



CITY OF COCKBURN

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct provides Elected Members at the City of Cockburn with consistent guidelines for an acceptable standard of professional conduct. The Code addresses the broader issue of ethical responsibility and encourages greater transparency and accountability in the affairs of Council.
- 1.2 The Code is complementary to the principals adopted in the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations which incorporates four fundamental aims to result in:-
- better decision making by Council;
 - greater community participation in the decisions and affairs of Council;
 - greater accountability of Council to the community; and
 - more efficient and effective local government.
- 1.3 The Code is independent from the requirements of the provisions of the Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Amendment Act, 2007 applicable from 2 October 2007 and which contain mandatory behaviour standards to be observed by Elected Members.

2. ROLES AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 A primary role of the Elected Members when acting as Council is to make decisions in the best interest of the community.
- 2.2 A primary role of all Elected Members shall be the achievement of the Council objectives contained in the Corporate Strategic Plan.
- 2.3 The focus of Elected Members when acting as Council shall be the effective translation of the community's needs and aspirations into an agreed direction and future for the City.
- 2.4 An Elected Member shall always act:-
- as a leader on issues of importance to the community;

- honestly, impartially and with integrity in its dealings with all elements of the community;
- responsibly by making decisions that are in the best interests of the wider Cockburn community taking into account professional advice;
- openly by encouraging the participation of residents in the opinion forming and decision making process of Council;
- tolerantly by acknowledging the right of individuals both on Council and in the community, to hold differing opinions and to express those opinions;
- independently and free of undue influences created by pecuniary interests and other conflicts of interest; and
- in an ethical and procedurally fair manner in all of its dealings.

3. CONDUCT

3.1 Elected Members shall act and be seen to act;

- properly and in accordance with the requirements of the law and the terms of this Code;
- as facilitators of community participation in Council processes;
- in a non-partisan way by seeking solutions and making decisions that are in the best interests of the broader Cockburn community;
- to represent the whole community first and the interests of pressure groups or individuals only in a context of the greater community good;
- co-operatively with Council staff through appropriately defined communication channels;
- to communicate and confirm Council decisions and policies in a positive and proactive manner in the community, regardless of the level of personal support for Council's collective decisions; and
- to make no allegations which are improper or derogatory and refrain from any form of conduct, in the performance of their official or professional duties, which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.

3.2 Elected Members shall observe the highest standards of honesty and integrity and avoid conduct which might suggest any departure from

these standards and be frank and honest in their official dealing with staff.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE

- 4.1 Elected Members shall ensure compliance with proper and reasonable administrative practices and conduct and professional and responsible management practices.
- 4.2 Elected Members are often asked to represent the Council on external organisations. Such positions should only be accepted within time and other constraints which do not adversely reflect on Council's commitment to that organisation and in doing so, Elected Members should fairly represent the Council's position to the best of their abilities, as it is understood by them at that time.
- 4.3 All aspects of communication by Elected Members (verbal or written) involving Council activities, should reflect the status and objectives of Council and should be accurate, polite and professional.
- 4.4 Elected Members shall only claim or accept travelling and sustenance expenses arising out of travel related matters which have a direct bearing on the services, processes or business of the Council in accordance with Council's policies.
- 4.5 Elected Members are expected to comply with neat and responsible dress standards at all times in their representation of Council.
- 4.6 When Elected Members are approached by members of the public to address an issue of individual concern on their behalf, the Elected Members:-
 - Should ascertain if they have spoken to the relevant staff member and, if not, encourage the person(s) to do so, in the first instance;
 - Should, prior to meeting with the person(s) or prior to discussing the matter in further detail, obtain comment and any related information from the relevant staff member; and
 - Should provide a brief file note of the meeting (who with, time, date, topic and outcome only) for Council's records, if considered appropriate by the Elected Member.
- 4.7 Elected Members shall direct any inquiries for staff to meet proponents or ratepayers concerning any application, proposal or issue to the CEO or relevant Director. Elected Members shall not advocate on behalf of proponents/ratepayers in meetings where staff are in attendance.

- 4.8 Unless not practicable, Elected Members are only to approach and seek advice from staff by:-
- correspondence;
 - telephone;
 - fax;
 - email; or
 - appointment
- 4.9 (a) Any customer requests or enquiries made by Elected Members, must be lodged with the Executive Services Unit for recording.
- (b) Any requests or enquiries received by the Executive Services Unit, shall be forwarded to the relevant service unit for dealing with through the Customer Request System.
- (c) Elected Members shall be advised as soon as possible in writing by the responsible officer, of the progress, outcome or information related to the request or enquiry.
- 4.10 Elected Members shall refrain from contacting or dealing with any staff member on a matter in which they have an obligation to declare an interest, pursuant to the Local Government Act, 1995, or Council's Standing Orders unless approval to participate in the matter has been provided in accordance with sec. 5.69.
- 4.11 Unless not practicable, Elected Members shall only enter the staff work areas of the Administration Building after requesting and receiving approval from the CEO, a Director or relevant senior staff member.
- 4.12 Facilities provided for use by Elected Members within the Administration Building, shall only be available for the pursuit or conduct of Council business or interests.

5. MEDIA AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 Unless acting in an authorised capacity as a Council spokesperson pursuant to the local Government Act, 1995:-
- (a) Councillors shall not speak, attempt to speak or give the perception of speaking on behalf of the local government; and
- (b) Councillors should ensure that statements made to the media are identified as their opinions only and do not necessarily represent the position of Council.