

Youth at the Zoo (YATZ)

Welcome to the Youth at the Zoo (YATZ) Program!

Taronga's Vision

'Securing a Shared Future for Wildlife and People'

Our role

Our role in conservation is to create direct and positive connections between wildlife and people. Through our efforts we protect endangered species, increase understanding of wildlife and inspire community action.

Central to Taronga's role are the strategic pillars of *Wildlife* and *People*.

Wildlife

We breed, manage and care for wildlife, and undertake research, to deliver tangible conservation outcomes.

Communities

We create unique, dynamic and engaging learning experiences to positively influence and change behaviours.



Habitats

We work directly with organisations that restore, reserve and preserve habitat areas.

YATZ Mission Statement:

"Through working together we will help others to take positive actions for the conservation of wildlife and their environments."

Taronga Zoo's YATZ program is for young people aged 13 to 19 years old who love animals and wildlife. YATZ is designed to give young people the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience of how zoos work, with a focus on the importance of animal conservation.

Please note that there is very limited interaction with, and no handling of, Taronga Zoo's animals.

Each YATZ member can expect to be rostered on 2-3 days each school holiday period. During school term there are opportunities for members to be rostered on for special events, however these events do not run on a regular schedule.

YATZ General Information Pack as @ April 2023

Provided below is a general outline of what can be expected as a YATZ member as well as your responsibilities while involved in the program.

Applications

Applications to become a YATZ occur twice a year – typically May and November. You MUST be on our 'Expression of Interest' list to receive the application invite in early May and/or early November.

We cannot contact you if you have not added your name to the Expression of Interest list via the link <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll/ap?ap=1923229381>

or found on our website at <https://taronga.org.au/work-at-taronga/youth-at-the-zoo>

The Application process occurs in four stages....

1. Once invited by email to apply, potential members must fill in an online profile in our database by a due date, typically one week after the email invite is sent out.
2. Potential members who have completed Step 1 are invited to submit a 2min application video / or animal fact infographic and their profile photo via Google Classrooms. All instructions are provided at this time. This upload needs to occur by the deadline, again typically one week after the email regarding the video is sent.
3. Members who have completed all steps to this date are invited to pay their membership fees. This is \$350 (as @ 11/10/2021) and covers your insurance, uniforms and an ID badge. Instructions on how to pay will be provided at the time of this payment invite going out.
4. Potential Members who have uploaded their Google classroom items are invited to pay for membership. All instructions are given to assist the applicants to choose their date and the dates are advised to potential members in this step so they might be prepared and to avoid disappointment. Again, a week is typically given to complete this step.
5. New members attend Induction and begin their YATZ Journey!!

Induction Day

As a new member, all YATZ are required to attend Induction before commencing their volunteering. Induction provides new members the opportunity to meet the YATZ co-ordinator, other new and existing members and become familiar with Taronga Zoo. Attendance is compulsory to ensure all new members understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction dates are listed at the time of application so that you might be better placed to save the date or discuss options with your family. If you think you cannot attend an Induction date – it might be best to consider waiting to apply until the next intake or contacting us to discuss options because you may not start any YATZ activities without attending Induction.



Activities available for YATZ members



YATZ and Families should be aware of :

Training Sessions

Certain activities in YATZ require or offer further training. Please see the descriptions of activities for more information on this. Training periods will be explained further at Induction.

Onsite and Online – since COVID many YATZ activities have included an online or digital component. We may have training workshops or guest speakers join us from all over the world with online capacity whereas onsite implies activities are held here at the zoo in person and face to face.

Activities for NEW YATZ – offered onsite and online

We try to schedule a couple of dates each holiday period that are just for new members and sometimes the YATZ Leaders. In the past they have included team Scavenger Hunts, Dreaming Creation Tours with our elder Uncle Les, or an excursion just for new members. You will be considered 'new' for only 6 months until the next Intake of YATZ so it is advised to try to grab one New YATZ activity so you can have fun with others from your Intake and get to know your Leaders.

