

Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat

Operational Management Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This plan has been prepared by Taronga Conservation Society Australia (TCSA) to accompany a State Significant Development (SSD) Application for the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat at Taronga Zoo, Mosman.

The report provides an overview of the operational management for the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat.

1.2 Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat

The Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will comprise 5 Accommodation Pods, Guest Lodge and Dining Hall (Restaurant) surrounded by Australian Wildlife. The facility will link into the existing Taronga Centre and provide an expanded Australian Animal Habitat for Retreat guests and day visitors.

The Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will be located on the eastern side of the Zoo which has reasonably steep topography. The small-scale accommodation pods will be nestled into the hillside and wrap around a wildlife sanctuary. The accommodation pods vary in height from two to four storeys with the highest of the pods located at the bottom of the sanctuary, however by working with the topography, none of the accommodation pods will be higher than the first floor of the existing Taronga Centre, and they have been sensitively designed to blend in with the native environment including vertical gardens.

The Australian Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will be built in an area of the zoo which is predominately not open to the visiting public and currently has various back-of-house storage facilities. The development will open up additional areas of Australian flora and fauna that has not been open to the visiting public in the past and integrate within the surrounding exhibits.

The management of the Taronga Zoo (TZ) site includes both internal staff, suppliers and external contractors to manage the operations of the site. It is proposed a similar structure will be implemented with the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat, for example, waste collection and catering services are both contracted engagements.

1.3 Hours of operation

The Taronga Zoo site is a 24-hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year operation and the proposed Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will operate similarly.

Taronga Wildlife Retreat (accommodation)	24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
Restaurant (Dining Hall)	6am – 1am, 7 days per week
Guest Lodge (Lobby/Reception)	24 hours per day, 7 days per week
Guest Lodge (Bar Area)	6am – 1am, 7 days per week
Terrace	6am – 1am, 7 days per week

2 Guest Experience

The following section outlines the proposed visitor experience component of the overnight immersive experience.

2.1 Vision

A must do, highly immersive, interpretive-led, unique Australian wildlife experience with overnight facilities that provides an exceptional guest experience and powerfully influences guests' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability and wildlife conservation.

2.2 Guest Experience Objectives

Guests will:

- Interact with Australian animals in unique and engaging ways
- Understand the unique nature of the interconnectedness between Indigenous Australians and the environment
- Engage with sustainable ways of living that promote harmony and interconnectedness between wildlife and people
- Experience a unique accommodation package

2.3 Guest Experience Setting

The guest experience setting for the Taronga Wildlife Retreat will be a uniquely immersive experience where guests are surrounded by Australian wildlife, indigenous culture and sustainable practices that give guests an optimistic feeling of nature and people living in harmony.

The Retreat will provide for the needs of zoo visitors by allowing an accessible viewing point and for the needs of its guests by offering self-guided freedom of access to the experiences provided for guests by the sanctuary, multiple encounter time offerings to facilitate guests' access to these experiences before dinner and a number of guided experiences at varying times of the morning and evening to provide for flexible arrival and departure times.

The environment will be a relaxed, rustic, lush bush setting with picturesque harbour views and running water. Spaces within the retreat will encourage guests to relax, mingle and explore the interconnectedness between people and wildlife.

The unique point of difference for the Taronga Wildlife Retreat will be the capacity for guests to encounter a variety of Australian animals in a diversity of ways, including views from each room, the retreat sanctuary and encounters offered through the engaging and reflective stories of the Retreat's Indigenous staff.

Staff will be well-trained on the theme and the delivery of experiences to meet a pre-defined set of objectives and outcomes. The animal collection will support authentic and enriching stories of Taronga's work in the field of conservation, the intricate connections of Indigenous Australians to wildlife and the sustainability initiatives designed and implemented in the Retreat to combat the threatening processes of the collection of animals it supports and promotes.

Taronga is Cammeraijal country

This is Cammeraijal country of Eel Spirit, Shark and Stingray Dreaming. The ancestors have woven their lore into every rock, every tree and bush, every drop of water, and every vein of clay that runs through this country. Their spirit, still today, sings through this Saltwater place.

“Cammeraijal Country” by Tim Moriarty, Yanuywa tribe, Borooloola, Northern Territory, 2009

2.4 Guest Experience Packages

A full itinerary of immersive talks, tours and add-on experiences is planned to be offered as part of the Retreat. Guests will also have access to the Zoo, and the opportunity to pre-purchase additional behind-the-scenes experiences. It is proposed all meals, non-alcoholic beverages and tours would be included in the single price. Placement into timeslots for tours and encounters will occur at the time of booking to ensure guest experiences are organised and access is managed to these experiences.

