

Statement of Business Ethics

Foreword

Wingecarribee Shire Council delivers an extensive range of services to the community. Quality service delivery at a reasonable cost increasingly requires Council to work in partnership with external service providers.

This Statement of Business Ethics is provided as a guide for the private sector when conducting business with Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Wingecarribee Shire Council is committed to conducting its business in a sound commercial and ethical manner and this Statement of Business Ethics sets out the standards the Council requires of its Councillors, Council staff and external service providers.

Wingecarribee Shire Council will demonstrate and practice a professional and ethical approach to all its business activities. All Wingecarribee Shire Councillors and staff are required to carry out their activities in accordance with our Code of Conduct.

The Statement of Business Ethics is a means of providing guidance regarding the standards of ethical behaviour that external service providers can expect from Councillors and members of staff. Similarly, the Statement of Business Ethics also articulates the standards of ethical behaviour expected of external service providers in their dealings with Wingecarribee Shire Council.

General Manager
Wingecarribee Shire Council

Our Values, Vision and Mission

Council's values, vision and mission are the underlying attitudes that consistently affect all of our actions and decision-making processes.

Our Values

Integrity, Trust and Respect;

Responsibility and Accountability;

Communication and Teamwork;

Service Quality

Our Vision

- A community that values and protects the natural environment enhancing its health and diversity
- A strong economy that encourages and provides employment, business opportunities and tourism
- An innovative and effective organisation with strong leadership
- A vibrant and diverse community living harmoniously, supported by innovative services and effective communication with Council
- Places that are safe, maintained, accessible, sympathetic to the built and natural environment, that support the needs of the community.

Our Mission

"To create and nurture a vibrant and diverse community, growing and working in harmony with our urban, agricultural and natural environments."

Doing Business with Council

Wingecarribee Shire Council, its Councillors and staff are committed to this Statement of Business Ethics. The community rightly expects Councillors and staff to be honest, reasonable and equitable in their dealings and always to act in the best interest of the public. Similarly, we expect the same standards of behaviour from those with whom we do business. Council has a zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption.

Our Code of Conduct articulates the standards of conduct expected of our Councillors and staff to enable them to fulfil their statutory duty and to enhance public confidence in the integrity of local government.

Our external service providers include applicants, objectors, business partners, contractors, suppliers and anyone with whom we do business. We have specific requirements in the following areas and we require our external service providers to meet these expectations.

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality

In general, Council expects its Councillors and staff to decline gifts, benefits or hospitality offered during the course of their work. You should refrain from offering any such incentives to Councillors or staff. All gifts offered, accepted or declined are required to be formally recorded in our public Gifts and Benefits Register.

Conflicts of Interest

Councillors and staff are required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Council extends this duty of disclosure to all external service providers, which include applicants, objectors, business partners, contractors, suppliers, and anyone with whom we do business.

Use of Council equipment and resources

Council resources include financial, material and human resources. All Council equipment and resources are to be used for their intended, proper and official purpose. This requirement clearly extends to the private sector's use of our resources.

Use of Council Information

Any confidential Council information should be treated as such and should not be revealed to persons other than those with a genuine need and authority. Private, confidential and commercial-in-confidence or proprietary information contained within applications, objections, tenders, quotations, expressions of interest, proposals, heads of agreements and the like, should never be given to competing interests nor unauthorised persons. Suppliers handling private information on behalf of Council are expected to adhere to Council's Privacy Management Plan.

Development Applications

Council is committed to assessing development applications in a manner, which is compliant with legislation, open and transparent. There shall be no undue influence on the development assessment process by Councillors or staff.

Communication

All communication should be clear and direct to minimise the risk of perception of inappropriate influence being brought to bear on the business relationship.

Secondary and post-separation employment

Staff have a duty to maintain public trust and confidence and not use commercially sensitive information to facilitate future employment opportunities in the private sector. External service providers are to refrain from exerting pressure, offering inducements or incentives or offering future employment to staff.

Intellectual Property Rights

In business relationships with Council, parties are expected to respect each other's intellectual property rights, and formally negotiate any access, licence or use of intellectual property.

