



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

Policy Name:	Code of Conduct		
Distribution:	All Workers	Document No:	CA-PC-POL-002-v2.0
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Issued/Updated by:	People & Culture	Approved by:	National Council

1. Purpose

Guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teachings as reflected in our Mission, this Code of Conduct describes the standards of conduct and behavior expected of Caritas Australia staff, volunteers, contractors and anyone providing services to Caritas Australia.

The Code of Conduct provides a shared understanding and expectation of the way we behave as individuals, towards each other, those we serve, our partners, donors and supporters.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and anyone providing services to Caritas Australia (All Workers). All the aforementioned are required to meet professional and ethical standards of behaviour and act in accordance with the mission, vision and values of the Australian Episcopal Conference of the Roman Catholic Church (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference) and its agency, Caritas Australia.

The foundations of Caritas Australia's working environment are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel values. The following Catholic Social Teaching principles are intrinsic to all aspects of the work activities of Caritas Australia:

- **Dignity of the human person:** We believe that every person is created in God's image and that all human life is sacred. We believe in the dignity of each person.
- **The common good:** We believe in working towards the common good and looking beyond our own personal interest.
- **Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable:** We believe in prioritising the women, men and children most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.
- **Solidarity:** We believe we are part of one human family and have a responsibility to help each person achieve their full potential.
- **Participation:** We believe that every person can be the architect of change in their own life.
- **Subsidiarity:** We believe in every person's right to participate in the decisions that affect their own lives.
- **Stewardship of Creation:** We believe that stewardship of the Earth's resources is vital for the common good of people.

- **The Promotion of Peace:** We believe in promoting peace through right relationships that embody respect, justice and collaboration.
- **Economic Justice:** We believe that everyone has the right to access the means to support themselves and their family.

3. Code Details

The Code requires all Workers to adhere to the standards set out below.

The standards in this Code also apply to social activities or interactions on social media that take place outside work premises if the identity of the person as an employee of Caritas Australia can be linked or inferred and where the activities or comments may have a detrimental financial or reputational impact on Caritas Australia.

All Workers are responsible for applying and complying with this Code of Conduct. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the Workers whom they supervise and/or are responsible for are aware of, and understand their responsibility under the Code.

All Workers are expected to always:

- Operate with integrity, honesty and respect for each other
- Treat supporters and other members of the public with courtesy and sensitivity
- Comply with legislative, industrial and Caritas Australia requirements
- Operate in a safe and responsible manner
- Preserve the environment from harm

3.1 Professionalism

All Workers are required to comply with this Code of Conduct and maintain professional and ethical behaviour at all times. The following provides a guide to those professional and ethical standards.

You must respect the dignity, rights and views of others by:

- listening to and seeking to understand different points of view (this does not necessarily mean agreeing with the point of view);
- refraining from all forms of discrimination as required under federal and state legislation;
- not exploiting, abusing, harassing, bullying, intimidating, or acting in a way that is contrary to maintaining harmonious relationships;
- respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences both in Australia and in the countries in which Caritas Australia works and conducts programs;
- upholding Caritas Australia's reputation overseas by respecting the law of the host country, cultural awareness and sensitivity, and appropriate personal behavior
- appreciating the genuine contributions that others make in meeting Caritas Australia's mission;
- expressing constructive feedback that is considerate and moderate in its tone;

- being courteous, sensitive, and considerate to the needs of others;
- being honest in communications;
- actively managing workplace conflict involving yourself or Workers under your supervision to create positive and constructive outcomes; and
- working co-operatively and collaboratively with others to achieve common goals and promote a positive work environment.

3.2 Ethics

You will perform any duties associated with your position diligently, impartially and conscientiously, to the best of your ability. You will:

- keep up to date with advances and changes in the body of knowledge and the professional and ethical standards relevant to your area of expertise;
- carry out your duties diligently and efficiently, exercise care, responsibility and sound judgment;
- ensure procedural fairness is followed in all processes;
- undertake to be mentally and physically fit to carry out your work responsibilities at all times, refrain from carrying out your duties if under the influence of alcohol, any illegal substance, or any drug which impairs your performance or poses a safety risk to yourself or others;
- understand responsibilities and obligations under Work Health & Safety legislation and be proactive in ensuring that the workplace is safe and secure from risks to health and safety and report any incidents, hazards or near misses which you become aware of;
- not tolerate or ignore dishonest behaviour by colleagues or others; and report instances of this sort of behavior through the standard processes;
- not take or seek to take improper advantage of any official information gained in the course of employment;
- not take improper advantage of your position to benefit yourself or others; and
- not allow personal political views/affiliations or other personal interests to detrimentally influence the performance of your duties or exercise of responsibilities;
- if professionally registered, observe all laws, professional codes of conduct and ethics relating to your professional memberships;
- not use Caritas Australia's internet and email resources for accessing, transmitting, storing or downloading pornographic, sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate material.