Guests would begin their experience by checking-in at the Guest Lodge (Reception), located close to the current Taronga Function Centre entry to the Zoo. Guests arriving by car or taxi would be able to access the current vehicle turning circle for drop-off. Guests with cars are then able to park in the public bays across the road from the Taronga Centre, or in the Zoo’s main car park.

At check-in, guests would be welcomed by Retreat staff, which would act both as hosts and also be part of the overall interpretative experience during their stay. These staff would be involved in talks, tours and also hosting tables at dinner with guests.

After check-in, guests will make their way to their room where they will have glimpses into the main animal sanctuary from the corridors. Guests would then be free to relax in their room, wander the Zoo grounds (during opening hours), or explore the Sanctuary and adjacent exhibits among which the rooms are located at their leisure.

A set of pre-planned wildlife educational experiences will be included in the guest’s itinerary as follows:

- Early evening welcome drinks and up-close hands-on encounters with small reptiles, mammals and invertebrates
- Dinner in the Retreat restaurant, served on large communal tables with Zoo hosts at each table able to engage with guests on wildlife and conservation
- Post-dinner or pre-breakfast tour of the Zoo, viewing and learning about animals in their exhibits and local indigenous culture
- Evening or morning Sanctuary encounter tour

3 Operational Management Plan

The Taronga Wildlife Retreat is to be located within the Zoo's existing liquor license area and an application will be submitted to the NSW Office of Liquor and Gaming NSW for approval of any revision to the liquor licence. It is proposed that the current operating hours and liquor licensing arrangements would be reflected in the Guest Lodge, Restaurant and Terrace.

Guest Lodge

The area will provide guest check-in facilities and provide limited food and beverage service including tea, coffee, snacks and alcoholic beverages. The facility will be the central contact point for guests and will be staffed 24-hours/day.

The maximum capacity of the Guest Lodge is 100 persons.

Restaurant/Dining Room

The area will provide a comprehensive food and beverage service including buffet breakfast, a la carte lunch (when required), dinner, tea, coffee, snacks and alcoholic beverages.

The area will be staffed when open.

The maximum capacity of the restaurant is 100 persons.

Terrace

The area will provide a comprehensive food and beverage service including buffet breakfast, tea, coffee, canapés, snacks and alcoholic beverages. The terrace will provide an outdoor dining experience for Retreat guests whilst providing flexibility as a replacement for the Harbourview Garden Court facility, which will be demolished as part of the project.

The area will be staffed when open.

The maximum capacity of the terrace is 150 persons.

3.1 Safety and security

The Taronga Zoo site has 24 hour security. Security staff, access control and CCTV collectively provide for effective monitoring of the Taronga Zoo site and the security and safety of animals in our care, our staff and our guests. The following arrangements will be in place to support the Taronga Wildlife Retreat operations.

– Security staff:

- must hold a Security License (1A1C);
- provide 24 hour coverage of the Taronga Zoo site based on rosters
- monitor the Taronga access control system and attend specific locations in the event of intruder or fire alarms;
- secure access points to the Taronga Zoo site at the end of each day;
- undertake the role of Chief Warden outside Taronga Zoo opening hours as part of which they are responsible for coordinating any afterhours emergencies

– Access control: access to the site outside Taronga Zoo opening hours is controlled by Taronga's access control system. Entry and exit is permitted at designated points only and monitored by Taronga's security staff (refer above). Access to buildings within the Taronga Zoo site is also monitored and restricted from 19:00 to 06:00 when alarms are activated unless manually overridden by security staff in the event facilities are being used.

– Accommodation: access to the rooms will be via swipe card/room key.

– CCTV: there are a number of CCTV cameras on the Taronga Zoo site. Camera placement and the distribution and use of footage is undertaken in accordance with the NSW legislative framework for surveillance. A register of CCTV cameras is maintained and available on the Taronga Zoo intranet.

3.2 Compliance with Laws, Regulations and Standards

Compliance with laws, regulations and standards is an operational requirement of Taronga Zoo (TZ).

Functions within the Taronga Centre and in grounds catering are currently outsourced to an external caterer. Whilst Taronga will manage the Taronga Wildlife Retreat, it is proposed catering and functions will continue to be outsourced.

The following outlines the current management practices and requirements that are in place for the site and are imposed on the caterer. The same requirements are proposed to be applied to the Taronga Wildlife Retreat.

Liquor License and Serving

The Taronga Zoo Alcohol Policy outlines the requirements of TZ's Liquor Licence, legal obligations and House Policies and procedures for service and consumption of alcohol for Taronga Zoo functions.

