

Taronga Conservation Society Australia
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ZOO AND WILDLIFE MEDICINE INTERNSHIPS

TARONGA ZOO

Taronga Conservation Society Australia

Taronga Conservation Society Australia (Taronga) is a NSW Government trading enterprise managed under the NSW Government Environment portfolio. It is governed by a 10 member Board of Directors – the Zoological Parks Board of NSW.

Taronga operates Taronga Zoo in Sydney and Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo, catering for local, interstate and international visitors. Taronga Zoo is a metropolitan zoo, on approximately 28 hectares of land overlooking Sydney Harbour and was first opened in 1916. It houses 4548 animals from 287 species including native and exotic mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.

Our Vision is “Securing a shared future for wildlife and people”. 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.

The Taronga Wildlife Hospital at Taronga Zoo and the Taronga Western Plains Zoo Wildlife Hospital are part of Taronga’s Welfare Conservation and Science Division. Other veterinary and scientific units that fall within this Division include the Behavioural Studies Unit, Wildlife Reproductive Centre, Australian Marine Mammals Research Centre and the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health.

Taronga Wildlife Hospital

The Taronga Wildlife Hospital (TWH) is responsible for the health of Taronga Zoo's animal collection. There is a strong emphasis on preventative medicine and animal welfare. The zoo’s veterinary team has a wealth of experience in all aspects of zoo, wildlife and conservation medicine, including reproductive management, nutrition, physical and chemical restraint and clinical medicine and pathology. An advanced level of veterinary care is maintained by continuous critical evaluation against current best practice in zoo and wild animal medicine and pathology.

TWH also accepts sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife for treatment, rehabilitation and release back to the wild where possible. A wide range of native wildlife including marine wildlife is admitted from the greater Sydney region and beyond. Advice and veterinary services are provided to wildlife conservation and recovery programs, internal and external Taronga approved research projects, marine animal stranding/rescue events, and animal confiscations. The TWH also provides consultancies to other zoos, fauna parks and aquaria, and quarantines animals coming into the collection from within Australia and overseas.

The TWH is a purpose built, modern, (including well equipped endoscopy, laparoscopy, digital radiography and ultrasonography) veterinary hospital and quarantine facility servicing Taronga Zoo. Situated on the perimeter of the zoo grounds, it encompasses a range of hospital housing for large and small animals, examination room, surgery, clinical pathology laboratory, quarantine facility (approved by the Australian Government for importation from overseas), necropsy room, pharmacy, office suite and staff amenities. A separate building provides hospital and rehabilitation wards and an examination room for native wild animals, approximately 900 of which are admitted each year.

Taronga Zoo employs four clinical veterinarians, a veterinary pathologist, a laboratory manager, a nutritionist, six veterinary nurses, and other support staff.

The veterinary pathologist provides a gross pathology service for Taronga Zoo and histopathology service for both zoos. Taronga is also the only zoo in Australasia to employ a full time nutritionist. The TWH has a clinical pathology laboratory and most samples are processed in-house. This includes haematology, biochemistry, microbiology and parasitology. The nursing team is highly trained in husbandry and veterinary nursing care of native and exotic animals. In addition to general administrative duties, the TWH Wildlife Health assistant manages the student externship and internship programs, record keeping for the hospital, provides the public interface for wildlife admissions and enquiries as well as assisting in the pathology lab.

Taronga operates the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (ARWH), a national wildlife health reference centre and diagnostic resource managed by veterinary pathologist Dr Karrie Rose. ARWH provides a valuable resource for wildlife health, disease surveillance and veterinary pathology.

TWH staff participate in various veterinary and wildlife education programs. These include training veterinary students and veterinarians from universities in Australia and overseas and presentation of papers, workshops and talks at conferences and seminars both nationally and internationally, and to local animal care and interest groups.

Internship Program Outline

Students will be supervised by the clinical veterinarians and may spend time with any of the TWH staff in order to gain the maximum exposure to all aspects of zoo and wildlife medicine.

