True blue
Terri fights Cape mine

James O’Loan

SHE was the American wife of one of Australia’s most famous exports but now Terri Irwin has officially declared herself true blue.

The environmentalist and wife of the late crocodile hunter Steve Irwin was yesterday cheered by thousands during a special citizenship ceremony at Australia Zoo’s Crocoseum.

With her children Bindi and Robert by her side, she affirmed her allegiance to Australia almost two decades after settling here.

Irwin thanked the crowd for helping her mark the zoo’s third Steve Irwin Day and spoke of her pride in becoming an official Aussie.

She later said the day was “the best day in a long time” and an appropriate point to take up her late husband’s conservation fight and remind Australians how lucky they are.

She held a press conference with politicians, environmental scientists and conservationists to push her campaign against a proposed bauxite mine that would encroach on the 135,000ha Steve Irwin Reserve on Cape York.

Irwin said she “absolutely” had enough money to continue fighting miner Cape Alumina through the courts and stop the mine.

After multiple court appearances Cape Alumina are conducting an environmental impact study that will make or break federal approval for the mine.

Irwin supporter and University of Queensland zoologist Professor Craig Franklin yesterday said scientists were finding new species in the area, which would disappear if mining occurred.

He said the case had “parallels” to Traveston Dam — rejected last week on environmental grounds.

“[Federal Environment Minister] Peter Garrett has declared his support for … species that are under threat,” Professor Franklin said.