

A Day in the Life of...

Kyra Coombs, Business Trainee



One of Perth Zoo's youngest employees, Kyra Coombs, is a business whiz-in-training with a passion for animals.

Kyra joined Perth Zoo in 2010 as a Year 11 student when she began a two-year traineeship in business, working two days a week at the Zoo. While filling out the traineeship application, Kyra put down animals and conservation as two of her interests – with good reason.

Kyra grew up in Kuranda, a town near Cairns in northern Queensland. The area is known for its stunning rainforests and biodiversity. The property where she lived was bordered by rainforest and it was there that her love of nature grew.

"We were surrounded by different kinds of animals and I learnt not to fear them but understand them," Kyra says. "So from a young age I have been very interested in learning about them and seeing what I can do to help animals."

A Day in Kyra's Diary

8:00 am Arrive at work and open Reception area. Put out any signs about conferences or seminars happening at the Zoo that day.

8:30 am Collect the daily mail. There's usually a large bag full to sort out.

9:30 am Assist with work in the Records office.

10:30 am Time to deliver internal and external mail around the Zoo. I use one of the Zoo's electric buggies to deliver the mail to the various office buildings dotted around the zoo grounds.

12:00 pm Lunch.

Kyra's traineeship is a State Government initiative which requires her to work for a government organisation. Perth Zoo was a natural choice. There was a long wait after her application form was submitted but then came the day she'd been waiting for.

"I came home from school and when I walked through the door my step dad said, 'Kyra, you missed a call from the Zoo, they want you to call them back.' Thinking he was just joking (again) I replied, 'Good joke!' But without me knowing, I had been referred to the Zoo and they wanted to interview me."

While she admits to being nervous at the interview, Kyra was successful in getting the position. She began in February 2010. Her role covers administrative duties including providing administrative support for the Zoo's Veterinary Department.

"The most enjoyable thing about my job is that each day is different. I can go from working in Reception one day to helping with other admin duties on the other side of the zoo the next. It gives me the chance to check out what's going on across the Zoo rather than just the one section."

One of the challenges of the job has been learning everyone's name and what they do.

"There are about 200 people at the Zoo and I think I'm finally getting to know everybody. Initially the position was for two days a week but recently I moved into a full-time business traineeship for 12 months."

"It's hard work on the main switchboard because there are a wide range of questions from ticket pricing to people asking about animals they've got in their backyards. I'm learning a lot!"

Although her current focus is on business, Kyra would love to pursue a career that involves animals. There is no shortage of opportunities in the field but as always, it's deciding where to focus that's the hard part.

"I'm just not sure which direction I want to head in but until I do working at the Zoo suits me just fine."

12:30 pm Walk to the Veterinary Department to help out with administration duties including entering medical reports into the database. I love it up here because I have the chance to see some of the animals brought in to see the veterinarians.

3:30 pm Return to the Records office to fill out my log book on what I did for the day. This is part of my traineeship and is submitted each month. My assessor checks my units of competencies. When my units are completed in the next 12 months I will graduate with a Certificate III in Business.

4:00 pm Home time!