Students are trained under the instruction and guidance of the following staff:

Senior Veterinarian	Dr Larry Vogelnest	BVSc (Hons), MVS (Wild Med), MANZCVSc (Zoo Animal Medicine), PSM
Associate Veterinarian	Dr Frances Hulst	BVSc (Hons), MVS (Wild Med)
Associate Veterinarian	Dr Kimberly Vinette Herrin	BA, MS, DVM, MANZCVS (Zoo Animal Medicine)
Associate Veterinarian	Dr Gabrielle Tobias	BVSc (Hons I), BSc (Vet) (Hons I), Dip Vet Clin Stud, MAppSc (Wildlife Health and Population Management)
Diagnostic Veterinary Pathologist	Dr Lydia Tong	MA VetMB
Nutritionist	Ms Michelle Shaw	MSc (Comparative Animal Nutrition)
Laboratory Manager	Mr Paul Thompson	MS
Hospital Manager	Dr Jessica Moore-Jones	

A Student Information and Skills Book will be provided on commencement of the externship, which includes a Skills list that sets out the general learning objectives of the externship program. Completion of the skills list will require some background reading and research by the student as well as the undertaking of practical skills under the guidance of zoo staff.

Students actively participate in clinical procedures and are given opportunities to perform skills such as venipuncture, injection, radiology and basic surgery. Where possible, wildlife cases are allocated to students. Students also participate in necropsies and pathology rounds, clinical pathology and nutrition. Additional learning opportunities may arise depending on cases and students are encouraged to gain as much experience as possible through observation, self driven research and discussion with staff.

Wherever possible, students will be given the opportunity to fulfil all requirements stipulated by their university. **If there are no specific requirements**, students will:

- Complete a communications task (eg.give a presentation to staff, produce an information brochure, or write a short article for publication in a newsletter).
- **AND** undertake a brief investigation of a topic of significance to zoo and wildlife medicine (a list can be provided prior to commencing an internship).
- **OR** write up at least two case reports.

Clothing and footwear

Students are expected to wear neat and practical clothing, suitable for professional mixed veterinary practice. Students should adequately protect themselves against UV exposure. Overalls, lab coats or scrubs and other personal protective equipment will be supplied for selected clinical procedures and necropsy.

Students must bring a pair of closed shoes or boots which can be left at the zoo during their externship and worn only at the zoo. Other footwear will be needed for daily travel to and from the zoo. At the end of the externship the soles of the shoes or boots must be cleaned and disinfected.

Students must wear a name badge (can be supplied) which they are expected to wear at all times whilst at the zoo.

Daily work routine

Student working hours are 7:40am to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays). Weekend attendance is not required.

Three clinical veterinarians are rostered on each week day, together with five veterinary nurses/keepers. On weekends a veterinarian is on call and two nurses are rostered to work.

From 7:40 to 8:30am the clinical veterinarians, pathologist and nutritionist meet to review cases and set the work agenda for the day. Following the meeting, clinical rounds are done in the hospital and in the zoo grounds. Procedures for the day generally take place in the hospital between 10:30am and 12:15pm, although larger procedures are usually scheduled earlier in the day. If necessary, procedures continue in the afternoon. Necropsy examinations usually take place in the early afternoon. Generally there is time for record keeping, paperwork, meetings and research in the afternoons.

Students are able to participate in all aspects of direct animal work at the discretion of the attending veterinarian and may have the opportunity to attend selected meetings and talks.

Student Requirements

Students must have had a tuberculosis test within 12 months prior to commencement of their internship and have proof of vaccination against Covid-19.

Travel and accommodation must be organised by students prior to arrival. We have a list of contacts for accommodation which can be provided by request. Advice regarding travel to and from Taronga Zoo can also be provided on request.

For further information and other enquiries, please contact Gillian Devaney, Wildlife Health Assistant, Taronga Wildlife Hospital, PO Box 20, Mosman NSW 2088, Australia. Phone: 61 (0)2 9978 4785. Fax: 61 (0)2 9978 4516. Email: gdevaney@zoo.nsw.gov.au

**Larry Vogelnest
Senior Veterinarian
Taronga Wildlife Hospital**

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