

Submission
No 23

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

30 October 2025

As an active WIRES carer, my submission focuses on the wildlife rescue organization which is the largest in Australia and its capacity to improve the welfare outcomes of wildlife.

In 2020, following a major bushfire event, WIRES was donated over 100 million dollars. This staggering amount was no doubt intended to benefit wildlife and WIRES volunteers like me felt a great deal of optimism that the welfare of wildlife would improve.

However, the current CEO and management have taken the organisation away from its key objective of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife and this is having a detrimental impact on the welfare of compromised wildlife. Some areas of concern are.

1. Inappropriate use of the RSPCA

There seems to be inappropriate links between WIRES and the RSPCA with RSPCA's recent raids on carers' homes being used to intimidate carers. In both cases animals had been under veterinary care.

On 5/6/2025, a northern NSW WIRES carer was subject to an RSPCA inspection after presenting an ill Kangaroo to a vet – RSPCA Job number -. Illness is common in orphaned Kangaroos. This case indicated the inspector's lack of awareness of macropod behaviour and health. The inspector failed to recognize tintibulation and wrongly attributed scars to ringworm. This totally inappropriate use of the RSPCA resulted in the loss of a rescuer and carer who resigned from wildlife care because of all the "BS from WIRES".

In another case from September 2025, Number from Wagga a long-term carer with 20 animals in care received an RSPCA welfare inspection for 2 joeys that had suffered diarrhoea. This is perhaps one of the most common ailments of orphaned joeys. This RSPCA inspector found no welfare concerns, and it was clearly an exercise in intimidation by WIRES possibly because the member was taking Stop Bullying action in the Fair Work Commission.

At the Tracy Dodds court hearings, WIRES staff were intermingling with RSPCA prosecutors demonstrating inappropriate links between WIRES and the RSPCA. The Tracy Dodds case has been very detrimental to recruitment and carer activity. Tracy is a very well-respected macropod carer who was charged and found guilty of animal cruelty for her rehabilitation of a fence hanger. WIRES had the option of complying with their constitution which only allows for charging in cases of deliberate cruelty. Clearly this was not deliberate. They also had the option of providing increased veterinary support, reducing the number of animals in care or closer supervision but they chose instead to make her a criminal. This case, currently under appeal, has had devastating impact on other wildlife carers. Many have reduced their care for fear of prosecution. In the Central

West branch 5 carers left WIRES because of this prosecution, and it is also mentioned when attempting to recruit new carers.

WIRES management have elected to employ ex RSPCA officers to focus on compliance when they should employ a team of vets to provide online and face to face support to wildlife and carers. The one vet they did employ, left recently with no replacement. A team of vets could offer positive support and education to volunteers as well as reporting deliberate animal cruelty cases.

One example of inappropriate employment is Tania Dominguez, an ex-RSPCA inspector who was employed by WIRES after the RSPCA was sued for trespass, malicious prosecution and malfeasance in a public office. This inspection was led by Tania Dominguez. The settlement of the case was estimated to have cost the RSPCA over one million dollars, yet WIRES have seen fit to appoint her to a “welfare” position without any veterinary or animal science qualifications or scientific reasoning. Ref:

<https://thenightly.com.au/australia/nsw/rspca-settles-million-dollar-supreme-court-stoush-with-sydney-grandmother-mary-grima-over-poodle-raids--c-15510641>

2. Failure to provide training relevant to Euthanasia

Unfortunately, euthanasia is a regular part of wildlife rescue. The NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Annual Reports indicate Macropods and wombats have the lowest release rates at just 7% in 2022 and that 46% of all car strike victims were eastern grey kangaroos. That’s 93% of large mammals dying or being euthanised. There is clearly an enormous need for euthanasia training, yet WIRES have made the cost of shooters licences so expensive (\$400-\$600) that few people sign up compared to shooters licences with other Wildlife groups. Most WIRES areas are predominantly in western NSW where large mammal euthanasia from vehicle strike and fence entanglement are critically urgent and traumatising. The killing of animals is a sensitive, emotive and ethically challenging yet wildlife carers are called out regularly to face this need.

