

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **TARONGA ZOO VISITS KOOKABURRA KIDS WITH AN '*INTO THE WILD*' SCHOOL HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE**

Kookaburra Kids, as part of their school holiday activities, stepped into the wild with a hands-on native Australian animal experience, hosted by SITA Australia at Mamre House and Farm on Thursday.

In 2013 SITA Australia (SITA) partnered with the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation as a major corporate sponsor, committing a \$150,000 three year package of support to fund much needed respite camps for children living in families affected by mental illness.

To celebrate the partnership, SITA hosted their second school holiday activity day for the Kookaburra Kids at Mamre House and Farm. In a rare opportunity, the children aged from six to 13 interacted with native animals from the Taronga ZooMobile, with the aim to encourage them to support native wildlife conservation.

SITA's Executive Director of Infrastructure, Emmanuel Vivant said, "SITA is delighted to be supporting another Kookaburra Kids holiday activity. Children living with sufferers of mental illness are often in much need of support and understanding themselves. Events like these provide opportunities for Kookaburra Kids to just be kids. It's organisations like Kookaburra Kids that are driving positive change in our local communities."

Kookaburra Kids Foundation CEO, Pam Brown, said there is currently over 800 kids registered to the program.

"We are extremely grateful to SITA for their continued support in providing these school holiday activities for the kids. Additionally SITA's 3 year commitment to the program has helped facilitate the Foundation's continued growth and the ability to reach more kids living in a family with a mental illness.

We are now seeing on average six to seven new referrals of kids to the program weekly, in particular from Western Sydney. SITA's staff interaction at the activity days has also been beneficial in providing more positive role models and support for the kids", Mrs Brown said.

Now at capacity, the number of camps and school holiday activities currently provided must be increased to support the demand for the number of kids in need.

Kookaburra Kids Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation which provides support to children living in families affected by mental illness. The free weekend camps and school holiday activities for kids in primary and high school offers respite and a "break" from what is often a caring role. The age appropriate mental health education and early intervention programs assists in building resilience and coping skills. The organisation is funded through community grant programs and philanthropic giving.

For more information visit [www.kookaburrakids.org.au](http://www.kookaburrakids.org.au)

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