

# Animal Law Student Society Guide

Animal law student societies help to support, connect and educate the next generation of legal changemakers for animals.

## ABOUT VOICELESS

Voiceless, the animal protection institute, is a national non-profit animal protection organisation working to promote respect and compassion for animals.

This guide was produced as part of the [Voiceless Animal Law Education \(ALE\)](#) program. The ALE program was established to help support and develop animal law education in Australia through creating resources for tertiary education, promoting animal law initiatives, and providing opportunities for the next generation of legal changemakers.

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Voiceless acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay our respects to the elders past, present, and emerging.

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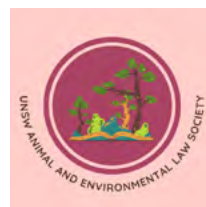
Thank you also to the various members (past and present) of UTAS SEALS who shared their experiences in the featured interviews throughout the guide.

## ENDORSEMENTS



Australian Animal  
& Environmental Law  
Student Network

**Australian Animal & Environmental Law  
Student Network**



**UNSW Animal and Environmental Law Society**



**University of Tasmania Student Environment  
and Animal Law Society**

# OVERVIEW

This guide provides information on how Australian university students can set up and run animal law student societies, or integrate animal law into existing societies and clubs.

Through societies, students are able to deeply engage with animal law issues, develop important legal skills and network with fellow students, animal lawyers and academics.

As an exciting and developing legal area, now is the perfect time for students to learn more about animal law and how to get involved in this important field of social justice law.

In this guide, you will find answers to the following questions:

PG #

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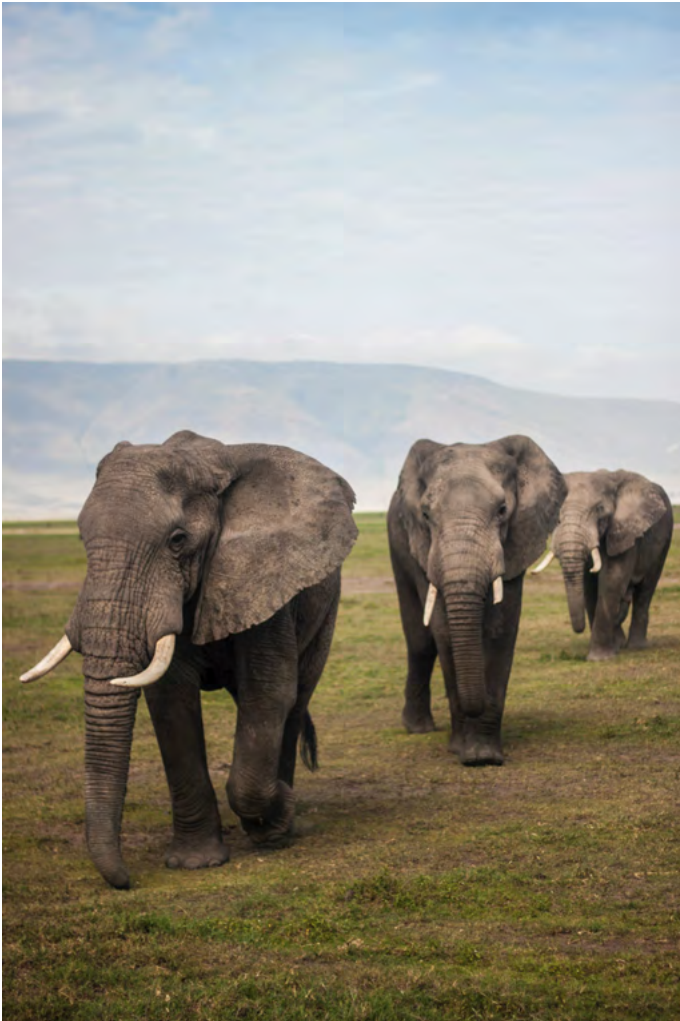
## What is animal law?

Animal law is a dynamic and growing area of the law in Australia, covering a wide range of legal areas concerning animals and the human/animal relationship.

As animals are present in so many different areas of our lives, the scope of animal law is consequently quite broad, reaching beyond traditional animal welfare legislation to many other areas of the law, including administrative law, consumer protection law, constitutional law, criminal law, environmental law, and more.

Australians interact with animals as owners, consumers and citizens, and these complex relationships are part of the reason why animal law so often raises fascinating and important questions of science, ethics, philosophy and justice.

You can learn more about animal law on the Voiceless website: [www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/](http://www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/)



## Can you study animal law in Australia?

Animal law is growing across the country, with seventeen Australian universities currently offering courses in animal law.

### Australian Animal Law Courses

#### ACT

- Australian National University

#### NSW

- Australian Catholic University
- Macquarie University
- Southern Cross University
- University of New England
- University of New South Wales
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Wollongong

#### QLD

- Bond University
- Central Queensland University
- Griffith University
- Queensland University of Technology

#### SA

- University of Adelaide

#### TAS

- University of Tasmania

#### VIC

- La Trobe University
- Monash University
- University of Melbourne

Learn more on the Voiceless website:

[www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/study-animal-law/](http://www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/study-animal-law/)



## Do any animal law student societies already exist in Australia?

Although almost half of Australia's law schools offer animal law courses, there are only a handful of student societies incorporating animal law within their scope.

