



WILDLIFE
INFORMATION
RESCUE AND
EDUCATION
SERVICE

Social Media and Media Engagement Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Document Purpose

The purpose of this Social Media and Media Engagement Policy (Policy) is to:

- Establish guidelines for the professional use of social media and media engagement on behalf of WIRES Ltd.
- Outline expectations for WIRES' representatives when referencing WIRES Ltd., its activities, or animals under its care.
- Safeguard WIRES Ltd.'s reputation, manage social media communication, and ensure responsible media engagement, and
- Establish parameters and outline the expected behaviour of people who do not officially represent WIRES Ltd. but could, through their social media or media engagement activity, impact the reputation, brand, and services of WIRES Ltd.

The Policy is supplementary to the WIRES Code of Conduct, Conditions of WIRES Membership, NPWS Biodiversity Conservation Licence conditions, DCCEW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Fauna, DCCEW Rehabilitation of protected animals Policy, DCCEW Species codes of practice, WIRES Species training manuals and compliments WIRES Community Standards.

1.2 Scope

For the purposes of this Policy "media" refers to any form of traditional and digital channels used for broadcasting, publishing, or disseminating information to the public, including but not limited to print, television, radio, podcasts, interviews and digital media.

Digital media includes but is not limited to, engagement on platforms which allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content. There are many forms of digital media, including social media platforms, blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, forums, and more.

People covered by this policy will be collectively referred to as 'Representatives'. It applies to all employees, directors, officers, contractors, members, volunteers, suppliers, temporary staff, visitors, vendors, or others that could be representing WIRES, or, be assumed to be representing WIRES.

This policy applies to:

- A representative's use of media engagement, including contact with media outlets and journalists, in both a professional and private capacity when referencing WIRES.
- A representative's use of digital media, including social media in a professional and private capacity where they can reasonably be identified as a representative of WIRES.
- All WIRES-related activities, including any WIRES-related event and/or activity including conferences, functions, or business trips, including Representatives personal social media participation. Any information posted or published on social media should be treated as publicly available information.

This policy operates in conjunction with other relevant WIRES policies and any applicable Enterprise Agreements, Awards, employment contracts, volunteer agreements including codes of conduct, and applicable legislation.

2. Background

WIRES has a strong brand and reputation within the animal rescue, wildlife rehabilitation and nature conservation space, built over a long period of time. It is critical that all representatives of WIRES are respectful of the organisation's reputation, and do not mis-represent or damage it in any way.

WIRES Ltd. maintains a robust digital presence across various social media platforms and engages with traditional media to complement communication and marketing efforts. These channels serve to raise awareness, assist wildlife in need, and offer educational content about wildlife preservation and rehabilitation.

3. Guiding Principles

Whenever Representatives are interacting on social media or engaging with media, whether in an official or personal capacity (see Section Four for definitions), the following guiding principles should be adhered to.

Representatives are:

- Expected to engage with others and WIRES respectfully and professionally.
- Encouraged to share and repost information that is relevant, appropriate to WIRES objects and activities, aligned with WIRES policies, and within the scope of this Policy.
- Not to knowingly publish, post or share incorrect, confidential, defamatory, or misleading information about WIRES' work, or the work of other organisations or individuals.
- Not to publish, post or share any content in contravention of any WIRES policies and codes of conduct, Enterprise Agreements, Awards, employment contracts, volunteer agreements, Codes of Practice, or Australian laws or regulations.
- Not to publicly post or share any images or footage of animals under the care of WIRES Biodiversity Conservation Licence, except for Official Use, without permission from WIRES Media Manager or Marketing Manager.

4. Definitions

4.1 Official Use

Official use is when a Representative is using social media or engaging with media as an official representative of WIRES Ltd. as an approved part of their media or marketing positions, or with permission from the Media Manager or Marketing Manager.

Posts from an official WIRES Ltd. account, i.e. not a distinct individual person, must be made by an authorised Representative. In determining who should be an authorised Representative, the CEO and Media and Marketing Manager may consider:

- the job description of the individual.
- whether the individual has the appropriate communication skills and experience.
- what understanding the individual has of the risks of social media and media use; and
- current and former responsibilities and how the individual performed in those roles.

Only Authorised Representatives should have access to WIRES' social media account passwords and logins.

4.2 Personal Use

Personal use is when Representatives:

- are using social media or developing digital content in a personal capacity, rather than officially representing WIRES Ltd.; or
- are using a personal website or social media account that bears no affiliation to WIRES Ltd. in any capacity.

Subject to this Policy, Representatives should seek prior approval from the Marketing Team before engaging in Personal Use about or connected with WIRES, except when sharing, reposting, retweeting, etc. WIRES Ltd.'s posts, materials, or comments without substantial or meaningful change, as part of showing their affiliation with, and support for the organisation and the organisation's activities.

