



Species Coordinator's Handbook

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Introduction

Thank you for being willing to take on this key role in WIRES. Coordinators play an essential role in our organisation, ensuring we maintain high standards of care for all animals – from rescue, through rehabilitation, to release. Because of this, we ask a great deal of our coordinators. They have to manage and support members, appropriately place animals, and have relevant animal care knowledge and skills.

We provide a number of resources to support you across all of these areas. These resources include this handbook, the coordinators policy, an online training package, and the various policies, manuals, and resources related to animal care. We encourage you to familiarise yourself with this material.

Please note, this handbook relates to the role and duties of the species coordinator. It does not cover animal care and management – that information will be found in the manuals and training materials that relate to the care of individual species.

The role of coordinator can be very demanding and challenging. Please take the time to seek out the resources – both inside and outside of your branch – that can help and support you in your decision-making and communicating with members.

Relevant Policy and Procedures

You need to be familiar with the following policies. These documents are on the WIRES Intranet, under the Council tab. These documents outline the responsibilities of and expectations of a species coordinator as well as the way they need to undertake their tasks.

Government Documents

- Licence
- Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Protected Fauna
- Relevant specific animal code of practice.

WIRES documents

- 3.2 WIRES Volunteer Respectful Workplace Policy (Appendix A)
- 3.3 WIRES Volunteer Disciplinary Policy (Appendix B)
- 2.1 Code of conduct (Appendix C)
- 1.5 Collection of Animals in the Network
- 1.6 Conflict between Branches over Surrendered Animals
- 1.10 Feral Animals
- 1.12 Specialist Care
- 1.13 Endangered Species
- 1.17 Transfer of Animals
- 1.18 Unwanted Pets
- 1.28 Euthanasia Policy

- 2.5 Registration and De-registration of Animals
- All relevant species policies (ie Snake policy, Bat Policies, Raptor Policies etc)

Coordinators must also be familiar with the RICC and relevant care manuals; species risk management plans and other work health and safety documents.

You will also need to complete the online Coordinators Workshop before, or within 30 days of, taking up the position.

What does a Species Coordinator do?

As the name implies, the role of a Species Coordinator is to oversee/coordinate those animals that, for whatever reason, come to the attention of the branch. While there are some specific duties and responsibilities as outlined below, primarily the coordinator is there to support members, keeping an eye on whether they are becoming overburdened and providing them with information from the relevant Management Team.

Of most value as a species coordinator will be your ability to communicate well and with patience. Be inclusive and communicate with understanding and diplomacy when having to make tough and sometimes unpopular decisions. Species Coordinators need to be able to separate their feelings about carers and make decisions based on the best interests of the animals. Never base your decision on personal feelings in relation to individual carers.

Being an effective Species Coordinator does not necessarily mean being an expert in any particular species, but rather knowing where to acquire the information you need.

You must be willing to keep abreast of the current best practice relating to care and housing of the species you are responsible for. You must keep up-to-date with WIRES policies pertaining to species care and, if unsure, be willing to seek advice. Any advice required should be sought from the Branch Chairperson and Branch Management Committee (BMC), or the relevant species management team.

The coordinator is the front line for maintaining best practice within the WIRES organisation, often in the face of contradictory information from external/internal sources and internet myth. This conflicting information frequently creates confusion for rehabilitators. The internet can be a valuable resource, but all information must be verified by a reliable source or reference, acceptable to the WIRES Board and the species management teams.

Species Coordinators' Responsibilities

Coordinators need to be aware of some specific responsibilities. These are generally about contact, records, and working with other branch officers and the relevant Management Team. You will have access to other relevant species coordinators' contact details.

