



# ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES REPORT

Upper Australia Precinct

Prepared for  
**TARONGA CONSERVATION SOCIETY AUSTRALIA**  
16 July 2020



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Report Number	Final

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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Overview of proposal .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Stakeholder analysis.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1. Level of engagement .....	3
<b>3. Engagement process .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1. Purpose of engagement .....	4
<b>4. Overview of engagement activities .....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1. Fact sheet and letter box drop .....	5
4.2. Community information session.....	5
4.3. Engagement email and phone number.....	6
<b>5. Engagement feedback .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Overall feedback .....	7
<b>Disclaimer.....</b>	<b>8</b>

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Fact sheet</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Letterbox drop catchment</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>Community information session</b>

## FIGURES

Figure 1 - Site context.....	2
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## PICTURES

Picture 1 - Information session set up .....	5
Picture 2 - Information session available communication materials.....	6

## TABLES

Table 1 - Stakeholder matrix .....	3
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# INTRODUCTION

Urbis Pty Ltd (Urbis) was engaged by Taronga Conservation Society Australia to undertake a community and stakeholder engagement process to support the proposed development of the Upper Australia Precinct, located within the north-eastern part of the Taronga Zoo site on Bradley's Head Road, Mosman in the Mosman Local Government Area. The site is bounded by Bradleys Head Road to the east, Athol Wharf Road and Sydney Harbour to the south, Little Sirius Cove to the west and Whiting Beach Road to the north.

The subject site, referred to as the Upper Australia Precinct, is located within the existing Taronga Zoo and will complete the Australia precinct project. The area of the proposal currently contains Taronga Zoo's Australian animal collection, including the nocturnal house, avian wetlands and commercial koala encounters venue.

The proposal aligns with a key Premier priority to maintain a strong economy. The completion of the Upper Australian Precinct will ensure the Zoo maintains its international reputation as a world class facility for the education and conservation of Australian wildlife. The proposal will deliver approximately 800 jobs including design, project management and construction over the 18-month design development and construction period.

Consistent with a best practice approach, engagement and communication activities were undertaken by Urbis Engagement prior to lodgement of the State Significant Development Application with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for the proposal.

The activities outlined in this report delivered an engagement process informed by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation spectrum. This Engagement and Communication Outcomes Report documents the engagement process undertaken for Taronga Conservation Society Australia during 2 July – 16 July 2020.

# 1. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL

The Upper Australia Precinct is one of the pillars of Taronga's Centenary Capital Plan and will be a major tourist destination for international tourists to view Australian wildlife. The proposal aims to enhance the guest experience and presentation of Taronga Zoo with a focus to improve the welfare of animals.

The proposal will incorporate three main exhibits:

- Redevelopment of the existing Nocturnal House building
- A new koala encounter and public koala canopy walk and
- Macropod/kangaroo walkthrough extended to include the existing wetland area.

Additional works proposed as part of the Upper Australia Precinct redevelopment will include the following:

- Upgrades to back of house facilities for animal care
- Additional toilets and amenities for staff and visitors
- Other supporting infrastructure and walkways and
- Modifications to the existing ropes course including a new entrance within the Zoo boundary.

Figure 1 - Site context



Source: lahznimmo architects and Spackman Mossop Michaels

## 2. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholders are individuals, groups of individuals or organisations that could influence or affect a project. Urbis Engagement collaborated with Taronga Conservation Society Australia in managing the community stakeholders for the Upper Australia Precinct proposal.

### 2.1. LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Urbis Engagement works in line with the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation spectrum and utilises the participation principles of:

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The following table outlines the key stakeholders who formed part of the consultation process. The stakeholder identification matrix is based on the principles in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation spectrum as outlined above.

Table 1 - Stakeholder matrix

Stakeholder	Level	How this group participated
Residential neighbours located adjacent to Taronga Zoo.	▪ Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fact sheet letterbox drop</li> <li>▪ Community information session invitation</li> <li>▪ Information and feedback hotline and email.</li> </ul>
Local business.	▪ Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fact sheet</li> <li>▪ Community information session invitation</li> <li>▪ Information and feedback hotline and email.</li> </ul>

## **3. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS**

As part of the engagement and communication process, the following consultation was undertaken for the Upper Australia Precinct:

- High level Engagement and Communication Plan
- Project fact sheet
- Letterbox drop
- Community information session
- Dedicated 1800 number and email feedback channels.