When sharing digital content, Representatives must not disclose confidential information belonging to WIRES or any other information the Representative is required to keep confidential.

Representatives may disclose their employment details on social media, such as inclusion in work history on LinkedIn, however, they should always consider their privacy and security first.

For the safety and security of the individuals and animals involved, any request for WIRES services, such as rescue, care, information, or education received through Personal Use must be directed to WIRES to be dealt with in an official capacity. These enquiries can be directed to the WIRES rescue line 1300 094 737, online Report-a-Rescue Form, or Contact Us page.

Individuals who undertake personal activity on social media channels are expected to self-moderate and use a commonsense approach, always ensuring they act according to the Policy and the law. The use of any hateful, or derogatory language on any personal account by a WIRES employee or Representative would be viewed as a breach of the policy. Advice can be sought from the Marketing Team at WIRES Ltd. via marketing@wires.org.au

5. Permissions and Delegations

5.1 WIRES Ltd.

Within the WIRES Ltd. Head Office, the Marketing Team and Media Manager is responsible for all Official Use of WIRES Ltd. social media, media engagement and websites as defined in Section 4.1. The Chief Executive Officer, Media Manager, and Marketing Manager have primary delegation over the website, media engagement and social media management at WIRES Ltd.

All media engagement by Representatives on behalf of WIRES Ltd. requires prior approval from WIRES Ltd. This includes but is not limited to providing interviews, statements, or any form of content creation for traditional media outlets or digital channels, including social media platforms. Approval must be sought and obtained from WIRES Ltd. before engaging in any media related activities.

Personal use, as defined in section 4.2, is up to the individual representatives; however, they may be held accountable for their actions related to media engagement and will be disciplined if required.

5.2 Branches

The Branch Executive has delegation for all social media and media engagement activity undertaken by the Branch, with a secondary delegation falling to either their officially appointed Administrators and Moderators. In the interests of animal welfare, best practice rescue and rehabilitation, the safety of our Representatives, and WIRES Ltd.'s reputation and brand, permission will not be granted for:

- Public facing branch websites; or
- Public facing branch Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok pages or accounts on any other platforms.

All public facing media must be approved in advance with WIRES Media and Marketing Teams.

WIRES Ltd. branches have administrative rights over their approved closed Branch Facebook and all other social media based groups, and Branches Executives have an obligation to ensure that:

- The WIRES Ltd. official account has administrator access to the closed Branch Facebook Groups, and they comply with this Policy and ensure they keep WIRES Ltd. abreast of any new branch closed groups created or social media platforms they are active in.
- The Branch appointed Administrators and Moderators for their Closed Branch Facebook Group have a responsibility to ensure that social media content reflects best practice, and that WIRES Volunteers are informed of this Policy and agree to abide by its contents, particularly in the context of appropriate content to post and the respectful, professional behaviour expected of all individuals engaged in the group.
- The Closed Branch Facebook Group must only include current WIRES Volunteers of that Branch, and this must be regularly reviewed (at least monthly) and edited as required.
- Any comments or content posted in closed social media groups that is inaccurate, inappropriate, against agreed policies or may be defamatory, must be removed as soon as possible.
- The Marketing Team at WIRES Ltd. will help provide advice and assistance in relation to social media best practice via marketing@wires.org.au
- WIRES Ltd. will remove posts, material or comments where it is determined that the post, material or comment is unacceptable (see Section Six (6) of this Policy) and does not comply with the Guiding Principles (see Section Three (3) of this Policy).

6. Unacceptable Use

Representatives will not engage in unacceptable use of social media and media engagement in an official capacity, which includes (but is not limited to):

- Conducting private business using WIRES Ltd. social media channels.
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, derogatory, disparaging, abusive, offensive or otherwise objectionable language.
- Activity that amounts to stalking, harassing, bullying, trolling or marginalising any employees, volunteers, individuals, groups, or others.
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content, including extreme images of graphic content (blood and gore, etc.), animal cruelty or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism, etc.
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values.
- Uploading information of a confidential nature, especially in regard to WIRES Ltd.'s services and stakeholders, or the personal or confidential information of anyone associated with WIRES Ltd.
- Unauthorised access of the systems of WIRES Ltd. or another organisation.
- Criticising or denigrating WIRES Ltd. or other organisations and their employees, volunteers or supporters.

- Activity that interferes with work commitments.
- Release of personal, sensitive or confidential information of WIRES Ltd.
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in-kind services or gifts and
- Activity that brings WIRES Ltd. or the person's professionalism or ability to act in a professional manner into disrepute.

