



Moreland City Council

Policy ID no:

Councillor Code of Conduct

Date Authorised by Council:

Commencement Date:

Review Date (four years from authorised date):

February 2021

Responsible Department

Corporate Services

This policy has been authorised.

Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1	Purpose of the Councillor Code Of Conduct _____	3
1.2	Background _____	4
1.3	Role of Mayor and Councillors _____	4
1.4	Conduct Obligations _____	4
2	POLICY DETAILS.....	6
2.1	Use of Council Resources _____	6
2.2	Gifts and benefits _____	6
2.3	Communication _____	6
2.4	Personal dealings with Council _____	6
2.5	Prohibited Conduct _____	7
2.6	Misuse of Position _____	7
2.7	Improper Direction and Improper Influence _____	8
2.8	Confidential Information _____	8
2.9	Conflict of Interest Procedures _____	8
2.10	Other legislative requirements _____	10
2.11	Dispute Resolution Procedures _____	10
3	MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW.....	15
4	DEFINITIONS	16
5	ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS	16
6	REFERENCES.....	16
7	ENDORSEMENT	17
	Councillor Code of Conduct Declaration _____	17

1 INTRODUCTION

The Moreland City Council (Council) consists of the Councillors who are democratically elected by the electors of Moreland in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act).

Section 76C of the Act provides that each Council must, within four months of a general election:

- call a special meeting solely for the purpose of reviewing the Councillor Code of Conduct (the Code); and
- at that special meeting, approve any amendments to be made to the Code determined by the council to be necessary following the review of the Code.

This Code has been adopted by Council to comply with the requirements of the Act.

A copy of this Code (as amended from time to time) must be:

- given to each Councillor;
- available for inspection at the Council office and any district offices; and
- published on the Council's internet website.

The Code must include an internal resolution procedure for dealing with any alleged contraventions of the Code. A Council can apply sanctions to a Councillor who has been found to have contravened the Code.

Failure by a Councillor to comply with the Council's internal resolution procedure or to comply with a written direction given by the Council under section 81AB of the Act (sanctions for contravention of the Code) constitutes misconduct by a Councillor.

If a Councillor Conduct Panel (CCP) ¹ makes a finding of misconduct against a Councillor, the CCP may apply further sanctions against that Councillor.

1.1 Purpose of the Councillor Code Of Conduct

The purpose of local government is to provide a system under which Councils perform the functions and exercise the powers conferred by or under the *Local Government Act 1989* and any other Act for the peace, order and good government of their municipal districts. Good governance is fundamental to a Council being able to perform its purpose. Good governance relies on good working relations between councillors.

This Code:

- sets out the standards of conduct expected of Councillors;
- endeavours to foster good working relations between Councillors to enable Councillors to work constructively together in the best interests of the local community; and
- mandates Councillor conduct designed to build public confidence in the integrity of local government.
- must include the internal resolution procedure for dealing with an alleged contravention of the Code;
- may set out processes for the purpose of resolving an internal dispute between Councillors;
- must include any provisions prescribed for the purpose of section 76C;
- must include provisions addressing any matters prescribed for the purpose of section 76C; and
- may include any other matters relating to the conduct of Councillors which the Council considers appropriate.

¹ See Section 4 – Definitions

1.2 Background

From the 2016 Council elections, a person elected to be a Councillor is not capable of acting as a Councillor until the person has read the Code and made a declaration stating that they will abide by the Code. It is the personal responsibility of Councillors to ensure that they are conversant with, and comply with, the provisions of this Code.

1.3 Role of Mayor and Councillors

Section 65 of the Act provides that the role of a Councillor is:

- to participate in the decision-making of the Council;
- to represent the local community in that decision-making; and
- to contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.

In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must:

- consider the diversity of interests and needs of the local community;
- observe principles of good governance and act with integrity;
- provide civic leadership in relation to the exercise of the various functions and responsibilities of the Council under this Act and other Acts;
- participate in the responsible allocation of the resources of Council through the annual budget; and
- facilitate effective communication between the Council and the community.

The role of a Councillor does not include the performance of any functions that are specified as functions of the Chief Executive Officer under section 94A of the Act.

