

How to Get that Job!

Before you Start...

How are Zoo vacancies advertised?

Positions that become available in the Australasian region are usually advertised in the employment section of local or National newspapers, however many positions are increasingly being placed on various Government or Zoo web sites. You can also check out currently advertised Zoo positions within the Australasian region by going to

<http://www.australasianzookeeping.org/Zoo%20Positions%20Vacant.htm>

or for a list of useful overseas sites, please go to the Animal Keeper Vacancies Links section of the AZK web site at

<http://www.australasianzookeeping.org/Links%20-%20Advertised%20Zoo%20Positions.htm>

If you would like to be notified by e-mail when new vacancies are posted to the AZK web site, simply send a blank e-mail to

Australasian_Zoo_Keeping-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Before you apply.

You've seen a job advertised that you are interested in applying for. If there is a position description and/or a person specification for the position, it is crucial that you get a copy of these before you start writing your application. If these don't exist, talk to the contact person in the job advertisement and get some information about the position and the sort of person they are looking to employ.

Many larger institutions will have a "position" or "job" description, which details what the roles and responsibilities of the position are and the tasks required, however many smaller institutions will not have these available as written documents. This information helps you to think about the functions and requirements of the job and gather information so that you can focus your job application upon the needs and expectations of the employer.

Larger institutions will also have specified selection criteria which detail the skills, knowledge and qualifications that they are looking for in a person to fill the position. Focus upon how you will address the selection criteria and show that you are competent to do the job, as a failure to do so will result in your application being rejected.

Finally, before you start preparing your application undertake some basic research about the organisation and the job you will be applying for to improve your chances of getting to the interview stage. Zoos within the Australasian region have different organisational cultures and focus on different activities, visitor education programs, conservation projects and the way in which they provide a recreational experience to their visitors. So it is important that you find out what the Zoo advertising a position does and how the job you are applying for fits into the organisation.

A good starting point is to look at the Zoo's website (go to <http://www.australasianzookeeping.org/Links.htm> to find links to most of the Zoos from the Australasian region) or visit a public library and search for annual reports and other materials that may help you. Don't underestimate the value of doing a web based search. Go to <http://www.australasianzookeeping.org/Links%20-%20Search%20&%20More.htm> to find some useful internet search tools.

If you can, get a copy of the Zoos organisational structure - an organisational chart sets out the reporting arrangements and may tell you where the advertised job fits in to the organisation. Sometimes an organisational context will be included within the Position Description.

Important details from the job advertisement to note.

Reference Number:

When a job is advertised it may state a specific position or reference number. These are most commonly used by government and other larger organisations that employ a large number of staff and also have a specialised recruitment or human resources section that all applications are sent to. Because there may be a number of positions which are being advertised and filled at the same time, if you fail to quote the unique position number or job reference in your application, it may be mistakenly placed among applications for a position which you did not intend to apply for. Position or reference numbers are generally not used by smaller or private institutions.

Position Descriptions and Key Selection Criteria:

Larger organisations generally use Position Descriptions and Key Selection Criteria that you must respond to. Failure to address selection criteria may result in your application being rejected. The advertisement will tell you where you can get copies of these documents.

Eligibility:

The job advertisement will often specify if there are particular eligibility requirements such as Australian citizenship or residency restrictions.

Generally Australian Government agencies will only employ Australian citizens or residents, however there may be exceptions to this restriction. In most other cases you will either need to have a current visa that allows you to work in Australia or be capable of obtaining one. If you are unsure of your eligibility to apply for the position, get in touch with the specified contact person.

Other eligibility restrictions such as qualifications and educational requirements may also be included in the job advertisement. If you are unsure about your eligibility to apply for the position, get in touch with the contact person to find out before you apply.

Lodging an application:

The job advertisement usually specifies how applications can be lodged, and whether you can apply online, by e-mail, fax or if you have to submit your application by post. Make sure that your application is sent to the address shown in the advertisement – generally this is NOT the specified contact person.

Closing Date:

In almost all cases the advertisement will state when you must have applications submitted by. Late applications may be accepted if there is a reasonable reason, however you should get in touch with the contact person to discuss this before submitting a late application.

Contact person:

The name or phone number or e-mail address of a contact person is normally provided in the advertisement or job description for you to get in touch with should you not understand anything or need further details about the job.

How is the recruitment process undertaken in the Australasian region?

It helps to know what the recruitment steps are so you understand where your application is in the recruitment process, and have a better idea of when you are likely to hear from the employing institution and what you may expect next.

Generally the steps involved in the recruitment process in the Australasian region for larger institutions involves:

1) Development of the Job Description and Key Selection Criteria.

Understanding the Key Selection Criteria is critical to the success of your application. Download the AZK “How to Write Successful Applications” PDF file for more information about Job Descriptions and Key Selection Criteria.

