



Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc. MEMBERSHIP MANUAL INCORPORATING KEY POLICIES

Version 5 | March 2023



SOWFI Contact Numbers are:

- (08) 7120 6610 (RESCUE 24/7)
- (08) 7100 1419 (ADMIN/MEMBERSHIP/MEDIA)

This is an internal document containing information applicable to new and current employees and in-house volunteers. It should be provided during induction and readily accessible by members.¹

¹In creating this Manual SOWFI has incorporated some content from the [Centre for Volunteering](#)
Document uncontrolled when printed – refer to electronic policy database for the most up-to-date version
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WELCOME TO SOWFI

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc (SOWFI) was established in South Australia in 2018 by a group of wildlife carers who were looking for an organisation that provided **evidence based, best practice training, an objective and active management structure, and both professional and personal support**. We are an incorporated association and registered charity. In 2020 we established a skills-based board to ensure best practice management and support for our volunteers.

SOWFI brings to South Australia a new breed of wildlife rescue organisation:

- One that searches out the relevant science and collaborations to help our native wildlife at an individual and population level
- One that actively supports its volunteers through structure, process & fundraising
- One that is willing to collaborate with other wildlife organisations in the best interests of wildlife conservation
- One that is prepared to give a voice to our wildlife when the laws let them down
- One that will raise funds to educate and support our wildlife researchers

We offer a supported, enriching volunteer experience in wildlife rescue, care, conservation projects and in time, citizen science projects that will measure and protect our native wildlife.

Thank you for joining the team!

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

Our **Vision** is to stop the decline of South Australian wildlife through public relations and education, rescue, research, and conservation projects while working for legislative change.

Our **Mission** is to relieve the suffering of orphaned, sick, and injured native animals through effective rescue and rehabilitation, and support research that will benefit them in the longer term. SOWFI will advocate on their behalf and create awareness amongst South Australians of their beauty and value to ensure they are here for generations to come. Collectively, and in collaboration with other organisations, contribute to the short and long-term welfare of our native wildlife and the conservation of their habitat in South Australia.

SOWFI's **Values** are important to us as they provide guidance for our decision-making, behaviours and also provide us with an ethical compass to guide our actions. We have developed a set of shared values so that members can understand the behavioural expectations of them and how we can create a common culture and experience for our members, and the stakeholders we engage with. Our values are.

1. We are committed to the care and conservation of our native wildlife & habitat
2. We will advocate on behalf of our native wildlife
3. Our decisions are always made in the best interests of the animal
4. We apply evidence-based knowledge and skill in our animal practices
5. We act with a high degree of compassion, personal responsibility, accountability, and respect
6. We see value in collaborating with like-minded people and organisations

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

SOWFI has six (6) core objectives that **shape and provide direction** for our volunteer efforts, they are.

1. **CONSERVATION** - promote preservation and protection of native wildlife and its habitats
2. **EDUCATION** - to create awareness among South Australians about the importance and value of their native wildlife
3. **RESEARCH** - to initiate, promote and fund research that benefits local native wildlife
4. **COLLABORATION** - to engage with key stakeholders
5. **CARE** - relieve the suffering of injured, sick, or orphaned native wildlife through effective rescue, rehabilitation, and release where possible
6. **ADVOCACY** - a voice on behalf of our local native wildlife

CORE ACTIVITIES

SOWFI and its volunteers are passionate about achieving our strategic objectives and **doing what we can to support the conservation of our native wildlife**. Some of our core activities are to.

1. Rescue and care for sick, injured, orphaned, and displaced native wildlife with the intention of returning them to the wild
2. Provide training to volunteers in all aspects of wildlife rehabilitation based on the latest scientific evidence
3. Promote the protection of wildlife by maintaining and re-establishing habitat in collaboration with other conservation groups and research institutions
4. Advise the community on solutions to wildlife problems
5. Raise public awareness of South Australia's unique wildlife and its diverse habitat requirements through community talks and education programmes
6. Operate an efficient wildlife organisation in South Australia which can be contacted at any time by any person in the community needing assistance with the care or rescue of native wildlife
7. Publish a newsletter every two months and distribute it to current members and sponsors

Many of our volunteers are involved in **more than one of our core activities** and we consider ourselves as blessed to have such dedicated members. If you want to get more involved in SOWFI or have ideas, you would like to share with us - we would love to hear from you via email team@saveourwildlife.org.au.

SOWFI MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP TYPES

VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP

Membership Type	Membership Fee
Family*	\$85.00
Single	\$55.00
Student (16 years or over)	\$25.00
Family Concession*	\$75.00
Single Concession	\$45.00

*Includes all children under 16

Applies to people applying to volunteer for SOWFI in any capacity.

Prerequisites:

- Completes the 'Introduction to SOWFI' component of training
- Has completed a registration of interest, been approved by the membership sub-committee following an interview and subsequently by the board
- Membership fees are paid at time of application, are non-refundable and renewed annually within 1 month of receiving an invoice to renew

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Is bestowed on a volunteer member following a nomination and approval by board. A 'life member' shall retain all membership rights but shall no longer be required to pay any annual membership subscription.

Prerequisites:

- A 'life member' is given to a volunteer in recognition of exceptional service to the organisation over an extended period of time

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Is bestowed on a volunteer member following a nomination and approval by board. An 'honorary member' shall be exempt from paying membership subscription for the year following their nomination and successful vote.

