



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

Type:	Corporate Policy – People and Culture		
Owner:	Employee Engagement Manager		
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer		
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Legislation Reference:	Section 175(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i>		

1 PURPOSE

Katherine Town Council seeks a constructive workplace culture where business is conducted safely, with integrity, honesty and fairness, a high standard of customer service and a culture that is focused on efficiency, adaptability, resilience, and enthusiasm aligned with Council’s Strategic and Municipal Plan, and relevant laws, regulations, by-laws and organisation standards.

Everyone working for Council must follow the highest standards of ethical behaviour when dealing with customers and each other. Council’s leaders have a special responsibility to encourage ethical conduct as part of a culture where this is recognised, valued and followed at all levels.

This Code of Conduct for Employees is a public declaration of the principles of good conduct and standards of behaviour that the Council’s stakeholders could reasonably expect of Council employees to demonstrate in the performance of their duties and functions.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council employees, regardless of their employment status, role or position. All employees must be familiar with and follow the spirit and intent of this Code of Conduct.

3 DEFINITIONS

Conflict of Interest means a situation in which an employee’s private interests interfere, or appear to interfere, with their duty to put the public interest first. It refers to circumstances where a member of council or staff member is, or could be, influenced by a private interest when performing an official function.

Discrimination means the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Employee means a person remunerated by Katherine Town Council on a full time, part time, casual or contract basis.

The Code of Conduct for Employees is a set of standards and behaviours related to the way work is performed at Council.

It is the responsibility of each employee to use reasonable and sound judgement while at work or when undertaking activities that may reflect on individuals as employees of Council. By consistently applying these standards, Council will enhance community trust and confidence.

1. ACT WITH HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Employees must act in an honest, impartial and transparent manner that is reflective of their public position. Furthermore, they must not place themselves under any actual or perceived financial or other obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonable be thought to influence them in the performance of their duty, role or responsibility.

Employees must:

- Be open and transparent in dealings,
- Use delegated powers responsibly and accountably,
- Avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest,
- Stive to earn and keep a high level of public trust; and,
- Act in good faith, in the interests of Council, our community and the public in general.

2. DILLIGENCE AND DUE CARE

Employees must exercise due care, diligence and skill in performing their duties, role and responsibilities. They must seek all relevant information pertaining to a task or decision, ask for clarification and instruction when required, and understand the ramifications or decision and actions, including indecision or lack of action.

Employees must make informed decision when discharging their duties, to the limit of their ability, skill, qualification, position and delegation. When unable to perform their duties due to lack of, or conflicting information, skill, qualification or ability, or for any other reason, they must seek clarification and/or further instruction or training.

When in doubt employees must not engage in a task or make a decision if it affects another party which adversely or unreasonably limits another staff member from doing their role or compromises safety.

3. PUBLIC INTEREST

Employees must uphold the public interest when discharging their duties including making decisions. They must ensure that the public interest always prevails over personal preference, operational expedience and general or specific convenience.

Employees have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the public, and must, on request, be able to demonstrate how their actions and/or decision-making is in the public interest.

Staff must not make disparaging remarks or bring Council into disrepute in any form of media including social media which may be linked back to their role at Council.

4. ACCEPT REASONABLE DIRECTION

Employees must comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given to them by someone in Council who has the authority to give that direction.

5. RESPONSIVE SERVICE

Employees must strive to provide a high standard of customer service, they must accept and value their duty to engage the community in developing and effecting priorities, policies and decisions, as well and managing public resources effectively, efficiently and economically.

Employees must treat members of the public equitably and with honesty, fairness, sensitivity and dignity. Employees are expected to treat complaints from customers, ratepayers and the community or fellow employees seriously, and to respond to constructive feedback as an opportunity for development.

6. DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest for Council employees are defined by the Local Government Act 2019. Employees must disclose any interests that may perceptibly or in fact conflict with the ability to adhere to principles 1 and 3 of this code. Examples include but are not limited to financial interests and personal interests where employees, or their families, friends and associates, may or could obtain some advantage or disadvantage.

Employees must declare their interests on commencement with Council and are required to do so on a regular basis. Employees must be proactive in declaring any real or potential conflicts of interest during the course of their duties.

7. MUST NOT DISCLOSE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Council has strict requirements pertaining to confidential information. Employees must not disclose confidential information obtained in the course of the duties except as may be required for the staff members official duties or compelled by a court of law.

An employee must not make improper use of confidential information obtained in the course of their work. And employee makes improper use of information if they use that information to gain private benefit or to inflict harm on another.

Employees must undertake every reasonable precaution to prevent unauthorised disclosure of confidential information. If an employee is unsure if the information is confidential they must assume that it is confidential until formal clarification is obtained.

8. IMPROPER OR UNDUE INFLUENCE

Employees must not take advantage or seek to take advantage of their position with Council to improperly influence other employees in the performance of their duties or functions in order to gain undue or improper (direct or indirect) advantage for themselves, or for any other person or body.

