

EHA National Policy



Code of Conduct

Policy Number		Responsible Association	
Policy Type	Internal	Version Number	
Approval Date	11 August 2022	Sunset/review date	30 June 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail to Directors, staff and other applicable parties of Environmental Health Australia expectations relating to ethical and professional conduct in order to protect the integrity of Environmental Health Australia.

2. Objective

The Environmental Health Australia board of Directors shall be referred to as the 'board' in this policy. The board is responsible for the ongoing development and implementation of the Strategic Plan which details the clear vision, mission and values of the organisation and is directly associated with the principles of the Code of Conduct Policy.

For the purpose of providing clarity between this Policy and the Environmental Health Australia Constitution, where reference is made to 'the Executive' in this Policy, it shall have the same meaning as 'Office Bearer' in the Constitution.

This policy aims to ensure that board members, staff and other parties identified as being captured by this policy are aware of the expectations that they perform their duties, represent the organisation and behave in a manner that exhibits the highest level of ethical and professional conduct and will not bring Environmental Health Australia into disrepute.

All board members, staff and other applicable parties will act with honesty, integrity and transparency in all their dealings with each other and as representatives of Environmental Health Australia. The organisation promotes the values of respect, fairness, integrity and collaboration.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All board members, observers and Directors of Environmental Health Australia;
- Environmental Health Australia Staff and Contractors;
- Environmental Health Australia Members;
- Any third party representing or acting on behalf of Environmental Health Australia at public events, training etc.;
- Any party to which Environmental Health Australia has a commercial arrangement, whether financial or not.

4. Policy Principles

This policy has been developed to provide a model Code of Conduct for board members, staff and all other applicable parties of Environmental Health Australia. It is the policy of Environmental Health Australia, as well as a responsibility of the board to ensure that the requirements of the Code of Conduct are upheld to the highest standard for the benefit of Environmental Health Australia and its members.

4.1. Code of Conduct: General

Environmental Health Australia will manage the expectations of the Code of Conduct through requiring Directors, staff, members and all other applicable parties to:

- Undertake their duties and respective positions in accordance with all requirements of the organisations established policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy and Constitution;
- Act with honesty, integrity and transparency in all their dealings with each other and as representatives of the organisation;
- Treat all persons with respect and courtesy, and without harassment;
- Conduct their duties to the highest standard of competence and professionalism when representing the organisation;
- Continually strive to maintain and improve their professional knowledge and excellence in the practice of environmental Health;
- Provide correct and timely professional advice and information to their employer, the general public, fellow members etc. in regard to environmental health;
- Use all organisational resources in a proper and responsible manner;
- Avoid conflicts of interest where possible and identify and disclose any conflicts of interest in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Comply with all applicable laws and legislation when acting on behalf of the organisation;
- Follow this policy and respond to any breaches appropriately.

Environmental Health Australia will provide comprehensive and timely information and responses to members, the public and all stakeholders in relation to reasonable requests for information. All information about the organisation will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of the organisation.

4.2. Code of Conduct: Specific requirements for Directors

In addition to the conduct requirements of 4.1 and their obligations to govern the organisation, all Directors of Environmental Health Australia have a duty including but not limited to:

- Act in the best interests of the members, independently and free from influence;
- Act in good faith;
- Ensure that the organisation is represented to the highest professional standard;
- Exercise due care and diligence in decision making;
- Ensure solvency and manage all organisational finances responsibly and prudently;
- Meet all relevant legislative requirements;
- Identify and declare conflicts of interest and undertake all functions in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Make decisions in the best interest of the organisation as a whole;
- Author and approve policies, plans and procedures to benefit the organisation and its members;
- Operate at a strategic level to identify opportunities for improvement or diversification in the interests of members;
- Treat fellow directors, members and guests as well as external stakeholders with respect and professionalism;
- Ensure that the organisation is fair and inclusive in its appointment and promotion practices for all board, staff and volunteer positions;
- Ensure that the organisation has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively;
- Discuss issues of concern directly with fellow Board members;
- Ensure all internal information is treated as confidential unless otherwise stated;
- Never use their position for their own personal advantage or the benefit or gain of another party whether financial or non-financial; and
- Undertake ongoing professional development.