Section 73AA of the Act describes the functions of the Mayor as including:

- providing guidance to Councillors about what is expected of a Councillor including in relation to the role of a Councillor under section 65, and the observation of the Councillor conduct principles and the Code by Councillors under sections 76B, 76BA and 76C;
- acting as the principal spokesperson for the Council;
- supporting good working relations between Councillors; and
- carrying out the civic and ceremonial duties of the office of Mayor.

1.4 Conduct Obligations

The Act places obligations on Councillors in relation to the way they should act. The Act also prohibits certain conduct by Councillors and prescribes penalties for Councillors who contravene these provisions.

Section 76B of the Act sets out the primary principle of Councillor conduct as follows:

It is the primary principle of Councillor conduct that, in performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must:

- (a) act with integrity; and*
- (b) impartially exercise his or her responsibilities in the interests of the local community; and*
- (c) not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.*

Section 76BA of the Act sets out the general principles of Councillor Conduct as follows:

In addition to acting in accordance with the primary principle of Councillor conduct specified in section 76B, in performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must:

- (a) avoid conflicts between his or her public duties as a Councillor and his or her personal interests and obligations;*
- (b) act honestly and avoid statements (whether orally or in writing) or actions that will or are likely to mislead or deceive a person;*
- (c) treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, beliefs, rights and responsibilities of other Councillors, Council staff and other persons;*
- (d) exercise reasonable care and diligence and submit himself or herself to the lawful scrutiny that it is appropriate to his or her office;*
- (e) endeavour to ensure that public resources are used prudently and solely in the public interest;*
- (f) act lawfully and in accordance with the trust placed in him or her as an elected representative;*
- (g) support and promote these principles by leadership and example and act in a way that secures and preserves public confidence in the office of Councillor.*

Councillors are required to conduct themselves in observance of the primary principle and the general principles.

1.5 Functions of the Chief Executive Officer

Section 94A of the Act provides that the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining an appropriate organisational structure for the Council;
- ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay;
- the day to day management of the Council's operations in accordance with the Council Plan;
- developing, adopting and disseminating a code of conduct for Council staff;
- providing timely advice to the Council;
- ensuring that the Council receives timely and reliable advice about its legal obligations under the Act and any other Act;
- supporting the Mayor in the performance of the Mayor's role as Mayor;
- carrying out the Council's responsibilities as a deemed employer with respect to Councillors, as deemed workers, which arise under or with respect to the *Accident Compensation Act 1985* or the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*; and
- performing any other function or duty of the Chief Executive Officer specified in this Act or any other Act.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for managing interactions between Council staff and Councillors including by ensuring that appropriate policies, practices and protocols are in place defining appropriate arrangements for interaction between Council staff and Councillors.

Councillors must undertake to respect the functions of the Chief Executive Officer and to comply with the policies, practices and protocols defining appropriate arrangements for interaction between Council staff and Councillors that are put in place by the Chief Executive Officer.

2 POLICY DETAILS

2.1 Use of Council Resources

All Councillors must commit to using Council resources effectively and economically by:

- maintain adequate security over Council property, facilities and resources provided to us to assist in performing our role and will comply with any Council policies applying to their use;
- ensure any expense claims that we submit are in compliance with the relevant legislative provisions and Council policy;
- not use Council resources, including services of Council staff, for private purposes, unless legally or properly authorised to do so, and payments are made where appropriate; and
- not use public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised.

2.2 Gifts and benefits

All Councillors must scrupulously avoid situations giving rise to the appearance that a person or body, through the provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality of any kind, is attempting to gain favourable treatment from an individual Councillor or from the Council.

Councillors must take all reasonable steps to ensure that our immediate family members (parents, spouse, children and siblings) do not receive gifts or benefits that give rise to the appearance of being an attempt to gain favourable treatment.

Where a gift is received on behalf of the Council, the gift becomes the property of the Council. For transparency and accountability purposes, these gifts will be recorded in the Councillors Gifts Register with a notation that it is the property of the Council.

All Councillors must recognise that gifts equal to or above the gift disclosure threshold received in the twelve months prior to election from a person or body that has a direct interest in a matter may give rise to an indirect interest because of receipt of an applicable gift.

Councillors must record all campaign donations in our 'Campaign Donation Return' in accordance with section 62 of the Act.

2.3 Communication

As representatives of the local community, Councillors have a primary responsibility to be responsive to community views and to adequately communicate the position and decisions of Council.

