

63rd Annual Conference WAZA -- 2008

WAZA's 63rd Annual Conference was held 19-23 October 2008 in Adelaide, Australia this year, along with a concurrent 19th Biennial Conference of the International Zoo Educators. The conference was kicked off with a gala icebreaker attended by CBSG Annual Meeting Attendees celebrating the closing of a very successful meeting, WAZA attendees and also IZE attendees. It was a large and raucous gathering at the outdoor meeting place of the Adelaide Zoo.

The following morning a formal opening was conducted on the lawn of the Adelaide Convention Centre with a traditional Aboriginal welcome, official opening addresses by the Premier Mike Rann and Minister Jane Lomax Smith. The WAZA President, Dr. Gordon McGregor Reid and IZE President, Dr. Stephen McKeown also welcomed the gathering.

The Plenary Session which was a Joint Session with both WAZA and IZE began with video Messages from Tim Flannery, Jane Goodall, and David Attenborough followed by a Keynote Address by Barry Brook. After this IZE attendees retired to their own venue; and WAZA Presidents Report, Office Report and report on International relationships were given.

Following this there were two sessions of committee meetings, including Marketing, Science/Veterinary, Population Management (CIRCC), Education, and Welfare and Ethics, which took the entire rest of the day. In the evening there was a traditional special Presidents Reception for new WAZA members where all members of Council could meet and interact with the new members. To end a busy and fruitful day, all attendees attended a Wine Tasting Evening at Government House, a walkable distance from the conference centre.

On the second day, an Administrative session was held for Members only, after which the First Technical Session began. All of the presentations of this session had to do with Global Climate Change ... some of the titles were

- *Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Global Challenges and Initiatives of the Wildlife Conservation Society*, Robert Cook
- *Riding the Waves of Climate Change and Community Perceptions of Zoos*, Cameron Kerr
- *The Challenge of Changing Zoos with or without Climate Change*, Miranda Stevenson
- *Wildlife Health and biodiversity in Australia Changing Climate -- Environmental and Political*, Karrie Ross
- *Fundamental Changes to mitigate climate change: One zoo's journey with WAZACS as a moral compass*, S. Boardman.
- *Bellweather or Benchmark? Why you need to know what your visitors don't know about your zoos' roles, and what you can do about it*, Gary Crilley
- *How do we achieve the truly sustainable zoo*, Miranda Stevenson and Jo Gipps
- *On the path to the carbon emission neutral zoo -- first steps, results and problems*, Jens-Ove Heckel
- *The potential, role, and benefits of genetic conservation in Australia and those linked to the international*

programme under the direction of the frozen ark, Ian Marcus Gunn

- *Changing Mission of zoos in a Changing World*, Miklos Parsanyi

After the printed proceedings are out, we can look into getting reprints of some or all of these stimulating presentations for those who are interested. Following this Technical Session, there was another plenary in which we heard the CBSG Report, by Chair, Bob Lacy, ISIS/ZIMS report by Nate Fleisness, Amphibian Ark Report by Kevin Zippel, and new members presentations.

The afternoon was devoted to committee meetings and workshop sessions, conservation committee, zoo associations meeting, and welfare and ethics Workshop, and Australia Asian forum.

On the third day we had in plenary reports of the Population Management/Studbooks, Conservation, Education, IZE, Marketing, Welfare and Ethics committees. After tea the 2nd technical session was conducted which featured general presentations, including one from our region, South Asia, by Sally Walker called Changing Zoos in a whole country: Nepal, South Asia as a Case Study. This presentation, along with the interesting view point of Dr. Brij Raj Sharma of India called the Roles of Zoos has been included in this issue.

In the afternoon there was a visit to the Montarto Zoo which is under the same management as the Adelaide Zoo, with Director Dr. Chris West who was formerly the Director General of the London Zoological Society. The Montarto Zoo is about an hour from Adelaide in the Adelaide Hills. It is more what we define as a Safari Park with very large and spacious landscape enclosures which enclose a variety of mostly non-indigenous wild fauna, primarily from Africa. After seeing the park, participants gathered to participate in a variety of activities such as lessons in boomerang throwing, camel riding, aboriginal dancing along with generally chatting and drinking. A gala cook-out dinner followed with a band and dancing.

The fourth day of the conference consisted both of Technical sessions which CZA's Brij Sharma gave his presentation. There were two more workshop sessions on Science and Veterinary and Sustainability. After lunch the final Administrative session was conducted with Reports of Committees and workshops, a Budget report, and announcement of the new Executive Director of WAZA, Dr. Gerald Dick (an interview with him appears in this issue), the newly elected President of WAZA, Dr. Mark Pfening of PAAZAB, Pretoria, South Africa, and the conferring of the prestigious Heini Heidigger Award on Dr. Peter Dollinger, outgoing Executive Director of WAZA (citation and interview appears in this issue). After a gala dinner and party conference returned to their rooms to make their way to a variety of scenic tours or home.