YATZeD

YATZeD are educational themed workshops, lead by fellow YATZ, usually Leaders, where members can acquire new skills and knowledge. Examples of past YATZeD workshop topics include Animal Photography, Science Day, Mammal Day and Animal Philosophy. YATZ can expect to learn via classroom presentations and hands on experiences. YATZeD generally run for two hours between the hours of 10:00am to 3:00pm, but some dates will vary. Numbers are limited to around 30 YATZ per workshop to enhance learning.



Zoo Adventures – onsite only

Zoo Adventures is a Taronga Zoo school holiday program for children aged 5-10. YATZ members have the opportunity to assist in running this program. YATZ members help to supervise the children, run craft activities and guide the Zoo Adventure children through the zoo. Working on Zoo Adventures offers YATZ the opportunity to gain experience working with children. Zoo Adventures runs throughout the holidays from at 8:30am until 3:30pm. YATZ will be with the Zoo Adventures team for a morning or afternoon shift.



Horticulture Jobs – onsite only

YATZ are often asked to help with general gardening, weeding and mulching tasks around the grounds and are supervised by the Horticulture Teams for these tasks. They are as required and not regular.



Campaigns & Activations

Each year Taronga Zoo supports national and international campaigns such as 'They're Calling on You', 'Fish for Good' and 'Wildlife Witness'. These campaigns help raise awareness of serious conservation issues and YATZ members can support this work by raising public awareness. By working on

campaigns YATZ gain knowledge of important local and global issues and gain skills in interacting with people from different ages and backgrounds as well as public speaking.



Special Events – onsite or online

YATZ members have the opportunity to be rostered on for fundraising events, planting/ YATZ General Information Pack as @ April 2023

bush regeneration days, social events and other activities that may arise, often within Zoo grounds and sometimes led by external partners of Taronga Zoo. These events are extra and not regular. YATZ need to discuss each event as it arises for the suitability to their own circumstances and that of their families.



Camps – “offsite” in person

In the past, YATZ have travelled to Dubbo NSW, Chiltern VIC, Bellingen NSW and Nepal. These camps are offered to all YATZ and incur an additional fee to offset transport, accommodation, food and other costs. Camps are great opportunities for YATZ to develop their relationships with one another and gain knowledge, skills and positive attitudes toward conservation.

Social Nights - onsite

YATZ holds two social nights per year for members to get to know each other. At these events, YATZ hear from a wide range of guest speakers from within the zoo and from other organisations. An award ceremony at each event rewards YATZ for their hard work and enthusiasm in the program, the biggest one being in July each year where we present the Boral YATZ Achiever Award.

Guest Experience Operations (after 6 months and training) - onsite

Once YATZ have been in the program for 6 months and receive training, YATZ members are offered the opportunity to volunteer in Guest Experience Operations. YATZ can expect to work at the entrance section of the zoo, welcoming and greeting visitors, handing out maps, and providing information and advice.

Volunteering in this area teaches YATZ vital skills for interacting with the public.



Section (after 12 months and training) - onsite

Section enables members to gain hands on experience working alongside our zookeepers in different sections/divisions throughout the zoo. You are required to be in the YATZ program for at least 12 months before applying for section shifts. Before commencing Section, YATZ members are required to undertake Section Training to learn what is required of them while working alongside the keepers. Section is held depending on Zoo Keepers needs throughout the school holidays. Places on Section are very limited due to its popularity and members should not expect to be placed on Section every school holidays.

There are different sections you can be allocated on the day of your shift:

- Backyard to Bush
- Bird Show
- Australian Fauna
- Primates and Ungulates
- Marine Mammals
- Reptiles
- Carnivores



Advanced Programs - onsite

'ZoonsnooZ' and 'the Retreat' and 'Keeper for a Day'

Taronga Zoo offers a school based overnight program- ZoonsnooZ, a school based program, an overnight stay open to the public. "Keeper for a Day" is a day program for young people interested in Zoo keeping as a career. The Retreat is Taronga's luxury hotel and YATZ assist with tours for guests in the animal space called The Sanctuary within The Retreat. To volunteer for these shifts YATZ members must be over 16 years of age and have completed additional training.

