

Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA) position on essential workers in relation to animal welfare

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The Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia is asking the Australian State and Territory Governments to officially recognise those workers in roles related to animal care and welfare as essential services during the COVID-19 response.

Whilst some people can work from home, that's simply not possible for those who have animals relying on them for food, veterinary care, environment maintenance and enrichment.

ZAA-accredited zoos and aquariums have gone to great lengths to ensure their teams continue to work to provide high standards of animal care and that risks can be managed to protect the health of those team members.

The sector always has a strong focus on biosecurity and, with the onset of the virus in Australia, ZAA-accredited zoos and aquariums are now working to their business' risk management plan for COVID-19 to ensure they follow safe practice for those still working on site.

Now they need government assurance that even with further restrictions, those essential workers will continue to be allowed to come to site and maintain a high standard of animal welfare.

ZAA would consider such roles to include:

- Keepers and other workers providing direct animal care and enrichment
- Animal food teams (including food preparation, collection and equipment)
- Animal food suppliers and workers managing supply chains
- Management staff and business owners
- Veterinarians, vet nurses, lab technicians/diagnostics, health records and other animal health roles
- Maintenance workers, horticulturists and other roles maintaining animal habitats and necessary equipment
- Sanitary workers maintaining hygienic spaces for human and animal health
- Security staff
- Other staff seconded to perform animal care tasks