**Code of Professional Conduct Policy**

**Governance Policy
Policy No: 1.0
Date: November 2004**

**INTRODUCTION**

This code of professional conduct is a set of guidelines for the ethical conduct of employees of Vision Australia (the Organisation).

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To establish a broad ethical framework that governs the conduct of the Organisation's staff in their relations with all stakeholders.
2. To complement key Organisation policies, in particular, the Vision, Mission and Shared Values Statements and the Corporate Governance Code of Conduct.
3. To further demonstrate our commitment to improving the quality of services provided by the Organisation to its clients, through the maintenance of high professional and ethical standards.

**POLICY**

1. In fulfilling our duties, we shall maintain the highest ethical standards and will act in an honest, diligent and professional manner.
2. We shall treat our clients with empathy and respect, valuing their independence and dignity.
3. We shall maintain the confidentiality of all information received in the course of our employment. We understand that it is improper to disclose, or allow to be disclosed, any confidential information unless that disclosure has been authorised by the Organisation, or the person from whom the information is provided or is required by law. (See Privacy Policy and Management of Client Records Policy)
4. We shall take responsibility and be accountable for our own decisions and actions.
5. We shall correctly implement all of the Organisation's policies and procedures, and act in accordance with all legislation, which is relevant to the performance of our duties.
6. We shall ensure that the principles of, and law as it relates to, equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination are applied in our workplace. (See Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Policy.)
7. We shall not allow personal interests to conflict with the interests of the Organisation. We will recognise and promptly address both actual and potential conflicts of interest.
8. We will not accept any gift or benefit of more than a 'token' value and most certainly will not solicit gifts for our own personal benefit. All gifts will be listed on the Vision Australia gift register.
9. We will not make public comments where it is possible that our opinions will be attributed as official comment of the Organisation. As members of the community, we have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate; however there may be circumstances in which we should clearly indicate that our comments are being made in a private capacity in order to ensure our comments are not attributed to the Organisation.
10. We recognise that the Organisation is the owner of any copyright subsisting in any materials that we prepare and/or develop during the course of our employment.
11. We will not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the Organisation.
12. We will not use Vision Australia branded stationery, fax cover sheets, email signatures and disclaimers for personal correspondence.
13. The Organisation expects employees to adhere to their own Code of Professional Conduct eg. Health professionals, Teachers, Accountants etc.
14. The Organisation expects employees to maintain professional relationships with their colleagues and treat each other with respect and integrity.
15. The Organisation encourages employees to continue their professional development and be committed to striving for personal professional excellence.
16. We are obliged, at all times, to comply with this code in both letter and spirit.

**NON COMPLIANCE**

Non compliance with this code may result in counselling and/or disciplinary measures including termination of employment, depending upon the gravity of the breach. Refer to Counselling, Warning, Dismissal Policy and Procedures and the relevant sections of the Staff Manual.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Client** - A child or adult who is blind or vision impaired, and who uses the Organisation's services, and caregivers of those receiving services. For Library Services, this includes those who have a print disability.

**Public Comments** - Public speaking engagements, comments on radio or television and expressing views in letters to newspapers or in books, journals or notices or where it might reasonably be expected that the publication or the comment will spread to the community at large. An employee on an external committee and not representing the Organisation needs to identify who they are representing.

**Stakeholders** - Staff, volunteers, clients, individuals and organisations with whom the Organisation deals.

**Token Gift** - A gift that is below $100 in value.

**We** - All staff, including volunteers, individuals on work experience, student placements, secondments and contractors.

**CROSS REFERENCES**

* Corporate Governance Code of Conduct
* Counselling, Warning, Dismissal Policy and Procedures
* Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Discrimination Policy
* Ethical Marketing Policy and Procedure (to be developed)
* Management of Client Records Policy
* Assessment for Education & Training Policy
* Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
* Vision, Mission and Shared Values Statements
* Workplace Harassment Policy
* Human Resources Policy
* Information Security Policy
* Email and Internet Use Policy
* Use of Vision Australia Work Environment Policy
* Children and Young People Protection Policy

**REFERENCE**

Disability Service Standards 1, 2, 4, 11, 12 (Commonwealth)

**AUTHORISED BY**

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\* Minor = eg spelling, formatting, slight change in wording etc
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