2) Vacancy advertised.

3) Applications close.

4) Selection Panel assesses the applications received against the selection criteria for the position.

The selection panel is usually made up of the hiring manager and suitably trained/experienced panel members. Usually there is a mix of genders and skill backgrounds to ensure a fair interview. Questions are developed by the panel to test applicants on the Key Selection Criteria.

5) High quality applicants are short-listed for interview.

Applications received are assessed by the selection panel against the Key Selection Criteria, ranked and short-listed for interview.

6) Interviews are conducted by the Selection Panel.

Interview questions are asked that test the applicants' suitability against the selection criteria. Behavioural interviewing techniques, ability tests and/or written and oral tests or other assessments may be used. Referees may be contacted after interview.

In Australia, particularly amongst larger institutions, the selection of a successful applicant for a position is based on merit - whether they are the best person for the job. Unlike some other countries, appointment to a position is not based on length of service with the organisation, age, sex or religion. Federal laws in Australia actually prohibit selection based upon these factors. This means that it doesn't matter if you are applying for an entry level position or a managerial role, the person judged by the selection panel as the best suited for the job is the one that will be offered the position.

7) Applicants interviewed are assessed and ranked by the Selection Panel.

The selection panel prepares a selection report on the process followed and a recommendation is made in regard to the most suitable applicant. The appointment is usually authorised by a senior manager that has not been a part of the selection panel. This report needs to demonstrate that the selection process has been fair and reasonable and that selection is based on merit.

8) Job offer made to successful candidate.

Generally when a successful candidate accepts the job offer, unsuccessful candidates are advised of the outcome.

9) Post interview counselling and feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Post interview counselling and/or feedback is usually available upon request from the chair of the panel for unsuccessful job applicants. Use this as a learning experience to improve your approach and increase your chance of

being selected for the next position you apply for.

Applying for advertised Zoo jobs in the Australasian Region.

The processes and procedures followed when applying for a position in the Australasian region will vary depending upon a number of factors.

The type of organisation advertising the position will often have specific requirements for selecting suitable applicants. Generally, public institutions (including most of the larger Australasian Zoos) will require that you submit a cover letter, an up to date CV or Resume and an “address to the key selection criteria”. Smaller institutions and many private Zoos will only require a cover letter and CV or Resume to be submitted, however the requirements for applying will usually be included in the advertisement, including whether you need to send in multiple copies of your application.

The type of position being applied for will also influence the process you will need to follow. Generally, permanent positions involve a more rigorous recruitment process, which can take longer to complete, whilst temporary, and casual positions tend to be completed quicker and with fewer administrative requirements.

The level of the position will also influence the recruitment process, with more senior positions usually involving a more rigorous recruitment process, which can take longer to complete.

The process and procedures followed in each case will either be specified in the job advertisement, or information on where to get this information will be included in the advertisement. If you are still not sure what is required then you should get in touch with the specified contact person.

Employment conditions in Australasian Zoos.

Employment conditions in Australasian Zoos vary and can differ between public and private institutions, the State and location where the institution is located, the level of the position, roster worked and a range of other factors.

Whilst the following information is supplied to provide a general idea of conditions you may be entitled to, it is important that you ask any prospective employer what conditions and entitlements you are eligible for before deciding to accept a position that is offered to you.

Generally the base rate for a full time position as an entry-level keeper will be between AUD \$20,000.00 and \$40,000.00, although this will vary considerably

between organisations and positions. Additional payments may be made on top of the base rate for overtime and weekend penalties, depending upon the requirements of the position.

The standard number of hours worked varies between organisations, however it is usually between 36 and 40 hours per week for a full time position. The standard hours worked may include time worked on weekends or outside of normal business hours (at appropriate rates of pay) or as additional hours to the standard number of hours worked and paid at "overtime rates".

Some other conditions and entitlements that you may receive include;

- Employer funded superannuation scheme
- Four to six weeks of annual leave entitlement
- 10-15 days of paid sick leave each year
- Paid maternity leave (and in some States paternity leave)
- Flex time
- Bereavement leave
- Long service leave
- Special leave (for family and community responsibilities)
- Leave without pay
- Staff discounts
- Uniform and all required safety equipment supplied by the employer

Many public institutions and an increasing number of private institutions will initially employ the successful applicant for a "probationary period". This can be a period of time that can vary in length from a few weeks to 12 months or more, and is best described as a "trial period". There may also be some formal review processes that occur during the probationary period. Some conditions and entitlements may not be available until the probationary period is successfully completed.

Contract, part time and casual positions generally do not receive many of the conditions and entitlements that full time positions get, and of course the hours of these positions will differ from that of a full time position.