



# Official Statement

## Koala holds ceasing as of 1st July 2024

To address increasing public demand and a concerted effort to embrace more immersive and educational experiences, Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary will be ceasing koala hold experiences from the 1st July 2024. The decision has been made in response to increasingly strong visitor feedback, wishing to spend longer with the sanctuary's koalas and their passionate wildlife care team, without necessarily holding them.

In place of koala holds, Lone Pine will introduce a new experience, Koala Close-Up, which will focus on meaningful connections and extended time in the presence of the sanctuary's beautiful koalas. This will be in addition to the sanctuary's existing koala experiences, Koala Moments and the Koala Discovery Tour.

Bookings for Koala Close-Up will be released in the coming weeks.

### **From General Manager, Lyndon Discombe:**

We love that there is a shift among both local and international guests to experience Australian wildlife up close, but not necessarily personal, just doing what they do best – eating, sleeping and relaxing within their own space.

We have absolutely seen an increase in demand for educational programs and guided experiences, focussing on the ability to witness the natural behaviours of koalas. Once you see them up close and in their wonderful natural state, we hope our guests love and respect them even more.

With the development of Koala Close-Up and the expansion of the sanctuary's existing daily koala encounters (Koala Moments), Lone Pine will be offering guests increased opportunity to be in the presence of our adorable marsupials and learn about their behaviours, ecology, and daily care, as well their unique quirks and personalities.

### **Official Statement of support from the Zoo & Aquarium Association (ZAA) Australia**

The Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA) Australasia strongly supports Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary's new position for koala experiences. This sanctuary is not only a place for Australian and international guests to see koalas, but an important centre for conservation education and advocacy.

This decision will address the desires of visitors to see koalas in their natural state while still providing the immersive, unforgettable, and educational experiences that drive conservation engagement in ZAA-accredited institutions.

### **Animal Wellbeing Statement:**

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of our animals is top priority in all that we do. All interactions with our wildlife are governed by the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Exhibited Animals, and the ZAA Animal Visitor Interactions Position Statement. Animal visitor interactions must foster respect for the species by presenting the individual in a respectful context as well as supporting the animal's welfare. Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary strives to ensure that all interactions are a positive and meaningful experience for both guests and animals.