Prerequisites:

- An 'honorary member' is given to a volunteer in recognition of their current or recent contribution in the field of the promotion, rescue and care of wildlife, other animals, or related activities, or who has made a significant contribution to the welfare of the association

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

Fees: On application

Applies to companies, association or other business organisations applying, and approved by the board, for membership in the name of that body.

Prerequisites:

- Must complete an application form and submit to board for approval
- Must support and endorse all values of SOWFI

FOUNDING MEMBERSHIP

Are entitled to free membership while they remain active on the board.

Prerequisites:

Is a member of the group of people that have been involved in SOWFI from its inception and contributed to the work that's been involved in the establishment of the association at a board/committee level during the period 2018-2020 inclusive

ANNUAL 'FRIEND OF SOWFI' SUBSCRIPTION

Membership Type	Membership Fee
'Friend of SOWFI' Couples & Family (\$5 per Child)	\$85.00
'Friend of SOWFI' Single	\$55.00

Subscription fee must be paid at time of membership application with various payment options available on the website including credit card online, EFT or postal cheque. **Renewal invoices will be sent out 1 month prior to expiry** and must be paid by the due date. One reminder will be sent after the invoice.

Membership will expire if renewal payment is not received by due date.



MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP

- Attend an 'Intro to SOWFI' training course, complete a 'Registration of Interest Form' and pay membership fee
- Attend an interview with the membership sub-committee
- Applications will be approved by board as required
- Appointed to a district team

LIFE AND HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

- Suggestions can be made to board with supporting documentation
- Applications will be approved by the board on an annual basis

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

- Applications will be made to the marketing officer who will present to board for approval

FOUNDING MEMBERSHIP

- A list of applicable members will be approved by board and advised accordingly

ELIGIBILITY TO NOMINATE FOR BOARD AND VOTE AT AN AGM:

Volunteer members, founding members, and life members are entitled to nominate for board positions, receive notices convening general meetings of the association and may vote on all matters, including constitutional matters.

THE SOWFI TEAM

SOWFI was established by a team of like-minded people dedicated to ensuring the conservation of South Australia's native wildlife. Since our commencement SOWFI has continued to grow and establish an organisational structure that will ensure our members are supported so they can provide best practice and evidence-based care for our native wildlife.

BOARD

SOWFI established a skills-based board in 2020. The purpose for the board is to ensure best practice governance and business management. The SOWFI constitution and strategic objectives set the direction for the board. Additional information on the board and their background can be found on our [website](#).

DISTRICT CO-ORDINATORS

SOWFI district co-ordinators play a key role in supporting our rescuers and carers, handling their queries, and ensuring consistent care practices for our native wildlife. Every one of our volunteers will be assigned a district co-ordinator to ensure you are provided with the right support and supervision.

SPECIES SPECIALISTS

SOWFI species specialists play a key role in supporting our rescuers and carers, handling their queries, and ensuring consistent care practices for our native wildlife. We have a variety of species specialists please liaise with your district co-ordinator for more information.

EDUCATORS

SOWFI is **committed to education** as a means of building community capability with respect to the conservation of our native wildlife. There are a number of ways we seek to build capability and they are.

1. Rescuer and carer courses delivered by our knowledgeable, passionate, and talented volunteers
2. Wildlife medicine for veterinarian industry (delivered by Dr. Anne Fowler)
3. Leadership training for our team leaders
4. Community training/education by our volunteers
5. General community awareness through our social media posts

OUR MEMBERS: RESCUERS, CARERS AND VOLUNTEERS

SOWFI's wildlife conservation efforts would not be possible if it were not for our amazingly dedicated volunteers. The SOWFI board recognises the sacrifices of our members, and we are extremely proud to be associated with such passionate and dedicated people.

There are a number of different volunteer positions including.

1. Wildlife Carer
2. Wildlife Rescuer/Transporter
3. Phone Co-ordinator
4. Wildlife Box Installation/Manufacturing team
5. Marketing and Fundraising team
6. Membership team
7. Operations team

OUR COMMITTEES

SOWFI has a number of committees that support our efforts to achieve our vision, mission, objectives, and plans. Committees will make recommendations for action to the board, which retains collective responsibility for decision making. Involvement in committees allows board members to deepen their knowledge of the organisation, become more actively engaged and fully utilise their experience.

OPERATIONS

The operations committees purpose is to support our wildlife rescuers and carers by ensuring they have access to equipment, food supplies, personal protective equipment and are aware of policies and procedures to ensure best practice in the field.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership committees purpose is to be the membership direction setters, contact point and working party for SOWFI membership goals and objectives.

FUNDRAISING

The fundraising committees purpose is to be the fundraising, marketing, events, social media, and communication direction setters, contact point and working party for SOWFI goals and objectives.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Congratulations on becoming a SOWFI volunteer helping to care for wildlife and promote the ideas and values of our organisation. If you have any queries your first point of contact is your district co-ordinator or email us at membership@saveourwildlife.org.au.

All recruitment activities and support are completed by SOWFI’s volunteers.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Step 1 | Member Pathways | Katrina Baker (Responsible Volunteer)

New members come to us through a number of pathways.

- Existing member referral sent to membership email
- Completing a ‘Registration of Interest Form’
- Attending a [SOWFI Rescuer/Carer course](#) (in person or online)
- Applying through a ‘Volunteering SA/Seek Volunteer’ vacancy

All new members, regardless of pathway must complete a ‘Registration of Interest (ROI)’ form. There are two types of forms to reflect the type of volunteering they have expressed an interest in.

1. [Registration of Interest Form | Carer/Rescuer](#)

2. [Registration of Interest Form | General Volunteer](#)

Once completed the ‘ROI’ is reviewed for completeness and sent for ‘selection’ processing.

