

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT AGREEMENT

Executive Board Members | Member Representatives | Committee Members | Staff | Volunteers | Contractors

1. Scope and Application

This Code applies to Executive Board members, office bearers, authorised representatives of member organisations, committee and working group members, employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and any other person authorised to act for or on behalf of the Network (covered persons).

It applies whenever a covered person attends meetings, delivers programs or events, communicates online, represents the Network publicly, manages information or resources, or participates in any activity connected with the Network.

This Code operates together with the Network's Terms of Reference, Constitution when adopted, policies, lawful resolutions and applicable laws. Where another document sets a higher standard, the higher standard applies.

2. Ethical Principles

All covered persons are expected to uphold the following principles:

- **Unity in diversity:** Respect the cultural, linguistic, national, ethnic and religious diversity of African communities and avoid conduct that divides, stereotypes or marginalises people.
- **Inclusion and equality:** Promote fair participation and meaningful opportunities and do not discriminate, harass, bully, victimise or exclude.
- **Respect:** Treat every person with dignity, courtesy and professionalism, including when opinions differ.
- **Collaboration:** Work in good faith toward agreed objectives and support constructive partnerships.
- **Integrity:** Act honestly, ethically and in the best interests of the Network and the communities it serves.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Make decisions openly, maintain appropriate records and accept responsibility for actions and use of resources.
- **Community-led practice:** Ensure African communities and member organisations have a meaningful voice in matters affecting them.
- **Political independence:** Protect the Network's non-partisan character and do not use its name, platforms or resources to promote a political party or candidate

3. General Standards of Conduct

Covered persons must:

- Act lawfully, honestly, fairly and with reasonable care, skill and diligence.
- Act within the Network's purpose and approved governance processes, and follow lawful and reasonable decisions, policies, procedures and delegated authorities.
- Provide accurate, complete and timely information when making decisions, preparing reports or communicating on behalf of the Network.
- Attend agreed meetings and activities, prepare appropriately and complete assigned actions within reasonable timeframes.
- Listen respectfully and address disagreement through constructive discussion rather than personal attacks.

- Not misuse a position, title, relationship or access to obtain an improper advantage for themselves, their organisation, family, friends or associates.
- Not make false, misleading or unauthorised statements or commitments in the Network's name, and cooperate with reasonable governance reviews, audits, investigations and handover requirements.

4. Working with Member Organisations and Communities

When engaging with member organisations, communities, participants, partners or stakeholders, covered persons must:

- Treat people with dignity and respect their cultural, religious and linguistic identities.
- Promote participation that is safe, accessible, inclusive and responsive to community needs.
- Respect the legal identity, governance, assets, liabilities, staff, programs and operational independence of each member organisation.
- Never make a binding commitment for another member organisation without that organisation's express authorisation.
- Use consultation honestly and never present a personal view as a community mandate without appropriate consultation and authority.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid exploitation, intimidation, coercion or favouritism, and promptly report serious safeguarding or safety concerns through the appropriate channel.

5. Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Benefits

A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may arise from personal, family, employment, business, political, financial or organisational interests.

- Disclose a conflict of interest as soon as it becomes known and before participating in the relevant discussion or decision.
- Follow the agreed management action, which may include recording the conflict, limiting access to information, abstaining from discussion or voting, or leaving the meeting temporarily.
- Do not influence a decision from which they, their organisation or an associate may receive an improper benefit.
- Do not solicit or accept money, gifts, hospitality, services or benefits that could influence, or appear to influence, judgement; declare material gifts or benefits as required.
- Ensure declarations and agreed management actions are recorded in meeting minutes and, where appropriate, the Conflict of Interest Register.
- Use Network funds, assets and resources only for approved purposes and comply with approved budgets, financial delegations, signatory requirements and procurement processes.
- Keep complete and accurate financial records and never use Network money, property, contacts, confidential information or opportunities for unauthorised personal or organisational benefit.
- Disclose relevant financial interests in suppliers, partners, grants, projects or transactions and report suspected fraud, corruption, theft, misuse of funds or serious financial mismanagement promptly.

6. Confidentiality, Privacy and Records

Covered persons must protect confidential and sensitive information, including personal information, complaints, financial information, internal deliberations, funding arrangements, passwords and unpublished project information.

