



CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION

What is the Code?

The Code of Conduct (the Code) sets out the standards of behaviour for everyone involved in the wildlife rehabilitation sector (the sector) in Tasmania, noting that private businesses and organisations may have their own behavioural expectations for staff and volunteers. The Code is particularly relevant for wildlife rehabilitators, who predominantly operate as unaffiliated individual community volunteers.

The Code complements the *Guiding Principles for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Sector* and is designed to be used in conjunction with conflict resolution processes.

Who does the Code apply to?

The Code applies to the wildlife rehabilitation sector in Tasmania, which primarily consists of:

- Wildlife rescuers and rehabilitators (including rescue and rehabilitation groups/ organisations)
- Private Veterinary Clinics and Wildlife Hospitals
- The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary
- WIRES

This Code applies to anyone who undertakes an active role in the rescue, treatment, rehabilitation and release of wildlife.

When does the Code apply?

The Code applies to all behaviours that are physical, written and verbal, and is particularly relevant to electronic or online communications including social media, email and text messages. The Code applies to all activities undertaken in a rehabilitation context, including, but not limited to, the following:

- An organised event - for example, a training session, workshop or meeting
- Interactions between veterinary clinic staff and wildlife rehabilitators
- Interactions between wildlife rehabilitators and staff of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
- Interactions between wildlife rehabilitators and members of the public
- Communicating on social media pages, via private messages; and
- Communication between mentors and mentees.
- Interactions between wildlife rehabilitators and other rehabilitators/rescuers.

Why do we have a Code of Conduct?

Wildlife rehabilitation is challenging, both physically and mentally, every day. This code has been developed to help make sure that the sector is a safe, supportive and rewarding place to volunteer. When the sector is working well together and maintains a positive culture, our wildlife benefit by receiving the best care possible.

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BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS



We take responsibility for our behaviour

- We take responsibility for our work, performance and behaviour.
- When we make mistakes, we take responsibility and learn from them.
- We listen to feedback with an open mind and try not to be defensive.
- We correct our actions or change our behaviour when needed.
- We are reliable and follow up on our commitments.
- We ensure our expectations of others are reasonable, clear and understood.
- We behave in a manner that does not harm the sector's reputation.



We help keep everyone safe

- We speak up if we see something that could harm ourselves or others.
- We let others know if we are assigned a task that is potentially unsafe, or we do not have the right skills, training or experience.
- We don't willingly place ourselves in a rescue or rehabilitation situation where our safety is jeopardised.
- We do not work while under the influence of alcohol or drug-related substances that affect our ability to perform rescue or rehabilitation duties.



We do our best for wildlife

- We strive to provide best practice care for wildlife.
- We provide a high standard of care for wildlife and do not jeopardise this by taking on more wildlife than we have the capacity to care for.
- We undertake continuous learning and keep our knowledge and skills up to date.
- We don't care for any animals that we're not trained to rescue, treat or rehabilitate, especially without a mentor's permission/oversight.
- We share our knowledge and skills with others.



We practice good leadership

- We lead by example, by demonstrating ethical behaviour and by complying with this Code.
- We uphold and promote respectful relationships with partners, organisations and government.
- We make proper use of any position, duties, status, power or authority we have.
- We take any concerns seriously, treating them promptly and confidentially so far as possible.
- We recognise, support and praise ethical behaviour by others in the sector.



We treat others with respect and kindness

- We encourage, help and support others.
- We give constructive feedback to others in a compassionate and respectful manner.
- We listen to others without interrupting, and we participate in meetings but do not dominate discussions.
- We communicate thoughtfully, particularly by email, text or on social media, where the opportunities for misunderstanding are greater.
- We consider the consequences for others before acting.
- We protect the privacy of others and avoid gossip.
- We behave in a way that does not offend, humiliate, harass, undermine, exclude or dismiss others.
- We understand that wildlife rehabilitation can be stressful, exhausting and emotional. We check in on others and encourage them to seek professional support if needed.
- We don't engage in discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation.



We embrace diversity and include others

- We understand that wildlife rehabilitation attracts people from different backgrounds and life experiences, and we all share a passion for our unique Tasmanian wildlife.
- We make an effort to be inclusive and welcoming to everyone.
- We recognise there are different ways to approach and solve problems and we are willing to learn from others and be open to different perspectives.
- We acknowledge and value the ideas and opinions of others, even if these are different from ours.



We act ethically and with integrity

- We act with honesty and transparency. We do not alter, hide or exaggerate the facts.
- We obey the law and do not engage in fraudulent or criminal behaviour.
- We ask others for help when we're unsure.
- We are committed to the success of the sector, and we ensure our actions are in the best interests of the sector.