Leadership

The YATZ program could not operate without a core group of Leaders. These are members that have been in the program for at least one year, taken part in most activities and have completed a through application process. Our Leaders plan school holidays and timetables with your Coordinator, undertake specific Leaders training, will assist other members settle in and find areas of the Zoo, attend many of your shifts, mentor new members, hang out with and support members with special needs and hidden disabilities, and deliver many activities for and with you. They are a way to communicate with Coordinators and Staff and act as your representative in the Zoo. We hope you will get to know them at your Induction and in your first few shifts. Ask for one of them if you would like specific help.





How to sign up for Activities

The YATZ program uses an online Volunteer Management System called Volgistics. The YATZ coordinator will send out an email with a link to a VICNet webpage where YATZ members can roster themselves to or for particular days and activities they would like to volunteer for. For this reason, communication via email is critical to the running of the YATZ program. All YATZ members must check their emails regularly to ensure they do not miss roster deadlines.

Due to the large number of members and the limited number of days and activities available, YATZ members may not be able to sign up to all their requested/desired days and/or activities. However, care is taken to ensure equality and fairness between all YATZ members.

Some activities, such as YATZeX require the return of Permission Forms or other details, sometimes including a payment. If the deadline for date submission is missed then YATZ members will not be able to volunteer for that associated activity. There is a strict deadline in place due to the large number of YATZ members and the amount of time and effort taken to accommodate each member's roster requests.

Attending activities

YATZ members are required to attend all their self selected dates as in their VICNet Calendar and to arrive on time. The option to 'remove' yourself from pre-chosen shifts exist and will be explained to you at Induction. Unexplained Absences or lateness to your allocated volunteer day will be noted and if repeated on a number of occasion's discussion with the YATZ coordinator may occur regarding your commitment and suitability for the program.

The ability to 'remove' yourself from activities online is only possible 1 week before the shift. After this time, if YATZ members cannot attend a rostered activity due to sickness or unforeseen circumstances, a phone call or email to the YATZ coordinator is required to explain your absence.

Uniform

All YATZ are required to wear the supplied uniform while volunteering. The YATZ uniform consists of the YATZ t-shirt and jumper, identification badge, and shorts (to knee length) or long pants. YATZ members should wear a hat and shoes which are enclosed, comfortable and suitable for the work they will be doing while volunteering.

Communication

Regular communication is critical to the running of the YATZ program. YATZ members must be aware that they are responsible for regularly checking their emails and VICNet roster so they do not miss deadlines for membership renewal, rosters, events and other important happenings. Email is our most important and primary form of communications and it is compulsory for members to supply a regularly checked address.

YATZ and their parents have the option of becoming friends with 'Yatz Taronga' on Facebook and following us on Instagram. This will provide the opportunity for further communication as well as building relationships between YATZ members. The use of our social media page is voluntary and optional.

Behaviour

As a YATZ volunteer, members will regularly be seen by, and interact with, the public. As a YATZ member you are required to act in an appropriate manner at all times. Failure to act in appropriate manner while volunteering will result in a meeting with the YATZ coordinator and potential loss of membership.



As a volunteer you have a responsibility to:

- support Taronga's values, staff, animals, students and other volunteers;
- ensure your own safety and the safety of those around you;
- be respectful and courteous to visitors at all times;
- avoid religious, racial or political comments;
- wear your uniform and badge in accordance with policy;
- behave in accordance with the volunteer code of conduct and abide by Taronga's policies and procedures (integrity and honesty; respect for people; appreciation of the public interest; responsibility and accountability; fairness and impartiality; conscientiousness and efficiency; and compassion);
- be aware of safety requirements at all times, including sun and weather protection;
- maintain an up-to-date tetanus shot;
- not enter non-public areas without prior permission;
- enhance the experience of the visitors;
- contribute to a high level of care and respect for our animals;
- strive to inspire others about wildlife and its conservation; and
- enrich your own learning, experience and enjoyment.

Contact details

Email address: yatz@zoo.nsw.gov.au – Please use your full name in the Subject Line

Phone number: 9932 4289

Facebook: 'Yatz Taronga' and Insta @yatztaronga

Postal Address: YATZ Coordinator,
Kerry Staker (at the time of this edition)
Taronga Zoo,
PO Box 20,
Mosman NSW 2088



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