- Animal and Environmental Law Society UNSW (AELSOC)
- Melbourne University Law Student Society (MULSS) Environment Portfolio, and
- University of Tasmania Student Environment and Animal Law Society (SEALS)

This presents a fantastic opportunity for enterprising law students to fill the gap and create student society spaces to learn, discuss and engage with animal law.

## What are the benefits of creating an animal law student society or portfolio?

Animal law societies provide a platform for students to learn more about animal law, and engage with like-minded students and professionals.

### BENEFITS:

- Discuss and debate animal law issues
- Understand how the law can be used to improve protections for animals
- Use collective student voices to engage with public issues and make submissions on law and policy reform matters
- Connect with fellow students, academics, lawyers and advocates
- Learn about career options in animal law



# Advice from the University of Tasmania Student Environment and Animal Law Society



PHOTO: UTAS SEALS

*“Student societies act as a conduit for animal law expertise to flow through to law students and for students to create professional connections in the animal law and animal rights community.”*

- Salman Shah, Former President, UTAS SEALS 2019.

*“They show that young people care and are taking action. It is a powerful image of the generation that will soon emerge into the workforce and help change Australia for the better.”*

- Samantha Climie, Secretary, UTAS SEALS 2021.

*“Our generation is so vocal about the issues facing our world with regard to the treatment of the environment and species who rely upon it, so a society provides a place for people to actually have a tangible and practical impact. We have skills and understanding about how to have an impact. Therefore, we have a huge role to play in raising awareness and providing a place for people to become involved.”*

- Jarin White, Vice-President, UTAS SEALS 2021.

*“I think a university could (and should) have an animal law society even if animal law is not already represented at that university. It could be a catalyst that leads to greater exposure for animal law – if students demonstrate interest, a faculty might look to offering an animal law elective or providing greater assistance to students who would like to be involved in animal law competitions.”*

- Meghan Scolyer, Inaugural President, UTAS SEALS 2017.



## What sorts of activities are animal law student societies involved in?

Animal law student societies arrange activities that help to achieve their key objectives. Most societies aim to assist their members to learn more about animal law issues, understand their career options in the space, contribute to law reform opportunities, and connect with the broader animal law community.

Voiceless has created a helpful *Animal Law Careers and Volunteering Guide*, available from the Voiceless website: [www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/](http://www.voiceless.org.au/animal-law/)

### EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES:



Discussion forums



Career panels



Guest speaker presentations



Law reform submission writing



Workshops on submission/letter writing



Creating animal law elective or careers guides



Animal law competitions



Creating an animal law library of resources for members



Social events



Creating pamphlets on topical animal law issues



Fundraising events



Pictured: UTAS SEALS have held a wide range of events and activities, including fundraising events and submission writing workshops assisted by academic staff from the Law School. Credit: UTAS SEALS.

# What are the first steps for creating an animal law student society?

## Research

Research animal law to gain an understanding of this unique and fascinating area of the law. Learning more about the field can help to give you an idea of what events and initiatives your future society may want to run. An excellent starting point for your research is reading through the [Voiceless Animal Law Toolkit](#), available from the Voiceless website.

A list of helpful contact information for animal law and protection organisations can be found at the end of the guide.

## Connect

It may also be helpful to seek advice from executives of animal law and relevant societies at other universities. They may be able to provide 'starting off' advice that will put you on the right track. Joining the [Australian Animal and Environmental Law Student Network](#) on Facebook will also help connect you with a community of students who may be able to assist.

## Identify existing societies & level of student interest

It is important to first check whether a similar or related society already exists. It is also useful to ascertain the level of student interest in joining an animal law student society to ensure that you will have sufficient support to form an executive and attract members.

## Consider your options

There are various ways animal law can be incorporated into law student life. This guide explores three main approaches.

- **Option 1: Hybrid Society**  
Incorporating animal law into a relevant specialised society (such as an environmental law or social justice society).
- **Option 2: Portfolio in a General Law Student Society**  
Creating an animal welfare portfolio within your university's general law student society.
- **Option 3: Independent Animal Law Student Society**  
Creating a new society dedicated to animal law.





# Which approach should I take?

The best approach will largely depend on what societies already exist at your university and your available time and resources.

## It is useful to consider:

- Could animal law fit into an existing society?
- How much attention would animal law receive if it was combined with another society?
- How much time are you able to devote to administration and organisation?

The table below outlines some of the main pros and cons associated with each option.



### Option 1: Hybrid Society

Incorporating animal law into a relevant specialised society (such as an environmental law or social justice society).

### Option 2: Portfolio in a General Law Student Society

Creating an animal welfare portfolio within your university's general law student society.

### Option 3: Independent Animal Law Student Society

Creating a new society dedicated to animal law.

Hybrid Society		Portfolio in General Society		Independent Society	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
<p>Saves time and energy associated with creating a new society and potential rejection of an affiliation application.</p> <p>May mean a larger number of members.</p> <p>May attract a broader range of students.</p>	<p>Animal law may have to compete with other subject areas.</p> <p>Smaller societies often have to put more energy into marketing to achieve engagement with events.</p>	<p>Saves time and energy associated with creating a new society and potential rejection of an affiliation application.</p> <p>Animal law may receive more attention as general law student societies are usually well integrated across the student body.</p>	<p>Animal law could possibly receive less attention, as it would have to compete with a range of other portfolio areas.</p> <p>May have less freedom and scope for creativity than creating a new society, as you would need to abide by the general society's rules and preferences.</p>	<p>Exclusive focus on animal law.</p> <p>Animal law wouldn't have to compete with another subject area.</p> <p>More freedom and scope for creativity.</p>	<p>Time and energy associated with creating a new society.</p> <p>Application for affiliation could be rejected.</p> <p>A small niche society may struggle to attract sufficient student support.</p>

## Option 1: Creating a hybrid society

If you decide to combine with an existing university society (such as an environmental law society), you will need to contact their president and/or executive team and detail your proposal (see the 'Template Proposal' overleaf for guidance).