Tenderers, Contractors and Sub-contractors

All tenderers, contracted and sub-contracted employees are expected to comply with this statement. It is the responsibility of contractors to make sub-contractors, if they are engaged, aware of this statement.

What you can expect from Council

Council will ensure that all policies, procedures and practices related to approvals, tendering, contracting and the purchase of goods and services are consistent with best practice and the highest standards of ethical conduct. All approvals and procurement activities and decisions will be fully and clearly documented to provide an effective audit trail and allow for effective performance review. Councillors and members of staff must adhere to Council's Code of Conduct. As a result they are expected to:

- Respect those with whom they deal with in the course of their duties;
- Use public resources effectively and efficiently;
- Abide by all relevant and applicable laws and regulations;
- Respect and comply with Council's policies and procedures;

- Deal fairly, honestly and ethically with all individuals and organisations;
- Assess applications objectively, considering all relevant and material factors;
- Promote fair and open competition while seeking best value for money;
- Avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
- Protect confidential information;
- Never solicit or accept remuneration, gifts or other benefits from a supplier or applicant for the discharge of official duties; and
- Respond promptly to reasonable requests for advice and information.

What is expected of you when dealing with Council

We ask all external service providers to observe the following when doing business with Council:

- Act ethically, fairly and honestly in all dealings with Council;
- Respect and be courteous towards members of the public, our Councillors and staff;
- Comply with all relevant contractual and statutory obligations;
- Respect and comply with the conditions set out in documents supplied by Council;
- Provide accurate and reliable advice and information when required;
- Declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to Council as soon as possible;
- Take all reasonable measures to prevent unauthorised release of privileged and confidential information, particularly to the media;
- Immediately report instances of corruption, maladministration and waste;
- Refrain from lobbying or canvassing Councillors or members of staff during procurement and tendering processes;
- Refrain from engaging in any form of collusive practice, such as offering Councillors or staff inducements or

incentives designed to improperly influence the conduct of their duties;

- Refrain from engaging in any activity with the purpose of reducing or eliminating competition.
- Refrain from behaving in a way that might bring the Council into disrepute;
- Refrain making any statement or acting in any way that could mislead anyone to believe that they are representing Council, or expressing Council views or policies.

Why comply with this statement?

By complying with the principles and standards in this Statement of Business Ethics, members of the public, applicants, objectors and suppliers will be able to advance their objectives and interests in a fair and ethical manner. Wingecarribee Shire Council expects all external service providers to Council to comply with our Statement of Business Ethics.

There are consequences for external service providers in not complying with the standards of behaviour outlined in this statement. Demonstrated corrupt conduct or unethical conduct could lead to:

- Disqualification of tender
- Termination of contracts
- Termination of meetings
- Loss of future work with Council
- Investigation for corruption, inappropriate or unethical conduct
- Loss of reputation or
- Referral of the matter for criminal investigation.

Consequences for non-compliance with this Statement of Business Ethics for Councillors, staff, and external advisors include:

- Disciplinary action
- Dismissal
- Loss of civic office
- Investigation for corruption, inappropriate or unethical conduct
- Referral of the matter for criminal investigation

Who to Contact

If you have any questions regarding this statement, or you do not believe Council or an external service provider is meeting the requirements described in this Statement, please contact our Public Officer or the General Manager on 02 4868 0888.

Public officials reporting corrupt conduct, maladministration or waste can be protected by the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*.

Wingecarribee Shire Council also has several policies which relate to the Statement of Business Ethics, including:

- Code of Conduct
- Statement of Ethics
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy
- Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Model Privacy Management Plan
- Public Interest Disclosures Policy

These policies can be found on our website or contact us for further information.

Our Administration Centre is located at the Civic Centre, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale. Opening hours are between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Phone: 02 4868 0888

Fax: 02 4869 1203

Mail: General Manager

Wingecarribee Shire Council

PO Box 141 Moss Vale NSW 2577 or

Email: mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.wsc.nsw.gov.au