

## Code of Conduct

### Chief Executive's foreword

Bridge 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 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 Bridge Housing Directors and employees.

All Directors, employees, contractors and consultants are expected to adhere to the Code in the course of their duties and when representing the company at any external meeting or event.

Directors and 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 speak with a member of the management team.

John Nicolades

**Chief Executive Officer**

## Bridge 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 Bridge Housing stakeholders including the wider community. We use our Corporate Values to make decisions that will align with our mission: to improve lives and strengthen communities through the provision of housing and services for low to moderate income households.

Our Values are:

1. We are a **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE** organisation with a commitment to social inclusion and improving the lives of the people and communities we support. We seek sustainable and environmentally responsible ways to fulfil our mission.
2. We are a **PEOPLE FOCUSED** organisation. We keep our applicants and residents' needs at the core of all activity and decisions, empathise with their needs and deliver our services with fairness, respect and sensitivity. We value and support our employees to enable them to perform at their best and achieve their full potential.
3. We are **COMMITTED** and **PASSIONATE** and put our hearts and minds into our work. We value and encourage innovation and continually seek to improve our performance.
4. We **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** based on trust and respect to create positive outcomes for the people and communities we serve.
5. We act with **PROFESSIONALISM** and **INTEGRITY**. We take responsibility for our decisions and actions and provide a consistent high quality service. Our decisions are based on sound judgement and our culture engenders good governance, transparency and honesty.

## Purpose and Scope

Bridge Housing Directors and 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.

All Directors and employees (full time, part time, temporary casual, in house contractors/consultants) 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 Bridge 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.

## Leadership Responsibilities

Directors and Managers have an important role in demonstrating ethical leadership, and role modelling 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.

Directors and 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.

Directors and 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
- 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
- That any breach or potential breach is treated seriously and professionally and managed promptly and confidentially.

## Elements of the Code

The Code sets out an overarching set of standards of behaviour and conduct but should be read in conjunction with other policies of the organisation. Key elements of the Code are described below.

### *Professional conduct*

Directors and employees 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. All people must be treated with respect.

At Bridge 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 Bridge Housing considers unprofessional and unacceptable:

- Offensive language including swearing and racial slurs
- 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, such as through excessive mobile phone or internet use for personal matters
- Serious delays in making a decision or taking action requested by management
- 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 notifying your manager by phone, not by text or email
- Being continually late for work, events or meetings
- Being wasteful or neglectful of company equipment or using company resources for unauthorised or illegal purposes.

*Policy Reference: Office Etiquette Policy; Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy*

### *Discrimination, bullying and harassment*

Bridge Housing has a zero tolerance when it comes to discrimination, bullying, harassment and violence of any kind.

Bridge Housing will ensure that all decisions affecting employees and tenants are free from discrimination.

Bullying, harassment and violence of any kind are against the essence of Bridge 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.

Bridge Housing has a zero tolerance for violence or behaviour that may reinforce gender inequality including the use of sexist language and sexually explicit jokes.

*Policy Reference: Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy*

## Health and safety

Employees 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 Bridge 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 WHS induction checklist on commencement
- Request any equipment you need to ensure your health and safety at work

*Policy Reference: Work Health and Safety Policy*

## Corrupt conduct, gifts, bribes and hospitality

Directors and employees 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 of nominal value may be accepted if declared and approved by the CEO or Board.

Bridge Housing maintains a gift register for items with a value of over \$25. The Board monitors the gift register.

All Directors and employees have a responsibility to guard against and report instances or potential instances of fraud and corruption. Staff are encouraged to report any concerns or seek guidance from their manager but we understand this is not always possible. As such, you should refer to Bridge Housing's Whistle-blower Policy and Whistle-blower Program, which is administered by Your Call, an independent third party organisation.

*Policy Reference: Fraud Control Policy, Whistle-blower Policy, Gift Policy, Statement of Business Ethics*

## Conflict of interest

All Directors and employees 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 a staff member has a family or personal relationship with another party. As such, employees are required to disclose these relationships immediately where it may affect or be seen to affect Bridge Housing's efficiency or reputation.

For other examples of where conflicts may arise and how to manage and disclose an actual or perceived conflict, please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy.

*Policy Reference: Conflict of Interest Policy*

## Child protection - mandatory reporting obligations and alternative reporting pathways

Bridge Housing employees should consider the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and, if their work involves contact with children and young people, comply with relevant policies and guidelines that apply to such work.

Bridge 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.

Bridge 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.

