

A Day in the Life of...

Susan Hunt, Chief Executive Officer



With a background in historical research and writing, a career as a Zoo Director is an unlikely outcome for Perth Zoo's Chief Executive Officer, Susan Hunt.

A graduate of Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia, Susan started her working life in academia as a tutor and lecturer at university following an Honours and Masters Degree specialising in Australian Indigenous and women's history. She also worked as a researcher and writer including script development for documentary films and has written two Western Australian history books, one of which is still used as a reference text.

Susan's first Government appointment was in Indigenous Affairs where she worked as a research and ministerial officer. She also worked for a time as a policy officer for the first Western Australian Indigenous Minister, the Hon Ernie Bridge MLA.

After more than ten years in Indigenous Affairs, Susan was appointed Director of Management and Policy at the Rottnest Island Authority, where she was responsible for environmental policy, corporate governance, interpretation, education and planning.

"During this time, I worked with the Authority Board on the development of its Strategic Business Plan.

"In 2000, I was recruited as the Business Director for Perth Zoo, responsible for human resources, finance, sponsorship, capital works, education, facilities, environmental services and marketing. It was a huge job, which really brought me up to speed on the operations of the Zoo."

Susan became the acting CEO of Perth Zoo in 2003 and was formally appointed to the position in 2004. For the next few years, she lived with her family on the Zoo site and, in the process, learnt a lot about the daily operations of the Zoo.



The CEO of Perth Zoo for almost six years now, Susan is also the President of the Australian and New Zealand Zoo and Aquarium Association and an active member of the World Zoo Association.

On Australia Day this year, Susan was recognised with an Australia Day Public Service Medal for her contribution to Perth Zoo's international conservation effort while at the same time leading the Zoo in its most successful period in terms of visitation, finances and public approval.

A Day in Susan's Diary

8:15 am Check emails, appointments and phone calls.

9 am Chair the weekly Corporate Executive meeting to discuss planning, funding, capital works, corporate governance, human resources and other matters. Walking inspection of the zoo with the directors to check general presentation and capital works requirements for forward planning.

11 am Check emails and spend time on correspondence including Ministerial briefings, budget updates, liaison with other agencies and organisations (Australian-based and international bodies) and communications relating to

my role as President of the Australasian Zoo and Aquariums Association.

12 pm Lunch (usually at my desk)

12:30 pm Media interview over the phone. Return other phone calls. Follow up other administrative work.

1:30 pm Meet with not-for-profit, non-government conservation organisation representatives to discuss ongoing collaboration and direct support for the protection of habitat and threatened species in the wild.

2:30 pm Monthly meeting with the Minister for the Environment to discuss strategic plans, initiatives at the Zoo and

outside the Zoo's borders, new developments/exhibits, threatened species breeding programs etc.

3:30 pm Speaking engagement at the Women in Science Forum celebrating and promoting the contribution of women to the field of science.

4:30 pm Back in the office. Meet with the President of the Perth Zoo Docent Association to discuss volunteer activities.

5 pm Some quiet time for policy review, development of advice for the Zoo Board, strategic plans and other writing.

6:30 pm Leave for the day

