

SCB Greater Melbourne Handbook and Strategic Plan

April 2021



Overview

What's this document all about?

Welcome! Here lies the guide to everything you need to know about the Greater Melbourne Chapter of the Society of Conservation Biology. This is intended to be a working document that can be updated as the chapter grows. We encourage the committee to make notes on this throughout the year, with a revised version to be released each year. This will also help guide handover as new committee members are elected.

What is SCB?

SCB, the Society for Conservation Biology, is “a *global community of conservation professionals dedicated to advancing the science and practice of conserving Earth's biodiversity*”. Founded in the US in 1985 following the coining of the term ‘conservation biology’ in the late 1970s, the society now has a global reach, including 7 regional sections (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, North America, Marine and Oceania) and ~35 chapters across the world. The society has founded several important journals in the field (including *Conservation Biology* and *Conservation Letters*) and numerous conferences including the bi-annual International Congress for Conservation Biology.

Membership of SCB global entitles you to discounted conferences, discounted access to their journals and conferences, discounts to publish in their journals, mailing lists, student awards, grants, etc. Membership fees are based on your income (from \$30 to \$120 per year). We encourage all of our members to also sign up to be part of the SCB global community

<https://conbio.org>

How does Greater Melbourne SCB fit?

Chapters are the local arms of the SCB's global network - a way to achieve the broad aims of the society at a local level. We sit within the Oceania Section, which has recently obtained NFP status in Australia. Other chapters in our section include Brisbane-UQ, Sydney, Wellington, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. The Oceania section has its own conference and journal (*Pacific Conservation Biology*) <http://scoceania.org>.

You do not have to be a member of SCB global to be a member of Greater Melbourne Chapter, or vice versa. But one of our roles as a chapter is to encourage people to join

<https://conbio.org/membership/become-a-member/>

A brief history of the Greater Melbourne Chapter

The city of Melbourne hosts the second-largest human population in Australia, contains many threatened species, and covers almost 10,000 km², including a variety of grassland, woodland, wetland, marine and freshwater ecosystems. The region has many academic, government, non-government and community groups interested in conservation and ecology, including:

- 7 universities with environment and ecology research centres
- 31 local government councils
- a number of state government environmental agencies
- a host of active conservation organisations and community groups.

However many are unaware of the breadth of the conservation community and the array of research and action being conducted across the region, resulting in missed opportunities for collaboration or involvement in conservation. We felt the need for a stronger network to foster collaboration, share knowledge, celebrate successes and draw public attention to local conservation.

The idea to form a chapter was proposed by Tim Doherty in late 2016. An initial scoping meeting was held in May 2017 attended by 16 local people engaged in conservation science. There was strong support for forming a Chapter based around the following goals:

- Unite the existing conservation network of Greater Melbourne
- Engage the public with local conservation research and action, including opportunities, news and success stories
- Offer resources to support and promote evidence-based conservation
- Facilitate the integration of Indigenous knowledge into conservation research and action
- Provide opportunities for researchers (particularly ECRs) to develop networks and skills that support their conservation work.

The chapter was first ratified by SCB Global in January 2018.

Our overarching vision is to harness the existing interest in conservation, bringing people together to support and strengthen conservation action across the region. A lot of the narrative in our field is about things that happen 'somewhere else' - the biggest conservation problems are 'out there', you need to move somewhere to get a job and have conservation impact etc. We want to emphasise that we can also do things on the home front as well. Acting our values locally, in the places we live and work.

Historically, chapters have been associated with universities (typical of the US model), however with so many universities, government agencies, not-for-profits and community organisations in Melbourne and surrounds having a strong focus on ecology and conservation, a key aim of our chapter is to foster relationships *across* these institutions. As such, we've decided to operate outside of the university 'clubs and society' model, which would have limited our membership only to students of a single university. This comes with it's own logistic and legal issues that we are still working through in partnership with the Oceania section.

Some info about our first year and suggested changes going forward

The first year of the Chapter was dedicated to building a membership, establishing networks, and identifying opportunities for the Chapter to help support and promote conservation research and action.

