



Agency Information Guide

August 2020

Introduction

In accordance with section 20 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, ('the GIPA Act') Taronga publishes this Information Guide annually.

A copy of this Information Guide is provided to the Information and Privacy Commission and a copy is available on the Taronga website <http://www.taronga.org.au/>

Copies of this document are also available from the Taronga GIPA Information Officer by telephoning (02) 9978 4716 or by [emailing us](#).

Written inquiries regarding the GIPA Act should be directed to:

GIPA Information Officer
Corporate Services & Governance
Taronga Conservation Society Australia
PO Box 20
Mosman NSW 2088

Further information on the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* is available at the website of the Information and Privacy Commission <https://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/information-access>

Taronga Conservation Society Australia

Taronga Conservation Society Australia (Taronga) operates Taronga Zoo in Sydney and Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo. Taronga is a leader in the fields of conservation, research and environmental education.

Taronga is constituted under the *Zoological Parks Board Act 1973* as a statutory authority owned by the people of New South Wales (NSW) and administered by the Minister for Energy and Environment. Amended legislation in 1992 defined Taronga's responsibilities in education, conservation, research and recreation. A minor amendment to the Act was also undertaken in 2008 to formally recognise Taronga Conservation Society Australia as the official name, to better describe the work of the organisation.

Brief History

Taronga Zoo in Sydney was officially opened in October 1916, displaying animals brought from the Moore Park Zoo which was originally founded by the NSW Zoological Society in 1881.

The new Zoo was administered by the Taronga Zoological Park Trust consisting of 12 members acting in an honorary capacity, most of whom were Royal Zoological Society councillors. This was replaced in 1973 by the Zoological Parks Board of NSW, constituted under the *Zoological Parks Board Act 1973* and given defined responsibilities in education, conservation, research and recreation.

Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo opened in February 1977, fulfilling a need for additional space to breed large endangered species including rhinoceros.

The two Zoos complement each other in achieving Taronga's goals. Taronga also maintains a close association with other wildlife organisations including the International Rhino Foundation, of which Taronga is a founding Board member, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (in particular their Captive Breeding Specialist Group), the Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA), as well as universities and research organisations throughout Australia and overseas.

Both Taronga Zoo, Mosman, and Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo, are open to the public every day of the year.

Structure of Taronga

Taronga’s leadership structure is as follows:



Composition of the Board

Appointment to the Board is governed by Section 6 of the *Zoological Parks Board Act 1973*, which provides:

- 6.(1)** The Board shall consist of 10 members of whom:
- (a)** five are to be persons who have, in the opinion of the Minister, qualifications, knowledge, expertise or experience appropriate to the powers, authorities, duties and functions of the Board, and
 - (b)** one is to be a person who has, in the opinion of the Minister, expertise in zoology, veterinary science, animal welfare, or in research relating to any one or more of those fields, and

- (c) one is to be chosen by the Minister from a panel of 2 persons nominated by an organisation determined by the Minister, the principal activity of which is the voluntary provision of financial or other support to the zoological park in Sydney, and
- (d) one is to be chosen by the Minister from a panel of 2 persons nominated by an organisation determined by the Minister, the principal activity of which is the voluntary provision of financial or other support to the zoological park in Dubbo, and
- (e) one is to be chosen by the Minister from a panel of 2 persons nominated by the Mosman Municipal Council, and
- (f) one is to be a person chosen by the Minister from a panel of 2 persons nominated by Dubbo Council

Functions of Taronga

The main functions of Taronga are specified in Section 15 of the *Zoological Parks Board Act 1973* which provides as follows:

15 (1) (Taronga) may establish, maintain and control zoological parks for the following purposes:

- (a) carrying out research and breeding programs for the preservation of endangered species;
- (b) carrying out research programs for the conservation and management of other species;
- (c) conducting public education and awareness programs about species conservation and management;
- (d) displaying animals for educational, cultural and recreational purposes.

(2) (Taronga) may also maintain and control:

- (a) the zoological park established before the commencement of this Act on the land described in Schedules 3 and 4, under the name of "Taronga Zoological Park"; and
- (b) other zoological parks on land or premises vested in or held by the Board, whether or not those parks were established by the Board,

for the purposes referred to in this section.

(3) (Taronga):

- (a) may co-operate with, and provide funds and other assistance to, such scientific and other institutions, governments and other bodies and individuals as Taronga may determine in connection with species conservation and management and for other scientific and zoological purposes: and

- (b) may investigate and carry out research into:
 - (i) the design of, and equipment and procedures in zoological parks; and
 - (ii) the care and well-being of animals kept in zoological parks,whether or not those zoological parks are maintained and controlled by Taronga; and
 - (c) may provide educational services for the public, (whether in the nature of lectures, broadcasts, films, publications or otherwise) about species conservation and management, zoological parks and the biology of animals; and
 - (d) may provide and charge for such services in connection with zoological parks maintained and controlled by Taronga as Taronga may determine; and
 - (e) may make recommendations or reports to the Minister with respect to matters connected with the Board's powers, authorities, duties and functions or the administration of this Act.
- (4) The Minister may request the Board to make recommendations or reports to the Minister with respect to matters connected with Board's powers, authorities, duties and functions or the administration of this Act and the Board is to comply with any such request.
- (5) The Board may exercise and perform such other powers, authorities, duties and functions as may be conferred or imposed on the Board or under this or any other Act.