4.3. Responsibility of the board

The board is responsible for:

- Ensuring an example of model conduct is set by the Board, through conducting their professional activities and duties to the highest ethical and professional standards as representatives of Environmental Health Australia;
- Upholding compliance with this policy and taking appropriate action to address breaches as necessary;
- Promoting and providing opportunities for members and other applicable parties to maintain and improve professional knowledge and development in the environmental health field; and
- Reviewing this policy on a scheduled basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

5. Code of Conduct Complaints

5.1. Receipt of Complaints

If a person alleges that a Director, member or other applicable party has failed to abide by this Code of Conduct, they must notify the President in writing of their complaint as soon as practicable. All complaints will be investigated by the Board of Directors.

If a complaint regarding an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct Policy is received, confirmation of receipt must be completed by the Executive Officer and the details of the complaint recorded in the Environmental Health Australia complaints register.

The Board will seek to investigate and resolve any complaints with sixty (60) days of receipt.

5.2. Confidentiality relating to Code of Conduct complaints

The Environmental Health Australia Executive shall have access to the register of complaints. Where a matter is identified as 'sensitive', access to that complaint may be restricted to the President and Executive Officer only, and this may be applied at their discretion or upon the request of the involved party.

5.3. Action required to address Code of Conduct Complaints

Once a Code of Conduct complaint has been appropriately received and acknowledged, the board (excluding the board member whom the complaint is in regards to, if applicable) must investigate the complaint and decide on the process to be taken to address the complaint.

This may include:

- Determining if Environmental Health Australia is the appropriate organisation to receive the complaint;
- Discussion as to whether the complaint is valid or requires further investigation or information from the complainant;
- Vote on the matter (this is a minimum).

Where a complaint is made against a current Director or Board member, the individual shall be excused from the investigation. Where a serious breach of the Code of Conduct is alleged, the individual, at the discretion of the Executive may be stood down from all duties associated with their position until the investigation has been completed and a resolution reached. Where a member of the Executive is the subject of the complaint an alternative process, determined by the remainder of the Board, will be undertaken or alternatively the complaint may be referred to an external party for investigation.

5.4. Considerations when deciding what action to take

In deciding what action to be taken, the board will consider:

- Whether the complaint is valid;
- The circumstances surrounding the receipt of the complaint;
- Whether it can be demonstrated on the balance of probabilities that the individual/s concerned intentionally or knowingly breached the Code of Conduct;
- If the individual/s should have reasonably known that the incident/ behaviour etc. would be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct;
- The individual/s position within the organisation;
- Any alternative options to address the complaint;
- The organisation's objectives and resources; and
- The possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the organisation.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the board (excluding any conflicted board member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting.

The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the complaints register. The complainant shall be advised of the outcome of any complaint investigation process, however it will be at the discretion of the Executive as to what detail in regards to the outcome is released.

6. Compliance with this policy

If the board has a reason to believe that a person subject to the policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances and take appropriate action.

If it is found that this person has failed to abide by the Code of Conduct, or has used their position in contravention of this policy or any associated organisational document, the board may take action against them. Based upon the seriousness of the breach the following actions may be taken (but are not limited to):

- Expulsion as a Director of the Board or as a member of the organisation;
- Termination of their relationship with the organisation where an existing formal or informal agreement is in place;
- Suspension as Director of the Board, associate or member of the organisation;
- A request to make representation disclosing full details of the circumstances of the complaint, if applicable, to the board explaining the reasons for the breach;
- An official warning;
- A recommendation for mediation between parties;

- Provision for conciliation between the complainant and the member; or
- Dismissal of the complaint.

Where potential criminal activity is identified the matter will be referred to the Police for investigation and all relevant details recorded by the Board.

7. Related documents

- [Environmental Health Australia Conflict of Interests](#)
- Environmental Health Australia Register of Interests

Responsible Officer

The President of Environmental Health Australia is responsible for the distribution and implementation of this policy. Enquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the responsible officer via email national@eh.org.au