



Standard – Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

This Standard outlines the ethical standards, professional behaviour and conduct requirements for Hunter Water to ensure the highest standards of fairness, honesty, respect and integrity are maintained.

2. Scope

This Standard applies to all employees of Hunter Water (full-time, part-time or casual) and all persons performing work in any capacity for Hunter Water (for example contractors, subcontractors, agents, consultants and temporary employees).

Where relevant the Standard operates in conjunction with Hunter Water's other related policies, standards and contract of employment or contract for service, however, this Standard does not form part of any contract of employment with Hunter Water nor does it form part of any contract for service with Hunter Water.

Hunter Water reserves the right to review and amend this Standard as is considered necessary.

3. Definitions

Public Comment	Public comment by employees includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio and television or in letters to newspapers and expressing views in books, journals, notices, social media forums, etc where it is expected publication of the comment will circulate to the community at large.
Worker	A worker is defined as an individual who performs work in any capacity, including as an employee, a contractor, a subcontractor, an outworker, an apprentice, a trainee, a student gaining work experience or a volunteer as outlined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

4. Key Elements / Components

This Code of Conduct outlines certain minimum standards against which the behaviour and conduct of all employees and persons performing work will be measured.

4.1 Our Values

The Code of Conduct builds on the foundation of Hunter Water, our values guide Hunter Water and the way we operate. Hunter Water will seek to demonstrate these

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values in each and every interaction with its employees, the community and its stakeholders. A summary of these values are:

1. **Wellbeing.** We care about the wellbeing of the public and everyone who works for us. Care for the environment is our highest priority.
2. **Collaborative.** We recognise that by working with others and sharing information and ideas we can develop better solutions.
3. **Innovative.** We look for new ways to do things and challenge traditional means
4. **Courage.** We have the courage to turn challenges into opportunities.
5. **Excellence** We strive for excellence. We strive to be the best we can be and to continually improve.
6. **Honest** We are honest and courteous, we respect the views of others.

4.2 Personal Behaviour and Conduct

4.2.1 Personal Behaviour

It is the expectation of Hunter Water that workers will:

- Live the values of Hunter Water that guide the way we operate.
- Not act contrary to the law.
- Observe the highest standard of honesty, integrity and courtesy.
- Always act in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner that is inclusive and tolerant of all people, cultures and diversity.
- Refrain from any form of conduct which may cause any reasonable person unwarranted offence or embarrassment.
- Ensure all advice given is accurate, impartial and complete whilst protecting the privacy of individuals.
- Carry out all activities in a safe and environmentally responsible manner
- Co-operate with colleagues and work together to achieve organisational goals and objectives.
- Be prepared to demonstrate the reasons for their decisions.
- Discuss any actual or potential dilemmas, conflicts or problems with an appropriate person such as a supervisor/manager or Manager Human Resources to resolve the issue.

4.2.2 Inappropriate Behaviour

Some examples of behaviour and conduct which are not appropriate and will not be tolerated include, but is not limited to:

- Harassment and bullying (please refer to the Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy for further information).
- Refusing or failing to follow a reasonable work instruction.
- Abuse of entitlements.
- Abuse of power and privileges.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work hours.

4.2.3 Ethics Self Questionnaire

If an employee is faced with a situation which they feel could potentially be unethical, or could conflict with the purpose of this Standard, they are encouraged to ask themselves the following questions:

- Does it feel like the 'right' thing to do?
- Does it conflict with any of Hunter Water's policies, standards or procedures?
- If you do it, will you feel bad or wrong?
- Would you be confident in explaining your actions to external authorities?
- How will it look in a newspaper?
- How will it affect other employees, customers, suppliers or the organisation as a whole?
- What is my supervisor's view?

4.3 Conflict of Interest

4.3.1 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when our corporate interests conflict with an interest that an employee/s or director/s may have. All employees can have real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, and these can be financial or non-financial.

In the performance of official functions and duties, corporate interests must come first on all such occasions. Employees and directors of Hunter Water must ensure that all perceived and actual conflicts of interest be immediately disclosed to management.

4.3.2 Outside Employment

Hunter Water supports the pursuit of continuous learning and acknowledges that outside employment can offer valuable experience, knowledge and skills.

Employees however may not engage in any form of employment outside their official Hunter Water duties without prior written approval from their Manager, eg employment with a competitor, commercial customers or suppliers of Hunter Water or its subsidiaries.

Outside employment includes full-time, part-time, temporary work, consulting, work during leave periods, any unpaid work or involvement in Directorships. In all cases when outside employment is considered, employees must give Hunter Water employment primary consideration. Where a perceived or actual conflict of interest exists, employees must disclose this to their supervisor/manager.

4.3.3 Acceptance of Gifts or Benefits

In dealing with external parties, employees may encounter situations where they are offered a gift or a benefit. This includes, but is not limited to monetary payments, payment in kind, the provision of goods and services, personal favours, entertainment, hospitality and travel. In such situations employees need to be mindful of the circumstances in which the offer is made and how it

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could be perceived. This does not preclude acceptance of opportunities to network with industry peers or to share knowledge with other organisations at a professional level. Employees should not:

- Solicit personal gifts or benefits.
- Accept monetary gifts in any circumstances. This includes cash, cheques, money orders, travellers cheques, direct deposits, payment or loans to be used towards the purchase of personal property product or discounts that are not available to all employees; or personal accommodation or transport.

