



1.9 Staff Conflict of Interest Policy

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to identify areas of potential conflict of interest in the organisation and manage any actual or potential conflicts of interests identified. The management of these identified conflicts of interest in the organisation demonstrates to our staff, customers and the community that we have an ethical approach to business and ensures there is no adverse effect on any stakeholders.

Application

This policy applies to all staff (full time, part time, casual and temporary) of Workforce Partners Australia. This policy also applies to contractors, consultants and suppliers (workers).

Areas of potential conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest may be actual, perceived or potential. A conflict of interest can be:

- Actual, where a conflict actually exists;
- Perceived, when a conflict is only believed to exist; and/or
- Potential, when a conflict is a future possibility.

Actual conflict of interest occurs where there is a real conflict between staff/workers performance and personal or private interests. Actual conflict may also impact on the staff/workers ability to perform their role to the required standards. **Perceived conflict** may arise where another individual may form the opinion that private interests may improperly influence the staff/workers performance or behaviours. **Potential conflict** of interest may arise where a staff member's/workers private interests could conflict with their performance or behaviours in the workplace.

Staff/workers are required to actively avoid being placed in situations where there may be actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest. WPA employees should demonstrate integrity by avoiding any real, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

In addition, conflict of interest may arise:

- Where a staff member/worker of WPA or his/her family/partner, through either personal or business interest, stands to gain financially from any business dealing, program or service provided by WPA.
- Where a staff member/worker stands to gain directly or indirectly from any business dealing, service or intellectual property provided by WPA to a competitor of any other business interest of that staff member/worker or his/her immediate family/partner.
- Where a staff member/worker stands to gain professionally or personally from any inside information, and that knowledge is used for personal or professional advantage.
- Where a division/program of WPA refers flow on business to another WPA division/program and that division/program is not in an appropriate position to deliver the flow on service to meet the needs of the client.
- Where a division/program of WPA does not follow contract guidelines when dealing with another WPA division/program.

Gifts and hospitality

Staff Members and other workers may only accept and give token gifts and modest hospitality and professional courtesies. Employees and other workers must not accept or give a gift or courtesy that could either lead to, or be seen to lead to, a conflict of interest such that our judgment is prejudiced or improperly influenced. Employees are to declare all gifts to the Director Operations.

Strategies to manage potential conflicts

All of WPA's different divisions/programs have independent responsibilities and objectives. Any conflict of interest would need to be accepted and approved by several individual decision makers before it impacts any stakeholder. A register of conflicts of interest including those of the Senior Management Team will be standard agenda items at WPA monthly management meetings. It is a company requirement that any business or personal matter which is, or could be, a conflict of interest involving the individual and or his/her role, must be declared and registered in this register. This will be updated on an annual basis, or as required.

A staff member/worker aware of an actual or potential conflict of interest involving another staff member has a responsibility to bring this to the notice of the staff member/worker concerned for declaration. If the staff member/worker concerned fails to declare the situation, it is the responsibility of the other staff member/worker to advise management of the situation.

Conflict of interest handling process

Where an actual or potential conflict of interest is declared or perceived, a WPA Director will investigate the matter to identify the nature and scope of the conflict and to determine a course of action to be taken to manage the matter. All WPA Directors will be informed of the matter and if identified as an actual or potential conflict, then it will be recorded in the conflict of interest register. Where the declaration of potential conflict of interest involves a Director of WPA, all Directors must provide an appropriate response.

If it is found that a conflict of interest existed during the provision of a service to a client that adversely affects, or can be seen to adversely affect the client, then the Director that linked to the conflict shall investigate the situation and take whatever remedial action is necessary to overcome the situation from the client's perspective. The Director shall also discuss the incident with those involved and take appropriate action to prevent recurrence.

Roles and Responsibilities

All employees/workers at Workplace Partners Australia have a role in identifying and disclosing conflicts of interest. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Ensure compliance of this policy and manage conflicts of interest promptly and with integrity.
- Provide leadership in implementing and giving effect to this Policy and facilitate compliance. Take appropriate action for breaches of this Policy.
- Maintain awareness of potential conflicts of interest and avoid them where possible. Promptly identify and disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that might be perceived to affect the proper performance of their role.

Policy Breach

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Related Policies – 1.12 Code of Conduct Policy

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