

**INQUIRY INTO 2025 INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION OF
THE APPROVED CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS UNDER
THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979**

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 4 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

CONFIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE

October 7th 2025

Subject: Concerns Regarding Governance, Workplace Culture, and Public Accountability within WIRES

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to raise serious concerns regarding the workplace culture, governance practices, and management of publicly donated resources within WIRES (NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service Inc.).

I do so in good faith and in the public interest. WIRES occupies a unique position of trust as Australia's largest wildlife rescue charity, funded almost entirely by public donations and philanthropic contributions. Such trust carries a responsibility to operate with transparency, professionalism, and compassion values that I regret to say were not reflected in my experience with the organisation.

1. Background and Personal Context

I commenced employment with WIRES in July 2025 after being made redundant from my previous role. During the recruitment process, I openly shared that my son had died by suicide in October 2024. My former employer had supported me through that devastating period, and I made it clear to WIRES that while I was ready to return to work, I remained emotionally fragile.

I accepted the position because my son had loved Australia's wildlife and had been an admirer of Steve Irwin. Joining WIRES felt like a meaningful way to honour his memory and contribute positively to the cause he cared about.

Unfortunately, despite my openness and the very personal motivation behind my employment, I was met with a culture that lacked empathy, professionalism, and psychological safety. After only six days, I felt compelled to resign.

2. Key Concerns

a) Governance and exclusionary practices

I was shown an internal spreadsheet that blacklisted veterinarians and volunteers, instructing that their project funding requests not be processed. This practice demonstrated a culture of mistrust and exclusion toward highly qualified professionals essential to wildlife care.

Such internal hostility directly undermines WIRES' stated mission and compromises animal welfare outcomes.

b) Mismanagement of donated medication

I personally discovered serious mishandling of wombat mange treatments by a direct team member:

Thousands of dollars' worth of medication were stored unsecured in a desk drawer.

Over 70 doses were missing, with no record of their distribution.

The staff member miscounted the stock twice before I bundled and numbered the doses myself for accountability.

There was no audit or control process for donated medication, creating significant risk to financial integrity and animal welfare.

c) Loose oversight of grant and project funds

I also observed highly informal and inconsistent management of project and grant expenditure. Spending decisions were often made without clear approval pathways or supporting documentation.

Given WIRES' reliance on public and philanthropic donations, this lack of financial governance raises serious questions about compliance, transparency, and donor trust.

d) Workplace culture and psychological harm

On my sixth day, I was called into a meeting with HR with only one hour's notice. I was informed of HR's attendance only shortly before, and I was presented with unsubstantiated allegations without any opportunity to prepare, respond, or arrange a support person.

This occurred despite management being aware of my recent bereavement and the fragility I had disclosed when I commenced employment.

The meeting was distressing, accusatory, and devoid of empathy. It left me humiliated and deeply shaken.

More broadly, the internal culture was unprofessional and reactive characterised by gossip, immaturity, and defensiveness. Staff who raised concerns or sought clarity were treated as disloyal rather than constructive.

These experiences caused me significant psychological distress and loss of confidence, in stark contrast to the supportive and compassionate environments I had previously worked in.

e) Privacy and monitoring

Employment terms referenced continuous digital monitoring without clear explanation of its scope, purpose, or data management, raising privacy and proportionality concerns.

f) Mobility and fairness

Staff were told they could not work remotely from personal properties (including holiday homes), while some senior managers were permitted to work from interstate and some work and live in New Zealand. Such inconsistencies damage morale and trust.

g) Remuneration and professional undervaluing

The salary offered (\$65,000 per annum) did not reflect the professional expertise or intellectual property (IP) that I and others contributed.

The previous Project Coordinator, who was leaving, held a PhD in Zoology and extensive research experience. I hold an MBA specialising in food waste and sustainability, with strong industry networks and applied IP in resource management. She had openly discussed how poor the pay was and that she would not be returning after her maternity leave. She also disclosed she could not raise any issues as she needed the reference after being there for a year from our manager.

While remuneration was not my main concern, the misalignment between professional contribution and recognition reflected a broader disregard for expertise and value.

3. Broader Implications and Impact

These experiences were deeply distressing on a personal level as a grieving mother seeking meaningful work and professionally unacceptable.

At an organisational level, they point to systemic weaknesses in governance, culture, and accountability within WIRES. The exclusion of qualified stakeholders, lack of oversight of donated medication, and poor financial controls collectively place both WIRES' reputation and animal welfare outcomes at risk.

Since my resignation, several senior executives I've spoken with in the environmental and corporate sectors have indicated they will reconsider future support for WIRES, citing these concerns and the potential reputational damage associated with continued affiliation.

However, I recognise that there are ethical and dedicated individuals within WIRES who are striving for change and would welcome independent oversight to restore integrity and trust.

4. Recommendations

I respectfully recommend:

An independent review of WIRES' governance, financial management, and workplace culture.

A full audit of donated medication, grant use, and inventory management.

Development of clear frameworks for stakeholder engagement, intellectual property, and staff privacy.

Implementation of transparent and consistent workplace policies applied equitably across all staff.

Confidential reporting mechanisms for current and former employees to safely raise concerns.

I submit this correspondence in confidence and in the public interest motivated by concern for wildlife welfare, ethical governance, and the need to protect the integrity of Australia's most trusted environmental charities.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. I would be pleased to provide further details or documentation in confidence if required.

Yours sincerely,