

Statement of Business Ethics

Purpose

To set out ethical ground rules for all sectors of the community when conducting business with Yass Valley Council.

Scope

All employees and Consultants

Definitions

Nil

Term	Meaning

Policy Principles

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

There are two main principles that form the basis of Yass Valley Council's business agreements:

- demonstrated impartiality and fairness at all stages of business transactions.
- best possible value for public money.

2. IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS

Impartiality and fairness are about being objective, even handed and reasonable. An impartial person will try objectively to establish criteria for determining best value for money and will work hard to objectively assess each tender, proposal, or quotation against these criteria.

Being impartial includes considering the practicalities of a given situation. Impartially does not require for example, inviting bids from firms which may have performed poorly in the past. In some circumstances, fairness takes into account the effects of actions of others. It would be unfair to call tenders when there is no serious intent to award a contract subject to a satisfactory offer.

Fairness does not necessarily mean pleasing everyone. Some people are occasionally adversely affected by fair decisions. Council operates from a viewpoint where it demonstrates fairness in all dealings and minimises where possible, any adverse effects of Council decisions.

3. VALUE FOR MONEY

Value for money is determined by considering all the factors which are relevant to a particular process. For example, quality, reliability, timeliness, service, initial and ongoing costs are all factors which can make a significant impact on benefits and costs. Value for money does not mean 'lowest price'. However, the lowest price bid might offer best value if it meets other essential criteria such as quality and reliability.

4. ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Council expects staff to:

- (a) respect and follow Council's Code of Conduct;
- (b) treat all tenderers for the supply of goods and services equitably;
- (c) promote fair and open competition while seeking best value for money;
- (d) protect confidential information;
- (e) meet or exceed public interest and accountability standards;
- (f) avoid situations where private interest could conflict with public duty;
- (g) never solicit or accept remuneration, gifts or other benefits from a supplier for the discharge of official duties;
- (h) deal with any token gifts in accordance with Council's Gifts & Benefits policy;
- (i) comply with all Council policies and procedures;
- (j) respond promptly to reasonable requests for advice and information;
- (k) not make comment to the public about Council matters unless they are specifically delegated to do so by the General Manager.

4.2 Council expects tenderers, suppliers, consultants and contractors to:

- (a) respect the conditions set out in documents supplied by Council;
- (b) respect the obligation of Council staff to abide by Council's procurement policy;
- (c) abstain from collusive practices;
- (d) prevent unauthorised release of privileged information, including confidential Council information;
- (e) refrain from offering Council employees or Councillors any financial or other inducement which may give any impression of unfair advantage.

4.3 Council expects all parties to:

- (a) disclose any conflicts of interest related to any business transaction or council decision;
- (b) treat council and business information as confidential unless otherwise indicated;
- (c) respect each other's intellectual property rights and formally negotiated any access licence for use of intellectual property;
- (d) to comply with the Statement of Business Ethics and to make any sub-contractors or sub-consultants aware of this statement.

5 BEHAVIOUR ETHICAL OR NOT?

There is no absolute definition of 'ethical behaviour'. If there is any doubt about the ethics of a proposed action, a sensible test is whether or not you would be happy to see your behaviour published in the local newspaper.

Staff and Councillors of Yass Valley Council or those in the employ of a tenderer, supplier, consultant or contractor who are concerned that a breach of the law or of ethical conduct may have taken place, should discuss the matter with Yass Valley Council's Public Officer or General Manager on (02) 6226 1477.

6. BREACHES

6.1 Non-compliance

If suppliers to Council do not comply with the Statement of Business Ethics, this may lead to one or more of the following:

- tenders being excluded from consideration;
- matters being referred for investigation;
- contracts being terminated; or
- firms or individuals being excluded from participating in future business opportunities with Council.

If Council officials do not comply with this policy, any breaches would be investigated in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and may lead to one or more of the following:

- a formal investigation;

- disciplinary action;
- dismissal; or
- potential criminal charges.

6.2 Reporting Unethical Behaviour

Yass Valley Council is committed to promoting ethical behaviour. Reports of unethical behaviour, fraud, corrupt conduct, maladministration or waste should be made to Council's General Manager in accordance with Council Policy GOV-CP-7 – Complaints.

6.3 Internal Disclosures

Public officials making disclosures about corrupt conduct, maladministration or waste of public funds are protected under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994*. Disclosures should be lodged in accordance with Council Policy GOV-CP-15 – Internal Reporting.

Responsibilities

The Governance Unit will:

- Provide all necessary administrative support for the operation of this policy
- Develop and document any procedures for the effective implementation of this policy
- Keep sufficient records to enable monitoring of compliance with this policy and provide information required for Integrated Planning and Reporting purposes and internal organisational performance measurement.

References

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

Legislation Policies and procedures	Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994
	Model Code of Conduct for Local councils in NSW 2020
	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
	GOV-CP-07 Complaints
	GOV-CP-15 Internal Reporting

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	MagiQ Reference
Original	25 March 2009	Approved at Council Meeting	Min 118
Review	13 May 2009	Approved at Council Meeting	Min 170
Review	26 February 2014	Approved at Council Meeting	Min 31
Review	13 September 2021	New Template	

Ownership and Approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Governance Unit
Owner	Manager Governance
Endorser	EMT
Approver	Council