- Access confidential information only where it is required for an authorised purpose.
- Use and disclose information only for the purpose for which access was granted, unless consent or lawful authority permits otherwise.
- Store documents, records and digital information securely and use approved systems where available.
- Do not copy, forward, photograph, publish or discuss confidential information with unauthorised persons.
- Maintain accurate meeting, membership, project and financial records and do not alter or destroy records improperly.
- Return or transfer Network records, property, passwords and access credentials when a role ends or when requested by an authorised officer.
- Continue to respect confidentiality after leaving a role or the Network.

Confidentiality does not prevent a lawful report of suspected wrongdoing, seeking professional advice, or disclosure required by law.

7. Communication, Media and Public Representation

- Public statements made in the Network's name must be authorised through the agreed governance process, and only authorised spokespersons may represent the Network's official position.
- Member organisations and individuals may express their own views in their own name but must not present those views as the Network's position.
- Personal political activity must remain separate from the Network and must not use Network branding, databases, meetings or resources without formal authority.
- Online and social media conduct must be respectful, accurate and consistent with confidentiality, privacy and non-discrimination obligations.
- Internal disagreements, confidential discussions or identifiable complaints must not be posted publicly or shared through informal messaging groups without authority.
- Network logos, letterheads, email addresses and social media accounts must be used only for approved Network purposes.

8. Financial and Resource Integrity

The Network is committed to meetings, workplaces, events and digital spaces that are respectful, safe and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation, threats and violence.

Unacceptable conduct includes:

- Insults, threats, intimidation, shouting, humiliating language or repeated personal attacks.
- Unwelcome sexual comments, suggestive conduct, inappropriate physical contact or sexual harassment.
- Racist, sexist, ableist, religiously intolerant or otherwise discriminatory comments or behaviour.
- Spreading malicious rumours, deliberately excluding a person, continually dismissing their contribution or abusing group communication platforms.
- Physical aggression, threatening gestures, stalking, retaliation or conduct that creates a hostile or unsafe environment.
- Performing duties while impaired by alcohol or drugs in a way that creates a safety or performance risk.

Reasonable management action, robust but respectful debate, and legitimate performance feedback are not bullying when carried out lawfully and appropriately.

9. Respectful and Safe Meetings and Workplaces

A person who reasonably believes that serious unethical conduct, misconduct, corruption, fraud, abuse, discrimination, harassment, safety risk or unlawful behaviour has occurred should report it promptly to an appropriate authorised person.

Depending on the circumstances, a concern may be reported to the President or Chairperson, Secretary, Public Officer, another authorised Executive Board member, an appointed complaints officer, or an external authority where required by law or where internal reporting is not appropriate.

Reports must be made honestly and in good faith. Retaliation against a person who raises a genuine concern, provides information or participates in a review is not tolerated. Knowingly false, malicious or misleading allegations may constitute misconduct.

Alleged breaches will be handled fairly, confidentially and as promptly as reasonably possible. The person concerned should be informed of the substance of the allegation and given a reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to safety, legal and confidentiality considerations.

Depending on the seriousness and circumstances, outcomes may include:

- Informal guidance, counselling, mediation or a request to correct the conduct.
- A formal warning, additional training, supervision or conditions on participation.
- Removal from a meeting, project, delegation, committee or spokesperson role, or suspension/recommendation for removal from office or membership under the Network's governance documents.
- Termination of employment, contract or volunteer engagement where applicable.
- Referral to police, a regulator, funder, insurer or other appropriate external authority.

Decisions about breaches must be made by persons who are impartial and free from relevant conflicts of interest, with appropriate records maintained.

10. Individual Responsibilities

Each covered person is responsible for reading, understanding and applying this Code, seeking guidance when uncertain, completing required declarations or training, and renewing their commitment when the Code or their role changes.

Leaders and office bearers have an additional responsibility to model this Code, address concerns consistently, promote an ethical culture and ensure people understand how to raise issues safely.

I confirm that I have read and understood the United African Organisations Network of NSW Code of Ethics and Conduct. I agree to comply with this Code and the Network's governance requirements applicable to my role. I understand that I must disclose conflicts of interest, protect confidential information, use the Network's name and resources only with proper authority, and raise serious concerns through appropriate channels.

Full Name: _____

Member Organisation: _____

Position / Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____