### **3.1. PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT**

The stakeholder and community engagement process for the Upper Australia Precinct aimed to:

- Provide accurate information about the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) and the process for providing feedback
- Deliver an independent, transparent and accountable consultation process and provide a range of ways for people to engage and give feedback
- Create pathways for stakeholder interaction and feedback that are open and transparent and
- Understand community views to inform the SSDA for the Upper Australia Precinct.

## 4. OVERVIEW OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The following activities were undertaken as part of the engagement and communication process:

### 4.1. FACT SHEET AND LETTER BOX DROP

A fact sheet was prepared to outline key features of the proposal and invite members of the community to provide feedback. The fact sheet advertised details of a dedicated email and phone number, managed by Urbis Engagement, and an invitation to attend a community information session to further understand the proposal.

The fact sheet was distributed on 3 July 2020 to the mailboxes of approximately 440 households within the Taronga Zoo catchment area.

A copy of the fact sheet and distribution catchment can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

### 4.2. COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

A one and a half hour information session was held on 8 July 2020 at Taronga Zoo. No attendees were present at the session.

At the information session the fact sheet, information boards and feedback forms were available for the community to peruse and utilise.

The information boards outlining key project facts displayed at the information session are provided in Appendix C. A copy of the feedback form available at the information session is provided in Appendix D.

Picture 1 - Information session set up





Picture 2 - Information session available communication materials



Picture 3 - Information session boards set up



### 4.3. ENGAGEMENT EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER

Members of the public were invited to contact Urbis Engagement through a dedicated 1800 phone number and/or an email address between 2 July and 16 July 2020. At the time of writing this report, no enquires have been received for further information or to provide feedback on the proposal.



## 5. ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

### Overall feedback

At the time of writing this report no feedback has been submitted through the Urbis Engagement enquiry line or email address and no mention of the proposal was detected on social media.

With over 440 individual fact sheets provided to the local catchment for proposal information and feedback requests, it is unusual to have no contact from the local community and stakeholders or attendance at a community information session.

However, given this proposal is minimally invasive to the local community and prior projects have been completed within the Taronga Zoo precinct that were more complex and invasive in nature, it is appropriate to assume the fact sheet provided adequate information regarding the new proposal.

The feedback email and phone line will remain open until determination of the SSDA is completed should feedback and/or issues management be requested.

# DISCLAIMER

This report is dated 16 July 2020 and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Pty Ltd (**Urbis**) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of Taronga Conservation Society Australia (**Instructing Party**) for the purpose of Outcomes Report (**Purpose**) and not for any other purpose or use. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Urbis expressly disclaims all liability, whether direct or indirect, to the Instructing Party which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose, and to any other person which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

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This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the reasonable belief that they are correct and not misleading, subject to the limitations above.

## **APPENDIX A**

## **FACT SHEET**

# BUILDING A BETTER ZOO

## Community Update – Taronga Zoo

### Upper Australia Precinct

JULY 2020

View along elevated koala boardwalk  
Source: lahznimmo Architects

Established in 1916, Taronga has gone from a location of entertainment to a mature conservation and education hub. The zoo provides support services for breeding critically endangered species, conservation research and education.

Taronga Conservation Society Australia aims to continually improve animal habitats while striving to enhance visitors' experiences. This proposal seeks to update the habitats and exhibit areas for Australia's most treasured animals.

The new 'Upper Australia' precinct at Taronga Zoo will showcase Australia's unique flora and fauna in their natural habitat, whether up in the trees or down in a burrow.

The proposal includes upgrades and attractions for kangaroo, koala, platypus, wombat and emus to enhance Taronga's wildlife conservation and education programs and experiences.

New exhibit fencing within the zoo boundary is proposed adjacent to the existing zoo perimeter wall, along a portion of Bradleys Head Road to provide the animals with visual and acoustic privacy. The screen will feature natural timbers and landscaping to improve the appearance of this area of the zoo from the street.



Nocturnal House building refurbishment



New koala encounter and public koala canopy walk



Macropod/kangaroos walkthrough extended to the wetland area



Upgrades to back of house facilities for animal care



Additional toilets and amenities for staff and visitors



Other supporting infrastructure and walkways



Modifications to the existing ropes course



#### Heritage

As a government agency Taronga Conservation Society Australia has responsibility to conserve and manage the heritage assets on the site. This proposal will involve alteration to the Australian Wetlands ponds and associated landscaping and rock walls. Where possible, areas will be retained and integrated into the new design. A Heritage Impact Assessment will be completed and submitted as part of the State Significant Development Application.