Taronga's Strategic Focus Areas

Taronga's strategic priorities and key objectives are defined in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and consist of the following:

1. **Conservation Outcomes** – *actively participate in wildlife conservation initiatives that ensure the long term security of wildlife in sustainable ecosystems and habitats*
2. **Wildlife in our Care** – *Be a leader in the care and presentation of wildlife, providing positive welfare, dignity and respect for all*
3. **Transformational Guest Experiences** – *Attract an increasing number of guests to our Zoos and inspire action through experiences that increase knowledge and change people's attitudes and behaviours*
4. **Excellence in Conservation Education** - *Increase participation and inspire action for the wild through innovative and authentic education programs*

5. **Engage and Influence** – Engage, grow and mobilise our members, supporters and networks to achieve positive outcomes for wildlife

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is in development.

Public Participation in Policy Formulation

Public participation in the formulation of policies of the Taronga Conservation Society Australia takes place as a result of the composition of Taronga's Board which includes representatives of the community, local government and volunteers. The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Taronga welcomes public comment and regularly conducts visitor feedback surveys as well as receives suggestions and feedback via Taronga volunteers who work directly with visitors. As well, the telephone switchboard staff on a daily basis assist with questions from the public. The Guest Services Division receives and responds to hundreds of letters every year most of which include suggestions from the public on how to improve our services. These all contribute to policy formulation or policy amendment.

Information held by Taronga

As an organisation committed to a shared future for people and wildlife including the promotion of positive community attitudes towards wildlife and the environment, Taronga holds, processes and produces a large amount of information, including publications which are available on our website - <https://taronga.org.au/about/publications>

Major categories of information are:

- Documents created by Taronga for public information about wildlife and conservation such as magazines, brochures, newsletters, scientific, technical and research material, maps and plans and documents relating to the internal administration of the agency.
- Documents provided to Taronga by members of the public, Government, agencies, businesses, community organisations including conservation partners and other third parties
- Information held in electronic, digital, visual and audio form, photographs, CDs, DVDs and audio recordings.

How to Access our Information

In accordance with the GIPA Act, Taronga provides public access to its information in various ways.

Open Access Information

Open access to information has been provided on our Taronga website (www.taronga.org.au). This includes information that Taronga is required to make publicly available under the GIPA Act such as:

- [Policy documents](#)
- Information released under the GIPA Act (the [GIPA Disclosure Log](#))
- The [register of contracts](#) valued at \$150,000 or more
- [Taronga's Annual Report](#)
- [This Information Guide](#)

Proactive release of information

Taronga proactively releases a wide range of information via its website. This includes information about:

- Animals including research and conservation programs Taronga is involved with. This includes providing open access to the Australian Shark Attack file, a database of shark encounters in Australia that is managed by Taronga, and links to other citizen science programs that also provide open access to information (e.g. Homes as Hollows resource managed by the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney).
- Visiting our Zoos
- Our education programs
- Volunteering at Taronga
- Our major capital programs
- Our history

Informal release of information

We also assist the public with informal requests via telephone, email and mail. Where appropriate, Taronga provides information on an informal basis to lessen the need for formal GIPA access applications.

Formal release of information

Information that is not already available via the Taronga website or if informal access has been refused, can be sought via a formal GIPA application. For information about formal GIPA applications, see the [Information and Privacy Commission](#) site or contact:

GIPA Information Officer
Taronga Conservation Society Australia
PO Box 20
Mosman NSW 2088

(02) 9978 4716.

Excluded Information

Taronga may be required to refuse access to information where there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. This can include information that:

- Is confidential
- Would breach privacy obligations
- Would undermine Taronga's competitive neutrality where it competes with other businesses
- Would prejudice any person's business, commercial, professional or financial interests
- That could jeopardise public safety, law enforcement or the fair trial of a person
- Would prejudice the effective exercise by Taronga of its functions

Taronga must not disclose certain categories of information noted in Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act, including information that:

- is subject to overriding secrecy laws
- relates to Cabinet deliberations or decisions,
- relates to Executive Council deliberations or decisions
- is subject to client legal privilege

Review of decision

If you are not happy with a decision made formally under the GIPA Act, you have rights of review both internally within Taronga and externally. Information about these rights will be provided in response to your formal application.

Contact us

For more information about accessing information, please contact:

GIPA Information Officer

Taronga Conservation Society Australia
PO Box 20
Mosman NSW 2088

(02) 9978 4716.

InformationManager@zoo.nsw.gov.au

Fees for making an access application under the GIPA Act 2009 to Taronga

The following application fees and charges apply to GIPA applications:

<u>Nature of Application</u>	<u>Application Fee</u>	<u>Processing Fee</u>
• Access to records by individuals about their personal affairs	• \$30	• \$30 per hour after the first 20 hours
• All other requests	• \$30	• \$30 per hour
• Internal Review	• \$40	• Nil

Discounts

Discounts of 50 per cent on processing charges (not application fee) may be available:

- For holders of a Pensioner Concession card issued by the Commonwealth
- For non-profit organisations
- For a full-time student
- In cases of financial hardship

Refunds

We may waive, reduce or refund any fee or charge payable under the GIPA Act.

Document review

This document was reviewed in August 2020 to reflect current operations and advice of the Information Commissioner received on 9 August 2019. Pending review by the Information Commissioner, it will be adopted and published on the Taronga website.



The document is next scheduled for review and submission to the Information Commissioner in August 2021.