

POLICY-HR CODE OF CONDUCT	
Date Implemented: 1 March 2006	Date Reviewed: 28 April 2020
Due Date for Review: 28 April 2023	Division: Whole of Organisation

PURPOSE:

The Code of Conduct outlines general standards of work performance and ethical conduct expected of all Board Directors, Staff and Volunteers.

SCOPE: This policy applies to Board Directors, Staff and Volunteers of LDDSWQL Darling Downs and South West Queensland Limited (LDDSWQL) whilst working on site or working from home or remotely.

MISSION STATEMENT

LDDSWQL is a responsive community-based organisation accessible to and collaboratively engaging with individuals, families, and communities to innovatively develop their own skills and strategies which enhance and strengthen their capacity to effectively bring about valued difference and positive change.

Vision Statement

We see a future of people living more engaged and fulfilling lives throughout our region by:

- strengthening community participation and resilience
- more individuals, families and communities achieving an increased sense of wellbeing.
- increasing our engagement with at-risk groups
- helping to reduce rates of suicide in our region.
- maintaining a state of readiness to respond to natural disasters via our Community Recovery capabilities
- ensuring our practices and systems are responsive to community needs and expectations.

Statement of Values

LDDSWQL works within, and is informed by, the values of:

- Dignity
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Openness and Transparency
- Mutual Respect and Accountability

Operating Principles:

Transparency:

LDDSWQL works with people in ways that are open, clear, and honest providing comprehensive information about the roles and responsibilities of the organisation.

Collaboration:

LDDSWQL works together with others towards shared goals, achieved through consultation and collaboration with individuals, families, and communities.

Support:

Staff and Volunteers within the organisation take time to listen, care and support. LDDSWQL acknowledges the uniqueness and diversity of people within the community and work to respond appropriately, thoughtfully, and flexibly to needs.

Resources:

Staff and Volunteers are the most valuable resource within the organisation. LDDSWQL ensures that training, development, and support are offered and maintained throughout each person's service.

LDDSWQL's Motto:

Strengthening Communities and Empowering People.

CODE OF CONDUCT**1. OVERVIEW AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

This Code of Conduct outlines general standards of work performance and ethical conduct expected of all staff and volunteers based on the following guiding principles: -

- Staff and Volunteers should perform their duties with professionalism and integrity, and effectively and efficiently serve LDDSWQL and the public.
- Fairness and equity should be observed by staff and volunteers in all official dealings, including dealings with the public and others. This includes managing any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

This Code of Conduct does not replace any other code of conduct lawfully approved for application to individual staff and volunteers within LDDSWQL and should be read in conjunction with any such code.

Staff and Volunteers should: -

- familiarise themselves with this Code; and,
- ensure that its provisions are observed.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this Code may be grounds for disciplinary action.

2. PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES**2.1 Service to LDDSWQL and the General Public**

Staff and Volunteers should: -

- apply themselves to the efficient and effective achievement of LDDSWQL declared objectives.
- adhere to the highest standards of professional competence, integrity, and honesty.
- provide conscientious, effective, efficient, and courteous service to all those with whom they have official dealings.

- be guided by principles of fairness and equity especially in circumstances where staff and volunteers exercise responsibility for the care or supervision of clients and other persons.

2.2 Conduct towards Other Staff and Volunteers

Staff and Volunteers should: -

- always treat other workers with respect and dignity.
- not mistreat other staff or volunteers or distract them from carrying out their duties.

Examples of unacceptable conduct are -

- inducements to infringe this Code; and
- all forms of intimidation and harassment, including verbal, physical, sexual, and racial harassment.
- failure to ensure the confidentiality of matters of a personal nature relating to workers where it does not adversely affect the operation of LDDSWQL.
- not allow personal relationships both inside and outside the work environment, to adversely affect their work performance or that of other staff and volunteers, specifically this includes adequately managing any perceived or actual conflicts of interests including the declaration of such. To facilitate this process the 'Declaration of Conflicts of Interest' is a standing agenda item for Board & Management meetings. In addition, the CEO (CEO) maintains a register of close personal relationships to help manage potential conflicts of interest.