Key actions in 2018 included:

- Launch at VicBioCon 2018
- Growing membership
- Putting Conservation in Victoria on the map
- Twitter
- Regular dinner events

- Instagram 'week in the life of a conservation scientist'
- Establishing our website

Our members are predominantly students and ECRs, though also include senior academics, community members, local government, state government, conservation organisations/NGOs, and environmental consultants.

We've settled on three general streams of activity where we felt we could make a difference:

1. Social networking for conservation professionals
2. Connecting with conservation action
3. A hub for resources and information

As we grow and develop, we can work on expanding our activities into the realms of policy/decision makers, community outreach.

Operations and admin

Committee structure

Our committee consists of a mixture of elected positions (e.g. President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer) non-elected positions for specific tasks/projects, and general handy people who like to contribute where they can (roving board members). The official roles and responsibilities for SCB Greater Melbourne are outlined in the Charter (available on Slack or our drop box).

To date, the Greater Melbourne Chapter have operated well with a core committee of 4–6, and the invaluable commitment of enthusiastic members stepping in to volunteer their skills for key tasks and projects (e.g. web design, managing twitter and instagram accounts, coordinating social events). All members are invited to attend and contribute to committee meetings.

In future, the board and committee members should be identified with a 'who are we' page on our website. This would allow people to know who they are dealing with, and also be good to acknowledge the great work that people have put in so far (i.e. with 'past committees' lists).

Elected positions

SCB Chapters have an elected board of 4–6 individuals (with a minimum of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary). **According to the SCB Bylaws, Chapter members must also be members of SCB Global to hold a position on the board.** Other members can be added to the committee by the board to serve on particular roles or in smaller teams as needed (e.g. social media officers, outreach, conference/social event organisation) but these do not need to be formally elected.

President: responsible for making sure the admin is taken care of so that the excellent people filling the other roles can carry on doing excellent things for the group, unhindered. This includes setting meetings times, sending out regular email updates, liaising with SCB global and the Oceania section (and attending their regular meetings), and ensuring the Chapter generally functions and stays active as per the Agreement, Bylaws and Charter.

Vice President: Backs up the president with the tasks above.

Treasurer: handles the cash, our bank account, and keeps an eye on grants and opportunities and leads the applications for these. This will include keeping track of paid memberships in future. Works with web development/scicomm team to implement online registration and payment.

Secretary: Assist planning events, elections, meeting invites, help maintain membership and mailing lists, records and shares meeting minutes. Liaise with SCB Global.

Non-elected positions that we think could be helpful

- Conservation officer/s (or subcommittee)
 - Leading initiatives for on-ground action, liaising with community, council or other action groups to help organise the initiatives proposed in Theme 2. Helping us identify other ways in which we can bring conservation science to action.
- Cultural officer/s (or subcommittee)

- This role is to assist other conservation professionals consider Indigenous (and other cultures where applicable) perspectives and knowledge when conducting their research, pointing to resources, information and existing research that can help the research community be better aware of and navigate this space in an open and sensitive way. The intent here is to put these issues and resources on people's radar and create a formal space for what we see as an important part of conservation going forward. Note that this is not about telling everyone to run off and engage with Indigenous communities immediately without any thought! There are a range of ways that people can consider and acknowledge Indigenous perspectives in their research and action, and different approaches will be appropriate for different communities, different relationships and different situations. It may be as simple as adding an acknowledgement to Country in your papers, being aware of your institutions Reconciliation Action Plan, or improving your personal understanding by attending cultural awareness courses. Or it may be as in-depth as collaborating on or supporting research that is conducted with, for or by Indigenous people. This is about making yourself aware of the issues, sensitivities, opportunities and appropriate approaches from a place of honesty and openness. We would welcome input from anyone who has experience or interest in this area to advise on this topic.
- Social media and outreach officer/s (or sub-committee)
 - Head up our twitter or other social media. Suggest/drive any other media outreach that might be helpful. A newsletter has also been suggested.
- Website development (or subcommittee)
 - Help keep website up to date and looking sharp.
 - Implement our cool ideas like the interactive map.
 - Set up our online registration and payment.
 - Bit of a techhead with an eye for making things look nice.
- Events planning (or subcommittee)
 - Help settle on times/dates for events, makes bookings etc.
 - Ideally you enjoy people and parties, or at the very least, organising people and parties. Good knowledge of places to eat, picnic, and generally be frivolous in Melbourne is a plus.
- University/Institution reps?
 - Could have representatives from each institution (university, state/local government, consultancy, NGO etc) that help bring their local issues to the group, and advertise chapter opportunities back to their institution (e.g. university, council, institution). This would be a liaison role, involving attending regular Chapter meetings.
- Conservation social-science sub-committee
 - To promote the integration of social-science in conservation research. A group that could get together to discuss current research, draw attention to it, and potentially provide assistance to ecologists/biologists looking to engage a social scientist in a project/ask questions about social science. Could provide support/guidance to those newly engaged with social science, as well as those with a social science background new to conservation/ecology