Councillors must undertake to comply with the Council's protocols and respect the functions of the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to be the spokespersons for the Council in accordance with our protocols.

It is acknowledge that individual Councillors are entitled to express their personal opinions through the media. Where Councillors choose to do so, they will make it clear that such comment is a personal view and does not represent the position of Council. Councillors must undertake to ensure that any such comment is devoid of comments that could reasonably be construed as being derogatory, offensive or insulting to any person.

2.4 Personal dealings with Council

When dealing with the Council in a private capacity (e.g. as a resident, ratepayer, recipient of a Council service or applicant for a permit), Councillors must not expect nor request preferential treatment in relation to any such private matter. Councillors must avoid any action that could lead Council staff or members of the public believing that they are seeking preferential treatment or hurting the reputation of Council.

2.5 Prohibited Conduct

The Act has specific provisions that prohibit Councillors from certain conduct. This conduct relates to:

- misuse of position;
- improper direction and improper influence;
- confidential information;
- conflict of interest; and
- electoral conduct.

These matters are set out below in order to provide a complete picture of the obligations on Councillors. While these matters are not of a nature to be addressed as a contravention of the Code, all Councillors must undertake to comply with the prohibitions on Councillor conduct set out below. These matters should more properly be the subject of an application to a Councillor Conduct Panel (CCP) for a finding of serious misconduct or a complaint to the Local Government Inspectorate or the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission depending on the nature of the allegation.

(Note: Serious misconduct by a Councillors means:

- (a) the failure of a Councillor to attend a CCP hearing formed to make a finding in respect of that Councillor; or*
- (b) the failure of a Councillor to give a CCP any information the CCP has requested the Councillor to give; or*
- (c) the failure of a Councillor to comply with a direction of a CCP; or*
- (d) continued or repeated misconduct by a Councillor after a finding of misconduct has already been made in respect of the Councillor by a CCP; or*
- (e) bullying of another Councillor or member of Council staff by a Councillor; or*
- (f) conduct by a Councillor in respect of a member of Council staff in contravention of section 76E; or*
- (g) the release of confidential information by a Councillor).*

2.6 Misuse of Position

A Councillor must not misuse their position:

- to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person; or
- to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.

Circumstances involving the misuse of position by a Councillor include:

- making improper use of information acquired as a result of the position he or she held or holds;
- disclosing information that is confidential information within the meaning of section 77(2);
- directing, or improperly influencing, or seeking to direct or improperly influence, a member of Council staff in contravention of section 76E;
- exercising or performing, or purporting to exercise or perform, a power, duty or function that he or she is not authorised to exercise or perform;
- using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised; or
- failing to disclose a conflict of interest as required under the Act.

2.7 Improper Direction and Improper Influence

A Councillor must not direct, or seek to direct, a member of Council staff:

- in the exercise of a delegated power, or the performance of a delegated duty or function of the Council;
- in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty or function exercise or performed by the member as an authorised officer under the Act or any other Act;
- in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty or function the member exercises or performs in an office or position the member holds under another Act; or
- in relation to advice provided to the Council or a special committee, including advice in a report to the Council or special committee.

This is an important rule that follows from the nature of local government. A broad range of powers are given to Councils under many Acts. These powers are given to the Council as a whole and an individual Councillor only exercises powers when he or she votes in a Council or Special Committee Meeting. An individual Councillor does not have the legal authority to instruct a member of Council staff or to direct the Council administration.

All Councillor contact with Council officers, be it verbally or electronically, should go through the Chief Executive Officer or the relevant Director in the first instance unless an alternative communication pathway with Managers has been agreed to by the Director.

2.8 Confidential Information

A Councillor must not disclose information that we know, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.

A Councillor may disclose information that they know is confidential information in the following circumstances:

- for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising out of the Act;
- to a court or tribunal in the course of legal proceedings;
- pursuant to an order of a court or tribunal;
- to the Chief Municipal Inspector to the extent reasonably required by the Chief Municipal Inspector;
- to a CCP in the course of a hearing and for the purposes of the hearing;
- to a municipal monitor ² to the extent reasonably required by the municipal monitor; and
- to the extent reasonably required for any other law enforcement purposes.

