



ELECTORAL CODE OF CONDUCT



Shire of Narembeen

Electoral Code of Conduct

Introduction

This code of conduct contains the principles and standards we are to apply in performing electoral officer duties.

Elections are the very foundation of our democratic society and vigilance is required in preserving the integrity of the electoral process.

Elections can also be an emotional experience for winning and losing candidates and a fertile area for disputation if cause exists. All candidates are entitled to expect that we will so conduct ourselves as to ensure the election outcome is a true expression of the will of the electorate.

An election is also an opportunity for personal contact with a big number of the Shire's customers. Casting a vote will be one of the few direct contacts some will have with the Shire during the course of the year. Our goal should be to project an image of professionalism, impartiality and friendliness.

The charter for this Code of Conduct is contained in Elections Regulation 8, which provides -

“8. (1) *This regulation applies to the ordinary elections to be held in 1999 and to each subsequent election.*

(2) *The RO for any election to which this regulation applies is to prepare or adopt an electoral code of conduct for the election that aims to ensure that all electoral officers, act –*

- a) lawfully;*
- b) professionally;*
- c) fairly and impartially;*
- d) with honesty and integrity; and*
- e) without any conflict of interest, in relation to the election.*

(3) *The RO is to provide each electoral officer with a copy of, or access to a copy of, the electoral code of conduct.*

(4) *An electoral officer is to observe and comply with the electoral code of conduct.”*

This Code of Conduct is a living document in that it will be examined by us each year to ensure that the guidance contained therein remains relevant and attuned to on-the-job experiences. Your contribution to this on-going review will be appreciated and in the interim, do not hesitate to raise, either directly with the RO or through an appropriate forum, ethical issues impacting on our role as electoral officers.

Our Commitment

Act Lawfully

We will –

- complete the Form 1 declaration before acting
- prepare so that we are familiar with the Act and Regulations, and the duties expected of us : ask questions so that uncertainties are resolved before election day
- exercise care in carrying out duties and making decisions: penalties for electoral offences are high
- abide by the detail of the Act, Regulations, and instructions issued, in performing all duties
- maintain surveillance to ensure security of election papers and secrecy of the ballot
- report offences to the appropriate authority.

We will not -

- make improper use of official information for the gain or detriment of any person, or falsify reports.

Act Professionally

We will –

- dress in a manner which depicts the professional position we hold
- open on time
- behave in a consistently ethical, competent and reliable manner
- be familiar with the Local Government Act and Regulations
- obey promptly any lawful instruction of a supervising officer
- assist and cooperate with other staff
- observe “no smoking” policies of the Shire

Act Fairly and Impartially

We will –

- act impartially to serve the common good, while recognising that equity can involve treating people differently according to their circumstances
- be polite and sensitive to customer needs : explain the reason for decisions
- be alert to any attempt by candidates/scrutineers to gain an unfair advantage : report any questionable activities in this regard to the appropriate authority
- refrain from making comments of a party political nature, or about candidates or local referendum issues, or policies of the Council.

We will not –

- solicit or accept gifts, fees, favours or remuneration of any kind, from a candidate or person assisting a candidate.

Act with Honesty and Integrity

We will –

- advise if we cannot allow a vote, and why
- have available a supply of Enrolment Eligibility Claim forms
- invite aggrieved persons to exercise their rights of appeal or complaint
- explain processes and procedures

Duty of Care

As electoral officers we must exercise a duty of care in order to fulfil our obligations effectively and without causing harm. Such a duty of care includes -

- ensuring the efficient and effective use of the resources placed at our disposal
- being accountable for the use of those resources; and
- setting an example by supporting and monitoring ethical behaviour.

Act with No Conflict of Interest

Electoral officers are to act without conflict of interest.

Generally, a conflict of interest exists if the relationship between a prospective electoral officer and a candidate is such as could influence, or be seen by others to influence, the partiality with which electoral provisions are administered.

Examples of “closely associated” relationships an officer could have to a candidate where a conflict of interest might arise include:

- A spouse (includes defacto) of the candidate
- A parent of a candidate
- A close relative of a candidate
- A partner of a candidate
- An employee of a candidate
- A trustee, if a candidate is a beneficiary
- Associated through his/her spouse who is living with the officer and is –
 - (a) parent of a candidate living with them
 - (b) partner of a candidate
 - (c) an employee of a candidate or
 - (d) a trustee, if a candidate is a beneficiary

If any officer has such a “close association” or is the director of a company associated with a candidate they must disclose the relevant detail to the RO and accept that person’s judgment as to whether or not the ‘interest’ should preclude their engagement as an electoral officer.