



WICEN (NSW) Inc

ABN 83 747 108 984

PO BOX 6151 DURAL DC NSW 2158

wicen.membership@vrarescue.org

PHONE 0408 397 217



Application for Membership

Please submit the completed form to the Membership Officer at the address above. Please note: New Applicants will be required to meet with the Executive prior to their application being submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Name:

Call Sign:

Address:
.....

Hereby makes an application to become a member of WICEN (NSW) Inc. (Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984) and agree to comply with the following:

- To be bound by the rules of the association and its Standing Orders, Policies and procedures, etc.
- When requested provide an ID photo by electronic means to the Membership Officer.
- That upon ceasing to be a member of the Association I will return any equipment issued to me, but not purchased by me, including the WICEN ID Card and any Membership Certificate issued.
- To abide by the rules and regulations of VRA Rescue NSW Pty Ltd (VRA), including having read and agreeing to be bound by VRA Service Standard 1.1 Code of Conduct & Ethics (attached to this Application form). Completing a VRA Membership Application pack which includes providing a current Working With Children Check (WWC), completing a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check Application and Informed Consent Form, including Proof of Identity. Once accepted as a VRA member and issued with a VRA SAP number you will be required to activate a VRA Rescue NSW member email address for service of notices.

Applicant's Signature: Date: / / 20

I, a member of the association, nominate the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the association.

Signature of proposer: Date: / / 20

I, a member of the association, second the nomination of the applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership of the association.

Signature of seconder: Date: / / 20

PLEASE NOTE – Your membership status upon endorsement by the WICEN Committee is Probationary only. The probationary status period is for a maximum period of six months to allow sufficient time for all the checks to be undertaken and issue of a SAP number by the VRA.

Secretary Use Only

Admitted by the State Management Committee on

Membership Fee Received: / / 20

New Members Data Form

Where a choice is offered please circle the applicable one(s)

Full Name: **Radio Equipment Available**

Callsign:

Postal Address: HF: Base / Portable / Mobile
2 m: Base / Portable / Mobile / Hand Held
70 cm: Base / Portable / Mobile / Hand Held

Home Address: Digital:

..... Maritime radio license: Yes / No

Date of Birth:

Home Phone: First Aid: Yes / No Expires: / / 20

Mobile Phone: Trainer Qualifications:

Work Phone:

Email Address: Member of WIA Yes / No

..... Member of AR NSW: Yes / No

Occupation: Are you currently or have you been a member of any
other Volunteer Emergency Service Agency: Yes / No
Please list any disabilities that might impact on your
If Yes please provide details:

WICEN activities:
.....
.....
.....

Availability for operations: Yes / No

Hours Notice Required:

Vehicle type: 2WD / AWD / 4WD

Next of Kin

Relationship to you:

Name:

Address if different:

Phone:



SERVICE STANDARD 1.1 CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	1.0
SOPs	> None
Policy Owner	Commissioner
Policy Contact	Professional Standards Unit
Approved By	Commissioner
Approved Date	26 March 2022
Effective Date	28 March 2022
Next Review Date	28 May 2022
Document Control	Electronic - Printed Copies are Uncontrolled

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Service Standard is to ensure that all VRA Rescue NSW members are aware of their obligation to uphold the values of the VRA Rescue NSW.
- 1.2 This Service Standard and accompanying Code of Conduct and Ethics specify the mandatory requirements and best practice conduct expected of all VRA Rescue NSW members, both volunteer and staff.

2 Policy

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct and Ethics forms part of this Service Standard.
- 2.2 All members must comply with the Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- 2.3 As part of the acceptance of offer of employment, new staff are required to sign an acceptance letter that states they have been provided with a copy, read and agreed to abide by the VRA Rescue NSW Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- 2.4 On joining the VRA Rescue NSW, all volunteer members are to be provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct and Ethics as part of the induction process.
- 2.5 The Code of Conduct and Ethics provides a broad framework to:
 - a. guide daily professional and personal conduct of all VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants as they undertake their VRA Rescue NSW duties and activities and provide a service for, and communicate with the NSW community;
 - b. support sound and ethical decision making and efficient, effective and prudent use of resources;