Make sure you decide exactly how you would like animal law to be integrated into the existing society. This is important to discuss with the society's executive team and should perhaps be the subject of an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

### Important questions to consider are:

- Should the society name be changed?
- Should a subcommittee be created for animal law? Or a separate portfolio?
- Should the society's executive structure and/or constitution be changed, including the aims?
- What new events should be run to effectively incorporate animal law?
- What other things should they do differently to incorporate animal law?



### Insight: Frances Medlock, Former President of the UTAS Student Environment and Animal Law Society (2018).

I was a member in 2016, Secretary in 2017 and President in 2018. When I joined it was only 'SELS' - the Student Environmental Law Society. In 2018 we added animal law as part of the scope of the society and it was very successful. We had a number of new members join because they were particularly interested in animal law specifically. In fact that year we held one of the most successful events the society had had to date about the treatment and legal status of animals, attended by politicians, academics and activists. We were lucky to have Meg Good supporting the society, and a number of the members studied animal law with her as an elective as well.

I think given the nature of animal law it was good to have a combined environmental/animal law society, as it was a natural fit that also broadened the scope of what the society could do. I met lots of interesting and inspiring people through the society, including people I remain friends with today. It was also a fantastic way to brush up on skills that aren't taught as part of the law curriculum, like submission writing, advocacy and event organisation - and of course a great way to learn more about animal law generally.



# TEMPLATE PROPOSAL TO COMBINE WITH AN EXISTING SOCIETY

Dear *[insert club name]*

My name is *[...]*, and I am contacting to propose the integration of animal law into the framework of your society.

Animal law is an area of increasing importance and I believe it is crucial to bring it to the forefront of our university's student body. *[Explain why you feel animal law is an important area of law]*

I am confident that incorporating animal law would increase student engagement with your society because *[...]*

Animal law is relevant to your society and would complement its existing structure because *[...]*

The manner I propose to integrate animal law into the framework of your society is *[...]*

*[Examples:*

- *By changing the name of this society from 'Environmental Protection Society' to 'Animal and Environmental Protection Society'.*
- *By creating a subcommittee for 'Animal Protection' or 'Animal Law'.*
- *By creating an 'Animal Law Portfolio'.]*

*I would love to speak to you further about this proposal, and I am keen to hear your thoughts and ideas.*

*Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Kind regards,*

*[...]*



# Interview: Inaugural President of the UNSW Animal and Environmental Law Society, Francesca Nyilas.

## What inspired you to create UNSW AELSOC?

There was a pertinent void in UNSW law for animal and environmental law, in particular animal welfare as an issue meriting serious legal engagement. I wanted to bring these areas to the forefront of UNSW law and create a united platform for students to harness their passion and enthusiasm to help protect animals and the environment. Not only did I have a personal interest in these areas, but I've met so many students wanting to explore ways they could use their law degrees to protect animals and the environment. Yet, there seemed to be no outlet at UNSW for students wanting to learn more about these areas outside of the classroom. I think this is because of the disproportionate emphasis on commercial law as a career path for law graduates, which often comes at the expense of subjects and extra-curricular activities geared towards public interest. We are living in an age of neglect for the intrinsic value of the environment and animals, and I think us students have a role to play in helping the community to recognise the value and importance of protecting the environment and non-human life.

## How was the creation of this society received by other students at your university?

The response I received after creating AELSOC at UNSW was overwhelmingly positive. Students were thankful steps were finally taken to inject animal and environmental law into UNSW's agenda in a way which allowed them to engage with these areas outside of their academic curriculum. UNSW's mainstream law society also warmly welcomed the creation of AELSOC and offered to collaborate for future events.

## What kind of activities does your society do?

AELSOC fosters all kinds of events, as long as they bear the principal aim of promoting use of the law to protect animals and the environment. For example, during my time with the society, we hosted a Parliamentary Inquiry Submission Workshop teaching students how to draft submissions on animal and environmental law issues and legislation. During the event, we heard from guest speaker, Tara Ward, UNSW Animal Law Course Convener and Co-Founder of the Animal Defenders Office, who kindly shared her expertise in drafting submissions on behalf of the Animal Defenders Office and the political processes involved. This was an incredibly insightful learning experience and students were able to hear first-hand how the Animal Defenders Office has advocated for greater



legal animal protections in parliament. We also created an 'AELSOC Library', which was a collection of books held by the society on animal and environmental law topics that members could borrow. The purpose of the library was to facilitate open knowledge sharing and allow students to access a range of resources to educate themselves on the state of the law and present issues.

## Before your society was created, was animal law well represented at your university?

At UNSW, animal law was only represented through the law elective 'Animal Law'. Aside from this, animal law was virtually absent from any other facets of university life including careers events, student societies and extra-curricular activities. However, there was opportunity for engaging with animal law outside of university, such as with the NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee.

