

**POLICY NAME:** Code of Conduct

**POLICY NUMBER:** HR005

**ADOPTED:** 13 December 2023

**REVIEW DATE:** December 2024

**POLICY OWNER:** Human Resources

**PURPOSE:** Employees must be familiar with the contents of this code and ensure their behaviour and communication are consistent with the expectations set out in this policy.

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## 1 SCOPE

There are **four ethics principles** (section 4 of the Public Sector Ethics Act) that are fundamental to good public administration:

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting the public good
- commitment to the system of government
- accountability and transparency

For the purpose of this Code only, employees are defined as:

- Any Council employee whether permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual
- Any volunteer, work experience student, contractor, consultant or anyone who works in any other capacity for Barcaldine Regional Council.

This Code does not apply to Councillors, who must comply with the Barcaldine Regional Council Councillor Code of Conduct.

This Code applies at all times when an employee is performing official duties including when representing Council at conferences, training events, on business trips and attending work related social events.

## 2 POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy provides employees of Barcaldine Regional Council with clear outline of expected behaviours and instructions on what is and isn't considered good practices by the council. This includes behaviour in the workplace, work related events or any time employees are representing the council.

## 3 HEAD OF POWER

Local Government Act 2009

The Local Government Act 2009 (section 13) requires local government employees to:

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- observe the principles under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 and
- comply with a code of conduct adopted under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994.

#### Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

The Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (section 15) requires the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that a code of conduct is prepared for the Council.

A public official must comply with the standards of conduct stated in the Council's code of conduct (*Upholding the Code*).

## **4 POLICY STATEMENT**

The Employee Code of Conduct policy details the behavioural expectations for employees towards colleagues, supervisors, organisation and community. It emphasizes open communication, professionalism, respect, and adherence to laws, while also outlining potential disciplinary actions for violations.

### **4.1 Corporate Values**

Council's corporate values:

- **Honesty** – We will always tell the truth.
- **Empathy** – We will seek to listen and understand the perspectives of others, we will treat all with kindness.
- **Accountability** – We will take responsibility for our choices, actions, behaviours, performance and decisions.
- **Respect**– We will be present, value others and welcome diversity.
- **Trust**– We will gain the trust of others by living our values.

### **4.2 Principles, values and standards of conduct**

**Principles** – are contained in Section 4 of the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 and provide the basis for good administration.

**Values** - are contained in Sections 6-9 of the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 and describe the behaviour that will demonstrate each principle.

**Standards of conduct** - assist employees to understand how to put the principles and values into practice.

#### **Principle 1 - Integrity and impartiality**

In recognition that public office involves a public trust, employees shall seek to promote confidence in the integrity of the public sector.

#### **Value 1.1 - Commit to the highest ethical standards**

##### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Act in a professional manner when fulfilling responsibilities.
- ◆ Comply with Council's procurement policy and procedures when purchasing goods and services.
- ◆ Perform duties within the delegated authority and qualifications to perform those duties.

- ◆ Report suspected wrongdoing including conduct not consistent with this Code.

### **Value 1.2 – Accept and value a duty to provide advice which is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Provide advice that is not influenced by personal gain.
- ◆ Ensure proper records are maintained to document how a decision was made in a fair and transparent way.
- ◆ Comply with Council's gifts and benefits policy when accepting any gifts or benefits that may be perceived as affecting impartial decision making.
- ◆ Inform the Chief Executive Officer of any external employment or voluntary work that may be perceived as affecting impartial decision making or affecting work capacity.

### **Value 1.3 - Show respect to all persons including employees, clients and the general public**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Treat all persons with courtesy and respect.
- ◆ Encourage open communication between employees and employers to try to avoid and resolve workplace issues
- ◆ Ensure all interactions with the wider community are fair, honest and respectful
- ◆ Recognise and respect different opinions and perspectives and manage disagreements by rational discussion.
- ◆ Behave in a manner that is inclusive and free from harassment.
- ◆ Take responsibility for protecting the safety, health and welfare of the workplace.