- c. assist VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants decide on an appropriate course of action when they are faced with an ethical issue or situation;
 - d. assist VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants recognise and avoid behaviours that are inappropriate or have the potential to involve, or be perceived to involve, corruption, maladministration or waste, and provide guidance with respect to the reporting of such matters; and
 - e. provide transparency to enable public scrutiny and ensure a merit based, apolitical and professional VRA Rescue NSW.
- 2.6 The Code of Conduct and Ethics obliges all members, contractors and consultants to be accountable for their own professional and personal conduct and behaviour and to act in accordance with the VRA Rescue NSW values and in the community's interest at all times.
- 2.7 The Code of Conduct and Ethics recognises the role of the VRA Rescue NSW in preserving the community's / public's interest and defending public value.
- 2.8 VRA Rescue NSW values and standards outlined in the Code of Conduct and Ethics must be demonstrated and maintained by all VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants at all times, whenever and wherever it is relevant to the work, responsibilities, functions and activities of VRA Rescue NSW.
- 2.9 VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants should also ensure that their off duty conduct is consistent with these standards to avoid any adverse impact on VRA Rescue NSW, or on a member's employment or volunteer status or contractual arrangements.
- 2.10 The Code of Conduct and Ethics cannot address every possible ethical issue or scenario that may be faced by VRA Rescue NSW members, contractors and consultants in the course of performing work, duties or functions and when off duty. For this reason, the Code of Conduct and Ethics should be used as a source of practical guidance based on a common sense approach to making ethical decisions about duty and issues. If in doubt, members should always consult their supervisor.
- 2.11 All VRA Rescue NSW members have an obligation to ensure that any visitors they are hosting act in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Ethics at all times.

3 Related documents

- > [Anti Discrimination Act 1977](#)
- > [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)
- > [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](#)
- > [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013](#)
- > [Crimes Act 1900](#)
- > [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cwth\)](#)
- > [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. At certain times, or when doing certain work, VRA Rescue NSW members will have additional obligations under other regulatory and / or VRA Rescue NSW policy documents.

4 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
		>
		>



VRA Rescue NSW

ACN 650 552 177



CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

PUTTING THE NSW VRA VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

1 Our Values

The community of NSW expects VRA Rescue NSW to conduct its business with professionalism, accountability, integrity and respect.

The actions, decisions and interactions of VRA Rescue NSW members must:

- › be consistent with relevant legislation and policy;
- › provide transparency to enable public scrutiny; and
- › be soundly based on VRA Rescue NSW values and the principles that guide their implementation.

There is no hierarchy among our core values and each is of equal importance.

Mutual Respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We actively seek and value everyone's contribution› We acknowledge differences in people› Constructive comment is accepted as a positive contribution to the richness of our organisation› We encourage accepting responsibility and accountability while avoiding a "blaming" culture› We respect the dignity of each and every person in all our communications
Adaptability and Resourcefulness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We encourage creativity and flexibility, while approaching our work sensibly and with safety› Initiative and continuous development are necessary and to be encouraged within our approved standards and procedures› We encourage open mindedness› We are analytical in our approach to tasks and the organisation encourages progression in new methods, alternatives, equipment and processes
One Team, Many Players, One Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We encourage diversity: our organisation is reflective of our communities› We encourage contribution from all areas› Consultation and engagement of stakeholders are essential to the success of VRA Rescue NSW› We target a diverse range of groups in our communications and the promotion of our organisation
Integrity and Trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We communicate clearly what we expect from each other› We take personal responsibility for actions and commitments that we make› We are both respectful of and open with each other› We foster a climate of trust and reliability› Open and informed decision making is promoted and encouraged
Support, Friendship and Camaraderie
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We provide a welcome atmosphere for all› We support each other in all activities› We foster a sense of belonging, purpose, enjoyment and involvement› We mentor our people to help develop their full potential
Community and Our Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We go above and beyond to make a difference in the community and our environment› We undertake our roles and behave in a way that is inspiring to others› We see building community capacity as central to our mission› We engage with the youth of our communities to ensure the sustainability of the organisation› We are mindful of the ecological and environmental impact of our activities
Knowledge and Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">› We foster a climate of continuous learning and sharing of information› We encourage self-reflection and personal growth› We enhance our knowledge through participation in a range of forums› We actively participate in research and embed the learning into our organisation› Debriefing is important, necessary and to be encouraged to improve our standards and procedures

2 Introduction

2.1 Who does the VRA Rescue NSW Code of Ethics and Conduct apply to?

The Code of Conduct and Ethics applies to:

- all members of VRA Rescue NSW, including the Commissioner; and
- all consultants, contractors and agency employees engaged to perform work for, or on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW.

In the Code of Conduct and Ethics:

- members of VRA Rescue Limited, staff and volunteer members of affiliated squads are referred to collectively as “members”; and
- the supervisor or manager directly in charge of a member is referred to as the “next in charge”.
- Additional obligations that apply to staff members, but not to volunteers, have been specifically identified in the Code of Conduct and Ethics.