## Caring for our native flora and fauna

The zoo contains significant natural biodiversity and provides habitat for native flora and fauna. Where possible, existing vegetation is being retained and integrated into the landscape design of the proposal.

## Traffic and parking

The proposal involves the reconfiguration and upgrade of existing zoo facilities and animal enclosures and will not change the zoo visitor capacity or staff numbers.

## Construction and noise

During construction, particular care will be taken to restrict and minimise dust, noise and traffic impacts. Best practice measures will be taken during construction, including barriers and screens and maintaining a clean worksite to protect our animals, guests, staff and near neighbours.

## Early constructions works

In June 2020, a Development Application was submitted to Mosman Council to seek approval to commence early works and demolition to prepare for the Upper Australia Precinct. The Development Application will be made available on the Mosman Council website for public exhibition and available for comment.

## Planning process

As with all proposals over a certain value, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will assess the application through the State Significant Development pathway. We are engaging with Mosman Council and government agencies on the proposal, along with neighbours and the local community.

Next steps:



July 2020: Community consultation.

Mid-Late July: State Significant Development Application is lodged with Department Planning, Industry and Environment.

Late 2020: Subject to approval from Mosman Council, early works to commence.

Late 2020: Upper Australian Precinct Application on public exhibition and available for community comment.

Early 2021: Subject to approval, construction to commence.

