



# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL OFFICIALS

## Council officials play a vital role in serving local communities

To do this effectively, you will want to uphold the highest standards of behaviour to ensure communities have trust and confidence in local government.

### What are the expected standards of behaviour?

The standards of behaviour are described in detail in the Model Code of Conduct. The Code is a legal document that all officials are obliged to understand and follow. The Model Code forms the basis of each council's code of conduct. Highlighted below are the expected standards of behaviour for all council officials.

#### You must:

- conduct yourself in a manner that will not bring council into disrepute
- act lawfully and honestly, and exercise due care
- treat others with respect and not harass or discriminate against them, or support others who do so
- consider issues consistently, promptly and fairly
- ensure development decisions are properly made and deal fairly with all parties involved
- disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interests including, in the case of councillors, from reportable political donations
- use and secure information appropriately and not disclose confidential information
- use council resources ethically, effectively and efficiently.

In addition, staff must ensure the efficient and effective operation of council's organisation and implement decisions of council without delay.

#### You must not:

- accept money or gifts of value and avoid situations that may appear to secure favourable treatment
- make complaints improperly, take detrimental action in response to complaints, or disclose information about code of conduct matters.

In addition, councillors must not:

- direct or influence council staff in the exercise of their role
- participate in binding caucus votes, except for nominations.

## What happens if the standards are not met?

The small number of cases where a council official fails to follow the Code will be dealt with in accordance with the Model Code Procedures.

Breaches of these standards may be reported to the general manager or, in the case of a breach by the general manager, to the Mayor. Serious complaints that cannot be resolved informally may be investigated by an independent conduct reviewer.

### Councillors

Breaches by councillors may result in:

- censure
- requirement for training
- counselling
- requirement to apologise
- findings of inappropriate conduct being made public
- referral to the Division of Local Government for disciplinary action, including suspension for up to three months
- referral by the Division to the Pecuniary Interest and Disciplinary Tribunal for suspension for up to six months or disqualification from holding civic office.

### General managers

Breaches by general managers may result in:

- requirement for training
- counselling
- requirement to apologise
- findings of inappropriate conduct being made public
- other actions specified under the general manager's contract.

### Council staff

Breaches by council staff may result in disciplinary action, termination or, in the case of non-senior staff, other penalties permitted under the relevant industrial award.

### Delegates or council committee members

Breaches by delegates or council committee members may result in:

- censure
- requirement to apologise
- prosecution
- removal or restriction of delegations.