

## MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Tourism Exchange 2016

### Moonlit Sanctuary the best place to see Australian wildlife

*The closest wildlife park to Melbourne to cuddle up to a koala  
A huge range of up-close encounters and famous lantern-lit tours  
Close to Melbourne's CBD and on the way to Phillip Island  
Learn about protecting Australia's endangered and threatened species*

Wander around 10 hectares of Australian bushland at Moonlit Wildlife Sanctuary meeting endangered species, feeding kangaroos and wallabies, cuddling up to a koala, and enjoy up-close encounters with birds, pythons, dingoes and more.

Located only a 50 minute drive from Melbourne's CBD and on the way to Phillip Island, Moonlit Sanctuary is home to over 60 species and more than 300 animals.

In 2001, owner and director Michael Johnson first opened Moonlit Sanctuary in the evenings to offer its renowned lantern-lit tours for visitors to get a glimpse into the fascinating activities of Australian nocturnal animals.

Following growing popularity the Sanctuary started opening its doors during the day and now welcomes more than 75,000 visitors each year from around the world.

Moonlit Sanctuary offers a range of up-close experiences with Australian animals including its exclusive Behind the Scenes tour, 10 different encounters each day, nine keeper talks daily, Keeper for a Day, and the popular *Conservation in Action* show.

Many animals roam freely around the Sanctuary, including a variety of waterbirds that call Moonlit's wetlands home, and curious and friendly kangaroos and wallabies to feed along the way.

With around 25 per cent of Moonlit's species endangered or threatened with extinction, the Sanctuary play an important role in conservation breeding programs and the reintroduction of animals into the wild.

The critically endangered orange-bellied parrots, southern bettongs, spot-tailed quolls, bush stone curlews, squirrel gliders and Tasmanian devils are some of the species protected at Moonlit Sanctuary.

Young visitors can learn about conservation and the environment, take part in encounters, and hear about caring for animals as part the Junior Rangers Program held every school holidays.

This year marks Moonlit Sanctuary's 15th anniversary of providing a haven for wildlife where visitors can get up-close with animals, learn about conservation, Australian species, and support the important work of breeding and reintroduction programs.

**Interviews available with:** Moonlit Sanctuary director, Michael Johnson

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### Up-close and personal animal experiences

Join Moonlit Sanctuary's knowledgeable keepers for a variety of animal talks held throughout the day.

Whether you want to cuddle a koala, hold a python, meet dingoes, or feed a tawny frogmouth, Moonlit Sanctuary offers a range of encounters including our exclusive Behind the Scenes tour which offers a jam-packed hour of animal experiences with one of our keepers.

Book our Keeper for Day to experience the day to day life of a keeper. Help them feed the animals and get an insight into all the tasks required to keep our animals happy and healthy.

At night Moonlit Sanctuary comes alive with our world-famous lantern-lit evening tours. Led by one of our keepers see tiny feathertail gliders dart around; giant yellow-bellied gliders gracefully move overhead; and endangered quolls, Tasmanian devils, pademelons and bettongs all forage for food.

<http://www.moonlitsanctuary.com.au/encountersandtalks>

### Conservation in Action education show

Moonlit Sanctuary launched its new *Conservation in Action* show earlier this year to educate visitors from around the world about the plight of Australian endangered animals.

Our keepers use enrichment to encourage a range of animals to show off their natural behaviours including flying, jumping, climbing and foraging while hearing interesting talks from keepers about wildlife conservation.

Stars of the show include dingoes, spot-tailed quolls, tawny frogmouths, rufous bettongs, barking owls, major mitchells and more.

*Conservation in Action* is held daily at 2.20pm and included in the Sanctuary's admission fee.