2.9 Conflict of Interest Procedures

If a Councillor has a conflict of interest in a matter which is to be considered or discussed at a meeting of the Council or special committee, an assembly of councillors, an audit committee or a committee established under section 223 of the Act to hear submissions, the Councillor must, if he or she is attending the meeting, disclose the conflict of interest in accordance with the provisions of the Act (unless any of the exemptions apply).

A Councillor has a direct interest in a matter if there is a reasonable likelihood that the benefits, obligations, opportunities or circumstances of the Councillor would be directly altered if the matter is decided in a particular way. This includes where there is a reasonable likelihood that the person will receive a direct benefit or loss that can be measured in financial terms and where the Councillor, or together with a member or members of the person's family have a controlling interest in a company or other body that has a direct interest in the matter.

² See Section 4 - Definitions

A conflict of interest also exists where a Councillor has any of the six types of indirect interest. These indirect interests are

- close association - an indirect interest because of a close association with a family member, relative or member of the household who has a direct interest;
- indirect financial interest - an indirect financial interest, including holding shares above a certain value in a company with a direct interest;
- conflicting duty - a conflicting duty arising from having particular responsibilities to a person or organisation with a direct interest;
- applicable gift - receipt of an applicable gift or gifts from a person or organisation with a direct interest;
- interested party - a party to the matter by having become involved in civil proceedings in relation to the matter; and
- residential amenity – this occurs where there is a reasonable likelihood that the person’s residential amenity will be altered if the matter is decided in a particular way.

2.9.1 Statutory Decision Making and Enforcement Responsibilities

Councillors may have to deal with applications for permits pursuant to various legislation including the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Building Act 1993*, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and Council’s local laws. Councillors may become involved in local cases as a ward representative, or more actively involved in decision making as a member of a Committee or at meetings of the Council which deal with these applications. If so, Councillors must ensure that Council’s statutory decisions are properly taken and that parties involved in the development process are dealt with fairly.

To reduce the risk of decisions being legally challenged, in dealings with permit applications, Councillors must not only avoid impropriety, but must at all times avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.

Councillors making an application for their own property, must not take any further part in the statutory process following submission of the application and must never seek to pressure or influence Council officers to provide a particular recommendation on any application, agreement or in taking enforcement action.

Councillors may receive representations from interested parties in relation to applications. If a Councillor is a member of a Committee which deals with applications, or who is able to attend a meeting of the Council to consider applications, and wishes to respond to lobbying by constituents or others by openly advocating a particular course of action prior to the meeting, must declare an interest and not take part in any consideration of the application in question and must leave the meeting room until consideration of the matter is concluded.

A Councillor proposing to take part in the consideration of applications at a meeting of a committee or of the Council, must not give grounds to doubt his or her impartiality and must not be seen to be prejudging a decision which will be made at the meeting where all the information required to make a decision will be available. A Councillor must not declare his or her voting intention before the meeting. Anyone who may be seeking to influence a Councillor must be advised that the Councillor will not formulate an opinion on a particular proposal until all available information is given and has been duly considered at the relevant meeting.

Any Councillor with an interest, whether financial, non-financial, or personal, in the outcome of a decision on an application, or an agreement, or on taking enforcement action, must declare that interest and refrain from taking part in the consideration of the application.

2.9.2 Assembly of Councillors

An Assembly of Councillors (however titled) means a meeting of an advisory committee of the Council, if at least one Councillor is present, or a planned or scheduled meeting of at least half of the Councillors and one member of Council staff which considers matters that are intended or likely to be—

- the subject of a decision of the Council; or
- subject to the exercise of a function, duty or power of the Council that has been delegated to a person or committee—

but does not include a meeting of the Council, a special committee of the Council, an audit committee established under section 139, a club, association, peak body, political party or other organisation;

If a Councillor attending an Assembly of Councillors knows that a matter being considered by the assembly is a matter that, were the matter to be considered and decided by Council, the Councillor would have to disclose a conflict of interest under section 79, the Councillor must, at the time set out in subsection (4), disclose to the assembly that he or she has a conflict of interest and leave the assembly whilst the matter is being considered by the assembly.

A Councillor must not disclose the conflict of interest either:

- immediately before the matter in relation to which the Councillor has a conflict of interest is considered; or
- if the Councillor realises that he or she has a conflict of interest after consideration of the matter has begun, as soon as the Councillor becomes aware that he or she has a conflict of interest.