## What was the biggest challenge you faced in creating UNSW AELSOC?

The administrative process and paperwork associated with creating a new club was the most difficult part. UNSW has a rigorous process for affiliation with its student club administration, Arc, and requires an assortment of paperwork and an Inaugural General Meeting (IGM) to be held in accordance with its procedures. I had to review its steps for affiliation multiple times to ensure we were acting in compliance. This is crucial because if you don't follow Arc procedures, then there is a risk your affiliation application will be rejected.

## **What advice would you give to students wanting to create an animal law society at their university?**

I would advise them to recruit a group of students to assist them in creating an animal law society. It can be a long, laborious and bureaucratic process and it's important to have assistance and advice along the way, especially from those familiar with university club protocols. Having multiple people review university club affiliation requirements can help ensure they are followed closely and no steps are neglected or missed.

## **What role do you think student animal law societies play in increasing the presence of animal law in Australian universities?**

I think they send the message to the university that students are taking issues such as environmental damage and animal

welfare seriously and want to use their law degrees to address these problems. The creation of animal law societies also conveys that students desire a greater breadth of animal law initiatives and that animal law is a relevant and important area of law which cannot be sidelined. With the rise of climate change, extinction and institutionalised animal cruelty, on top of university funding cuts which may cause the cancellation of some law electives and potentially animal law, animal law societies provide an important advocacy platform for students to demand greater presence of animal law in university life.

## **Do you have any other comments you would like to share?**

Animal law is underrepresented in most Australian universities. Creating a student animal law society is one way to address this problem and tackle entrenched cruelties involved in factory farming and agricultural practices. Issues of animal welfare are rising on legal and political agendas, which bring important opportunity for legal reform and raising public awareness of institutionalised cruelty.





## Option 2: Portfolio in a general law student society

Depending on how your university's law society is structured, animal law could be inserted as an entirely new portfolio or as either a combined or sub-portfolio. Social justice and environmental law portfolios provide a natural fit with animal law.

### Examples

**New portfolio:** 'Animal Law Portfolio'.

**Combined portfolio:** 'Animal and Environmental Law Portfolio'.

**Sub-portfolio:** 'Environmental Law Portfolio' (animal law included within this).

It is best to email the student law society's president(s)/ executive team members to put forward the reasons why you think animal law should be incorporated into the society's work, and to explain the various options for integration. See the 'Template Proposal' on page 11 for guidance.

### Important questions to consider are:

- What should the new portfolio be called?
- What events should be run by this portfolio?
- Will the law society's constitution have to be changed to integrate this new portfolio?
- Should new executive positions be created to facilitate the operation of this portfolio (e.g. 'Animal Law Director')?
- Should a subcommittee be created for this new portfolio?
- What other things should the club do differently to incorporate animal law?

## Option 3: Create a new animal law student society

The third option is to create a new student society dedicated to animal law. This is a good option to choose if you would prefer to create a forum exclusively devoted to animal law, or if the first two options aren't possible. The remainder of the Guide is devoted to exploring this approach. As a first step, you will need to consider the following checklist of questions on the next page.





# Checklist for creating a new animal law student society

## ☐ Who can become a member of this society? Should it be open to all students, or just law students?

Opening up membership to all students instead of just law students may help increase member numbers. It may also help incorporate a diversity of views and expertise.

## ☐ What executive officers should the society have?

The executive structure should reflect the intended functions of the society. Aside from the standard President, Secretary and Treasurer roles, it is important to think about other supplementary roles which are necessary for the society's operation. For example, if your society intends to have a strong online presence, it may be useful to have a Media Officer in charge of generating media content. If a principal activity is organising events and discussion panels, it may be helpful to have an Events Officer.

## ☐ Have you checked your university's rules?

Your university may have a set of guidelines regarding minimum requirements for the executive.

## ☐ Should the society have subcommittees?

Subcommittees are smaller groups within a society focused on particular issues or activities. They can be divided according to different activities or areas of law. You could also create sub-committees on different animal law issues, such as factory farming or live export.

## ☐ What rules should govern the society?

Think about basic rules relating to society conduct and how members should engage with each other. Also consider diversity and inclusion and how cultural and linguistic diversity should be embraced. Consider the long-term impact of society content and shared information, such as member contact details and whether members should be bound by rules of confidentiality concerning personal information.

## ☐ How should executives be elected?

Simple majority means executives are elected on the basis of who received the most number of votes in a contest following a single count. Preferential voting is more complex and means voters mark a preference for every single candidate on a ballot paper to determine who has acquired an absolute majority of total votes (more than 50% of formal votes). A simple majority voting system may be more effective for smaller societies, but preferential voting may be more effective when the club membership increases in order to reflect more complex voter preferences.

## ☐ Should a Facebook forum be created for your society?

A Facebook page or group is an excellent and easy strategy to keep members connected and to streamline communications on one platform. Executives can also be given page administrative rights to monitor posts and members. Most university student societies use Facebook groups to post events, announcements, discussion topics and relevant information.

## ☐ Should a website be created for your society?

A website could help to extend the online presence of the society beyond traditional forms of social media. However, website domain names may incur costs and this may only be justifiable once the society reaches a certain level of engagement or a larger member base.

