



Media Release

Friday, June 3rd, 2011

BRIDPORT PRIMARY STUDENTS WIN DEVIL NAMING COMPETITION

The winners of the NRM North and Tasmania Zoo devil naming competition will be treated to a VIP event at the zoo at Riverside today.

Students from grade 5/6 Sweetman, Bridport Primary School, were judged the winners with a beautiful hand-drawn poster of the two NRM North sponsored devils.

The students named the female devil 'Euca' and the male 'Wattle'.

The class, and the runners up from Norwood Primary, were rewarded with a free visit to the zoo to meet the two devils and take part in tree planting activities to celebrate World Environment Day on Sunday.

NRM North's Community Engagement & Communications Manager, Melissa Lewarn, said the competition was a huge success with around 150 entries received.

"We had 15 classes at eight primary schools submit posters and short stories and it was quite hard to decide on a winner as all of the entries were of high standard.

"This competition was important because not only did students get to be creative in their submissions, they also learnt a lot about Tasmanian devils and the challenges they face with the Devil Facial Tumour Disease."

The two newly-named devils are living in a purpose-built breeding enclosure which was funded by NRM North.

They were born last April within Tasmania Zoo's Devil Conservation Breeding Program. Both are of separate gene giving them the diversity to breed this coming year.

The Operations Manager of Tasmania Zoo, Robert Warren, said five female devils had completed this year's breeding season.

"We are yet to complete final exams to verify numbers in pouch, but with previous success, we intend to have all females bearing young.

"This will give us another 20 pup devils and 100 per cent breed success rate that this program is recognised with. It is hoped that during the next 12 months, we will secure further sponsorship to extend this facility."

Mr Warren said Tasmania Zoo had one of the largest and most diverse conservation breeding programs for our endangered Tasmanian devil.

"2011 will be another milestone year for the zoo with the recent agreement with the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program to establish a free range enclosure.

"This will be built by the Devil Island organisation and will be handed over to Tasmania Zoo for management.

"The introduction of this facility will make Tasmania Zoo's devil program the most diverse in the management of the species in the world." Mr Warren said.

Mrs Lewarn said NRM North was keen to support Tasmania Zoo in its endeavours to protect this unique creature from extinction.

"In some areas, the disease has wiped out more than 90 per cent of the Tasmanian devil population and that is why breeding programs like the one at Tasmania Zoo are crucial to ensure the ongoing survival of the species."

Interview/Photo Opportunity: Robert Warren and Melissa Lewarn will be available for interviews between 10.30am-2pm TODAY at Tasmania Zoo, 1166 Ecclestone Road, Riverside.

The winning class and runner up class will meet the two devils between 10.30am-11.15am, followed by tree planting activities at 11.30am-12.30pm.

Ends

For more information contact: Melissa Lewarn, Manager – Community Engagement & Communications, NRM North, 6333 7776 or 0427 354 058