# ACT Wildlife – Code of Conduct

**Policy Version:** 2026
**Approved by:** ACT Wildlife Committee
**Review Cycle:** Annual (or earlier if required)

## 1. Purpose

The ACT Wildlife Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural, ethical, and professional standards expected of all members, volunteers, staff, and representatives. It guides safe, compassionate, professional, and ecologically responsible wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release services within the ACT, and ensures ACT Wildlife operates with integrity, accountability, and compliance with ACT and federal legislation, including the *Nature Conservation Act 2014 (ACT)*, the *Animal Welfare Act 1992 (ACT)* and the *Animal Welfare (Welfare of Native Wildlife – Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release) Mandatory Code of Practice 2023*.

This Code must be read in conjunction with:

- Animal Care Standards
- ACT Wildlife Constitution
- ACT Wildlife Vision, Mission and Values
- ACT Wildlife Conditions of Membership
- ACT Wildlife Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all ACT Wildlife members, volunteers, carers, coordinators, committee members, staff, and any person representing ACT Wildlife in any capacity, from here on referred to as individuals.

## 3. General Conduct Requirements

All members must:

### 3.1 Integrity and Professionalism

- Act honestly, ethically, compassionately, and with integrity in all ACT Wildlife activities.

- Conduct all activities with accountability, recognising that individual behaviour reflects on the entire organisation.
- Uphold ACT Wildlife's Values in all conduct and decision-making.
- Treat wildlife, individuals, veterinarians, First Nations partners, professionals in related fields, and the public with respect, courtesy, and professionalism.
- Represent ACT Wildlife positively and avoid conduct that may bring the organisation into disrepute.
- Place optimum animal care above personal gain, conflicts of interest, or organisational politics.

## 3.2 Compliance with Laws and Policies

Members must comply with:

- All ACT Wildlife policies, procedures and guidelines
- All relevant ACT and federal laws governing wildlife, animal welfare, rehabilitation, biosecurity, and workplace health and safety
- All licence conditions relating to wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, release, and humane euthanasia
- All reasonable directions from ACT Wildlife Coordinators and Committee

## 3.3 Safety and Welfare

- Be mindful of personal safety and the safety of others.
- Establish and maintain safe working habits and conditions, including risk assessments, zoonotic disease precautions, and adherence to WHS policies.
- Prioritise the welfare, dignity, wildness, and wellbeing of wildlife at all times, including humane euthanasia when required.
- Follow ACT Wildlife's biosecurity protocols and take appropriate measures to manage disease risks and other emerging threats.
- Prioritise psychological safety and wellbeing, seek support when needed, and contribute to a respectful, inclusive environment.

## 3.4 Conflicts of Interest

- Disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest.

### 3.5 Confidentiality

- Maintain confidentiality regarding individuals' information, rescue locations, wildlife data, and internal organisational matters.

### 3.6 Use of Resources

- Use ACT Wildlife resources responsibly and only for authorised purposes.

### 3.7 Accuracy of Information

- Not provide false or misleading information in any ACT Wildlife context.

### 3.8 Collaboration, Knowledge Sharing and Cultural Respect

- Share knowledge generously and work cooperatively to improve outcomes for native fauna.
- Engage with cultural knowledge holders where appropriate, recognising the importance of Country and traditional ecological knowledge.

## 4. Respectful Conduct and Behaviour

ACT Wildlife is committed to a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. The following definitions from WIRES are adopted:

### 4.1 Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that creates a hostile or intimidating environment and detrimentally affects participation.

### 4.2 Bullying

Bullying occurs when unreasonable behaviour is repeated and creates a risk to health and safety.

### 4.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, whether a single incident or repeated.

### 4.4 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably based on protected attributes such as sex, age, race, disability, pregnancy, or other grounds under anti-discrimination legislation.

