

12.1 WIRES Code of Conduct

Policy Adopted 11 November 2006, reviewed and amended 29/11/2008 adopted by Council 13 December 2008. Addendum approved and adopted by council 9th April 2011.

All WIRES Members are required to:

- 2.1.1 Behave honestly and with integrity in the course of all WIRES activities;
- 2.1.2 Act with care and diligence in the course of all WIRES activities;
- 2.1.3 When acting in the course of Wires activities, shall act in accordance with the following harassment, bullying and discrimination policy which sets out the relevant definitions, underpinning principles and WIRES' commitment to eliminating harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination within the organisation.
- 2.1.4 When acting in the course of all WIRES activities, comply with all applicable laws and NPWS/DECC licence conditions;
- 2.1.5 Comply with WIRES Constitution and all Policies & Procedures;
- 2.1.6 Comply with all reasonable direction given by someone in WIRES who has authority to give the direction; eg Branch Animal/Species Coordinators;
- 2.1.7 Maintain appropriate confidentiality and discretion about dealings with all other wildlife carers, whether they be WIRES or non-WIRES;
- 2.1.8 Disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with WIRES activities and positions of office;
- 2.1.9 Use WIRES resources in a proper manner with due regard for the fact that they represent the expenditure of public money;
- 2.1.10 Not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the volunteers membership or activities;
- 2.1.11 Not make improper use of any position, duties, status, power of authority, in order to gain or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the member or for any other person;
- 2.1.12 At all times behave in a way that upholds WIRES' values, integrity and good reputation;
- 2.1.13 Not make any public statement on behalf of WIRES without the approval of the Branch Management Committee or WIRES State Council/Board;
- 2.1.14 Recognise that majority decisions of properly constituted WIRES Management Committees and Board are binding on all members under the jurisdiction of those Committees.

Addendum to WIRES Policies 2.1 WIRES Code of Conduct and 3.2 WIRES Volunteer Grievance Policy

Objectives

The harassment, bullying and discrimination addendum aims to create an environment free from harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination leading to a productive and positive setting. To achieve this objective the WIRES Council will continue to:

- Implement effective procedures to manage complaints based on the principles of natural justice,
- Promote and expect appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

Preamble

The Council and the Board do not condone harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination and value diversity within the membership. The following definitions apply to all members of WIRES, and will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the relevant disciplinary and grievance policies. These definitions apply in any context, including interactions between individual WIRES members. It should be noted that any anti-social discriminatory behaviour, as covered below, may emanate from any member to any other member within the organisation.

Definitions

Harassment: Harassment is defined as behaviour that is directed at an individual or group of members which, because of its severity and/or persistence, is likely to create a hostile or intimidating environment and detrimentally affect an individual's participation in the organisation.

Harassment is determined by reference to the nature and consequences of the behaviour, not the intent of the initiator, and occurs in circumstances where such behaviour could reasonably be considered to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment is any behaviour of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome. It may involve a single incident or a series of incidents. The Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 declare sexual harassment to be unlawful.

Commonplace examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual or suggestive remarks;
- Sexual propositions or repeated requests for dates;
- Repeated questions about personal life;
- Sexual jokes;
- Physical contact such as touching, hugging, brushing up against a person;

- Offensive telephone calls, reading matter or objects, e-mails, screen savers etc;
- Suggestive looks or leers;
- Putting your hand or an object (like a pay slip or a pen) into someone's pocket (especially breast, hip or back pocket);
- The repetition of any other conduct of a sexual nature that causes a person discomfort after the person has told the harasser of their discomfort.

It is a person's right to object to behaviour which they consider falls into any of the categories above.

When identifying sexual harassment, the intent of the person whose behaviour caused offence is largely immaterial, as it is the effect of their behaviour that is relevant.

Sexual harassment is not behaviour which is based on mutual attraction, friendship or respect. If the interaction is consensual, welcome and reciprocated it is not sexual harassment

Bullying:

A. Bullying is defined as any unwanted or aggressive behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, or hurt another person. It can include verbal, physical, and emotional abuse, or social exclusion. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Insults, threats, or verbal abuse.
- Spreading false rumors or gossip.
- Unwanted physical contact or threats of violence.
- Purposefully excluding someone from group activities or discussions.
- Cyberbullying (e.g., online harassment).

B. Zero Tolerance for Bullying:

There is zero tolerance for bullying behavior in any form. Bullying will not be tolerated, and swift action will be taken against any individual who engages in such behavior.

C. Responsibilities of All Members and Volunteers

- All members and volunteers are expected to uphold this Code of Conduct.
- If you witness or experience bullying behavior, you are encouraged to report it to the appropriate supervisor, volunteer coordinator, or designated complaint officer.
- Individuals should avoid any behavior that could be perceived as bullying, even unintentionally.
- Reports of bullying will be taken seriously and handled confidentially to protect the privacy of all involved parties.

- Reports should be made promptly to the appropriate personnel, and no one will be retaliated against for making a report in good faith.

D. Investigation and Consequences

- Any reported incidents of bullying will be thoroughly investigated. Both the individual who reported the bullying and the person accused will have the opportunity to share their perspectives.
- Disciplinary action will be taken if bullying is confirmed. Actions may include warnings, suspension, or removal from the organization or event, depending on the severity of the bullying.

E. Support and Resources

- Support will be provided to those affected by bullying. This may include counselling, peer support, or other resources as necessary.
- Volunteers and members are encouraged to seek support if they feel affected by bullying behavior.

F. Commitment to Prevention

The organization is committed to creating a culture of inclusion and mutual respect. We will provide regular training and resources to help prevent bullying and ensure everyone is aware of appropriate conduct.

Discrimination:

A. Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably because of their sex, age, race, disability, pregnancy or any of the other grounds covered by anti discrimination legislation. Discrimination can also occur when a requirement (or rule) that is the same for everyone has an effect or result that is, or is likely to, disadvantage members because of their sex, race, disability etc. [NB: OH&S legislation and regulations are paramount]

B. When acting in the course of WIRES activities, treat everyone, regardless of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic circumstance, political or religious beliefs, with respect, courtesy and without any form of harassment whether real or implied (from 2.1 WIRES Code of Conduct).

