



## Dogs ACT Executive and Council Behaviour Policy and Code of Ethics

Dogs ACT Executive and Council can contribute positively to creating a productive and harmonious environment in which both members and staff can be inspired to achieve their full potential, working together to better service Dogs ACT members. However, when behaviour is inappropriate or dysfunctional, it can have serious consequences on productivity, job satisfaction, and on the physical and psychological wellbeing of committee members, members, employees, and volunteers. The Behaviour Policy sets out the behaviour or conduct expected of all Executive and Council members, whether they are on Dogs ACT grounds, or representing Dogs ACT elsewhere. All Executive and Council members have a Duty of Care to each other and must comply at all times with the Policy. Dogs ACT aims to prevent and minimise behaviour which may adversely affect the harmony of the organisation and the office and/or cause harm or injury to others.

This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant Regulations, Codes, Policies, and Aims & Objectives.

### **Scope and Purpose**

This Policy applies to all Executive and Council members and relates to the behaviour of members towards each other, office staff of Dogs ACT, and the Dogs ACT community (such as members, visitors, and contractors).

### **Principles of Behaviour**

The Executive and Council Behaviour Policy describes how members should treat other committee members and members of the Dogs ACT community. In summary, the Policy requires that committee members model professional behaviour and demonstrate the standards of conduct and therefore behave: -

- Lawful
- Professional
- Honest
- Respectful
- Accountable
- Responsible
- Productively
- Safely
- Ethically
- Fairness
- Integrity

Behaviour or conduct which is not consistent with the Behaviour Policy is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Dogs ACT.

Reports or complaints, or unacceptable behaviour by any member of the Executive or Council, will be taken seriously and handled by three impartial Council or appointed Dogs ACT members in a confidential and fair manner. They must take into account the principles of procedural fairness. The three appointees are obliged to take action when and if it is deemed to be unacceptable behaviour which may have an adverse effect on the wellbeing of members or Dogs ACT staff. Such action may include disciplinary action.

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

In determining whether behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonable, consider what a reasonable person would judge to be unacceptable or unreasonable having regards to the circumstances. The information below provides further guidance on what is unacceptable behaviour for Executive and Council members.

### **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour**

Behaviour which would be considered unacceptable includes (but is not limited to), the following:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour such as threatening gestures or actual violence or assault
- Verbal abuse, for example yelling, screaming, abusive or offensive language
- Being under the influence of illicit drugs or heavily impaired by alcohol
- Unsafe work practices or behaviour which may harm staff members or others
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Stalking
- Unwelcome physical contact including that of a sexual, intimate, or threatening nature
- Teasing, name calling, or ridicule, or making someone the brunt of pranks, or practical jokes
- Withholding approval for, or denial of requests maliciously, discriminatorily, unfairly, or without basis
- Excluding or isolating individuals
- Undermining performance, reputation, or professionalism of others, by deliberately withholding information, resources, or authorisation, or supplying incorrect information
- Discussing or releasing confidential Dogs ACT information without the appropriate authority
- Malicious or mischievous gossip
- Abusive or harassing notes, e-mails, telephone calls, text messages, etc.
- Belittling opinions or unreasonable and unconstructive criticism
- Offensive gestures and behaviour
- Snide insensitive comments

### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is defined as repeated, less favourable treatment of an individual to another individual or others, which is considered unreasonable and inappropriate. It includes behaviour which intimidates, offends, degrades, humiliates, undermines, or threatens. Bullying may take place in private, or in front of others. Whether or not the person responsible for the behaviour intends to harm, the effect of the behaviour is harmful. A single incident of bullying behaviour is unacceptable and should not be ignored or condoned. Bullying or other unacceptable behaviour may also be a form of unlawful discrimination or harassment. This could occur if the basis of the behaviour relates to an individual's race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, ethnoreligious background, sex, marital status, pregnancy, potential pregnancy, family responsibilities, disability (physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and illnesses such as HIV/AIDS), age, homosexuality, transgender status, political conviction, or religious belief.

### **Responsibilities of Committee Members**

Every Executive and Council member has a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour is consistent with the Behaviour Policy and to take appropriate action when they directly experience or observe behaviour which they consider to be inappropriate. Such action may include: -

- Keeping a factual record of the incident e.g. the date, time, nature of behaviour, what was said, witnesses, etc.
- Advising the person responsible for the behaviour, that their behaviour is inappropriate and ask them to stop behaving that way. This action should be taken if the member is comfortable with interacting directly with the person responsible for the behaviour. This could solve the problem, particularly if the person responsible for the behaviour is unaware of their behaviour or the way it affects others.
- Reporting the behaviour to the Dogs ACT President or appropriate person.

- Making a complaint in accordance with Dogs ACT Complaints Policy

When being appointed to a Dogs ACT Executive or Council position the below Code of Conduct and Ethics should be agreed upon and followed.