## ☐ What activities should the society undertake?

Societies undertake various activities, including fundraising, discussion panels, career panels, debates, drafting parliamentary inquiry submissions, attending animal protection events, hosting community events and creating information brochures and pamphlets.

## ☐ How will you create the society's constitution?

Some university society administrations offer constitution templates.

## Recruit society members and an executive team

Once you have decided on a basic structure for your society, you will need to recruit members and decide on how an executive team should be elected. There are multiple ways to recruit members and generate a list of nominees for executive positions.

### Suggested strategies

- Post on your university's Facebook discussion group. Explain that a new society has been created and you are currently recruiting for members and an executive team. Provide a list of available executive positions and invite people to contact if they are interested in nominating themselves or becoming a member.
- Create a pamphlet/flyer to hand out at your university with the abovementioned details. These could be handed out on university campuses and/or posted online.
- Make announcements at the beginning of university lectures, with the permission of the lecturer.
- Request that your Law School and/or relevant societies (such as the general law student society) help advertise the opportunity to their mailing lists/members.

## Prepare for an Inaugural General Meeting (IGM)

The creation of most university societies will require the holding of an IGM. During the IGM, you will need to elect an executive team. It is important that prior to this, you advertise that nominations are open for executive positions and allow an appropriate window of time for people to nominate themselves. You should also consider how nominees should nominate themselves - should they give a speech during the IGM, or write a statement?

You will need to keep a record of all prospective members. This can be recorded via Google Forms which automatically saves member information into a spreadsheet. It is also advisable to save backups of these documents and/or have hard copies.

After you have advertised the creation of your new society, you will likely need to create the following records. This list is non-exhaustive and not universal - different documents may be required as part of your university's affiliation process. It is necessary to check your university's website to confirm what documents you need to produce for affiliation.

### Important records

1. Your society's constitution.
2. A list of all registered members.
3. A list of nominees for executive positions, including their nominee statements if applicable.
4. A voting platform for nominees (online or in-person).
5. A brief outline of how the IGM will run including important details such as location, time, date, who will be chairing, who will be taking minutes, when nominees will give their speeches, when voting will commence, when voting will end and how elected executives will be announced.

You will need to send out an IGM notice in advance (ideally at least 7 days prior) to all members specifying a time, date and location (or online meeting link and password).



# Hold an IGM

You will need to hold an IGM to elect your executive team. During the IGM, executive nominees will be elected through a designated nomination process, such as by giving a speech or providing a written statement. It may be useful to have someone time the nominee speeches.

Two important functions during the meeting are chairing and taking minutes. Information sheets for these roles can be accessed below:

- [Chairing a meeting.](#)
- [Taking minutes](#)

## Suggested agenda

1. Official meeting opening and acknowledgement of country
2. Apologies
3. Signing IGM attendance form
4. Acceptance of official name, aims/objectives and constitution
5. Election of executive
  - a. Brief speeches from nominees
  - b. Question time
  - c. Executives elected
6. General business
7. Business without notice
8. Meeting closure





## Meeting structure

1. In opening the meeting, it is important to provide an Acknowledgement of Country. [Some guidance on this can be found here.](#)
2. Then announce apologies for any members unable to be present at the meeting.
3. This should be followed by requiring all attendees to sign an attendance form. This form is a crucial record and is highly likely to be required as part of your society's formal affiliation application.
4. The next step is to formally adopt the constitution, aims and name. During this step, attendees should be invited to suggest any formal changes to the constitution or amendments. The constitution should be agreed upon by consensus.
5. The next suggested step is the official election of the executive team. Nominees can nominate themselves by either giving speeches at the IGM or submitting written statements available for members to read. If the former option is chosen, time needs to be allocated for the giving of speeches, perhaps including time for members to ask questions. It is advisable to apply a time limit to all nominee speeches to ensure fairness.
6. Once all candidate statements have been read or speeches have been given, a voting platform should be opened. Votes can be counted physically, or via an online platform. If the latter option is used, you must choose a platform that adheres to your society's constitution (for example, allowing only one vote per member). You should specify times the voting platform will be opened and closed, which ensures all members have sufficient time to vote. You could open the voting platform for 20 minutes and announce the results during the IGM, or keep it open for 24 hours and announce the results the following day. Your university society administration may also have requirements regarding how long the voting platform is required to be open.
7. If voting is open for 24 hours, you should skip the announcement of new executives and move to general business, and instead announce voting results the following day.
8. General business includes any business items notified as part of the IGM. Unnotified business items can be raised during business without notice and members should be invited to raise any relevant discussion during this time. Make sure the time of the meeting closure is noted and members are thanked for their attendance.

## Submit university affiliation documents

After the IGM has concluded and executives have been chosen, the next step is to submit all documents required for your university's society affiliation process. The documents required for this will vary across universities.

A list of likely required documents are listed below as a guide.

1. The society's constitution
2. IGM minutes
3. List of IGM attendees
4. Copy of IGM notice
5. Executive team details
6. A signed society affiliation agreement
7. List of intended activities
8. Description of the society
9. Society contact and social media details

You should allow at least a month before expecting your society to be fully established. However, this does not prevent you from running society events and initiatives in the meantime, provided they do not require university funding.

Once your society is approved and affiliated, it is crucial to adhere to all administration rules and policies.



