

Code of Conduct

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V1.1	June 2015	Amendments made to reflect changes in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001. A key change is the introduction of the term corrupt conduct which replaces official misconduct
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1. Purpose

The *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* sets out the ethical principles and values that all public sector agencies, entities and public officials in Queensland must abide by and the steps to be taken to implement these. The Code of Conduct (the Code) adopts the ethics principles and values set out in the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 as these apply in our organisation. The Code provides us all with a clear understanding of the ethical values and standards of behaviour that apply in all of our daily business activities. It relates not only to behaviour in the workplace but also social media participation and attendance at external events, for example, conferences, famils, trade shows, training or work-related social events and any other business activities requiring travel whether domestic or overseas.

2. Scope

It applies to all employees at Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) from the Chairman, Board and Chief Executive Officer to the newest employee, whether they are permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual as well as volunteers and students. The Code applies equally to everyone whether based in a Queensland office, interstate or an international office.

The Code also applies to certain organisations and individuals that provide services to TEQ as contractors or consultants. The Code will extend to these service providers where this is necessary to ensure that any action or decision that could be associated with our organisation is consistent with our standards of ethical conduct. This will be enforced appropriately through the various contractual arrangements we have with these persons.

Compliance with the Code is mandatory, and breaches will be handled as outlined in section 5.3.

3. Overarching Legislation and Related Policies

- *The Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*

4. Policy Statement

TEQ and each of us as TEQ employees must adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice and conduct. Not only is this essential to achieving our vision of global leadership but also arises out of being a part of the Queensland public sector. We are each required to ensure that our conduct is not only professional and consistent with TEQ values but also aligns with the specific obligations and requirements that come with being an employee of a public sector entity. The purpose of our Code is to provide each employee with a clear understanding of our role as public sector employees and what is expected of us in relation to our conduct.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Where does TEQ fit into the public sector?

In order to understand our responsibilities as TEQ employees and the accountability of TEQ, it is important to understand our governance structures and where we fit within the system of government. We are not public servants but we are employees of a public sector entity that is established, funded and entrusted by the Queensland Government and is therefore ultimately accountable to the people of Queensland for all actions and decisions taken.

TEQ is a statutory body established under the *Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012*. It is this legislation that provides for the very establishment of our organisation and that defines our functions and powers. We are individually and collectively responsible to the Board of TEQ and ultimately the Government, to fulfil the set functions and exercise our authority appropriately.

There is specific legislation that applies to us as public entity employees in addition to the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. TEQ is a statutory body and the *Public Service Act 2008* does not apply to TEQ. However, the other Queensland Acts that do apply and which you should be aware of include:

- The *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*, which provide standards and accountability in relation to our management of State finances;
- The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*, which sets out the process for reporting certain types of wrongdoing and the protection available for doing so;
- The *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, which defines the corrupt conduct of public sector employees that can be dealt with by the Crime and Corruption Commission and its powers; and
- The *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Information Privacy Act 2009*, which set out the rights of the public to access information held by our organisation and where such access will be contrary to the public interest.
- The *Human Rights Act 2019* requires public entities to act and make decisions in a way compatible with human rights. The objects of the Act include to protect and promote human rights, and to help build a human rights culture in the Queensland public sector.

The most up to date version of these Acts and the related regulations can be accessed at www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

5.2 What is my role in implementing the Code?

We all have a part to play in projecting a professional image of TEQ and can demonstrate ethical leadership in our roles. An ethical culture starts with our Chief Executive Officer and is demonstrated through our senior leaders and all employees.

All employees

All employees play a critical role in creating an appropriate organisational culture and in minimising the risk of breaches of the Code. It is everyone's responsibility to implement the Code by:

- familiarising themselves with the Code;
- participating and completing any training related to the Code;
- taking personal responsibility for their conduct;
- ensuring their conduct aligns with the Code; and
- reporting any conduct that does not align with the Code.