### **Value 1.4 – Acknowledge the primacy of the public interest and undertake that any conflict of interest issue will be resolved or appropriately managed in favour of the public interest**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Disclose and manage any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest between work responsibilities and personal interests. A conflict of interest can arise from either gaining a personal advantage or from avoiding a personal loss.
- ◆ Disclose and manage any conflict of interest between this Code and a professional code of ethics.
- ◆ Ensure that participation in political, trade union, professional or non-profit organisations does not create a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest and does not affect the performance of Council duties. It must be made clear that any public comments made in the capacity as a member of that organisation are made only on behalf of that organisation.
- ◆ Be aware that having a conflict of interest is not unusual and, in itself, is not a breach of this Code. However, failure to disclose and manage the conflict is a potential breach.
- ◆ Ensure that any conflict of interest is resolved in the public interest.

### **Value 1.5 - Commit to honest, fair and respectful engagement with the community**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Ensure that information provided to the public fairly reflects Council policy and is appropriately authorised.
- ◆ Obtain authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer prior to providing information or commentary on Council business to the media.
- ◆ Contribute to public discussions on community and social issues only in a private capacity and make it clear that any comment is understood as representing a personal view and not those of Council.
- ◆ Comments must not purposefully misrepresent the views of the Council or the views of other members
- ◆ Understand that personal comments made on a public issue may compromise the ability to perform Council duties in an independent and unbiased manner.
- ◆ Maintain the confidentiality of confidential information that is not publicly available.

### **Principle 2 - Promoting the public good**

In recognition that the Council is the mechanism through which the elected Councillors deliver programs and services for the benefit of the people of our region.

### **Value 2.1 - Accept and value the duty to be responsive to both the requirements of Council and the public interest**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Accept and value the trust given by the public to develop and deliver services to the community.
- ◆ Accept that the Chief Executive Officer is employed by Council to implement the policies and priorities of Council for the benefit of the public.

### **Value 2.2 – Accept and value the duty to engage the community in developing and effecting Council priorities, policies and decisions**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Listen and provide an appropriate response, where permitted, to issues and concerns raised by the community.
- ◆ Assist with raising community awareness about public issues and policies.
- ◆ Participate in public consultation, where permitted, in the development of public policy.

### **Value 2.3 – Accept and value the duty to manage public resources effectively, efficiently and economically**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Be responsible for the effective, efficient and economical management of public resources.
- ◆ Be responsible for safely disposing of waste, minimising electricity consumption and responsibly using chemicals.
- ◆ Be responsible for protecting the natural environment and creating healthy surroundings for the community.

### **Value 2.4 – Value and seek to achieve excellence in service delivery**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Deliver services to the Council and the community fairly, courteously and effectively.
- ◆ Assist all members of the community including people with disabilities, those with languages other than English and those who find it difficult to access Council services.
- ◆ Assist fellow employees who have literacy issues or who find it difficult to understand Council policies, procedures or forms.
- ◆ Treat complaints from clients and the community seriously and respond to constructive feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

### **Value 2.5 – Value and seek to achieve enhanced integration of services to better service clients**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Endeavour to work together to address complex issues.
- ◆ Work cohesively at the local and regional level to collectively plan and deliver integrated services to the community.
- ◆ Share information across the public sector, where permitted by law, to enhance the seamless delivery of services.
- ◆ Share common use assets within Council to generate economies and efficiencies.

### **Principle 3 - Commitment to the system of government**

In recognition that the public sector has a duty to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, Commonwealth and local government.

### **Value 3.1 – Accept and value the duty to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, the Commonwealth and local government.**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Comply with the laws of Queensland and the Commonwealth and Council's local laws.
- ◆ Adhere to Council's 5 year corporate plan, annual operational plan and annual budget.
- ◆ Adhere to Council's policies and procedures.
- ◆ Be responsible for safety, health and welfare in the workplace and have a duty of care to fellow employees and members of the public and report any safety incidents or hazards immediately.

