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1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Code of Conduct (Code) is to set out the Health Services Union NSW/ACT/QLD's (HSU) expected standards of behaviour. It provides a clear framework for ethical and professional conduct, ensuring that all individuals contribute to a safe, respectful, and values-driven workplace.
- 1.2 The HSU is committed to ethical workplace practices. By following the principles in this Code, individuals help uphold the reputation of the HSU and ensure we continue to act in the best interests of our members.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct applies to the following Parties:
- all staff;
 - Elected Officers;
 - Union Committee and Union Council Members;
 - Workplace Sub Branch Officials;
 - Workplace Delegates; and
 - Conference Delegates.
- 2.2 All Parties are required to comply with the Code of Conduct at all times while working for or representing the HSU.
- 2.3 A breach of the Code may be considered misconduct or serious misconduct depending on the circumstances and could, in the case of employees, result in disciplinary action by the HSU. In the case of Elected Officers or other HSU members bound by the Code, it could result in action under the Rules.

3. Relevant Legislation

- 3.1 This Code should be read in conjunction with the following legislation:
- *Anti-Discrimination Act (NSW) 1977;*
 - *Industrial Relations Act (NSW) 1996;*
 - *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998;*

- *Workers Compensation Act (NSW) 1987; and*
- *Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011.*

4. Principles of Conduct

4.1 The following ten (10) principles set the standard of behaviour expected of all Parties:

1. Act with honesty and integrity
2. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy
3. Act lawfully, ethically and with accountability
4. Promote a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace
5. Act with care, diligence and professionalism
6. Maintain confidentiality
7. Disclose conflicts of interest
8. Use HSU resources responsibly
9. Uphold the HSU's values, integrity and reputation
10. Communicate accurately and transparently.

Principle 1: Act with honesty and integrity

All Parties are expected to uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all professional interactions and decision-making. This means always being truthful, transparent, and conducting themselves in a manner that builds trust with colleagues, members, and stakeholders.

Honesty and integrity also require all Parties to:

- Avoid misleading, deceptive, or dishonest behaviour, including the omission of important information;
- Making decisions using fair, unbiased and objective processes;
- Represent the HSU's interests faithfully and not engaging in conduct that could bring the organisation into disrepute;
- Admit and report mistakes or wrongdoing promptly;

- Using the authority and powers of your role responsibly, for their intended purpose, and not for personal benefit; and
- Not accepting inducements, incentives or gifts that may influence — or appear to influence — your professional judgement.

Principle 2: Treat everyone with respect and courtesy

Respect and courtesy are fundamental expectations for all Parties. Every individual, regardless of position, background, or opinion, is entitled to dignity and respect.

While the HSU encourages the exchange of diverse ideas and opinions, respectful communication means recognising the value of differing viewpoints. Even in robust discussions, everyone has the right to be heard, and their contributions must be respected.

Key principles of respectful behaviour include:

- **Respect for opinions:** All viewpoints should be valued and heard without judgment or discrimination.
- **Courtesy in communication:** Conversations should be conducted with kindness, patience, and professionalism.
- **Inclusivity:** A respectful environment promotes wider participation and engagement.
- **Constructive disagreement:** Conflicts should be addressed through respectful dialogue, aiming for understanding and resolution.

Principle 3: Act lawfully, ethically and with accountability

All Parties must act in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, industrial instruments, and HSU policies, procedures and guidelines.

Upholding ethical standards means doing what is right and not just what is permitted while ensuring that decisions and actions align with the values and expectations of the HSU.

Accountability involves taking responsibility for your actions, decisions, and their outcomes.

All Parties are expected to:

- Understand and comply with relevant policies, procedures and guidelines;
- Use sound judgment and act in good faith, with honesty and fairness;
- Own the consequences of their decisions and actions, including admitting mistakes and taking steps to address them; and
- Report any unlawful, unethical, or improper conduct they witness or become aware of through the appropriate channels.

By acting lawfully, ethically, and with accountability, all Parties help maintain trust, transparency, and integrity across the organisation.

Principle 4: Promote a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace

Every person has the right to work in an environment that is safe, inclusive, and free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, and violence. All Parties are expected to contribute to a culture that upholds dignity, fairness, and mutual respect.

The HSU does not tolerate any form of inappropriate workplace behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment or harassment of any nature;
- Bullying or intimidating conduct;
- Discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political belief, social background, or any other protected attribute;
- Verbal or physical aggression or threats of violence; and
- Any behaviour that violates the HSU Work Health and Safety Policy, the Workplace Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy or the Equal Employment Opportunity and Workplace Behaviour Policy.