Leaders

Anyone who has supervisory responsibilities will set the tone for the behaviour of employees that report to them and will be looked to as a role model of decision-making and ethical conduct. All leaders, including those temporarily appointed to such positions, are expected to promote the Code by doing the following:

- model and promote the Code;
- demonstrate their awareness of the Code and how to apply it in day-to-day business activities;
- ensure employees understand the Code;
- ensure employees have the relevant training and knowledge of relevant policies and procedures to do their work; and
- support employees who report genuine concerns of wrongdoing and manage complaints fairly and transparently.

People and Leadership

The People and Leadership team acts as the custodian of the Code and is responsible for educating employees and coordinating regular reviews. People and Leadership will:

- distribute the Code and the Dispute Settlement Procedure to all new employees in their employment pack, and to all Board members in their corporate governance handbook;

- ensure that new employees receive training in the Code and sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understood the Code;
- publish the Code on the Intranet;
- co-ordinate reviews by the Audit Committee as and when required;

Group Executives

As our senior leaders, the Chief Executive and Group Executives have a responsibility to:

- promote an organisational culture that values high ethical standards and behaviour;
- openly discuss and explain the importance of ethical decision-making;
- ensure all employees can access training in how to use the Code; and
- ensure complaints are managed fairly and transparently.

Board Members

Board members have overall responsibility for TEQ's performance, which includes ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and systems are in place to maintain high standards of ethical behaviour. In relation to the Code, the Board is expected to:

- demonstrate an ongoing commitment to achieving best practice corporate governance;
- establish mechanisms to ensure that the Board members, including individual directors, are accountable to ensure their conduct is ethical;
- work with the senior leadership of TEQ to ensure they fulfill their responsibilities for the development and implementation of the Code;
- continue to task an Audit Committee with responsibility for reviewing the Code as part of the annual work plan and ensuring adequate governance structures and controls and audit processes exist to uphold the standards of ethical conduct required under the Code;
- declare and respond appropriately to conflicts of interest among Board members; and
- manage any conflict of interest issues related to employees that are raised with the Board.

5.3 What if the Code is not followed?

This Code is applicable to all of us, and everyone is expected to follow the Code. If the Code is not followed, a disciplinary interview will take place, with the outcomes for a breach ranging from counselling to termination, depending on the severity and circumstances of the breach

Where corrupt conduct occurs, the incident will be referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission for further investigation. An internal incident can be referred to the police if it is deemed to be a criminal act.

If you suspect a breach of the Code is occurring, you are obligated to report this to your leader or an appropriate person within TEQ (for example People and Leadership or your next level leader) in accordance with our Dispute Settlement Procedure. The procedure outlines the step by step approach to prompt resolution of disputes by consultation, cooperation and discussion.

5.4 What do I do if I'm not sure

You should seek further guidance if you have any questions or are uncertain how to apply the Code in a particular situation. We encourage you to discuss any contents of the Code with your leader or a member of the People and Leadership team.

6. How the Code Works

The Code is based on the ethics principles and values set out in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, adapted to apply in the context of our unique organisation. The Code does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of what to do in every possible situation. Instead the Code presents a broad framework of ethical conduct that you have an obligation to uphold. The framework involves the following **four** public sector ethics principles:



The Code sets out your obligations in relation to each of the four ethics principles. It explains what each principle means by setting out the associated values and specific examples. When applying the Code, consider both the information contained in the Code as well as the 'spirit' and 'intent' of the principles. It is important to remember that there may be situations where you will be called upon to demonstrate sound judgement in the application of the Code to ensure the public interest is met.

This code refers to several TEQ policies to provide more detailed information and guidance on specific areas. Please read the Code in conjunction with these policies.

Principle 1: Integrity and Impartiality

Ethics obligation:

TEQ and each of us as TEQ employees must recognise and respect the trust placed in us by the public by demonstrating utmost integrity by:

- being committed to the highest ethical standards;
- accepting and valuing our responsibility to provide objective, independent, apolitical and impartial advice;
- showing respect towards all persons, including other employees, clients and the general public;
- acknowledging the central importance of the public interest, including by resolving or managing any conflicts of interest; and
- being committed to engaging honestly, fairly and respectfully with the community.

