Landcare Victoria Inc.

Code of Conduct

Landcare Victoria Inc.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and purpose of the Code

Central to the success of the landcare movement are good people who demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct in their interactions with other people and organisations. Landcare Victoria, as the peak body for Victorian landcare, aims to foster a mutually-supportive and safe environment where members, volunteers and staff are respected, valued and enjoy working together towards our shared objects.

The Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of behaviour of all individuals in connection with their roles with Landcare Victoria. The Code has been produced in accordance with clause 17.4 of the Constitution of Landcare Victoria Inc, which gives the Board power to make policies for:

(i) the general conduct and management of the Association; and

(ii) the activities and operations of members in their capacity as members as it sees fit

The Code is intended to:

- Ensure Landcare Victoria and all individuals working with our Association meet any statutory requirements, standards and obligations in regard to matters of conduct, health and safety
- Set overarching principles and standards of behaviour to guide people on how to perform their duties in a professional and ethical way
- Ensure the values and integrity of the Association are actively being upheld
- Provide assurance to individuals and organisations working with Landcare Victoria, including external stakeholders, by enabling high standards of practice

All organisational documents referenced in this Code may be accessed on Landcare Victoria's website.

1.2 Updating the Code

The Board of Landcare Victoria Inc is responsible for the accuracy and currency of organisational policies. The Code of Conduct is managed by the Chief Executive Officer of Landcare Victoria.

This Code will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years or when capstone requirements change, including legislative amendments. The Chief Executive Officer with support from staff will prepare recommendations for changes, subject to approval by the Board.

In the case of a discrepancy between the Code of Conduct and the Constitution of Landcare Victoria Inc, the Constitution takes precedence as the organisation's governing document.

1.3 Definitions

In this Code:

a) **Association** means Landcare Victoria Incorporated A0011936S.

b) **Board** means the board having management of the Association for the time being.

c) **Code** means this document, the Landcare Victoria Inc Code of Conduct.

d) **Constitution** means the governing document of the Association as amended from time to time.

e) **Landcare Victoria** means Landcare Victoria Incorporated A0011936S.

f) **Member** means a member of the Association as defined in the Constitution.

g) **Member Policy** means a policy that meets the description in **clause 17.4(a)(ii)** of the Constitution.

h) **Objects** mean the purposes for which the Association is established, as set out in **clause 4.1** of the Constitution.

i) **Prejudicial conduct** means conduct meeting the description in **clause 12.1(b)** of the Constitution.

j) **Strategic Plan** means the current strategic plan of the Association.

2 Code of Conduct

2.1 Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to all Landcare Victoria employees, volunteers, members, contractors and other parties in connection with their roles with Landcare Victoria.

As Landcare Victoria members may be organisations (full members) or people (associate members), individuals are bound by the Code when acting on behalf of or in connection with the Association, including when representing a Landcare Victoria member organisation.

2.2 Capstone requirements

All individuals and organisations in Victoria are bound by the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*, which provides protections from discrimination in public life in Victoria. Under this legislation, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a protected personal characteristic, to sexually harass someone, or to victimise them for speaking up about their rights, making a complaint, helping someone else make a complaint or refusing to do something that would be contrary to the *Equal Opportunity Act.*

The *Equal Opportunity Act* includes a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible. This means that, instead of simply reacting to complaints of discrimination or sexual harassment, organisations must be proactive about discrimination and take steps to prevent it from occurring.

With respect to appropriate and safe behaviour, other state and Commonwealth legislation and regulatory standards may also apply, including:

- *Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Act 2011 (Vic)* (also known as Brodie's Law)
- *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*
- *Fair Work Amendment Act 2013 (Cth)*
- Victorian Child Safe Standards

In accordance with clause 12 of the Constitution, Landcare Victoria may take disciplinary action against a member if it determines that an individual member, or one or more individuals within a member organisation, have engaged in prejudicial conduct. Conduct prejudicial to the Association, includes but is not limited to, a failure to comply with a code of conduct or policy of Landcare Victoria.

Individuals working with Landcare Victoria are also expected to consider the objects of the Association as defined in the Constitution, along with the organisational values defined in the current Strategic Plan.

2.3 Organisational values

Our values, as defined in the Landcare Victoria Inc Strategic Plan 2025-2028, reflect the values of the Victorian landcare community. Actions taken by individuals acting on behalf of or in connection with the Association should always be aligned with these values:

- **Grounded** in the community and knowledge of local landscapes
- **Empowering** individuals and communities to make a positive difference to their local landscapes
- **Respectful** of the knowledge of diverse groups of people with a connection to the land, including First Nations people
- **Collaborative** in our approach to achieving outcomes

2.4 General code of behaviour

When acting on behalf of or in connection with Landcare Victoria or one of its member organisations, those bound by this Code of Conduct will:

1) Understand and act in accordance with Landcare Victoria's documented objects, values, Member Policies and procedures
2) Comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory standards
3) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others, and value their ideas and opinions
4) Be fair, considerate, honest, ethical and professional in all dealings with others
5) Strive to make decisions that are fair and equitable
6) Always act in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner towards all persons and challenge inappropriate, exclusionary, or discriminatory behaviour
7) Value, respect and leverage the benefits of diverse lived experiences
8) Protect the welfare and human rights of others, and particularly those who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
9) Report any unlawful, threatening or violent behaviour to the appropriate authorities
10) Accept responsibility and accountability for their own actions
11) **Not** engage in unlawful, threatening, violent or discriminatory behaviour
12) **Not** shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle, degrade or harass any person
13) **Not** use their involvement with Landcare Victoria to promote their own beliefs, behaviours and practices where these are inconsistent with those of the Association
14) **Not** take any action or behave in a manner that may bring Landcare Victoria or the broader landcare movement into disrepute

2.5 Breaches of the Code

Any breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Constitution. Depending on the severity of the breach, such disciplinary action may include reprimand, formal warning, suspension of membership/employment or termination of membership/employment.

Similar disciplinary action may be taken against any leader, supervisor or manager who directly approves or condones a breach of Our Code and does not take immediate action to remediate such breach.

Breaches of applicable laws or statutory regulations may also result in prosecution by the appropriate authorities.

In keeping with the requirement for organisations to be proactive in preventing discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as per the *Equal Opportunity Act*, any behaviour contradictory to this Code that may constitute a breach should be reported to Landcare Victoria as soon as is practicable.