

Employee Code of Conduct

NOTE: Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be obtained from the Policy Register on Council's intranet or by contacting Council's Corporate, Governance & Strategy Branch. **A hard copy of this electronic document is considered uncontrolled when printed.**

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

South Burnett Regional Council ('Council') conducts its business with integrity, honesty and fairness and complies with all relevant laws, legislation, codes, and corporate standards.

Everyone working for Council must follow the highest standards of behaviour when dealing with information, customers, and each other. Council employees must encourage a culture where ethical conduct is recognised, valued, and followed at all levels.

Council actively supports, encourages and develops its employees to work safely, be customer focused, use technology and Council assets effectively, adapt to change, improve their own capabilities and contribute to developing and achieving the objectives within Council's Corporate and Operational Plans.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council employees (including temporary and permanent employees), volunteers, work experience students, trainees, apprentices, and persons engaged through labour hire. This policy may also apply to contractors if stipulated in their contract.

All Council employees (regardless of their employment status, role or position – e.g., permanent, temporary, voluntary, casual or part-time employees, managers, supervisors, team leaders, team members or individuals) and contractors must be familiar with and follow the spirit and intent of the Employee Code of Conduct. Hereafter, referred to as Council employees.

The Code is concerned with Council employee conduct as public officials and behaviour as individuals at work and outside the workplace where particular behaviour may be directly related to Council and employment activities, and in other circumstances where actions may impact upon the reputation and activities of Council.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

Council's Vision: "The South Burnett... unique communities working together in a strong and vibrant region".

Council's Purpose: "South Burnett Regional Council...making a positive difference in people's lives through the quality of work we do".

A Code of Conduct ('Code') is a set of standards and behaviours related to the way Council employees do their work. It puts a responsibility on each Council employee to use sound judgement while at work.

It aims to deliver best practice by ensuring service standards are clear and guided by sound ethics. By consistently applying these standards, we enhance public trust and confidence in each Council employee.

The Code does not cover every situation. However, the values, ethics, standards, and behaviours are a reference point to help make decisions in situations it does not directly identify. If a Council employee acts in good faith and in keeping with the Code, the Council employee can reasonably expect to be supported by management.

The 'Good Decisions Resource' as provided by the Queensland Ombudsman can assist Council employees in situations not covered by the Code.

3.1. Legislative Principles & Council Corporate Values

The *Local Government Act 2009* ('Act') sets out the way in which a local government is constituted and the nature and extent of its responsibilities and powers. The Act requires that Council's actions are consistent with the following local government principles:

- a) transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest; and
- b) sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; and
- c) democratic representation, social inclusion, and meaningful community engagement; and
- d) good governance of, and by, local government; and
- e) ethical and legal behaviour of councillors, local government employees and councillor advisors.

These legislated principles, together with Council's corporate vision and purpose, form the basis of this policy and apply to all employees guiding our thinking, actions, and decision-making.

The corporate values we share as Council employees are:

- Honesty;
- Respect;
- Accountability;
- Integrity; and
- Unity.

The *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* identifies four (4) ethics principles fundamental to good public administration that guide our behaviour as public officials and forms the basis for a local government Code of Conduct. The four (4) principles are:

- integrity and impartiality;
- promoting the public good;
- commitment to the system of government; and
- accountability and transparency.

3.2. The First Principle: Integrity and Impartiality

3.2.1. Ethics Value

In recognition that public office involved a public trust, public service agencies, public sector entities and public officials seek to promote public confidence in the integrity of the public sector and –

- a) are committed to the highest ethical standards;
- b) accept and value their duty to provide advice, which is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial;
- c) show respect towards all persons, including employees, clients and the general public;
- d) acknowledge the primacy of the public interest and undertake that any conflict of interest issue will be resolved or appropriately managed in favour of the public interest; and
- e) are committed to honest, fair, and respectful engagement with the community.

Operationally, for you this requires the following standards of behaviour:

3.2.2. Conflicts of Interest

Council employees must consider the public interest when carrying out their official duties and place this above their own private or personal interests. This is achieved by carrying out all official duties in accordance with ethical principles outlined in this document, assessing their own private and personal interest to identify (and declare) any action, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, avoid situations which may arise to conflicts of interest and manage all conflicts of interest in accordance with Council policy.

Council employees should refer to Council's Employee Conflict of Interest Policy – Statutory048 for further information on how to report and manage conflict.

