



VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 8

ADMONITION

In reading these Training Notes, Volunteers will have noticed some repetition: “**hurry up and wait**”, stop to assess **safety**, and so on.

This may be quite different from your initial expectations when first registering for volunteering with SAVEM.

Some volunteers have the expectation that they will be deployed into the field immediately. We are occasionally asked, “Is there any training?” and “how hard can it be?”

The Training Notes will already have shown that:

- the Emergency Management environment within which SAVEM works is specific, detailed, and requires knowledge – and behaviours always matching those protocols
- working with animals in Emergency situations is about the animals’ welfare; as a result of which the focus and hard decisions may well be quite different to what the untrained volunteer might be expecting – and these might be confronting
- SAVEM’s processes must be strictly followed – no individual variances or independent action can be, or will be, tolerated.

Now is a good time for you to:

- Review in which **Functional Area** within SAVEM you would like to contribute. Remember they are **Control, Planning, Operations, Logistics and Public Information**.
- Understand that Operational Animal Welfare decisions at SAVEM are made primarily by a Veterinarian, and does not equate to “save every animal”. It *does* equate to best practice animal welfare. Realise you may be challenged.
- know that “baby steps” are inevitable

The Training Notes get you started. The real learning occurs by attending training workshops, and “learning by doing”, initially under the tutoring of long term senior SAVEM personnel. Nevertheless, from Day 1, you are responsible for your actions, which includes attending and undertaking training. Individuals whose behaviours jeopardise SAVEM’s standing and reputation will be stood down immediately, and will not be given any role in any subsequent SAVEM activities.

That is why:

- policy decisions are made only by SAVEM’s Board, usually by unanimous consensus
- clinical decisions are made by at least one, but usually two, veterinarians trained to Team Leader level, with those decisions documented in the Event Log and Field note book records
- SAVEM Standard Operating Procedures and Policies determine behaviours and actions
- team members act to agreed team action decisions, under Team Leadership

SAVEM will never ask a volunteer to do anything which is unsafe, beyond their skill level, or without proper support.

You are not alone. Act within SAVEM’s SOP’s and Policies, and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

We endeavour to create a mutual support environment with regular informal discussions, “peace time” exercises and participation in process development workshops, which help develop you the individual through the SAVEM structure.

