

FOSTERING
INNOVATION



TOURISM
EXCELLENCE

Royal Melbourne Zoo

Behind-the-Scenes Encounters

Tel. 03 9285 9300

mz@zoo.org.au

While zoos are some of the world's oldest tourist attractions, many zoos of the western world are in the forefront of innovating new products to allow visitors to better understand and appreciate the wonders of the animal kingdom.

The Royal Melbourne Zoo is highly regarded around the world for its enlightened approach to animal management as well as its programs developed to introduce the public to the animal world.

Sleepover tours, twilight music sessions and the Behind-the-Scenes Encounters are some of the methods it uses to introduce a new generation of Melburnians to the zoo and to raise much needed funds for their conservation programs.

The 'Behind-the-Scenes Encounters' provide a unique opportunity to experience life behind the cages and barriers, as well as to get up close and personal with some of the world's most amazing creatures. They also enable people to learn about the zoo's conservation programs and how the keepers care for the animals.

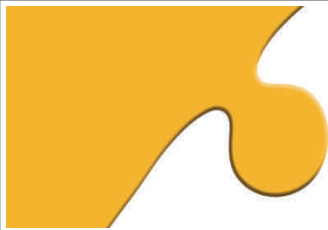
Groups need to book 14 days in advance for their unique experience and minimum numbers and costs apply. The various sessions run from between 20 to 40 minutes and provide varying degrees of interaction.



The 30 minute 'Trunk Art' sessions allows two people at a time to meet the zoo's most artistic animals, the elephants Bong Su and Mek Kaph. Guests are invited to select their favourite colour scheme and then hand over the brushes and easel to the elephants to create a personal masterpiece, which is then available for purchase. The 45 minute 'Elephant Introductions' take groups of eight people into the cow barn to meet one of the zoo's Asian elephants. If it happens to be bath time, guests can help out with a back scrub.

The 45 minute 'Big Cat Encounter' (temporarily unavailable) provides guests with a rare glimpse into the world of the beautiful Jaguars and Leopards, including a tour of their dietary preparation centre. For the ultimate in big cat experiences, the 30 minute 'Lion Encounter' takes guests behind the scenes with keepers for a 30 minute training session, which highlights the different personalities and habits of the four large cats.

The 30 minute 'Tiger Territory' introduces people to the zoo's magnificent Samatran Tiger, Ramalan, and enables them to learn first-hand from the keepers about the tiger breeding program and what needs to be done to preserve the animals in their natural habitat.



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One of the most popular experiences on offer is 'Gorilla Games'. This 30 minute program teaches guests the fascinating and entertaining dynamics of gorilla group behaviour, dominated by the giant silverback, and to see how uncannily close they are to our own behaviour.

A 45 minute behind the scenes with a keeper in the Reptile House provides guests with a much deeper understanding about many of the world's 7,000 species of reptiles. It's not for the timid, as among the encounters you get to meet pythons, lizards and crocodiles.

The fascinating Tree-kangaroo is rarely seen by Australians, but the behind-the-scenes encounter allows visitors to feed them and to pat koalas.

Every booking made for a 'Behind-the-Scenes Encounter' includes entry to the zoo and entitles the visitor to an animal sponsorship of their choice.

www.zoo.org.au



Key findings:

Providing an in-depth and more personal interaction with the animal world.

Using income generated by tourism to boost research into the conservation of animal species.