

Beach backs Monarto's African safari vision

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SOLID BACKING: Zoos SA chief executive Elaine Bensted and Beach Energy's community head Rob Malinauskas meet Satara, Monarto's resident Southern White Rhino, who arrived from Africa in 2002.

A six-figure undisclosed sponsorship by SA oil and gas producer Beach Energy is set to fire up Zoos SA's conservation efforts and future plans for its star attractions, the Southern White Rhinos, at Monarto Safari Park.

Beach Energy's conditional five-year partnership will directly support conservation efforts directed to protect the park's five Southern White Rhinos as well as the eight new arrivals from South Africa, expected in 2021.

Some of the funds will also be directed to efforts in South Africa. The partnership announcement comes as Zoos SA edges closer to its \$1 million target to build a new quarantine support facility for the animals next year.

Zoos SA chief executive Elaine Bensted said the sponsorship would help with upgrades for the existing facilities for the rhinos and to improve visitors' experiences in the short term and with the future relocation of the new arrivals.

"We have partnered with Beach and other corporates for a number of years on various fundraising initiatives. But to see Beach step up as a major partner for the rhino sanctuary is amazing," Ms Bensted said.

"Securing Beach Energy as a major partner is a coup for Monarto Safari Park and is a great endorsement of our conservation efforts."

"With up to three rhinos being poached in the wild each day,

the race to save the

species has never been so urgent. With Beach Energy's support, we can continue our conservation efforts here and in Africa."

Zoos SA is currently working with The Australian Rhino Project and other partners to create a rhino sanctuary at Monarto Safari Park. Under the plan and updated quarantine regulations, the rhinos will leave South Africa early next year for New Zealand where they will spend 12 months before being transported to Australia, subject to approvals. For this reason, the sponsorship is split into a two-plus-three-year arrangement, conditional upon the arrival of the rhinos.

Beach Energy managing director Matt Kay said the partnership is exciting for the company.

"We are thrilled to support the Southern White Rhinos and enhance the conservation efforts around these beloved creatures so they can be enjoyed by future generations," Mr Kay said.

Ms Bensted said the new partnership fits in well with ongoing initiatives, including building a \$40 million resort at the Safari Park. "The safari tours will be designed around the white rhinos," she said.

In return, Beach employees will get access to benefits provided by Zoos SA, including discounted entry fees and access to conservation efforts information.

Thrilled to support ... conservation of these beloved creatures