

Why WAFA?

Who are we?

As a member of the International Working Animals Federation (IWAF), the Working Animals Federation of Australia (WAFA) is Australia's leading authority on working animal matters. Our staff are experts in working with animals across a variety of industries including Assistance, Therapy, Detection, Education, Conservation, Film and TV and a number of other sectors. Our expertise comes from handlers, trainers, allied health professionals, veterinarians, lawyers and other industry professionals, which allows us to bring to you the highest standards in Australia.



We Aim to...

...promote the welfare of humans and animals whilst working to remove rogue operators from the industry. We advocate for mandatory standards for those animals working in a variety of working capacities including in assistance, therapy, education, film and tv, detection, conservation and other roles.

THE WORKING ANIMALS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA (WAFA) CURRENTLY PROVIDES VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION FOR ASSISTANCE AND THERAPY ANIMALS, HOWEVER, ACCREDITATION FOR OTHER TYPES OF WORKING ANIMALS ARE UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN OTHER AREAS.



What do we stand for?

First and foremost, membership of the WAFA enables working animal enthusiasts to join a community dedicated to working animals. We facilitate a sharing of knowledge, experience, highest quality standards, methodologies and support for new or existing organizations and individuals wanting to improve the quality of their operations. All of this is focused on improving the safety of working animals operations across Australia.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join the Working Animals Federation of Australia as long as they have an interest in working animals in some capacity.



Who is Working Animals International?

WAFA is a chapter of the International Working Animals Federation.

International Working Animals Federation recognises the importance and excellent work undertaken by Assistance Dogs International and the International Guide Dogs Federation worldwide. However, these organizations limit their membership and accreditation to not-for-profit organizations that train purpose-bred canines to become assistance animals. This leaves many groups unable to join, including:

- Independent/solo handlers who trained their own Assistance Animal,
- Independent trainers who help handlers to train their own Assistance Animals,
- Trainers who source and train rescue animals,
- Individuals who work with cats, parrots, ponies and other species,
- Professionals who work with other Working Animals, and
- For-profit businesses.

International Working Animals Federation was initially established to support handlers, trainers, allied health and other professionals who work with Assistance Animals, allowing organizations and individuals to join as long as they meet the same high standards. WAI has since expanded to incorporate a wide variety of speciality accreditations for those working with Therapy, Detection, Education, Conservation, Film and TV roles.

International Working Animals Federation allows for organizations to join and provide WAFA accreditation to all of its staff and handlers, or for individuals to join individually and apply to WAFA for direct accreditation.



What services do we offer?

WAFA offers a range of services, including:

- Membership and accreditation with accompanying professional standards and code of ethics
- Regular e-news updates on the industry, research and our programs
- Webinars and continuing professional development
- Free community education (including the free 'Assistance Animal - Knowledge Assessed' program)
- Free download resources for community access,
- Search function to connect those in need of services to pre-vetted professionals, and
- Training in self-advocacy for Assistance Animal handlers and free advocacy support in discrimination matters.





What are the benefits?

Our membership and accreditation schemes offer a number of benefits including:

- An accreditation and assessment process that ensures the world's highest operational standards are continuously maintained to meet international standards of best practice,
- A communication hub that ensures members remain informed and have access to the latest research and areas of expertise in all areas of animal and human welfare,
- Access to knowledge-sharing webinars and members-only resources especially tailored to meet the Australian environment,
- An opportunity for personal development through access advice about breeding, rescuing, instructing, training, placing and assessing human-animal interactions, as well as facility set-up and management, public access marketing, fundraising and operational management,
- Sharing for ideas and experiences to facilitate mentoring within the industry and beyond,
- A potential to take part in and facilitate research and community outreach workshops,
- Ability to join our committees and make real change, use of the WAFA logos - a symbol of highest quality across the industry, and
- Legitimacy for lobbying on access and other relevant issues.



What are the current projects?

Our Current Projects include:

- Development of an accreditation system for other classes of working animals, including detection and education animals.
- Development and endorsement of a national symbol to denote animals with public access rights (assistance animals)
- Development of nationally-accredited postgraduate study options for professionals working in the sector including allied health professionals and professional animal trainers,
- Standardization of the industry including prescription, training and assessment of working animals,
- Access to safe and clean toileting areas for working animals in public locations currently without appropriate facilities available,
- Development of a quarterly, professional peer-reviewed journal,
- Development and endorsement of a licenced, nationally accepted including unique identification for working teams.
 - Public Access Test (PAT) for Assistance Animals
 - Therapy Access Test (TAT) for Therapy Animals
- Collaboration with industry partners to facilitate public access for Assistance Animals and decrease discrimination in:
 - Real estate
 - Airlines
 - Medical (dentists, hospitals)
 - Public transport (uber, lyft)
 - Hospitality (airbnb).

