

Submission
No 31

**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: 31 October 2025

Partially
Confidential

This submission

I am making this submission under the Terms of Reference of the **2025 Inquiry into operation of the approved charitable organisations under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979***:

- (b) the exercise by the approved charitable organisations of their compliance and enforcement functions under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, and
- (c) any other related matters.

Background and context

I am a WIRES member of 10 years standing and have held a number branch executive positions over this period, including Treasurer, Chairperson, Secretary, and 5th Executive.

During my executive roles I have been exposed to some disturbing punitive actions undertaken by both WIRES and **RSPCA** against a number of our branch members.

Back in 2021, WIRES created a new division called the WIRES Animal Welfare Team headed by (ex **RSPCA** inspector) whose aim is to investigate 'allegations' of wildlife animal cruelty not so much of the public but specifically to investigate wildlife in care by WIRES members. These employees have no wildlife training or experience.

This division also questionably hired and both ex **RSPCA** inspectors to also investigate WIRES members. Prior to joining WIRES, featured heavily in a **RSPCA** raid that went badly (see attached file 'RSPCA settles million dollar case.docx'). Why WIRES would want to hire someone with these credentials is a mystery to me. As for whilst at the **RSPCA** she investigated two of our branch members that I know of from referrals by WIRES to the **RSPCA**. Whilst at WIRES, she attended **RSPCA** led prosecution court hearings against WIRES members (see **RSPCA v Dods**), hardly impartial or supportive of WIRES members. I did query these practices with the WIRES Board but I have not had a reply (see the attached 'Don't shoot the messenger email image.png')

The manager of the Animal Welfare Team, (also another ex **RSPCA** inspector) was brought in to WIRES to create and lead an investigative team to enforce the POCTA Act against WIRES members. During a webinar given by to our branch, he inadvertently displayed his pc desktop screen which revealed files and folders he had been covertly compiling against WIRES members. Two members from our branch were featured on his desktop (see attached file ' . Both these members had their licence to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife revoked. They are currently challenging the revocation of their licenses in the Supreme Court (**Henderson v WIRES**) and the Fair Work Commission (**Turk v WIRES**). See the attached file 'No due process – Gary Henderson.pdf').

It seems that these questionable **RSPCA** practices have been brought over to WIRES. They include:

- No right of reply to allegations, no due process (no common law natural justice)
- Contraventions to the Privacy Act (collecting information about members without their knowledge)
- Covert collaboration with the **RSPCA** against their own members.

I can only conclude that these questionable practices are part of the **RSPCA** culture.

In my opinion, there is a strong relationship between WIRES and the **RSPCA** which is having a detrimental effect on WIRES members and the wildlife that members rescue and care for.

The WIRES CEO is an ex **RSPCA** employee who has been morphing the culture of WIRES in recent years to the **RSPCA** model, especially since WIRES received over \$100m from donations following the bushfires of 2019/20. The bushfire donations have enabled WIRES to attempt to change the objectives and direction of WIRES from just rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife to also include elements of law enforcement similar to that of the **RSPCA** model.

WIRES and the **RSPCA** are clearly working in tandem here and the effect has, and continues to be, devastating on the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector. This climate of fear has resulted in:

- WIRES Members leaving the sector in droves.
- Animals suffering as members are reluctant to euthanise animals when necessary as they fear being investigated and prosecuted for animal cruelty.
- Fewer animals rescued (WIRES members fear animals dying in their care).
- Vets overloaded with wildlife (remember initial treatment is generally for free) as everything is taken to vets no matter how healthy.

Conclusion

WIRES was created by members who are the owners (effectively the shareholders of the organisation). Now the WIRES board (made up of WIRES members) are endorsing and enabling WIRES employees (e.g. Animal Welfare Team) to go after their own members to criminalise them. No employees (including the CEO) are or can be directors of WIRES.

WIRES members work under the Code of Conduct under the Biodiversity Conservation Act not under the POCTA Act. WIRES members have the licence and discretion to determine how to assess, initially treat (which could involve euthanasia e.g. using blunt force trauma), and care for wildlife. Rescued wildlife are already compromised (already injured, orphaned, or emaciated). WIRES members may have animals in care for up to a year and through this period the animals are compromised until full recovery.

THE POCTA Act looks at animals in care that are compromised and so this means all WIRES members caring for animals could be prosecuted under the POCTA Act at any time until the animal fully recovers and is released back to the wild.

I understand that the **RSPCA** may need to investigate animal cruelty conducted by for profit organisations and individuals caring for domestic and farm animals, but no one joins a wildlife rescue organisation to be wilfully cruel to animals.

The use of the POCTA Act has no place in the Wildlife sector and either the POCTA Act and the Biodiversity Conservation Act should be brought into line with each other as currently they contradict each other, or a new act specifically relating to wildlife rescue and care be legislated.

As a WIRES member, it is possible to be compliant with the Biodiversity Conservation Act but breach the POCTA Act. The POCTA Act is being abused by the approved charitable organisations who use this legislation as a stick to manage and control animal carers.

The operation of the charitable organisations approved under s 34B of the POCTA Act 1979 are, I believe, out of control with their use of the POCTA Act which is resulting in unjust criminal convictions (see **RSPCA v Dods**).

I am sure the public are unaware that their donations to WIRES are being spent on criminalising their own members.

A Parliamentary Inquiry is required to bring this sector under control.

Confidential

I am happy for this submission to be published but without my name.

Regards

31/10/2025