Sydney Zoo: Animal Welfare Policy

The following animal welfare policy is a draft statement of principles. It will be refined over time as Sydney Zoo procures its animals and works with our animal welfare partners to develop specific procedures and processes for each species and enclosure.

Sydney Zoo accepts the agreed international definition of animal welfare from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE):

**Animal welfare means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal is in a good state of welfare if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Animal welfare refers to the state of the animal; the treatment an animal receives is covered by other terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment.**

As an educational and conservation oriented business with responsibility for the care of animals, Sydney Zoo will ensure that at all times the needs, interests and welfare of our animals is our primary consideration. Sydney Zoo believes that good animal welfare is essential to providing visitors with a rewarding and fun experience, and hence is essential for the long-term viability of our business.

Sydney Zoo’s commitment to animal welfare is to provide respect and the best care for our animals and strive to be advocate and an authority on animal welfare.

Sydney Zoo is committed to the health safety and well-being of the animals. Sydney Zoo will understand and consider each animal’s behavioural and physiological needs to design habitats that reproduce the animal’s natural environment.

Sydney Zoo will ensure that our animals have ample space, and shelter by providing habitats that meet or exceed legislative requirements, and:

1. are secure;
2. are safe and shelters them from the weather;
3. minimise exposure to fear and distress,
4. allow each animal an opportunity to escape aggression from compatriots;
5. provide an enriched environment to allow for environmental stimuli and fulfilment;
6. are checked daily, and are clean and hygienic;

To ensure our animals have appropriate nutrition and drinking water, Sydney Zoo will:

1. provide food and water of the highest quality and hygiene standards, with special attention to individual needs and circumstances;
2. Provide diets for each animal that are developed and maintained under the supervision of a veterinarian and based upon the expected diets in the wild;
3. provide food and water in ways that not only satisfy health needs but provide opportunity for behavioural enrichment as well;
4. maintain accurate records on the diets provided
5. monitor the weight and health condition of individual animals;
6. maintain high standards of hygienic food preparation, handling and storage.

To prevent pain and disease, Sydney Zoo will:

1. deliver a leading veterinary care program that meets current international standards for zoo and wildlife health care and understands and adapts to needs of each species and animals biology;
2. maintain data on the status, health and wellbeing of all our animals over time;
3. maintain preventative health care programs,
4. ensure effective quarantine protocols for all incoming animals
5. ensure staff understand and limit the risks of disease incursion from all potential vectors;
6. ensure that suffering is minimised in the event of terminal illness or disease.

To bring these policies into effect, Sydney Zoo will ensure that our staff have the resources, training, skills and experience necessary to their roles and responsibilities, and maintain staffing levels that enable our programs to be delivered effectively, including:

1. maintaining the highest professional standards of our curatorial staff and support and encourage staff to obtain qualifications in relevant disciplines;
2. ensuring staff awareness and understanding of Sydney Zoo’s policies, procedures and reporting processes, and training relating to animal health;
Protecting the Welfare of our Animals

Sydney Zoo’s commitment to animal welfare is paramount - our core focus will be to provide exceptional care for our animals and strive to be known as an animal welfare advocate in Australia. Sydney Zoo aims to be at the forefront of the modern zoo paradigm - exemplary animal welfare standards are the core of our operating ethos.

Our number one priority is to ensure that at all times, the needs, interests and welfare of the animals is our primary consideration. Sydney Zoo has developed a comprehensive Animal Welfare Policy that will be overseen by the Zoo’s General Manager - Life Sciences and reported to the Company’s Board of Directors. The General Manager - Life Sciences has extensive experience housing endangered animals, marine mammals and Australian marsupials at the Sydney Aquarium, Wildlife World and other facilities internationally. Our senior staff are well regarded by the regulators of the industry, they are actively involved in industry associations and have been involved in the development of animal exhibition standards.

Sydney Zoo intends to operate on ‘gold standard’ basis – with exceptional exhibition quality and animal husbandry practices. We will employ a multifaceted approach to animal welfare to ensure we fulfil all of the animal’s needs in a number of ways, this approach is outlined below.

- Providing high quality homes, food & balanced diet, encouraging natural foraging behaviour
- Extensive veterinary facilities
- Social interaction & breeding programs

Providing high quality homes, food & veterinary care for our animals
- We will provide a high quality, balanced diet with food delivered in a way to promote natural foraging behaviour and at different times to reduce predictability.
- Animal shelters will be of a high standard.
- We will have extensive veterinary capabilities in-house to ensure fast response and treatment of sick animals.

Social interaction & breeding programs
- A number of exhibits will feature a range of different species to replicate more complex interspecies interactions.
- There will be multiple numbers of each species, ensuring all animals have appropriate companionship. Our expert zoo keepers will gradually develop social grouping to reduce the potential for conflict among the animals.
- Sydney Zoo will aim to make a contribution to reducing endangered species by participating in breeding programs. Our high capacity facility will feature significant enclosure space, which is ideal for breeding programs.
Protecting the Welfare of our Animals

Creating the best environment possible
- Sydney Zoo is committed to providing an environment that focuses on the well-being of the animals and provides similar surrounds to their native habitat. The internal exhibit design will replicate environments and environmental complexity of the animal’s natural habitat to the greatest extent possible.
- The proposed exhibit design features will exceed the relevant standards under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act. The designed areas are on average over twice the minimum requirements.
- The Zoo design will feature large open spaces, with moating and low fences.
  - The natural behaviours of all animals will be closely monitored – our zoo keepers will seek to encourage this natural behaviour by creating complex and interesting habitats for the animals.

There have been significant changes in the design and operation of modern zoos. Visitors want to see animals behaving naturally and have the opportunity to appreciate them in their environmental context, and so modern Zoos seek to provide this. Modern zoos demonstrate a much stronger commitment to ensuring the welfare of animals, with larger enclosures, habitat replication, environmental complexity, and husbandry methods that promote natural feeding behaviours.

Where will the animals come from?

All mammals, endangered species and exotic animals will be sourced from other existing facilities including zoos or wildlife parks and will not be captured from the wild. Some fish may be humanely captured from local waterways.

Sydney Zoo is currently investigating partnerships with reputable organisations that are pursuing breeding efforts overseas to ensure the survival of critically endangered species.

Legal protections for animals in zoos

Sydney Zoo will be required to comply with laws and standards to ensure the protection of all animals. This legislative framework has been developed in conjunction with industry associations and is regulated by the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Exhibited Animals. Sydney Zoo is required to comply with these laws in order to maintain its licence to operate - failure to comply can result in closure of the facility.

Sydney Zoo will exceed the following relevant standards:
1. Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986
2. General Standards for Exhibiting Animals in New South Wales
3. Policy on Exhibiting Primates in New South Wales
4. Standards for Exhibiting Australian Mammals in New South Wales
5. Standards for Exhibiting Carnivores in New South Wales

The standards cover all aspects of transport, settlement, housing, spatial requirements, exhibit furniture, off exhibit rotation, diet and husbandry, and animal interaction procedures. They also include minimum corporate governance standards with respect to animal welfare and keeper training.

For more information visit www.talksydneyzoo.com

For enquiries please contact:
(02) 9956 6962
feedbacksydneyzoo@jbaurban.com.au