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Sunday 28 February 2016

TIGER ISLAND REVITALISATION AND CONSERVATION

Today Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk joined international award-winning designer and TV host Jamie Durie OAM, Ardent Leisure CEO Deborah Thomas and Themeparks CEO Craig Davidson, at Australia's biggest theme park, Dreamworld, to launch the redevelopment of the park's iconic Tiger Island.

Home to 14 tigers, Dreamworld through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation is the largest zoological contributor to tiger conservation worldwide, raising funds through tiger experiences and donations to save wild tigers, now critically endangered.

The multi-million-dollar Tiger Island redevelopment includes:

- Interpretive areas focusing on the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation and Dreamworld's tiger conservation partners and initiatives in Sumatra, Russia and Nepal. These areas will help educate guests on the plight of tigers in the wild and how they can contribute to saving wild tigers through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation
- World-class tiger exhibits with extended accommodation and amenities
- New and expanded tiger husbandry facilities
- Improved viewing areas including a covered stadium seating 500 people and strategically placed windows enabling guests to safely experience being face-to-face with a tiger
- Splash pools with underwater viewing
- New themed shopping and dining outlets
- Enhanced experience areas where guests can get up close to a tiger
- State-of-the-art audio visual backing for tiger presentations including big screens
- A dedicated undercover corporate events space seating up to 250 people

Breaking ground on the Tiger Island project, Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said the \$7million dollar redevelopment of Dreamworld's Tiger Island – including a massive new stadium and themed shopping and dining outlets - would create 80 new jobs during construction.

Ms Palaszczuk said Dreamworld has marked many important milestones during its 34 years as tourist magnet for the Gold Coast and now work on another pace-setting attraction is starting.

"Dreamworld already has a 1,200 strong workforce during peak times, and is one of the biggest employers on the Gold Coast," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"This new development will create 80 more jobs, underlining Dreamworld's confidence in Queensland's economy and in particular, the tourism sector."

The Premier said the redevelopment of Tiger Island by Dreamworld's parent company Ardent Leisure is another shot in the arm for Queensland tourism especially in the lead-up to and including the Commonwealth Games.



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“The Gold Coast has long been home to Australia’s premier theme parks, which are crucial to attracting millions of tourists each year.

“Last year to September, 4.4 million visitors spent millions and millions of dollars on the coast.

“And the number of Chinese visitors attracted to the Gold Coast is a stand-out, up by more than 13% over the last year.

“And while the private sector continues to invest, we will work with airline partners to secure more flights in and out Gold Coast and Queensland in the years to come.”

Ardent Leisure CEO Deborah Thomas said the redevelopment was a significant milestone for Ardent and Australia’s biggest theme park, the multi award winning, Dreamworld.

“Ardent Leisure is committed to Queensland and contributes significantly to the economy through tourism, jobs and continued investment in our leisure and health businesses located in this State.

“We are delighted to be celebrating the 21st anniversary of this much-loved Dreamworld attraction by gifting a world-class exhibit to Queensland and a new home to our tigers, thereby creating a unique and compelling new experience for Dreamworld guests. Our aim is to develop a best in class facility to capture the imagination of local, domestic and international tourists, and drive visitation to South East Queensland,” said Ms Thomas.

“Since opening in 1995, Tiger Island has been one of the most popular attractions at Dreamworld, and remains an iconic drawcard for Queensland and a leading fundraiser for tiger conservation worldwide. We are heavily committed to a worldwide conservation program to raise awareness and interest in this endangered species through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation (DWF) and visitation to Tiger Island,” she added.

Dreamworld CEO Craig Davidson said the new-look Tiger Island would embody Dreamworld’s unique Australian spirit and signature wow-factor.

“Our design team has taken inspiration from Nepal and Sumatra where we support tiger conservation activities through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation,” said Mr Davidson.

“The outcome is a completely new look and feel for Tiger Island enabling our guests to see and learn more about these magnificent creatures, as well as get closer than ever before, encouraging empathy and educating visitors about the plight of tigers in the wild.