All Parties must not engage in, condone, or ignore such behaviour. All concerns should be reported promptly to their manager or Human Resources (HR).

Creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful workplace is a shared responsibility. It is essential to ensuring that all individuals can participate fully and confidently in their work without fear of mistreatment or exclusion.

Principle 5: Act with care, diligence and professionalism

All Parties are expected to perform their duties with care, diligence, and a high standard of professionalism at all times. This means approaching work with attention to detail, reliability, and a commitment to quality outcomes.

In the context of the HSU, our responsibilities to members are significant. Many of the individuals we represent face ongoing challenges in their working and personal lives. It is essential that all Parties carry out their work with compassion and care for the membership.

Acting with care and professionalism includes:

- Fulfilling duties to a high standard and meeting deadlines;
- Being thorough, well-prepared, and responsive in all interactions;
- Treating all members, colleagues, and stakeholders with empathy and respect;
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conduct, appearance, and communication; and
- Continuously seeking to improve skills, knowledge, and performance.

By demonstrating care, diligence, and professionalism, all Parties contribute to a workplace culture that is respectful, competent, and member focused.

Principle 6: Maintain appropriate confidentiality

All Parties must protect the confidentiality of all personal, sensitive, and organisational information encountered during the course of their work. This includes information about members, staff, industrial matters, internal operations, and any other content not intended for public disclosure.

Maintaining confidentiality includes:

- Not discussing or disclosing confidential information without proper authorisation;
- Not engaging in informal discussions about sensitive matters;
- Being mindful of physical, verbal, and digital environments when handling private and confidential information; and
- Immediately reporting any known or suspected breaches of confidentiality, whether accidental or intentional.

Breaching confidentiality undermines trust, exposes the HSU to legal and reputational risk, and may result in disciplinary action. All Parties have a responsibility to safeguard the privacy and dignity of members, staff, and the organisation.

All Parties must ensure that all information must be handled in accordance with the HSU's Privacy Policy.

Principle 7: Disclose Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibilities as an HSU employee, elected officer or member and/or their responsibility to act in the best interests of the HSU and its members. Personal interests include direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder).

Conflicts of interest can arise in various contexts at the HSU, including industrial, financial, administrative, political, or governance matters. When a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest is identified, all Parties must:

- Disclose the conflict to their manager or the HR Manager as soon as it arises;
- Seek guidance before proceeding with any related activity or decision; and
- Withdraw from any involvement in matters where the conflict exists or may be perceived to exist.

Persons bound by this Code should consider how a situation or decision may be perceived by members, and act appropriately. It's important to remember that a conflict can exist even if the person feels their decision making isn't being influenced by the relationship, and it must still be declared.

All Parties must not use their position, authority, or access to inside information to gain an advantage for themselves or others. Failing to appropriately disclose or manage a conflict of interest can undermine the integrity of the HSU.

The HSU maintains a conflict of interest register that is managed by the Project Officer – Governance and Compliance. All real or perceived conflicts of interest are required to be documented in the register.

Principle 8: Use HSU resources appropriately

All HSU resources are funded by members. All Parties have a responsibility to use these resources efficiently, ethically, and only for authorised work-related purposes.

Resources include, but are not limited to:

- IT systems and equipment;
- Stationery and office supplies;
- HSU-branded materials and uniforms;
- Facilities and Vehicles; and
- Communication systems and digital tools.

All Parties must:

- Use resources responsibly and avoid waste or misuse;
- Take reasonable care to maintain resources in good condition;
- Not use HSU resources for personal gain, unauthorised private use, or outside employment;
- Ensure that access to information systems and digital tools is secure and complies with IT and cybersecurity policies; and
- Respect the financial contribution made by members in funding HSU assets.

Responsible use of resources ensures the HSU can operate effectively and deliver the best possible outcomes for its members.

In conjunction with the Workplace Surveillance Policy, all Parties are aware that their activities may be monitored while at work.

Use of HSU Branding and Uniform

HSU-branded items, including but not limited to business shirts, polo shirts, hoodies, jackets, conference apparel, vehicles, signage, printed materials and other merchandise displaying the HSU logo, are organisational assets and represent the HSU publicly.

Employees must not wear, display or otherwise use HSU-branded clothing, vehicles, materials or merchandise at any event, rally, protest, political gathering or public activity unless expressly authorised by the Secretary or their delegate.

The display of HSU branding at unauthorised events may create a reasonable perception that the employee is representing, or acting on behalf of, the HSU and may be interpreted as official endorsement of the event or associated views. Such conduct exposes the HSU to professional, safety and reputational risks.