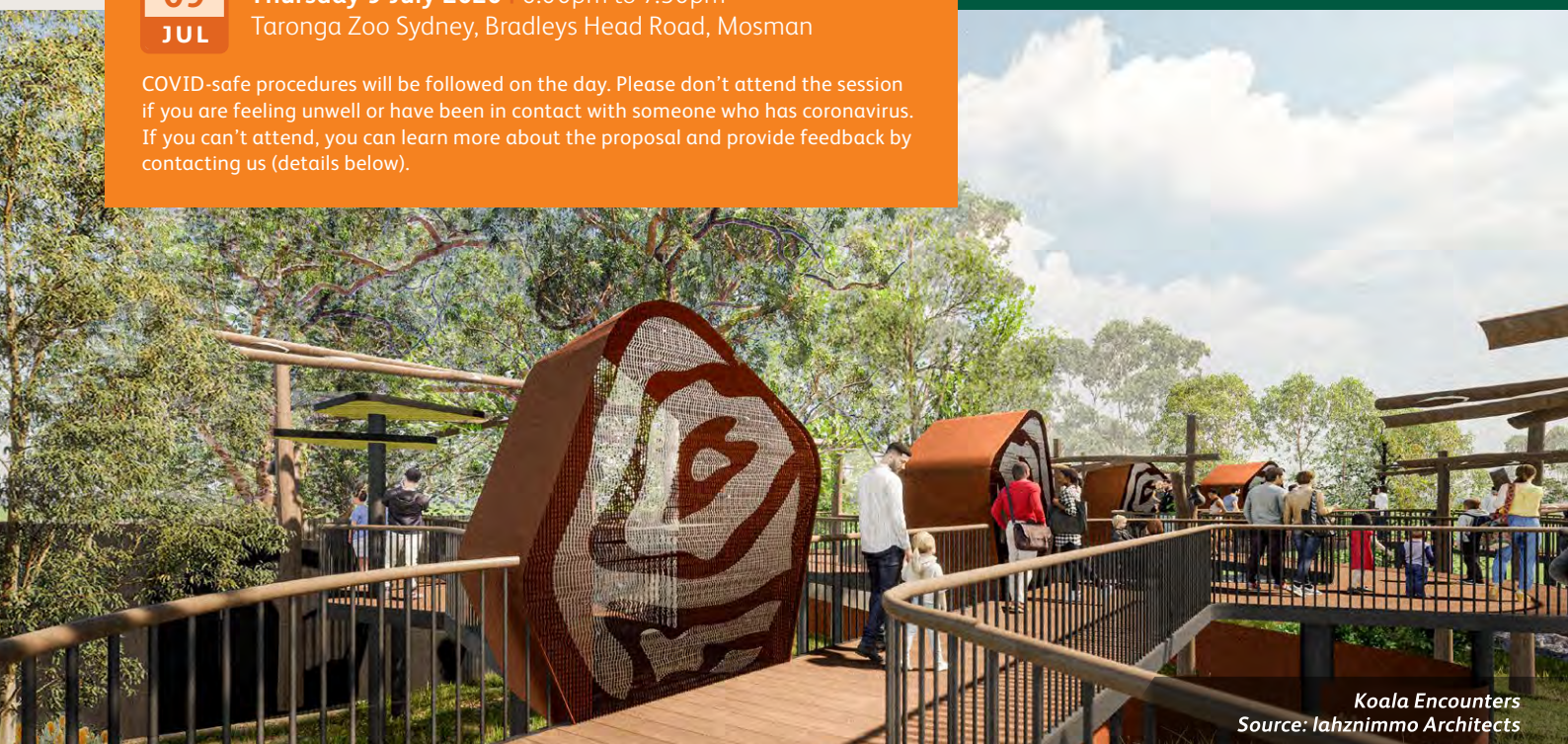
## COMMUNITY DROP IN SESSION

Join us at our upcoming community information session to learn more about the project, ask questions and provide your feedback.

09  
JUL

Thursday 9 July 2020 | 6.00pm to 7.30pm  
Taronga Zoo Sydney, Bradleys Head Road, Mosman

COVID-safe procedures will be followed on the day. Please don't attend the session if you are feeling unwell or have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus. If you can't attend, you can learn more about the proposal and provide feedback by contacting us (details below).



Koala Encounters  
Source: lahznimmo Architects

## Keeping you informed

Taronga Conservation Society Australia is committed to keeping its near neighbours informed and has commissioned Urbis to collect your feedback on the plans and answer any questions you may have. Please contact us at any time.

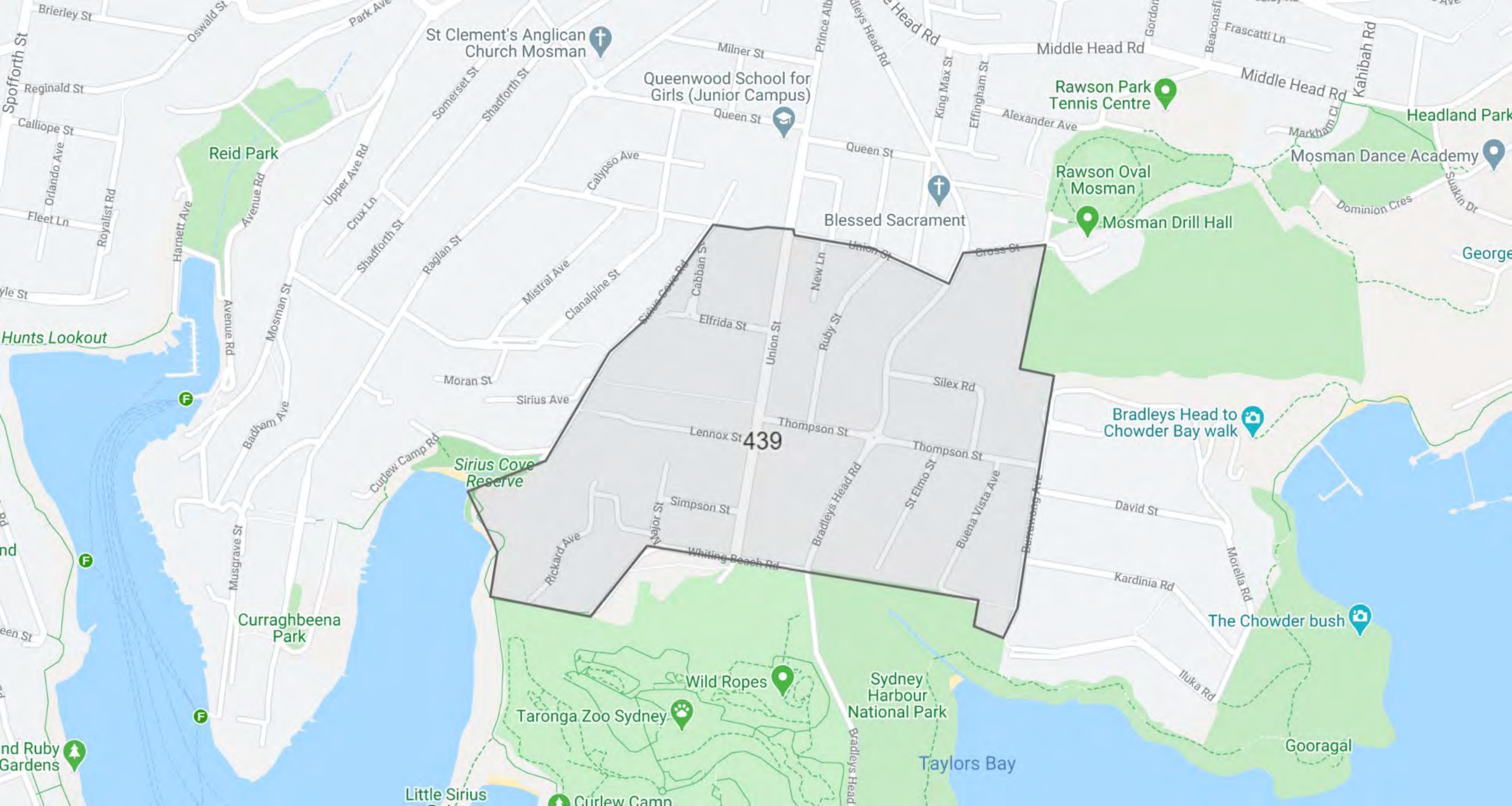
t: 1800 244 863 e: [engagement@urbis.com.au](mailto:engagement@urbis.com.au)