Your duties as a species coordinator fall into five broad groups:

- You need to organise the care of animals within your branch;
 - The Species Coordinator is indirectly responsible for the welfare of all relevant species within their branch.
 - You will generally be involved in decisions to euthanase an animal in care, to release it or to transfer it to another branch or organisation.
- You need to ensure appropriate treatment of animals in care;
- You need to liaise with people within your branch, within your local area, and in other parts of WIRES;
- You need to ensure good records are kept;
- You need to familiarise yourself with the care, habitat and release requirements of the species for which you are responsible, and of WIRES policies and procedures and you need to keep your knowledge of these matters up to date;
 - The Species Coordinator must be prepared to keep their training on the relevant species up to date and attend relevant species training sessions or specialist workshops

Organising the care of animals within your branch will involve:

- Maintaining a list of members trained in the rehabilitation of the relevant species, ensuring that individual species' needs are met by the rehabilitator and that allocation of animals is made fairly and appropriately.
- Being readily available by phone or email to answer questions relating to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of relevant species;
 - You should be prepared to research and obtain information not available at the time the question is presented, or refer the member to an appropriate source of advice.
- Make decisions (with permission from the BMC if needed) for veterinary procedures on the species for which you are responsible.
 - This should include discussions with the vet on likely outcomes, and

consultation with the branch executive on the probable cost.

- A vet's finding that euthanasia is necessary should, however, be taken as final.
- Being responsible, within WIRES, for the final decision on matters such as euthanasia or release, in consultation with the vet, the rescuer/carer and, if necessary, the species management team.
- Overseeing the transfer of animals to other WIRES branches, wildlife rehabilitation groups or other institutions, according to WIRES and government policies, and using suitable transfer techniques for the species involved. This will be needed when:
 - the animal has come from out of the branch area. The branch or organisation of origin must be informed within 48 hours and arrangements made for transfer back to the area it came from as soon as possible
 - no-one within the branch has the appropriate training and facilities to ensure a successful release.
- Acting as the contact for WRO staff in cases where, at the end of a working day, the WRO has been unable to find a rescuer for an animal,
 - so that it is not left over for the next day's rescues.
- Acting as the main contact in the event of an emergency involving the relevant species.
 - In the case of a declared emergency, this will be through the branch emergency response team member, if the role exists.

Ensuring appropriate treatment of the species for which you have responsibility will involve:

- Ensuring that animals in care and rehabilitation are kept in appropriate conditions including:
 - that the area they are kept in is an adequate size,
 - with, if appropriate, others of the same species,
 - away from domestic animals or predators, and
 - they are able to develop independence from people.
- Ensuring that all new members wishing to rehabilitate an animal attend a species relevant course before taking any animal into care.
- Arranging for the inspection of all new members' facilities prior to WIRES animals

being placed in their care.

- You need to ensure that the current member facility inspection report is filled out, and that you and the Branch Secretary receive a copy.
- Ensuring that branch members comply with or exceed any current licence conditions or WIRES Minimum Standards for wildlife rehabilitation and facilities.
- Maintaining a list of members requesting training in the relevant species and liaising with the branch training officer to organise training for them.
- Advising the BMC quickly of any animal welfare matters involving the species you coordinate. You must keep records about these matters.
- Reporting to the Branch Executive on any persistent failure by rescuers or carers to comply with WIRES policies. You must keep written records on any issues.
- When you believe you have new or useful information that is backed by scientific evidence or research, presenting it to the species management team for discussion, evaluation and possible inclusion in future training.

Maintaining good record-keeping will involve:

- Maintaining an up-to-date list of all animals for which you are the coordinator;
- Ensuring that callsheets are created on the WIRES database for all animals, and that once created they are kept up to date;
- Ensuring regular updates - including weights, measurements, illnesses, injuries and treatments, as well as the animal's progress - are entered on the WIRES database.
 - Where carers are not able to enter the data themselves they should provide it to you so that you can ensure it is recorded on the database.
 - The minimum data collected on each animal must include:
 - ✓ Date Rescued
 - ✓ Call number
 - ✓ Rescuer
 - ✓ Species
 - ✓ Location of rescue
 - ✓ Cause (or probable cause)
 - ✓ Injury
 - ✓ Fate
- Providing regular reports to the branch executive on the species for which you are responsible.

Keeping your own knowledge up to date will involve:

- Understanding the habitat requirements for each species under your responsibility
- Completing all applicable training courses relevant to your species before taking up the position.
- Liaising with Species Coordinators in surrounding branches and organisations to share knowledge, resources, and WIRES-approved training.