2.3 Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young People:

Staff and Volunteers should: –

- treat children and young people with respect and dignity.
- communicate in a clear, concise, and easy to understand language.
- not mistreat, harass, or bully any child or young person with whom they come in contact as part of their employment with LDDSWQL.
- not swear or use unacceptable or degrading language when interacting with children or young people.
- not engage in physical contact with children or young people without their expressed consent and also of their parent or legal guardian.
- be aware that failure to comply with the provisions of this Code of Conduct for interacting with Children and Young People may result in grounds for disciplinary action by the CEO.

Contacts: Should staff have any questions regarding this Code of Conduct for interacting with Children and Young People they should contact their Manager/Supervisor or the CEO.

2.4 Conduct for interacting with people living with a disability.

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
2. Respect the privacy of people with disability.
3. Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill.

4. Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency.
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability.
6. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect, and abuse of, people with disability.
7. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

2.5 Standards of Dress

Workers should conform to standards of dress as determined by their Manager/Supervisor or as directed by the CEO.

2.6 Use of Alcohol and Drugs

Staff and Volunteers should not: -

- at any time, allow the consumption of alcohol and other drugs to adversely affect their work performance or official conduct; or
- consume alcohol while on duty except where related to the staff member's official duties and subject to the CEO's approval and conditions.
- at any time during performance of work or other official functions on behalf of LDDSWQL partake of restricted or dangerous drugs; or
- at any other time, partake of alcohol and other drugs where to do so might adversely affect their subsequent performance of work or other official duties on behalf LDDSWQL.

2.7 Use of Official Resources

LDDSWQL facilities and other physical resources should be used for their proper purpose. Use of the Organisation's facilities beyond this should be at the discretion of the CEO. Where supplied, staff or volunteers are not able to use their I.D. card unless it is necessary for duties associated with their employment. LDDSWQL letterhead must not be used for other than authorised business activities.

2.8 Lawful Directions

Staff or Volunteers should carry out any reasonable direction given -

- by the CEO or
- in the absence of the CEO, a person or persons having the authority to give the direction i.e., the Acting CEO,
- Chief Operating Officer or Chief Financial Officer.

Where on reasonable grounds, a staff member or volunteer believes that a direction is improper or illegal, the staff member or volunteer: -

- should refer the grounds for objection to the CEO in writing.

3. HANDLING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3.1 Purpose

Actions and decisions taken at all levels in LDDSWQL need to be informed, objective and fair. A conflict of interest may affect the way a person acts, decisions that they make, or the way they vote in group decisions. Conflicts of interest need to be identified and action taken to ensure that personal or individual interests do not affect the organisation's services, activities, or decisions.

Declaration and management of conflicts of interest are specifically required for the Board Directors as part of their legal responsibilities as Board Directors. Staff and Volunteers are also bound to report any conflict of interest.

3.2 Definition

This policy will apply to situations where the personal interests of an individual or group of individuals directly conflict with the best interests of the organisation, its members, or clients, or where the decisions or actions of individuals may be influenced by their personal interests rather than those of the organisation.

Situations this may include but are not limited to are: -

- Close personal friends or family members are involved, such as decisions about employment, discipline or dismissal, service allocation or awarding of contracts.
- An individual or their close friends or family members may make a financial gain or gain some other form of advantage through bribery or some other activity.
- An individual is involved with another organisation that is in a competitive relationship with our organisation and therefore may have access to our plans or financial information, and/or enter into a self-serving relationship perhaps through bribery.
- An individual is bound by prior agreements or allegiances to other individuals or agencies that require them to act in the interests of that person or agency or to take a particular position on an issue.

3.3 Procedures

LDDSWQL is committed to ensuring that personal or individual interests that conflict with the interests of the organisation are identified and managed so that they do not affect the services, activities, or decisions of the organisation. In the course of their duties, Board members, staff or volunteers should not give preference to any person, organisation, or interest (whether pecuniary, commercial, political, religious, or other) as a result of any private association with that person, organisation, or interest.