Step 2 | SOWFI Selection Process | Samantha Wilkinson (Responsible Volunteer)

All SOWFI volunteers and members must uphold the most professional of wildlife and volunteer standards. The overarching selection criteria is as follows.

- Successfully complete the SOWFI recruitment forms and processes within the timeframe specified
- Participate in a ‘selection’ interview
- Agree to uphold and act in accordance with SOWFI values, vision, mission, objectives, plan, policies, procedures, and leader direction
- Have a successful police check outcome
- Other criteria as approved by the chair, membership board member or the board from time to time

The above selection criteria will continue to apply throughout a volunteers membership. Maintaining SOWFI membership is conditional upon upholding our values, and acting or operating in accordance with SOWFI constitution, policies, procedures and laws and legislation.

Wildlife Rescuer	Wildlife Carer	General Volunteer
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Registration of Interest Form2. Successful completion of online rescuer course3. Successful completion of rescuer course (practical)4. Selection interview5. Other process as required	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Registration of Interest Form2. Successful completion of species care & rescue course3. Selection interview4. Other process as required	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Registration of interest form2. Selection interview3. Other process as required

SOWFI member selection process is dependent on the type of volunteering they have applied for. Each selection process is outlined in the table above. Once selection is completed a SOWFI volunteer will confirm whether you will progress to the next phase of the recruitment process.

Step 3 | SOWFI Member Recruitment Process | Toni Tong

At this stage of the process it is focussed on, 'Volunteer Engagement Agreement' forms, police clearance, volunteer information and fee payment.

A SOWFI volunteer will send you an email with information and actions as outlined below.

1. You will be sent a copy and be asked to review the SOWFI member manual, position description (if applicable), and code of ethics (if applicable).
2. Should you want to proceed you will be asked to complete and sign a 'Volunteer Engagement Agreement' form
3. You will be asked to complete and lodge the appropriate police clearance form
4. You will also be required final action is to pay your SOWFI membership fee

Once we have received your 'Volunteer Engagement Agreement' form, notification of receipt of your membership fee and also lodgement of your 'National Police Clearance' a SOWFI volunteer will confirm whether or not you will progress to the next phase (onboarding).

Step 4 | SOWFI Member Onboarding Process | Toni Tong

Onboarding members is an important aspect of caring and developing our members. Our onboarding process is as follows.

1. Membership confirmation and volunteer engagement letter sent to new member/volunteer
2. Membership certificate sent to new member/volunteer
3. Member assigned to a SOWFI district co-ordinator
4. Member receives information pack (membership manual, position description, code of ethics etc.)
5. Member is provided access to volunteer portal
6. Member provided links and information to buy; SOWFI Wildlife Rescue Hi Viz vest and complete the Feed & Merchandise Order (this is not required for general volunteers)
7. Email will also include information on how to connect with SOWFI via our various social media platforms
8. Your name and email address will be sent to WIRES to activate the xMatters phone rescue app. Please download the xMatters app on your phone

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our organisational documents, social media sites and welcome to the team!

Once you are assigned a district co-ordinator, they will contact you and will be your first person of contact if you have any queries, problems or need support. If your district co-ordinator is not available and you have an urgent query regarding the health, safety or welfare of an animal, please contact another district co-ordinator on this [list](#).

KEY RESOURCES

Since the creation of SOWFI its members have worked hard to develop resources to support the organisation and its members to be successful. These documents may be updated from time to time.

No.	Resource Name	Description	Contact
1.	Constitution	Guides the governance of the organisation	
2.	Code of Ethics	Code of ethics for wildlife volunteers	
3.	Annual Report	Copy of SOWFI's latest annual report	

MEMBER SUPPORT AND WELBEING

Being a wildlife volunteer can be stressful and rewarding in equal measure. Practicing self-care is a very important part of maintaining your personal wellbeing. Your SOWFI colleagues are here to help so please let us know if you want to chat or share how you are feeling.

Tips to maintain your wellbeing.

- **Accept** how you feel and be kind to yourself
- **Recognise** your reactions are normal
- **Focus** on things you can control
- **Understand** you may experience many different reactions
- **Share** how you feel/seek advice with someone you respect/care about
- **Maintain hope** that things will get better
- **Be healthy**, consider mindfulness, meditation, yoga
- **Report** matters you consider serious/that require further action
- **Seek help**/professional assistance (see below)

ANIMAL WELFARE COUNSELING SERVICE

Your mental health and wellbeing is important, and we acknowledge that what you do is not always sunshine and roses. You will see some things that are confronting and upsetting, and you will lose animals. We strongly encourage supporting each other through chatting, catching up, and sharing concerns as well as happy stories. However, sometimes it is also important to talk to [someone who is trained to help people through challenging experiences](#).

[WildTalk](#) has been set up to help people working with Australian wildlife in a volunteer or paid capacity. It is designed to provide an assistance program to all rescuers, carers, veterinary professionals, and researchers through times of illness, injury, or crisis that have an impact on mental health.

Established in 2019, [WildTalk](#) recognises a need to support the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation workers in unique ways. As such, their service is provided independently of any wildlife organisation, giving their clients the confidence to be open and candid. Working with wildlife is a rewarding path in life. [WildTalk](#) recognises that caring about wildlife comes with a variety of unique challenges and they are here to help.

