



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF FREEMASONS VICTORIA

Foreword

As Freemasons Victoria continues to adapt and evolve, it is essential that it retains the key attributes that have allowed it to flourish for over a century. Our behaviours are guided by the three tenets of Freemasonry: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, which have inspired our organisational values: Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership, Human Rights. It is precisely these tenets and values that this Code of Conduct seeks to reinforce and protect.

The Code of Conduct complies with and is supported by the existing legislative frameworks which govern the State of Victoria and the Commonwealth of Australia.

The term 'Representatives of Freemasons Victoria' includes (but is not limited to) staff (employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers/interns), members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees, members of the Grand Team, officials and members of Lodges while fundraising or otherwise volunteering in the community.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria are required to be guided by the Code of Conduct in their behaviour, and are encouraged to engage with one another about how they can best adhere to its requirements.

Don Reynolds
Grand Master

Jane Sydenham-Clarke
Chief Executive Officer

Freemasons Victoria Values

Masonic teaching is at the essence of Freemasons Victoria which is based on brotherly love, belief and truth and enabled through ceremonial structure and a network of Lodges that reinforce these values and stimulate empathy, fellowship, networking, support and a generous community compassion in which diversity is embraced. The values driving the organisation are:

Responsiveness – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate responsiveness by:

- a) providing honest, impartial and timely advice
- b) providing high quality services to our membership and the Victorian community
- c) identifying and promoting best practice.

Integrity – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate integrity by:

- a) being honest, open and transparent in their dealings
- b) using powers responsibly
- c) reporting improper conduct
- d) avoiding any real or apparent conflicts of interest
- e) striving to earn and sustain public trust of a high level

Impartiality – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate impartiality by:

- a) making decisions and providing advice on merit and without bias, caprice, favouritism or self-interest
- b) acting fairly by objectively considering all relevant facts and fair criteria
- c) implementing Freemasons Victoria policies and programs equitably.

Accountability – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate accountability by:

- a) working to clear objectives in a transparent manner
- b) owning problems by seeking solutions, rather than deflecting them to another party to solve
- c) accepting responsibility for their decisions and actions
- d) seeking to achieve best use of resources
- e) submitting themselves to appropriate scrutiny

Respect – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate respect for colleagues, members, stakeholders and members of the Victorian community regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or religion by:

- a) treating them fairly and objectively
- b) committing to address conflicts fairly and moving forward once a resolution is reached
- c) ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying
- d) using their views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis

Leadership – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate leadership by behaving professionally and actively implementing, promoting and supporting these values.

Human Rights – representatives of Freemasons Victoria should respect and promote the human rights set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities by:

- a) making decisions and providing advice consistent with human rights
- b) actively implementing, promoting and supporting human rights
- c) actively enabling care, compassion, dignity and pride.

Code of Conduct

1 Responsiveness

1.1 Advising Decision-Makers

Advice is provided in an honest, impartial and timely manner, and with an understanding of its implications on the broader direction of the organisation. Representatives of Freemasons Victoria do not withhold relevant information from the Chief Executive or the Board.

1.2 Services to the Community

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria provide services to the community in an equitable, prompt and ethical manner. They act within the level of their authority and in accordance with the relevant policies.

1.3 Contributing to Improvements

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria are committed to continuous improvement and adopt a best practice approach to the performance of their duties. They identify and actively promote appropriate strategies, methods and processes that lead to improved performance.

2 Integrity

2.1 Honesty

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria act honestly in the performance of their duties. They are open and transparent when making decisions. They give honest advice based on available facts and data. They ensure their advice is up to date.

2.2 Using Powers when representing Freemasons Victoria

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria use their power in a responsible way. They do not use their power to provide a private benefit to themselves, their family, friends or associates. They exercise power in a way that is fair and reasonable, and family or other personal relationships do not improperly influence their decisions. They respect the rights and dignity of those affected by their decisions and actions.

2.3 Financial Probity

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria observe the highest standards of integrity in financial matters and comply with the requirements of relevant financial management legislation, policies and procedures. They maintain a strict separation between work/volunteer-related and personal financial matters and only use or authorise the use of Freemasons Victoria or Lodge financial resources or facilities for work/volunteer-related purposes.

2.4 Personal Information

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria with access to personal information of members ensure it is only used for official purposes and in an approved manner. Personal information is handled according to relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria only disclose such information when required to do so by law, in the legitimate course of duty, when called to give evidence in court, or when proper authority has been given. In such cases comments are confined to factual information only.

2.5 Public Comment

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria only make public comment on behalf of Freemasons Victoria when specifically authorised to do so in relation to their duties.

When making a comment in a private capacity, representatives of Freemasons Victoria ensure that it is clear they are expressing their own view. They ensure personal comments do not compromise their capacity to perform their role in an unbiased manner, and that their comments are not seen or perceived to be an official comment.