# How do I get started once the Society is up and running?

Once you have successfully established your society, you will need to set up relevant financial and organisational systems and hold your first executive meeting. After this, the fun part starts - you can begin planning the activities and initiatives your society will run over the year.

## Financial and organisational systems

### ABN and bank account

Your university student association may provide assistance to help you to apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN), and set up a society bank account.

### Logo, document storage and communications

The following may be helpful to create in the initial stages:

- A professional logo for the society. There are a number of free online logo creation websites available.
- A society-specific email address.
- A Google Drive Account linked to that email address (for collaboration and storage of documents).
- A society-specific social media account (such as a private social media page and group chat for members and a public non-member social media page).
- An organisation space on an online project management platform such as Trello, Slack or Asana.

The Google Drive Account may include the society's constitution and folders for each year. The folder for each year could include:

- Membership documents (an excel spreadsheet for recording memberships, and a spreadsheet with an availability of members).
- Treasurer documents (a record of expenses, any grant applications, and budget proposals).
- Meeting minutes (including handovers, agenda templates, and notes from IGM, AGM and GMs).
- A projects folder (with sub-folders for different project types).

## First executive meeting

In the first week of operation, you will need to plan an initial meeting for the executive.

The day before the meeting, the President should contact the Secretary of the society with a draft list of agenda items. It may be useful to put this in an executive social media group chat in order to allow members of the executive to prepare and raise any agenda items they would like to discuss.

### Suggested general meeting agenda

- Your society's name
- The society logo
- The date of the general meeting
- Meeting start time
- Attendance (list names of executive members in attendance)
- Apologies (list names of executive members who are unable to attend)
- An acknowledgement of country
- A table with two columns - the Secretary can list the agenda items on the left of the table prior to the meeting and then during the meeting the Secretary can write the actionable items on the left of the table for each topic
- A final agenda item to establish when the next meeting will occur
- The meeting close time

During the general meeting, the President's role is to guide the executive's discussion and to lead the group through the agenda items at a good pace. The President should ensure that appropriate time is spent on each agenda item, and that the views of all executive members are heard and taken into consideration.

The Vice-President also plays an important role as they should ensure that everything that needs to be covered is raised at the meeting. The other members of the executive should contribute their ideas on each agenda item where relevant, and the Secretary should record what is said during the meeting and distribute the minutes to the executive members after the meeting.



## Plan projects

During your first executive meeting it is helpful to discuss what projects you would like to achieve during the semester. For your society's first semester, it is generally achievable to plan 2-3 projects.

Start the semester with an event that encourages new members to come along, and be sure to allocate enough time for organisation and advertising. It is useful to fully map out which tasks will need to be completed for the initial event at the first executive meeting, and to split these tasks between members to avoid further delegation closer to the event.

Once the executive has decided on a plan, it can make project files in the society's Google Drive with a to-do list of tasks, listed on the basis of priority, with the name of each executive member responsible for each task.

### Ideas for potential projects

- Letter/submission writing sessions
- Seminars
- Documentary nights
- Public speakers
- Public panels
- Submission writing on law/policy reviews
- Representations to local councils
- Letter writing to local members of government
- Social events, such as bushwalks and craft sessions





## **Interview: Hannah Lawrence, President of the UTAS Student Environment and Animal Law Society 2021.**

### **What kind of activities does your society do?**

SEALS conducts projects, workshops, and events focusing on animal and environmental law. We host public talks and panels, submission and letter writing workshops, and engage in the democratic process by writing submissions for statutory review of legislation and policy relating to animal and environmental law.

### **What advice would you give to students wanting to create an animal law society at their university?**

If you are passionate about animal law and it is not well represented at your university, I encourage you to create a society like SEALS! I think animal and environmental law are generally under-represented at universities despite many students caring deeply about both topics. I became interested in SEALS when we wrote a collaborative submission to the independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) in 2020. I learnt so much about administrative law and statutory interpretation relating to environmental law from writing that submission and met so many new friends, I've loved SEALS ever since!

### **What role do you think student animal law societies play in increasing the presence of animal law in Australian universities?**

Student animal law societies play an increasingly important role in raising awareness of animal law not only within their university, but in the community, both locally, and nationally. It is so rewarding to have members join who would like to learn about the law and utilise their legal skills for the benefit of animals and the environment.

Law students are particularly well placed to make a difference in the field because unlike an ordinary advocacy group, they have the foundations of legal training which allow their voices and animal's voices to be heard.



### **What are the biggest challenges for SEALS?**

I think the biggest challenges for SEALS are juggling people's university commitments with SEALS and getting first year students, who are perhaps nervous or unsure of how to contribute, to have a go and get involved! We have found that 'shout-outs' advertising events at lectures has been very effective for getting like-minded people on board, and that it is invaluable to get advice and support from experts in the field. Overall, the benefits outweigh the challenges, and I am so fortunate to have met such an amazing bunch of people.

## Engage general members

It is important to maintain engagement between the executive and general society members, so that general members feel involved in the day-to-day running of the society and the society's projects and initiatives. The President can allocate additional tasks to general members based on their preferences, skills, and availability.

Engagement with general members can be facilitated by posting in a general member chat to keep them informed about upcoming events and opportunities, and to provide them with information about additional volunteering roles. Social events and meetings for all society members are also important for networking.

## Advertise

Appointing a Social Media Officer can improve the quality and consistency of your advertising and in turn, improve your society's engagement with the university community and members of the public.

