



CITY OF PALMERSTON CODE OF CONDUCT

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO OUR CODE	1
From the Executive Team	1
Application - who does Our Code apply to and when?	1
DEFINITIONS	2
OUR FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS	3
Our Vision	3
Our Mission	3
Our Values	3
Our Principles.....	3
OUR CODE	4
CODE PRINCIPLES	6
Honesty, integrity and accountability.....	6
Bullying, Harassment and discrimination.....	7
What is bullying and harassment?.....	7
What is discrimination?	7
Respecting cultural diversity	7
What is meant by conflict of interest?	7
Confidentiality.....	8
Gifts and benefits	8
Workplace health and safety	8
Duty of care.....	8
Use of Council resources	9
Public comment	10
Use of social media.....	10
RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OUR CODE	11
What are your responsibilities as an employee?.....	11
Managers' responsibilities under our code.....	11
BREACHING OUR CODE	12
What happens if there is a breach under Our Code?.....	12
Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)	12
Other regulatory bodies.....	12
How do you report a breach or concerns of a possible breach?	12
Our commitment	13
Legislative references and related documents	13

INTRODUCTION TO OUR CODE

From the Executive Team

As the Executive Leadership team, we are pleased to present City of Palmerston's Code of Conduct which reflects our values and principles that guide how we work together. We are committed to leading this organisation towards high levels of performance, not just through strong governance practices but by valuing an inclusive, respectful and empowering workplace.

Our shared values of Teamwork, Commitment and Accountability, Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency, Quality Resources and a Culture of continuous improvement, are aligned to our principles and underpin the expected behaviour of all City of Palmerston employees and its representatives.

Our code is guided by our vision of 'A Place for People', where we keep the community at the centre of all we do. It is developed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) (the Act), and the Community Plan, and is a commitment of how we will all conduct ourselves in delivering value to the community through services, initiatives and programs.

We understand that challenges require good decision making and our code is there to provide you with clarity and guidance in doing this. You can expect full support from us, when you demonstrate decision making based on good faith and alignment of Our Code.

We encourage everyone to champion a culture where ethical conduct is standard practice and by applying these standards, we enhance the community's trust and confidence. We value those that follow Our Code and recognise that our vision for the Palmerston Community, is also our vision for the organisation.

Application - who does Our Code apply to and when?

Our Code as authorised by the Chief Executive Officer applies to all City of Palmerston employees and its representatives. This includes:

- fulltime, part-time and casual employees
- permanent and temporary employees
- work experience candidates
- volunteers
- trainees or graduates performing work for City of Palmerston
- personnel engaged through an agency on labour hire service arrangements
- contractors and consultants

The Act provides for a prescribed Code of Conduct which sets the minimum standards of conduct within Local Governments. City of Palmerston uses those minimum standards and applies our own values and principles to create a code that is clear for City of Palmerston's employees and its representative, under the expectations of behaviour. Our Code of Conduct is an opportunity to highlight the values of the organisation to potential and future employees as a workplace of choice. All City of Palmerston employees and representatives are expected to perform their duties in accordance with our Code at all times.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
CONTRACTOR/CONSULTANT	A person completing specific scopes of work or providing specialist support, through a contract arrangement, paid via invoice for service arrangement.
COUNCIL	Refers to the Elected Member group
LABOUR HIRE	A person employed by a Labour Hire agency to provide temporary relief in vacant positions and areas of peak demand, as and when required. Services are paid via invoice for service arrangement.
EMPLOYEE	A person who is employed directly by City of Palmerston. This includes trainees, graduates, scholarship holders, work experience candidates and volunteers. This does not include contractors, labour hire or consultants.
EMPLOYER	The employer is City of Palmerston
MANAGER/SUPERVISOR	An employee responsible for controlling or administering an organisation's function or group of staff.
REPRESENTATIVE	Refers to Contractors, Labour Hire, Consultants and Volunteers
SOCIAL MEDIA	Social media describes the use of interactive mobile and web-based technologies to develop, share, discuss and modify information, ideas, personal messages and audio-visual content. Social media is also referred to as 'social networking'. Social media platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Yahoo and other blog sites.

OUR FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Our Vision

Our vision is to make Palmerston 'A Place for People'.

Our Mission

City of Palmerston is committed to:

- Improving the safety of all our citizens,
- Maintaining our own Identity,
- Providing services, facilities and amenities to support the community's needs,
- Developing and maintaining our reputation for being clean and green.

