

APRIL 2017



CITY OF HOBART

ALDERMANIC CODE OF CONDUCT



City of **HOBART**

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Legislation	6
3. Further assistance	7
Part 1 - Decision making	8
Part 2 - Conflict of interest	8
Part 3 - Use of Office	9
Part 4 - Use of resources	9
Part 5 - Use of information	10
Part 6 - Gifts and benefits	10
Part 7 - Relationships with community, Aldermen and Council employees	11
Part 8 - Representation	11

PREAMBLE

Section 28T of the *Local Government Act 1993* ("the Act") requires each council to adopt the model code of conduct, with or without variations as permitted by the Act, as its code of conduct relating to the conduct of its Aldermen.

The Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2016 sets out the model Code of Conduct.

The model Code of Conduct was adopted by the City of Hobart, without variation, at its meeting held on 9 May 2016.

Further, the Council resolved at its meeting held on 12 October 2015 to include the following statement in respect to workplace health and safety:

"It is expected that Aldermen will behave responsibly in regard to appropriate use of alcohol and other drugs while on Council duties.

In support of this, facilities are available in the Aldermen's Lounge and adjacent to the Lord Mayor's Courtroom to provide for self-testing."

N.D. Heath
General Manager

ACCOMPANYING CONTENT TO THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Aldermen of the City of Hobart, with respect to all aspects of their role.

As leaders in the community, Aldermen acknowledge the importance of high standards of behaviour in maintaining good governance. Good governance supports each Alderman's primary goal of acting in the best interests of the community.

Aldermen therefore agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of behaviour set out in the Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct incorporates the Model Code of Conduct made by Order of the Minister responsible for local government.

Application of code of conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to an Alderman whenever he or she:

- conducts council business, whether at or outside a meeting;
- conducts the business of his or her office (which may be that of Lord Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Alderman); or
- acts as a representative of the Council.

A complaint of failure to comply with the provisions of the Code of Conduct may be made where an Alderman fails to meet the standard of conduct specified in the Model Code of Conduct.

Standards of conduct prescribed under the Model Code of Conduct

The model code of conduct provides for the following eight standards of conduct:

1. Decision making

An Alderman is to bring an open and unprejudiced mind to all matters being considered in the course of his or her duties, so that decisions are made in the best interests of the community.

2. Conflict of interest

An Alderman effectively manages conflict of interest by ensuring that personal or private interests do not influence, and are not seen to influence, the performance of his or her role and acting in the public interest.

3. Use of office

An Alderman uses his or her office solely to represent and serve the community, conducting himself or herself in a way that maintains the community's trust in the Alderman and the Council as a whole.

4. Use of resources

An Alderman uses Council resources and assets strictly for the purpose of performing his or her role.

5. Use of information

An Alderman uses information appropriately to assist in performing his or her role in the best interests of the community.

6. Gifts and benefits

An Alderman adheres to the highest standards of transparency and accountability in relation to the receiving of gifts or benefits, and carries out his or her duties without being influenced by personal gifts or benefits.

7. Relationships with community, Aldermen and council employees

An Alderman is to be respectful in his or her conduct, communication and relationships with members of the community, fellow Aldermen and Council employees, in a way that builds trust and confidence in the Council.

8. Representation

An Alderman is to represent himself or herself and the Council appropriately and within the ambit of his or her role, and clearly distinguish between his or her views as an individual and those of the Council.

Principles of good governance

By adopting this Code of Conduct, Aldermen commit to the overarching principles of good governance by being:

Accountable – Explain, and be answerable for, the consequences of decisions made on behalf of the community.

Transparent – Ensure decision making processes can be clearly followed and understood by the community.

Law-abiding – Ensure decisions are consistent with relevant legislation or common law, and within the powers of local government.

Responsive – Represent and serve the needs of the entire community while balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.

Equitable – Provide all groups with the opportunity to participate in the decision making process and treat all groups equally.

Participatory and inclusive – Ensure that anyone affected by or interested in a decision has the opportunity to participate in the process for making that decision.

Effective and efficient – Implement decisions and follow processes that make the best use of the available people, resources and time, to ensure the best possible results for the community.

Consensus oriented – Take into account the different views and interests in the community, to reach a majority position on what is in the best interests of the whole community, and how it can be achieved.

2. LEGISLATION

The code of conduct framework is legislated under the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act). The Act is available to view via the Tasmanian Legislation Website at www.thelaw.tas.gov.au.

