

Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction

As employees of the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation (WRLC), we all have a responsibility to ensure that the organisation upholds (and is seen to uphold) the highest level of integrity, efficiency and impartiality in all of our dealings with employees, customers and the community.

Section 95 of the Local Government Act provides a set of Conduct Principles that staff must observe, namely to:

- act impartially;
- act with integrity including avoiding real or apparent conflicts of interest;
- accept accountability for results; and
- provide responsive service.

This Code of Conduct outlines the standard of behaviour expected of all employees. It is designed to help employees understand their responsibilities and obligations, and provide guidance if you are faced with an ethical dilemma or conflict of interest in your work.

The Code aims to:

- promote within employees a spirit of service to Library users;
- emphasise the principles of merit, responsible management, competence and efficiency; and
- maintain appropriate standards of integrity and conduct of all employees.

If you believe that another person is breaching the Code you can discuss the other person's behaviour on a confidential basis, and without risk of reprisal with the Chief Executive Officer.

If you are unsure of any aspect of the Code, you can discuss it with your direct supervisor or the Chief Executive Officer.

Personal and Professional Behaviour

- You have a principal responsibility to implement and administer the policies and programs of the WRLC.
- In serving the public you are to treat all people with whom you have contact in the course of your work fairly, and with courtesy and sensitivity. Act with propriety and be able to demonstrate this in relation to any advice or service you give. You must be able to explain any decisions you make.
- Strive to attain value for money, and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of public resources.
- Respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence, and acknowledge this contribution.
- Perform your duties diligently, impartially and responsively, to the best of your ability. Report to work as required and when absence is unavoidable, promptly notify the appropriate supervisor of the reason.
- Be clean, neat and tidy in appearance, as appropriate to the position.

- Any criminal offence of which you have been found guilty during the course of your employment, or if you are charged with any criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, immediately advise the Chief Executive Officer.
- Use WRLC facilities and other physical resources for the proper purpose, and maintain them properly.
- Act and advise with honesty and integrity in all aspects of your official duties. If you believe any aspect of WRLC policy or administration may have unforeseen consequences or otherwise requires review, then bring it to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.
- Comply promptly with all lawful and reasonable directions you are given. If you have grounds for complaint arising out of such directions, whether ethical or otherwise, you are to discuss and attempt to resolve the matter with your immediate supervisor. If you are still dissatisfied you may lodge a grievance to resolve the matter with the Chief Executive Officer. You must continue to carry out any lawful directions that you may be given until the matter is resolved.

Safe and a Non Discriminatory Workplace

- Treat all staff and contractors fairly, involve them in discussions that affect them, and provide equal opportunity to develop their skills.
- Observe relevant occupational health and safety requirements and act to remove or bring to the attention of your supervisor any situation which is, or may be, a health or safety hazard.
- Your activities outside working hours must not diminish public confidence in WRLC or your ability to perform your duties.

You must not harass anyone or discriminate on the grounds of:

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| * Age | * Disability/impairment |
| * Industrial activity/inactivity | * Lawful sexual activity/sexual orientation |
| * Gender identity | * Marital status |
| * Physical features | * Political belief and/or activity |
| * Pregnancy | * Breastfeeding |
| * Race | * Religious belief and/or activity |
| * Sex | * Status as a parent or carer |
| * Irrelevant criminal conviction | * Personal association with someone of the above attributes |

This includes harassment or humiliation through the use of technology.

For example, using the Internet, a mobile phone or a camera.

The principles of Victorian and Federal Equal Opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation are fully supported.

- Any conduct which is intimidating or offensive to Library users, suppliers, contractors, competitors, the public or other employees is unacceptable.
- The consumption of alcohol or improper use of drugs or other substances must not adversely affect your work performance or official conduct.

Copyright

- WRLC retains the copyright of work produced by you during the course of your employment. You retain the copyright of the work only if approved by WRLC, or if you can demonstrate that you did not use WRLC's time, name, information, or resources in producing the work.
- You must only use computer software legitimately acquired in accordance with WRLC policy, and you must comply with all licence conditions accompanying any software acquired or used and report any violations, by any person, of which you become aware, as required by law.

Use of official facilities and equipment

- The Library's resources include information technology hardware and software, other communication devices, facilities and equipment, stationery, furniture and furnishings, goods, supplies and services.
- Staff are expected to be efficient, ethical and economical in their use and management of the Library's resources. Staff are personally accountable in their use of work resources and should not permit misuse by others. All usage of the Library's resources should be lawful, appropriate and ethical.
- When using any Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems, services or devices, staff must comply with the *Social Media Staff Policy*.

Use and Release of Information

- You may disclose official information that is normally given to Library users seeking information.
- You must not make public comment to a public forum, the print or electronic media without the consent of the Chief Executive Officer.
- You must not use or communicate official information or commercial-in-confidence matters without the permission of the Chief Executive Officer. This includes leaking information to the media. You must not take improper advantage of any information gained in the course of your employment with the WRLC.
- Information is only to be released in accordance with the WRLC's Privacy policy and principles of the Information Privacy Act 2001.

Conflict of Interest

- Conflict of interest with official duties may arise for various reasons and, as an individual, you may have private interests that from time to time, conflict with your WRLC duties. A conflict of interest exists where loyalties are divided. It exists, if during the course of their employment an employee makes a decision which results in any improper benefit or gain to a third party or themselves.
- Nominated Officers of the WRLC must complete a declaration of pecuniary interests, as required by Section 81(4) of the Local Government Act 1989, at least annually.
- Disclose potential conflicts of interest to management when dealing in the course of official duties with relatives, close friends or business acquaintances.

Gifts, Favours, Entertainment and Services

- Accepting gifts (including pre-Christmas) is not encouraged. On the one hand it could be a genuine token of appreciation, however on the other, it could lead to a staff member being compromised to the extent that there is an expectation that special favours will be granted.
- The integrity of the individual staff members and the organisation as a whole can be enhanced if embarrassing and compromising offers of gifts are politely refused and the person offering the gift is thanked.
- Ensure that in financial matters, including the handling of monies there is full accountability in relation to any advice or transaction in which you may be involved. If you have financial responsibilities, observe the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

Outside Business or Employment Activities

- Where participation in outside business/employment activities interferes with an employee's ability to satisfactorily perform assigned work for the WRLC, a conflict of interest exists.
- Where an employee having knowledge of commercially sensitive or non publicly available information, actively participates in outside business/employment activities for a competitor of the WRLC, a potential conflict of interest will exist.
- Once you have left the employment of the WRLC you should not use confidential information obtained during your employment to advantage your prospective employer or disadvantage the WRLC in commercial or other relationship with your prospective employer. In addition you must surrender any WRLC assets, equipment or items containing business information (including intellectual property).
- Obtain the approval of the Chief Executive Officer before addressing or chairing seminars conducted by professional conference organisers.
- Pay any fee received for any seminar participation in your professional capacity to the WRLC, unless you are specifically exempted from this requirement by the Chief Executive Officer.

Conclusion

Employees who breach the standards of conduct detailed in this Code may face disciplinary action which could include dismissal. A Code of Conduct cannot cover every situation. If you are unsure of the appropriate action to take in a particular situation discuss the matter with your supervisor. You can also ask for a copy of any related policies the WRLC may have on the matter.

Endorsed by: Consultative Committee June 2015

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Wimmera Regional Library Corporation's Staff Code of Conduct.

I undertake to perform my duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Signature

Name (printed).....

Date