“The main splash pool on Tiger Island will be repositioned as a central key feature with a transparent wall so visitors can see the tigers swimming, an activity tigers enjoy and an experience that our guests will love.

“We’ve also added large shaded areas and stadium seating for guest comfort.

“New tiger cub and juvenile areas will cater for our recently expanded tiger family and there will be a special area to showcase two of our Sumatran tigers who are part of the Global Species Management Program (GSMP),” said Mr Davidson



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Internationally-acclaimed designer Jamie Durie and his team at Durie Design are an integral part of the Tiger Island project, extending Durie's existing landscaping and design work with Dreamworld which has included the Dreamworld globe and entry statements plus future areas.

"It's both an honour and a privilege to be a part of not just the design, of the Tiger Island Project that will enable more Australians to experience just how unique and rare these beautiful creatures are, but most importantly, be part of a ground breaking tiger preservation program that enables these extraordinary animals to increase their numbers by supporting their breeding, protection, health and natural habitat," said Durie.

Other project highlights include new dining and shopping experiences with a full working kitchen to cater for corporate events held at Tiger Island. A percentage of funds raised from these events is contributed to tiger conservation through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation.

Mr Davidson said Tiger Island's off-exhibit areas would also be extended with additional roaming areas for tigers within their amenity.

With less than 3,000 left in the wild, tigers are critically endangered. Dreamworld, through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation (DWF), is the largest zoological contributor to tiger conservation worldwide.

Dreamworld's tigers raise money to help their wild cousins through guest experiences such as tiger walks, photos and VIP tiger cub experiences. DWF donations fund anti-poaching patrols and conservation initiatives protecting wild tigers in Indonesia and Russia.

Opened in 1995 and celebrating its 21st anniversary this year, Tiger Island is home to nine adult tigers and five cubs. Dreamworld opened in 1981 and will be celebrating 35 years of operations this December.

Dreamworld is an active member of the Zoo and Aquarium Association, the peak body representing the zoo and aquarium community throughout Australasia.

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Media Enquiries:

Dreamworld: Lyndal Dennis 0403 318 684 / Lara Boath 0409 897 010 / pr@dreamworld.com.au

ABOUT ARDENT

Ardent Leisure Group is a leading leisure and entertainment business with a diverse portfolio of premier assets encompassing theme parks, bowling and family entertainment centres, health clubs and marinas. The businesses owned and operated by the publicly listed Ardent Leisure Group, (ASX AAD) have in common the delivery of outstanding guest experiences, exceptional customer service and exposure to growth markets. Our activities already span Australasia and are expanding across the United States. Ardent Leisure's Australasian brands include Dreamworld, Skypoint, Goodlife, Kingpin, AMF, Playtime and D'Albora and Main Event Entertainment in the United States. www.ardentleisure.com



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ABOUT DREAMWORLD

Australia's biggest theme park, Dreamworld is happiness all in one place. Brave the 'Big 9' thrill rides, meet your favourite DreamWorks heroes and ABC KIDS characters, go wild at Tiger Island, and discover Indigenous culture and Australian wildlife at Dreamworld Corroboree. Don't miss our all new Motorsports Experience featuring the world's first Hot Wheels themed rollercoaster - the Hot Wheels SideWinder - and the world's largest collection of Peter Brock racing cars in Brock's Garage. When the fun heats up, you can cool down at Dreamworld's interconnecting water park WhiteWater World. For details and best value tickets visit www.dreamworld.com.au

ABOUT DREAMWORLD WILDLIFE FOUNDATION (DWF)

Dreamworld plays an active role in the fostering and protection of the region's wildlife through the Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation (DWF). Established in 2012, DWF is an internationally recognised fund committed to the protection, education and conservation of the earth's most magnificent creatures and habitats, crucial to their survival. DWF makes significant donations to fund anti-poaching patrols and conservation initiatives in Russia and Indonesia to help save tigers in the wild through its conservation partners 21st Century Tiger, Flora & Fauna International and the Phoenix Fund.