### Effective advertising methods



- Doing 'shout outs' to advertise an event at the beginning of a relevant lecture with the lecturer's permission (you may also like to make a PowerPoint slide to accompany your message)
- Emailing lecturers to see if they would make an announcement post on the online learning platforms for their courses
- Emailing high school teachers to advertise career-related events that may appeal to grade 11 & 12 students
- Putting posters in advertising locations around your university
- Making social media posts advertising your event from your society's social media pages
- Creating an event page on Facebook
- Contacting your university faculty reception to see if they can send out an email advertising the event
- Asking members to share the event with their friends and colleagues

## Communicate clearly & respectfully

The President should communicate the due dates and expectations for each task clearly. It is good to leave a leeway buffer (ideally one week or more) before submissions are due to allow time for proofreading and perhaps to send the draft to a member of staff for comments. The executive should encourage members to get involved, and provide assistance and encouragement to new members. All members and staff should be thanked for their contributions to each project.

An effective executive should consider when members are busy with university and personal commitments and remain flexible and encouraging about deadlines for projects. Remember that a key goal of your society is for everyone to learn and have fun!

## Facilitate collaboration

The society's Google Drive allows students to collaborate on the same project files. Collaborators can leave comments and work simultaneously on a piece of work (such as submissions).

## Network

Making social contacts and collaborating with others provides great opportunities for students. Your society may want to reach out to your general university student society, related faculties in your university, university staff, legal professionals, high school students, and environment and animal law societies from other Australian and overseas universities.

It is useful to maintain connections with past members of your society, new graduates, and previous members of faculty staff as they are often willing to share their expertise with students.

## Share news

Your society's private and public social media platforms can be a great way to keep members and the public informed about local, national, and international developments in animal law. It is important to acknowledge the source of any information that is posted (including photography). Your society may wish to provide links to recent court cases, journal articles, newspaper articles, and social media events.

## Reflect on the society's achievements

It is good practice to review and reflect on your society's achievements.

For example, after running your first event, it may be helpful to ask your members:

- What worked really well?
- What could we have done better?
- What could be done differently next time?

You may also want to reflect on whether you achieved the society's objectives in running the event or project.



# Supporting the next generation of legal changemakers for animals

The creation of animal law student societies helps to support, connect and educate the next generation of legal changemakers for animals.

By creating one of these societies at your law school, you are leaving an important legacy for future students, and helping to work towards the achievement of improved legal protections for animals across Australia.

*“Progress is made by pushing forward the boundaries of legal protection ...  
And now a new frontier beckons – animal welfare, protection and rights.”*

- Voiceless Patron and Former Justice of the High Court, The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG.



PHOTO: SAMMANTHA FISHER  
[www.sammanthafisher.com/](http://www.sammanthafisher.com/)



# CONTACTS

## Animal protection organisations

### Animals Australia

[www.animalsaustralia.org](http://www.animalsaustralia.org)

### Animal Liberation

NSW [www.al.org.au](http://www.al.org.au)  
Qld [www.alq.org.au](http://www.alq.org.au)  
SA [www.animalliberation.org.au](http://www.animalliberation.org.au)  
Tas [www.facebook.com/animalliberationtasmania/](http://www.facebook.com/animalliberationtasmania/)  
Vic [www.alv.org.au](http://www.alv.org.au)

### Animal Welfare League

Australia [www.awl.org.au](http://www.awl.org.au)  
NSW [www.awlnsw.com.au](http://www.awlnsw.com.au)  
Qld [www.awlqld.com.au](http://www.awlqld.com.au)

### Australian Alliance for Animals

[www.allianceforanimals.org.au](http://www.allianceforanimals.org.au)

### FOUR PAWS (Australia)

[www.four-paws.org.au](http://www.four-paws.org.au)

### Humane Society International (Australia)

[www.hsi.org.au](http://www.hsi.org.au)

### International Fund for Animal Welfare (Australia)

[www.ifaw.org/au](http://www.ifaw.org/au)

### People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Australia

[www.peta.org.au/](http://www.peta.org.au/)

### RSPCA

Australia [www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au)  
ACT [www.rspca-act.org.au](http://www.rspca-act.org.au)  
Darwin [www.rspcadarwin.org.au](http://www.rspcadarwin.org.au)  
NSW [www.rspcansw.org.au](http://www.rspcansw.org.au)  
Qld [www.rspcaqld.org.au](http://www.rspcaqld.org.au)  
SA [www.rspcasa.org.au](http://www.rspcasa.org.au)  
Tas [www.rspcatas.org.au](http://www.rspcatas.org.au)  
Vic [www.rspcavic.org](http://www.rspcavic.org)  
WA [www.rspcawa.org.au](http://www.rspcawa.org.au)

### Voiceless, the animal protection institute

[www.voiceless.org.au](http://www.voiceless.org.au)

### World Animal Protection (Australia)

[www.worldanimalprotection.org.au](http://www.worldanimalprotection.org.au)

## Animal law organisations, law firms and legal centres

### Animal Defenders Office

[www.ado.org.au](http://www.ado.org.au)

### Animal Law Institute

[www.ali.org.au](http://www.ali.org.au)

### Anti-Puppy Farm Legal Clinic (Victoria)

<https://www.ali.org.au/advice>

### Barristers Animal Welfare Panel

[www.bawp.org.au](http://www.bawp.org.au)

### K & R Animal Law

[www.kandranimallaw.com.au](http://www.kandranimallaw.com.au)

### Lawyers for Animals

[www.lawyersforanimals.org.au](http://www.lawyersforanimals.org.au)

### Lawyers for Companion Animals

[www.lawyersforcompanionanimals.com.au](http://www.lawyersforcompanionanimals.com.au)

You can access a broader list of organisations and law firms offering animal law services via the Voiceless website [here](#).

