

**PERTH ZOO, SUMATRAN TIGERS**

*Statement by Minister for the Environment*

**MRS EDWARDES** (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [2.06 pm]: I inform the House of Perth Zoo's latest arrivals, which rank as one of its greatest breeding success stories. At 10.45 pm on Thursday, 14 September, three healthy Sumatran tigers - two males and one female - were born at Perth Zoo. This significant achievement is a first for Perth Zoo and for Western Australia. Most importantly, the birth of these cubs is a major boost to international efforts to save the critically endangered Sumatran tiger from extinction. It also underlines Perth Zoo's importance as a regional breeding centre for these endangered animals. The Zoo's female Sumatran tiger, Malu, is nearly four years old, and the male, Calang, is almost 10. Together they are part of an Australasian breeding program to increase blood lines, and contribute to international breeding efforts.

The birth of the cubs, who are now nine weeks old, was not announced earlier as there is a danger period, particularly with first-time mothers. Privacy for the mother is critical in the early stages of the life of the cubs. The most vulnerable period has now passed and the cubs went on public display last week.

The chief executive officer of Perth Zoo, Brian Easton, and his team are to be congratulated on their latest breeding success and their outstanding work in the field of conservation. We all know Perth Zoo as the State's best recreational venue, but it is also a leader in conservation and plays a significant role in education and research.

With as few as 400 Sumatran tigers left in the wild, and around 250 in zoos around the world, these cubs are welcome and significant additions. It is appropriate to acknowledge the importance of community and sponsor support in these moves to save endangered species in Western Australia and in other parts of the world. This support is vital if we are to have any hope of preventing species such as the Sumatran tiger disappearing forever.