

Warringah Council

# **Code of Conduct**

## **Standards for Community & Other Representatives – Council Advisory Committees**

**Issue 1  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Warringah Council relies on and values the work that individuals within our community contribute as members of advisory committees established by Council. The Council could not achieve a number of its objectives without the active participation and contribution of people, such as yourself, who give generously of their time and knowledge to make Warringah such a great place to live and work.

The Council is committed to high ethical standards for everyone who works with Council in a paid, voluntary or elected capacity.

The Warringah Code of Conduct sets the benchmark for acceptable standards of behaviour by Council officials. That Code has also provided the foundation for this *Code of Conduct for Community & Other Representatives – Council Advisory Committees*.

As a community representative on a Strategic Reference Group, Community Committee or other advisory committee established by Council we ask you to commit to our ethical standards and to perform your responsibilities in accordance with the core principles of integrity, leadership, selflessness, impartiality, accountability, openness, honesty and respect.

This Code of Conduct outlines your responsibilities in areas such as conflicts of interest, gifts and personal information. Where appropriate, you should read it in conjunction with the primary Warringah Code of Conduct (available on Council's website or otherwise by contacting Council), which includes useful detail to explain some key elements such as conflicts of interest and gifts & benefits.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this Code of Conduct, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Team Leader, Governance on 9942-2444.

## 2. KEY PRINCIPLES

As a community representative, you are responsible for your own good conduct when serving on a Strategic Reference Group, Community Committee or other advisory committee established by Council.

As part of good conduct, you are asked to carry out your responsibilities in according to the following key principles:

### **Integrity**

You must not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.

### **Leadership**

You have a duty to promote and support the key principles by leadership and example and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Council. *This means promoting public duty to others in the council and outside, by your own ethical behaviour.*

**Selflessness**

You have a duty to provide advice and contribute to committee deliberations with the public interest in mind. You must not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for yourself, your family, friends or business interests.

**Impartiality**

You must consider matters on their merit and in accordance with your responsibilities as a Committee member.

**Accountability**

You are accountable to the public for your contribution to Committee deliberations and must consider issues on their merits, taking into account the views of others.

**Openness**

You have a duty to be as open as possible when participating in Committee deliberations, being prepared to give reasons for your views and listening to others.

**Honesty**

You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your Committee responsibilities and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in such a way that protects the public interest.

**Respect**

You must treat others with respect at all times.

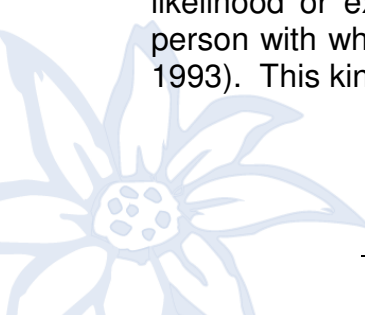
### **3. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

A conflict of interest arises when your own personal interests, or those of people close to you, conflict with your obligations and responsibilities as a member of a Strategic Reference Group, Community Committee or other advisory committee established by Council. For example, a conflict would exist if you had a personal interest that influenced the way you conducted yourself as a representative of the general community, an organisation or other group during discussions and/or voting at a committee meeting.

If you believe you have a conflict of interest that relates to your voluntary position on a committee, we ask that you disclose it to us. Please note that a conflict of interest does not necessarily mean that you are prevented from participating in a meeting or activity. Rather, it allows others to understand your position and prevents criticism of Council activities or decisions at a later date.

Community and other representatives on advisory committees typically participate because of their specific knowledge, experience and expertise in the matters covered by a committee's charter. This interest is generally well understood and would not need to be disclosed.

A pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another person with whom the person is associated. (section 442 and 443 Local Government Act 1993). This kind of interest requires greater scrutiny and must be disclosed.



If you are unsure whether or not you have a conflict of interest, please contact Council's Team Leader Governance, who will be happy to talk the matter over with you.

#### **4. GIFTS OR BENEFITS**

As a community representative on an advisory committee established by Council, you should not offer to a Councillor or Council staff member a gift or benefit that is:

- designed to gain advantage for yourself or a group you represent
- may be perceived by the public to give advantage to you or a group you represent.

Similarly, as a community or other representative on an advisory committee you should not accept gifts or benefits that could appear to give an advantage to the donor.

Token gifts may be given or accepted; token gifts include small items such as a bunch of flowers or box of chocolates. Cash gifts or incentives should never be offered to, or accepted by, a community representative under any circumstances.

If you are offered a gift or benefit in relation to your participation on a committee that is not considered token, please report it to Council's Internal Ombudsman. If you are not sure if the gift or benefit would be considered token, please do not hesitate to contact the Team Leader Governance to discuss.

#### **5. CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION**

As part of your responsibilities with an advisory committee, you may have contact with confidential or personal information. If so, we ask that you maintain the security of any such information and not access, use or remove any information, unless you are authorised to do so.

If you become aware of any breach of the security, or misuse, of Council's confidential or personal information please contact the Internal Ombudsman.

#### **6. COUNCIL RESOURCES**

Council resources should only be used for Council purposes. Council resources include equipment, vehicles, documents, records, data and information.

#### **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

From time to time, community and other representatives on committees may be contacted by the media for information or comment. While you may speak as a member of the public, we ask that you do not make any public statement to the media or at public events that could lead people to believe that you are speaking on behalf of Council or expressing its views or policies.

## **8. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

We ask that you not carry out your responsibilities as a member of a committee while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs that could impair your ability or cause danger to the safety of yourself or others.

## **9. REPORTING CORRUPTION, MALADMINISTRATION & WASTE**

One of the ways in which you can help us to maintain our ethical standards is to report any suspected incidences of corruption, maladministration or serious and substantial waste.

You may report these to Council's Internal Ombudsman. Alternatively, you can report any suspected instances of corruption to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and any instances of maladministration to the NSW Ombudsman.

## **10. WARRINGAH COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT**

Warringah Council is committed to the standards and principles expressed in this Code of Conduct. They reflect the high standards expected by our community and you are expected to maintain these standards and principles when participating in advisory committees established by Council.

Community representatives who breach these standards may have their membership of a committee revoked by Council.

## **11. FOR ASSISTANCE/INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CODE:**

If you have any questions, or are unsure about any matter relating to this Code of Conduct, you can contact Council's Team Leader Governance on 9942-2444.

