

Devil Ark eyes numbers boost to save iconic species

THE Barrington Tops' not for profit organisation Devil Ark is calling on locals of the Upper Hunter region to get behind their ambitious plans to double the Tasmanian Devil mainland breeding program.

The organisation is aiming to boost its numbers from 180 Tasmanian Devils to 360 as a means to guarantee they don't become extinct.

This month marks 20 years since the iconic Australian marsupial was diagnosed with a life threatening cancer - Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD), and their future is looking grim.

Today, almost the entire state of Tasmania is now infected, with 90% of Tasmanian devils gone.

Determined not to let the species become extinct, the board of directors for Devil Ark are making a commitment to double their insurance population of healthy Tasmanian devils by 2020.

As a not for profit organisation, Devil Ark will need to raise \$1.5 million in funds to cover the expansion costs to double the Ark to 360.

In an every cent counts campaign, Devil Ark is reaching out to the Australian public, conservation organisations, businesses and schools to help fund the project.

General Manager of Devil Ark Tim Faulkner said the species was facing extinction with no cure for DFTD.

"More recently a second strain of the disease has been discovered, demonstrating that there is a real risk that this iconic species will be lost forever," he said.

"Devil Ark is keeping our promise to save the species and have started plans to double Devil Ark's population to 360 devils.

"The Devil is not in better shape now than in 2008 and a Tasmanian solution is seemingly about politics rather than the species' recovery.



PRECIOUS: Tim Faulkner with a baby Tasmanian Devil.

“We’re calling on the locals of the Upper Hunter region to help spread the word and not let state boundaries stand in the way, when science and research have failed to find a solution and sadly we risk losing the most researched animal in history.

“We at Devil Ark believe the recovery of the devil is a national responsibility.

“Bold new plans to double Devil Ark, far from the diseased landscape of Tasmania are due to begin construction in early 2017.

“Our successful facility already holds 52% of the mainland insurance population, and aims to repopulate Tasmania once the disease has run its course.

“Doubling the Ark will guarantee Australia doesn’t see another iconic species become extinct, we have already lost the Tasmanian Tiger and if we don’t act now the Tasmanian Devil could be gone forever.

“Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate on earth and as the top order predator, the Devil is critical in maintaining balance within the ecosystem.”

Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC) – a Devil Ark partner based in the USA is already on-board, committing an impressive \$250,000 to kick-start the project.

“If an American organisation can see the benefit in saving an iconic Australian species, we’re confident Australians will stand up as well and help us raise the \$1.5 million needed for our own species,” added Mr Faulkner.

Devil Ark is a registered environmental organisation and charitable institution under the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission.

For further information or to make a donation see www.devilark.org.au