We will achieve this through delivering high quality value for money services to our community that meets their diverse needs.

Our Values

- Teamwork,
- Commitment and Accountability,
- Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency,
- Quality Resources,
- A Culture of Continuous Improvement.

Our Principles

Our Code is structured around a set of governing principles and expected behaviours related to the way we do our work. All employees have a responsibility to use sound judgement and exhibit the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in everything we do. Our Governing principles are detailed in Our Policy and include the following:

- Honesty, integrity and accountability
- Bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Conflicts of interest
- Confidentiality
- Gifts and benefits
- Workplace, health and safety

OUR CODE

City of Palmerston employees and representatives must comply with and commit to the following principles:

1. Honesty, integrity and accountability

Employees must act with honesty and integrity in performing official functions.

1.1. Care and diligence

Employees must act with reasonable care and diligence in performing the official functions of their role.

1.2. Courtesy and respect

Employees must act with courtesy and respect towards other council staff, Elected Members, contractors and members of the community.

Employees should foster a positive and professional work culture that is free from any discriminatory language or behaviour that may be offensive or not welcome by others

1.3. Accountability

Employees must responsibly carry out their duties in line with the principles outlined in Our Code and associated policies within their delegated authority.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

Employees must not bully, harass or discriminate against another person in the course of performing their duties.

3. Cultural diversity

3.1. Employees must respect cultural diversity and must not discriminate against others, or the opinions of others, on the grounds of their cultural background.

3.2. Employees must act with respect for cultural beliefs and practices in relation to each other and members of the Community.

4. Conflict of interest

4.1. Employees must avoid any conflict of interest, whether actual, potential or perceived, when performing their duties and responsibilities.

4.2. If a conflict of interest exists or arises over the course of their employment, employees must comply with any policies, procedures, statutory requirements or obligations of disclosure.

5. Confidentiality

5.1. Employees must respect the confidentiality of information obtained in confidence in the employee's official capacity and not disclose any official information acquired in the course of employment, other than required by law or where proper authority has been granted.

5.2. Employees must not use information obtained in an official capacity to gain a private benefit or to cause harm to another.

6. Gifts and benefits

6.1. Employees must not actively encourage or accept gifts, favours or benefits from any person where it could be deemed as influencing their decision making.

6.2. In the instance an employee is offered a gift, favour or benefit through the course of performing their duty, this must be declared and recorded on the Gifts and Benefits Register.

7. Workplace health and safety

- 7.1. Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure they are aware of their safety obligations under legislation, regulations and City of Palmerston policies and procedures relevant to their duties.
- 7.2. Employers have a duty of care to ensure that training, resources and appropriate instruction are provided to all employees to keep them safe and reporting and recording procedures are adhered to
- 7.3. Employees have a duty of care to comply with all reasonable instructions and directions pertaining to workplace health and safety. Never perform deliberate, wilful or reckless activities which create a risk to the safety and wellbeing of themselves or others.
- 7.4. Employees must acknowledge psychosocial risks and participate in all training provided. They should exercise due diligence towards any psychosocial hazards they observe and attempt to minimise or eliminate where possible and report as required.

8. Use of Council resources

- 8.1. Employees must use council resources ethically, effectively and carefully in exercising official functions and must not use them for private purposes unless otherwise authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

9. Public comment and use of social media

- 9.1. Employees should not make public comment on City of Palmerston matters in an official capacity except where required by law or authorised by the Chief Executive Officer. This includes through mainstream media or social media.
- 9.2. Employees should not, during or after their employment with City of Palmerston, share or post any confidential information, or comment or enter into a conversation representing the view of City of Palmerston unless otherwise authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

CODE PRINCIPLES

Our Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviours, standards, and responsibilities of the employee and employer for City of Palmerston. It is aligned through our Values and Principles and backed by our internal policies and procedures. Where Our Code does not provide specifics, please refer to the related policy or procedure, Enterprise Agreement or relevant regulations.

Honesty, integrity and accountability

As an employee of City of Palmerston acting with honesty, integrity and accountability means we are working together to achieve Council's overall vision to be 'A Place for People'.

