

## **ETHICAL PLANNING PRACTICE BY CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNERS**

**ISOCARP  
POLICY  
2019/02**

### **The Code of Professional Conduct of the International Society of City and Regional Planners 2019**

#### **PREAMBLE**

Planners work within a system which can and should reflect the interests of the community as a whole. Planners are subject to strong and conflicting pressures from different interest groups (residents, businesses, lobby groups, developers, public authorities, institutions, others). The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance to our Members to ensure that they practice their profession with the highest ethical and professional standards, earn the confidence and respect of the communities that they serve, ensuring the integrity of planning decisions and of the planning system as a whole.

#### **1 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CONDUCT**

In their professional roles, our Members commit to act in the following manner.

- (a) To strive for the highest standards in their professional activities.
- (b) To aim to ensure that all persons who may be affected by planning decisions are engaged in a meaningful way in the decision-making process.
- (c) To aim to ensure that the processes of planning are conducted as openly as practicable and that all relevant information is disclosed to interested persons.
- (d) To use their best endeavours to ensure that planning processes for which they are responsible will reflect an appropriate balance of:
  - good planning principles and decisions based on facts and evidence
  - sustainable and ethical development
  - responsible management of natural and built resources
  - acknowledgement of Indigenous connections to country
  - a pleasant, healthy, safe and socially-connected living and working environment
  - efficient and economically sound outcomes, and
  - effective and fair governance.
- (e) To uphold and promote the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, gender, age, disability, location, social status, or sexual identity.
- (f) Always to provide advice which, in similar circumstances, is materially consistent with that previously given to the same or another client or employer.
- (g) To understand the planning law in which they operate.
- (h) To maintain proper records of agreements entered into and work undertaken.
- (i) To take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence, practise within areas of competence and not falsify or misrepresent qualifications, work experience or prior

responsibilities.

- (j) Not to act in any way that may bring themselves, the profession or the Society into disrepute during the course of their normal employment as a Planner.
- (k) To report to the Society any alleged breach of this Code or other alleged unprofessional conduct of which they become aware and to assist the Society in its investigations.

## 2 RESPECT FOR ALL PERSONS

In their professional roles, our Members will:

- (a) Treat others with courtesy and without discrimination, harassment or inappropriate conduct, and
- (b) Treat their colleagues with mutual respect for their professional opinion, ensuring that their opinions are provided in the public arena or otherwise on an informed basis with due regard to evidence, fact or substantiated argument.

## 3 AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In their professional roles, our Members will:

- (a) Not act in circumstances where there is a potential conflict between their own private interest and the interest of their client, employer or the public interest.
- (b) Disclose the nature of their role when providing planning advice.
- (c) Where employed by or having acted for an authority, not carry out work for any other client or employer which may be perceived as constituting a conflict of interest, unless they have received approval in writing from the authority to act for that client or employer.
- (d) Not undertake work for a client or employer if another client or employer is likely to be prejudiced.
- (e) Disclose to their employer or clients any gifts, commissions or discounts received from or offered by any third parties in connection with their work as a Planner, and not accept any such gifts, commissions or discounts where their receipt may, or may be perceived to, influence their advice.
- (f) Not undertake paid professional work for any authority or organisation of whose governing body, Board of Directors or the like they are Members unless:
  - a conflict of interest does not arise from the carrying out of governance duties
  - full disclosure has been made to the governing body and
  - the approval of the governing body has been obtained.
- (g) Act where a potential conflict of interest exists, or may arise only in exceptional circumstances, such as where the Member alone possesses the required expertise.
- (h) Prior to accepting any engagement where a potential conflict of interest exists or may arise, the Member must consider whether to disclose (within the bounds of confidentiality) pertinent details to the clients or employers concerned.

## 4 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

In their professional roles, our Members will:

Keep all information provided to them during the course of their work confidential, and shall not disclose or use any of that information for their own benefit, nor disclose it to any third party except where:

- a potential conflict of interest exists or may arise
- the information is authorised to be publicly available or is required by law to be disclosed
- they have the express approval of the legal owner of that information
- they have sought formal permission/approval to use any such information or
- disclosure is necessary to prevent a substantial damage to the public interest.

## 5 FAIR COMPETITION

In their professional roles, our Members will:

- (a) Not induce a breach of contract or solicit work from another Member who has been engaged to carry out a commission.
- (b) If employed by a statutory authority or public body, not undertake private commissions unless
  - a conflict of interest does not arise from the carrying out of the commission or
  - full disclosure has been made to the employer and the approval of the employer has been obtained.
- (c) Not allow diminution of the Member's professional obligations and responsibilities if undertaking an honorary commission.
- (d) Not carry out work on a contingency fee (success fee) basis.

## 6 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Our Members will:

Take all reasonable steps to ensure that planning work and professional activities are conducted in accordance with this Code:

- whether in the public, education or not-for-profit sectors, as an employee, a manager, an executive or in a position of responsibility, or
- whether in private practice, as a Principal, a Partner, a Director, an employee, or in a position of responsibility.

## VERSION CONTROL

Adopted by the Board 7 May 2019

Confirmed by the Board 5 June 2019

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ISOCARP acknowledges the code of professional conduct of the Planning Institute of Australia as a constructive precedent for this code of professional conduct.