Captive bolts are a safe and convenient method of humane killing, yet WIRES CEO Leane Taylor has made a unilateral decision to prohibit members from using Captive Bolts for euthanasia despite it being legal in NSW, requiring no licencing and is safe to transport. Humane killing with a captive bolt is taught in universities, used in many intensive animal industries such as dairies and piggeries and Wildlife Victoria actively train wildlife volunteers in accordance with animal welfare legislation, following standard operating procedures and in adherence with minimum animal welfare standards. Eg <https://www.macedonrangeswildlifenetwrok.com.au/mrwn-event/captive-bolt-training/>

Leanne Taylor is yet to give a legitimate reason for this ban other than there are significant work health and safety risks. These risks would be no worse than the use of blunt force trauma which is also a permitted euthanasia method. Volunteers are also

advised to bundle the animal into a vehicle to take to a vet despite POCTA section 7 <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1979-200#sec.7> prohibiting “*the carriage of animals in a manner which unreasonably, unnecessarily ...inflicts pain upon the animal*”. At times this is physically impossible.

Recently a geographically large WIRES branch was ordered “*that bolt gun use was to CEASE IMMEDIATELY...further use will be reported to the Police and the WIRES Welfare team.*” These are not the actions of an organisation supporting volunteers willing to reduce the suffering of our wildlife. Note also the implication that the Welfare team is too be feared as a threatening entity. The police on the other hand are pleased to be relieved of a duty not seen as a priority and often sidelined in the duty list, delaying a satisfactory welfare outcome.

A result of the lack of training and threats of punishment by WIRES Head Office means large mammal trauma rescues are avoided or left to a few hardy volunteers who do thousands of kilometres a month. The suffering of these kangaroos beside roads and in fences is unimaginable and could be ameliorated with training and resources for volunteers. The NSW Macropod Code of Practice states that “*All macropod rehabilitators should attend a macropod advance training seminar or advanced online course every three years.*” The use of video conferencing technology offers the capacity to provide cheaper more accessible training, more regularly yet the training team’s failure to provide mandated training or even offer regular online species training reflects WIRES management’s lack of concern for animal welfare.

3. Financial management

WIRES as an organisation has existed for nearly 40 years, surely now is the time to address this training need. Despite obscene amounts of money donated for animals in 2020 it is now being frittered away with little going to the carers and animals. An analysis of the 2025 finances from the ACNC reports show that **for every dollar spent, only 5 cents is going to carers for animal food and vet bills** while 85 cents go to support a bloated head office. 44 cents in every dollar is spent on staff wages while the volunteers attend to animal welfare. With such poor funding volunteers are finding themselves lacking basic rescue equipment such as catching nets, traps or transport equipment. Care facilities are provided based on cronyism; only to reward good behaviour rather than geographical need or numbers rescued or cared for.

14 cents in every dollar is being spent on consultants. While their purpose is not named, they are probably the legal team fighting members and staff who are currently running cases in the Fair Work Commission and the Supreme Court to return the organisation to a legally compliant and ethical organisation.

4. Breaches of law – corporate and workplace

Since 2022 the board of WIRES has refused to hold AGMS or to follow basic corporate law and the WIRES Constitution. Branches have been held in administration with no rights. After failure to receive 75% votes for their desired constitution the board illegally registered a constitution stripping members of their rights, discarding approx. 900 volunteers and changing the direction of the organisation (against members' wishes). Only after 2 volunteers commenced separate legal actions in the Supreme court has the board admitted "irregularities" in their ASIC registration of an unwanted constitution. Staff members and volunteers are taking action in the Fair Work Commission to stop unfair dismissal and bullying.

This is an organisation in chaos, unable even to provide a consistent number of volunteers or staff members. It is in strong need of renewal and ethical leadership. There is little chance that animal welfare will become a priority until responsible entities such as National Parks and Wildlife licensing department, the Environment minister, ASIC, the Fair work Commission, Fair Trading and Safe Work invoke some of their powers to return this organisation to ethical and transparent governance.

Outcomes sought

- While the last two sections may seem beyond the remit of this inquiry, I call on the committee to recommend a parliamentary inquiry into the management of WIRES over the past 5 years.
- That CEOs or managers of large companies making decisions reasonably expected to cause or increase suffering to wildlife be made accountable.
- That the period from an RSPCA inspection to prosecution be reduced to 3-6 months.

Thank you for considering my submission.

WIRES volunteer