3.2.3. Good Decisions

Our community expects that Council will operate consistently and fairly and Council's suite of guidelines, policies and procedures ensure this can happen. Good decision-making lies at the heart of good administration and Council employees must ensure that information is identified and considered when making good decisions. It is important to recognise the *Human Rights Act 2019* when making decisions whilst at work.

You must not influence any person in an improper way with the aim to obtain personal advantage or favour. All decisions need to be, and be seen to be, fair and transparent. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including clear record-keeping, and documenting how decisions were made. You must not in any way misrepresent your qualifications, experience or expertise in any recruitment and selection process.

Refer to the '*Good Decisions Guide*' provided by the Queensland Ombudsman for further information about how to undertake good and ethical decisions and consider the 23 rights protected by the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

3.2.4. Gifts and Benefits

Whilst employed at Council you may be offered gifts and benefits that have the potential to affect, or be perceived to affect, the impartiality, integrity and objectivity that is necessary for employees to perform their duties effectively. It is not appropriate for Council employees to ask for or encourage the giving of any form of gift or benefit in connection with the performance of their duties. Some circumstances arise when Council employees may refuse, accept, or give a gift or benefit and Council employees should ensure they familiarise themselves with the specific requirements (prior to doing so).

Refer to Council's Gifts and Benefits Policy for further information.

3.2.5. Employment outside of Council (Secondary Employment)

Where a Council employee is wishing to undertake secondary employment (i.e., paid, unpaid, voluntary or hobby) outside their work with Council an application should be made prior to commencement of the secondary employment. An application will be assessed to ensure that no Conflict of Interest exists or develops, between secondary employment and official duties; that the secondary employment has no effect on the performance of your official duties including considerations for the effects from workplace health and safety and fatigue management; that the secondary employment does not involve use of Council resources (physical, technological or intellectual).

Pursuant to the Act, where you seek to be employed by more than one local government at the same time, approval of each of the local governments is required prior to you being appointed to the second position.

Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for secondary employment but is not obligated to provide it where a conflict of interest may occur.

Refer to Council's Application for Secondary Employment Form for further information.

3.2.6. Media Relations and Public Comments on Council Business

The Mayor is the official spokesperson for all Council responses or media interviews of organisational or regional significance. On a case-by-case basis, the Mayor may delegate to another to speak on behalf of Council. Executive Services team will field all enquiries and the Chief Executive Officer ('CEO') may authorise other officers to engage with the media on operational matters.

Council business can be topical, sensitive, and controversial and there is a process to be followed when making public comments. If you are asked to comment on any Council matter via the media or other public relations firms, you should contact Executive Services prior to making any statements. You must also ensure that to the extent you collect, handle, or give access to personal information, you comply with the "privacy principles" outlined under the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and Council's Information Privacy Policy.

The rights of Council employees to free speech are acknowledged. Where you feel the need to speak out in public on a political or social matter, it should be made clear that these are your personal views being expressed and these views do not represent the views of Council. Council employees making such comments should be mindful of the content and ensure there are no possible breaches of confidentiality.

This clause also applies to Council employees using social media including social networks, blogs, video/photo posting sites, forums, and online chat services. Examples of Social Media include but are not limited to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Council recognises that Council employees may wish to use social media in a personal capacity however, they should be aware they are personally responsible for content they publish on any form of social media and should take reasonable measures to ensure their personal comments cannot be mistaken for the official view of Council.

Confidential information regarding Council business and operations should not be shared with third parties (including but not limited to spouses and close relatives). If it comes to Council's attention that confidential information is shared on social media by third parties and the breach of confidentiality is able to be identified back to a Council employee, disciplinary action may be taken.

Furthermore, employees also need to be aware that insulting and threatening comments about Council or fellow Council employees sent from a Council employee's home and out of work hours may constitute serious misconduct and lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Refer to Council's Media Relations Policy – Strategic001 for further information.

3.2.7. Acceptable Requests Guidelines

The Acceptable Requests Guidelines Policy provides clear guidelines to Councillors and Council employees about the way in which a Councillor may ask a Council employee for information to carry out their responsibilities or ask the CEO to provide information, that the local government has access to, relating to the local government in accordance with Act. Council Policy sets out the relevant requirements and before responding you should:

Refer to Council's Acceptable Request Guidelines Policy – Statutory004 for further information.

