



# Working together for a Responsible Palm Oil future

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## Background

Unsustainable palm oil production results in massive deforestation, rapid biodiversity loss in tropical ecosystems, and significant greenhouse gas emissions (Laurance, 2007; Fitzherbert et al., 2008). Global consumption of palm oil and its derivatives is increasing (US Department of Agriculture, 2015), requiring urgent conservation action to save habitats and species.

However, the Association acknowledges that palm oil has a high yield per hectare with the smallest footprint when it comes to energy, fertiliser and pesticides. Advocating for 'palm oil free' products could have bad unintended consequences for the wild environments and animals we wish to protect. Palm oil, if produced in a sustainable way, has the potential to be a more environmentally friendly crop than many alternatives.

Many ZAA-accredited zoos in Australia and New Zealand care for charismatic species such as Sumatran tigers and orangutans, who can be engaging advocates for their wild counterparts affected by unsustainable palm oil production. With their expertise in community conservation and incredible animals for visitors to connect with, ZAA-accredited zoos are well positioned to make meaningful change for sustainable palm oil.

## Position

### 4.1 Vision and Mission

Our vision is that all products containing palm oil in Australia and New Zealand use only RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (100% Segregated) as a minimum, halting associated deforestation, habitat loss, biodiversity loss and carbon emissions.

To achieve this, the Association has established the ZAA Palm Oil Taskforce, which aims to assist ZAA-accredited zoos and aquariums in advocating for sustainable palm oil practices with government, community and businesses, whilst also supporting them to conduct self-audits and move towards 100% segregated CPSO in their own supply chains.

We acknowledge that palm oil labelling is an important tool for achieving our vision, as well as greater awareness of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and its definitions of Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO), as well as the responsible production of palm oil by industry leaders in the Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG).

## 4.2 Position

The Association supports the work of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and a move towards use of only RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CPSO) 100% Segregated.

The RSPO is the most high profile and best represented organisation involved in certifying palm oil as sustainable, using standards based on an evolving set of Principles and Criteria (P&Cs) (RSPO, 2013) addressing a range of issues, including environmental and social impacts of palm oil. The POIG 'Charter' for palm oil producers is based on the RSPO P&Cs, but sets stronger standards on key issues, including the protection of secondary forests identified via the High Carbon Stock (HCS) Approach.

The Association and its Members call on companies to source and use only RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (100% Segregated) as a minimum and require all suppliers to be verified or working towards compliance with the Palm Oil Innovation Group Charter.

## Definitions

In this position statement, unless the context requires otherwise:

**Association** means the Zoo and Aquarium Association Inc. (ABN 71 836 556 156).

**Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO)** is produced by palm oil plantations which have been independently audited and found to comply with the globally agreed environmental standards devised by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), using criteria that relate to social, environmental and economic good practice.

**Executive Director** means the Executive Director of the Association.

**Member** means a member of the Association, as defined in the Association's Membership Policy, and may include an employee, officer or agent of a Member of the Association.

**Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG)** means the group whose members are committed to displaying best practice in regards to the standards of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, particularly pushing practices farther in regards to reducing deforestation, carbon stocks, biodiversity and social impact.

**Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)** is a multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable production of palm oil worldwide, and its members include palm growers, oil processors, traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, investors and social and environmental NGOs.

## References

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## Approval and Review Details

### Position Statement details

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This document should be reviewed within five (5) years of the date of approval or last review.

Amendment History			
Approved / Amended / Rescinded / Reviewed	Authority	Date	Description / Notes
Reviewed	ZAA Palm Oil Taskforce	2020	Redrafted to reflect the current landscape and ZAA / ZAA Member focus on Sustainable Palm Oil action.
Approved	Board	25/11/2025	Changes above by Palm Oil Taskforce approved.