## **APPENDIX B**

## **LETTERBOX DROP CATCHMENT**





## **APPENDIX C**

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION**



# BUILDING A BETTER ZOO

## Taronga Zoo Upper Australia Precinct

The new 'Upper Australia' exhibit at Taronga Zoo will showcase Australia's unique flora and fauna in their natural habitat, whether up in the trees, or down in a burrow.

Taronga Conservation Society Australia aim to continually improve animal habitats while striving to enhance visitors' experiences. This proposal seeks to update the habitats and exhibit areas for Australia's most treasured animals.

View along elevated koala boardwalk with macropod exhibit to the left. Source: lahnimmo Architects

### Planning process

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will assess the application through the State Significant Development pathway.



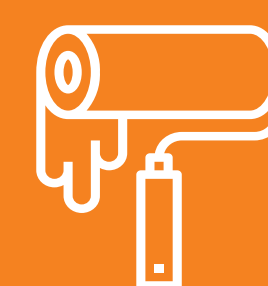
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Other supporting infrastructure and walkways



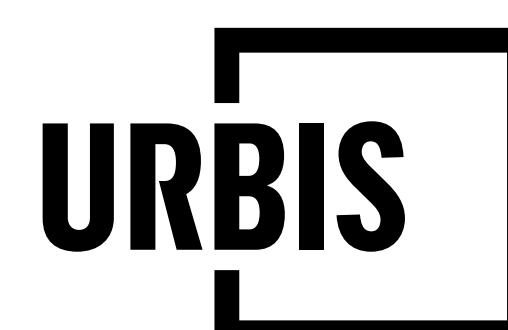
Modifications to the existing ropes course



### Keeping you informed

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**t:** 1800 244 863 **e:** [engagement@urbis.com.au](mailto:engagement@urbis.com.au)