Employees are required to exercise sound judgement to ensure that their personal activities do not create confusion about whether they are acting in a personal capacity or on behalf of the HSU.

A failure to comply with this requirement constitutes a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Employees who are uncertain whether an event is authorised must seek clarification from their manager or the Human Resources team prior to attending.

Principle 9: Upholds the HSU's values, integrity and reputation

The HSU holds a respected position within the community, the broader union movement, and among its members and stakeholders. All Parties are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the HSU's values and enhances its credibility, both in and outside the workplace.

All actions and behaviours should reflect the highest standards of professionalism, fairness, and ethical conduct. This applies to workplace interactions, public engagements, participation in campaigns, and any situation where you may be seen to represent the HSU.

All Parties must:

- Act as ambassadors of the HSU and promote its mission, values, and objectives;
- Avoid any behaviour that could damage the reputation of the HSU or undermine public confidence in its work; and
- Maintain integrity when engaging with members, the public, partner organisations, and stakeholders.

This includes maintaining a professional standard of appearance and representation. All parties must present themselves in a way that reflects the professionalism and integrity of the HSU.

This includes:

- Dressing neatly and appropriately for the work environment and public engagements (if staff elect to wear printed t-shirts in the office, they must be HSU branded);
- Not wearing HSU-branded uniforms or clothing when attending entertainment venues, smoking, or engaging in personal or social activities where association with the HSU may be inappropriate; and
- Ensuring vehicles used for work related purposes are clean and well maintained.

Upholding the HSU's values and reputation is a shared responsibility and essential to maintaining the trust, influence, and legitimacy of the HSU.

Principle 10: Communicate accurately and transparently

Clear, accurate, and timely communication is essential to maintaining trust and credibility with members, colleagues, and external stakeholders. All information shared on behalf of the HSU must reflect the facts, be consistent with organisational messaging, and promote confidence in the HSU's work.

All Parties must:

- Ensure all verbal, written, and digital communications are factually accurate and not misleading;
- Communicate in a manner that is respectful, clear, and appropriate to the audience;
- Provide information within reasonable timeframes, using formats that are accessible and professional;
- Avoid speculation, assumptions, or unauthorised statements, particularly when representing the HSU externally; and
- Refer to the appropriate policy, delegate, or manager if unsure about the accuracy or authorisation of a communication.

Transparent communication helps build strong relationships, encourages accountability, and ensures that members and stakeholders are well-informed and supported.

5. Social Media Conduct

- 5.1 All parties covered by this Code must ensure their use of social media (personal and professional) is consistent with the principles set out in this Code.
- 5.2 Engagement with official HSU social media channels is encouraged where it aligns with the HSU's values and objectives.
- 5.3 Excessive or inappropriate personal use of social media during work hours may result in access restrictions or disciplinary action.

6. Serious Misconduct

- 6.1 Serious misconduct involves an employee deliberately behaving in a way that is inconsistent with continuing their employment. Serious misconduct may result in summary dismissal and includes, but is not limited to:
 - Wilful or deliberate behaviour that is inconsistent with the continuation of employment;
 - Actions that create a serious and imminent risk to the health or safety of another person;
 - Conduct that risks the reputation, viability or operations of the HSU;

- Theft, fraud, assault or sexual harassment committed in the course of employment;
- Being intoxicated at work, including under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; and
- Refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction consistent with your role or contract of employment.

6.2 This list is not exhaustive. Other conduct may also be treated as serious misconduct depending on the circumstances.

7. Management of Allegations of Misconduct and / or Serious Misconduct

7.1 Where an allegation(s) of misconduct or serious misconduct is made against an employee, the following will occur:

Step 1 - The Secretary of the HSU will be notified.

Step 2 - The Secretary (or their delegate) will conduct inquiries as it deems appropriate for the purposes of determining whether the misconduct or serious misconduct occurred. Inquiries will be conducted in a reasonable, fair and objective manner.

Step 3 - The Secretary (or their delegate) will provide the employee with the details of the allegation(s) of misconduct or serious misconduct in writing.

Step 4 - The employee will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) and to raise any mitigating circumstances.

7.2 Where an allegation(s) of misconduct and / or serious misconduct has been made against an employee, the HSU may direct the employee to be absent from the workplace on full pay pending the resolution of the matter.

7.3 The Secretary (or their delegate) will consider the employee's response, and any other relevant material to determine whether the allegation(s) of misconduct or serious misconduct can be substantiated on the balance of probabilities. The Secretary (or their delegate) will determine what disciplinary action (up to and including summary termination) is to be taken.