2.6 Reporting Unethical Behaviour

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria comply with legislation, policies and lawful instructions in the performance of their work. Representatives of Freemasons Victoria report to an appropriate authority behaviour that violates any law, rule or regulation, or represents corrupt conduct, mismanagement of resources, or is a danger to health or safety, or to the environment. Additional conditions staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees are outlined in the Business Ethics section of the HR Policy and Procedure manual.

2.7 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs where there is conflict between the representative's Freemasons work/volunteer duty and other professional or private interests. A conflict can be actual, potential or perceived. It may relate to circumstances where the representative is or could be directly influenced, or where it is perceived the representative might be influenced.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria avoid conflicts of interest (actual, potential or perceived) wherever possible. They ensure their personal or financial interests (including the interests of family members, friends, or associates) do not influence and could not be perceived to influence the manner in which they execute their duties.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria declare any conflicts of interest. If unsure about a possible conflict of interest, representative of Freemasons Victoria may seek advice from a member of the Executive team, the Chief Executive or a member of the Board of General Purposes.

2.8 Public Trust

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria seek to build and maintain a high level of trust with the community. In the performance of their duties and in their private life, representatives of Freemasons Victoria avoid conduct that may adversely affect their standing or which may bring Freemasons Victoria into disrepute.

2.9 Fitness for Duty

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria carry out their duties safely and avoid conduct that puts themselves or others at risk.

Members should be mindful of the amount of alcohol and/or medication they consume when representing Freemasonry, and ensure that their ability to perform their duties and to exercise sound judgement is not impacted.

Use of illegal drugs by any representative of Freemasons Victoria will not be tolerated.

Staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees are prohibited from consuming alcohol in Freemasons Victoria offices (including the library and museum) at any time.

Staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees must ensure their BAC is below 0.05% when representing Freemasons Victoria at functions.

Additional conditions for staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees are outlined in the Alcohol and Drug Policy, contained in the HR Policy and Procedure manual.

3 Impartiality

3.1 Decisions and Advice

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria make decisions and provide advice that is free of prejudice or favouritism and is based on sound judgement. Before making a decision or providing advice, representatives of Freemasons Victoria consider relevant information and the impact on the organisation, community and other representatives of Freemasons Victoria. Their decisions are not affected by personal influences.

3.2 Gifts and Benefits

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria do not – for themselves or others – seek gifts and benefits (including hospitality). They refuse all offers of gifts and benefits that could reasonably be perceived as influencing them or undermining the integrity of their organisation or themselves. Additional conditions for staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees are outlined in the Gift and Gratuities Policy outlined in the HR Policy and Procedure manual.

3.3 Acting Fairly

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria deal with issues consistently, fairly and in a timely manner. Representatives of Freemasons Victoria use fair criteria, and consider all relevant information in dealing with issues. Being fair means being just and working within commonly accepted rules.

The Secretary's Handbook and the Book of Constitutions outlines steps to be taken should a member wish to make a formal complaint. Staff and members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees who have a workplace grievance are required to follow the Grievance Handling Procedure outlined in the HR Policy and Procedure Manual.

3.4 Bankruptcy

The Chief Executive, members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees and Office bearers are obliged to disclose to the President if they become bankrupt (within the meaning of the Bankruptcy Act 1966) or an insolvent under administration (within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001).

4 Accountability

4.1 Being Responsible for Decisions and Actions

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria make decisions and take actions within the scope of their authority that are lawful and consistent with relevant legislation and government policy. They consider any impact of their decisions or actions on the organisation, community and other representatives of Freemasons Victoria.

4.2 Resources

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria use resources and equipment efficiently and only for appropriate purposes as authorised by the appropriate party. Representatives of Freemasons Victoria seek to achieve value for money and use resources in the most effective way possible. They identify opportunities for improvement to achieve best possible efficiency and responsiveness.

4.3 Open to Scrutiny

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria carry out their duties in an open and transparent manner. They maintain accurate and reliable records as required by relevant legislation, policies and procedures. Records are kept in such a way as to ensure their security and reliability and are made available to appropriate scrutiny when required. Additional conditions for employees, members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees are outlined in the HR Policy and Procedure manual.

4.4 Compliance with Legislation

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria ensure they are aware of and comply with all legislation relevant to the performance of their duties.

5 Respect

5.1 Fair and Objective Treatment

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria promote an environment that encourages respect.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria are fair, objective and courteous in their dealings with the community and other representatives of Freemasons Victoria.

5.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Confidential information requires special treatment and protection. Those people who provide confidential information to representatives of Freemasons Victoria have the right to expect this information will be treated as confidential. Representatives of Freemasons Victoria with access to confidential information ensure it remains confidential, and at all times act in accordance with legislation and policies relating to dealing with private information.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria receive and manage information in such a manner that its confidentiality will be maintained and that it will not be used to advantage a prospective employer or business, or disadvantage Freemasons Victoria.