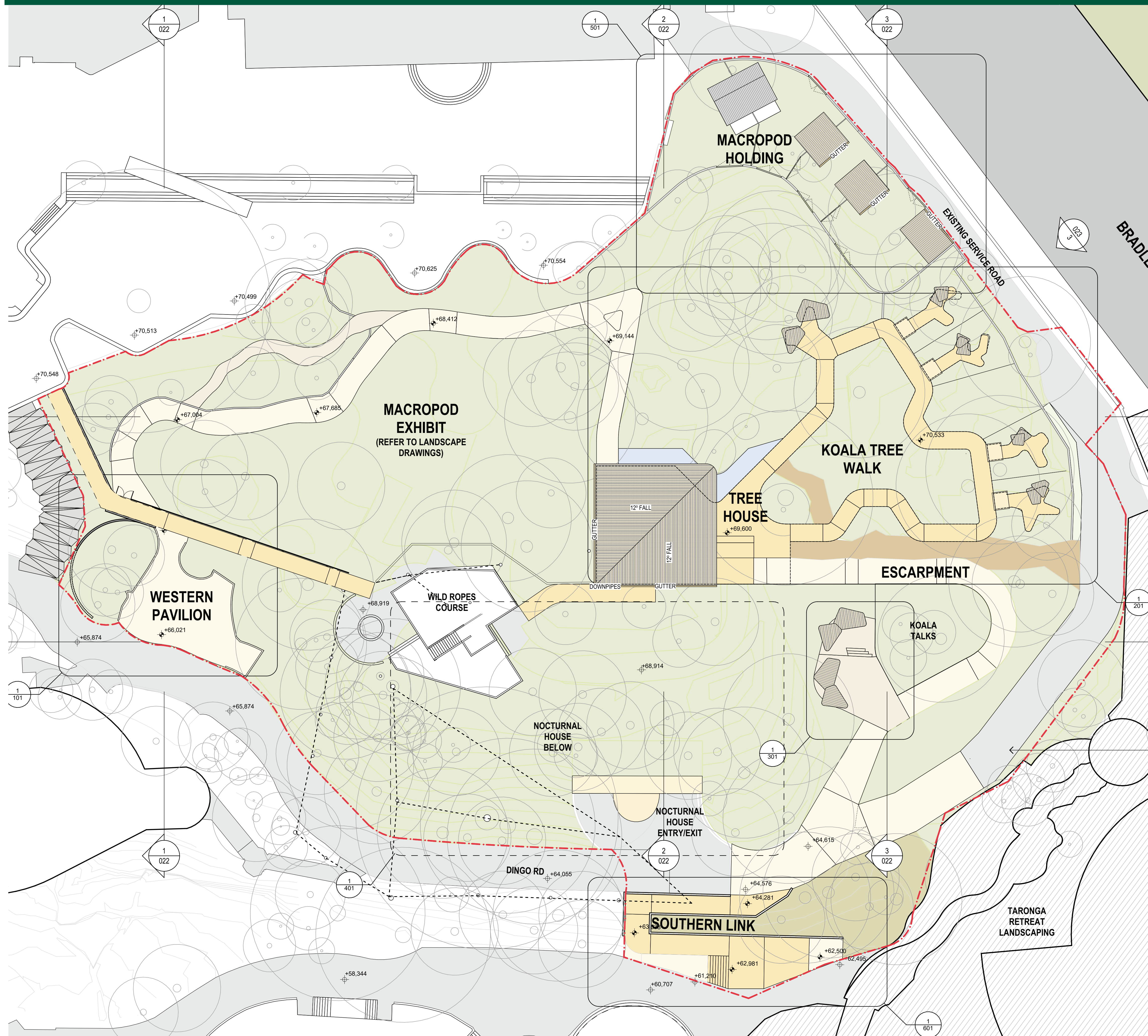




# SITE PLAN

The main exhibit path will snake through various native landscapes, ranging from lush rainforest through to arid woodland and then up into the tree canopy via an elevated boardwalk to view koalas at their natural sitting height in the tree canopy.

The Australia journey then winds its way down through the Blue Mountains rock escarpment and then underground into the Nocturnal House; where a complete refurbishment of the existing building will provide state-of-the-art keeper facilities and unique night-time viewing of Australia's nocturnal creatures.





# MACROPOD & KANGAROO EXHIBIT



View along macropod walk looking east towards the Treehouse. Source: lahznimmo Architects

**Meet a range of quintessential Australian animals at close range, such as kangaroos, wallabies and emus.**

Diverse Australian landscapes with from dry rainforests and hanging paperbark swamps to open woodlands.

Recycled hardwood timber bridge, pathways and bench seating.

Existing wetland pond edging retained where possible.