2.10 Other legislative requirements

The Act includes requirements in relation to Councillor eligibility, electoral conduct and the election period (caretaker period). Alleged contraventions of these provisions are not to be dealt with by the Council using the internal resolution procedure in this Code. Allegations in relation to contravention of these provisions should be directed to the Victorian Electoral Commission or the Local Government Inspectorate, depending on the nature of the allegation, for investigation and any consequent action.

2.11 Dispute Resolution Procedures

Before commencing any formal dispute resolution process, the Councillors who are parties to a dispute are expected to use their best endeavours to resolve the matter in a courteous and respectful manner between themselves. Where, after these endeavours have been exhausted, the matter still remains unresolved, the parties may resort to any or all of the Council's three phase dispute resolution process.

The Council's three phase dispute resolution process involves:

- direct negotiation between the parties in dispute with the Mayor in attendance to provide guidance;
- external mediation by an independent mediator engaged by the Chief Executive Officer; and
- an internal resolution procedure involving an independent arbiter.

Phase 1 – Direct negotiation

Where Councillors who are in dispute have not been able to resolve the dispute between them, either (or both) party (parties) may request the Mayor to convene a meeting of the parties.

A dispute referred for direct negotiation may relate to:

- an interpersonal conflict between Councillors where the conflict is or is likely to affect the operations of the Council; or
- an alleged contravention of the Code.

The party requesting the direct negotiation meeting is to provide the Mayor with the name of the other Councillor and the details of the dispute in writing. The written request is to indicate that it is for a 'direct negotiation' dispute resolution process. Where the request relates to an alleged contravention of the Code, the request must:

- specify the name of the Councillor alleged to have contravened the Code;
- specify the provision(s) of the Code that is alleged to have been contravened;
- include evidence in support of the allegation;
- name the Councillor appointed to be their representative where the request is made by a group of councillors; and
- be signed and dated by the applicant or the applicant's representative.

The applicant is to notify the other party of the request and provide him or her with a copy of the written request either at the same time as it is provided to the Mayor or as soon as practicable thereafter.

The Mayor is to ascertain whether or not the other party is prepared to attend a 'direct negotiation' meeting.

If the other party is not prepared to attend a meeting, the Mayor is to advise the applicant forthwith. No further action is required of the Mayor.

If the other party declines to participate in a meeting, this does not constitute a contravention of this Code.

If the other party consents to a meeting, the Mayor is to convene a meeting of the parties at the earliest available opportunity. Unless one or both parties are unavailable, this should be within five working days of receiving the consent of the other party.

The Mayor may present the parties with guidelines, in advance of the meeting or at the meeting, to help facilitate the meeting.

The role of the Mayor at the meeting is to provide guidance to Councillors about what is expected of a Councillor including in relation to the role of a Councillor under section 65 of the Act, and the observation of the Councillor Conduct Principles and the Code.

The Mayor is to document any agreement reached at the meeting. Copies of the agreement are to be provided to both parties. Where one party does not comply with the agreement, the other party has recourse to external mediation or the internal resolution procedure where the matter relates to an alleged contravention of the Code.

If the parties cannot resolve the dispute at the meeting, a further meeting may be convened with the consent of both parties. Where the dispute remains unresolved, either or both of the parties have recourse to external mediation or the internal resolution procedure where the matter relates to an alleged contravention of the Code.

Where the Mayor is a party to the dispute, the request is to be made to the Deputy Mayor (if any) or the immediate past Mayor. The Deputy Mayor or the immediate past Mayor will perform the functions ascribed to the Mayor.

Phase 2 – External mediation

A Councillor or a group of Councillors may make an application for a dispute to be referred for external mediation whether or not the dispute has been the subject of an application for 'direct negotiation'.

An application made for a dispute to be referred for external mediation may relate to:

- an interpersonal conflict between Councillors where the conflict is or is likely to affect the operations of the Council; or
- an alleged contravention of the Code.

