



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Energy**

Senator Jonathon Duniam  
Chair  
Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Duniam

On 23 October 2017 I appeared as a witness before the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee Estimates Hearing.

During the hearing Senator Rhiannon asked a number of questions in relation to the funding of a platypus conservation project. The first question in the Senators' line of questioning on this topic was

*"The other thing that I want to ask you about, staying with the platypus, are the comments from the Threatened Species Commissioner. It was in your answers—maybe that was when it came up last May—that San Diego Zoo put about half a million dollars into a platypus conservation project. Are you directly managing that, or does that come through Taronga Zoo? Can you give us a bit more information about how this project is being carried forward?"*

In response to the Senator's line of questioning I said

*".....The project you're referring to is a project captured in the Threatened Species Prospectus. It essentially involves San Diego Zoo providing money directly to Taronga Zoo as a project.....*

*.....It's a direct relationship between San Diego Zoo and Taronga Zoo subject to the regulatory arrangements that Mr Murphy oversees.....*

*.....Beyond that, it's a project that San Diego Zoo is investing in with Taronga Zoo."*

I wish to correct this answer. San Diego Zoo Global is in negotiations with the University of Melbourne to provide \$500,000 of funding to better understand the threats to platypus and five threatened fish species in south-eastern Australia. Taronga Zoo is not the recipient of the funding but is listed as a partner in the Threatened Species Prospectus project.

The remainder of my answer to the question, given at the Hearing, is correct. I apologise for the error in my answer and trust this further information will assist the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Sebastian Lang  
Acting Threatened Species Commissioner  
Biodiversity Conservation Division  
16 November 2017