

A solution to save the Tasmanian Devil | video, photos



THE Tasmanian Devil is dying. But, in the highest tops of the Hunter, more than 150 Tasmanian Devils live free from the disease.

Twenty years ago on July 2016, the Australian Tasmanian Devil was diagnosed with a life-threatening cancer called devil facial tumour disease (DFTD). This rare contagious cancer put the carnivorous marsupial and iconic Australian animal on the endangered animal list.



Today, almost the entire state of Tasmania is infected with 90 per cent of Tasmanian Devils gone to the disease.

And now, Devil Ark, Australia's largest conservation breeding program for the Tasmanian Devil, has a solution to save the soon-to-be-extinct animal.

The Barrington Tops facility is making a commitment to double its insurance population of healthy Tasmanian Devils by 2020, by going from 180 devils to 360, which directors believe will guarantee the species' survival.

For years, Devil Ark has been committed to maintaining a captive insurance population of devils far away from the disease, to ensure the species survives.

However, Devil Ark general manager Tim Faulkner said with no cure for DFTD and a second strain of the disease recently discovered, the risk of losing the Tasmanian Devil forever had increased.

"Devil Ark is keeping our promise to save the species," Mr Faulkner said.

"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."

Devil Ark holds 52 per cent of the mainland insurance population and aims to repopulate Tasmania once the disease has run its course. Mr Faulkner said doubling the facility would stop the extinction of another iconic species in Australia.

"If we don't act now the Tasmanian Devil could be gone forever," he said.

Construction to double Devil Ark will start in early 2017, but the facility needs to raise \$1.5 million to cover the expansion costs and is calling on Australians to help save the Tassie Devil.

American company, Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC) has already jumped on board and committed \$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," Mr Faulkner said.

Details: www.devilark.org.au