The applicant is to submit a written application to the Principal Conduct Officer ("PCO")³ setting out the name of the Councillor and the details of the dispute. The application is to indicate that the application is for an 'external mediation'. Where the application relates to an alleged contravention of the Code, the application must:

- specify the name of the Councillor alleged to have contravened the Code;
- specify the provision(s) of the Code that is alleged to have been contravened;
- include evidence in support of the allegation;
- name the Councillor appointed to be their representative where the application is made by a group of Councillors; and
- be signed and dated by the applicant or the applicant's representative.

The applicant is to notify the other party of the request and provide him or her with a copy of the application either at the same time that it is submitted to the PCO or as soon as practical thereafter.

The PCO is to ascertain (in writing) whether or not the other party is prepared to attend an 'external mediation'. If the other party declines to participate in an external mediation, he or she is to provide their reasons for doing so in writing to the PCO. These reasons may be taken into account if the matter is, subsequently, the subject of an application for a CCP.

When the other party declines to participate in an external mediation, this does not constitute a contravention of this Code.

If the other party agrees to participate in an external mediation, the PCO is to advise the applicant, the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer forthwith.

The Chief Executive Officer is to engage the services of an external mediator to conduct the mediation at the earliest practicable opportunity.

The mediator is to document any agreement reached at the meeting. Copies of the agreement are to be provided to both parties. Where one party does not comply with the agreement, the other party has recourse to the internal resolution procedure where the matter relates to an alleged contravention of the Code.

If the parties cannot resolve the dispute at the meeting, a further meeting may be convened with the consent of both parties. Where the dispute remains unresolved, the applicant has recourse to the internal resolution procedure where the matter relates to an alleged contravention of the Code.

³ The Principal Conduct Officer is a staff member appointed by the CEO.

Phase 3 - Internal resolution procedure – Arbiter

An application cannot be made for an internal resolution procedure during the election period for a general election. Any internal resolution procedure that is in progress is to be suspended during the election period for a general election.

If the respondent to an application for an internal resolution procedure is not returned to office as a Councillor in the election, the application lapses. If the respondent is returned to office in the election, the application may resume if:

- the application was made by the Council and the Council so resolves; or
- the application were made by a group of Councillors and any one (or more) of those Councillors who has been returned to office wishes to proceed with the application; or
- the applicant (individual Councillor) is returned to office and wishes to proceed with the application.

A Councillor or a group of councillors may make an application alleging that a Councillor has contravened this Code. The application must:

- specify the name of the Councillor alleged to have contravened the Code;
- specify the provision(s) of the Code that is alleged to have been contravened;
- include evidence in support of the allegation;
- name the Councillor appointed to be their representative where the application is made by a group of councillors; and
- be signed and dated by the applicant or the applicant's representative.

The application must be submitted to the PCO.

An applicant may withdraw an application for an internal resolution procedure. Once an application has been withdrawn, the same or a similar application relating to the same instance in relation to the respondent Councillor cannot be resubmitted by the applicant.

On receiving an application, the PCO will:

- advise the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer of the application without undue delay;
- provide a copy of the application to the Councillor who is the subject of the allegation at the earliest practical opportunity but not later than two working days from receipt of the application;
- identify an arbiter to hear the application;
- obtain from the arbiter written advice that they have no conflict of interest in relation to the Councillors involved;
- notify the parties of the name of the proposed arbiter and provide them with the opportunity (two working days) to object to the person proposed to be the arbiter;
- consider the grounds of any objection and appoint the proposed arbiter or identify another arbiter;
- provide a copy of the application to the arbiter as soon as practicable after the opportunity for the parties to object to an arbiter has expired;
- after consultation with the arbiter, advise the applicant and the respondent of the time and place for the hearing; and
- attend the hearing(s) and assist the arbiter in the administration of the process

In identifying an arbiter to hear the application, the PCO must select an arbiter who is suitably independent and able to carry out the role of arbiter fairly.