Required standards of conduct:

1.1 Commit to the highest ethical standards

In performing our duties, our organisation and each of us personally will meet the highest ethical standards by ensuring that:

- any advice we provide is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial;
- our organisational and individual decision making is ethical;
- we each engage with the community in a consultative, respectful and fair manner; and
- we each report any suspected wrongdoing, which includes any conduct that is inconsistent with this Code.

1.2 Manage conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is essentially a problem of divided loyalties. You have a conflict of interest if your personal interests could cause you to not act appropriately in your responsibility as a TEQ employee.

For example:

- a conflict exists if any decision you make or have influence over as a TEQ employee, could provide you or someone close to you with a personal gain or benefit. This could potentially bias you towards not acting in the best interests of TEQ, its stakeholders, the Government or the public.
- conflict may arise from personal relationships, employment outside the public service, membership of special interest groups, or ownership of shares, companies, or property. A conflict of interest may also be experienced when there is contention between our public sector ethics and our personal beliefs or opinions.

Having a conflict of interest is not unusual and is not wrong in itself but it would be wrong not to disclose and manage that conflict appropriately. We all need to be committed to demonstrating our impartiality and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities. As such we will:

- always disclose a personal interest that could, now or in the future, be seen as influencing the performance of our duties;
- actively participate in developing and implementing solutions to any conflict of interest situations; and;
- ensure that any conflict of interest is resolved in the public interest.

If you believe you may have a potential or actual conflict of interest, notify your leader of the conflict in writing and this will be forwarded to People and Leadership. If ever in doubt it is always better to declare a potential conflict of interest than to dismiss it as trivial. What seems insignificant to one person might be perceived as a serious conflict to others. People and Leadership may seek a declaration of conflict from you, which would be kept on your personnel file.

If you become aware of a potential or actual conflict of interest involving another employee which to your knowledge has not been disclosed you are required to raise this with People and Leadership who can then determine if the conflict has already been declared and managed and escalate the matter as required (if the concern involves a member of People and Leadership, you should raise the matter with your leader, director, group executive or Chief Executive Officer as appropriate). The matter may need to be escalated to the Board depending on the level of influence the employee has, the significance of the potential gain or benefit involved and whether there are concerns of fraudulent, corrupt or irregular activities.

1.3 Contribute to public discussion in an appropriate manner

It is common for employees of TEQ in particular roles to communicate information to the public and the media as part of our role in facilitating the promotion, marketing and development of tourism and events in Queensland. This includes engaging in social media as a representative of TEQ (please refer to TEQ's Social Media Participation Policy for more information). Responsibility for ensuring that any disclosure is appropriate remains with the relevant leader. Each one of us must also ensure that all information provided is consistent with TEQ's corporate and brand messaging. The information provided must be accurate and not misleading and be related to our individual area of expertise and authority.

It is important to remember that commenting on Government policy is a matter for the Board, the CEO and Government Ministers, not employees. Unless specifically authorised to do so, our employees are not to comment to the media on the tourism policy of the Government or the policy of TEQ.

Aside from communicating with the public as a TEQ employee, be assured that you still have the right, like any other citizen, to contribute to public discussions on community and social issues as a member of the public. However, there are certain responsibilities that come with being a TEQ employee, so in recognition of this, each of us will:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that any comment we make will be understood as representing our personal views, not those of TEQ /or the Government;
- ensure that TEQ logos and names do not appear on non-TEQ written correspondence;
- maintain the confidentiality of information we have access to due to our roles, that is not publicly available, and;
- be aware that personal comments about a public issue may compromise our capacity to perform the duties of our role in an independent, unbiased manner.

1.4 Manage participation in external organisations

Extreme care should be taken to ensure that active participation, on a part-time or freelance basis, in any outside business, whether or not such business is a supplier or client, does not interfere with your ability to satisfactorily perform assigned work for TEQ. If you are proposing to engage in outside business activities, you should assess whether a conflict exists with your TEQ commitments.

