

## CODE OF CONDUCT



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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Purpose

The purpose of this code of conduct is to give effect to the company policies of Reef Check Australia including the governance and compliance policy.

This procedure describes the standards and processes for the identification and resolution of issues concerning ethical conduct of individuals within RCA. We seek to:

- Maintain appropriate standards of conduct
- Maintain fairness in decision making
- Maintain and enhance the reputation of RCA
- Adhere to appropriate ethical standards

### Application

This procedure applies to all persons working and volunteering with RCA, including our employees and volunteers.

In addition, individuals who are granted access to RCA facilities, who engage in our activities on a recreational basis, or who are engaged in providing services to RCA, such as contractors and consultants, are also expected to comply with applicable provisions of the Code.

The obligations contained in this procedure define the standards of conduct required by all individuals.

### Expected standards of behavior

The personal and professional behaviour of people engaging with RCA should conform to the standards that reasonably could be expected of persons in such roles. This applies both while working or otherwise participating with RCA and at all times that may impact upon RCA.

This includes:

- a commitment to professional standards in research, administration and community involvement
- a commitment to ethical standards
- the promotion of the rights all persons within RCA
- conduct which is professional and which has regard to RCA's interests, purposes and policies
- conduct which will not compromise either their position or RCA's position
- a commitment to encouraging the appropriate reporting of wrongdoing
- the promotion of an environment that supports the purposes of RCA as a charity



The Code operates in conjunction with common and statute law and does not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of any individual under common and statute law. At any time, all persons can lodge a complaint with an external agency where appropriate.

### **Adherence to RCA management systems**

In all activities for RCA, and in all dealings with RCA employees, volunteers and other persons working or engaging with RCA, and the community, individuals will be guided by RCA's core values, strategic plans, written agreements, management system (including policies and procedures) and the public good.

### **Commitment to legal compliance**

All individuals have an obligation to uphold the system of government, observe the State and Commonwealth laws. In addition, they have an obligation when travelling abroad to respect and abide by the customs and laws of the host country.

### **Respect, Integrity and impartiality**

All individuals working with RCA are placed in a position of trust and are expected to be honest, fair and impartial when carrying out their duties to maintain public confidence in the RCA, act in good faith and show respect towards all persons.

The conduct of individuals in their dealings with others including employees, volunteers (trained and recreational), external organisations and members is paramount. RCA supports the principles of procedural fairness and values social justice, equal opportunity and the provision of a safe and supportive working environment, and as such all individuals are expected to treat others fairly, honestly and responsibly, and with proper regard for their rights and obligations.

All individuals are expected to respect others including without limitation:

- promote a high standard of respect for all employees, volunteers, contractors and the general community;
  - treat others with courtesy and fairness;
  - be responsive and prompt in dealing with others;
  - when supervising others, create a fair and just working environment;
  - observe procedural fairness when engaged in decision making;
  - not engage in unlawful discriminatory or related conduct on grounds such as gender, gender identity, sex characteristics, sexuality, lawful sexual activity, sex work activity, relationship status, pregnancy, parental status, family responsibilities, breastfeeding, race, disability or impairment, appearance, cultural background, religion, age or political conviction, trade union activity, or association with others on the basis of these grounds;
  - not engage in behaviour which may reasonably be perceived as workplace bullying or harassment, intimidation, vilification or victimisation, including include sexual harassment or sex or gender based harassment or creating a hostile working environment;
- have respect for cultural differences; and



- respect the privacy of others in the collection, use and access of personal information whilst performing RCA duties or activities.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Individuals involved with RCA must avoid situations in which their private interests, whether pecuniary, personal or otherwise, might reasonably be thought to create a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest with their duties to RCA. There is an expectation that individuals must identify, declare and manage perceived, potential or actual conflicts.

Any matter that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of duties, or conflict with RCA's interests must be immediately declared to RCA management or the Board in the first instance and steps taken to resolve the conflict situation.

Where an individual is unsure about the potential for a conflict, they should discuss the situation with management or the Board as appropriate. Where doubt exists, the conflict of interest must be declared. Where there is a clear case of conflict, the individual must withdraw from the situation giving rise to the conflict.

Situations that may generate a conflict can arise out of:

- personal/sexual relationships with others
- personal/sexual relationships with persons with whom RCA is dealing, for example contractors or tenderers
- personal financial interests in matters which involve RCA
- outside employment or roles that may compromise the integrity of RCA
- use of confidential information obtained in the course of RCA duties
- external activities and public comment, i.e. nominating for and contesting political elections.

Where an individual has a concern regarding a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest involving other members of the RCA community, this should be reported to management or the board, where appropriate.

### **Privacy and confidentiality**

Individuals must respect the privacy of others and ensure that personal information is accessed and used only for RCA purposes and not disclosed except where authorised by legislation. Individuals must also respect the confidentiality of RCA confidential information related to the business.

Individuals who have access to such information have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of such information, irrespective of the storage medium. Any actual or suspected misuse of information must be reported to management or the board.



### **Receipt of benefits**

Individuals should discourage the receipt of any gifts or benefits in connection with their work or position except where this may arise in an official capacity. In this case, all such gifts or benefits with a value in excess of \$100 must be disclosed to the board.