3.2.8. External Activities

Council supports and is committed to ensuring all Council employees are free to engage in trade union, party-political, professional, interest group or charity activities of their choosing. However, you must make sure that your participation in such activities does not cause either a Conflict of Interest, and/or unduly restricts or interferes with the performance of your official duties with Council.

You must not allow your involvement in any external organisation to intrude upon your duty (as a Council employee) to give sound advice to Council that is objective, independent, apolitical, and impartial.

You are not to take part in political affairs whilst on duty. Council's Information Communication Technology ('ICT') systems, including internet access and email, Council newsletters and workplaces must not be used for political messages or circulating defamatory or disparaging remarks against individuals or groups.

If you comment publicly via any social platform be it social media, newspaper or other form of communications, in connection with external activities, you must make a clear distinction between your opinion as a member of the external organisation, and your opinion as a Council employee.

You must not use your role in Council, Council information or information gained in the course of your official duties as a Council employee, to advance your position or standing within an external organisation, nor for the benefit or promotion of an external organisation.

You must not provide Council information to members of other groups or related persons, except where this information is publicly available.

As a member of an external organisation, you need to be aware that participating in activities in the public arena, where you may be identified as a Council employee, can give a perception of a Conflict of Interest in some circumstances. Where such a situation arises, you must declare and manage the conflict in accordance with Policy.

3.2.9. Behaviour Toward Each Other

We value trust and must treat each other with respect, honesty, fairness, sensitivity, and dignity. Employees who supervise or manage other employees have an additional responsibility to model this kind of behaviour, and to ensure the people they supervise understand the standard of performance and behaviour that is expected of them at work and when dealing with ratepayers and the public generally.

Council values diversity, and expects all its employees, contractors, and volunteers to accommodate and respect different opinions and perspectives. You must not behave towards any other person in a way that could be perceived as intimidating, overbearing, or bullying, or that may constitute unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Effective teamwork is an essential part of a productive workplace culture. Each team member needs to work co-operatively with fellow Council employees and actively and willingly take part in team activities (e.g., meetings, training, Council functions).

3.2.10. Non-Discriminatory Workplace

Council is an equal opportunity employer and as such is proactive in ensuring its practices do not discriminate based on an attribute or based on a person's association with another person who maintains an attribute.

As a Council employee, you have a shared responsibility to ensure that discrimination is not part of our workplace or our practices in dealing with ratepayers and the public generally.

Examples of attributes could include but are not limited to:

Race/ethnicity, gender, origin, marital status, sexual preference/lawful sexual activity, age, disability/impairment (including infectious disease), physical features, pregnancy, family responsibilities, religious beliefs, political affiliation, breast feeding or gender identity.

If you witness discriminatory behaviour you have a positive obligation to report such actions to your Manager, or if such action involves your Supervisor or Manager, another senior officer. Cases of unlawful discrimination may lead to disciplinary action being taken against offending staff.

Refer to Council's Anti-Discrimination & Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy – Statutory037 for further information.

3.2.11. Sexual and other forms of Workplace Harassment

Council is committed to the prevention of any form of sexual harassment, victimisation, or other forms of bullying in the workplace, or at any place where work-related activities are performed, including at Council functions. This commitment applies to all employees in their relationships with each other, to applicants for employment at Council and to persons who have dealings with Council.

As a Council employee, it is expected that you proactively contribute to building a workplace free from sexual harassment, victimisation, and bullying. You have a responsibility to respect the rights of fellow Council employees, by not taking part in any action that may constitute harassment of any form, and in doing so you are supporting and promoting the achievement of equal employment opportunity.

Refer to Council's Anti-Discrimination & Equal Opportunity (EEO) Policy – Statutory037 for further information.

3.2.12. Domestic and Family Violence

Council is strongly committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. It is recognised that employees sometimes face difficult situations in their work and personal life, such as domestic and family violence, that may affect their attendance, performance at work or safety.

All Council employees have a responsibility to model Council's values, which includes behaving in a way that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence and supporting those who are affected by it.

Refer to Council's Domestic and Family Violence Policy – Statutory052 for further information.

3.3. The Second Principal: Promoting the Public Good

In recognition that the public sector is the mechanism through which the elected representatives deliver programs and services for the benefit of the people of Queensland, public service agencies, public sector entities and public officials –

- accept and value their duty to be responsive to both the requirements of government and to the public interest; and
- accept and value their duty to engage the community in developing and effecting official public sector priorities, policies, and decisions; and
- accept and value their duty to manage public resources effectively, efficiently, and economically; and
- value and seek to achieve excellence in service delivery; and
- value and seek to achieve enhanced integration of services to better service clients.