The role of the arbiter is to:

- consider applications alleging a contravention of the Code by a Councillor;
- make findings in relation to any application alleging a contravention of the Code which the arbiter must give to the Council;
- give a written statement of reasons supporting the findings to the Council at the same time as it gives its findings to the Council;
- recommend an appropriate sanction or sanctions where the arbiter has found that a Councillor has contravened the Code.
- In considering an application alleging a contravention of the Code, an arbiter will:
- in consultation with the PCO, fix a time and place to hear the application;
- authorise the PCO to formally notify the applicant and the respondent of the time and place of the hearing;
- hold as many meetings as he or she considers necessary to properly consider the application. The arbiter may hold a directions hearing;
- have discretion to conduct the hearings as he or she deems fit while ensuring that the hearings are conducted with as little formality and technicality as due and proper consideration of the application allows;
- ensure that the parties to and affected by an application are given an opportunity to be heard by the arbiter;
- consider an application by a respondent to have legal representation at the hearing to ensure that the hearing is conducted fairly and may, in his or her absolute discretion, grant the application or deny the application;
- ensure that the rules of natural justice are observed and applied in the hearing of the application; and
- ensure that the hearings are closed to the public.

Where an application to have legal representation is granted by an arbiter, the costs of the respondent's legal representation are to be borne by the respondent in their entirety.

An arbiter:

- may find that a Councillor who is a respondent to an internal resolution procedure application has not contravened the Code;
- may find that a Councillor who is a respondent to an internal resolution procedure has contravened the Code; or
- will suspend consideration of an internal resolution procedure during the election period for a general election.

The arbiter is to give a copy of his or her findings and the statement of reasons to the Council, the applicant and the respondent. At the same time, the arbiter provides the findings and statement of reasons, he or she shall, where a Councillor has been found to have contravened the Code, recommend an appropriate sanction or sanctions for the contravention for consideration by the Council.

A copy of the arbiter's findings, statement of reasons and any recommended sanctions is to be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Council for its consideration. If an arbiter has found that a contravention of the Code has occurred, the Council may, after considering the arbiter's findings, statement of reasons and recommendation on sanctions, give any or all of the following written directions to the Councillor:

- direct the Councillor to make an apology in a form or manner specified by the Council;
- direct the Councillor to not attend up to, but not exceeding, two ordinary? meetings of the Council (in respect of the next scheduled meetings of the Council);
- direct that, for a period of up to, but not exceeding, two ordinary? months on a date specified by the Council the Councillor:
 - be removed from any position where the Councillor represents the Council; and
 - to not chair or attend any advisory committee or special committee meeting or an assembly of Councillors or any other meeting specified in the direction.

A Councillor who does not participate in the internal resolution procedure may be guilty of misconduct. The Act provides that misconduct by a Councillor means any of the following:

- failure by a Councillor to comply with the Council's internal resolution procedure; or
- failure by a Councillor to comply with a written direction given by the Council under section 81AB; or
- repeated contravention of any of the Councillor conduct principles.

Allegations of misconduct are heard on application by a CCP.

3 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Code of will be reviewed within four months of the next general election.

4 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Councillor Conduct Panel	A panel of two people selected by the Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar under section 81V of the Act.
Municipal Monitor	A person appointed by the Minister. The functions of a municipal monitor are set out in section 223CB of the Act.
Residential Amenity	A matter would be considered likely to directly affect your residential amenity if it involved a change in the factors that makes living in your home pleasant or agreeable or otherwise affects the quality of living in your home. This can occur by a variety of factors affecting your home including: traffic and parking, noise and pollution, vandalism and nuisance, visual amenity or the character of the area.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Gifts and Hospitality Policy – D16/252172
- Councillors Equipment Policy – D16/253330
- Election Period Policy – D16/181734
- Councillor Support and Reimbursement Policy – D16/245902
- Procurement Policy – D15/353961
- Travel, Accommodation & Personal Expenses Policy D16/253083

6 REFERENCES

- Local Government Act 1989
- Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014
- Local Government (General) Regulations 2015
- Conflict of Interest in Local Government – A Guide
- MAV Model Councillor Code of Conduct

7 ENDORSEMENT

Councillor Code of Conduct Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read the Councillor Code of Conduct for Moreland City Council adopted on 20 February 2017 and declare that I will abide by this Code.

.....

CR NATALIE ABBOUD

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR SUE BOLTON

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR ANNALIVIA CARLI HANNAN

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

.....

CR HELEN DAVIDSON

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR ALI IRFANLI

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR JOHN KAVANAGH

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR DALE MARTIN

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR SAMANTHA RATNAM

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR MARK RILEY

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR LAMBROS TAPINOS

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer

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CR OSCAR YILDIZ JP

Dated:

Witness:

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Nerina Di Lorenzo
Chief Executive Officer