Care and diligence

- We complete tasks with attention to detail and accuracy, striving for excellence in everything we do.
- Ensure we are working within an organised and safe working environment.
- We are proactive in identifying and addressing risks or issues.
- We keep the customer at the centre of all we do.
- We are positive in making a difference and lead by example.
- We are always seeking ways to improve, including identifying opportunities for professional growth and skill development.

Courtesy and respect

- We respect each other, the community, our stakeholders and the environment.
- We share our knowledge and listen to others, valuing and accepting all differences.
- We work together as an organisation building solid working relationships.
- We communicate in a polite and professional manner that is free from discriminatory language or behaviour that may be offensive to others.
- We respect and acknowledge personal boundaries and cultural differences.
- We avoid gossip, offensive language or behaviours or inappropriate humour.

Accountability

- We take ownership of tasks and delivering on commitments.
- We are transparent and honest in the workplaces.
- We report unethical behaviour or breaches of policy when necessary.
- We ensure compliance with regulations and workplace policy and procedures.
- We strive for value for money and avoid waste or excessive use of City of Palmerston resources.
- We hold ourselves and each other accountable.

Bullying, Harassment and discrimination

What is bullying and harassment?

Workplace bullying is considered as repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. When determining whether behaviour is 'repeated', you should consider whether the behaviour is of a persistent nature. Repeated behaviour can involve a range of the same and/or different behaviours over time. When determining whether behaviour is 'unreasonable', you should consider what behaviour a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

Harassment is considered any form of behaviour towards a person that:

- (a) is not wanted by the person;
- (b) offends, humiliates or intimidates the person; and
- (c) creates a hostile environment.

Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome attention of a sexual nature, which is humiliating, intimidating or offensive. Sexual harassment is unlawful under the Anti-Discrimination Act, *Criminal Code Act 1983* (NT) and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) and will not be tolerated at City of Palmerston.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unjust or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, religious beliefs or sexual orientation to name just a few.

Discrimination is unlawful and City of Palmerston's employees and its representatives are required to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Employees are encouraged to report any discriminatory, bullying, or harassing behaviour directed at themselves or others to their line manager or the HR department.

Respecting cultural diversity

City of Palmerston is "A Place for People" and our employees and representatives must encourage diversity through valuing our differences, respecting cultural beliefs and practices and promoting unity amongst each other and within the community. It is important, as an organisation, that a respect for differences is acknowledged and appreciated throughout the workforce. Employees should exercise inclusive communication that avoids stereotypes or cultural assumptions and takes the time to listen to understand cultural perspectives. We need to celebrate the diversity of our entire workforce, and ensure we adjust work practices where appropriate.

What is meant by conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest may exist where you have or potentially have, or may be perceived to have, a vested interest in the outcome of a decision or action. Some things that you should think about when making decisions to avoid a conflict of interest include:

- Could you, your family or friends benefit, or appear to benefit, either directly or indirectly from this situation?
- Is your action, decision, or recommendation one that a fair and reasonable person in a similar situation might make?

- Have all options been considered on an equal basis?
- Would your actions withstand public scrutiny?

All employees are required to carry out their duties fairly and without bias. Any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest must be disclosed in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines.

Confidentiality

Confidential information is considered any information relating to customers, contractors, suppliers and employees including all files, plans, documents, drawings, letters, reports, conversations, personnel records and any other information obtained by City of Palmerston. Employees and employers have an obligation to comply with confidentiality requirements as outlined under the *Information Act 2002* (NT) and in accordance with any confidentiality agreement(s). As a City of Palmerston employee, you are required to take all reasonable care to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of official information.

You also need to ensure that you do not use your position (or information that you have) to influence others to obtain a private benefit for yourself or for somebody else. You must not take advantage (or seek to take advantage) of your status or position with Council to obtain a private benefit for yourself or for any other person or body.

Gifts and benefits

Gifts and benefits include cash or cash-like gifts that may be perceived as an incentive or reward for preferential treatment. Gifts could include cash, vouchers, food and drink hampers, memberships or entitlements to discounts for products or services, event tickets, hospitality (including food, drinks and accommodations), and so on. A gift or benefit is deemed to have been accepted by you, where it is received by you or someone personally associated with you.

All employees must avoid situations that would give rise to the appearance that a person or body is attempting to secure favourable treatment from you or from City of Palmerston, through the provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality of any kind to you or someone personally associated with you.

Acceptance of a gift or benefit is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and all gifts and benefits must be recorded in the Gifts and Benefits Register.