### **1. Commitment**

I took up this position to work for something larger than myself. I will carry out this work honestly and in fairness to everybody involved, placing the interests of Dogs ACT before my own. When acting in my capacity as an Executive or Council member for Dogs ACT I will:

- a. pursue as my highest priority the fulfilment of Dogs ACT aims & objectives, code of practice, constitution, business statement, rules and regulations and promise
- b. ensure I undertake the activities and deal with issues / problems / concerns in a consistent, prompt, fair, and non-discriminatory manner
- c. promote Dogs ACT interests and protect its reputation
- d. consider the interests of Dogs ACT stakeholders, our members, our affiliates, our employees and volunteers, and the society and the environment in which Dogs ACT operates.

### **2. Conscientiousness**

I understand my responsibilities and will do my job fully to the best of my ability, and without reservation. When acting in my capacity as an Executive or Council member for Dogs ACT I will:

- a. keep informed about issues affecting Dogs ACT
- b. exercise independent judgement on the issues
- c. seek out the information necessary to support the exercise of my judgement
- d. perform my duties with integrity, honesty and equity while adhering to Dogs ACT Constitution, Rules & Regulations, Codes of Practice, Business statement, Policies and Procedures
- e. act with due care and diligence, in the best interest of Dogs ACT
- f. provide advice, express opinions or make statements in an honest, objective, impartial and efficient way, and consider the reasonably foreseeable consequences of that advice
- g. invest the time and effort required to fulfil the responsibilities of my position by reading materials, participating fully in meetings, and carrying out any duties assigned by Dogs ACT.

Committee members should ensure that resources, funds, or equipment, under their responsibility, are used effectively and economically for the purposes of fulfilling Dogs ACT objectives. They are not to be used for personal business, or any other reason not approved by Executive and Council.

Committee members also agree that by accepting their role on the Executive or Council they vest all Intellectual Property (IP) generated, during the course of that role and as a direct result of undertaking their activities on the committee, with Dogs ACT.

### **3. Community**

I will treat the people involved with Dogs ACT respectfully, fairly and without prejudice. When acting in my capacity as a committee/council/executive member for Dogs ACT I will:

- a. observe and promote the human rights of all persons touched by the work I undertake on behalf of Dogs ACT
- b. oppose prejudice, address disadvantage, and promote diversity
- c. treat colleagues, members, affiliates, employees, volunteers, and the community with courtesy and respect
- d. refrain from any form of conduct that may cause offence or embarrassment to other committee members, other members, or employees and volunteers of Dogs ACT
- e. refer any request for public comment, public statement, or public disclosure of official information to the Dogs ACT Executive.

#### **4. Compliance**

I will work within the law, and within the Constitution, Rules & Regulations, Codes of Practice, Policies and Procedures, and I will make sure that Dogs ACT does too. When acting in my capacity for Dogs ACT I will, to the best of my ability and within the bounds of my authority:

- a. ensure the business of the Dogs ACT is conducted honestly and complies with all laws and any contractual obligations
- b. ensure to the best of my ability that Dogs ACT is complying with all applicable legislation
- c. ensure that I do not engage in any illegal or improper practices
- d. ensure that Dogs ACT is managing potential risks effectively
- e. observe the provisions of Dogs ACT Constitution, Rules & Regulations, Codes of Practice, Policies and Procedures and make appropriate suggestions for updates
- f. ensure work undertaken is competently performed and honestly and reliably reported

#### **5. Conflicts of Interest**

In my dealings with Dogs ACT I will be honest and open and will not take any advantage of my position on the committee.

At no time while acting in my capacity will I:

- a. place my own interests, or the interests of any other person or body, before the interests of Dogs ACT, or so act as to give the appearance of any such conflict
- b. enter into any financial relationship with or on behalf of Dogs ACT without approval
- c. through my own conduct bring Dogs ACT into disrepute

Committee/Executive/Council members must clearly separate their personal interests from the interests of Dogs ACT. If a member recognises a conflict of interest between their official duties and personal interest, they should declare the conflict in writing to ensure they act in Dogs ACT best interest.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

I will keep confidential all matters that have been entrusted to me as sensitive or confidential. Conversely, I will freely tell anyone anything they are entitled to know.

When acting in my capacity for Dogs ACT I will:

- a. preserve, where appropriate, the confidentiality of the Dogs ACT business
- b. respect the confidentiality and protect the privacy of Dogs ACT members, employees, sponsors and others with whom we do business, and only reveal such information to others with the consent of the person(s) or organisation(s) or their authorised representative(s)
- c. ensure that all confidential or sensitive documents cannot be accessed or read by people not authorised to do so, and where possible hand-delivered to be tabled at an appropriate meeting rather than being circulated
- d. recognise my accountability to Dogs ACT members, and provide all information on the Dogs ACT performance necessary to give meaning to that accountability

Members should always act in the interest of Dogs ACT and its members regarding official information and issues of confidentiality. Official information must never be used to gain benefit or advantage for any person.

#### **7. Communication**

I make sure I know what Dogs ACT does, and why, and I will promote it.

When acting in my capacity for Dogs ACT I will:

- a. communicate the significance of the Dogs ACT mission, strategy, and culture to members, employees, stakeholders and the public
- b. share where appropriate with other members the insights and practices I have developed in the course of my activities with Dogs ACT.