

Policy 6.02 Behaviour of Councillors and Staff

Directorate	Business and Governance
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer

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Record of Administrative Amendments

Amendment Version No.:	Description of Administrative Amendment	Date Reviewed
3.2	Version placed on public exhibition (D25/37741)	May 2025
3.1	Review of policy in accordance with Section 165 of the Local Government Act 1993 Workshopped with Councillors on 30 April 2025	26/03/2025
3.0	Adopted by council (D22/110357)	16/11/2022

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all elected officials and employees of Bega Valley Shire Council. It relates to expected behaviours from all interactions between councillors and staff, whether face-to-face, online (including social media and virtual meeting platforms), by phone, text message, or in writing. It will be applied whenever interactions between councillors and staff occur, including inside or outside of work hours, and at both council and non-council venues and events.

This policy does not confer any delegated authority upon any person. All delegations to staff are made by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

It demonstrates direct commitment of the following strategic guiding principles:

- Efficient and effective | improving collaboration and partnership with community, businesses, neighbouring councils, and other government bodies. We demonstrate leadership that inspires and motivates teams to perform their best and achieve success.
- Equitable and inclusive | we commit to building a connection with stakeholders based on trust and respect. We will engage in meaningful dialogue and respond to feedback constructively.
- Responsive | timely and accurate information sharing with our community stakeholders. We listen to the voices of our community and consider them in our decision-making processes.
- Transparent | Commitment to clear, open and professional communication. We provide regular updates on progress and decisions.
- Accountable | Proactive consultation and engagement internally between business areas and externally with key stakeholders. We adhere to legal and ethical standards and our actions align with established rules and regulations.

outlines the guidelines for behaviour of Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers of the Bega Valley Shire Council in all operations and deliberations, both internally and externally.

1.2 Purpose

This policy has been developed using the Office of Local Government (OLG) model councillors and staff interaction policy. The purpose is to:

- facilitate a positive working relationship between councillors and staff
- help ensure councillors, staff, contractors, and volunteers maintain an appropriate level of professional conduct, behaviour, and ethical standards at all times
- establish a framework by which councillors can access the information they need to perform their civic functions
- promote positive and respectful interactions between councillors and staff
- advise where concerns can be directed if there is a breakdown in the relationship between councillors and staff

To ensure Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers maintain an appropriate level of professional conduct, behaviour and ethical standards at all times.

1.3 Definitions

Nil.

Word or term	Definition
<u>Contractor</u>	<u>An individual or entity engaged to perform specific tasks or services under a contract. They operate independently because their conditions of employment are not governed by the Local Government (State) Award or Local Government (State) (Electricians) Award.</u>
<u>Councillor</u>	<u>A person elected to council as a result of a local government election. This includes the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors.</u>
<u>Employee</u>	<u>An individual hired by Council to perform a specific job in exchange for wages or a salary. The individual works under the director or control of Council, who dictates the terms and conditions of employment under the relevant Award</u>
<u>Workplace</u>	<u>A place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes or is likely to be while at work.</u>

2 Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022

Office of Local Government (OLG) Guidelines and Circulars

Office of Local Government (OLG) Model Code of Conduct ~~and~~

Office of Local Government (OLG) Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Guidelines

3 Implementation

3.1 Policy Statement

Council will enable positive working relationships between councillors and staff by:

- ensuring councillors understand their roles and responsibilities
- ensuring staff understand their roles and responsibilities
- enabling councillors and staff to work together appropriately and effectively to support each other in their respective roles
- ensuring councillors receive information in an orderly, courteous and appropriate manner to assist them in the performance of their civic duties
- ensuring councillors have adequate access to information to exercise their statutory roles

- providing direction on how councillors can obtain information in their official capacity
- providing direction on how councillors can obtain information in the capacity as a ratepayer
- maintaining transparent decision-making and good governance arrangements
- providing councillors with appropriate access to council buildings and facilities
- ensuring councillors and staff maintain appropriate records as a requirement part of their roles
- ensuring the councillors and staff interact consistently, professionally, and positively on a day-to-day basis so the reputation of council is enhanced
- managing breaches of this policy in accordance with Council's code of conduct.