7.4 At all times throughout this process the employee is entitled to be represented by a person of their choice.

8. Management of Grievances

8.1 The grievance procedure provides employees with a formal process to raise concerns regarding any aspect of their employment, including workplace conditions, terms of employment, relationships with colleagues or management, or violations of company policies. The goal is to ensure that grievances are addressed fairly, objectively, and in a timely manner.

a) Informal Resolution

Employees are encouraged to first attempt to resolve any grievances informally. Employees should raise concerns directly with their manager or senior manager, ensuring that open and respectful communication is maintained.

b) Formal Grievance Submission

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the employee should submit a formal grievance in writing, outlining the nature of the issue, any relevant facts, and the desired resolution. The grievance can be submitted to the employee's manager or directly to the HR Manager.

If the grievance involves the employee's direct manager, the employee should notify their senior manager and HR manager instead.

c) Investigation

Upon receiving a formal grievance, an impartial investigation will be conducted to assess the merits of the complaint. The Secretary (or their delegate) will determine the most appropriate investigator. The investigation will be thorough, fair, and unbiased. All parties involved will have an opportunity to provide information or evidence relevant to the grievance.

d) Response

Once the investigation is complete, the Secretary (or their delegate) will provide a written response to the employee, outlining the findings of the investigation and any proposed actions to resolve the grievance.

e) Resolution

If the grievance is upheld, appropriate corrective action will be taken to address the issue and prevent its recurrence. If the grievance is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be clearly communicated.

f) Confidentiality

All grievances will be handled with the utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved. Information will only be disclosed to individuals who need to know to address the grievance.

9. Dispute Resolution Procedure

9.1 A workplace dispute is any disagreement or conflict between employees, or between an employee and the organisation, that affects working relationships, duties, or the work environment. Disputes may arise from miscommunication, differences in expectations, unresolved grievances, or broader workplace issues.

9.2 The HSU is committed to resolving disputes fairly, transparently, and promptly. Employees are entitled to work in an environment free from unmanaged conflict, and both the HSU and its employees are responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent, manage, and resolve disputes quickly and effectively.

a) Informal Resolution

Initial Discussion: Employees should attempt to resolve disagreements as early as possible, through open and respectful communication with the other party. Both employees and managers should strive to address conflicts promptly and professionally to prevent escalation.

b) Formal Resolution

If the dispute cannot be resolved informally, the following steps will be taken:

Step 1 - Written Record

A written record of the dispute must be created, including the nature of the disagreement, the efforts made to resolve it informally, and any actions taken. This record will be shared with both parties involved in the dispute.

Step 2 - Escalation

If the dispute involves the employee's direct supervisor, the employee should notify their senior manager and the HR Manager. If the dispute involves a safety matter, such as concerns about an unsafe work environment, suitable alternative work should be arranged until the issue is resolved.

Step 3 - Support Person

Employees are entitled to have a support person present at any stage of the dispute resolution process. The support person must be independent of the matter and must not be directly involved in the dispute.

Step 4 - Status Quo

While a dispute is being addressed, no party will unilaterally alter the work arrangement unless there is a health and safety risk.

c) Mediation

If the dispute remains unresolved after informal and formal attempts, a mediator will be appointed to facilitate resolution. The below steps will be followed:

Step 1 - Appointment of Mediator

A mediator will be selected based on experience in handling workplace disputes. Mediators will remain neutral and impartial throughout the process.

Step 2 - Mediation Process

During mediation, the mediator will help both parties identify their concerns and work toward a mutually acceptable resolution. The mediator may suggest possible resolutions, but the final decision will require mutual agreement from both parties.

Step 3 - Costs Associated with mediation will be covered by the HSU.

d) Resolution and Action

Once the dispute is resolved, a written summary of the outcome will be provided to all parties involved, including any actions that will be taken to address the issues raised and prevent future disputes.

e) Confidentiality

Dispute resolution will be handled in a confidential manner. All parties involved are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding the details of the dispute and any resolutions.

10. Breaches of this Policy

10.1 Breaches of this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

10.2 Where a staff member suspects a breach of the Code may have occurred, they may seek advice and/or raise the suspected breach for investigation with their Manager, HR or the HSU Secretary.

10.3 A staff member who seeks to make a complaint under this Code should do so as soon as is reasonably practicable.

11. Variations to the Policy

11.1 This Policy may be varied from time to time and an updated version will be posted on the HSU's employee portal.

12. Policy / Document Version Control

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