411 Code of Conduct

Chief Executive Officer’s Forward

Link Housing is entrusted by the government, the community and its tenants to manage its services and assets efficiently, fairly, impartially and with integrity. We hold an important position in the community that requires transparency, honesty, respect and fairness for all people we support and serve. As a Public Benevolent Institution (non-profit) housing provider, we make decisions each day that affect the lives of others. In everything we do, we are expected to act and be seen to act in the interest of those we are here to serve.

The Code of Conduct (the Code) explains the minimum standards of conduct and behaviour expected of Link Housing Employees.

All Link Housing Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are expected to adhere to the Code in the course of their duties and when representing the company at any external meeting or event.

Employees are encouraged to discuss the Code with each other, at team meetings, during one on one’s, and refer to it when making important decisions.

Active and open discussion of ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest helps to foster a healthy and professional organisational culture and one that can withstand the highest scrutiny.

If there is anything in this Code that you do not understand, please ensure to discuss this with a member of the management team.

Andrew McAnulty
Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
1.0 Link Housing Corporate Values

Our corporate values guide our actions and determine who and what we aspire to be. They are expressed through our interaction with our colleagues, applicants and residents, suppliers and all other Link Housing stakeholders including the wider community. We use our Corporate Values to make decisions that will align with our vision: “Enhancing lives through community housing”

Our Values are:

- Ethical - through transparency, fairness, honesty;
- Excellence - in everything we do;
- Respectful - of everyone we engage with;
- Accountable - to tenants and other stakeholders;
- Safety – think safe, work safe, be safe;
- Leadership – the courage to shape the future.
2.0 Purpose and Scope

Link Housing Employees are responsible for upholding the integrity of the organisation and complying with the Code of Conduct. One person’s misconduct can tarnish the credibility of all of us and make it more difficult to achieve our organisational objectives.

This policy applies to:

- Board of Directors (Directors);
- All current employees, (Employees);
- Temporary and contract workers (Contractors); and
- Volunteers (Volunteers).

All Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers are expected to adhere to the Code in the course of their duties and allow it to guide their behaviour, decision making and development whilst employed at Link Housing.

The Code should be read in conjunction with other policies that are referred to in this document and within the context of our Corporate Values.

3.0 Leadership Responsibilities

Directors and Managers have an important role in demonstrating ethical leadership, and role modeling the standards of behaviour outlined in this Code.

Directors and Managers must demonstrate accountability for their own performance and behaviour as well as that of their direct reports.

Managers are responsible for the health and safety and performance of their direct reports. They are accountable for addressing continued unsatisfactory performance and errors, misconduct and breaches of this Code and other company policies and procedures.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their direct reports:

- understand and follow the Code;
- understand and adhere to relevant legislation, policies, procedures and corporate values;
- understand their jobs, how they are expected to do their job and the results for which they are accountable; and
- have equitable access to learning and development opportunities.

Directors and Managers are also responsible for ensuring:

- they set a good example of ethical behaviour, accountability and open honest communication;
- they acknowledge and encourage ethical and professional work practices;
- the systems of work and the work premises and environment are safe and free from inappropriate behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, bullying and fraud and any other unlawful conduct;
- they encourage compliance with the Code and ensure that its principles are discussed regularly through team meetings, one on ones and during the performance review process;
• they take appropriate action on breaches of the Code and report major breaches to senior management; and
• that any breach or potential breach is treated seriously and professionally and managed promptly and confidentially.

4.0 Elements of the Code

4.1 Professional Conduct

Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers should behave professionally in all situations and with all stakeholders including but not limited to; each other, managers and board members, suppliers, contractors, clients and other agencies.

Professional conduct is defined as; exhibiting a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like manner.

At Link Housing this is demonstrated in your verbal language and communication, your personal appearance and how you conduct and present yourself at work, in meetings, and at external events, training and seminars.

The following are examples of acts which Link Housing considers unprofessional and unacceptable:

• offensive language including the use of slang and racial slurs;
• dressing in a way that is unprofessional – Link’s dress code is referred to as business casual;
• showing aggression through yelling or making emotional gestures;
• refusing to follow or failing to carry out a reasonable instruction from your manager;
• ignoring work duties or wasting time during work hours and serious delays in making a decision or taking action;
• coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or bringing illegal substances to work;
• being absent from work without a valid reason or not notifying your manager;
• being continually late for work, events or meetings;
• being wasteful or neglectful of company equipment or using company resources for unauthorised or illegal purposes; and
• Conducting yourself in a way that compromises the company's reputation.

4.2 Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment

Link Housing has a zero tolerance when it comes to discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Link Housing endeavours to ensure that all decisions affecting employees and tenants are free from discrimination.

Bullying and harassment are against the essence of Link Housing’s Corporate Values and Code of Conduct and you must ensure your behaviour and actions do not offend, intimidate or humiliate any person you engage with in the course of completing your role.

4.3 Health and Safety

Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers must adhere to the Workplace Health and Safety Policy and report any accident, near miss or injury to their manager as soon as possible.

Everyone at Link Housing is responsible for health and safety. As a minimum, your responsibility is to;

- immediately report any hazard or potential hazard to your manager to avoid a potential injury;
- report any injury, accident or near miss to your manager as soon as possible;
- ensure you know who your first aid officer and fire wardens are;
- complete the induction checklist on commencement;
- complete the ergonomic assessment on commencement and each time you move desks; and
- request any equipment you need to ensure your health and safety at work.