A note on workloads

We are largely a group of students and early-career researchers - this means that at some point or another, any one of us is swamped with job applications, grant applications, paper or thesis deadlines, field work etc. Being part of this committee shouldn't be an extra burden. The idea is that the committee is structured in a way that we are all able to help each other out during times of overload. Creating sub-committees for different tasks or events is a great way to do this. Communication is key - if you're struggling, or need a bit of extra help, let us know and we'll work something out.

General suggested activity schedule

- Committee meetings
 - Every second month (6 per year)
- Other events
 - One per quarter (4 per year)
- Supporting other events (e.g. VicBioCon, ESA) as needed
- Twitter
 - Regular posting (daily if possible)

Voting and elections

- Held online via Ballot Bin and then confirmed at a follow-up committee meeting/welcome event that counts as the AGM.
- Voting and elections are held yearly to approve the new board and plan for the year. Only registered chapter members can vote
- Note that the term of board positions is at least 1 year, but you can renominate and for up to 3 years (as long as you are re-elected). This helps strike the balance between continuity and getting fresh blood. Further information on how elections should be conducted are provided in the Agreement, Bylaws, and Charter, including expulsion/termination in the event of misconduct.

Committee meetings

- It's helpful for the committee to catch up regularly to keep things on track. Given that we're all spread across the region, we usually do this with a mix of in-person and via zoom.
- Suggested frequency: Every second month (alternating with other social events), or in response to particular events as needed.

About us/online

Email - melbournescb@gmail.com

Website - <https://scbgreatermelbourne.wordpress.com>

- Established and managed by Billy Geary (legend). Has great potential for greater use, including offering resources, blogging, member spotlights etc.

Twitter - @MelbourneSCB.

- We rotate the role of who curates the feed through a few key members. Going great guns so far. Thanks team! (particularly Holly Kirk, Elodie Camprasse and Nadine Richings)

Instagram - @scbmelbourne [currently inactive]

- The idea of having a 'week in the life of a conservation scientist' is a great one. Perhaps the instagram format is a bit too much work for the kind of audience we're getting. Suggest changing tack, taking these ideas to the member spotlights instead (see theme 1)

Key documents

We have a drop-box set up at the moment, accessible by core members of the committee. This contains the official documents ratified by the SCB, including the Agreement, Bylaws and Charter. Ideally we would make these documents openly available for members via our Slack Channel and on the website.

Membership structure

- \$5 annual membership fee. Register and pay online via our website. Cash payments are also possible if we take sign-ups at events in-person.
- Members to get discounts at events where possible, but mostly we would try and run
- Members have access to Slack - a members-only social media platform to share job and volunteering opportunities, discussion, and general chapter chatter.
- The rest of our initiatives would remain public access (e.g. twitter, website blog and events, member spotlight, and any public resource pages we develop).

Income

The Chapter is strictly not for profit. Any funds received must be put straight back into delivering things to our members and the broader community. See SCB bylaws and other policy for more on this topic.