2.2 When does the Code of Conduct and Ethics apply?

The Code of Conduct and Ethics applies whenever a member is:

- acting in the capacity of a member;
- attending or participating in any VRA Rescue NSW or VRA Rescue NSW sponsored activity, including but not limited to attending incidents, training, or other community relations events;
- on VRA Rescue NSW premises;
- wearing VRA Rescue NSW uniform, whether on duty or otherwise;
- attending any VRA Rescue NSW sponsored event, including social events; or
- holding themselves out as a member, including where they are identified as a member of VRA Rescue NSW on social media.

Members should also make certain their off duty conduct is consistent with these standards to avoid any adverse impact on VRA Rescue NSW, or on their employment or volunteer status.

Contractors, consultants and agency employees engaged by VRA Rescue NSW must abide by the Code of Conduct and Ethics, whenever and wherever they are performing work for VRA Rescue NSW.

2.3 How does it relate to VRA Rescue NSW Service Standards and the law?

All members of VRA Rescue NSW must also comply with all relevant State and Commonwealth laws.

If a conflict arises between the Code of Conduct and Ethics and the provisions of any Act or Regulation, the latter provisions prevail.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics provides the overarching principles and standards for how members are to approach the most common ethical issues that may arise as they perform their duties. Several other Service Standards and policies are also issued by VRA Rescue NSW to set out the specific steps and actions to be taken when managing the ethical issues referred to in the Code of Conduct and Ethics. Members must therefore ensure they are aware of, and comply with, the Code of Conduct and Ethics and the relevant Service Standard.

2.4 What happens if a member breaches the Code of Conduct and Ethics?

Behaviour contrary to VRA Rescue NSW values and / or the Code of Conduct and Ethics can bring individual members into disrepute, undermine productive working relationships, hinder service delivery and damage the community / public trust in VRA Rescue NSW, or the emergency services sector more broadly.

There are a range of consequences for breaching VRA Rescue NSW values and the Code of Conduct and Ethics depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach and the status of members involved.

A failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and Ethics may constitute:

- A breach of discipline in the case of a volunteer; and
- Misconduct in the case of a staff member.

The Commissioner or Professional Standards Unit may be required to report some breaches of the Code of Conduct and Ethics to one or more of the following external agencies and such conduct may constitute a criminal offence:

- NSW Police
- Office of the Children's Guardian

If it is alleged that a member has acted in a way that is contrary to the Code of Conduct and Ethics, they will have an opportunity to provide their version of events. How this will happen will be proportionate to the seriousness of the matter. Where the allegation is minor or low level the member's next in charge may discuss the matter directly with the member. If the allegation is more serious, and / or there is evidence of a pattern of similar behaviour over a period of time, a formal process may be required.

Potential outcomes where a finding of breach of discipline / misconduct has occurred may include:

- Volunteers – reprimand, suspension, demotion, disqualifying the respondent from holding rank, imposition of conditions on membership or removal from membership;
- Staff members – any of the actions detailed in their employment contract; and
- Contractors, consultants and agency employees – termination of contract / work arrangements.

2.5 What should a member do if they become aware of conduct or behaviour contrary to the Code of Conduct and Ethics?

A member who believes that another member, consultant, contractor or agency employee has done the wrong thing must discuss their concerns confidentially with their next in charge.

If the next in charge is the person who the member believes may have breached the Code of Conduct and Ethics, or the member is not comfortable discussing their concerns with this person, they should raise their concerns confidentially with the next level of management / command.

A member may also raise any concerns with Wellbeing and Chaplain Support.

Members must report suspected corrupt conduct, as well as maladministration and serious and substantial waste of VRA Rescue NSW resources, or a breach of confidential information and privacy rights to their next in charge or make a report under the Whistleblower Policy.

In the case of conduct or behaviour that may involve serious misconduct, any misconduct involving a child or potentially criminal or corrupt conduct, or to seek clarification on these matters, they may also contact the Commissioner or VRA Rescue NSW Professional Standards Unit.

3 Our Core Conduct Obligations

VRA Rescue NSW is a community-based emergency service. It is both part of the community and serves the community.

Serving the community means more than protecting people, property and the environment from emergencies. It also means we have other obligations as detailed in this section.

3.1 Compliance

All members must comply with:

- › VRA Rescue NSW values;
- › the Code of Conduct and Ethics; and
- › any other VRA Rescue NSW Service Standards and procedures relevant to their role.

All members must also comply with any lawful and reasonable direction or instruction given to them by another VRA Rescue NSW member empowered to make such a direction or instruction under legislation, regulation, delegation or authorisation.

The VRA Rescue NSW ethical framework ensures the workplace culture, practices and systems (including recruitment and promotion) operate consistently.

All VRA Rescue NSW managers, executives and senior volunteers must also:

- › lead and promote implementation of the ethical framework in their workplace;
- › recognise and promote individual member and team conduct that exemplifies the ethical framework; and
- › act promptly and with due process to prevent and address any breaches of the ethical framework.