It is the duty of everyone affiliated with WIRES Ltd. to alert either the Marketing Team, or Branch Executive where applicable, to any inappropriate content they may encounter.

7. Copyright, Intellectual Property, and Privacy

Representatives must respect the intellectual property rights of others and not infringe on copyrights, trademarks or other forms of intellectual property in their use of social media or media engagement.

It is expected that:

- Attributions are included when quoting a link or publication,
- The original link is used whenever possible,
- Quotes are indicated using quotation marks or block quotes, and
- Conditions of licensed materials are adhered to.
- When using a photograph, confirm it can be used and adhere to any license conditions applicable. If an image is used, credit the source unless permission has been granted to use the image without credit, or the copyright of the image is WIRES Ltd.
- If an image includes a person, Representatives must ensure the person has provided their written consent to their image being used for the agreed traditional or digital media channels.
- Any use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) must be clearly stated so as not to create confusion or misrepresent real behaviour.
- All content creation and social media use must comply with WIRES Ltd.'s Privacy Policy and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

8. Policy Breach

Misuse of social media, media engagement or any digital channel can have serious consequences for WIRES Ltd.

All Representatives are responsible for ensuring adherence to this Policy. At management level, this responsibility includes undertaking appropriate risk assessment and performance management or disciplinary action for any suspected or identified breach.

Misuse of social media or media engagement leading to a breach of this Policy can have serious consequences for Representatives. This may include performance management or disciplinary action, including counselling, warning, training and suspension. If misuse of social media or media engagement constitutes serious misconduct, disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may occur.

In certain circumstances, WIRES Ltd. may also:

- Report the individual's conduct to external authorities, such as NPWS, RSPCA, or the police, and
- Seek to recover costs incurred because of a breach of this policy from the Representative who committed the breach.

9. Wildlife Rescue and Care Advice and Assistance

It is inappropriate and unsafe for Representatives to undertake any activities involving wildlife rescue assistance to members of the public directly through digital channels, including social media. Social media

is a communication and engagement channel, not a service channel, and is not resourced or monitored 24/7.

WIRES Ltd. strongly recommends, where possible, disabling private messaging functions on social media channels, like Facebook, for example, to close this method of contact from the public to avoid Representatives receiving requests for rescue assistance directly.

To ensure the public understands social media is a communication channel and not a help-seeking service, all official social media accounts, blogs, or pages should direct help seekers to WIRES Rescue Office number 1300 094 737, which is a 24/7 service and clearly communicate the following, or a substantially similar message: "Please contact WIRES for 24/7 wildlife rescue advice and assistance, by visiting wires.org.au or calling 1300 094 737."

10. Complaints

Social media and media complaints or negative comments regarding WIRES Ltd. may occur through different channels. Both official and personal users of digital media are discouraged from arguing or refuting complaints or negative feedback through these media channels. This behaviour can antagonise or fuel further attacks on WIRES Ltd.'s services, brand and/or reputation.

In the event of a complaint or negative comment about WIRES Ltd., it is important to respond to the comment as soon as possible with a generic message to confirm that further advice or information is being sought and request an email address where a detailed response can be sent once further advice, or a response has been obtained. Any complaints should be directed to marketing@wires.org.au.

11. Deleting or Disabling Comments

Social media is fluid, busy and often self-regulating. Social media can be used to disseminate information but should be considered a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to wider community views.

WIRES Ltd. will hide, delete or disable comments or posts and ban profiles, pages or accounts that breach any of the conditions outlined in the 'Unacceptable Use' in Section Six (6) of this Policy. If a Representative thinks a post or comment may be defamatory, they should err on the side of caution and take the appropriate action to have the comment removed as soon as possible.

12. Contact Us

If you have any questions about applying this Policy or require any guidance on acceptable use of digital media and appropriate media engagement, please contact WIRES Ltd. Marketing Team: marketing@wires.org.au

All mainstream media enquires should be directed to media@wires.org.au or 0416272153

13. Related Documents

13.1 Related Policies

Internal:

[WIRES Code of Conduct](#)

[Conditions of WIRES Membership](#)
[WIRES Privacy Policy](#)
 And [other WIRES policies](#)

External:

NPWS Biodiversity Conservation Licence conditions
 DCCEW Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Native Fauna
 DCCEW Rehabilitation of protected animals Policy
 DCCEW Species codes of practice

13.2 Related Legislation

[Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
[Copyright Act 1968 \(Cth\)](#)

14. Policy Owner and Review Details

Policy owner	Leanne Taylor, Chief Executive Officer
Next review date	1 July 2027

Version	Date approved	Sections modified
V1	1 July 2025	