Realistically our income will remain very small for the first few years of operation. Most events will need to be run free or small charge. There are regular small grants offered by SCB Global and the sections which can supplement this and help us support bigger events. SCB Oceania is working on its not-for-profit status that would allow us to also accept donations

Past-activities

2018

- **Chapter Launch at Victorian Biodiversity Conference**, La Trobe University, 6th-7th February.
- **Meet and Greet** – Great Northern Hotel, Carlton North, June 28th 5-8pm
Casual dinner and chit chat at a local pub. An informal event to meet your fellow chapter members interested in ecological research and conservation management across Melbourne and Victoria.
- **Meet and Greet** – Mt View Hotel, Richmond, October 18th, 6-8pm
Casual dinner and chit chat at a local pub. An informal event to meet your fellow chapter members interested in ecological research and conservation management across Melbourne and Victoria.
- Resource released – **Mapping Conservation in Victoria**
<https://scbgreatermelbourne.wordpress.com/conservation-in-victoria-map/>

2019

- **Dinner at the Victorian Biodiversity Conference** –Naughtons Hotel, Parvville, February 7th, 7pm onwards.
Social networking event attended by chapter members at conference attendees.
Funded by SCB Global events grant
- **New committee welcome and launch** – The University of Melbourne June 18th, 5:30pm
Guest speaker Dr. Cathy Oke on Nature in the City
- **Threatened species day eve – Stories of Hope (and free pizza)** – September 6th, 5-7pm
Co-hosted with the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, the event was attended by more than 150 people and featured speakers Brendan Wintle, John Woinarski, Brendan Sydes, Sarah Bekessy, Noushka Reiter, Anja Skroblin & Andrew Weeks. MC'd by chapter president Kylie Soanes.
- **Weeding for White's Skink** – Royal Park, October 26th 10-12.
Collaborating with park manager Serco and the Friends of Royal Park to hand-weed important patches of restored habitat adjacent to the remnant population of White's Skink. All the required training and equipment will be provided on the day. Followed by a walk around the Trin Warren Tam-boore wetland at Royal Park. BYO picnic lunch.

- Resource released – **Threatened Species of Greater Melbourne**
<https://scbgreatermelbourne.wordpress.com/threatenedspecies/>

2020

- **Picnic in the park** at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, February 15th, 11:30 onwards. CANCELLED DUE TO HEATWAVE AND SMOKE.
- Launch of new resource, **Cultural Awareness in Conservation**
<https://scbgreatermelbourne.wordpress.com/cultural-awareness-in-conservation/>
- **#SCBMELB20 Twitter Conference**, July 30th-31st, 2020.
The conference theme was "Conserving Melbourne's Biodiversity: past, present and future". The program included plenary presentations from Sarah Bekessy (RMIT), Martin Hartigan (Resilient Melbourne), Michael Livingston (Melbirds) and Laura Mumaw (Gardens for Wildlife) and 24 presentations from researchers and practitioners working on biodiversity in Greater Melbourne. More than 400 people were in our Twitter 'audience' over the two days!
<https://scbgreatermelbourne.wordpress.com/conference-scbmelb20/>
- **Urban Threatened Species Hackathon** – September 2020
A small group gathered online to collect data and resources relating to threatened species that occur within Greater Melbourne. The aim was to use this data to create additional resources about local biodiversity that could raise awareness and help practice.

Brainstorm of ideas for future activities for each theme

Theme 1: Social networking for conservation researchers

First and foremost, we want to bring the conservation network together. This includes opportunities for networking, developing social and professional relationships among researchers, practitioners and community groups. Suggested activities include:

Regular dinner/picnics

These have been run throughout 2018 and been really successful in building our network. They are a casual affair - we just all organise to meet and share a meal at the same place - allowing people to pop in for a drink or stay for dinner. Moving forward, it would be good to alternate between dinner events and perhaps lunch/weekend picnics. Every second or third month seems to be a good frequency so far.

The plan is to rotate events around days/times/places to help with accessibility, while also keeping things central. Early Mon-Thurs often works best. Consider that our membership includes people with full-time 9-5 positions, people that have to travel outside of Melbourne, people with family/carer responsibilities, people from universities flung across the edges of the city.

Eventually these could also be combined with trivia nights, bowls, other activities.

This would also be a great opportunity to collaborate with other conservation-minded organisations to host events.

