

Marine Conservation Reserve Advisory Committee Members



Code of Conduct



Department of
Conservation and Land Management

MPRA
MARINE PARKS &
RESERVES AUTHORITY

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Introduction

This Code of Conduct (Code) has been prepared to promote good practice. It gives committee members a summary of their obligations and provides guidance about ethical conduct.

1. Personal behaviour

Committee members are in a position of trust. Their involvement may affect the welfare, rights or entitlements of the community and individuals and it is expected that they will carry out their functions with professional integrity and due regard for the public interest.

Committee members will:

Understand the committee's role and public duties

- Gain a clear understanding of the role or purpose of the committee.
- Develop an understanding of the physical, political and social environment in which the committee operates.
- Stay informed about all relevant activities affecting the committee.

Be active

- Attend all committee meetings. Where attendance is not possible members will submit an apology. If absence is likely to extend for several consecutive meetings, members will obtain leave of absence.
- Participate actively and work cooperatively with fellow members and stakeholders to achieve agreed goals.
- Prepare for meetings by reading and considering papers circulated with the agenda.

Respect each other

- Treat each other with professionalism, courtesy and respect.
- Not improperly influence other committee members.
- Act loyally and in good faith.

Consult

- Consult stakeholders and affected parties about issues under consideration.

Raise concerns

- Express concerns to the chairperson or other relevant authority about decisions or actions contrary to the committee's public duty.

2. Accountability

2.1 Allowances

Accommodation and travel expenses

Committee members will be reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses as follows:

- Air and rail travel costs approved by the committee.
- Members using their own motor vehicle to attend normal committee meetings are entitled to claim an allowance at public service rates.
- Accommodation, meals and out of pocket expenses, incurred on official business will be reimbursed at public service rates or booked and paid directly by the committee.

2.2 Entertainment and catering

Any entertainment should be consistent with the committee's genuine needs and public duty. Members should not lose or gain financially as a result of entertainment.

Committee members will ensure:

- Catering is limited to basic food and drink items.
- Alcohol is not consumed during committee meetings.
- Transparent consideration and due thought before accepting hospitality offered by suppliers or potential suppliers, to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest or undue influence.

3. Use of public sector resources / facilities

3.1 Frequent flyer points

Committee members travelling on official business should not accept gifts, free travel or other benefits.

Committee members:

- Will not use travel points accumulated on government business under frequent flyer or other programs to acquire benefits such as upgrading of tickets above normal entitlements or for private travel, whether or not members personally have met the costs of membership to a frequent flyer scheme.
- Should only accept travel incentives for the committee's benefit, including future free travel on committee business.
- Eligible for travel incentives from membership of Golden Wing, Flight Deck, Frequent Flyer or similar schemes should advise the travel booking officer of their membership when making travel arrangements; and the number of accumulated (government) points each quarter.

Once a member leaves the committee (and is not a State employee), any entitlements such as membership to the frequent flyer scheme must be discontinued. Benefits accrued on government business can only be used for official purposes.

4. Record keeping and use of information

All documentation produced by the committee forms part of the public record.

Committee members will:

- Ensure records are properly organised and kept in safe custody.

4.1 Documentation of decisions

All decisions must be transparent. Decisions and processes should be documented. Documentation protects all parties involved in a decision, both collectively and individually.

The committee will:

- Prepare and retain minutes for all official committee meetings.
- Ensure adequate procedures are observed for documenting decisions involving the committee.

4.2 Use of confidential information

Sometimes highly sensitive matters are discussed by committees. These may be discussed with only committee members present and in strict confidence. Nevertheless all decisions should be documented and appropriate minutes prepared, while according certain records an extra level of security.

The committee will:

- Ensure confidential records are subject to appropriate access procedures.
- Respect confidential information and observe any restrictions agreed by the committee (subject to Freedom of Information Act requirements).
- Maintain confidentiality and not divulge information deemed confidential or sensitive. If members are uncertain they should seek direction from the committee chairperson.
- Not misuse information obtained in the course of committee duties for direct or indirect gain, or to do harm to other people or the committee.
- Respect the privacy of individuals.

4.3 Security of information

While the secretary or executive officer of the committee may be the person primarily responsible for the storage and handling of records, all committee members have individual responsibility for any document, tape, disk or other record in their custody. Records should be afforded an appropriate level of security, in accordance with the Chairperson's advice.

Committee members will:

- Ensure recorded information, in both paper and electronic form, under their control is kept in a secure place.
- Be cautious about leaving committee records on fax machines, photocopiers or computer screens.

5. Conflicts of interest

5.1 Gifts and gratuities

Committee members should not accept gifts or benefits likely to place them under an actual or perceived financial or moral obligation to other organisations or individuals.

Committee members will:

- Not demand or accept in connection with their official duties any fee, favour, reward, gratuity or remuneration of any kind, outside the scope of their entitlements as a committee member, unless authorised by the chairperson of the committee.
- Not use their public position for personal profit or gain.
- Not accept a gift if it could be seen by the public, knowing the full facts, as intended or likely to cause a member to act in a particular way or deviate from public duty.

5.2 Private interests

Committee members are expected to place public interest above personal interests and not to use their position for personal gain.

Conflicts between private interests and public duties can arise when:

- A member stands to make a financial gain from a committee decision.
- A member's spouse, children or near relative stands to make a financial gain.
- A member holds membership of another organisation likely to benefit from a committee decision.
- A member's spouse, children, near relatives or close associates are members of an organisation affected by committee decisions.

Accordingly committee members will:

- Openly declare matters of a private interest such as investments, relationships, voluntary work and membership of other groups that may conflict or be perceived to conflict with the member's public duty.
- Record any issues of conflict to ensure they are transparent and capable of review.
- Declare and, if appropriate, disqualify themselves from any committee discussions and decisions where a conflict of interest has, or could occur.

6. Public sector employees on committees

- If a public sector employee is appointed to a committee, the reasons should be documented and made public.
- Public sector employees serving on a government committee have the same fiduciary responsibilities as other committee members, but should not receive remuneration additional to their salaries.