You must also:

- Ensure that any threatened species are notified appropriately according to WIRES Policy 1.13 Endangered Species.
- Comply with any specific advice or direction from your species management team about the coordinator's role for your species.

When the Coordinator is unavailable for a period of days, he/she should advise the WIRES Rescue Office (WRO) or where applicable, the branch Phone Roster Coordinator and the Branch Secretary. The BMC must appoint a substitute coordinator. The BMC should consider members who are on the Branch Species Support Team or nominated by the Species Coordinator. Where there is no one suitable in the branch, the BMC may consider asking a neighbouring branch coordinator or the Species Management Team to suggest an appropriate person.

The substitute Coordinator has the same duties and obligations as the appointed coordinator for the period they are working in the role.

Member engagement

Building an engaged team of carers within your branch will help to ensure support even during peak seasons. It will also make it far easier to fulfil the responsibilities of a coordinator and can lead to improved rehabilitation practices. Communication is the key to engagement. This means not only sharing news and information with carers; it calls for listening to their concerns and responses.

One of the simplest ways to increase communication is by sharing rehabilitation success stories with the branch at monthly meetings. Communication can also be enhanced through periodic emails to carers to share news about changing practices, illnesses, injuries and treatments. These steps serve a two-fold purpose of helping to build carer knowledge at the same time as keeping carers involved.

Engagement can also be developed by helping carers to extend their skills (eg dealing with new injuries) or by supporting carers as they obtain new experiences (eg working with new species or new age groups).

When Issues Arise

The most difficult part of the role is often working with other members.

Issues with members may relate to the way care is being provided and you may need to provide guidance around this. Remember to keep your advice firmly linked with the policy and training material, and reference them for the member.

Below is a table that summarises some things that you might consider in communicating with members.

| Encourage | Avoid |
|---|---|
| Give the volunteer recognition | Do not assume the role of a stern parent scolding a child |
| Provide a warm atmosphere of communication | Do not moralise |
| Encourage the volunteer to gain insight into the problem | Do not threaten the volunteer with the likely consequences if they don't get their act together |
| Give the volunteer a clear picture of all their strengths and weaknesses | Do not get into an argument |
| Encourage the volunteer to bring out any conflicts, personal problems and ideas | Do not cut off a volunteer's comments |
| Suggest positive steps to rationalise the problem or improve performance | Do not give the volunteer false hope |
| Create a desire with the volunteer to change | Do not expect a dramatic change in the volunteer because of one conversation |
| Build a level of support that is conducive to both friendliness and efficiency | |

The other area where members and coordinators most commonly disagree is over the fate of an animal, be it euthanasia or moving the animal to another carer. There are a range of ways you can manage this.

First, it is valuable to listen to the reasons given by the member to support their views.

A member who feels that you have listened and understood their reasons is more likely to listen to you and accept your decision. It may be that the member puts a convincing argument and that you decide to follow the member's suggested course of action for a time. In every decision, the individual animal's welfare must be the paramount consideration in this decision.

Regardless of the best efforts of you and the member, there may still be times when you are not able to come to an agreement. This is the time to look at a conflict resolution process. Review the policy and look at Appendices A, B and C of this handbook. You will need to talk to your BMC Executive and may wish to consult with the volunteer support manager in WIRES head office (VSM@wires.org.au)

It is important to recognise that members come to WIRES with a range of life experiences and connections. We may not like or approve of all the lifestyle choices a carer makes. However, as coordinator, your focus must be on supporting the member to provide appropriate care. Unless you are able to demonstrate that a carer's choices are having a negative consequence for the animals, it is not appropriate to deny the member animals or comment on their choices.