3.2 Public Interest

Since the functions and powers of VRA Rescue NSW can have a broad effect on members of the community, all members are expected to perform their duties and activities, make decisions and exercise any delegation or authorisation in ways that promote or preserve the community / public's interest.

It is acknowledged that members also have their own private interests. An "interest" in this context means anything that can have an impact on an individual or group. The term "private interest" includes not only the personal, professional or business interests of a member but also the personal, professional or business interests of individuals or groups with whom a member is closely associated. This can include relatives, friends, business associates, or even rivals and enemies.

In order to ensure their actions and decisions actively place the interests of the community / public and VRA Rescue NSW before that of their own, a member must:

- › act professionally with honesty, consistency and impartiality as they carry out their VRA Rescue NSW duties;
- › treat people with whom they have contact during the course of their duties equally without prejudice or favour;
- › uphold the law and institutions of government and democratic principles;
- › provide transparency to enable public scrutiny;
- › not use VRA Rescue NSW information or resources for private gain;
- › not take improper advantage of their VRA Rescue NSW membership;
- › provide apolitical and non-partisan advice;
- › promptly disclose and effectively manage any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest so they can perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way;
- › make adequate records of any decision made or actions taken during the course of their duties;
- › make sure they receive value for money when incurring expenses on VRA Rescue NSW's behalf; and
- › be fiscally responsible and focus on the efficient, effective and prudent use of resources.

3.3 Ethical Decision Making

A member must act ethically in all their dealings with members of the community, stakeholders and their fellow members.

It is therefore essential that members identify ethical dilemmas and apply ethical judgement in resolving them because this is appropriate behaviour that reflects VRA Rescue NSW values.

The decisions and actions members take must be consistent with legislation, VRA Rescue NSW values, the Code of Conduct and Ethics and VRA Rescue NSW Service Standards and procedures.

When faced with an ethical dilemma, members should clarify the scope of the problem and consider carefully how the problem affects (or may affect in the future) other members, members of the community, stakeholders and the government of the day.

Members should use the following framework to guide their decision making:

1	Is what I am proposing to do within the law?
2	Is what I am proposing to do consistent with the principles of VRA Rescue NSW?
3	Is what I am proposing to do in line with VRA Rescue NSW objectives?
4	Is what I am proposing to do in the best interests of VRA Rescue NSW and the Community? (ie. will it yield the greatest benefit or least harm to the most people and minimise the number of people who might be disadvantaged in the short or long term)
5	Is what I am proposing to do consistent with the Code of Conduct and Ethics and / or VRA Rescue NSW Service Standards and procedures?
6	Is this a decision I have the authorisation to make, or should it be referred to a more senior member?
7	What will the outcomes of the decision be – for me, my role, the squad and VRA Rescue NSW?
8	What will the consequences be for other individuals?
9	Which options support due process, transparency, fair compensation for any loss and fair treatment of those affected by any decision?
10	Which options support the legal rights of members of the public?
11	Could the decision lead to myself or a family member, friend or associate benefiting at the expense of the squad, VRA Rescue NSW or the community?
12	Will the decision bear up to scrutiny by the community or the media?
13	What is the likely impact on VRA Rescue NSW membership, finances, infrastructure and other assets?
15	Can the issue be addressed through the redesign of services, work practices or new methods of service delivery?

Evaluate and decide which option best addresses the above issues and:

- > is lawful;
- > is in the community/ public interest;
- > supports integrity;
- > builds trust;
- > delivers better services; and
- > ensures accountability.

To establish if the option selected is consistent with VRA Rescue NSW values and the Code of Conduct and Ethics, test it against the following questions:

- Integrity – would your fellow members say you had considered the views of all interested parties / individuals and acted in the right way, even if it was at your personal cost?
- Trust – would your action, if it became public, build confidence in VRA Rescue NSW and the emergency services sector?
- Service – would the community say your actions improved the quality of the services they receive?
- Accountability – would the Commissioner and fellow members say that your actions are consistent with VRA Rescue NSW values, the Code of Conduct and Ethics and the law?

Ensure that in implementing your decision, the methods and approach you take are also consistent with VRA Rescue NSW values and the Code of Conduct and Ethics.

3.4 Accountability

Being accountable in everything we do:

- enhances the public's confidence in VRA Rescue NSW;
- helps to ensure that we are responsive to the interests of the community; and
- protects individuals, members and VRA Rescue NSW.

