



## Background

Central to the success of Landcare are good people who demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct, which is evident in their dealings with both organisations and people. This code of conduct is written to help support employees, Committee members, Group Representatives and anyone undertaking work for or on behalf of the East Gippsland Landcare Network (EGLN) to be effective and skilled at managing the range of issues referred to in the code. EGLN maintains a mutually supportive environment where staff, members, and volunteers are respected, valued, and enjoy working within Landcare.

## Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all Committee of Management members, Group Representatives and members, and employees of EGLN while undertaking any role or activity related to EGLN.

### 1. General Behaviour Responsibilities:

- Observe and operate within all State and Commonwealth laws.
- Read and abide by the EGLN Inc Statement of Purpose and Rules.
- Treat all members of the community (regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, cultural background, religious status, marital status, or political conviction) equitably, with dignity and respect, and not engage in behaviour that might reasonably be perceived as harassment, bullying or intimidation.
- Always act honestly, in good faith, carrying out official decisions and policies faithfully and impartially. Committee members have an obligation to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken by the Committee.
- Show fairness, courtesy, timeliness, responsiveness, and respect in all dealings with others, including, but not limited to, making constructive and supportive contributions to meetings and discussions, making decisions that are procedurally fair, showing an awareness and respect for cultural difference and allowing for alternative points of view to be expressed.
- Respect and acknowledge that confidential information received in exercising official duties remains the property of EGLN and shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which it was originally obtained. Confidential information including, but not limited to, personal contact information and discussions of a sensitive nature shall not be disclosed unless that disclosure is authorised by EGLN or the person(s) who provided the information, or it is required by law.
- Function as a team to the overall benefit of EGLN.
- Refrain from behaviour and actions that are likely to bring discredit upon or be detrimental to EGLN.
- Members, Representatives, and employees will not use their involvement with EGLN to promote their own beliefs, behaviours, or practices where these are inconsistent with those of EGLN.
- Be committed to a role of environmental leadership in all facets of the business.
- Declare any pecuniary interest that is, or could be perceived as being, in conflict with the purposes of EGLN and excuse yourself from any discussions/decisions in which you have a pecuniary interest.

### 2. Child Safe Policies

All children at Landcare activities have a right to feel safe, therefore there will be no tolerance for physical, verbal, or emotional abuse. EGLN strives to be Child Safe with no tolerance for child abuse and a commitment to children's best interests. All adults who form a reasonable belief that such a sexual offence has occurred have an obligation to report it to the police.

EGLN recognise that there are key risks to Child Safety. These are:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Grooming (abuse of trust usually occurs where there is an ongoing relationship of trust)
- Inappropriate child-to-child or adult-to-child physical or verbal contact
- Circulation of sexually explicit material.

In order to reduce such risks, EGLN will:

- Consider child safety risks in all EGLN event / activity planning and actively work to mitigate any risks.
- Ensure that people are appropriately qualified to work with children as applicable and/or have a 'working with children' card.
- Be respectful to each other and model appropriate behaviour and language around and towards children.
- Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions.
- Respect the privacy of children, their families, and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know or to comply with legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that consent is obtained from the child and his/her parents/carers before photographing or videoing any participant under 18 years.
- Listen directly to children and respond to them appropriately.
- Not initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves.
- Not be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than the shortest possible time.
- Not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature or use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Not show favouritism to children through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- Report any complaints, concerns, or disclosures to the appropriate authorities immediately (the Police through 000)

EGLN will raise and consider the following matters when planning and/or conducting an event or activity:

- Ensure that Child Safety is forefront of mind to deter inappropriate activity (e.g. mention it in activity briefings)
- Include an 'Under 18' checkbox on activity participation sheets.
- Make sure that children and adults know who to go to if they have concerns.
- If families are to bring children to activities, ensure that it is known in advance/on arrival that the parent or carer must be directly responsible for/supervise their child at all times.
- If children are unaccompanied, ensure that they work in group of three or more with either two or more adults or children of a similar age.
- Ensure that no child is alone with only one other person at any time other than their parent or designated carer.
- Design activities so that there is a clear line of sight and limited access to any hidden places that could conceal inappropriate conduct.

### **3. Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Respect**

EGLN has a commitment to provide a healthy and safe working environment free from workplace bullying and sexual harassment at all levels. EGLN members, representatives, volunteers, and employees, must not:

- Engage in any unlawful, threatening, or violent behaviour.
- Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle, or degrade any person.
- Engage in any form of harassment of others.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any other person.

**"Bullying"** is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or group of persons that creates a risk to health and safety. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine, or threaten.

**"Repeated behaviour"** refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can involve a range of behaviours over time.

**“Unreasonable behaviour”** is behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances would see as unreasonable, including behavior that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening.

**“Sexual harassment”** means any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated, and where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances.

EGLN is committed to eliminating, so far as is reasonably practicable, all forms of workplace bullying and sexual harassment by maintaining a culture of openness, support, and accountability. No employee or volunteer at any level should subject any other employee, volunteer, or visitor to any form of sexual harassment.

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### **Acknowledgment of Code of Conduct**

I ..... acknowledge that I have read the EGLN Code of Conduct.

I understand that if I breach the Code of Conduct, I will face disciplinary action that could lead to termination of employment, being asked to leave the Committee, step down as a Group Representative or any consequences as per State or Commonwealth law.

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.

**For Group Representatives only:** I approve for my personal details (name, address, preferred phone number and email) to be shared with other EGLN Landcare Group Representatives.

Landcare Group: ..... Position: .....

Email: .....Preferred phone number: .....

Address: .....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

*Please sign two copies; retain one for your own records and return the other which will be filed securely*