The same process for managing potential or actual conflicts of interest applies as under 1.2. If you believe you may have a potential or actual conflict of interest in relation to participation in an external organisation, notify your leader of the conflict in writing and this will be forwarded to People and Leadership. If you become aware of a potential or actual conflict of interest involving another employee which to your knowledge has not been disclosed you are required to raise this with People and Leadership (if the concern involves a member of People and Leadership, you should raise the matter with your leader, director, group executive or Chief Executive Officer as appropriate). The matter may need to be escalated to the Board depending on the level of influence the employee has, the significance of the potential gain or benefit involved and whether there are concerns of fraudulent, corrupt or irregular activities. For example:

- if you are in a position to use commercially sensitive information to benefit a supplier of TEQ that you actively participate in, this would be a real conflict of interest.

- if you are involved in an outside company that could bid to supply any goods or services to TEQ, a potential conflict of interest arises that must be reported so that this can be managed appropriately to avoid any real or perceived unfair personal gain for you or biased decision making on behalf of TEQ.

Our work also does not prevent us from being personally active in a political party, professional organisation or trade union. In fact, TEQ encourages its employees to participate in community activities as well as trade associations, professional associations, charitable or service organisations. However, it is important to manage this participation so as to not adversely impact on your ability to meet your responsibilities at TEQ.

For example:

- if you are elected as a workplace representative or official of a trade union or professional association, you are not required to seek permission from our workplace before speaking publicly in that capacity. You just need to make it clear that your comments are made only on behalf of that organisation. In all instances, we expect you to comply with the appropriate laws of privacy, confidentiality and information management.
- if you are a member of a political party, you need to be aware that participating in activities in the public arena, where you may be identified as associated with TEQ, could give rise to a perception of conflict of interest, which would need to be declared. If you wish to run for public office, you will need to check what this means for your employment with TEQ, which will depend on which level of Government you are standing for.

1.5 Demonstrate a high standard of workplace behaviour and personal conduct

We have a responsibility to always conduct and present ourselves in a professional manner and demonstrate respect for all persons including with other employees, clients or members of the public. Externally, any conduct that is intimidating or offensive to our clients, suppliers, contractors, the public or other employees will not be tolerated. Internally, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive workplace and inappropriate harassment and discrimination of our employees will also not be tolerated (please refer to the Discrimination, Workplace Bullying and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy for more specific information).

We will:

- treat co-workers, clients and members of the public with courtesy and respect, relating to them appropriately and respecting their right to hold views different to our own;
- ensure our conduct reflects our commitment to a workplace that is inclusive and free from harassment;
- be committed to ensuring the safety, health and welfare of ourselves and others in the workplace, whether co-workers or clients;
- ensure that what we do in private does not compromise the integrity of TEQ or harm our ability to do our jobs; and
- report employee criminal charges and convictions as required by legislation.

Our obligations in relation to the safety, health and welfare of ourselves and others includes ensuring we are fit for duty. To this end the abuse of prescription drugs and/or alcohol or the use or possession of illicit drugs is not acceptable. Neither is the consumption of alcohol where it affects your ability to perform your role, other employees, work performance, public relations, safety or where it violates the law. Where the use of prescription drugs affects your ability to perform in your role, you should discuss this with your leader or People and Leadership. TEQ will provide confidential support to you if you require assistance in dealing with any substance abuse. Please contact People and Leadership if you require assistance in this area. Smoking on our premises is not permitted.

Principle 2: Promoting the public good

Ethics obligation:

We directly assist current and prospective tourism and event partners and travelers seeking information about Queensland tourism. However, all Queenslanders benefit from a successful tourism and events industry and so are the beneficiaries of TEQ's role in promoting, marketing and developing Queensland tourism. Recognising this important responsibility, we will all, as TEQ employees:

- be responsive to the requirements of the TEQ board, the government and to the public interest;
- manage our resources effectively, efficiently and economically;
- achieve excellence in service delivery; and
- achieve enhanced integration of services to better service clients.

Required standards of conduct:

2.1 Commit to excellence in service delivery

As experts in our fields, we strive for excellence in the delivery of services to tourism and event partners, and the public. We will:

- deliver services effectively, efficiently and economically;
- deliver services courteously and fairly, ensuring that no members of the community are excluded from the benefit of our services, including people with disabilities and those who speak languages other than English; and
- treat complaints from clients and the community (e.g. industry partners and consumers) seriously and use constructive feedback as an opportunity for improvement.