Code of conduct

Aldermen are required to comply with the provisions of the Council's Code of Conduct while performing the functions and exercising the powers of his or her office with the council.

The Code of Conduct incorporates the Model Code of Conduct (made by order of the Minister responsible for local government) and may include permitted variations included as attached schedules to the Model Code of Conduct.

Making a code of conduct complaint

A person may make a code of conduct complaint against one Alderman in relation to the contravention by the Alderman of the council's code of conduct.

A person may make a complaint against more than one Alderman if the complaint relates to the same behaviour and the same code of conduct contravention.

Code of conduct complaints are lodged with the General Manager of the council and must comply with legislative requirements, as outlined below.

A complaint may not be made by more than two complainants jointly.

A code of conduct complaint is to –

- be in writing;
- state the name and address of the complainant;
- state the name of each Alderman against whom the complaint is made;
- state the provisions of the code of conduct that the Alderman has allegedly contravened;
- contain details of the behaviour of each Alderman that constitutes the alleged contravention;
- be lodged with the General Manager within six months after the Alderman or Aldermen against whom the complaint is made allegedly committed the contravention of the code of conduct; and
- be accompanied by the code of conduct complaint lodgement fee.

Once satisfied that the code of conduct complaint meets prescribed requirements, the General Manager forwards the complaint to the Code of Conduct Panel.

Code of conduct complaint lodgement fee

The code of conduct complaint lodgement fee is prescribed under Schedule 3 (Fees) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*.

3. FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Aldermanic dispute resolution

Aldermen commit to developing strong and positive working relationships and working effectively together at all times.

Prior to commencing a formal code of conduct complaint, the Aldermen who are parties to any disagreement should endeavour to resolve their differences in a courteous and respectful manner, recognising that they have been elected to act in the best interests of the community.

A council's internal dispute resolution process should be the first step that is taken when there is a dispute between Aldermen.

An Alderman who is party to any disagreement should request the Lord Mayor or the General Manager to assist the Alderman in resolving the disagreement informally.

If the informal assistance does not resolve the disagreement, the General Manager may, with the consent of the parties involved, choose to appoint an external mediator to assist in the resolution of the disagreement. If an external mediator is appointed, Aldermen who are party to the disagreement must strive to cooperate with the mediator and use their best endeavours to assist the mediator and participate in the mediation arranged.

Where a matter cannot be resolved through internal processes, the next step may be to lodge a formal code of conduct complaint.

Aldermen should only invoke the provisions of the Code of Conduct in good faith, where it is perceived that another Alderman has not complied with the provisions or intent of the Code of Conduct.

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

For the purposes of section 28R(1) of the Act, the Code of Conduct set out in Schedule 1 is the Model Code of Conduct relating to the conduct of councillors.

INTERPRETATION

- (1) In this order Act means the *Local Government Act 1993*
- (2) *The Acts Interpretation Act 1931* applies to the interpretation of this order as if the order were by-laws.

PART 1 - DECISION MAKING

1. An Alderman must bring an open and unprejudiced mind to all matters being decided upon in the course of his or her duties, including when making planning decisions as part of the Council's role as a Planning Authority.
2. An Alderman must make decisions free from personal bias or prejudgement.
3. In making decisions, an Alderman must give genuine and impartial consideration to all relevant information known to him or her, or of which he or she should have reasonably been aware.
4. An Alderman must make decisions solely on merit and must not take irrelevant matters or circumstances into account when making decisions.

PART 2 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. When carrying out his or her public duty, an Alderman must not be unduly influenced, nor be seen to be unduly influenced, by personal or private interests that he or she may have.
2. An Alderman must act openly and honestly in the public interest.
3. An Alderman must uphold the principles of transparency and honesty and declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest at any meeting of the Council and at any workshop or any meeting of a body to which the councillor is appointed or nominated by the Council.
4. An Alderman must act in good faith and exercise reasonable judgement to determine whether he or she has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.
5. An Alderman must avoid, and remove himself or herself from, positions of conflict of interest as far as reasonably possible.
6. An Alderman who has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in a matter before the Council must –
 - (a) declare the conflict of interest before discussion on the matter begins; and
 - (b) act in good faith and exercise reasonable judgement to determine whether the conflict of interest is so material that it requires removing himself or herself physically from any Council discussion and remaining out of the room until the matter is decided by the Council.

