



WAFA POLICIES:

# CODE OF CONDUCT

# PREAMBLE



Animals play a beneficial role in the health and wellbeing of humans across many walks of life. We work with a range of working animals, including Assistance, Therapy, Detection, Education and beyond. We are proud to collaborate with a variety of professionals with diverse range of education, training, knowledge, skills, expertise and accreditation, including individuals with lived experience. This requires the establishment of a Code of Conduct to protect the health, welfare and wellbeing of all humans and animals involved in the Working Animals sector.

This Code of Conduct provides a framework for applying the core values, principles, and standards of the Working Animals Federation of Australia (WAFA) which exists to guide industry professionals in their interactions with Working Animals. It describes a set of overarching ethical principles which include privacy and confidentiality, accountability, transparency, integrity, honesty, fairness, respect and best practice. Detailed recommendations on peer-reviewed and best-practice evidence-based interventions are addressed separately in a variety of documents including the Code of Ethics, Code of Practice and Professional Standards.

**THIS CODE OF CONDUCT APPLIES TO ALL MEMBERS  
OF THE WORKING ANIMALS FEDERATION OF  
AUSTRALIA.**

This Code of Conduct will be subject to periodic amendments with amendments being communicated through updates to the Working Animals Federation of Australia website. All members should ensure that they are up to date on the most recent version of the Code of Conduct which should be cited as follows:

**Working Animals Federation of Australia (WAFA). (2021). Code of Conduct.**

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**VERSION: 3.2**

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Online communication differs from face-to-face communication. Whilst it is rare for a person to deliberately behave inappropriately online, actions can cause unintentional harm. Therefore, members of the Working Animals Federation of Australia agree to abide by the following.

Ensure all posts, comments and interactions are respectful and constructive. This means that all interactions through the Working Animals Federation of Australia website and social media sites should be made in the spirit of helping someone to improve on or build their work. Actions should not target an individual, business, organisation, or group with personal criticism. Whilst the Working Animals Federation of Australia recognises the presence of unscrupulous practices in the industry, public shaming of individuals, businesses or organisations is prohibited.

Individuals who have concerns regarding the conduct of an individual, business or organisation

who is a member of the Working Animals Federation of Australia online or social media sites

should inform the Working Animals Federation of Australia as soon as is practicable. If you feel

that you are in immediate danger you should contact the police on 000.

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Acknowledge and support all peoples regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, age, ability, race, culture, background or other attributes. All members have the responsibility to treat others how they would like to be treated. This includes acknowledging other people's opinions and perspectives before moving the conversation or discussion forward. Members should seek to summarise the other member's point of view before disagreeing to show that you respect their view and take their views seriously. Where differences of opinion exist, discussions should remain polite and respectful at all times.

Refer to peer-reviewed literature and industry best-practice at all times. Members should refrain from recommending training, assessment or other techniques which are ill-informed, lack scientific backing or authenticity or are out of sync with industry best-practice. Although differences in training techniques or methodology may be discussed, members must refrain from criticising other trainers who utilise alternate humane methods. All training methodologies and equipment use must be undertaken within the realms of current Australia legislation and accompanying regulations, codes of practice and associated guidance materials.

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Refrain from harassing, intimidating or flaming other members. Members may from time to time read something that offends or upsets them. The Working Animals Federation of Australia recognises that it can be very tempting to type and send a speedy response, however, this can result in escalation resulting in a flaming spiral. All efforts must be made to avoid making hasty replies which flame anger. Disagreements are expected; however, differences should be respected with the focus maintained on the matter under discussion. Comments directly targeting individuals whether online or in person are directly prohibited.

Ask permission before reproducing comments or personal information, particularly on social media. This includes comments which may have information redacted or that are deidentified before reproduction. Members are encouraged to collaborate and share ideas for the purposes of bettering the industry, however, reference must be noted to the original source of the material with a URL included where possible. This includes sharing of Working Animals Federation of Australia copyrighted and trademarked material. However, Working Animals Federation of Australia free downloads may be shared without alteration or erasure with appropriate referencing.

Follow good netiquette. This includes encouraging each other, refraining from posting overly personal information about yourself or others, keeping messages short and to the point, thinking before responding, and considering effect rather than intention. During interactive sessions, such as webinars or conferences, members must appear and behave appropriately and refrain from making any gestures or undertaking other behaviors which may cause undue disruption or offense to others.

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Understand that the Working Animals Federation of Australia maintains the right to remove or sanction members where the mental or physical safety of the Working Animals Federation of Australia is put at risk by an individual's behavior. This will occur at the discretion of Working Animals Federation of Australia staff. Staff will not enter into discussion of any social media breaches; however, website and other sanctions will be discussed with the individuals concerned before a final decision is made. However, Working Animals Federation of Australia rulings remain final.

Understand that the Working Animals Federation of Australia supports a variety of individuals from all walks of life. This includes handlers of Assistance Animals and Therapy Animals who have various disabilities and mental health conditions. Due to the vast array of disabilities with many potential effects, members should refrain from commenting about other members grammar, syntax, spelling, use of capitalisation or other typological features. Members may ask the poster to clarify the content of their post, however, criticism is disallowed. Members should refrain from discrimination, harassment or bullying made on this basis of a person's perceived or known disability or mental health condition will result in immediate removal from all Working Animals Federation of Australia social media and website functions and activities. No refund will be available for removed individuals.

Refrain from attacks made against members. This includes the use of aggressive typological features such as the overuse of capital letters or emojis. Members must avoid making any derogatory or stereotypical remarks or comments which includes mocking, mimicking or belittling another person either online or in person. Members should avoid speculating or gossiping about a person's perceived sexual or gender identity or refuse to use a person's preferred gender pronoun or former name.

Act mindfully at all times ensuring that you offer others the respect. The Working Animals Federation of Australia is a safe space for everyone.



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