Workplace health and safety

Under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* (Cth), a duty of care exists to provide for the protection to the health, safety and welfare of workers and others within a workplace. We have a strong culture ensuring all employees keep themselves and others safe within the workplace and address WH&S risks and hazards at an organisational level.

Duty of care

Employees and Employers have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others within the workplace.

The employer is responsible for:

- Ensuring workers receive sufficient information, instruction and training in the work that the worker may be required to perform.

- Enabling the worker to perform the work without risk to the health and safety of the worker, or any other person.
- Ensuring that workplace infrastructure or equipment, and workplace materials are maintained in a safe condition.
- Ensuring the safe handling, packaging, storage and transport of chemicals such as dangerous goods and other harmful materials.
- Ensuring psychosocial risks are eliminated or minimised where reasonably practicable and implement control measures and review methods to maintain effectiveness.
- Providing adequate facilities that workers can access while at work (such as clean and hygienic toilets, access to water and eating areas).

An employee is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care for their own psychological and physical health and safety, and for the health and safety of others, while at work.
- Following reasonable directions given by, or on behalf of, the employer on issues related to health or safety.
- Participating in psychosocial training and keeping up to date with knowledge of psychosocial work health and safety matters in the workplace.
- Ensuring, in all cases, that appropriate resources and processes are followed (including temporary staff, contractors or anyone engaged to work for or on behalf of CoP) to eliminate or reduce all forms of psychosocial hazards and risks.
- Using relevant safety equipment provided for the worker's use.
- Reporting a workplace accident to the employer as soon as practicable after it occurs.

Workplace incidents and injuries can be avoided if appropriate care is taken by both the employee and the employer. Employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health, well-being and safety.

Use of Council resources

Employees should be aware that all information, including sensitive or personal information conveyed through electronic communication facilities such as emails cannot be guaranteed as private and are subject to Freedom of Information legislation.

All corporate files and electronic communications, including mobile phone communication, are official records of Council and employees should take care when handling official information required as part of their role. For specific information relating to the use of Council resources, please refer to the current IT Policies.

When using City of Palmerston's facilities, equipment, vehicles and other resources (including ICT equipment) it is expected that you use them sensibly and appropriately and take reasonable care to make sure they are maintained and in good working order. You are responsible to be informed on any policies and procedures specifically relating to their use. You are also expected to secure them against theft or misuse.

City of Palmerston resources are not to be used for personal use without the authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer.

Public comment

You must not make public comment on City of Palmerston matters in an official capacity except where required by law or authorised by the Chief Executive Officer. Any media enquiries are to be directed to the marketing and communications team in the first instance. Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio or television, expressing views in a letter to the press or in books or notices, social media platforms or the circulation of a comment that could flow to the community at large.

Employees must not make statements either verbally or electronically (including on social media) which publicly comment on the operations, employees or Elected Members of the City.

As a member of the community, you have the right to make public comment if you:

- Make it clear that the comment represents your personal views as a private citizen.
- Ensure comments do not misuse official or confidential information.
- Ensure comments do not conflict with your official position in City of Palmerston.
- Ensure comments do not compromise your ability to advise on, direct, administer or implement City of Palmerston policy or carry out your professional duties effectively.
- Ensure comments do not bring City of Palmerston into disrepute.

Use of social media

City of Palmerston understands that social media can help employees build relationships at work. Social media offers an immediate method of communicating with stakeholders and the media. However, the immediacy of the format also brings with it some inherent risks. Ensuring that information is correct and consistent is paramount when posting on social media sites.

Employees must be mindful of not damaging City of Palmerston's reputation, brand, commercial interests and/or bringing City of Palmerston into disrepute. City of Palmerston employees are expected to adhere to the following standards of behaviour, specifically that employees will not:

- During or outside business hours, post materials or comments that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, bullying, harassing, discriminatory or hateful in relation to other employees, contractors, or customers.
- Knowingly use or share the identity of another employee (including name, alias or variation of a name) without their permission.
- Allow their online interactions to damage or negatively impact on internal or external working relationships.
- Post photographs of, or tag, Elected Members, businesses, contractors or Ministers on their personal or professional social media profiles unless authorised by the Chief Executive Officer, noting that sharing City of Palmerston posts is considered acceptable where other use and comment requirements are followed.
- Share images or content that could identify, associate or imply endorsement by or of Elected Members or political parties.
- During or after their employment with City of Palmerston, post any confidential information relating to City of Palmerston, or links to confidential information.
- Enter into a conversation as a representative of City of Palmerston without instruction from an appropriate delegate.
- Create any social media page or identity using City of Palmerston's name.
- Post City of Palmerston logos, branding, trademarks or other such intellectual property without approval.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OUR CODE

What are your responsibilities as an employee?