Individuals must disclose to RCA any financial interest they may have in any organisation from which RCA proposes to obtain services or equipment or enter into any contract which would result in a financial transaction.

Individuals must ensure that where contracts are proposed through their area of expertise with external organisations, that any relevant close personal relationship must be disclosed.

### **Public comment**

Public comment by individuals in their capacity as private citizens is permitted provided that any such comment makes it clear that the view expressed is their own and not necessarily the view of RCA. Where public comments are offered by research workers it is expected that such comment will normally lie within their field of expertise. Public comment on any RCA management issue must be made by Management or a person authorised by Management. Comment on matters concerning the Board must be made only by the Board Chair or person authorised by the Board Chair.

### **Research conduct**

Individuals undertaking or assisting research should do so in a manner consistent with intellectual honesty and the public interest. Research should be designed to enhance knowledge in the particular field of scholarship, it should employ sound methodology, and the accuracy and integrity of data should be safeguarded. Harm to experimental subjects must be avoided, and the ethical principle of voluntary informed consent to research participation by human subjects must be respected. The ideas, information or intellectual contribution of others must be acknowledged appropriately and the intellectual property of others respected.

### **Promoting the public good**

Individuals have an obligation to deliver programs and services of the highest quality to advance the good of RCA. It Individuals must exercise proper care and attention in performing their duties, to carry out their duties to the best of their ability and ensure that RCA resources are used economically and efficiently.

### **Carrying out of duties and standards of performance**

All individuals will, where reasonably practicable and applicable to their activities:

- carry out activities faithfully and impartially
- seek high standards in research, community service, administration and governance
- create a safe and healthy work environment
- adhere to professional codes of conduct where applicable
- report fraudulent or corrupt conduct appropriately

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- act within the limits of their delegated authority
- take reasonable steps to protect confidential information
- take reasonable steps to ensure compliance with RCA's intellectual property procedures
- give due credit to the contributions of others
- supervise and assess other's work fairly and objectively
- maintain their professional skills and keep up to date in their area of expertise
- ensure they are informed of RCA management system requirements including relevant policies and procedures
- value and seek to achieve excellence in service delivery

### **Duty of care**

Proper care and attention should be exercised when undertaking activities, in particular where others will rely on the advice or information offered.

Individuals have a duty to take reasonable care and to avoid causing harm to others and must follow safe working practices and actively promote safe and healthy conditions. Managers are responsible for ensuring that activities within their areas are undertaken with due diligence for health and safety of others.

### **RCA resources**

Individuals have a responsibility to ensure that RCA resources are used efficiently and effectively and for legitimate purposes and waste should be avoided.

Email and internet activity by individuals must be conducted in a professional manner for legitimate RCA business and with due regard and respect for other persons. It is recognised that individuals occasionally may need to use RCA resources for private purposes, e.g. making the occasional telephone call. Individuals must ensure such use is kept to a minimum.

Individuals must comply with RCA financial procedures for financial and asset management.

Equipment and materials should be treated with care and secured against theft.  
Individuals must at all times act within the limits of their delegated authority.

### **Alcohol / drug abuse**

Individuals must ensure that personal use of alcohol or other drugs does not affect the performance of their duties or the safety and well-being of others. See additional procedures documents for specific activities.

### **Reporting breaches, grievances or any other non-compliance with this code**

The Code outlines the standards of behaviour of persons engaging with RCA in all capacities and also forms part of each employee and volunteer's conditions of agreement with RCA and contractor's engagements.



Where any individual is aware of or suspects a breach of this Code, they are encouraged to immediately report the breach to senior management or the board. The individual is able to withdraw the Complaint. However, RCA may be required to investigate as required by legislation. We will take all reports seriously and will investigate and respond appropriately.

Failure to comply with the Code's provisions will be managed and dealt with fairly but in accordance with law or contractual provisions as applicable. A failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action including potential termination of relationships with RCA or having rights of access to RCA services, facilities or infrastructure revoked.

Some breaches may also have consequences for individuals under criminal or civil jurisdictions.

RCA may take action against a person(s) making a frivolous or vexatious Complaint. Any person found to have made a frivolous or vexatious complaint may be found to be in breach of this procedure.

### **Complaints and Whistleblowing**

RCA encourages the reporting of complaints and any wrongdoing or integrity issue. Complaints may be made to Company Secretary and or any member of the Board or General Manager. Complaints may be made in anyway including anonymously. We will also publish this process for making complaints via the RCA website.

RCA will comply with whistleblowing protection requirements in the *Corporations Act* and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons who are eligible whistleblowers in relation to any complaints have identity and confidentiality protected and are not subject to unlawful victimisation or reprisals by reason of making complaints.

Complaints will be addressed with due regard to principles of procedural fairness in accordance with our commitment to ensuring integrity in our operations and compliance with all legal obligations.

### **Further information**

Further information on the requirements of this standard can be sought from General Management [Jodi@reefcheckaustralia.org](mailto:Jodi@reefcheckaustralia.org), or Company Secretary. Company secretary contact details are [fiona@reefcheckaustralia.org](mailto:fiona@reefcheckaustralia.org) or telephone 0477979575.