Resources within the branch:

- Other members of your branch may be an important resource for you to draw on; they may have experience with a particular species or knowledge of available treatments that may be invaluable. Where possible you should create a list of experienced members with the necessary skills to assist you or other members if you are unavailable. This list should be approved by the BMC and then circulated to all branch members.
- Please keep in mind that many years of caring does not necessarily equate to current best practice.
- Once you identify what skills exist within the branch, it may be worth discussing with these members how they wish to deploy their skills. In many branches this leads to the formation of a branch Species Support Team, whose members take on slightly different roles. For example, a member with skills in examination and treatment or a member who can deliver subcutaneous fluids may assist new members by teaching them how these procedures are done.
- Many procedures are well beyond new members' initial skills and are best attained through "one-on-one" training. Giving injections is a typical example of the existing specialist skills you need to identify within the branch.
- It is useful to make a list of reference books available within the branch. Field guides and other books or photographic collections, will assist in identification. Specialist biology and medicine books can be invaluable.
- Local vets, who may specialise or have expertise in native animals, are an important set of contacts to be fostered. Please ensure that you and your members treat vets with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Refer to your list of experienced members, who may have successfully treated common problems for years, as they may save expensive or time-consuming trips to the vet surgery. Such visits add stress to an already compromised animal.

- It cannot be presumed that members will have all the equipment/facilities required to deal with the particular developmental stage of the Species. Identify and verify who has what equipment/facilities within the branch before placing any animal with a rehabilitator.
- Identify members who can help locate suitable habitat types in order to release species appropriately while taking into account your responsibility to release in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Record Keeping - Xmatters and the WIRES Database

The WIRES Intranet can assist you in a number of ways and it is essential to become familiar with its features. If you are unfamiliar with either the Intranet or the database, a copy of the “cheat-sheet” is available from the Login page of the WIRES Intranet website, and any member who regularly uses the site will be able to download one for you.

Those with the necessary skills and internet access are encouraged to assist those members who don't.

The place to start with new members is to get them into the habit of completing the callsheet for each animal when they carry out a rescue. New members should be encouraged to complete their own callsheets and to phone or email you if, for some reason, they are unable to do that.

Some uses of the intranet include:

- Recording animals which come into the branch and all the information pertaining to those animals.
- Tracking of specific injuries. The records on the database may give you some information but it will also give you the rehabilitator's name and allow you to send them a private email seeking further information.

Coordinators' species lists are vital, whether electronic or paper, and should include details of animal weights, foot and tail measurements, injuries, illnesses, treatments, and fates etc.

The phone call or email to register the animal will also provide the opportunity for a member to be given advice and/or instructions.

Other essential information for you as Species Coordinator and the database are:

- The details of the animal: The common English name is quite satisfactory but must be the complete name – just putting down kangaroo, for example, makes the record useless.
- The weight, measurements and visual assessment of the stage of development

of the animal upon arrival into rehabilitation.

- Date and original location where rescued (this information may need to be gained from the Vet or member of the public as appropriate)

Veterinary Decisions

Under the provision of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTAA), it is a legal requirement that any animal requiring veterinary treatment, must receive it in a timely fashion. Although there is no legal obligation for anyone to take an animal into care initially, once they do so, they accept legal responsibility for its welfare. This includes mitigating suffering. NPWS Wildlife Rehabilitation policy states that euthanasia is an acceptable outcome. While regrettable, in many cases it is the best outcome.

An important role for Species Coordinators is assisting members to decide what veterinary treatment an animal should receive. While most vets provide consultations and some drugs free of charge, there can be cases where the animal requires costly treatment. This will require decisions that take into account available resources, and the long-term welfare of the animal.

Before seeking any veterinary assistance, Species Coordinators must familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, relevant Management Team policies local branch policy guidelines regarding veterinary treatment, payment and costs.

Succession Planning

At some point in time, every coordinator decides it is time to step down. The transition to a new coordinator can be made much more smoothly if potential replacements have already been identified and if efforts have been made to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to perform the role. The species coordinator is in a unique position to enable this to happen.

Consider the carers within your branch and identify those with the potential ability to one day take on the coordinator's role. Ask yourself:

- Would they have the time to devote to the position?
- What useful skills, knowledge, and experience could they bring to the role?
- What other skills, knowledge, and experience would help them prepare for such a role?
- Do they have the ability to work with a wide range of members?
- Most importantly, are they interested?