Every employee is accountable for their behaviour and actions and is responsible for ensuring they reflect the standards and values set out in our Code. You are required to contribute to a positive workplace culture. Our Code is our policy for expected behaviour and actions (your conduct). It is important that you clearly understand your obligations under Our Code.

City of Palmerston expects that you will take all reasonable steps to read and understand Our Code, and where you are not sure of your obligations seek guidance from your manager. As an employee you are required to comply with all lawful and reasonable directions from your relevant manager.

Managers' responsibilities under our code

Managers have responsibilities in addition to those already listed in this document; they are expected to take all reasonable steps to:

- Ensure employees (that report through to them) are aware of their responsibilities under Our Code.
- Establish reasonable performance expectations for employees and ensure they are understood and assessed objectively against these standards.
- Provide and ensure that appropriate levels of supervision and oversight are afforded to any employee where that supervision has potential safety and wellbeing implications.
- Address inappropriate behaviour and/or workplace conflict promptly.
- Support employees to improve the skills and knowledge related to the performance of their role.
- Provide constructive feedback to, and welcome feedback from, employees including taking employee concerns seriously and acting without delay when necessary.
- Identify any psychosocial hazards in the workplace and act to minimise or remove.
- Treat all employees fairly.
- Avoid bias or favouritism toward employees.

BREACHING OUR CODE

What happens if there is a breach under Our Code?

Behaviour outside of the principles outlined in this Code has no place within City of Palmerston's culture. If employees are unsure of the expected appropriate behaviours, they should consult with their manager or supervisor.

City of Palmerston employees and representatives are trusted by the community and must uphold the reputation of Council by always acting responsibly in our delivery of service. City of Palmerston sees these attributes as important aspects of our workplace culture.

Any breaches of Our Code may lead to disciplinary action including but not limited to, termination of employment, legal action or criminal prosecution.

If you are unsure of anything written in Our Code, or if you require advice on whether an action could possibly be in breach of Our Code, you are encouraged to seek further assistance from your manager or the Human Resource Team.

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

It is important to note that any serious misconduct will be mandatorily reported to the Northern Territory's Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC). ICAC can investigate alleged improper conduct of public officers (which includes City of Palmerston staff). Investigations can also extend to any persons, businesses organisations that have a contract with, receive a grant from or provide a service on behalf of City of Palmerston.

Other regulatory bodies

There is a requirement to ensure compliance is maintained across all aspects of City of Palmerston's service delivery which includes a number of regulatory bodies, including, but not limited to, WorkSafe NT, Fair Work, Northern Territory Government, Australian Government, and Australian Taxation Office.

How do you report a breach or concerns of a possible breach?

You can report any breaches, or possible breaches of Our Code to your manager. If the breach concerns your manager or if you believe your manager did not take proper action on your concern, you can also speak to Human Resources or a higher-level manager.

If you feel the issue cannot be resolved by any of these parties, you can escalate to the Chief Executive Officer. If you are unsatisfied with the response received through any or all of these avenues, you can report the matter to the Ombudsman NT. The Ombudsman NT resolves and investigates complaints about Northern Territory Government departments, authorities and local government councils.

It is important for you to know that City of Palmerston is committed to protecting a person from reprisal if they raise concerns about potential breaches of our Code as per the requirements under the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017* (NT) and any other relevant legislation.

Our commitment

As part of demonstrating our commitment to uphold this Code, we all need to identify and report conduct that is not consistent with this Code. Managers have a responsibility to make fair, transparent and consistent decisions regarding any allegations of behaviour that does not uphold this Code. We will support employees who report genuine concerns of wrongdoing and manage any reports of suspected wrongdoing in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.

Legislative references and related documents

- *Anti-Discrimination Act (NT)*
- *Criminal Code (NT)*
- *City of Palmerston Human Resources Policies & procedures*
- *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017 (NT)*
- *Information Act (NT)*
- *Local Government Act 2019 (NT)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Workplace Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act (NT)*