OTHER WELLBEING RESOURCES

Smiling Minds - <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Beyond Blue - <https://beyondblue.org.au/>

Headspace - www.headspace.com

POLICIES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

We currently have key policies covering a range of processes, activities, rights and obligations of staff and volunteer-specific matters. These are continually being developed and/or updated and upon completion are located in the 'Policies and Procedures' folder. (links)

The policies and procedures are intended to comply and be consistent with appropriate laws, legislation, regulations, and codes of practice. Where inconsistency occurs the laws, legislation, regulations, and codes of practice will be the basis for member standards. **It is the volunteers responsibility to comply with our policies and procedures and all appropriate laws, legislation, regulations, and codes of practice.** Liability for any type of breach (law or policy) remains as a member risk and penalty unless deemed reasonable and approved as being covered by SOWFI insurance.

These policies will operate in conjunction with the 'Letter of Engagement' for every member engaged by SOWFI. The benefit for SOWFI having well-written policies is it ensures we.

- All act and behave consistent with the values of the organisation
- Comply with employment and other associated legislation
- Demonstrate the organisation is being operated in a professional and ethical manner
- Are uniform and consistent in decision-making and operational procedures
- Are able to defend SOWFI against possible legal actions if they arise
- Save time when a new problem can be handled quickly and effectively through an existing policy
- Foster stability and continuity
- Maintain the direction of the organisation even during periods of change
- Provide the framework for organisational growth and planning
- Assist in assessing performance and establishing accountability
- Clarify functions and responsibilities

POLICY PROCEDURE

All members are required to uphold these policies and standards. SOWFI will ensure all members have access and are aware of their obligations with respect to these standards. The board, committees, district co-ordinators, rescuers, carers, specialists, educators, members, and volunteers are equally accountable for upholding these standards in equal measure and will be subject to the same actions and consequences.

Any member is able to report a suspected breach of these standards to their district co-ordinator or a board member without fear of victimisation or reprisals. A breach of these policies, standards by any member will be taken seriously, will be investigated and may result in action being taken including membership rights being terminated.

SOWFI will attempt to contact any member alleged to have breached a policy/standard and notify the member of any allegations with respect to the breach. Members will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegations. These responses will be considered by the board chair and/or delegate(s) and a determination will be made in consideration of the allegations, and investigation findings.

The board chair reserves the right to terminate membership without investigation in certain/serious instances. The board chair reserves the right to assign an internal or external investigator.

The chair/board reserves the right to take action up to and including membership suspension and termination. Contact may be in writing, in person/online, by phone or via email. Termination will be in person/online, in writing or via email.

Any current or former member found to be in breach of a legal requirement and obligation may be subject to legal action being taken against them, dependent upon the circumstances of the breach. Illegal conduct will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

ABANDONMENT

A member would be considered to have abandoned their membership if.

- Their membership fees have lapsed for a period of 3 months.
- They are absent from their volunteering responsibilities for a period of three (3) or more consecutive months
- Have not notified SOWFI , nor sought prior authorisation or provided a reasonable cause for this absence

SOWFI will attempt to contact these members and will notify the member of any member termination outcome and action(s). Contact may be in writing, by phone or via email. Termination will be in writing or via email.

ABSENTEEISM AND ATTENDANCE

Attendance at work to perform the requirements of the appointed position is essential to the efficient and safe operation of SOWFI and conservation of native wildlife. Poor attendance and excessive absenteeism can place added burden on fellow members. **Members are encouraged to contact their committee member/district co-ordinator with respect to periods of absenteeism.**

Repeated late attendance or absence from work without valid reason, or the required notification being given by the member, will result in follow up and may result in action being taken or membership rights being terminated.

SOWFI will attempt to contact these members and will notify the member of any member termination outcome and action(s). Contact may be in writing, by phone or via email. Termination will be in writing or via email.

APPRECIATION OF SERVICE CERTIFICATES

Certificates of appreciation and service will be provided to members who have demonstrated outstanding support and service to SOWFI. Minimum service period for which a certificate will be provided is 6 months.

Members may request a certificate of appreciation. Certificates for eligible and approved members will ordinarily be provided within 4 weeks of resignation or at other times as determined by the board.

The provision of certificates is at the sole discretion of the board.

BULLYING

Bullying is when people **repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions** against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless.

Bullying is not the same as conflict between people (like having a fight) or disliking someone, even though people might bully each other because of conflict or dislike. The sort of repeated behaviour that can be considered bullying includes:

- Keeping someone out of a group (online or offline)
- Acting in an unpleasant way near or towards someone
- Giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being rude and impolite, and constantly negative teasing
- Spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone (i.e. using their Facebook account to post messages as if it were them)
- Mucking about that goes too far
- Harassing someone based on their race, sex, religion, gender, socio-economic background, or a disability
- Intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone physically
- Intentionally stalking someone
- Taking advantage of any power over someone else like a prefect or a student representative

Bullying can happen anywhere, including in volunteer organisations like SOWFI. It can be in person, in online social spaces, via text messaging or via email. It can be **physical, verbal, emotional**, and it also includes messages, public statements and behaviour online intended to cause distress or harm (also known as **cyberbullying**). But no matter what form bullying takes, the results can be the same; severe distress and pain for the person being bullied.

Face-to-face bullying (sometimes referred to as direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or direct verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is less direct, but just as painful. It means bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, such as excluding people from groups or spreading lies or rumours. Because it is less obvious, it is often unacknowledged by adults.

Cyberbullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as instant messaging or chat, text messages, email and social networking sites or forums. It has many similarities with offline bullying, but it can also be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience, and sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove. Most people who cyberbully also bully offline.