Responsible Service of Alcohol

TCSA strives to provide a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for all events, special occasions and general visitation at TZ. The Taronga Zoo Alcohol Policy requires that:

- The Caterer must develop a House Policy for functions and alcohol service and submit it to TCSA for approval;
- All Staff who perform any task in relation to the service of alcoholic beverages must have current RSA Certification;
- The Caterer maintains a copy of the RSA Certification for all employees who have completed the course;
- Staff adhere to the conditions of TZ Liquor Licence;
- Staff only serve alcohol within the licensed areas;
- Staff only allow patrons to purchase a maximum of four drinks on any one visit to the bar;
- The sale of spirits is limited to one 30ml measure per drink;
- Any patrons who display disruptive or offensive behaviour should not be served alcohol and/or should be removed from TZ;
- Staff should organise taxis on behalf of patrons if requested; and
- The Caterer should develop and implement an Incident Report to record all incidents occurring at any of the alcohol service points within TZ. Incident Reports should include name(s) of the person(s) causing the incident, physical description of the person(s) and the reason for their removal.

3.3 Waste Management

TZ is a sensitive, eco-environment. TCSA is committed to ensuring that this environment is managed well so that it can be appreciated and visited for future generations. TZ has a number of policies which have been developed to protect our environment.

TCSA's Waste Management Policy provides the framework for all TCSA staff and contractors to promote the effective and environmentally-conscious waste management. The Policy highlights TCSA's commitment to the promotion of effective and environmentally-conscious waste management.

Waste management of the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will be in accordance with the Zoo's current waste management operating procedures. The waste collection at Taronga Zoo is outsourced to a third-party contractor who has a presence on site. It is the intention of Taronga to incorporate the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat into this contract. Taronga will work with the Waste Management Contractor to incorporate specific Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat requirements into the site management plan.

3.3.1 Waste Storage Areas

Waste storage will be kept to a minimum with daily collection of waste as per existing management practices. Central storage will be provided for operational waste associated with the accommodation. Recyclables and general waste will be separated and stored in colour coded bins with clear labels as per existing public waste collection points.

3.3.2 Waste Disposal

TCSA's environmental policies encourage waste minimisation and the principles of 'Avoid, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Disposal'.

Public Areas

- Consistent with TCSA's Environmental Sustainability Policy, the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat project will take active steps to reduce the waste generated through catering;
- Taronga will educate the public and retreat guests to correctly dispose of waste and minimise waste at TZ so to reduce the potential risk caused to animals through waste items such as straws and plastic bags;
- All staff will be trained to be proactive in depositing waste into correct waste bins; and
- Consistent with TCSA's Waste Management Plan, receptacles will be provided for the separation of waste in public areas.

Catering Services Areas

- All garbage from the catering areas will be available for garbage collection at the approved collections sites at the end of an open-day and/or the conclusion of an event for collection by TZ's waste contractor; and
 - It is proposed waste storage will be kept to a minimum with daily collection of waste as per existing management practices.
 - All staff should ensure that waste is separated into the correct waste containers. TZ provides waste containers for:
 - General Waste
 - Paper
 - Co-mingled recyclables
 - Bulk Waste
 - Animal Waste
 - Trade Waste
- | |
|--|
| Waste from food preparation |
| All paper from office areas |
| All waste that is not recovered and sent to landfill |

3.3.3 Cleaning

TCSA prides itself on clean, well presented properties that meet the expectations of our visitors.

- TCSA will develop, implement and maintain a Cleaning Schedule for all areas which will be updated on an annual basis;
- An external contractor will remove waste from the designated collection points within TZ.

3.4 Deliveries and Parking

Deliveries to the facility will primarily be in relation to food supplies and business operational requirements

The Taronga Zoo site has existing service delivery points which will be utilised for the operations of the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat. As part of the project the existing Taronga Centre turning circle will be realigned to provide increased operational efficiencies for guest drop off and deliveries.

Primary parking for guests will be within the existing multi-story car park.

Existing deliveries for servicing the animal exhibits will continue as per current management arrangements.

4 Life Sciences Operations

4.1 Resourcing

The Australian Fauna Precinct will have responsibility for the care of wildlife in the Australia Habitat.

A resourcing plan will be developed at least 12 months prior to the opening of the Australia Habitat by the Precinct Manager in consultation with the Manager Life Sciences Operations, Manager Human Resources and members of the Taronga Zoo Management Team.

The resourcing plan will be developed to ensure appropriate care for wildlife in the Australia Habitat and training and conditioning as required.

4.2 Animal welfare

As a conservation organisation with responsibility for the care of wildlife, Taronga ensures that at all times the needs, interests and welfare of wildlife in our care is a primary consideration. Taronga's specific commitments to animal welfare are detailed in the 'Taronga Animal Welfare Charter' which establishes a framework for the care of wildlife at TCSA Zoos including wildlife in the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat.