### 4.5 Expectations

All individuals must:

- Treat everyone with respect and courtesy
- Avoid harassment, bullying, discrimination, or unsafe behaviour
- Take prompt action if inappropriate behaviour is observed
- Support a culture of safety, inclusion, and compassion

## 5. Conduct Requirements for Carers

Carers have additional responsibilities:

### 5.1 Legal and Licence Compliance

- Act in accordance with all licence agreements and laws relating to wildlife rehabilitation.

### 5.2 Notification and Record Keeping

- Notify the relevant species coordinator immediately when an animal comes into care.
- Enter all animal details into Wildman within 24 hours and maintain accurate health and growth records.

### 5.3 Facility Access

- Provide access to coordinators or mentors to assess aviaries, enclosures, and care standards.

### 5.4 Animal Welfare

- Provide the best possible husbandry and care, maintaining native fauna in a wild condition and supporting release as soon as appropriate.
- Strive for the highest standards of care through ongoing learning, skill development, and adherence to current rehabilitation methods, regulations, and knowledge.
- For non-viable or non-releasable animals, consider all appropriate alternatives, including education, foster parenting, and conservation programs, before humane euthanasia under licence obligations.
- Relinquish animals when necessary to improve rehabilitation outcomes, including socialisation.

- Maintain the dignity, wildness, and welfare of each animal in life and in death.
- Make decisions based on welfare, evidence, and ecological principles, free from personal bias.

### 5.5 Training Requirements

- Complete orientation and basic species training before caring for wildlife.
- Complete advanced training at least once every three years.

## 6. Public Statements and Social Media

Members must:

- Not make public statements on behalf of ACT Wildlife without Committee approval.
- Use social media and digital platforms responsibly and adhere to ACT Wildlife's Social Media Policy.
- Ensure public and online communication is accurate, respectful, private, and aligned with ACT Wildlife's values.
- Avoid sharing images or information that compromise animal welfare, volunteer privacy, confidential information, rescue locations, wildlife data, or ACT Wildlife's reputation.

## 7. Community Engagement, Education and Conservation

Individuals should encourage community support through volunteer training, public education, and transparent communication; promote responsible coexistence with native wildlife and stewardship of the environment; work on the basis of sound ecological principles; prioritise habitat preservation and long-term conservation outcomes; and support ACT Wildlife's partnerships with government agencies, conservation organisations, and research bodies.

## 8. Privacy and Information Handling

Members must:

- Provide accurate personal information and keep it up to date

- Protect confidential information, including organisational information, records, personal data, rescue locations, wildlife data, and internal organisational matters
- Consent to ACT Wildlife sharing relevant information with authorised volunteers or government agencies when required by law

## 9. Complaint Resolution

ACT Wildlife adopts WIRES' best-practice principles:

- Complaints will be treated seriously, promptly, sensitively, and confidentially
- Members have the right to be informed of issues raised and the right to be heard
- Complaints may be resolved informally (discussion, mediation) or formally in writing
- Frivolous or vexatious complaints may be rejected following preliminary assessment
- Complainants must not be bullied or harassed

Formal complaints are to be made in accordance with ACT Wildlife's Complaints Process.

## 10. Breaches of the Code

Membership or authorisation may be suspended or terminated if a member:

- Breaches ACT Wildlife Conditions of Membership, codes, policies, procedures or guidelines
- Fails to comply with ACT Wildlife Coordinator or Committee instructions
- Engages in unsafe, unethical, unlawful, or ecologically irresponsible behaviour
- Brings ACT Wildlife into disrepute
- Misuses ACT Wildlife equipment, resources, records, or information
- Fails to acknowledge personal limitations or seek assistance from veterinarians, coordinators, mentors, or trained professionals when appropriate
- Demonstrates ongoing vexatious, malicious and disruptive behaviour
- Fails to acknowledge personal limitations or seek assistance from veterinarians, coordinators, mentors, or trained professionals when appropriate

This aligns with ACT Wildlife's Conditions of Membership.

ACT Wildlife expects individuals to participate in ongoing training, evaluation, and improvement of ACT Wildlife's practices, policies, and governance.

## 11. Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed **annually** or earlier if required by legislative or organisational changes.