2.2 Ensure appropriate community engagement

Effective community engagement and consultation are essential to TEQ achieving its mission. We work in partnership with the Queensland tourism and events industry, with our domestic and overseas tourism partners, and with our Queensland Government stakeholders. We will:

- pursue a common vision through strategic industry leadership and alliance;
- actively engage with our stakeholders to form partnerships built on trust;
- listen and respond to the genuine issues and concerns raised by individuals, stakeholders and communities;
- consult extensively with the tourism industry, the general community and appropriate government departments.
- be proactive and strategic in raising community awareness about our role and programs.

2.3 Work as an integrated service

We work in partnership with the Queensland tourism and events industry, with our domestic and overseas tourism partners, and with our Queensland Government stakeholders. We also consult extensively with appropriate government departments in strategic planning. If the need arose, we would also work with any other public sector departments and agencies, where collaboration will achieve a better result. As such, we will:

- share information across Queensland public service agencies (unless there is a legal restriction);
- share common-use assets, business and office accommodation, and infrastructure within Queensland public service agencies to generate economies and efficiencies; and
- work cohesively at the local, regional, state and national levels to provide integrated services.

Principle 3: Commitment to the system of government

Ethics obligation

TEQ and its employees recognise their responsibility to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, Commonwealth and local government by:

- accepting and valuing our responsibility to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, the Commonwealth and local government;
- being committed to implementing the official TEQ priorities, policies and board decisions professionally and impartially;
- accepting and valuing our duty to operate within the framework of Ministerial responsibility to government, the Parliament and the community; and
- accepting our responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the *Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012* to deliver certain functions consistent with Queensland Government policy and under the guidance of our board.

Required standards of conduct

3.1 Commit to our roles in public service

Our role is to undertake our duties, and to give effect to the policies and decisions of TEQ and the elected government. We will:

- accept that the elected government and the Board have the right to determine policy and priorities;
- be responsive to those policies and priorities and then to implement them professionally and impartially;
- comply with the laws of State, Australian, local and overseas governments; and
- comply with our employment agreements, certified agreement and TEQ policies, guidelines, procedures and standards.

3.2 Maintain appropriate relationships with ministerial employees

If providing advice to our Minister is a part of your role within TEQ, ensure interactions are positive and productive when engaging with ministerial employees.

Ministerial employees do not have the authority to direct TEQ employees in their own right. So if this occurs, you can bring this to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer or Group Executive before taking any actions that have been asked of you by a Ministerial employee.

3.3 Ensure proper communication with members of parliament

We have the right to communicate directly with a Member of Parliament on any issue affecting us as a private citizen. In communicating with Members as private citizens, we will maintain the confidentiality of information that we have access to due to our roles that is not publicly available.

Principle 4: Accountability and transparency

Ethics obligation

TEQ and each of us as TEQ employees must recognise and respect that the trust placed in us by the public requires us to demonstrate high standards in the way we manage and perform our functions. At TEQ, we:

- are committed to exercising proper diligence, care and attention;
- are committed to using public resources in an effective and accountable way;
- are committed to managing information as openly as practicable within the legal framework;
- value and seek to achieve high standards of public administration;
- value and seek to innovate and continuously improve performance; and
- value and seek to operate within a framework of mutual obligation and shared responsibility between public service agencies, public sector entities a public office.

Required standards of conduct

4.1 Commit to innovation and continuous performance improvement

The capacity of TEQ depends on an innovative and creative workforce, and a commitment to continuously improve the performance of TEQ and ourselves. We each have a responsibility, having regard to our own roles, to:

- maintain and develop our professional skills and knowledge;
- consult with our leaders and take reasonable steps to identify and apply for development opportunities relevant to our current roles and responsibilities;
- actively participate in employee performance management processes, including induction, performance planning and development; and
- actively contribute to developing and improving business planning and processes, including innovative ways of delivering our goals.