A member is accountable for their own conduct and the decisions they make and actions they take. Members can demonstrate their accountability by:

- acting according to the spirit and the letter of any relevant legislation;
- complying with VRA Rescue NSW Service Standards and procedures at all times;
- making certain that all decisions, actions and advice are based on evidence and within delegation / authorisation;
- being answerable for their decisions and actions, and the outcomes resulting from their decisions and actions;
- making sure that any decisions made, actions taken or advice provided on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW is properly documented;
- ensuring they take ownership of situations they are involved in. They see them through, and take responsibility for what happens – good or bad;
- not blaming others if things go wrong. Instead, they do their best to make things right;
- taking an active role in implementing the objectives of VRA Rescue NSW; and
- ensuring that VRA Rescue NSW resources and assets are used responsibly in accordance with relevant Service Standards.

3.5 Fairness and Equity

The NSW community, stakeholders and other members have a right to expect that members demonstrate fairness and equity whenever they perform their duties, take actions, have interactions and make decisions.

Accordingly, all members must:

- act honestly, in good faith, reasonably and with integrity at all times when dealing with members of the community, stakeholders and fellow members;
- perform their duties impartially, particularly when exercising discretionary powers or delegated authority;
- inform other members and members of the community of their rights, the procedures to be followed and the criteria on which any decisions will be made, providing them with adequate opportunity to respond and / or put their case and then taking this information into consideration when making decisions;
- ensure other members and members of the community are advised of the reasons for any decision; and

- › act in a manner that is inclusive and respectful of people and their linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic, national or racial backgrounds, physical, mental or intellectual attributes or disabilities, age, gender or sexual orientation.

3.6 Environmental Protection

All members must:

- › be mindful of the environmental impacts of their actions;
- › have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development; and
- › work to minimise environmental impacts in the workplace by reducing consumption of paper and energy and reusing and recycling resources.

4 Conduct Obligations in Specific Circumstances

A member's conduct, behaviour and the choices they make provide the opportunity to put VRA Rescue NSW values and the Code of Conduct and Ethics into practice and support other VRA Rescue NSW members to do the same.

Observing the following principles as members undertake their duties will ensure their professional and personal conduct and behaviour promotes VRA Rescue NSW values and maintains the community's trust and confidence in its integrity and professionalism.

4.1 Workplace Health and Safety

All members must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

All members must comply with all relevant VRA Rescue NSW Work, Health and Safety Service Standards.

4.2 Alcohol and other Drugs

A member must not:

- › sell or allow the sale or consumption of alcohol on VRA Rescue NSW premises and at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events;
- › supply or allow the supply of alcohol to minors on VRA Rescue NSW premises and at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events by any person, including the minor's parent or guardian;
- › allow the consumption of alcohol by minors on VRA Rescue NSW premises or at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events; or
- › consume alcohol on VRA Rescue NSW premises or at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events unless a responsible officer is present who is willing to assume responsibility for:
 - › ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct and Ethics and other relevant Service Standards and policies; and
 - › supervise the conduct of the members in attendance.

In the case of volunteers, the responsible officer must be:

- › a member of the squad executive; and
- › present at all times while alcohol is being consumed.

In the case of staff members, the responsible officer must be:

- › the senior ranked staff member; and
- › present at all times while alcohol is being consumed.

Soft drinks or other non-alcoholic drinks must be made available whenever alcohol is consumed or available for consumption on VRA Rescue NSW premises or at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events.

A member must not use, supply or possess any prohibited substance.

A prohibited substance includes:

- any prohibited drug or prohibited plant as that term is used in the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985* (NSW)
- any prescription drug or pharmaceutical other than in circumstances where the member:
 - has a prescription for the prescription drug or pharmaceutical provided by a registered health care provider; and
 - is using it in accordance with the advice of that health care provider.

4.3 Conflicts of Interest

A “conflict of interest” refers to situations where a conflict arises between the performance of a member’s responsibilities / duties (ie. their public duty) and their private or personal interests.

A conflict of interest can involve gaining a personal advantage as well as avoiding or minimising personal disadvantage. That is, a conflict of interest may allow you to avoid a loss, expense, or something else that has a negative impact on your personal or private interests.

Conflicts of interest may be actual, or be perceived to exist, or potentially exist at some time in the future.

Members must avoid situations where in the performance of their duties they could be influenced, or be seen to be influenced, by their private interests.

The perception of a conflict of interest is just as important as an actual conflict as it can equally have an impact on the NSW community’s confidence in the integrity of VRA Rescue NSW.

It isn’t wrong or unethical to have a conflict of interest, what is important is that it is identified promptly and appropriately managed.

The best way to handle conflicts of interests is to avoid them entirely, wherever possible. If a member thinks they have a conflict of interest they must disclose it to their next in charge as soon as possible and work cooperatively with them on a strategy to manage the situation.