Bullying affects everyone in different ways. But there are common feelings that come up when you are being bullied. **How bullying can affect individuals.**

- Feeling guilty like it is your fault
- Feeling hopeless and stuck like you can't get out of the situation
- Feeling alone, like there is no one to help you
- Feeling like you don't fit in with the cool group
- Feeling depressed and rejected by your friends and other groups of people
- Feeling unsafe and afraid
- Feeling confused and stressed out wondering what to do and why this is happening to you

- Feeling ashamed that this is happening to you

Bullying can have a negative impact on everyone – it is **not just a problem for victims and bullies**. If you see or know of others being bullied you may feel angry, fearful, guilty, and sad. You may feel as bad as those who are being bullied. You may also feel worried that the bullying could happen to you. When bullying isn't stopped or challenged by anyone it can create an environment where bullying is accepted and where everyone feels powerless to stop it.

You have a right to feel safe and to be treated fairly and respectfully.

- If you know or see a member being bullied, report the conduct to your district co-ordinator or a board member
- If you are being bullied, you should talk to your district co-ordinator or a board member
- If you feel safe and confident, you can approach the person who is bullying you and tell them that their behaviour is unwanted and not acceptable

CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

SOWFI has established two standards of conduct and ethics for its members. The first relates to our Wildlife Carers and Rescuers and the second is for all members and volunteers. All members are committed to upholding our code of conduct and ethical standards.

WILDLIFE CARERS/RESCUERS

All SOWFI Wildlife Carers and Rescuers adopt best practice ethical and care practices for native wildlife.

- A wildlife volunteer should strive to achieve high standards of animal care through knowledge and an understanding of the field. Continuing efforts must be made to keep informed of current rehabilitation information, research, and regulations
- A wildlife volunteer should be responsible, conscientious, and dedicated, and should work continuously toward improving the quality of care given to wild animals undergoing rehabilitation
- A wildlife volunteer must abide by local, state, and federal laws concerning wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation, and associated activities
- A wildlife volunteer should establish safe work habits and conditions and abide by OHSW practices at all times
- A wildlife volunteer should acknowledge limitations and enlist the assistance of a veterinarian and other trained professionals when appropriate
- A wildlife volunteer should respect other volunteers and persons in related fields, sharing skills and knowledge in the spirit of cooperation for the welfare of animals
- A wildlife volunteer should place optimum animal care above personal gain
- A wildlife volunteer should strive to provide professional and humane care in all phases of wildlife rehabilitation, **protecting the welfare, respecting the wildness, and maintaining the dignity of each animal in life and in death**. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate. **Non-releasable animals that are not appropriate for education, foster-parenting, companionship, or captive breeding have a right to euthanasia**
- A wildlife volunteer should encourage community support and involvement through volunteer training and public education. The common goal should be to promote a responsible concern for living beings and the welfare of the environment
- A wildlife volunteer should work from a foundation of sound ecological principles, incorporating appropriate conservation ethics and an attitude of stewardship

- A wildlife volunteer should conduct all business, activities, and communications in a professional manner, with honesty, integrity, compassion, and commitment, realizing that an individual's conduct reflects on the entire field of wildlife rehabilitation

Adapted from: US National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association & International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Code of Ethics

CODE OF MEMBERSHIP CONDUCT

Save Our Wildlife Foundation Inc (SOWFI) members observe the highest possible standards of behaviour, ethics and integrity as an entry and ongoing condition of their membership. **The standards expected of members include, but are not limited to:**

- Strict observation of occupational health and safety rules, responsibilities, and practices at all times
- Compliance with all organisational policies, procedures, rules, and contractual obligations
- Compliance with all relevant industry legislative requirements in the performance of all duties
- Adherence to appropriate professional 'Codes of Practice and/or Ethics' (such as accounting standards or building codes)
- Compliance with all reasonable and lawful instructions of board members/district co-ordinators
- Adherence to the **confidentiality of any information, records or other sensitive material acquired during the course of membership** responsibilities and/or after the cessation of membership responsibilities with SOWFI
- Honesty, respect, fairness, and a courteous manner in all dealings with customers, clients, co-workers, suppliers, management, and the general public
- The proper intended use of and respect for SOWFI equipment, information, electronic systems, supplies and property (including intellectual property)
- Not to make any unauthorised public statements, including to the media, about SOWFI (requests for media statements must be referred to the appropriate board member/district co-ordinator or person responsible)
- Not to compete with, or against the interests of SOWFI, either directly or indirectly. This includes a duty not to engage in outside membership responsibilities without the prior approval of SOWFI
- No assault against another person, including fighting in the organisation
- No offensive language and/or behaviour in the organisation, including the use of electronic systems
- **No unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying in the organisation**
- Not to possess, distribute, sell, consume or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst in the organisation

CONFIDENTIALITY

All members of SOWFI have a legal requirement and an obligation to abide by this confidentiality policy. Except as required by law, members must not disclose, or allow to be disclosed, in any form or by any means any confidential information of which the member becomes aware during the course of their membership responsibilities or through the performance of their duties.

For the purpose of this confidentiality policy, **'confidential information' is defined as any confidential or proprietary information provided by SOWFI (in any form) to any member in connection with their membership responsibilities**, including.

- The names, details and any information relating to the organisation affairs of the clients, customers, potential customers, suppliers, or members of SOWFI

- Matters of a technical nature, trade secrets, technical data, marketing procedures and information, pricing and/or discount structures, accounting programs and procedures, financial information, strategic and organisation plans and like information relating to the organisation of SOWFI
- Other information which SOWFI informs the member is confidential or which, if disclosed, the member knows or ought reasonably to know, would be detrimental to SOWFI
- All other information which is imparted to the member in circumstances which the member knows or ought reasonably to know that the information is confidential to SOWFI or any persons with whom SOWFI is concerned

but excludes any information that is public knowledge or is in the public domain.