PART 3 - USE OF OFFICE

1. The actions of an Alderman must not bring the Council or the office of Alderman into disrepute.
2. An Alderman must not take advantage, or seek to take advantage, of his or her office or status to improperly influence others in order to gain an undue, improper, unauthorised or unfair benefit or detriment for himself or herself or any other person or body.
3. In his or her personal dealings with the Council (for example as a ratepayer, recipient of a Council service or planning applicant), an Alderman must not expect nor request, expressly or implicitly, preferential treatment for himself or herself or any other person or body.

PART 4 - USE OF RESOURCES

1. An Alderman must use Council resources appropriately in the course of his or her public duties.
2. An Alderman must not use Council resources for private purposes except as provided by Council policies and procedures.
3. An Alderman must not allow the misuse of Council resources by any other person or body.
4. An Alderman must avoid any action or situation which may lead to a reasonable perception that Council resources are being misused by the Alderman or any other person or body.

PART 5 - USE OF INFORMATION

1. An Alderman must protect confidential Council information in his or her possession or knowledge, and only release it if he or she has the authority to do so.
2. An Alderman must only access Council information needed to perform his or her role and not for personal reasons or non-official purposes.
3. An Alderman must not use Council information for personal reasons or non-official purposes.
4. An Alderman must only release Council information in accordance with established Council policies and procedures and in compliance with relevant legislation.

PART 6 - GIFTS AND BENEFITS

1. An Alderman may accept an offer of a gift or benefit if it directly relates to the carrying out of the Alderman's public duties and is appropriate in the circumstances.
2. An Alderman must avoid situations in which the appearance may be created that any person or body, through the provision of gifts or benefits of any kind, is securing (or attempting to secure) influence or a favour from the Alderman or the Council.
3. An Alderman must carefully consider –
 - (a) the apparent intent of the giver of the gift or benefit; and
 - (b) the relationship the Alderman has with the giver; and
 - (c) whether the giver is seeking to influence his or her decisions or actions, or seeking a favour in return for the gift or benefit.
4. An Alderman must not solicit gifts or benefits in the carrying out of his or her duties.
5. An Alderman must not accept an offer of cash, cash-like gifts (such as gift cards and vouchers) or credit.
6. An Alderman must not accept a gift or benefit if the giver is involved in a matter which is before the Council.
7. An Alderman may accept an offer of a gift or benefit that is token in nature (valued at less than \$50) or meets the definition of a token gift or benefit (if the Council has a gifts and benefits policy).
8. If the Council has a gifts register, an Alderman who accepts a gift or benefit must record it in the relevant register.

PART 7 - RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY, ALDERMEN AND COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

1. An Alderman –
 - (a) must treat all persons with courtesy, fairness, dignity and respect; and
 - (b) must not cause any reasonable person offence or embarrassment; and
 - (c) must not bully or harass any person.
2. An Alderman must listen to, and respect, the views of other Aldermen in Council and committee meetings and any other proceedings of the Council, and endeavour to ensure that issues, not personalities, are the focus of debate.
3. An Alderman must not influence, or attempt to influence, any Council employee or delegate of the Council, in the exercise of the functions of the employee or delegate.
4. An Alderman must not contact or issue instructions to any of the Council's contractors or tenderers, without appropriate authorisation.
5. An Alderman must not contact an employee of the Council in relation to Council matters unless authorised by the General Manager of the Council.

PART 8 - REPRESENTATION

1. When giving information to the community, an Alderman must accurately represent the policies and decisions of the Council.
2. An Alderman must not knowingly misrepresent information that he or she has obtained in the course of his or her duties.
3. An Alderman must not speak on behalf of the Council unless specifically authorised or delegated by the Lord Mayor.
4. An Alderman must clearly indicate when he or she is putting forward his or her personal views.
5. An Alderman's personal views must not be expressed in such a way as to undermine the decisions of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute.
6. An Alderman must show respect when expressing personal views publicly.
7. The personal conduct of an Alderman must not reflect, or have the potential to reflect, adversely on the reputation of the Council.
8. When representing the Council on external bodies, an Alderman must strive to understand the basis of the appointment and be aware of the ethical and legal responsibilities attached to such an appointment.

PART 9 - VARIATION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

Any Variation of this Model Code of Conduct is to be in accordance with section 28T of the Act.

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