Bega Valley Shire Council will address the matter of 'Councillor and staff behaviour' by:

- Ensuring that Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers carry out their duties in accordance with all relevant legislation, policies, guidelines, professional standards and BVSC's own adopted codes of meeting practice and this conduct policy.
- Promoting the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Chief Executive Officer as the spokesperson for Council in all official matters.
- Encouraging Councillors and staff, through their behaviour, enhancing the community's perception and reputation of local government at all times.
- Publicly recording, in a timely manner, any recognition or reimbursement to Councillors or staff by way of certificate, gift or financial payment.
- Providing guidelines for the provision of facilities for Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to assist them in discharging the duties and functions of their civic office. These are clearly identified and available to Councillors, staff, and the public.
- Ensuring that Councillors adhere to Council's records management and access to information policies for record keeping and documentation.
- Producing all Council documents using applicable templates that comply with corporate identity, formats, and standards.
- Ensuring all reported breaches of this policy are subject to the relevant assessment and conduct management procedures.
- Dealing with all complaints expeditiously and in accordance with the relevant procedures.

3.2 Responsibilities

3.2.1 Elected Council

Elected officials (Councillors) of Council will be responsible for completing their civic duties in accordance with this policy, the Code of Conduct, administration of the code of conduct, and the code of meeting practice.

Councillors ~~They~~ will be required to adhere to all other adopted council policies, legislative, and regulatory requirements relating to the administration of local government.

The general responsibilities of a councillor also include:

- representing the Bega Valley Shire community
- setting the strategic direction of the council
- reviewing the performance of the council

- [being an active and contributing member of the Council](#)
- [making considered and well-informed decisions as a member of the Council](#)
- [participating in the development of the Integrated Planning and Reporting \(IPR\) framework](#)
- [representing the collective interests of residents, ratepayers, and the local community](#)
- [facilitating the communication between the local community and the Council](#)
- [upholding and accurately represent the policies and decisions of Council](#)
- [making all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills needed to perform the role of a councillor](#)

3.2.2 Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Leadership Executive Group (LEG)

The Chief Executive Officer ([CEO](#)) is responsible for ensuring this policy (and all other policies) is reviewed and adopted by the elected council. The CEO will have the responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day operations of council and ensuring council staff, contractors and volunteers adhere to the provisions of this policy and its associated procedures.

Members of the Leadership Executive Group (LEG) will have the responsibility for ensuring the provisions of this policy and its associated procedures are implemented by council staff, contractors, and volunteers, and will do so in consultation with the CEO.

3.2.3 Director Business and Governance and ~~p~~People and ~~g~~Governance team

The Director of Business and Governance and the People and Governance section will be responsible for reviewing and facilitating the adoption of this policy and its associated procedures. The People and Governance section will also have the responsibility for making sure council staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligations under the policy on an operational level. The Public Officer is delegated to act as Council's complaints coordinator.

4 Supporting documents

4 [BVSC 2025-29 Community Engagement Strategy](#)

4.1 [4.1.1 BVSC Procedures that relate to this Policy](#)

Procedure No.:	Procedure Name	External or Internal Procedure
6.02.01	Code of Conduct (based on OLG Model Code)	External
6.02.1(a)	Code of Conduct Administration - OLG Guidelines	External
6.02.02	Code of Meeting Practice	External
6.02.03	Councillor Induction Guidelines - OLG	External
6.02.06	Compliments and Complaints including Unreasonable Correspondent Complainant Conduct	External
6.02.08	Record Keeping requirements for Councillors	External
6.02.09	Elected Official Communication Protocols Councillor and staff interactions	External

Procedure No.:	Procedure Name	External or Internal Procedure
6.02.10	Registration of Gifts and Benefits	External
<u>6.25.01</u>	<u>Social Media</u>	<u>External</u>
<u>N/A</u>	<u>2024-28 Community Engagement Strategy</u>	<u>External</u>

4.24.1.2 BVSC Policies that Relate to this Policy

Policy No.:	Policy Name
6.01	Governance
6.03	Risk Management
<u>6.10</u>	<u>Communications</u>
6.11	Records Management
<u>6.12</u>	<u>Access to information</u>
6.13	Organisational Service Standards
<u>6.16</u>	<u>Community Engagement</u>
<u>6.25</u>	<u>Social Media</u>
<u>6.28</u>	<u>Delegations</u>

Note: Policy details may change from time to time. To ensure you are viewing the most recent version please view Council's adopted Policies and Procedures on Council website.