This requires the following standards of behaviour:

3.3.1. Customer Service and Personal Presentation

As a Council employee it is expected you will strive to provide excellent customer service. You must treat members of the public with respect and with honesty, fairness, sensitivity, and dignity.

All Council employees serve ratepayers directly or indirectly, and it is important to know how to deal comfortably and calmly with difficult situations and difficult people. You are expected to treat complaints from customers, ratepayers, and the community or fellow employees seriously and respond to constructive feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

Customers have a right to comment on or to complain to or about Council. Council expects its employees to show respect towards complainants. While you must make all reasonable efforts to help customers lodge complaints, if you think a situation is threatening or intimidating, you are entitled to withdraw. If in doubt, ask for help from a more experienced colleague or Manager. Council will support any employee who believes they are under threat from a member of the public.

Council's image can be impacted by the presentation of staff. Council requires its office-based employees to appear neat and tidy and maintain a professional business standard of dress (standard office attire). If you are unsure about what constitutes appropriate dress, please discuss this with your Manager or refer to Council's Uniform (Corporate and Field) Policy – Administrative 007,008.

Where you have been provided with Council uniforms, you are required to wear all components of the uniform without alteration (other than alterations designed to ensure a proper fit) and ensure that uniforms are clean and tidy. Field staff will be provided with personal protective clothing at Council's expense and this uniform must be worn in accordance with Council's Uniform (Corporate and Field) Policy – Administrative007,008.

3.3.2. Fairness to Suppliers

Council's contracting activities are regulated pursuant to the Act and the *Local Government Regulation 2012* ('Regulation'). Further, Council has established procedures and delegations of authority for various stages of procurement of goods and services which reflect the content of the

Regulation. You must comply with the relevant legislation and Council procedures when seeking suppliers for goods or services.

If you have been approved to be involved in offering contracts or buying goods and services from outside Council, you must be sure you have taken reasonable, fair and consistent steps to allow all potential suppliers to bid/tender for work.

Refer to Council's Procurement Policy Statutory007 for further information.

3.3.3. Public Money

You must maintain high standards of accountability if you collect and use public money.

You are not allowed to borrow or use Council money for private purposes. Council employees using Council money for the purpose of entertainment and/or hospitality expenditure on Council's behalf must do so strictly in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy – Statutory007.

3.3.4. Intellectual Property

Council expects its employees to ensure their actions do not breach or infringe the *Copyright Act 1968*, by unlawfully using the intellectual property of any individual or organisation (including Council).

You must respect the copyrights, trademarks and patents of suppliers and other organisations outside Council which includes that you do not reproduce or quote suppliers' material unless your license specifically allows it.

Similarly, you must not store or copy audio, video or image files, printed media, and software on Council assets without an appropriate license or approval. Where this is unclear you must seek written approval from the CEO or delegated officer before arranging to publish, disclose or reproduce any articles or materials as part of your official duties.

Any original work, invention, or product you have contributed to in association with your official duties as a Council employee remains the property of Council. Similarly, you must not publish or disclose any matters relating to Council's intellectual property without appropriate authority. This does not stop you from sharing with other organisations information relating to your official duties. However, if you do, and if you are unaware of whether such action may breach this Code, you must first seek clarification from your Manager.

3.3.5. Concern for the Environment

We all share the responsibility of protecting our natural environment, creating healthy surroundings for our community, and for managing the impacts of air, water, land, and noise pollution. This includes individual responsibility for our own actions (e.g., taking care in disposing of waste and using and storing chemicals, reducing energy consumption and waste in our workspaces where we can and applying high standards of environmental protection across the region).

In performing your duties at Council, you must ensure that you comply with your general environmental duty and where applicable, your duty to notify of environmental harm. Refer to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

3.4. The Third Principle: Commitment to the System of Government

In recognition that the public sector has a duty to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, Commonwealth and local government, public service agencies, public sector entities and public officials -

- accept and value their duty to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, the Commonwealth and local government; and
- are committed to effecting official public sector priorities, policies, and decisions professionally and impartially; and
- accept and value their duty to operate within the framework of Ministerial responsibility to government, the Parliament, and the community.