*Policy Reference: Child Protection Policy*

## *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, to incite violence or threats or other illegal purposes and not breach other Bridge Housing policies or damage the reputation of Bridge Housing.

Company cars can only be used for business purposes.

*Policy Reference: Use of Company Equipment Policy; Car Usage Policy; Computer, Internet, Email and Social Media Policy*

## *Procuring goods and services*

When procuring goods and services for Bridge Housing, employees must be responsible with the company's money and ensure good value for money.

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

*Policy Reference: Schedule of Delegations; Procurement Policy, Statement of Business Ethics, Contractor's Code of Conduct*

## *Corporate Information*

### **Privacy**

Information kept by Bridge Housing will be kept confidential and only be used for functions or activities that are reasonably necessary.

All Directors and Bridge Housing employees have a responsibility to ensure we comply with our obligations under privacy legislation by following the Australian Privacy Principles which set out the standards, rights and obligations we have in relation to collecting, storing, accessing and correcting personal information.

All Bridge Housing employees will also ensure they comply with the *Health Records and Information Act* for information we collect and hold on health matters.

*Policy Reference: Privacy Policy*

### *Confidential information*

Information which Bridge Housing has released to the public through our website, e.g. the Annual Report, Strategic and Business Plan media releases should be considered public information. All other information should be considered confidential unless otherwise approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

If you are unsure what information is considered confidential, you should ask your manager before disclosing any information related to Bridge Housing via any means or medium.

### *Public Comment*

Bridge Housing Directors and employees must not make public comment on behalf of Bridge Housing to media, on radio and television or in the press, journals, books or other publications without the prior written consent of the Chair or the Chief Executive Officer.

### *Record keeping*

Bridge 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.

### *Other employment or business*

Employees are required to advise their General Manager of any external business or employment they are engaged in when joining Bridge Housing. Current employees wishing to undertake additional work or start a business must advise their General 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.

Bridge Housing staff 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 Bridge Housing or use Bridge Housing equipment, resources and time to complete this activity.

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

### *Leaving Bridge Housing*

When you leave Bridge 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 Bridge 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 Bridge Housing and not use it for personal or financial gain.

### *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.

Employees 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.

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**English**

If you need help to understand this letter please contact the Telephone Interpreters Service on 131450 and ask them to contact on 8324 0800 for you at no cost. You can also come to the Bridge Housing office and ask for assistance in your language.

**Simplified Chinese**

如果您理解这封信有困难, 请拨打电 话传译服务 131450 要求电话传译 服务替您拨打 Bridge Housing, 电话 8324 0800。这项服务是免费的。您也可以到 Bridge Housing 的办公室来。要求用您的语言来协助您。

**Spanish**

Si necesita ayuda para entender esta carta, por favor comuníquese con el Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes al 131450 y solicite que lo contacten sin cargo con Bridge Housing al 8324 0800. También puede dirigirse a las oficinas de Bridge Housing y solicitar asistencia en su idioma.

**Russian**

Если для понимания содержания этого письма Вам необходима помощь, свяжитесь, пожалуйста, с Телефонной переводческой службой по номеру 131450 и попросите соединить Вас с Bridge Housing по номеру 8324 0800. За соединение платить не нужно. Кроме того, Вы можете лично посетить офис Bridge Housing и попросить об услугах переводчика.

**Greek**

Εάν χρειάζεστε βοήθεια για να κατανοήσετε την παρούσα επιστολή, παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε με την Υπηρεσία Τηλεφωνικών Διερμηνέων στο 131450 και ζητήστε τους να επικοινωνήσουν με το 8324 0800 για εσάς χωρίς καμία χρέωση. Μπορείτε επίσης να επισκεφθείτε το γραφείο Bridge Housing και να ζητήσετε βοήθεια στη γλώσσα σας.

**Vietnamese**

Nếu cần người giúp để hiểu thư này xin quý vị liên hệ với Dịch Vụ Thông Ngôn Điện Thoại số 131450 và nhờ họ liên lạc với Bridge Housing qua số 8324 0800 cho quý vị một cách miễn phí. Quý vị cũng có thể đến Văn Phòng của Bridge Housing và xin giúp đỡ bằng ngôn-ngữ của quý-vị.

**Arabic**

إذا احتجت إلى مُساعدة في فهم هذه الرسالة رجاء الاتصال مع خدمة الترجمة الهاتفية على رقم 131450 واطلُب منهم أن يتصلوا لك بمكتب على رقم 8324 0800 بدون تكلفة عليك. ويُمكّنك أيضا الحضور إلى مكتب Bridge Housing وطلَب المُساعدة بلُغتك.