

RFAWA POLICY STATEMENT



APPROPRIATE USE OF EQUIPMENT AND TETHERING



Quality equipment plays an important role. Here, an eagle is wearing a leather hood which helps to calm the bird during a veterinary examination. Photo credit Magnus Wildt.

Purpose

As a responsible organisation which ranks the welfare of raptors in our care as the highest priority, RFAWA is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that any equipment used by members is of the highest quality and design, and is fit for purpose. This document outlines minimum standards for equipment and tethering,

Equipment

There can be a world of difference between what appears to the casual observer or untrained eye to be perfectly serviceable or effective equipment, and equipment that is well designed and made especially for the purpose.

A perfect example of this may be a piece of a log with a staple hammered half way up the shaft as a tethering ring (see pics). Although it may suffice if the raptor being tethered to it is under constant supervision, the fact is that a single bate (vigorous wing flapping) can easily result in broken flight feathers, or more serious damage to the bird.



Examples of poorly designed perches for any raptor.

Although importing to Australia can be expensive, many of the larger and heavier items can be produced locally by skilled craftsmen. RFAWA only endorses equipment which is of the highest quality and is fit for purpose. Sharing photos and ideas privately within the membership will quickly help to identify suitable equipment whilst enabling members to learn from the knowledge and practices of more experienced members.



Raptor perches which are well designed and perfectly fit for purpose.

Tethering

When a raptor is being managed in such a way that it requires daily handling, tethering using equipment which is fit for purpose can play a vital role, particularly in the initial training of the raptor.

Consideration should be given to the comfort of any tethered raptor. They require appropriate shelter that takes into account weather conditions, particularly protection from strong wind, direct sunlight and heavy rain or hail and other predators

Raptors being tethered should display a calm disposition to their surroundings and they should be checked upon regularly and/or, tethered within a secure weathering, particularly where there may be other predators.

In line with the *RFAWA Code of Ethics*, raptors that are not being handled daily and flown regularly should be free-lofted in a suitable enclosure in line with Section 3.10 and Section 4 (appendix A) of DBCA's '*Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia*'.

Although these standards apply to raptors undergoing rehabilitation, they also provide a useful guide to the size and shape requirements of suitable housing for raptors kept for other purposes but which are not being regularly free-exercise flown, such as those on Regulation 16 wildlife display licences.



RFAWA acknowledges and supports the Position Statements of the **International Association of Avian trainers and Educators (IAATE)**¹ titled '[Tethering and the use of jesses](#)' and '[Free Flight for Programs](#)'

As a responsible organisation, RFAWA expect that the standards outlined in these documents are observed and maintained.

¹ <https://iaate.org/position-statement/position-statements>