The above does not limit the responsibility of a public service agency, public sector entity or public official to act independently of government if the independence of the agency, entity or official is

required by legislation or government policy, or is a customary feature of the work of the agency, entity or official.

This requires the following standards of behaviour:

3.4.1. Acting within the Law

As a Council employee, you are expected to comply with applicable legislation, Awards, Certified Agreements, Council policies and local laws.

You have the right and responsibility to respectfully question how you do your work, particularly if you think there is an imminent risk to the safety of yourself or others, or there is a better way of doing something, or if you think a direction may be in breach of the law. When you have recorded your suggestion or concern you are required to work as directed by your team leader/supervisor/manager, except where there is an imminent risk to safety. If the matter cannot be resolved within the workgroup, it should be immediately referred to your Manager.

If you are charged with having committed any indictable offence, are subject to an indictable offence conviction, or are subject to a summary conviction, you should immediately report the circumstances to your Manager. All disclosures of this nature will remain confidential.

3.4.2. Delegations and Signing Documents on Behalf of Council

If you are requested to undertake an action on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, prior to exercising any power on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer you must ensure an appropriate delegation pursuant to State or Federal legislation exists that allows you to exercise the power.

The following persons are the only persons who may sign a document on behalf of Council:

- the Mayor; or
- a delegate of Council; or
- a Councillor or Council employee who is authorised, in writing, by Council or the Chief Executive Officer, to sign documents.

Refer to the Delegations Register for further information.

3.4.3. Raising Concerns

You have the right to comment on or raise concerns with your Manager about Council policies, practices, or priorities where they impact on your employment. However, you must do this in a reasonable and constructive way and take responsibility for your comments and views. Further, you must accept Council has the right to determine its policy, practices and priorities and you must comply with all reasonable and lawful instructions, whether or not you personally agree with a policy direction.

When raising complaints or grievances, employees are expected to act with honesty and in good faith. Complaints that are considered vexatious or frivolous will not be progressed. These types of complaints may be managed as acts of misconduct in accordance with the Council's Discipline Procedure.

3.4.4. Fraud and Corruption

Fraud includes unethical and illegal acts which are characterised by the intent to deceive. Corruption is a dishonest activity in which an employee of an entity acts contrary to the interests of the entity.

Council has zero tolerance for fraud and corruption and is committed to acting in the best interest of the community and upholding the principals of honesty, integrity, and transparency. You have an obligation to detect and prevent fraud and corruption, as well as report suspected fraud and corruption.

Refer to Council's Fraud and Corruption Prevention Management Policy – Statutory021 for further information.

3.4.5. Information Privacy

Council maintains information about individuals, businesses and commercial issues which is private, sensitive and which could be harmful to a person's interest if released. Council employees should

only access personal information and records that they require to perform their official Council duties. Council employees must ensure the collection, storage and use of personal information is carried out in accordance with the Privacy Principles outlined in the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

As a general rule you can maintain privacy by:

- not discussing work matters with persons not entitled to know such information;
- taking responsibility to safeguard confidential files and information;
- ensuring collected information is only used in a manner consistent with the purpose for which it was originally collected; and
- complying with Council's Information Privacy Policy – Statutory038 in relation to maintaining the privacy of personal information.

Refer to Council's Information Privacy Policy – Statutory038 for further information.

3.5 The Fourth Principle: Accountability and Transparency

In recognition that public trust in public office requires high standard of public administration, public service agencies, public sector entities and public officials -

- are committed to exercising proper diligence, care, and attention; and
- are committed to using public resources in an effective and accountable way; and
- are committed to managing information as openly as practicable within the legal framework; and
- value and seek to achieve high standards of public administration; and
- value and seek to innovate and continuously improve performance; and
- value and seek to operate within a framework of mutual obligation and shared responsibility between public services agencies, public sector entities and public officials.

This requires the following standards of behaviour:

3.5.1. Using Council's Physical Assets

Council's assets include property, plant, equipment, information systems, computing resources, goods, products and/or valuables (this includes surplus material, waste material and off-cuts).

If you are in charge of assets you must take good care of them while they are in your possession or use, and ensure they are used economically and efficiently. It is an offence to misuse or allow anyone else to use Council assets (including surplus material, waste material and off-cuts). You must make sure assets are secured against theft and properly stored, maintained, and repaired.