The member:

- May use confidential information solely for the purposes of performing their duties as any member of SOWFI and must not use confidential information for their own personal financial or other gain
- Must not communicate (or permit anyone else to communicate) any confidential information, except with the prior written authority of SOWFI
- May only disclose confidential information to persons who are aware that the confidential information must be kept confidential and who have a need to know (but only to the extent that each person has a need to know).

The member’s obligation of maintaining confidentiality does not extend to confidential information that the law requires to be disclosed.

CONFIDENTIALITY PROCEDURE

Members must store all confidential information in a secure manner, except when being used for the purposes of their membership responsibilities.

At the end of any member’s membership responsibilities, the member must return to SOWFI:

- All confidential information in material or electronic form
- Those parts of all notes and other records based on or incorporating confidential information
- All copies of confidential information and notes and other records based on or incorporating confidential information
- All property belonging to or leased by SOWFI, including that which may include confidential information, including but not limited to books, documents, records, electronic storage media, discs, access cards, computer hardware, credit cards and computer log-in codes, in the member’s possession or control

In addition to the above requirements, the member must also delete all those documents and records held electronically in any medium at any place that are in the member’s control.

The member’s legal requirement and obligation of confidentiality will continue after the end of the member’s membership responsibilities in respect of all confidential information, other than information forming part of the member’s stock of general skill and knowledge.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All members of SOWFI have a responsibility to work in the best interests of the organisation and avoid situations and actions that may be, or create the appearance of being, in conflict with the organisation's overall interests, objectives and principles.

Activities that have the potential to cause a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Holding a substantial financial interest in any organisation (e.g. suppliers, customers etc.) that has dealings with SOWFI
- The acceptance by any member from any party or supplier of goods and/or services, either directly or indirectly, of cash payments, goods, services, loans (except from banks or other financial institutions), or discounts that are not generally available to all members
- The acceptance by any member, either directly or indirectly, of any gifts, gratuities, or services in kind from any party that is involved, or is attempting to be involved with SOWFI
- The ownership by any member or a member of any member's family, in any proportion, of land and/or other assets, either directly or indirectly that is the subject, or potential subject, of organisation dealings with SOWFI
- engaging in nepotism, by the offer of membership responsibilities to a member of any member's family, especially where the family members would be involved in a direct reporting relationship
- A personal relationship with another member, including familial, sexual, or financial, where there is a potential for, or a perception that a conflict of interest could exist where there is a possibility that a decision may be biased in favour of, or against a person with whom there is a personal relationship
- Engaging in outside membership responsibilities (including self-membership responsibilities or carrying on an organisation) where such membership responsibilities will, or has the potential to
 - Impact on the member's ability to perform their normal functions
 - Create a conflict of interest and/or
 - Compromise the confidentiality of the organisation
- All dealings between members of SOWFI and members of their families

Problems arising out of these situations can usually be avoided by members conducting any organisation on behalf of SOWFI in an ethical, honest, and transparent manner.

SOWFI members must not accept gifts, prizes, or rewards (including goods and/or services) as a reward for performing volunteer duties. This policy ensures that SOWFI/its members do not create or incur fringe benefits tax (FBT)/reportable fringe benefit liabilities for SOWFI.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURE

When any member is in a situation where a conflict of interest exists, or has the potential to exist, or could be seen to exist, they must immediately declare such interest and the potential conflict that may arise.

Where members are not sure if a conflict, or potential conflict exists, they should raise the matter with their committee member/district co-ordinator and do all things necessary to ensure that such conflict, or potential conflict is brought to the attention of and dealt with by SOWFI, prior to any involvement by the member in the situation where the conflict had the potential to arise.

When engaging an organisation on behalf of SOWFI, the member must seek approval from the board chair to assist in determining what is considered proper and ethical behaviour. At all times, the overriding concept and principle must be the member's duty to disclose all possible conflicts, or potential conflicts, as

soon as they become aware of them, when conducting organisation or dealings on behalf of SOWFI. This is the only way that transparency, honesty, and integrity can be maintained.

DISCIPLINE

Any alleged/suspected breach by a member of a policy, procedure or other standards will be taken seriously, will be investigated and may result in action being taken including membership rights being terminated.

SOWFI will attempt to contact any member alleged to have breached the code of conduct and notify the member of any allegations with respect to breach of code of conduct. **Members will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegations.** These responses will be considered by the board chair and/or delegate(s) and a determination will be made in consideration of the allegations, and findings.

The board chair reserves the right to terminate membership without investigation in certain/serious instances. The chair/board reserves the right to apply action up to and including termination to maintain a high performing SOWFI membership base.

Illegal conduct will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Contact may be in writing, in person/online, by phone or via email. Termination will be in person/online, in writing or via email.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. This is known as 'direct discrimination'.

It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. This is known as 'indirect discrimination'.

Discrimination can be against the law if it is based on a person's:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
- Sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding
- Sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status

Discrimination on these grounds is against the law in a number of areas of public life, including employment, education, getting or using services or renting or buying a house or unit. Some limited exceptions and exemptions apply.

Organisations have a legal responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination on these grounds. Organisations can also be liable for the discriminatory acts of their employees. This is called 'vicarious liability'.