4.4 Corrupt Conduct, Gifts, Bribes and Hospitality

Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers must not participate in any activity that is fraudulent or gives the perception of being fraudulent, whether within the organisation or not.

You must not solicit or accept gifts, bribes, hospitality, benefits, service or favours. This may be considered corrupt conduct and certain types of corrupt conduct may amount to a breach of NSW or Commonwealth law.

In certain circumstances, declining a gift of nominal value may cause unnecessary offence. Gifts or nominal value may be accepted if declared in the gift register.

The gift register is administered by Reception and may be periodically reviewed by the Board.

Everyone has a responsibility to guard against and report instances or potential instances of fraud and corruption.

Policy Reference: Corrupt Conduct and Fraud Control Plan

4.5 Conflict of Interest

All Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers will avoid any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest with the primary responsibility being the disclosure of the conflict in advance.

Conflicts of interest are particularly likely to arise where an employee has a family or personal relationship with another party. As such, everyone is required to disclose these relationships immediately where it may affect or be seen to affect Link Housing’s efficiency or reputation.

Directors have a duty to declare to the Board any private interest that may be perceived to impinge upon a Board or company interest. The Board will then make a decision on how to manage the real or perceived conflict of interest.
4.6 Child Protection - Mandatory reporting obligations and alternative reporting pathways

Link Housing Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers should consider the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and, if their work involves contact with children and youth comply with relevant policies and guidelines that apply to such work.

Link Housing Employees are ‘mandatory reporters’ under the Keep Them Safe shared approach to child welfare which was introduced as part of the Children’s Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act 2009. This means they are legally obliged to make a report to the Child Protection Helpline if, during the course of their work, they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is at risk of significant harm.

Link Housing Employees can refer to the Keep Them Safe Mandatory Reporting Guide or contact the Child Protection Helpline for advice about reporting requirements and related obligations


4.7 Use of Equipment and Facilities

You must be careful and mindful when using company equipment and resources. You must not abuse, waste or destroy company equipment and resources.

Reasonable use of company equipment and resources for personal purposes is acceptable, however this must not be abused or impinge on the operations of the business, your ability to complete your work, or impact the company financially through time or resource wastage.

Any use of company equipment must not be used for gambling, pornographic, racist or other illegal purposes and not breach other Link Housing policies or damage the reputation of Link Housing or any of its Employees or stakeholders.

Policy Reference: Computer, Internet, Email and Social Media Policy.

4.8 Procuring Goods and Services

When procuring goods and services for Link Housing, Employees must be responsible with the company’s money and ensure good value for money.

You must follow the Link Housing Schedule of Delegations when purchasing for Link Housing and keep in mind our policies and codes related to conflict of interest, bribes and corruption.

4.9 Corporate Information

Privacy
Information kept by Link Housing will be kept confidential and only be used for lawful purposes.

All Link Housing Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers have a responsibility to keep employee and tenant information stored appropriately to ensure we do not breach our privacy obligations as directed by the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 and Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

Record keeping and filing should be kept up to date and in a safe location and only be used for lawful purposes as specified by legislation.


Confidential Information
Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers must not disclose company information or documents acquired through their position, except as is necessary to undertake their duties to Link Housing.

Information which Link Housing has not released to the public via our website, the annual report, media releases etc should be considered confidential.

Prior to disclosing information or documents to a third party, you should receive approval from the Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer.

Public Comment
Link Housing Directors, Employees, Contractors or Volunteers must not make public comment on behalf of Link Housing to media, on radio and television or in the press, journals, books or other publications without the prior written consent of the Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer.

Policy Reference: Media Policy

Record Keeping
Link Housing Employees have a responsibility to keep full and accurate records of its activities relating to employment, tenants and tenant applications in the relevant record keeping systems and files.

Our records are our corporate memory and provide evidence that we have followed proper procedures and the law in carrying out our work.

Record keeping and electronic and paper based filing should be kept up to date as part of good business practice and to also safeguard our privacy and confidentiality obligations.

4.10 Other Employment or Business
Employees are required to disclose at the time of employment any external business or employment they are engaged in before joining Link Housing. Current Employees wishing to undertake additional work or start a business must advise their manager before commencing such activity.

Approval will most likely be given if the activity will/does not adversely affect your ability to
perform your role, or give rise to a conflict of interest.

Link Housing Employees should not allow their participation in any other work, whether volunteer or otherwise, to impact their ability to efficiently and effectively meet their obligation to Link Housing or use Link Housing equipment, resources and time to complete this activity.

Link Housing reserves the right to review their decision should the activity affect your performance or be in conflict with Link Housing’s business.

A Director must disclose to the Board or HR & Nominations Committee, interests in corporations, partnerships or other business that may be relevant to the activities of the Board. If in doubt of any interest, real or perceived, a Director must declare his/her position to the Board.

4.11 Leaving Link Housing

When you leave Link Housing, you are required to return all documentation and equipment provided or obtained during the course of your employment.

After leaving, material, ideas and other work produced during the course of your employment remains the property of Link Housing unless there is an agreement in writing to the contrary.

During subsequent employment and activities, you should continue to respect the confidentiality of information gained during your time at Link Housing and not use it for personal or financial gain.

5.0 Applying this Code

The Code of Conduct forms part of your conditions of employment. A breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action ranging from counselling, further training and up to and including instant dismissal.

Directors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers should be aware that criminal and civil legal action may also be taken against them as a result of breaches of this Code where state and commonwealth law is breached.
Confirmation

Please sign and date this document to confirm that you have read it and agree to follow the Code of Conduct's requirements.

_________________________________________  ____________
Name                                              Signature     Date