Immediately on becoming aware that a conflict between private interests and official duty, whether real or apparent, has arisen or is likely to arise, Board Directors, staff or volunteers should disclose such details to the CEO.

Such disclosure should automatically be made by Board Directors, staff or volunteers engaged in personnel selection or other discretionary functions when dealing with relatives, close friends, or business acquaintances.

On receipt of a disclosure from a Board Directors, staff member or volunteer, the CEO will determine the extent of any conflict of interest and direct the action required to resolve the

conflict. Failure to comply with such direction may make the Board member, staff member or volunteer liable to disciplinary action. A register of conflicts of interest will be maintained by the CEO. All potential and actual conflicts will be recorded in the register, showing:

- Name of the person
- Date of the disclosure
- Position of the Person
- Details of Potential or actual conflict
- Actions taken.
- Details entered by

All Board Directors, staff members and volunteers are required to declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest they are aware of by contacting the CEO or their representative as soon as possible once the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest has been identified.

This can occur by email, telephone call or in writing. At any time, a Board Director, staff member or volunteer who is unsure whether a conflict of interest exists should consult any relevant guidelines or, where appropriate, seek a direction from the CEO or relevant line Manager.

3.4 Acceptance of Benefits

Staff or Volunteers should: -

- as a general principle, not solicit or receive any benefit (other than provided for as part of their terms and conditions of employment) in respect of services performed, whether during working hours or not, in connection with their duties.
- avoid situations in which the acceptance of a benefit or potential benefit could give even the appearance of a conflict of interest with their official duties.

Where a staff member or volunteer's duties require the acceptance of a benefit, and the benefit is accepted, the fact of its acceptance should be referred to the CEO for determination as to whether the benefit should be returned or accepted on a permanent basis. Where permanently accepted, the Board of Directors may specify the conditions for such acceptance.

The CEO may authorise a staff member or volunteer to accept free travel or hospitality where the CEO is satisfied that: -

- acceptance does not constitute conflict of interest; and,
- where acceptance is necessary for the proper conduct of official duties.

3.5 Reporting Offer of Benefits

A staff member or volunteer should immediately report to the CEO any circumstances where an offer of a benefit is made, regardless of whether it is accepted or not, if the staff member or volunteer feels that such circumstances involve an attempt to induce favoured treatment.

3.6 Influence to Secure Advantage

Staff and Volunteers should: -

- not seek the improper influence or interest of any person to obtain promotion, transfer, or other advantage.

- manage their personal finances so as not to come under pecuniary (monetary) obligation to LDDSWQL and clients.

3.7 Political Activity by Staff or Volunteers

Staff or Volunteers have the same right as any other citizen to freedom of political association. However, any political activity by staff members or volunteers should clearly be conducted in a private capacity.

For staff members or volunteers engaged in political activity, such as holding office in a party or membership of a party committee, care should be exercised that a conflict of interest does not arise with official duties.

4. OFFICIAL INFORMATION AND PUBLIC COMMENT

4.1 Use of Official Information

Official information should not be used by staff or volunteers to gain improperly any kind of advantage for them, or for another person or organisation.

Unless approved by the CEO, staff members or volunteers presenting material at meetings or lectures sponsored by individual or organisations outside *LDDSWQL* should not accept fees where -

- staff or volunteers utilize a skill, knowledge or information derived directly from their employment with the Organisation rather than a professional/specialist skill.
- meetings/lectures are supported by the Organisation and conducted during normal working hours.
- the organisation has ownership of the intellectual or physical property involved.
- there may be a breach of the common law principles of the worker's duty of fidelity to the interests of the Organisation, including the use of the Organisation's materials or property.

Where a fee is received by a staff member or volunteer in the above circumstances, it should be paid immediately into LDDSWQL funds.