Under the 'Australian Human Rights Commission' act, individuals can also lodge complaints with the commission concerning discrimination in employment because of their religion, political opinion, national extraction, nationality, social origin, medical record, criminal record, or trade union activity. Complaints will be reported to parliament where the commission finds a breach of the act.

DRESS CODE

SOWFI requires that all members maintain a standard of dress that reflects the desired image and maintains a safe working environment. Whilst at work, all members of SOWFI are required to ensure that safe, appropriate, neat, and tidy dress standards are observed at all times.

SOWFI respects cultural diversity and will seek to accommodate requests from members who wish to wear clothing and/or accessories that have a religious or cultural significance. All such requests will be considered subject to any safety requirements that apply to the work area and must not display any sexist, racist or offensive images or messages in English or any other language.

All members are required to wear a Hi-Viz vest whilst collecting leaf or conducting rescues. Members are responsible for maintaining and cleaning their uniforms. For details about uniform requirements, refer to 'SOWFI Uniforms Policy'. All members are encouraged to contact their district co-ordinator/board member and discuss any issues that they may have in relation to acceptable work attire, or any special needs or requirements that they may have.

This 'Dress Code Policy' applies to all members of SOWFI and repeated breaches of the policy by any member may result in disciplinary action, including termination, being taken against the member concerned.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

SOWFI is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive organisation in accordance with requirements under the 'Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986'. All members of SOWFI have a responsibility under the above act to ensure that they take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others whilst in the organisation, by not being affected by drugs or alcohol to the extent that it impacts on their own or another person's safety or work performance.

The effects of intoxication and the use or dependence on drugs or alcohol are associated with impaired judgement and skills, reduced concentration, absenteeism, and increased organisation accidents. These behaviours and activities may seriously affect member safety and standards of practice within SOWFI.

Members who have concerns about working with any other member (including contractors, consultants, or visitors to the premises), due to possible drugs or alcohol use, should consult with their committee member/district co-ordinator immediately.

SOWFI recognises that any member's work performance can be affected by problems in their personal life and is committed to assisting members in dealing with these issues.

For the purpose of this 'Drugs and Alcohol in the Organisation Policy', SOWFI defines drugs and alcohol as follows:

- 'Drugs' refers to a chemical substance, whether it is legal or illegal, which may have the ability to impair a person's physical or mental capacity. These can include prescribed drugs issued by a medical practitioner, or non-prescribed drugs, which includes, but is not limited to, speed, heroin, amphetamines, LSD, crack, cocaine, ecstasy, or marijuana
- 'Alcohol' refers to any beverage containing an alcoholic content that temporarily impairs a person's physical or mental capacity

All members of SOWFI are prohibited from selling, distributing, manufacturing, possessing or consuming drugs or alcohol during the hours they are acting as a rescuer/carer/volunteer or when on a SOWFI premises or conducting a SOWFI event.

There may be certain occasions where alcohol may be available at SOWFI functions, though generally, these functions will not take place whilst the member/volunteer is undertaking official duties.

In instances when members attend either organisation functions or functions on behalf of SOWFI, management and members will be expected to behave in a professional and responsible manner, ensuring that duty of care is provided to both them and others.

In circumstances where any member is taking medically prescribed drugs to manage a specific condition that may interfere with their work performance, they are required to notify their board member/district co-ordinator. The board member/district co-ordinator, in consultation with the member (and the member's doctor if relevant to the particular circumstances), may (if practicable) adjust the work requirements of the member concerned. If this is not possible and the situation is temporary, the member will either resume or commence a period of member leave until the member is able to resume work safely.

The right of members to take drugs or consume alcohol socially is acknowledged; however, SOWFI reserves the right to act if any member is.

- Affected by drugs or alcohol, so as to endanger their own safety or the safety of any other person in the organisation
- Affected by drugs or alcohol and operating a vehicle or other equipment
- Found in the possession of drugs, drug use equipment or alcohol on SOWFI premises without prior consent
- Affected by drugs or alcohol, so that the member's work performance is impaired

SOWFI will accept no liability for any law or policy breach including damage to vehicle, injury to any person, or damage or injury to any third party. The driver of any SOWFI vehicle found to have consumed drugs or alcohol prior to, or whilst driving a SOWFI vehicle will be deemed to have committed an act of serious misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action and possible termination of membership. **All liabilities will rest with the member/driver concerned.**

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROCEDURE

To ensure a healthy and safe organisation environment for all of its members, SOWFI will undertake any reasonable actions if a member is found consuming, possessing, distributing, selling, or manufacturing drugs or alcohol on work premises, or is believed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These actions could include search of premise/equipment/storage/bags, drug and alcohol testing, involvement of the police/other authority, undertaking interviews/taking statements, confiscating items, undertaking investigation, retaining evidence, subjecting the member to action up to and including duty suspension and/or membership termination.

SOWFI does acknowledge that members have the legal right to refuse to be tested; however, if the member does refuse, it does not prevent the member from being subject to action/termination.

The primary focus for SOWFI is the safety of its broader membership base and the wildlife in its care.

EMAILS

Use of SOWFI emails should be limited as far as possible to SOWFI related matters only. Only essential SOWFI-based information should be stored in your inbox or email folders, sending harassing, obscene and/or other threatening messages, unsolicited junk mail (SPAM), 'for profit' messages or chain letters, pornography of any kind or explicit information or explicit graphics of any kind attracts disciplinary action and may lead to membership termination. Please advise a member of the board if you have queries in relation to attachments or emails generally.