3.3 Safeguarding

Caritas Australia is committed to maintaining a culture of safe and protective environments for all, including our staff, volunteers, contractors, partners and the communities and individuals we work with, particularly those most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse or exclusion.

Caritas Australia has a zero tolerance approach to any form of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment including any form of child abuse.

All Workers are required to sign the Caritas Australia Child Protection Code of Conduct, and comply with the Code and the Child Protection Policy Statement, Procedures and Guidelines and any other policies and procedures that relate to safeguarding.

Allegations of any form of exploitation, abuse or harassment will be dealt with through the appropriate Caritas Australia Policies or Procedures and will be reported to the Police and/or other relevant authorities.

3.4 Acceptance and /or Giving of Gifts or Benefits

It is expected that you will never solicit any gifts or benefits. Nor should you accept gifts or benefits either for yourself or for another person which might in any way, either directly or indirectly, compromise or influence you in your professional capacity.

Gifts of a nominal value generally used for promotional purposes or moderate acts of hospitality offered as a genuine “thank you” by a supporter or partner may be accepted by you as long as they have not been solicited. It is recognised that such gifts are often intended for Caritas Australia and not a specific individual and such gifts should be handed to your Head of Team or Manager to accept on behalf of the Agency.

Gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase, provide information or treat favourably are not acceptable regardless of their monetary value. Examples of inducement include a recruitment agency offering theatre tickets for each temporary person employed. Gifts such as a Christmas hamper for work allocated to a consultant should be shared or, if a singular gift (such as a box of chocolates) should be made available for consumption at a work function. Consideration should also be given to donating such gifts to charity.

3.5 Confidentiality

Preserving confidential business information is vital to protect the interests of Caritas Australia, its Workers and stakeholders. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Computer processes and data
- Computer programs and codes
- Supporter databases and lists
- Donor information including addresses and donations received
- Internal financial information on Caritas Australia, its supporters, or partners
- Marketing strategies and data
- All forms of internal communication

All Workers are required to comply with Caritas Australia’s confidentiality statement as a condition of employment. Even where this statement is not specifically and separately prepared and signed, the condition remains enforceable for all staff members. It also forms part of their conditions of employment and the business ethics at Caritas Australia. Volunteers are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and a clause regarding confidentiality is included in the Independent Contractor Agreement for contractors. Workers with access to sensitive information, such as donor information, are also required to sign a Non-Solicitation Agreement upon employment.

Employees who disclose confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action which may include termination of employment or engagement. In addition, where any ‘reasonable doubt’ exists, Caritas Australia reserves the right to contact Police and other

relevant organisations to lodge claims for damages incurred, even if the employee themselves does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

Note that these provisions do not apply in circumstances where a public authority (e.g. law enforcement agencies or WorkCover) has a statutory right to require information in certain circumstances.

3.6 Conflict of Interest

All Workers have an obligation to ensure that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest between your personal interests and professional duties. In general, if any personal advantage is obtained or may be perceived to be obtained, there is potential to bring your actions into question.

Workers will not undertake employment outside working hours that would in any way directly or indirectly compete with the activities of the Conference or Caritas Australia or which conflicts with your duties or affects your performance.

Caritas Australia permits the employment of qualified family members, domestic partners, significant others and/or similar personal relationship of employees as long as such employment does not create a conflict of interest. In accordance with Caritas Australia and ACBC's employment practices, the basic criteria for employee selection or promotion shall be suitability for the position based on appropriate qualifications, education, experience, training and past performance, consistent with Caritas Australia's needs. Relationships by family, marriage, domestic partnership and/or similar personal relationship shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to selection, promotion, salary, or other conditions of employment.

Where a Worker has or begins a close personal relationship with another Worker (including potential staff and ongoing, maximum term or casual staff, National Council Members, Volunteers and Contractors) they must disqualify themselves from decisions concerning the appointment, promotion, disciplinary proceedings or any other determination relating to employment conditions, benefits or entitlements for the staff member.

All Workers have an obligation once they become aware that there is, or may be, a potential conflict of interest between their personal interest and professional duty (whether real or apparent) to immediately inform a manager/supervisor and seek guidance on how or if to proceed.

In general, it is not necessary for any Worker to obtain permission to be involved in voluntary or unpaid activities. However, where a conflict of interest arises between these activities and official responsibilities, you have an obligation to raise the issue with your manager/supervisor.

3.7 Relationships

Should a close personal relationship dissolve or be marred in any way, parties are to ensure they remain professional at all times; demonstrating respect of each other's dignity, rights and views and not allow any matters pertaining to their relationship be brought into the workplace or working environment.