### **Value 3.2 – Commit to effecting official Council priorities, policies and decisions professionally and impartially**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Accept that elected Councillors have the right to determine policy and priorities.
- ◆ Provide advice to Councillors that is thorough, responsive and unbiased to assist good Councillor decision making.
- ◆ Implement decisions and policies of Council professionally and impartially.

### **Value 3.3 – Accept and value the duty to operate within the local government framework**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Retain the right to communicate with a Councillor on any issue as a private citizen while maintaining the confidentiality of information not available to the public.
- ◆ Understand that Councillors are not empowered to direct Council employees in their duties.
- ◆ Ensure that interactions between employees and Councillors are positive and productive and comply with legislative restrictions.

### **Principle 4 - Accountability and transparency**

In recognition that public trust in public office requires high standards of public administration.

### **Value 4.1 – Commit to exercising proper diligence, care and attention**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Apply due care while performing Council duties.
- ◆ Carry out duties honestly, responsibly, conscientiously and the best of ability.
- ◆ Provide accurate and impartial advice to all clients.
- ◆ Comply with Council's employment and human resources policies.
- ◆ Comply with Council's employment procedures and enterprise bargaining agreement.

### **Value 4.2 – Commit to using public resources in an effective and accountable way**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Ensure that public resources are used economically and for a proper purpose and are not wasted, abused or used extravagantly.
- ◆ Ensure that Council's computer hardware and software is only used in accordance with Council's policies.
- ◆ Be responsible for managing, protecting and taking care of Council assets in accordance with Council's policies.
- ◆ Ensure that Council's corporate knowledge and intellectual property is protected.

### **Value 4.3 – Commit to managing information as openly as practicable within the legal framework**

#### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Ensure that personal information is lawfully collected and handled in accordance with information privacy legislation.
- ◆ Treat official information with care and use it only for the purpose for which it was collected. Official information must not be used for personal purposes.
- ◆ Store official information securely and limit access to those persons requiring it for legitimate purposes.
- ◆ Maintain the security of the Council's computer system and passwords.
- ◆ Respect the confidentiality of confidential information after employment with Council.

#### **Value 4.4 – Value and seek to achieve high standards of public administration**

##### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Maintain high standards of accountability when collecting and managing public money.
- ◆ Exercise powers lawfully and within the delegated authority.
- ◆ Comply with all reasonable and lawful instructions.

#### **Value 4.5 – Value and seek to innovate and continuously improve performance**

##### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Be responsible for maintaining and enhancing work skills, knowledge and expertise in consultation with management.
- ◆ Attend and actively participate in compulsory training activities.
- ◆ Actively participate in employee performance management processes including inductions, tool box talks, team meetings, performance reviews and professional development activities.
- ◆ Actively contribute to developing innovative ways for delivering services and improving client outcomes.

#### **Value 4.6 – Value and seek to operate within a framework of mutual obligation and shared responsibility between other public sector entities and fellow employees**

##### **Standards of conduct**

- ◆ Work cooperatively with fellow employees and other public sector entities to achieve work related outcomes.
- ◆ Provide accurate and impartial information to other public sector entities when legally requested to do so.

## **5. UPHOLDING THE CODE**

The executive leadership team has a responsibility to demonstrate and uphold the principles in this Code and to promote an organisational culture that values high ethical standards and behaviour.

Employees have a responsibility to identify and report conduct that is not consistent with this Code. Management will support employees who report genuine concerns of breaches of this Code.

The Chief Executive Officer has a responsibility to make fair, transparent and consistent decisions regarding any allegations of behaviour that does not uphold this Code.

The standards of conduct do not cover every possible scenario. In these circumstances, the principles and values will provide guidance on the intention of the Code.

## **6. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

“Nil.”

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**7. REVIEW**

Human Resources will review the contents of, and compliance with, this Policy at least once a year.

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HR-005	5.02	HR Manager	December 2024