Taronga has a robust process for the reporting and review of any welfare concerns identified by staff or public. Specific actions to be taken may include:

- discussion of concerns with staff or Life Sciences management
- completion of an 'Animal Welfare Incident Report' by any member of staff that has a welfare concern for investigation and mitigation within 3 days; and
- where required, develop species specific criteria and processes to measure and monitor welfare; and
- daily monitoring of wildlife in the Australia Habitat by Australian Fauna Precinct Keepers and TCSA Veterinarians as part of daily operations.

4.3 Animal training

Animal training will be the responsibility of Australian Fauna Precinct Keepers. All animal training will be undertaken in accordance with the 'Animal Training and Conditioning Policy' and reviewed at least bi-annually to ensure:

- animal welfare; and
- the delivery of unique experiences that inspire guests to become champions for wildlife.

Appropriate allowances for animal training will be included in the resourcing plan for the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat.

4.4 Animal handling

Animal handling will be undertaken in accordance with the Animal Encounter Procedure Manual. The Taronga Australian Fauna Precinct Manager will be responsible for reviewing the Animal Encounter Procedure Manual bi-annually to ensure its ongoing relevance and suitability for the delivery of programs and guest experiences that rely on the Australia Habitat animal collection.

The Aboriginal and Community Programs Manager will also be responsible for ensuring that animal handling procedures are known and understood by program delivery staff.

4.5 Animal collection plan

The number of individuals of each species will be determined by the Australian Fauna Precinct Staff in consultation with the Curator in accordance with the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act* and in consultation with the Manager, Animal Population, Health and Welfare.

Animals will be sourced from the existing Australian Animal collection, wider Taronga and Taronga Western Plains Zoo collection or via acquisition if required.

4.6 Animal presentation and support facilities

The Taronga Wildlife Retreat and Australia Habitat includes a range of animal presentation and encounters. Preliminary design requirements have been established and will be finalised prior to the issuing of construction tender documentation.

Operating policies and procedures will be finalised at least 6 months prior to the opening of the Australia Habitat and Taronga Retreat and will be consistent with existing Operational procedures. Development and review of operating policies and procedures will be responsibility of the Precinct Manager, Australian Fauna Precinct and Manager, Life Sciences Operations.

5 Property, Infrastructure and Operations

5.1 Operational support services

Cleaning

The Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat will need to be cleaned on a regular basis. Elements of the building will have different requirements with a cleaning schedule and resourcing plan to be developed at least 6 months prior to the opening.

Security

Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat security will be integrated into existing Taronga Zoo security procedures. Specific operational requirements will be identified and document at least 6 months prior to the opening.

Access to certain parts of the building will be restricted and managed to the extent possible as part of Taronga's existing access control system.

5.2 Environmental sustainability

Taronga is committed to reducing the environmental footprint of our Zoos including via environmentally sustainable design, construction and operation of new facilities.

At least 6 months prior to the opening the Manager Environmental Sustainability will:

- set clear targets for resource use and efficiency of the new building; and
- develop workplace procedures to reduce the operational footprint of the Australia Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat.

Communication of workplace procedures will be integrated into the broader operational plan and change management process for the project.

5.3 Asset maintenance

Taronga Zoo is committed to minimising asset liabilities in terms of the costs for ongoing operation and maintenance. Asset maintenance will be the responsibility of the Manager Infrastructure with the goal of assets remaining productive at the lowest possible long term costs.

To meet operational requirements and minimise asset maintenance costs, Taronga will provide for the following in the design:

- materials based on ease of maintenance, affordability, safety and availability locally;
- elements (e.g. light fittings) that can be replaced safely and without significant interference with operations; and
- appropriate access panels and service vehicle access to the site to support ongoing maintenance.

5.4 Facilities maintenance

Facilities management will be the responsibility of the Manager Facilities.

The Facilities Manager will develop a facilities management plan at least 6 months prior to the opening. Support will be provided by the assigned Capital Works Project Manager and Operations Manager, as required. The facilities management plan will include the following items:

- emergency access points;
- access to undertake maintenance;
- stock and delivery access;
- waste management;
- garbage collection;
- storage;
- maintenance and service arrangements

5.5 Horticulture management

The operational management and maintenance of plants in and around the perimeter of the site will be the responsibility of the Horticulture Team in conjunction with the Australian Fauna Keeping staff. Specific requirements for horticulture management are listed below:

- soil and plants to be supplied only from established suppliers;
- maintenance weeding will be undertaken regularly (at least annually) to prevent re-establishment of weed species; and
- annual assessment of species will be completed to identify plants in poor health. Where possible, seeds may be collected and grown as a replacement resource.