A member must make a written declaration of private financial, business, personal or other interests or relationships that have the potential to influence, or could be perceived to influence, decisions made or advice given by them.

Conflicts of Interest and a member’s right to participate in political and community activities and pursue personal interests.

Outside of a member’s VRA Rescue NSW duties they have the right to participate in political and community activities and to pursue personal interests, provided that:

- any participation does not conflict with their duty as a member to serve the community’s interest in a politically neutral manner; and
- any conflict that arises is recognised and adequately managed.

What is considered appropriate by VRA Rescue NSW in any particular case will depend on the nature of the issue, the position the member holds, the extent of their participation and their public prominence.

Where a member becomes aware that a conflict of interest has arisen regarding their political or community activities they must inform their next in charge immediately, who will then work with them to develop the most appropriate strategy for addressing the conflict.

4.4 Gifts and Benefits

Refer **Service Standard #.# [to be released]**

4.5 Secondary or Private Employment (Staff Members Only)

Secondary or private employment means work other than a staff member's job with VRA Rescue NSW and includes undertaking voluntary or unpaid work or operating a private business (whether as an employee, principal or business owner).

A staff member must seek approval in writing from their next in charge to undertake secondary or private employment prior to commencing the secondary or private employment.

The written submission must show that:

- the secondary or private employment will not interfere with, or adversely affect their VRA Rescue NSW duties;
- the secondary or private employment will not create a conflict of interest with their VRA Rescue NSW duties;
- the secondary or private employment will not involve the use of any VRA Rescue NSW intellectual property or confidential information or resources; and
- the secondary or private employment will be undertaken outside of their current working hours.

Staff members who are directly involved in the procurement of goods and services for VRA Rescue NSW are prohibited from undertaking secondary or private employment with a supplier or potential supplier of goods or services to VRA Rescue NSW.

If the staff member's approved secondary employment arrangements change (eg. change in hours, location etc.) they must seek approval in writing from their next in charge before the new arrangements take effect. If the staff member's position in VRA Rescue NSW changes they must reapply for secondary employment approval.

4.6 Respectful and Inclusive Workplace

VRA Rescue NSW is strongly committed to providing and maintaining a respectful and inclusive workplace, where all members are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times and in all work locations. Bullying, discrimination, vilification and / or sexual harassment have no place in a respectful and inclusive workplace.

Members must comply with all relevant Service Standards.

4.7 Safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people

VRA Rescue NSW has both a legislative and moral obligation to protect children and young people.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years.

Protecting children and young people engaged in VRA Rescue NSW activities and providing a child-safe, child-friendly environment is a responsibility that all members share. In order to create a child-safe environment all members must take an active role in keeping children and young people safe from all forms of harm and creating a trusting environment where they are valued, respected and welcomed.

Members must:

- comply with any relevant pre-screening employment / membership checks.
- ensure they act professionally and maintain a respectful and professional distance around any child or young person with whom they come into contact during the course of their duties.

- avoid any behaviour that might be considered by a reasonable person as inappropriate including but not limited to:
 - having a sexual or intimate relationship;
 - using sexual innuendo or inappropriate language;
 - holding conversations where they disclose private information about themselves;
 - giving gifts of a personal nature;
 - taking inappropriate photographs; or
 - having contact via social media, text, phone, email or letters in inappropriate circumstances.
- recognise circumstances that may involve inappropriate behaviours towards a child or young person and discuss their concerns with their next in charge or with the Professional Standards Unit; and
- ensure that any child or young person that approaches them with a concern or complaint about another member's behaviour towards a child or young person is appropriately supported and the matter immediately reported to their next in charge or to the Professional Standards Unit.

4.8 VRA Rescue NSW resources

Members must ensure that VRA Rescue NSW resources are used efficiently and effectively for the purposes of VRA Rescue NSW and that they:

- make decisions relating to the use of resources, facilities and equipment that are reasonable, appropriately authorised and able to withstand community scrutiny;
- take due care and diligence and act within delegation when purchasing goods and services on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW;
- treat VRA Rescue NSW property and equipment with due care and ensure the property and equipment is secured against theft, misuse or breakage;
- take appropriate care of any protective clothing and equipment issued to them and only wear it when authorised to do so;
- wear their VRA Rescue NSW uniform in a presentable manner;
- hold a valid licence for the class of VRA Rescue NSW vehicle or boat they are operating. If their licence is cancelled or suspended, they must inform their next in charge immediately;
- hold a valid licence or accreditation for the equipment they are required to use;
- only use VRA Rescue NSW internet, intranet, email and computers (computer systems) for appropriate purposes;
- do not use VRA Rescue NSW computer systems to create, access, store or distribute pornographic, harassing, obscene, threatening, sexist, sexually explicit, racist, discriminatory or other offensive material;
- do not use VRA Rescue NSW computer systems for accessing, downloading, copying, storing or playing videos, audio or music files, unless that material is related to their VRA Rescue NSW duties;
- are economical in the use of office facilities and equipment, including the use of motor vehicles, travel and credit cards;
- return any equipment provided to them during the course of their employment / membership to their next in charge on their last day of duty.