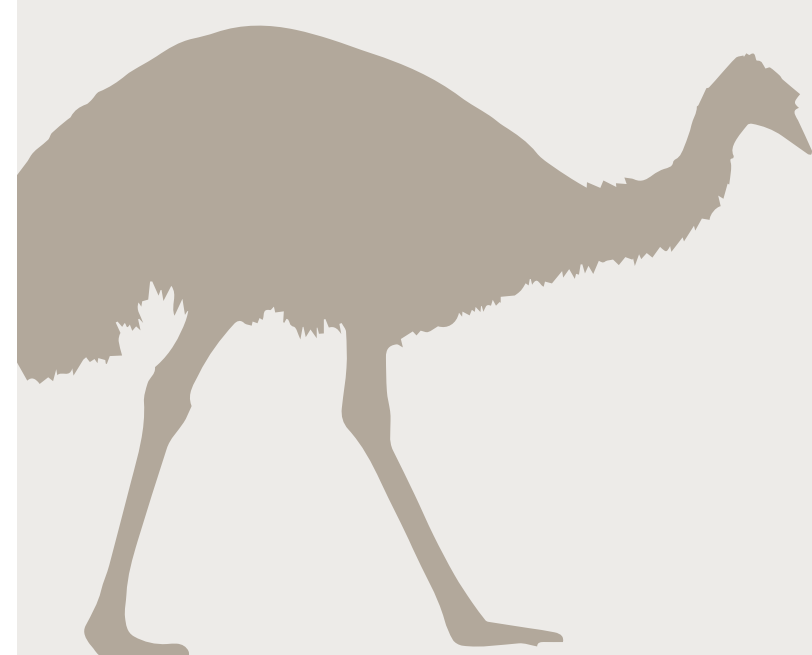
Trees and other vegetation integrated with existing established trees to provide a balance of sunshine and shade to meet the animals' thermal comfort needs, as well as refuge.

Carefully positioned open grassland "clearings" will provide for optimal animal viewing.

Bush tracks will invite visitors on an exploratory journey through different Australian forest types.



View along koala boardwalk with koalas to the right. Source: lahznimmo Architects





# KOALA EXHIBIT



Koala Encounters. Source: lahznimmo Architects

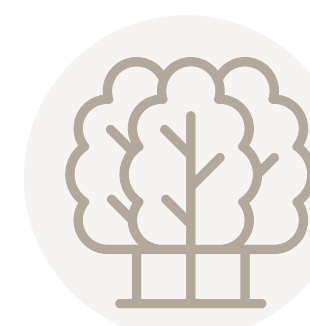
The exhibit is located in the north-eastern part of the precinct, overlapping with the existing macropod and koala areas.



Elevated viewing experience to experience koalas at their natural sitting height.



Four private koala encounter bays for premium koala viewing experience for paying guests.



Integrated into the established woodland setting of Upper Australia trees.