Having identified a suitable and willing successor, think about ways you can begin to address any skills gaps and improve preparedness for the coordinator's role. For example, this could mean creating a mentoring or first aid response role for the carer, or

making them the alternative contact when you are not available. It could involve obtaining experience across a number of new species, assisting with paperwork, or completing additional training (such as the coordinator's workshop).

Appendix A - 3.2 WIRES Volunteer Respectful Workplace Policy

Introduction

To solve problems as they develop, WIRES Inc needs effective grievance handling procedures tailored to the needs of the organisation and its volunteers.

What is a "grievance"?

A grievance is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about a situation by one or more volunteers.

What is a "grievance procedure"?

Grievance procedures are formal and agreed procedures that an organisation and its members have agreed to follow to deal with or resolve problems which may occur from time to time within the organisation.

Grievance procedures are based on the principle of natural justice and it is recognised as good sense to have effective grievance procedures.

Features of a good grievance procedure?

- Complaints must be specific and fully described by the person with the grievance;
- The person(s) should be given the full details of the allegation(s) against them;
- The person(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should have the opportunity and be given a reasonable time to put their side of the story before resolution is attempted;
- Proceedings should be conducted honestly, fairly and without bias;
- Proceedings should not be unduly delayed.

What is an effective grievance procedure?

An effective grievance procedure should allow the following outcomes:

- A peaceful method of conflict resolution to reduce discomfort and provide greater stability;
- Quick and effective results;
- Improved communications and relationships;
- Increased harmony and efficiency of the organisation;
- Resolution of problems according to the principles of confidentiality and fairness;
- Better emotional well-being, performance and morale of WIRES members;
- Avoidance of the costs and delays of ongoing conflict;
- Natural justice.

Handling Grievances

Grievances must be dealt with promptly:

- Avoiding the matter creates anxiety;
- Initiate discussion quickly, investigate and double check all the facts.

WIRES Office bearers should be accessible for assistance.

- Make sure volunteers understand the grievance procedure and how it works.

Informality:

- Discuss the issue in a non-threatening environment;
- No-one should receive a printed form letter in response to a problem.

Consistency:

- Policies and procedures must apply equally to all volunteers.

Admission of errors:

- Anyone who has acted incorrectly or inappropriately should say so, and then attempt to fix the problem.

Closure:

- Once a response is decided upon, a full explanation should be given;
- This allows the matter to be finalised.

Learning from it:

- Resolving grievances should give practical insights into dealing with such a situation (and possibly others) in the future.

Policy

Stages in the grievance procedure are:

1. In the first instance an informal attempt to resolve the grievance should be made between the persons involved.
2. If it cannot be settled informally it should then move to the following formal procedure:
 - a) A volunteer with a grievance notifies the Branch Executive (in writing) as to the substance of the grievance, requests a meeting, and states the remedy sought.
 - b) Discussion will follow between the volunteer and the Branch Executive as soon as possible, but in less than 30 days.
 - c) If the matter remains unresolved:
 - The volunteer with the grievance must notify the WIRES Board, in writing as soon as possible or within a maximum of 21 days, and may request mediation with the Community Justice Centre.
 - d) If the matter is still not resolved:

- WIRES Board members will make final determination on the matter and provide actions to finalise the issue in writing to both the complainant, and any relevant branch officers.
- e) If any parties remain dissatisfied with the decision of the Board, an appeal may be lodged with the Board within a maximum of 10 working days.
- f) The Board may appoint a sub-committee to review the material and consider the merits of the appeal.

Appeals Procedure

On receipt of an appeal from a volunteer the Board must, within 28 days, appoint a sub-committee to hear the appeal within 60 days of receipt of the notice from the volunteer.

The appeal sub-committee must consist of no less than three members of the Association. **At the appeal hearing:**

- the subcommittee must abide by the Appeal Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and procedures;
- the parties must be given the opportunity to state their respective cases orally*, or in writing;
- the subcommittee members present will vote by secret ballot on the question of whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked;
- the sub committee's decision will be final.