4.2 Release of Official Information

Staff and Volunteers are not prohibited from disclosing official information which would normally be given to any member of the public seeking that information. However, official information of a confidential or privileged nature must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons or organisations, except with the authorisation of the CEO. All staff and volunteers must adhere to:

- Australian Privacy Principles, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, January 2014
- The Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy Amendment Act (Enhancing Privacy Protection) 2012

4.3 Client Relationships

- Undue invasion of privacy must be avoided in the collection and dissemination of information. Information obtained in counselling relationships or evaluative data

concerning staff members or other clients may be communicated only for professional purposes and only to persons legitimately concerned with the case. Written or oral reports may present only data germane to the purposes of the evaluation.

- LDDSWQL staff members and volunteers must make provisions for maintaining confidentiality in the day-to-day use, storage and disposal of records as defined by the Federal Privacy Act 1988 (which was revised on the 21 December 2001).
- When working with minors or other persons who are unable to give voluntary, informed consent, staff must protect these persons' best interests and will regard their responsibilities as being directed to the parents, next of kin or guardians, in accordance with the normal legal formulae.
- Staff members may not disclose information about criminal acts of a client unless there is an overriding legal or social obligation to do so. In the first instance, staff should seek the advice of their line manager, and in all cases approval of the CEO must be obtained.
- Staff must avoid relationships with clients that could impair their professional judgement or increase the risk of exploitation. Examples of such dual relationships include but are not limited to counselling of close friends or relatives or unauthorised out-of-hours personal contact with clients.
- Sexual relationships between staff members and their clients are unethical. Such behaviour may constitute grounds for dismissal.
- Workers must maintain professional and ethical boundaries outside their work settings with people who are clients of LDDSWQL.

4.5 Public Comment

The CEO (or his/her delegate) is the spokesperson for the organisation and the first point of contact for LDDSWQL in all matters, unless specifically excluded by the chairperson.

If the CEO (or his/her delegate) is not available to take the media enquiries, then the staff member or volunteer concerned will advise the journalist and record their contact details so that the CEO or his / her authorised representative can respond.

5.

5.1 Technology and Electronic Devices

The use of electronic equipment and computers owned or supplied by LDDSWQL must be in accordance with LDDSWQL's principles, policies, and procedures and consistent with LDDSWQL's ethos and vision statement. It is important that staff and volunteers make themselves aware of the various policies regarding the use of and access to the LDDSWQL Information Communication Technology network.

6 Privacy Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers must adhere to:

- Australian Privacy Principles, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, January 2014

- The Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy Amendment Act (Enhancing Privacy Protection) 2012

Staff members, volunteers, contractors, and other agents are expected to conduct their work in a manner that complies with the expectations listed below:

- Work within the guidelines outlined in the organisational privacy statement.
- Do not gather personal information without obtaining the individual's consent (implied or explicit) unless otherwise authorised by policy or the CEO.
- If you collect personal information, inform the individual of the organisation's identity, and contact details, the purpose for collecting the information and how the information will be used and disclosed. Also inform the individual of the consequences if they do not provide the requested information.
- Allow access (as per policy guidelines) by the individual to information held about them or give reasons for refusal.
- Ensure that personal information you collect is accurate, complete, and up to date before you use the information.
- Ensure that personal information you collect is protected from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access as per organisational procedure.
- Offer individual clients, where practical, the opportunity of not identifying themselves when receiving services from LDDSWQL.
- Only collect sensitive (including health information) information where it is directly related to the provision of services to individuals or groups of people.
- Ensure you do not disclose personal / sensitive information to a third party unless authorised by the client in writing or the CEO.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Legislation and Compliance

- [AS/NZS ISO 9001:2016 Quality Management Systems 7.5 Documented Information](#)
- [Human Services Quality Framework - Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors - Standards 1-6.](#)
- Lifeline Accreditation and Standards Program (LASP).
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(Provider Registration and Practice Standards\) Rules 2018](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme ACT 2013](#)

Lifeline QMS: [Plans](#), [Policies](#), [Procedures/Guides](#) and [Forms](#)

REVIEW PROCESS: Policy Review Frequency: 3yrs (or otherwise stated)

Authorised by:



Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Date: 28 / 04 /2020