Member spotlights

monthly profiles of our members to post on the blog. Rather than the traditional 'who are you and what do you do?' format (say this in your best Arnold Schwarzenegger voice), these could take the format of :

- "A week in the life of...", asking people to tell us about a week in the life of a conservation scientist. The goal is to recruit a range of career stages, roles, academic/local government/community/NGO etc.
- "Ten questions with" – people answer a standard set of ten questions that help others get to know them and their work. This would substantially reduce workload, as people would simply need to fill out the form. We could also accumulate a backlog of posts to schedule. Proposed question list has been developed and is in the drop box.

This will replace the Instagram account, which had a great run, but is just that bit to time intensive for us to manage at the moment (unless an Instagram-obsessed wizard joins the committee).

How did you get there?/Where did you go? Seminars

These would be casual seminars hosted by universities and live streamed/zoomed throughout network. Based on the model used by the UniMelb Botany Postgrad society, which invited people to talk candidly about their career journey and then take Q&A from the audience. The aim would to have a diverse range of speakers (across academia, industry, government, community group), talking openly about their winding path to where they are now. In the past these have been really positive experiences, particularly for students/ECRs.

- When: could easily be a lunch event? Would help offset the tendency for other social events to be dinner...
- Where: share hosting around unis/other institutions, with satellite rooms to be set up with virtual access (via Zoom) so that people don't need to travel (a similar model to the SWIFFT seminars)
- Frequency: every opposite month/second month to the dinners?
- Cost: free

Theme 2: Connecting with conservation action

A way to start getting our foot in the door to do some on-ground action without starting from scratch. There are a lot of fantastic volunteer groups that are already well-established, but might just need some fresh young blood to help get things done. Some ideas to work up:

“Conservation flash mob”

As a starting point, we organise for our members to show up at a time/plce to help a local community group with a project (planned and agreed upon with them beforehand, not a ‘surprise’). This allows us to start developing relationships with key community groups, and establish some credibility by being present and doing the onground works.

Friends of Friends

The idea is that our ‘flash mobs’ lead into us developing the ‘*Friends of Friends*’ (suggested by Freya Thomas), where we provide organised muscle to Friends groups that need a bit of help with some heavy lifting on a regular basis. By building on those relationships early, we can organise more regular events, and act as a source of volunteers for community groups to reach out to when they need. These activities may help build relationships that may lead into ‘conservation master planning’ (see “*Other, longer term ideas*” as suggested by Lee Harrison)

Groups to consider/approach

- VEFN (Victorian Environmental Friends Network)
- Keeping Victoria Beautiful (Adopt a Roadside and Stationers Programs)
- Field Naturalists Society of Victoria

Things to sort out

- Would they welcome this kind of help?
- Would organising this be the responsibility of the Conservation Officer?
- Admin/Safety/insurance issues we need to conquer first?
- Provide food/BBQ afterwards? Some kind of info session by the Friends? Or an ecologist?

Cost: Free - just make your own way there. We could coordinate carpools where necessary. But ideally at first this would focus on local Melbourne groups to reduce logistic issues.

Potential schedule

- Quarterly ‘flash mobs’, organised by us in collaboration with a Friends group to head out somewhere and help with an activity they had planned
- Any time - we have all the events advertised on Slack Calendar?
- Friends groups can contact us when they need help doing this?

The need for this work has been increased following COVID lockdowns. Groups were unable to maintain the parks, many of which are overgrown with weeds. This could be a good opportunity for locals to give a little love back to the parks that helped them through lockdown.

Theme 3: A hub for resources and information

There are already a range of other organisations and groups that do this well in Greater Melbourne (both environmental outreach and skills training). So our role here is not to reinvent the wheel, but to direct people to good information, events etc. There are a few avenues for us to do this.

Social media feeds

Our twitter account has been really successful so far, and we will continue running this. The aim is to develop a 'roster' of twitter curators, with a different member responsible for running the feed each month. This allows us to share the load, and helps keep our feed diverse (we all have our own unique networks and viewpoints).

We still need to develop a social media policy to help guide this though - which essentially boils down to 'When tweeting on behalf of our group, you're also representing SCB global. This means a) don't make rash political statements/judgements on policy that have not been approved by SCB global, b) don't feed the trolls, c) don't **be** a troll.'