4. Duty to report

Staff members have a duty to report any concerns regarding breaches of this Code to their Manager/Supervisor. If they are not comfortable about reporting to their Manager/Supervisor,

they should report the matter to a Leadership Team member. Concerns regarding a Leadership Team member should be reported to the CEO. In the case where the CEO is the subject of a concern, this should be referred to the National Council. This should be done orally or in writing and should include full details and if possible, supporting evidence.

All reported breaches will be treated in confidence as far as reasonably practicable. Caritas Australia is committed to protecting any person who raises concerns about a breach of the Code from retaliation or reprisals.

4.1 Victimization

Any attempt to victimise a person who raises a legitimate breach of the code will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action with penalties that may include a warning or dismissal. Frivolous or vexatious allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will result in disciplinary action being taken.

5. Breaches of the code

Any suspected breaches of the Code will be investigated as stated in Caritas Australia's and ACBC policies including Managing Misconduct, Workplace Investigations and Caritas Australia's Respectful Workplaces Procedure, Complaints Policy or Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures if the suspected breach is in relation to Child Protection. Breaches of the Code may lead to disciplinary action including formal warnings or termination of employment. Breaches of this Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to the following:

- Discrimination whether direct or indirect
- Disregard of safety procedures
- Exploitation, abuse or harassment of Workers, supporters, or our partners, communities or individuals with whom we work
- Misappropriation of Caritas Australia funds
- Working whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs in situations where your performance is impaired
- Offering children or vulnerable people in programs conducted or associated with Caritas Australia, recreational drugs or alcohol including cigarettes
- Abuse, theft, assault, including sexual assault and grooming of children, and risk of significant harm to children and vulnerable people
- Offensive, threatening or damaging behaviour
- Disregard of environmental protection procedures
- Offering or accepting bribes or similar inducements
- Conduct that could bring Caritas Australia or any of its Workers, partners and supporters into disrepute, including through use of social media
- Theft or misuse of the property of Caritas Australia or its supporters or partners
- Misrepresentation of Caritas Australia's credentials, policies or capabilities

- Misuse of information or material obtained from Caritas Australia or its supporters or partners
- Disregard of local law of host Country
- Failing to report a situation where you have been charged with an offence, or convicted of an offence carrying a penalty of 12 months or more in prison

5.1 What happens if there is a Breach of the Code?

There are a range of consequences for breaches of this Code depending on the nature and seriousness of the matter.

Managers have a responsibility to address the alleged breaches of the Code promptly, and in a fair and reasonable manner. They need to assess the seriousness of any alleged breaches, and how they should be dealt with.

Possible outcomes for a Worker who has breached the Code may be:

- Mediation between parties involved with an aim towards mutual understanding and resolution
- Issuing a written apology
- Official warning
- Counselling
- Performance improvement plans
- Formal disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment
- Referral to the relevant registration board when the staff member holds a professional membership
- Referral to an external Agency or the Police

6. Related Documents

Copies of the current ACBC policies, procedures and guidelines are available on the Office for Employment Relations' website (www.employmentrelations.catholic.org.au) and are easily accessible to all employees. They are also available in hard copy on request. Copies of the current Caritas Australia policies, procedures and guidelines are available on AIMS.

- ACBC Anti-discrimination Policy
- ACBC WH&S Policy
- ACBC Conditions of Employment
- ACBC Workplace, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- ACBC Sexual Harassment Procedure
- Caritas Australia Respectful Workplaces Procedure
- Caritas Australia Complaints Policy
- Caritas Australia Visual Images and Stories
- Caritas Australia Use of IT Systems Policy
- Caritas Australia Child Protection Policy Statement
- Caritas Australia Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures
- Caritas Australia Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Guidelines
- Code of Ethics for Caritas Internationalis Member Organisations
- Code of Conduct for Caritas Internationalis
- ACFID Code of Conduct

7. Document History and Version Control Table

Version No.	Date Approved	Approved By	Description of Changes
CA-HR-POL-002 v1.0	30 Oct 2015	National Council	Original document
CA-PC-POL-002(ii) v2.0	30 Oct 2018	National Council	Changed Child Protection to Safeguarding Added reference to comments made in relation to outside work under Code Details Updated Related Documents Removed the scope of this policy to exclude visitors Changed policy number

Statement of Acknowledgment and Acceptance

I agree to undertake to perform my duties in a manner that supports the values and mission of the Conference, Caritas Australia and support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church. I agree to abide by all Caritas Australia policies and procedures currently in place and any alterations made to them from time to time, as well as new ones introduced.

I have carefully read the Code of Conduct and I understand that the responsibility is on me, as a person engaged by Caritas Australia, to abide by this policy and report any suspected breaches in accordance with this Code.

Signed by:

Name: (Please Print)

Date:

Please return this signed page to the People & Culture department.
It will be retained by Caritas Australia on file.