



MARU ANIMAL WELFARE STATEMENT

www.marukoalapark.com.au

The welfare of animals both in the wild and in human care is a topic that we are pleased to see more and more people taking an interest in and being passionate about as that passion can drive wildlife conservation and awareness. The aim of having wildlife in our care at Maru is to foster an understanding and appreciation of these animals by providing people with educational messages and conservation information when they visit to see them. All of the animals seen by visitors at Maru have been bred and born in our or another animal park, zoo or sanctuary and have not come directly from the wild.

We are committed to providing high levels of animal care and welfare by staying informed of continually evolving current best practises and only having appropriately trained and experienced staff caring for the animals. We use knowledge of how the animals live in the wild to provide care at Maru including appropriate habitats, nutrition, social structures, experiences and freedom of choice to allow the animals to show and carry our natural behaviours.

We are proud to be an accredited member of the Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA) which is the peak body for all zoos, animal parks, sanctuaries and aquariums in Australasia. We use the science-based ZAA model of assessing the welfare of animals in our care using the Five Domains of animal welfare; nutrition, environment, physical health and behaviour leading to overall mental health domain. This goes above and beyond the state government wildlife licensing requirements as it looks at the mental and overall welfare of the animals and not just their physical and dietary needs. We are inspected and assessed under this model every three years by ZAA to maintain our accreditation and ensure that our practises and care leave our animals in a positive welfare state.

MARU WILDLIFE SHELTER

We run a Wildlife Shelter at Maru to rescue and rehabilitate injured, sick and orphaned wildlife for their care and hopeful return to the wild. The Wildlife Shelter hospital area and wildlife are in a quarantined area not accessed or seen by visitors at all and this is to ensure the best possible care of these animals by minimising human contact.

Appropriately trained staff provide care for the wildlife under rehabilitation and this often involves additional voluntary around the clock 24 hour regular feeding and care. Wildlife are checked and assessed by local veterinarians and if it is the vets assessment that the animal cannot be rehabilitated and survive back in the wild, then the animal will be humanely put to sleep by the vets. At no time are any rescued wildlife ever kept by Maru to go out into public areas for visitors to see. These are wild born animals and the aim is to return them back to the place where they were found if possible.



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ANIMAL VISITOR INTERACTIONS

Maru offers animal visitor interactions as the connection made between the visitor and animal during the experience gives opportunity to provide education about the species and inspire action towards its conservation.

For all animal interactions we will ensure the following:

- Only appropriately conditioned and suitable species and individuals will be used
- We will treat the animal with respect and dignity at all times
- Will not compel the animal to perform unnatural behaviours or make unnecessary or unreasonable demands on the animal
- Only trained and experienced staff will oversee interaction experiences
- Experiences are created and offered only after taking into account all of the animals welfare concerns including nutrition and any food offered during an experience will be accounted for as part of its daily diet and not be its only source of food
- Walk through open areas such as the macropod habitat will have refuge areas the animal can choose to retreat to away from visitor interaction and staff supervision on busy days to ensure the welfare of the animals
- All walk-through areas will display signage informing visitors about how to appropriately and safely interact with the animals
- In all visitor interaction settings the aim is to allow the individual freedom of choice about engagement with visitors and the individual will be removed from the area by the park keepers as soon as it shows any signs of not wanting to participate or stress and will then be rested before being offered interactions again
- Current best practise guidelines will be followed for deciding how long each interaction goes for and appropriate rest time and days between interactions
- All areas of the health and safety of the animal, visitor and staff will be considered and continually monitored and assessed and improvements made as appropriate
- The main focus of any animal interaction offered will be providing educational information about the individual animal being seen and the status and conservation of the species and their habitat in the wild and inspiring any call to action that will support that ongoing conservation
- Any photographs taken should depict the animal in a natural position and state and holding or touching of the animal for the photo will be avoided, in the aim of passing on clear messaging to others about responsible interactions with wildlife

In recognition of our continually evolving understanding of animal welfare Maru will aim over the next two years to move away from shorter length animal visitor interactions where the animal is taken to the visitor and instead promote longer more in-depth experiences where the visitor is taken to the animals habitat and a greater depth of information is provided. This will be accompanied by clear messaging and education with the focus of the interaction being about the species and its conservation and not about touching the animals or getting a photo.