Staff Members only - Limited use of computer systems, fixed and mobile telephones, facsimile and photocopier equipment (but excluding motor vehicles) for personal use will generally be permitted, provided the use is infrequent and brief and the following criteria has been satisfied:

- The use of the equipment does not conflict with the staff member's work or that of their colleagues;
- The use of the equipment does not involve a significant cost to VRA Rescue NSW;
- The use of the equipment is undertaken in the staff member's own time;

- The staff member will not benefit financially from the use of equipment; and
- The use of equipment is not for commercial purposes for the staff member or others.

4.9 Intellectual property

When creating materials, applications or equipment members must ensure the intellectual property rights of VRA Rescue NSW and others are not infringed. Any third party copyright or other rights information must be recorded in the materials.

The copyright of material created by members in the course of their duties belongs to VRA Rescue NSW, even if the material was developed in the member's own time, or at home.

A member must seek consent from the Commissioner before entering into any arrangements regarding the publication or disclosure of any research or articles or materials, applications or equipment produced as part of their duties.

A member must not use the intellectual property, including copyright of VRA Rescue NSW, for private purposes without first obtaining written consent from the Commissioner.

During subsequent employment and activities a member must respect the confidentiality of any information obtained in the course of their VRA Rescue NSW duties and the intellectual property rights over material produced, including material that they produced in the course of their VRA Rescue NSW duties.

For more information in relation to responsibilities regarding intellectual property see *Service Standard 6.4 Information and Communications Technology*.

4.10 Confidential, private, and personal information

All members must ensure that personal and private information collected from other members or the public is treated in a confidential manner.

All members must ensure that corporate information created, received, or collected in the course of their duties is treated in a confidential manner.

Members must comply with all Service Standards relating to the collection, handling and protection of information, in particular *Service Standard 6.1 Personal Information and Privacy [to be released]*

4.11 Public Comments

A member must comply with relevant Service Standards, in particular *Service Standard 7.1 Media*, when making any public comments or publishing official information regarding VRA Rescue NSW.

Public comment includes comments made in the context of public speaking engagements, comments on radio, television, the internet or other collaborative or social networking applications, letters to newspapers, books, journals or other written publications where it is reasonably expected that the comments will be available to the community at large.

Only the Chair, Commissioner or persons authorised by the Commissioner may speak on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW.

If a member wishes to make a statement on a matter related to the emergency services sector as a private citizen, they must not do so in VRA Rescue NSW uniform. They must also make clear that the comments made are their own or those of other entities and are not made on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW.

Members must be mindful to ensure they do not reveal any confidential, personal or private information when making public comments.

4.12 Personal relationships

VRA Rescue NSW acknowledges that members with a close personal relationship may be required to work / undertake duties together. It is also recognised that in the workplace or the operational environment this could, or could be seen to, compromise fair and ethical work performance and decision-making.

If a member has a close personal relationship with another member or members they consider may create a conflict of interest (either perceived or actual) they must declare the relationship / s to their next in charge. The member must also work actively with their next in charge to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to minimise any negative effects, (either perceived or actual), of the close personal relationship / s. If a member is unsure or has concerns about whether a close personal relationship is a conflict of interest, they should discuss the matter with their next in charge.

4.13 Personal presentation

When a member wears VRA Rescue NSW uniform or operates identifiable VRA Rescue NSW vehicles or boats they are clearly identified to the community as a member of VRA Rescue NSW. A member's appearance must be clean, neat and tidy; other than when undertaking operational activities.

Any clothing worn by a member that bears the insignia of VRA Rescue NSW must only to be worn in accordance with *Service Standard 4.2 Uniforms*.

A member must only wear VRA Rescue NSW uniform when:

- on duty or travelling to or from duty; and / or
- attending training, official functions, meetings, conferences or at VRA Rescue NSW sponsored events.

A member must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment / clothing (PPE / PPC) for the task when undertaking operational activities.

A member must not wear their uniform, identity card or VRA Rescue NSW name badge when visiting a public bar or registered club, other than if they are attending the venue for an official function, meeting, conference or a VRA Rescue NSW sponsored event.

Staff members who do not wear uniform must still ensure their personal appearance and presentation are clean, tidy and appropriate for their role when on duty.

