



Statement of Business Ethics



Introduction

Georges River Council regularly conducts business with the private, public and not-for-profit sectors to deliver a range of services to the community. When interacting with these businesses, Council has a responsibility to achieve the best possible outcomes in the interests of the community. These include ensuring our business relationships are honest, ethical, fair and consistent. While working with Council, we expect individuals and organisations to share these same responsibilities.

Council's Statement of Business Ethics provides guidance for all sectors of the community when conducting business with Council, and explains the mutual obligations of all parties.

What to expect from us

Council staff members are bound by Council's Code of Conduct, policies and its Corporate Mission and Values.

As part of the Code of Conduct, staff are expected to:

- Use public resources effectively and efficiently
- Act fairly, honestly and ethically
- Disclose actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Not seek or accept gifts or benefits for performing official duties
- Protect personal, confidential and proprietary information
- Document all work to provide an effective audit trail

What we ask of you

We require anyone doing business with Council including members of the public, applicants, lobbyists, suppliers, volunteers, consultants and contractors to observe the following standards of ethical behaviour:

- Act ethically, honestly and with integrity and openness in all dealings with Council
- Declare actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Be aware and comply with legislation, Council policies and procedures, and contracts
- Respect the obligations of Councillors and staff to abide by Council's Code of Conduct
- To report any wrongdoing in our business relationships
- Refrain from engaging in any form of collusive practice or offering Council officials inducements or incentives including gifts and benefits
- Provide accurate and reliable information to Council when required
- Prevent the disclosure of confidential information
- Not discuss Council dealings with the media
- Maintain records of all dealings with Council



Practical Guidelines

Gifts and Benefits

Gifts and benefits must not be offered to any Council official. If a gift or benefit is offered to a Council official in the course of their work, they must decline the gift and report it in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.

Conflicts of Interest and disclosure

Our customers, suppliers and employees need to be confident that all decisions made by Council are impartial. All Council officials are required to avoid conflicts of interest and to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Council extends this requirement to our business partners, contractors and suppliers. Refer to Council's Code of Conduct, which outlines requirements for disclosure for Council officials

Lobbying

Lobbying is an acceptable part of the democratic process. However, it is not acceptable if it undermines public confidence in impartial decision-making and falls outside the bounds of appropriate and lawful behaviour. Generally, inappropriate or unlawful conduct on the part of someone lobbying a councillor usually involves an attempt to obtain preferential consideration or treatment based on factors other than the merits of a matter. Refer to Council's Code of Conduct, for more information.

Contractors and Sub-Contractors

Our suppliers are to ensure that all their employees as well as their sub-contractors working on Council business are made aware of, and comply with this statement.

Intellectual property rights

In business relationships with Council, parties are expected to respect each other's intellectual property rights, and formally negotiate any access, licence or use of intellectual property.

Workplace safety

Council takes workplace safety seriously. It is expected all parties who do business with Council comply with all legislative and procedural safety requirements.

Confidentiality

All confidential information should be treated as such and should not be revealed to persons other than those with permission. Suppliers handling private information on behalf of Council are expected to adhere to Council's Privacy Management Plan.

Secondary and post-separation employment

All staff members have a duty to maintain public trust and confidence, and to not disclose confidential information obtained during the course of their employment or to facilitate future employment opportunities.

Sponsorship

Council representatives should not seek or receive a personal benefit or be perceived to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship agreement. Further, Council will not seek, accept or provide sponsorship to an organisation if the sponsorship arrangement could compromise, or be seen to compromise, Council's ability to exercise its regulatory and planning functions.

Refer to Council's Sponsorship and Donations Policy, for more information.

Political donations

The law requires that persons with a financial interest in, or who have made a submission in relation to, a Development Application, or a planning instrument, disclose certain information about political donations and other gifts that have been made to a Councillor or a Council employee within the previous two years of the application or submission.

Communication

All communication between parties should be made in a clear and cordial manner to minimise the risk of perception of inappropriate influence.

Use of Council's Equipment, Resources and Information

All Council equipment, resources and information should only be used for its proper official purpose.

Why Comply with this Statement?

You should be aware of the consequences of not complying with Council's ethical requirements when doing business with us. Non-compliance with Council's ethical requirements may lead to:

- Termination of contracts
- Loss of future work
- Investigation for corruption
- Matters being referred for criminal investigation
- Damage to reputation

Council officials who do not comply with this statement will be considered in breach of Council's Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Conduct.

Who to Contact

To report wrongdoing, breaches of this Statement or to get advice you can contact:

Internal

Manager Governance and Risk Management
02 9330 6400

External

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)
02 8281 5999
NSW Ombudsman 02 9286 1000
Office of Local Government 02 4428 4100



Additional Information

For further information regarding the policies mentioned in this Statement, please refer to Council's policy page at www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Governance/Codes-Policies-and-Registers. Alternatively, you can contact Council 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 9330 6400.