You must ensure that you use Council assets only for official Council business, unless written approval to do otherwise has been granted by your Manager, or a written contract of employment provides otherwise. If you use Council vehicles or a Council issued mobile phone, smart phone, or tablet for non-official purposes, you must ensure that your use is in accordance with Council's Computer, Internet, and Email Usage Policy – Strategic007. Council allows limited personal use of electronic mail and web browsing, limited personal use means use that is infrequent and brief, and is performed during your non-paid time, that is, before and after work or during meal breaks.

You must not store personal files on Council's Information Communication Technology assets e.g., computers and laptops etc. Any files stored on, or information accessed using Council assets, are discoverable by Council.

Upon the termination of your employment with Council, you must return all Council property (e.g., uniforms, security access cards, keys) and work-related documents prior to or on your last day of employment.

Refer to Council's Computer, Internet and Email Usage Policy – Strategic007 and Motor Vehicle Procedure – Procedure014 for further information.

3.5.2. Diligence, care, and attention

Council aims to conduct its business with integrity, honesty, and fairness and to achieve the highest standards in service delivery. You contribute to this aim by carrying out your duties honestly,

responsibly, in a conscientious manner and to the best of your ability. This includes:

- being punctual and not being absent from your workstation/location during work time without reason;
- giving priority to official duties over personal activities (other than emergencies) during work time;
- helping Council achieve its mission and goals by acting to improve systems and practices;
- conducting yourself in a way so others gain confidence and trust in the way Council does business;
- not allowing your conduct to distract or prevent others from working (e.g., wasting time chatting about personal matters and interrupting other staff);
- advising your Manager when you have spare capacity to take on additional duties; and
- not exposing Council to a judgment for damages against it, as a result of your negligence or breach of any law or policy.

If you are responsible for managing or supervising others, you must also ensure that:

- you model the values and principles outlined in this Code and ensure that employees within your area of responsibility understand and comply with the Code;
- you do not come under a financial obligation to any Council employee you supervise or manage;
- your work and the work of those you supervise contributes to the achievement of Council's vision;
- Council employee performance is monitored, and individuals are given constructive and regular feedback on their performance in line with policies and procedures;
- where practicable, Council employees are given training opportunities to assist them in developing their careers within Council;
- employees are provided with information that is vital for effective work performance;
- the opinions of Council employees are respected and considered;
- workloads are fairly distributed and reasonable work allocation is provided to ensure full work time occupancy;
- resourcing for a work team is neither excessive nor inadequate for the job;
- Council employees who collect, handle, or disburse public money are properly supervised;
- employee work times, overtime, allowances, and absences are correctly recorded on timesheets and pay summary reports; and
- the appropriate action is taken if breaches of this Code occur.

3.5.3. Attendance at and Absence from Duty

You are expected to follow Council employment and working arrangements, certified agreements and adhere to reasonable expectations relating to attendance at work and leave. This includes not being absent without approval and accurately and truthfully recording work and leave periods.

Council's operational efficiency depends on your punctuality and attendance at your work location (office, depot, or worksite). If you are unavoidably detained advise your supervisor/ manager as soon as reasonably possible before your expected start time.

Absence without approval and without reasonable excuse can create concerns for your safety and lead to unproductive time for others. All employees have an obligation to ensure they promptly notify Council as soon as possible upon becoming aware they are going to be absent from work. Failure to promptly notify Council may result in the non-payment of salary/wages for the period of absence and/or may result in Council taking disciplinary action.

3.5.4. Self-Development

All Local Government employees have an obligation to be proactive in the continual improvement of all aspects of their work performance. You should aim to maintain and improve your work performance and that of your work unit in the delivery of customer service. You have a continuing responsibility to maintain and enhance your skills and expertise and keep up to date with the knowledge associated with your area of work.

Council will assist you by providing equitable access to training and development opportunities. This may include accessing the educational assistance program, learning new work duties, participating in project work, or undertaking internal or external training.

Refer to Council's Learning and Development Policy – Strategic013 for further information.

3.5.5. Workplace Health and Safety

As Council employees we are all committed to zero harm in the way we conduct our business and Council activities. Council will endeavour to ensure that persons are free from:

- death, injury, or illness caused by the workplace, relevant workplace area, work activities, or plant or substances for use at work; and
- the risk of death, injury or illness caused by the workplace, relevant workplace area, work activities, or plant or substances for use at work.