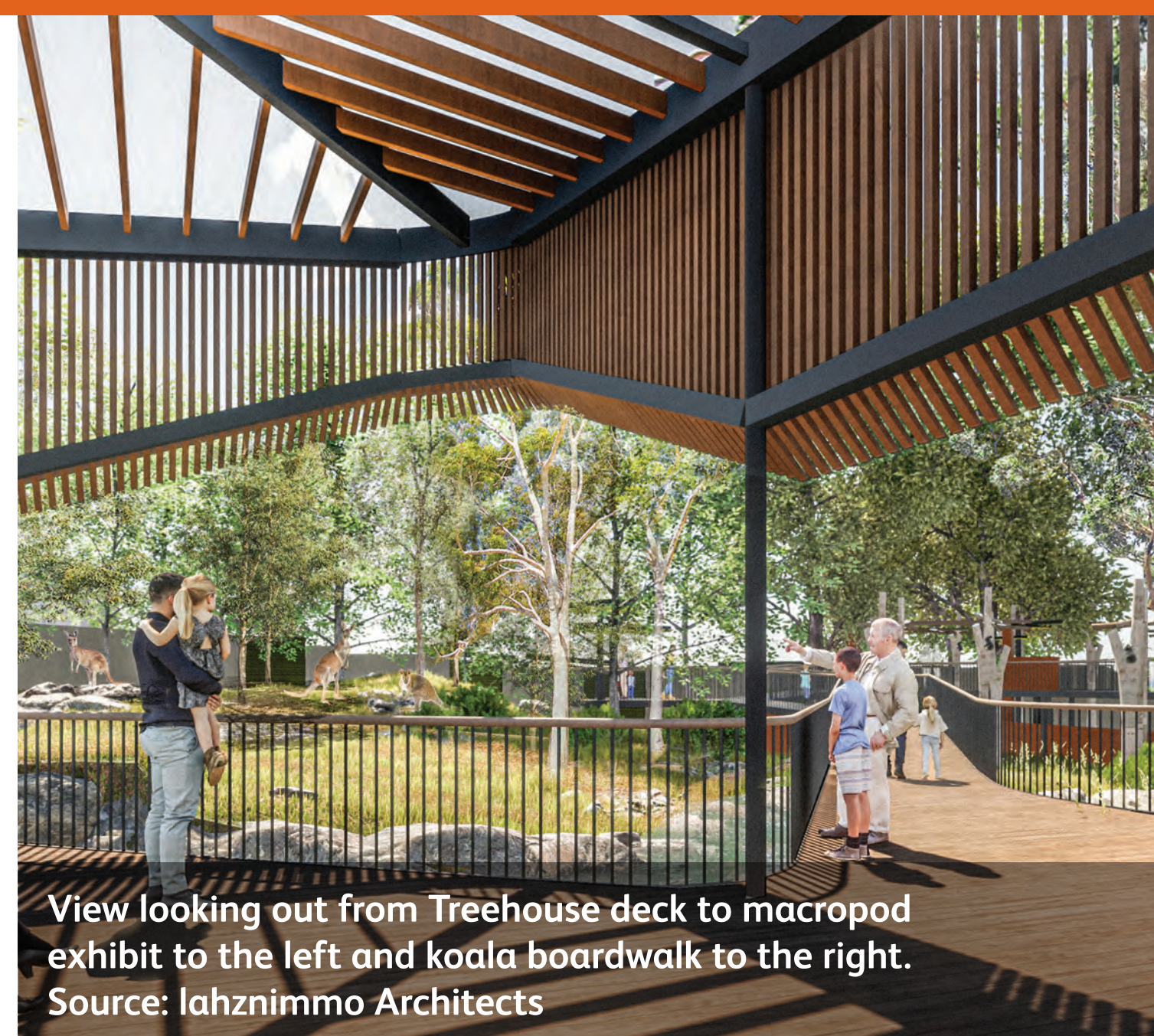


## Treehouse viewing deck

The Treehouse will be the central point within the Upper Australia precinct, connecting Macropods with Koalas and then linking visitors down via the escarpment walk to the Nocturnal House.

- Shaded space to sit and rest and bathroom facilities.
- Ticketing for Koala Encounters and small 'gift shop'.
- Australian hardwood timber deck open on three sides with a high timber roof.

View from the koala boardwalk to the treehouse. Source: lahznimmo Architects



View looking out from Treehouse deck to macropod exhibit to the left and koala boardwalk to the right. Source: lahznimmo Architects



# ESCARPMENT WALK & KOALA TALKS

The Escarpment Walk will provide an accessible path of travel from the Treehouse down to the Nocturnal House and Dingo Rd to allow guests to continue on to the lower part of the zoo. The large ramped walkway will descend the steep site allowing for a snaking path to showcase a final koala exhibit from multiple vantage points. Shaded seating is provided to the west of this exhibit for guests to gather during the scheduled exhibit koala talks by keepers.



View up from Dingo Road towards koala talks with Treehouse in background. Source: lahznimmo Architects

## Heritage

A Heritage Impact Assessment will be completed and submitted as part of the State Significant Development Application. As a government agency Taronga Conservation Society Australia has responsibility to conserve and manage the heritage assets on the site. This proposal will involve alteration to the Australian Wetlands ponds and associated landscaping and rock walls. Where possible, areas will be retained and integrated into the new design.

## New exhibit fencing

New exhibit fencing within the zoo boundary is proposed adjacent to the existing zoo perimeter wall along a portion of Bradleys Head Road to provide the animals with visual and acoustic privacy. The screen will feature natural timbers and landscaping to improve the appearance of this area of the Zoo from the street.

View from Bradleys Head Road – proposed timber fence to be located behind heritage wall shown in white. Source: lahznimmo Architects



TARONGA RETREAT CARPARK

KOALA EXHIBIT

MACROPOD HOLDING YARD





**APPENDIX D**

**FEEDBACK FORM**



## PROPOSED TARONGA ZOO UPPER AUSTRALIAN PRECINCT FEEDBACK FORM

### 1. Are you a:

☒ Please tick

- ☐ Local resident
- ☐ Local business owner
- ☐ Visitor to the area
- ☐ Staff member or volunteer
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Reflecting on what you have seen, what do you think works well about the concept design of the Upper Australian Precinct?

.....

.....

.....

### 3. Are there any additional factors you think should be considered in the planning and design of the Upper Australian Precinct?

.....

.....

.....

### 4. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about this proposal?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you taking the time to complete this feedback form. Your feedback is being collected by Urbis Engagement on behalf of Taronga Zoo Conservation Society. You can drop your completed feedback form into the box provided, or via e-mail to [engagement@urbis.com.au](mailto:engagement@urbis.com.au) by 16 July 2020.