The Gifts and Benefits Register will be reported quarterly to the Executive Management Team and annually to the Board.

Please refer to the *Gifts and Benefits Procedure* for more information.

4.4 Use of Corporate Resources and Information

4.4.1 Use of Corporate Resources

Employees must:

- Be scrupulous and honest in their use of Hunter Water owned resources. This includes equipment, materials, property, official services, facilities, money and time and ensuring other persons do not misuse our resources.
- Use Hunter Water resources entrusted to them effectively, sensibly and economically in the course of their duties, abiding to the appropriate instructions and policies.
- Not use Hunter Water resources, including the services of Hunter Water employees for private purposes, unless authorised to do so in writing.

An employee may utilise Hunter Water resources for private use only when meeting the following conditions:

- The private use is in the employee's own time.
- Private use of the equipment does not disrupt or prevent the employee's work or that of his/her colleagues.
- Approval is obtained from the manager responsible for the resource (in writing).

In considering each case, managers may also require the employee to:

- hire the item at a fair market rate; and/or
- supply consumables; and
- pay for any damages - this may also include loss of privileges for future private use.

If approved, employees must take appropriate precautions to prevent theft, damage or misuse of the resources whilst in their care.

However, under no circumstances are major motorised (eg diesel, electric, petrol, gas) and mobile equipment to be used for other than Hunter Water purposes. This includes mowers, backhoes, trailers, chain saws, etc.

If a plant item is contained within the warehouse system, it is not to be used for private purposes. The only exceptions to this policy are Hunter Water motor vehicles and mobile phones which are covered by separate and distinct circumstances (refer to separate policies). Unauthorised removal of Hunter Water resources is regarded as theft and this will result in disciplinary action.

4.4.2 Official Information

Information concerning the activities, results or plans of Hunter Water or any associated company, including suppliers, customers and subsidiaries, not generally available to the public will only be used for authorised purposes relating to work. Official information must not be used for personal benefit or to inflict harm or detriment to others during or after their period of employment with Hunter Water.

Employees shall not disclose any official information gained directly or indirectly during the course of their employment unless:

- required by law,
- it is related to giving evidence in court,
- it is in the course of their duties.

All employees have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of official information they are responsible for and must not deliberately give false, inaccurate or misleading information to Hunter Water, colleagues, customers or the public.

4.4.3 Personal Information

All employees have a right to expect confidentiality and privacy with respect to personal information obtained during their employment. Confidential personal details (addresses, phone numbers, etc) will not be provided to other employees unless required to perform their jobs.

Information relating to employment records, salaries, addresses, etc will only be released to external persons/organisations if required by law or upon receiving written permission from the relevant employee.

4.4.4 Customer Accounts

All employees who have access to the Hunter Water Customer Information System (CIS) have a duty to ensure they comply with the requirements of this code, particularly in regard to their use of customer information.

Under no circumstances is any employee to transact business on his/her own customer account or where a conflict of interest may occur, such as a family member's account. Any employee seeking to personally make a transaction that

may affect the financial details on such accounts should have that transaction authorised by their supervisor.

Wherever there is any doubt in regard to appropriate use of CIS, employees should check with their supervisor.

4.4.5 Tender Prices

Information that may mean a potential tenderer gains an advantage should not be disclosed to any party involved.

4.4.6 Intellectual Property

All employees of Hunter Water should respect the Corporation's intellectual property rights over material produced by the Corporation.

All intellectual property rights, including trademarks, copyright and patents, irrespective of whether or not such devices/concepts were formed in Hunter Water time, with or without Hunter Water resources that are directly or indirectly related to any aspect of Hunter Water are owned by Hunter Water.

Any work developed, invented or created, including but not limited to: documents, computer programs, inventions, processes or improvements in procedure, whether this work has been developed either alone or in collaboration with others in the course of your employment with Hunter Water remains the intellectual property of Hunter Water.

If employees leave Hunter Water, they must respect the Corporation's intellectual property rights over material produced by the Corporation.

4.5 Representation of Hunter Water

4.5.1 Public Comment

Employees, as individual members of the community, have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate on political and social issues. However, there are instances where this is inappropriate, eg situations where the public comment, although made in a private capacity, may appear to be an official comment on behalf of Hunter Water. In such circumstances, employees should clearly state that their remarks do not represent the official view of Hunter Water.

Employees asked to make public speeches on topics related to Hunter Water must obtain the permission of their manager and advise the Managing Director.

4.5.2 Media Comment

Only the Chairman of the Board of Directors and Managing Director, and other persons authorised by the Managing Director, can make official comments to ~~members of the media.~~

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4.5.3 Social Media

Workers should be aware that Hunter Water may observe content and information made available to employees through social media. In consideration of the public purpose nature of Hunter Water's business, any comments about or in connection with Hunter Water made in a social media platform must be factual and consistent information with Hunter Water's goals and objectives. Workers should use their best judgement in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to Hunter Water, its workers, or customers.

Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, discriminatory, bullying, antagonistic, defamatory, can create a hostile work environment or that could create a risk to another employee's health and safety. Hunter Water workers must observe any relevant privacy, defamation, discrimination and copyright laws.

Please refer to the *Social Media Standard* for more information.

4.5.4 Personal References

Authorisation must be obtained from the relevant Executive Manager prior to references for current/past employees being signed off on official letter-head.

Any references given must state the factual aspects of the work undertaken with Hunter Water and are not to include personal character references. Managers must seek approval from the relevant Executive Manager prior to issuing any references for current or past employees.

4.5.5 Uniform

The appearance of employees reflects the image of Hunter Water and has a significant impact on the way we are viewed by our customers, employees and the general public. Hunter Water aims to provide our employees with comfortable and professional uniforms that project a good image and comply with Workplace Health and Safety guidelines.

Please refer to the *Corporate Uniform Procedure* for further information.

4.6 Health, Safety and the Environment in the Workplace

4.6.1 WHS

Hunter Water is committed to achieving the highest performance in work health and safety (WHS), with the aim of creating and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment throughout its operations.

It is the duty of Hunter Water as the employer to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and contractors whilst at work. It is the duty of Hunter Water employees to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves

and others, to cooperate with Hunter Water in providing a safe workplace and to comply with WHS requirements.

Please refer to the *Work Health and Safety Policy* for further information.

4.6.2 Environment

It is Hunter Water's approach to achieve a high standard of environmental care by complying with relevant legislation and seeking continuous improvement in performance by taking account of evolving environmental excellence and community expectations.

4.6.3 Alcohol and Drug Use

Employees must not possess or transfer illegal drugs while at work or be impaired by illegal or legal drugs while at work or when conducting Hunter Water business. Attending work under the influence will be regarded as serious misconduct and may also breach various state and federal laws.

It is also considered serious misconduct if employees operate heavy machinery, drive, etc when they have been advised by their doctor not to do so. Some medications cause drowsiness and may impair the senses. If an employee is unable to perform their normal duties due to prescribed medication, the supervisor must be informed immediately.

4.6.4 Anti-Discrimination

Hunter Water is committed to developing a diverse workforce and providing a working environment in which employees, business associates and customers are treated equitably, fairly and with respect. Discrimination and harassment of any form, specifically those related to race, sex, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or preference, pregnancy and carer's responsibility, will not be tolerated and will be regarded as serious misconduct. Employees are encouraged to disclose such incidents to their managers so an investigation can occur and corrective action can be taken where appropriate.

Please refer to the *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy* for further information.

4.7 Contravention of the Code

Hunter Water regards any contravention of the Code as a serious matter. If anyone working with or for Hunter Water suspects that a contravention of the Code has been or will be committed they should promptly and confidentially report the issue, preferably in writing. Any such report will remain confidential, but may be used for the purpose of any subsequent investigation of the issue. Any individual who reports an issue will not be victimised or disadvantaged by doing so.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Any confirmed contravention of the Code may result in disciplinary action up to and

Role	Responsibilities
Workers	It is the responsibility of Hunter Water Employees to ensure that they comply with the requirements of this Standard. It is also the responsibility of all workers of Hunter Water to report any breaches of this Standard to Management as per the relevant procedures.
Managers/Supervisors	In addition to the responsibilities for all employees, it is the responsibility of Hunter Water managers and supervisors to ensure that all workers, including contractors and labour hire, act in accordance with this Standard. The behaviour of managers and supervisors sets the tone for the conduct of all workers, therefore these roles have a responsibility to model and promote this Code. Managers and supervisors are required to take the appropriate action as outlined in the relevant procedures if they become aware of breaches of this Standard.
Executive Management Team (EMT)	It is the responsibility of the EMT to promote a workplace environment that encourages honest and open communication about business conduct issues, emphasises the importance of operating in accordance with the Code, and avoids placing pressure on employees to deviate from the Standard.
Human Resources	It is the responsibility of Human Resources to provide advice to leaders and workers about the application of this Standard, and to monitor and review the Standard to ensure it remains consistent with legislation and applicable to the organisation.

including termination of employment. The Misconduct and Disciplinary Standard will apply in the event of any suspected breach of the Code. Hunter Water is required to notify the Crime and Misconduct Commission and investigate any serious allegation or suspicion of official misconduct.

6. Related Documents

Internal Hunter Water Documents

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Misconduct and Disciplinary Standard
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Social Media Standard
- Protective Clothing, Footwear and Glasses Standard
- Corporate Uniform Procedure
- Gifts and Benefits Procedure

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7. Document Control

Document Owner: Group Manager People & Culture

Review Required By: Executive Manager Corporate & Legal

Document Approver: EMT

Version	Author's Name	Details of change	Approval Date	Approved by	Next Scheduled Review
1	J Lawler	Review of old policy and split into policy/standard	September 2015	EMT	September 2018
2	J Lawler	Update Corporate Values	April 2017	EMT	April 2020