You should respond to email messages containing important information or requests from your district co-ordinator or another member as soon as possible, email does not replace face-to-face communication with colleagues or stakeholders. Email messages represent not just you as an individual but also the organisation and therefore, they should always be respectful of the addressee as well as SOWFI.

Emails should address the issue, not the addressee, use appropriate tone and language. You should support your point(s) with a clearly argued position based on facts. Emails which are badly expressed, poorly constructed, misleading, not proofread prior to sending or are ineffective can cause confusion and lead to an unnecessary exchange of correspondence which can, in turn, lead to loss of time and productivity as well as frustration, any matter which requires detailed consideration and/or negotiation should be discussed in person or during scheduled meetings. Capital letters should be avoided. This is considered 'SHOUTING', You should report any unlawful or offensive content to your district co-ordinator or a board member for further action. **If you receive SPAM or junk mail – do not click on any links in the email message and do not reply.** Add it to your 'Junk Mail' filter and delete the message immediately.

GRIEVANCE HANDLING

SOWFI aims to resolve problems and grievances promptly and as close to the source as possible with graduated steps for further discussions and resolution at higher levels of authority as necessary.

GRIEVANCE PRINCIPLES

- Complaints must be 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

GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURES

The following is a three-level process:

1. The member attempts to resolve the complaint with the person they have a grievance with (or with another person, as close to the source as possible). This level is quite informal and verbal
2. If the matter is not resolved, the member notifies their district co-ordinator (in writing or otherwise) as to the substance of the grievance and states the remedy sought. Discussion should be held between member and any other relevant party. This level will usually be informal, but either party may request written statements and agreements. This level should be achieved within a two-week period
3. If the matter is not resolved, the district co-ordinator can refer the matter to the board. A grievance taken to this level must be in writing from the member. The district co-ordinator will forward to the board member any additional information thought relevant. The board member will provide a

written response to the complainant. The board member also communicates with any other parties involved or deemed relevant. See below for board contact details.

BOARD CONTACT DETAILS:

- Membership email | membership@saveourwildlife.org.au
- There is a [feedback and suggestions](#) button on the member section of the SOWFI website. This sends an email to the Secretary who then decides on best course of action
- Contact a board member directly

HARASSMENT

[Harassment](#) can be against the law when a person is treated less favourably on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, breastfeeding, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Some limited exemptions and exceptions apply.

Harassment can include behaviour such as.

- Telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
- Sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages
- Displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
- Making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's race
- Asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his or her sex life

The law also has specific provisions relating to certain types of harassment.

- Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consensual behaviour
- Harassment linked to the disability of a person, or their associate is against the law
- Offensive behaviour based on racial hatred is against the law. Racial hatred is defined as something done in public that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

A one-off incident can constitute harassment. All incidents of harassment require organisations and its leaders to respond quickly and appropriately.

Organisations can also be held liable for harassment by their members if they do not have appropriate standards and processes in place. This is called 'vicarious liability'.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

[Intellectual property](#) (IP) is the property of a creator/developer's mind or proprietary knowledge. It is a productive new idea developed or created. This can be an invention, trademark, design, brand or even the application of your idea. The idea must be something new or original but determining whether the idea is new or not is not always easy. It is SOWFI's intent to work in collaboration with its members with respect to determining the IP ownership rights of IP created or developed by its members.

If you are wanting to retain IP rights over IP, you have developed or created you must immediately communicate this with the board chair or a board member before the IP is developed or created.

IP DETERMINATION PRINCIPLES

In the event there is a disagreement with respect to IP ownership the following principles will be applied.

1. Does the IP relate to the core purpose for SOWFI and if the IP was no longer available would it create risk/hazard for the wildlife in care/rehabilitation.
2. Would it be reasonable for SOWFI to intend to utilise the IP after the IP developer/member is no longer a volunteer
3. Does it establish or ensure standards of care/rehabilitation for wildlife in our care
4. Does it or would it form part of the standard operating procedures/actions for SOWFI rescuers/carers/volunteers
5. Has it been developed after the person has become a volunteer
6. Has the document/material been stored on the SOWFI Google drive and does it incorporate the SOWFI logo
7. Has the document/action has gone through approval process through board, chair or another SOWFI approval mechanism
8. Has IP ownership been confirmed in writing between the parties (letter/email/SMS/documented and witnessed conversation)

Upon accepting a volunteer/member role with SOWFI the volunteer agrees that intellectual property developed by the volunteer will be considered SOWFI intellectual property (IP). That is, unless the volunteer informs SOWFI of retaining volunteer IP ownership in advance of the IP being created and utilised whilst being a SOWFI member.

TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

This organisation may purchase information management and technology assets to assist members to carry out their work efficiently. Members are expected to maintain the proper use of and access to resources including Internet and email.

- Unlawful and acceptable use of these resources outlines acts that are criminal in nature and may be referred to the authorities
- Members are prohibited from copying or removing software owned by SOWFI
- Members cannot acquire new software or assets unless approved by the board
- The use of these resources for personal profit or gain is strictly prohibited
- Members must do all that they can to ensure system security and safety
- Members must do all that they can to minimise SPAM and viruses as well as protecting the privacy of logins and passwords

WORK HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

The key Work Health & Safety (WH&S) requirements are:

- All staff and volunteers must adhere to the appropriate work health & safety laws, legislation, and codes of practices.
- If any staff member or volunteer is concerned in relation to a WH&S issue, they should raise the matter immediately with their district co-ordinator or a board member
- SOWFI will communicate WH&S policies and procedures to volunteers from time to time.
- All volunteers should be familiar with SOWFI policies, procedures for the safe use of equipment, housekeeping etc.