4.2 Ensure diligence in public administration

We have an obligation to seek to achieve high standards of public administration and perform our duties to the best of our abilities. We will:

- be diligent in our work;
- provide accurate, consistent and unbiased advice;
- treat all people equitably and consistently, ensuring there is a fair process for making decisions;
- consider how we use our authority and only use it for the purpose intended and;
- follow all reasonable and lawful directions (even if we personally disagree with the policy direction or decision).

4.3 Ensure transparency in our business dealings

TEQ upholds that its employees carry out their roles impartially and with integrity to the best of its knowledge. Consequently, it is not appropriate for employees to accept or give gifts and benefits that affect or may be likely to affect the performance of their duties. We also do not accept any unethical or improper payment practices either to obtain business or for personal gain. To be clear, dismissal will often be appropriate if you knowingly make or receive a bribe or inducement to or from a third party even if such a transaction is to further the cause of TEQ.

In order to ensure all TEQ business dealings are conducted with the highest level of integrity we will ensure:

- our business meetings with persons who were formerly Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries or senior government representatives are not on matters those persons had official dealings with in their recent previous employment in accordance with government policy;
- any interaction we have with lobbyists is properly recorded;
- we manage gifts, benefits or hospitality in accordance with the TEQ Giving and Receiving of Gifts policy; and
- we administer payments in accordance with TEQ procedures.

In addition to this Code, you have an obligation to report potential fraud or corrupt conduct in accordance with TEQ's Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy and the Public Interest Disclosure Policy. If you believe you know of any fraud, corrupt conduct, irregular transactions or breach of ethics you are required to raise that matter with your immediate leader or to communicate your concerns to your director or the Chief Executive Officer. TEQ will fully co-operate with any investigation by law enforcement or regulatory authorities.

4.4 Ensure appropriate use of official resources, public property and facilities

We are each accountable for the resources that we use in the course of our duties. We will all:

- be economical, and avoid waste and extravagance in the use of public resources for proper purposes;
- use any public resource in accordance with official policies;
- purchase, manage and care for public resources (e.g. business equipment, official information and knowledge) in accordance with TEQ's policy (e.g. ICT Acceptable Usage Policy) as well as State and Federal legislation and regulations; and
- responsibly use and manage our corporate knowledge and intellectual property.

Every employee while in control of any TEQ assets, particularly cash or other valuables, is personally accountable for them. If any item is lost, stolen or misplaced whilst under your control, please report this to the Finance department as soon as possible.

For example:

- Company assets, including goods, money, intellectual property or the services of other TEQ employees (including contractors), must not be used for personal gain.
- Employees should take care with attractive items such as not leaving laptop computers in a visible position within an unoccupied vehicle.

4.5 Ensure appropriate use and disclosure of official and confidential information

The public has a right to know the information that is created and used by the government on their behalf. This right is balanced by necessary protections for certain information, including personal information. Information privacy legislation protects against the misuse of personal information and we have an obligation to ensure the lawful collection and handling of personal information. We are also responsible for ensuring the records we need are stored and maintained as required as part of our recordkeeping system.

In relation to official information, we will:

- treat official information with care and use it only for the purpose for which it was collected or authorised;
- store official information securely, and limit access to those persons requiring it for legitimate purposes; and
- not use confidential or privileged information to further personal interests.

Due to the nature of our duties and responsibilities at TEQ, we are also in possession of knowledge and documents, which are strictly confidential and agree to preserve the private and confidential nature of such information with vigilance and diligence. TEQ employees agree not to use or disclose confidential information or otherwise seek to exploit confidential information without the prior written consent of TEQ as part of the confidentiality agreement. We prevent the use or disclosure of confidential information unless the information lawfully comes into the public domain through no fault of our own, or if we are required to disclose the information by TEQ or by law such as access to information requests under the Right to Information legislation, in which case written notice should be given to TEQ Legal Counsel. We will also continue to respect the confidentiality of official information when we leave TEQ.

You should immediately notify TEQ of any use or disclosure by you of confidential information if not previous authorised.

7. Supporting Procedures

- Dispute Settlement Procedure