



Guidelines for preparation of educational programs involving public display of live native fauna

Pursuant to the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and the Wildlife Conservation Regulations, Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) has a responsibility to licence public displays of live native fauna. Wildlife Parks and the like are licensed under these provisions.

While DPaW has a clear responsibility to ensure that the animals used in such displays are appropriately sourced and treated, increasingly it is becoming clear that there is also a responsibility for DPaW to be satisfied that the fauna are actually being used in an educational way. In this regard such displays need to be part of properly planned, structured and targeted educational programs.

In order to satisfy the above requirements DPaW is introducing a system whereby those persons wishing to use fauna for educational displays need to lodge with DPaW written educational programs, prior to licences being issued for the displays.

The educational program documents should cover:

- what educational message is to be conveyed;
- what issues you will be covering in your display;

The information below should help you in planning and preparing your program.

Matters to consider in the planning and development of live fauna educational programs

There are several key aspects that should be considered when developing an educational package involving the use of live native fauna. These include the following points.

- It is important that proponents are clear on what are to be the main aims of your presentation (eg. is it to simply provide a general introduction to native fauna?, is it to focus on the role of native fauna in the natural environment?, is it to highlight the problems native fauna are facing in the changing environment?, is to inform the audience of wildlife care facilities?, or a combination of several of those aims?).
- It is important to clearly identify the audience and the level of understanding that they are likely to have. For example, the type and detail of material presented to high school students will be very different from that given to lower primary or pre-primary students. Can you develop a package which has the same general themes, but with varying levels of information to suit the age of the audience?

- Any educational package developed need not be designed specifically with schools as the target audience, but the process which you would go through in developing such a package would be equally useful in designing presentations directed at non-school groups.
- Advice from the Education Ministry and from science teachers has indicated that school based educational presentations are more valuable if the teacher has access to resource material which can be used in follow-up lessons after you have presented a display. There may be some benefits in contacting the local schools in your area and obtaining advice from teachers as to what they would like to see and what they need to maximise the interest generated by a live animal display. In doing so, you may be able tailor your presentation to expand on issues that the students are studying at a particular point in time, making your task easier and the students' learning more interesting.
- Whatever the level of the presentation, it is very important that it is factually correct and that written material has no spelling or grammatical errors. While anecdotal examples are interesting, children often fail to appreciate that they are not necessarily fact, nor that they may represent uncommon or unusual events. Every effort should be made to avoid creating such false impressions. Written material should be clearly worded and concise. If you can't get the message across in one or a few short sentences than you need to reconsider exactly what it is that you are trying to say. Also, if you do not know an answer to a child's question when giving a talk, please don't make one up. Admit that you do not know the answer and perhaps advise the class that you will try to find out for them, or point them in the direction of someone who may. Again, differentiate between opinions and facts.
- It may also be appropriate to point out the legal status of native animals in Australia and the regulations regarding the keeping of native species. While you personally may not agree with the current laws and regulations, it is important that if this issue is addressed in the presentation that the students/audience are given the facts in a positive way.
- Educational presentations should maintain their focus on Australian native species wherever possible. Placing our native fauna in some sort of perspective with the rest of the world is useful, but the presentation should mainly deal with issues and species that the audience are likely to encounter or be familiar with. This is particularly important if the native animals you are displaying are meant to tie directly in with the subject(s) presented.
- The other issue you will need to address in your submission to DPaW is which species of native animals are to be displayed, where they will be obtained from, their suitability for particular types of displays (small groups indoors versus large open-air locations), how the animals will be transported (if displays are to at changing venues) and how they will be presented (held in the hand or in small cages).
- Native reptiles, amphibians, birds or mammals kept under non-Regulation 16 licenses cannot be used for display. Invertebrates, in general, cannot be kept as pets nor displayed.

Issues Which Must be Addressed by Prospective Applicants for a Regulation 16 Licence to Operate a Wildlife Park.

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1.	Written approval from the local government authority (shire) to conduct such a venture at the proposed location.	
2.	A detailed, scale plan of the site showing cage locations, fences and other buildings.	
3.	Details of the size / height and specifications of all internal and external fences.	
4.	Details of security measures to prevent unauthorized entry into the facility and cages.	
5.	Working plans for all cage facilities showing size, shape, features such as ponds, drainage facilities and waste disposal.	
6.	Diet for proposed display species.	
7.	Indication of who will provide professional veterinary care for animals.	
8.	Details of previous experience in handling animals.	
9.	Contingency plan in the event of any animals escaping including details on who will be notified, and methods and equipment needed to recapture and transport escaped animals.	
10.	Contingency plan(s) in the event of fire or flood.	
11.	Contingency plan for the disposal of stock in the event of the business folding.	
12.	If possible an estimate of visitor patronage and projected cash flows for the venture.	
13.	Educational program of the fauna planned to be displayed	