9. GIFTS

Employees should not seek or otherwise accept gifts from any person or body, any immediate or future gift, gratuity or benefits for themselves or any other person or body, relating to their status as employees of Council or the performance of any duty, function or work within or for Council.

10. RESPECT AND COURTESY

Employees must treat others with respect and courtesy at all times. This includes but is not limited to not using derogatory terms toward others, observing the rights of other people, and recognising the different rights and roles other have within Council.

Employees must not engage in, or overlook, any bullying or harassment of others, including sexual harassment, or engage in any form of unlawful discrimination.

Employees must report if they observe or have reasonable grounds to believe that any bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination is occurring.

11. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Employees must be proactive in the continual improvement of all aspects of their work performance. Employees should aim to maintain and improve their work performance and that of their work unit in the delivery of customer service. Employees have a responsibility to maintain and enhance their skills and expertise and keep up to date the knowledge associated with their job.

12. SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Council requires employees to get approval from the CEO to undertake paid employment with another organisation, conduct a business, undertake volunteer work or participate on boards and committees. If an employee performs paid employment outside of Council, they must ensure this work is kept separate from Council work, does not lead to a conflict of interest, does not affect Council time or resources (physical, technical or intellectual); and does not interfere with their ability to do their work in Council.

Council requires staff to apply due care and diligence, manage fatigue and their Work Health and Safety responsibilities and manage their work/life balance accordingly. Consideration for approval will be given based on those principles as well as any real or perceived conflict of interest. Applications must be made in writing and sought prior to commencement of any employment.

13. OUT OF HOURS CONDUCT

Out of hours conduct may be found to be serious misconduct if it seriously damages Council's reputation or compromises the employee's capacity to perform his or her duty. Conduct outside of work involving criminal offences does not, along, warrant dismissal. There must still be a relevant connection between criminal activity and the inherent duties and requirements of the role, however prolonged absences from work due to convictions and imprisonment may result in termination of employment due to an employee's inability to fulfil their contractual requirements.

Employees at training events or attending conferences paid for by Council are determined to be at work for the duration of the scheduled event they attend. Employees wearing Council uniform must abide by the Code of Conduct whilst in uniform at all times. Employees in uniform must be mindful that they are representing Council whenever they are wearing their uniform.

Staff using or engaging with media, including social media out of hours or in a personal capacity that in any way disparages Council or brings Council's reputation into disrepute will be found to have breached the Code of Conduct.

14. PUBLIC CONDUCT

Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes and upholds the good reputation and public image of Council at all times. This includes not making public comments on matters relating to Council or their employment within a public capacity (other than those delegated by Council). Employees must be aware of situations that may cause tension between their public and private roles and in such cases give priority to their public role. An employee's rights to maintain their own political opinions and convictions are not to be impinged upon by this clause, however it is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that their personal convictions and beliefs as private natural persons do not, in perception or fact, conflict or unduly influence their public position.

15. COMMUNICATION WITH COUNCILLORS

Communication between elected members and employees must be respectful and in accordance with Council's policies and procedures. Council employees must give elected members advice that is thorough, responsive, objective, independent and apolitical so that Councillors can make decisions and carry out their community responsibilities.

If employees believe there is conflict between a request from an elected member and Council policies, they must discuss this with their manager.

16. WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

Employees must understand that they have a duty of care to themselves and each other. Employees will follow work, health and safety procedures at all times, accept reasonable direction regarding work health and safety and report incidents, hazards and near misses within the required timeframes. Employees must ensure they are fit for work at all times.

17. COMPLIANCE WITH, AND BREACHES OF POLICY

It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure that they comply with the provision of this code. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Chief Executive Office to ensure that this Code is complied with by all employees. Alleged breaches of the Code will be dealt with in a procedurally fair manner according to Council policy. Proven breaches of the Code may result in formal disciplinary action being undertaken which may include termination of employment and subsequent referral to, and prosecution by other regulatory bodies.

5 ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

- Fraud and Corruption Control policy
- Gifts and Benefits policy
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Privacy policy
- Confidential Information policy
- Customer Service Charter
- Work Health and Safety policy
- Secondary Employment policy
- Training and Development policy
- Prevention of workplace bullying, discrimination and harassment policy
- Code of Conduct for Employees Declaration (attached)

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2019*
- *Information Act 2002*
- *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*

[Revision History](#)

Version	Approval date	Details of change	Responsible officer
1	16/12/2003	Created	CEO
2	22/07/2008	Update	CEO
3	24/05/2016	Update	CEO
4	24/01/2017	Update	CEO
5	01/08/2021	Update	CEO
6	23/01/2023	Reviewed and update for consistency with <i>Local Government Act 2019</i>	CEO
7	29/02/2024	Revised	CEO