All uniform and PPE / PPC items remain the property of VRA Rescue NSW and must be immediately returned to VRA Rescue NSW if the member is directed to do so by their next in charge or when they cease to be a member of VRA Rescue NSW.

4.14 References

All members must comply with this section of the Code of Conduct and Ethics to avoid incurring legal liability and ensure they protect the public interest, integrity and reputation of VRA Rescue NSW.

Employment References

An employment reference is a document or verbal statement that provides information or makes assertions about a current or former staff member's skills, conduct and performance, during a specified period of time. An employment reference is provided to an employer to enable them to assess the current or former staff member's suitability or non-suitability for employment.

Staff members who hold supervisory or management roles are not obliged to provide an employment reference to current or former staff members.

Where a staff member who holds a supervisory or management role chooses to provide an employment reference, they:

- › can only do so if they were the line supervisor or manager of the person seeking the reference; and
- › may only be provided to another person / organisation with the staff member's consent. If the staff member cannot be contacted or consent is not granted, then no information is to be disclosed.

Employment references whether provided verbally, or in writing, must be accurate. You may be subject to a claim of defamation from the current or former staff member or a claim for compensation for misleading a new employer if you provide inaccurate information or withhold critical information in an employment reference. Line supervisors or managers must ensure they limit the information they provide in any reference to a subordinate's capabilities, performance and conduct during the period in which the person was under their supervision / management, or to an assessment of the person against specific selection criteria.

Where an employment reference is requested in writing it may be prepared on VRA Rescue NSW letterhead and the line supervisor or manager may include their VRA Rescue NSW title, rank, grade or position / role.

Written employment references must be signed and dated by the author and a copy retained for future reference. A hardcopy must be placed on an existing staff member's personnel file where practicable.

Where a line supervisor or manager has been asked by a current or former staff member to act as a referee, it can be assumed that implied consent has been granted to disclose relevant information.

Personal References

A personal reference is a document or verbal statement that provides information or makes assertions about a person's character or personal attributes. Personal references are generally used to support loan or rental applications, in dealings with the NSW Police, or in criminal, civil or industrial court proceedings.

Personal references may be provided by any VRA Rescue NSW member in their capacity as a private individual.

Members need to be careful however when providing personal references as there are a number of legal or conflict of interest issues to be considered, including:

- › The Integrity of VRA Rescue NSW
 - › Members must sign and date any written personal reference they provide. However they must not use their VRA Rescue NSW title, rank, grade or position in a written personal reference, nor imply in any way that VRA Rescue NSW endorses the content of the personal reference.
 - › Personal references (written or verbal) that make reference to the current or former member's service with VRA Rescue NSW must include a clear disclaimer that the views contained in the reference are the views of the person providing the reference and do not represent the views of VRA Rescue NSW.
 - › Written personal references must not be provided on VRA Rescue NSW letterhead, including squad letterhead.
 - › Written personal references must not be sent through the VRA Rescue NSW email system, or in an envelope which contains the VRA Rescue NSW logo or identifies VRA Rescue NSW or a squad in any way.
- › The Public Interest
 - › Members have an obligation to protect the public interest and the integrity of VRA Rescue NSW before their own, or another member's interests. For that reason it is important to consider if a conflict of interest exists – either for themselves, or for VRA Rescue NSW, if they provide a personal reference.
- › The Person's Privacy
 - › Members have an obligation to protect the privacy of the person for whom they are providing the personal reference. Written personal references should generally be provided directly to the current or former member who has requested the personal reference.

- A written personal reference may only be provided to another person / organisation if the current / former member has provided their consent to the information being disclosed to that person / organisation.
- Once the written personal reference has been provided to the current / former member (or with their consent to another person / organisation), all electronic versions and any hardcopy versions of the document are to be destroyed to protect the privacy of the current / former member.
- **Personal Liability**
 - Members who have been requested to provide a personal reference (whether verbally or in writing) to be used by the current or former member in proceedings involving the NSW Police, or to support the member in civil or legal proceedings, or at a tribunal, must ensure that the information they provide in the personal reference is accurate to the best of their knowledge. It is an offence to state anything to a tribunal or court that is untrue or would be misleading.
 - To ensure a written personal reference cannot be subsequently altered you should only provide it to the person requesting it in PDF format.

Notwithstanding anything else in this Code of Conduct and Ethics, a statement may be provided by VRA Rescue NSW in relation to a staff member's employment or salary to a financial institution or other appropriate person or entity at the member's request for the purpose of an application for a mortgage, loan application, finance agreement or other purpose where information of that nature is normally provided by an employer.

4.15 Bankruptcy (Staff Members Only)

A staff member must notify the VRA Rescue NSW Commissioner if they become bankrupt, or make a composition, arrangement or assignment for the benefit of their creditors.