

Kangaroo Walkabout: Protocols and Messaging

Mission in Action

When guests visit the Kangaroo Walkabout, they will:

Feel:	Safe while visiting our parks
	A sense of belonging - developing a sense of community
	An emotional connection and empathy for wildlife
Learn:	The stories of individual animals in our care (e.g., name, age, personality, etc.)
	Excellent animal wellbeing is a top priority
Act:	Connect with, and appreciate nature – be a respectful wildlife observer

We will meet these outcomes by:

- Welcoming guests to the Kangaroo Walkabout (**Belonging**) and setting up expectations using positive language, so guests know what to expect during their visit and what is expected of them (**Safe and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Keeping watch throughout the habitat to ensure guests are behaving appropriately and the kangaroos are comfortable (**Safety and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Learning about the guests through observation and asking them questions. Sharing stories of our animals that are likely to be relevant or of interest to them (**Belonging and Empathy**).
- Observe that guests are utilizing the double-door vestibule system correctly – only one vestibule door should be open at a time. You do not need to open and close these doors for the guests, unless the area is overly crowded, and you need to limit the number of guests entering the space (**Safe**).
- Thank the guests for visiting and for respecting the kangaroos and their habitat (**Belonging and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).

Meeting these outcomes supports our mission: **Empowering People. Saving Wildlife.**

Hours of Operation

Intended hours of operation are below and are subject to change.

Australia Contact Areas								
	Jan 5-31	Feb	Mar	Apr	May 1-22	May 23-31	Jun	Jul
Aviary Hours	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-6:00	10:00-6:00	10:00-6:00
Kangaroo Hours	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-6:00	10:00-6:00	10:00-6:00

	Aug 1-16	Aug 17-31	Sep	Oct	Boo Dates:	Nov 1-19	Nov 20-30	Dec
Aviary Hours	10:00-6:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	12:00-4:00	12:00-4:00
Kangaroo Hours	10:00-6:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	12:00-4:00	12:00-4:00

Procedures, Policies and Protocols

General Protocols:

- Permitted items: strollers, wheelchairs, and other mobility devices
- Items **not** permitted for animal wellbeing: open food or drinks; open umbrellas
- Touching the kangaroos is not permitted. (See more information under Animal Wellbeing.)
- Respectful wildlife viewing should be demonstrated by walking and avoiding loud noises.
- Remain on the pathway.

Protocols for Education Volunteers and Staff:

- 2 Education volunteers or interpreters are required to open the Walkabout, to ensure the safety of our animals and guests.
- ZooAides should not be the only team members present in the Walkabout.
- Touching the kangaroos is not permitted.
- Opening shift:
 - Bring Kangaroo Walkabout radio, clicker, water cooler (when applicable), and bag from the Education Building
 - Remove the bin, broom, and dustpan from the vestibule
- Radio should remain on channel 8. If assistance is needed regarding the animals, call the Australia Animal Care Team on channel 2, then switch back to channel 8.
- Bags and other team members' items should be placed in the bin under the bench
- Water bottles should remain with team members
- Sweep up animal droppings or trash from the public pathway as needed using the broom and dustpan
- If a kangaroo is on or near the path, a team member should be in the area. Ask guests to give the kangaroo plenty of space as they pass. If a kangaroo is completely blocking the path and guests cannot pass, call Australia Animal Care. Do not attempt to move the animal yourself.
- Closing shift:
 - Clear the area of guests and remain until Animal Care locks the doors
 - Place the bin, broom, and dustpan in the vestibule
 - Return Kangaroo Walkabout radio, clicker, water cooler (when applicable), and bag to the Education Building

Cold Weather Policy

- For the wellbeing of our team members, the Kangaroo Walkabout will not be open if the temperature is below 40 degrees.
- Closures of the Walkabout will be communicated on the Visitor Engagement Portal

Hot Weather Policy:

- The Walkabout will remain open during hot weather with the following accommodations:
 - Fan mounted in the Walkabout
 - Portable personal fans available in the Education Building
 - Water cooler for hydration
 - Shade
- If these accommodations do not meet your needs, or you have health concerns regarding the heat, please contact us to cancel your shift as early as possible

Emergency Weather Response:

If potentially dangerous weather conditions are imminent, a Level 2 weather emergency will be announced on all radio channels as a Security Alert, and the Kangaroo Walkabout will close until the alert is cleared. Australia Animal Care staff will close and lock the Walkabout.

ZooAides:

- For thunder and lightning: seek shelter inside the Nocturnal Building or return to the Education Building
- For tornadoes or severe weather: immediately seek shelter in the Nocturnal Building bathrooms
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3420 to let the ZooAide Supervisor know your location.