**** Where a volunteer is not confident to express his/her grievance in writing, they may seek assistance to do so, or may express their grievance verbally. The Branch Executive, Board or sub-committee should record this in writing, the transcript of which should be agreed to, and signed by all parties as an accurate record of the meeting.***

Records must be kept by whichever party is concerned – if resolved at branch level, the records must be kept by the Branch Secretary; if resolved by the sub-committee/Board, and then records must be kept by the Board Secretary.

Appendix B – 3.3 WIRES Volunteer Disciplinary Policy

Introduction

WIRES volunteers who are performing or behaving unsatisfactorily will be assisted to understand the standards expected of them in relation to compliance with WIRES policies, procedures and conduct. (WIRES Policies and Code of Conduct are available on the Intranet under the Council tab.)

Where appropriate, initial direction and support will be provided by the relevant Coordinator and/or Branch Management Committee.

Where inappropriate behaviour or performance is not remedied through this process, warnings or disciplinary action may be necessary.

Policy

1. Directions may be given either in writing or orally. However confidential written records of all initial directions and support must be kept by the relevant Branch officers and Branch Secretary. The volunteer will be shown and given a copy of the written records and will have an opportunity to comment on their contents before these are filed. Each performance or behavioural issue will not be considered valid in excess of three years.
2. WIRES volunteers, whose performance or behaviour continues to be unsatisfactory, will be given a defined set of directions and time frame in which to improve their performance/behaviour, and informed of the consequences resulting from continued non-compliance. If at the end of this stated period the volunteer shows no improvement, a written warning will be issued.
 - This warning will inform the volunteer in writing that disciplinary action up to and including cancellation of authorisation/membership may be taken if the volunteer does not cease the unsatisfactory performance or behaviour immediately.
3. WIRES Inc also has the right to suspend or cancel the authorisation/membership of a volunteer for serious breaches of WIRES Policies and Procedures and/or Code of Conduct.
4. At every stage of the disciplinary process, the volunteer, should they wish, has the right to have a support person in attendance. The support person must not have any input into the procedure.

Appendix C – 2.1 WIRES Code of Conduct

Policy Adopted 11 November 2006

Reviewed and amended 29/11/2008

Adopted by Council 13 December 2008

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, 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;
- 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; e.g. 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 Respectful Workplace Policy addendum approved and adopted by Council 9 April 2011

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

Bullying is defined as any on-going anti-social or unreasonable behaviour that offends, degrades, intimidates or humiliates a person, such as:

- Cruelty, belittlement or degradation
- Public reprimand or behaviour intended to punish, such as isolation and exclusion from activities
- Ridicule, insult or sarcasm
- Trivialisation of views and opinions, or unsubstantiated allegations of misconduct
- Physical violence such as pushing, shoving or throwing of objects

Discrimination

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]

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).

Principles, Obligations and Responsibilities

Reports of (and in) a formal written complaints of harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination will be treated seriously by the Board and Council and will be investigated promptly in a sensitive, thorough and confidential manner ensuring that complainants and witnesses are not victimised.

Before any decision is made, members have the right to be informed about the nature and content of the issue and have the right to be heard in line with the WIRES Constitution, and as per the current WIRES Grievance Policy.

All members have a role in ensuring that harassment, bullying and discrimination does not occur within the organisation and are expected to take prompt and appropriate action in circumstances where such behaviour is drawn to their attention.

The complaint resolution process is carried out in good faith and complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance will be rejected if a preliminary investigation of the facts indicates this.

When a complaint is brought forward by a member, it is the responsibility of the appropriate governing body* to ensure that no bullying or harassment is directed against the complainant, either directly or indirectly.

(*Branch, Standards Team, Council or Board)

Resolution Options

The Board and Council encourage members to endeavour to resolve issues directly and informally through a process of discussion and conciliation where possible. At any stage, strategies used to resolve a grievance may include, but need not be limited to, mediation, counselling or conciliation meetings between the parties.

If the informal options do not work or are not appropriate, Members can make a formal complaint in writing under the Grievance Policy.

In cases of assault or other criminal activity, members should contact the Police or appropriate government authority.

Depending upon the severity of the issue, any breach of the WIRES Code of Ethics, and/or Code of Conduct or Addendum to same, will result in temporary or permanent loss of members' authorisation.