

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS IN QUEENSLAND

PREAMBLE

Free and open access to the institutions of government, and the rights of individuals and organisations to promote and exchange views with government, are basic tenets of a strong democracy.

But the operations of government can be challenging, which is when individuals and organisations seek the professional advice of specialists who provide counsel on the intricacies of dealing with government. Similarly, government can be assisted by independent advisors to understand the needs of commercial businesses.

Through the provision of advice to individuals and organisations on public policy processes, and by facilitating contact with government, government relations advisors perform an important and legitimate function in the democratic process.

Activities of government relations individuals and organisations are governed in Queensland through the *Integrity Act 2009*.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

Respect for the democratic process and the institutions of government are the fundamental principles which underpin good government relations.

In pursuit of quality outcomes for clients, government relations advisors:

- Commit themselves to conducting their activities in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty; and
- Strive for ethical behaviour, client service excellence, equality of opportunity and social justice.

Government relations advisors are committed to uphold the principals of the Code of Conduct and encourage their employers, clients and prospective clients to demand adherence to the Code.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide guidance and support to government relations advisors to ensure they undertake their activities with the highest ethical and professional standards and earn the confidence and respect of government and the community.

This Code of Conduct provides a statement of principles upon which government relations advisors shall conduct their activities. A breach of any one principle shall be regarded as unethical conduct.

Ultimately, the integrity of government and its functions relies upon the integrity of the individuals who participate in its processes.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Government relations advisors shall:

1. Conduct their business to the highest professional and ethical standards, and in accordance with all relevant law and regulation with respect to lobbying;
2. Act with honesty, integrity and good faith and avoid conduct or practices likely to bring discredit upon themselves, government representatives, their employer or clients;
3. Apply their skill and knowledge to diligently advance and advocate their clients' interests, without compromising any other obligation under this Code;
4. Not make misleading, exaggerated or extravagant claims about the nature or extent of their ability to achieve outcomes;
5. Use reasonable endeavours to satisfy themselves of the truth and accuracy of all statements and information provided by and to clients, and to the public, government and agencies;
6. Not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and take care to avoid doing so inadvertently;
7. Advise clients where their objectives may be illegal or unethical, and refuse to act for a client in pursuit of any such objective;
8. Not engage in conduct that is corrupt, dishonest or illegal, or causes or threatens any detriment;

9. Identify themselves, their employer (where relevant) and their client when making contact with a government representative;
10. Disclose to clients any actual or potential conflict of interest;
11. Keep confidential all information provided to them during the course of their work and not disclose or use that information without the express approval of the legal owner of that information, or where required by law, or where necessary to prevent a substantial damage to the public interest;
12. Where relevant, take reasonable steps to inform themselves, their clients and employers of any social, environmental and economic consequences which may arise from their actions;
13. Promote the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, gender, age, location, social status, disability or any other form of unlawful discrimination;
14. Keep separate from their government relations activities any personal activity or involvement on behalf of a political party.