## Animal law student competitions

### ANIMAL Moot

National animal law moot competition, offered annually.  
[www.ali.org.au/animal](http://www.ali.org.au/animal)

### NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Essay Competition

National animal law essay competition, offered occasionally.  
[www.lawsociety.com.au/legal-communities/NSW-young-lawyers/committees/animal-law](http://www.lawsociety.com.au/legal-communities/NSW-young-lawyers/committees/animal-law)

## Law Society committees

### Animal Law Committee of the Law Society of South Australia

[www.lawsocietysa.asn.au/](http://www.lawsocietysa.asn.au/)

### Law Institute of Victoria Animal Welfare Committee

<https://www.liv.asn.au/web>

### NSW Young Lawyers Animal Law Committee

[www.lawsociety.com.au/legal-communities/NSW-young-lawyers/committees/animal-law](http://www.lawsociety.com.au/legal-communities/NSW-young-lawyers/committees/animal-law)

# CONTACTS

## Social media groups

**Australian Animal and Environmental Law Student Network**

[Facebook](#)

**Animal Law Talk Australia**

[Facebook](#)

## International & overseas animal law organisations

A selection of international and overseas animal law organisations.

**Advocates for Animals (UK)**

[www.advocates-for-animals.com](http://www.advocates-for-animals.com)

**A-Law UK Centre for Animal Law (UK)**

[www.alaw.org.uk](http://www.alaw.org.uk)

**Animal Law Coalition (US)**

[www.animallawcoalition.com](http://www.animallawcoalition.com)

**Animal Law Europe (EU)**

[www.animallaweurope.com](http://www.animallaweurope.com)

**Animal Law Reform South Africa (South Africa)**

[www.animallawreform.org](http://www.animallawreform.org)

**Animal Legal Defense Fund (US)**

[www.aldf.org](http://www.aldf.org)

**Center for Animal Law Studies (US)**

[www.law.lclark.edu/centers/animal\\_law\\_studies/](http://www.law.lclark.edu/centers/animal_law_studies/)

**Global Animal Law GAL Association (Global)**

[www.globalanimallaw.org](http://www.globalanimallaw.org)

**Hong Kong Animal Law and Protection Organisation (Hong Kong)**

[www.hkalpo.com/](http://www.hkalpo.com/)

**Institute of Animal Law of Asia (Asia)**

[www.ialasia.org](http://www.ialasia.org)

**New Zealand Animal Law Association (New Zealand)**

[www.nzala.org/w](http://www.nzala.org/w)

## Animal law student societies

**University of Tasmania, Student Environment and Animal Law Society (UTAS SEALS)**

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

**University of New South Wales, Animal and Environmental Law Society (UNSW AELSoc)**

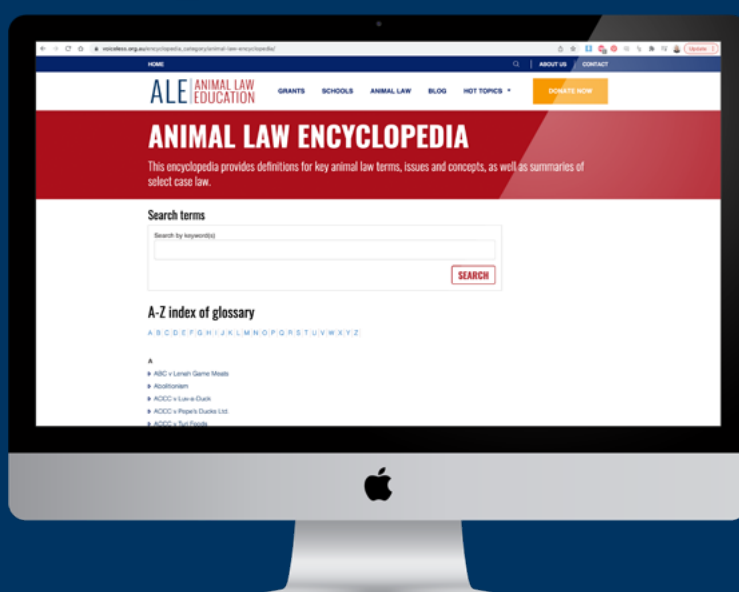
[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

# Voiceless Animal Law Education Resources

Access a range of Animal Law Education (ALE) resources on the Voiceless website

- Animal Law Careers and Volunteering Guide
- Animal Law Encyclopedia
- Animal Law Services Guide
- Animal Law Student Society Guide
- Presentations by animal lawyers and academics
- Studying Animal Law Guide
- Submissions Writing Guide
- Voiceless reports and educational resources on animal protection issues
- Voiceless Animal Law Lecture Series videos
- Voiceless Animal Law Talk podcast episodes
- Voiceless Animal Law Toolkit



[voiceless.org.au/animal-law/](https://voiceless.org.au/animal-law/)



# ALE | ANIMAL LAW EDUCATION