Adults (volunteers or interpreters):

- Clear the walkabout of guests and encourage them to seek shelter, if appropriate.
- Stay until Animal Care staff has locked the habitat.
- Seek shelter inside the Nocturnal Building for thunder and lightning, or the Nocturnal Building bathrooms for tornadoes or severe weather.
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3483 (or radio on channel 8) to alert the Daily Contact of your location and the team members who are with you.

Emergency Response: Refer to Safety and Security Training

Service Animal Policy:

- Service animals are permitted anywhere that guests have access to in the Kangaroo Walkabout.
- If you notice a concerning response from the kangaroos, contact the Australia Animal Care staff.

Volunteer and Staff Roles

Education Team Members:

- **All Team Members:**
 - Engage and educate guests by introducing the animals and providing interpretive messaging. Let the moment guide the message and gauge the interest of the guest.
 - Demonstrate and encourage guests how to be a respectful wildlife observer by walking, using a quiet voice, and giving the animals plenty of space.
 - Encourage guests to be respectful of the habitat by storing food and drink out of sight and disposing of trash and recyclables appropriately.
- **Greeter:**
 - Monitor the entrance doors to ensure guests are utilizing the double-door system for animal safety. You do not need to operate the doors for guests.
 - Can position themselves anywhere along the first third of the path based on the frequency of guests, shade availability, and kangaroo location.
 - Welcome guests and set positive expectations of staying on the pathway and remaining calm.
- **Floater:**
 - Can position themselves anywhere along the path based on the frequency of guests, shade availability, and kangaroo location.
 - Monitor the exit door to ensure animal safety.
 - Thank the guests for visiting and, when appropriate, provide information about the Kangaroo Experience (available on our website)

Animal Care Team Members:

- Unlock and lock the Kangaroo Walkabout each day
 - The contact area will be unlocked at the designated opening time. Education team members should only call the animal care team if the doors haven't been unlocked at the designated time.
- Monitor and enforce expectations for animal and human safety

Team Member Training

Education Team Members: An online training session is required yearly, and new volunteers complete 3 trainee shifts in the area. The operations protocol is discussed in detail during training.

Animal Care Team Members: The Australia Region keepers receive training on all aspects of the Kangaroo Walkabout, husbandry of animals, and animal wellbeing. Keepers receive an initial training period upon hire and utilize department Keeper Training check-off sheets to ensure they have full knowledge of the Walkabout and the animals that are in this area.

Animal Engagement and Wellbeing

If a member of the Australia Animal Care Team is in the Walkabout, they may allow guests to touch a kangaroo that is on the pathway. Animal Care finds these opportunities to be engaging and enriching for the kangaroos, but only when they have the choice to participate. They will base this decision on behavior and cues from individual animals. Education team members will not touch kangaroos while guests are present; this opportunity is for guests only.

Contact with the kangaroos by Education staff and volunteers is prohibited unless an Australia Animal Care Team member has given explicit permission and is supervising the interaction, and no guests are in the Walkabout. Any touching outside of this situation will be grounds for reprimand.

The kangaroos always have access to an area where they can choose to spend time away from the guests, including their barn. When kangaroos choose to be in the barn, share with guests that though it might be disappointing not to see them, it is an essential part of their wellbeing that they can choose where to spend their time.

Guest Engagement Examples

Training as Part of Animal Care

Mission-based Outcome: Learn that the CZFP is a trusted authority on animal wellbeing.

- Training is a key part of animal care here at the Zoo! Our Animal Care staff works closely with animals to train them on a variety of behaviors, enabling us to provide the best care possible. Kangaroos are target-trained to touch their noses to an orange ball in exchange for a treat—usually oats. This training allows Animal Care staff to station kangaroos on a scale for routine weights, check their pouches, and perform other important health procedures.
 - Turning medical care into a positive experience reduces stress for both the animals and the staff, allowing for better overall wellbeing.

Choice and Control

Mission-based Outcome: Learn that excellent animal wellbeing is a top priority.

- Animals can roam freely throughout the habitat, but people must stay on the path. Kangaroos choose whether to interact with other kangaroos— or guests! They can choose where and with whom to spend their time. This ability to exercise choice and control is an important part of animal wellbeing at the zoo.
 - Think of it like when you have guests over at your house. Do you want everyone headed straight to your bedroom to hang out? That might be okay with some close friends, but our rooms are also places we might go to be alone and rest. We are in their habitat and want the kangaroos to be as comfortable as possible.
 - Like people, some of the kangaroos are more social and even have certain individuals that they like to hang out with (point out any kangaroos that tend to be together) but they also like to have plenty of space to be by themselves if they choose.