Resource pages on our website

The website has great potential to house brief guides/listicles pointing to resources on various topics. These could be resources for a) students, b) researchers, c) practitioners, d) community groups. A few potential areas of advice we could collate

- Indigenous perspectives and cultural training [COMPLETED]
- Friends groups
- Policy skills
- Academic skills/training sessions
- Conferences, workshops, seminars
- Volunteer opportunities
- Victorian/Greater melb enviro databases (e.g. Visualising Victoria's Biodiversity)
- Environmental groups worth knowing about e.g. (SWIFFT, Wild Melbourne/Remember the Wild, VicBioCon, ESA, Ecological Consultants Association Victoria, CeRDI (Centre for e-Research and Digital Information, etc)

Active dissemination of research to conservation practitioners in Greater Melb/Vic could be really useful for providing a connection between local research and local management/policy/decision making. For example, monthly/quarterly emails describing new research (publications, but could also be active research projects) to a targeted network of practitioners (small scale like Dbytes, or up to something more formal like Decision Point).

Other, longer-term opportunities that have been suggested

Supporting VicBioCon

The Victorian Biodiversity Conference is a fantastic initiative that aligns with our core aims and values. In the long run, we'd like to be able to provide stronger support to keep this going, whether that be financial, administrative, networking, or just people power. Following the 2019 conference, the new board will work with the current organisers to see what kind of role the Chapter can play in ensuring the conference continues in future. This may include sourcing funding and support from SCB Oceania or Global. Ultimately the extent to which we can be involved will be limited by financial/administrative issues we are currently dealing with (due to being an unincorporated chapter), but hopefully we can resolve these over time.

Connecting science with practice and decision makers

Often community groups or interest groups might come to council or the decision makers and say 'We'd love some money to do some great conservation stuff with this land', to which the managers might say 'OK. Show us your conservation master plan that explains what you're doing, why and what it will bring in the long term (with some scientific evidence, thanks)'. Groups that are already time poor or perhaps don't have the expertise might struggle with this. But if they worked with their friendly local scientist, they might be able to pull something together.

A long-term goal would be for our group to be able to offer to identify the need for, and ultimately create, master plans for designated areas. This is a way that we can give back, putting our scientific expertise to guide on-ground action, and providing members with valuable experience in how the 'real-world' works when it comes to making conservation decisions about a space (practical constraints, etc).

First requires building relationships and goodwill, to understand the political landscape that decision makers are working in, and find out what they need/can best get out of our involvement - ideally something we would build during our activities for Theme 2. Potentially could involve a workshop with local councils to give us a 'crash course' in master planning (suggested by Lee).

Practitioner showcase

Rather than scientists putting on a conference that says "Here's the research I do. Why don't you use it?", we organise a seminar/day where local land managers and conservation practitioners come along and say "Here's the kind of work I do and the kind of questions I have. What kind of research can you do that would be helpful?"

Comments on policy

We have made one comment on government policy so far (the Senate Inquiry into fauna extinction crisis) and struggled to rally enough people to help write it. It may be something that we delve more into as the community builds (perhaps forming sub-committees in response to specific issues when they arise), but in this early stage it's not something we're committing to doing on a regular basis unless a local champion takes it on. Note that when we are speaking

as 'SCB', any comments would need to strictly adhere to SCB's policy so as not to violate the rules of being a not-for-profit (see SCB Chapter Handbook).

Fundraising

This will largely depend on legal issues currently being sorted out at SCBO level, but hopefully we can be umbrellaed under their Not-For-Profit status, which would allow us to apply for community grants, accept tax deductible donations etc without raising the ire of the tax office.

Important policies yet to be developed

A note on equity/Accessibility

We have a diverse membership (and we would like to a) keep it that way, b) allow for it to be more diverse). As such, when planning activities or meetings please consider

- the time that events are held - Some of our members hold 9 to 5 office jobs, others are away in the field at certain times of year, many have family or carer responsibilities.
- the place - We're a pretty far flung group! Universities are spread across every corner of the city, many of us live in rural areas and commute.
- the catering and 'vibe' - Venues should always have a range of meal and drink options and not continually centred around alcohol (e.g. vegetarian, non-alcoholic, etc)

E.g. Restricting events to primarily Friday night dinners at a pub, or lunch time meetings at a particular university, will limit who can come along. Ideally, the timing and location of regular events (committee meetings, dinners, etc) will be rotated, and where relevant, options to participate remotely provided, meetings/report-backs circulated afterwards for those who were unable to attend. This to give everyone the opportunity to participate and stay involved. Not everyone will be able to come to every event, but we don't want to make it systematically impossible for them to come to any.