5.3 Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity may result from a range of factors; origin, age, gender, race, cultural heritage, lifestyle, education, physical ability, appearance, language or other factors. We value the differences between people and the contribution these differences make to our organisation.

This requires that we actively and flexibly seek to accommodate the unique needs of many different representatives of Freemasons Victoria.

It is the responsibility of all representatives to create an environment where:

- Differences are embraced.
- The ability to contribute and access opportunities is based on merit.
- Inappropriate attitudes or behaviours are confronted.
- Diversity and inclusion is part of how we operate
- Above all, we are committed to ensuring that all representatives of FMV are treated with respect and dignity.

Valuing and promoting diversity is an important element of demonstrating respect.

5.4 Anti-discrimination and Harassment

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence and victimisation.

Discrimination is treating or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair work practices.

Violence refers to any incident in which a person is physically attacked or threatened, including any statement or behaviour that causes them to believe they are in danger of being physically attacked.

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be in breach of this policy. Victimisation is against the law.

Prospective members and business partners are entitled to participate in a selection process which is based on merit and not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria are entitled to participate free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence and victimisation.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria have the right to raise issues, and to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised.

Representatives of FMV are expected to offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures, treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Any representative of Freemasons Victoria who believes they have been a victim of discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence or victimisation is strongly encouraged to take appropriate action. Staff and members should refer to the Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy outlined in the HR Policy and Procedures Manual.

5.5 Improving Outcomes

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria are conscientious and efficient in their work. They use their knowledge and expertise to deliver a high quality service, as well as identifying opportunities to improve outcomes.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria contribute both individually and as part of a team and engage constructively with their peers. They share information to support delivery of the best and most appropriate outcomes.

6 Leadership

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria should demonstrate leadership by actively implementing, promoting and supporting these values.

6.1 Leading by Example

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria model the behaviours based on the tenets of Freemasonry and Freemasons Victoria values, and at all times act in an ethical manner. Leadership is about positive influence, inspiring and empowering others.

Providing sound advice, delivering high quality services and encouraging best practice demonstrates **responsiveness**.

Being honest, using powers correctly, identifying and dealing with inappropriate conduct, avoiding conflicts of interest and developing and maintaining public trust demonstrates **integrity**.

Making decisions that are free of bias, considering all relevant facts and ensuring policies and programs are implemented fairly demonstrates **impartiality**.

Being transparent, responsible, using resources efficiently and inviting scrutiny demonstrates **accountability**.

Treating others fairly, eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying, and focusing on improving outcomes demonstrates **respect**.

6.2 Supporting Others

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria work co-operatively with their peers. They support and learn from one another and accept differences in personal style.

They respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of others in their area of competence, and acknowledge their contribution.

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria provide other representatives of Freemasons Victoria with support and guidance.

7 Human Rights

7.1 Understanding Human Rights

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria understand human rights as these apply to their work.

7.2 Making Decisions and Providing Advice Consistent with Human Rights

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria ensure their own decisions and advice properly considers the human rights set out in the Charter, and respects the human rights of others.

7.3 Implementing Human Rights

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria conduct activities and act in a manner that is consistent with human rights.

7.4 Protecting Human Rights

Representatives of Freemasons Victoria seek to protect the human rights of colleagues, other representatives of Freemasons Victoria and members of the Victorian community by raising concerns regarding circumstances that could breach those rights, and reporting any suspected breaches to the Grand Secretary.

Additional Information

8 Guidance

8.1 Who does the Code apply to?

This Code applies to all representatives of Freemasons Victoria: staff (employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers/ interns), members of the Board of General Purposes and its sub-committees, members of the Grand Team, officials and members of Lodges while fundraising or otherwise volunteering in the community.

8.2 When does the Code apply?

The Code applies to you whenever you are identified as a representative of Freemasons Victoria and whenever you are acting as a representative of Freemasons Victoria.

8.3 What will happen if I breach the Code?

Failure to comply with the principles or the spirit of the Code will be considered a serious breach of policy and will be investigated. Breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action.

8.4 How can I be sure my conduct complies with the Code?

While the Code provides general guidance and minimum expectations regarding your conduct, no code or policy can ever cover every conceivable circumstance you may face. In everything you do, you are expected to listen to and act upon your conscience to help build and maintain Freemasons Victoria and your own reputation.

If you are in doubt about whether your conduct is consistent with this Code, it may help you to ask yourself the following questions:

- Does it feel like the right thing to do?
- What would a peer expect or want me to do in this situation?
- What would the reaction be if this was reported in the newspapers?
- Would my peers consider my behaviour appropriate?

8.5 Who can support me in complying with the Code?

If you need more information or are unsure of Freemasons Victoria's expectations or your obligations you are encouraged to speak with your manager, Lodge Secretary, Grand Secretary or the Chief Executive Officer.

I _____ acknowledge that I have read,
understood and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct

Signed: _____