You must take reasonable steps to ensure your own safety, health and welfare in the workplace as well as have a duty of care to fellow employees and members of the public. As a worker you have obligations to comply with in relation to Workplace Health and Safety, this includes complying to the Workplace Health and Safety Policy and all associated policies, procedures, guidelines, manuals, and safe work method statements.

3.6. Breaches of the Code

Council expects all Council employees whilst engaged in Council duties to ensure they demonstrate the basic standards of acceptable conduct as stated in this Code. All Council employees have the responsibility to comply with this Code of Conduct and all other policies which Council implements and/or varies from time to time.

A breach of this policy damages business effectiveness, public perception of Council and interpersonal work relationships. Any act or lack of action by a Council employee that contravenes this Code may result in Council taking disciplinary action against that Council employee, up to and including summary dismissal. All suspected breaches will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In cases where a suspected breach of this Code is under investigation, and if the Chief Executive Officer deems it appropriate, any employee suspected of a breach of this Code may be suspended from duty on full pay until the investigation has been completed.

3.7. Information about Employee Conduct

Council aims to create a work environment where Council employees understand and maintain appropriate standards of conduct. You have the right to make a Public Interest Disclosure to a proper authority subject to, and in accordance with, the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010* and Council's Public Interest Disclosure Policy, where you honestly believe on reasonable grounds that you possess information about another Council employee's conduct that relates to:

- official misconduct; or
- maladministration; or
- a substantial misuse of public resources, other than an alleged misuse based on mere disagreement over policy that may properly be adopted about amounts, purposes, or priorities of expenditure; or
- a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or
- a substantial and specific danger to the environment.

After reading the Code of Conduct, if you are still unsure of how it applies to you, it is important that you discuss this with your supervisor/manager. In most cases, they will be able to assist with your enquiry. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the People and Culture Branch.

4. DEFINITIONS

Conflict of Interest means a conflict between a Council employee's duties and responsibilities and the Council employee's private interests. Conflicts can be actual, perceived or potential depending on the circumstances. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage – whether financial or otherwise.

Council employee means to members of staff who are employed on a permanent, part-time, fixed term or casual basis under award and enterprise bargaining agreement conditions. It also includes senior staff, contractors, consultants, and volunteers.

Maladministration means administrative action that was taken contrary to the law, was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory, or was in accordance with a rule of law or a provision of an Act or a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstances, or was taken for an improper purpose, or on irrelevant grounds, or having regard to irrelevant considerations, or was an action for which reasons should have been given, but were not given, or was based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact, or was wrong.

Official Misconduct means conduct that could, if proved be a criminal offence, or a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating a Council Employee's services.

5. LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)

Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 (Qld)

Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld)

Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)

Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)

Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Queensland Ombudsman "Good Decisions Resource" (available on the Queensland Ombudsman website)

South Burnett Regional Council Acceptable Requests Guidelines Policy – Statutory004

South Burnett Regional Council Anti-Discrimination and EEO Policy – Statutory053

South Burnett Regional Council Complaint and Grievance Procedure – Procedure057

South Burnett Regional Council Computer, Internet, and Email Usage Policy – Strategic007

South Burnett Regional Council Drug and Alcohol Policy – Administrative004

South Burnett Regional Council Learning and Development Guidelines – Procedure005

South Burnett Regional Council Discipline Procedure – Procedure009

South Burnett Regional Council Employee Conflict of Interest Policy – Statutory048

South Burnett Regional Council Fitness for Work Policy – Strategic018

South Burnett Regional Council Gifts and Benefits Policy – Strategic002

South Burnett Regional Council Information Privacy Policy – Statutory038

South Burnett Regional Council Media Relations Policy – Strategic001

South Burnett Regional Council Procurement Policy – Statutory007

South Burnett Regional Council Uniform (Corporate and Field) Policy – Administrative007, 008

South Burnett Regional Council Workplace Health and Safety Policy – Statutory015

7. NEXT REVIEW

As prescribed by legislation or August 2023

8. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Revision Description	Adopted Date	ECM Reference
1	Development of Policy	23 September 2004	170919
2	Review of Policy	11 November 2009	792528
3	Review of Policy	25 August 2010	911890
4	Review of Policy	19 February 2013	1112607
5	Review of Policy – Resolution 2021/97	25 August 2021	1112607
6	Administrative amendment – organisational structure review – resolution 2022/432	27 April 2022	1112607


Mark Pitt PSM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date: 27 April 2022