Other issues that need to be sorted and formalised in policy

- Harassment/bullying/discrimination
- OHS/Safety
- Social media/Comms policy
- Diversity and inclusion statements
- Conflict of interest policy decisions

Consider adopting successful ones from other chapters or organisations. The SCB Code of Conduct is a great starting point, and further details on some of these issues are covered in the Agreement, By-Laws and Charter.

Society of Conservation Biology- Greater Melbourne Chapter Code of Conduct

This code of conduct is adapted from that of the Society of Conservation Biology, Ecological Society of America and the Victorian Biodiversity Conference.

The SCB Chapter of Melbourne (hereinafter referred to as the ‘chapter’) values the diversity of views, expertise, opinions, backgrounds, and experiences reflected among the chapter members and the broader conservation community, and is committed to providing a safe, productive and welcoming environment for all participants of chapter meetings and events.

Chapter meetings and events can serve as an effective forum to consider and debate science- relevant viewpoints in an orderly, respectful, and fair manner. This Code of Conduct is important to promoting diversity and creating an inclusive, supportive, and collaborative environment for all peoples.

All chapter meetings and events participants – including, but not limited to, committee members, chapter members, speakers, volunteers, guests, service providers (hereinafter referred to as “participants”) – are expected to abide by the Chapter Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct applies in all venues, including ancillary events and social gatherings, and on-line forums and discussions associated with the chapter.

Expected Behaviour

- Treat all participants with kindness, respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions (including those you may not share).
- Communicate openly, with respect for other participants, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour and speech directed toward other participants.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants. Alert an alert chapter member you notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress.
- Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue, or event venue

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form. Harassment includes speech or behaviour that is not welcome or is personally offensive. Behaviour that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so use discretion to be certain respect is communicated. Harassment intended in a joking manner still constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:
 - Physical or verbal abuse of any participant
 - Unwelcome, disparaging or offensive verbal comments or exclusionary behaviour related to age, position/seniority, appearance or body size, employment or military status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, individual lifestyle, marital status, national origin, physical or cognitive ability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, race, or religion
 - Inappropriate physical contact

- Unwanted sexual attention
- Use of sexual or discriminatory images in public spaces or in presentations
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following
- Harassing photography or recording, including taking photographs or recording of another individual's oral presentation when they have explicitly prohibited it, e.g. when discussing non-published material
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events
- Bullying behaviour
- Retaliation for reporting unacceptable behaviour

Process for Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour

If you are the subject of unacceptable behavior or have witnessed any such behavior, please immediately follow these steps:

1. Remove yourself from the situation and find a safe space. In the case of a medical or criminal emergency, contact event security and/or local emergency response authorities. Anyone experiencing or witnessing behaviour that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to personal or public safety at any time should contact local law enforcement (by calling 000) or if possible immediately notify facility security.
2. In non-emergency situations, you also have the right to report a criminal (or possible criminal) offense to event security and/or local authorities.
3. If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you are the subject of unacceptable behaviour, have witnessed any such behaviour, or have other concerns, please contact a committee member or email melbournescb@gmail.com as soon as possible
4. All concerns relating to unacceptable behavior will be treated seriously and addressed promptly. Complainants will remain in control of the process and the chapter committee members will outline options available to deal with the situation promptly, effectively, and in a manner that the complainant finds most suitable.”
Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that it does not compromise the rights of others.

Consequences

- Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behaviour is expected to comply immediately.
- Chapter committee members (or their designee) or security may take any immediate action deemed necessary and appropriate, including removal from the meeting or event without warning or refund.

- Any breaches of this code may result in prohibition from attending future meetings and events.
- The matter may be referred to employing universities or institutions for consideration of further consequences.
- Depending on the nature of the issue, additional information, security, or local police may be needed to address the situation appropriately.

For any questions about this policy, please contact The SCB Greater Melbourne Chapter at melbournescb@gmail.com

