

Staff Code of Conduct

Approved: March 2015
By: CEO



Staff Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct sets out the principles that are expected to be upheld and prescribes specific conduct which is required when undertaking work for Murray Irrigation.

The Code of Conduct applies to all employees of Murray Irrigation and includes others engaged to do work on behalf of Murray Irrigation. The Code of Conduct guides staff in making decisions and determining the appropriate way to deal with ethical matters that may arise when undertaking work for Murray Irrigation.

Applying this Code of Conduct will strengthen and protect our dealings with other employees, individuals, customers, contractors and businesses while reinforcing our governance standards and the reputation of Murray Irrigation.

2. Purpose

This Code of Conduct establishes the basic level of conduct expected of all employees. However, it cannot address all the possible challenges that individual employees may face in carrying out their functions. This Code of Conduct assists employees to:

- understand the standards of conduct that are expected of them,
- enable them to fulfil their legal duty, to act honestly and exercise reasonable diligence,
- act in a way that enhances customer confidence in the integrity of Murray Irrigation.

3. Key Principles

This Code of Conduct is founded on the following key principles:

- 3.1 Employees shall perform their official duties with skill, impartiality, professionalism and integrity.
- 3.2 Employees shall undertake all dealing fairly and respectfully.
- 3.3 Employees shall disclose their private financial or other interests where their interests may, or may appear to conflict with their official duties, and take appropriate steps to prevent a conflict.
- 3.4 Employees who are responsible for incurring or approving expenditure shall ensure the efficient and economical use of Murray Irrigation resources and assets.
- 3.5 Employees shall not take advantage of their official duties, position or authority to seek or obtain a benefit for them or for any other person or body.
- 3.6 Employees shall exercise proper courtesy, consideration and sensitivity and shall act with fairness and equity in all their dealings with members of the public, customers and other employees.

- 3.7 Employees shall not engage in improper conduct, in their official capacity or otherwise, that adversely affects the performance of their duties or brings Murray Irrigation into disrepute.

4. General Conduct Obligation

- 4.1 Employees should avoid conduct that:

- contravenes legislation, company policies, rules and administrative procedures
- is unethical,
- is an abuse of power or misconduct,
- causes or involves intimidation, harassment or abuse,
- causes or involves discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to employment issues
- causes or involves prejudice in the provision of services to the customers or in staff dealings.

- 4.2 Employees should exercise reasonable care and diligence to act lawfully and honestly in carrying out their role.

- 4.3 Employees should consider and apply work issues and dealings consistently, promptly and fairly and without favour.

- 4.4 Employees should take all relevant facts known into consideration and have regard to the particular merits in each case when making decisions.

- 4.5 Employees should not discriminate or support others who discriminate against colleagues or customers. This includes but not limited to, discrimination on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, age, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, marital status or disability. Further, when dealing with employee matters, this also includes fairness and equality in making appointments, promotions, employment contracts, recommending people for reward or benefits, training plus the application of the Anti - Discrimination Act and the Workplace Gender Equity Act.

- 4.6 If an employee is unsure about the ethical issues around an action or decision they are about to take, they should consider these five points:

- Is the decision or action lawful?
- Is the decision or action consistent with Policy, procedures and guidelines?
- What is the outcome for the employee, work colleague, the company or customer?
- Do these outcomes raise a conflict of interest or lead to private gain or loss at the company's expense?
- Can the decision or conduct be justified in terms of the customer or company's interest and would it withstand public scrutiny?

In the event the answer is no to any of these points; employees should not act and raise the particular issue with their Supervisor or Manager regarding how to deal with the matter.

5 Conflict of Interest

- 5.1 A Conflict of interest exists when an employee could be influenced, or perceived that they could be influenced by a personal interest when carrying out their role.

- 5.2 An employee is required to resolve any conflict of interest or incompatibility between their private or personal interest and the performance of their role or separate themselves from this situation while referring the matter to their Supervisor or Manager.

5.3 Where an interest exists, an employee must disclose an interest promptly and as soon as possible to their Supervisor or Manager or CEO and identify that interest and what action was taken in a Staff Register of Interests form and lodged with the Human Resources Manager (Form available on the intranet or via the HRM).

5.4 A Conflict of Interest can be of two types:

Financial: An interest that the employee has in a matter because of a reasonable expectation of an appreciable financial gain or loss to the employee or a family member or company the employee or family is associated with.

Non-Financial: A private or personal interest that the employee has that does not amount to an appreciable financial interest (for example; a friendship, member of an association or group or club)

Other business or employment

5.5 An employee who is considering outside employment or contract work that relates to the business of Murray Irrigation, or might conflict with their employment role, is required to seek the approval of the CEO or his nominee.

5.6 Before seeking approval or engaging in approved outside employment or business the employee must ensure that it will not:

- conflict with their role and duties with this company,
- interfere with undertaking the obligations of their role,
- involve using confidential information or company resources,
- require the employee to work while on duty for the company,
- discredit or disadvantage the company.

Personal dealings with Murray Irrigation

5.7 Some employees will inevitably deal personally with the company (for example a shareholder, recipient of services, settling accounts). They must not expect or request preferential treatment for themselves, or anyone else, because of their position. They must avoid any action that could lead others to believe that they are seeking preferential treatment.

6. Personal Benefit

Gifts or Benefits

6.1 An employee must not:

- seek or accept a bribe or other improper inducement
- seek or accept a personal profit or advantage which has a monetary value, other than of a nominal or token value.

6.2 An employee must not seek or accept any payment, gift or benefit intended or likely to influence the employee to:

- act in a particular way (including making particular decisions),
- fail to act in a particular circumstance,
- otherwise deviate from the proper exercise of their official role and duties.

6.3 An employee may accept gifts or benefits that are of a nominal or token value that does not create a sense of obligation on their part. However, any such gift and what

was done with the gift should be recorded in a Staff Register of Gifts form and lodged with the Human Resources Manager. (Form available on the intranet or via the HRM)

Token gifts or benefits

6.4 Generally token gifts or benefits are of a nominal value and may include:

- gifts of reasonably priced alcohol to an individual employee at the end of year functions, public occasions or in recognition of work done (such as speaking at a function)
- free or subsidised meals and/or beverages provided infrequently that have been arranged primarily in connection with the discussion of official business
- refreshments provided at a conference or training program
- ties, scarves, coasters, diaries, flowers and alike of a nominal value
- invitations to an appropriate out of hour's social functions or events organised by other bodies.

Value of gifts

6.5 Employees should not accept an offer of money, regardless of the amount.

6.6 If an employee receives a gift of more than a nominal or token value in circumstances where it cannot be reasonably refused or returned, they should accept the gift and disclose it to their Supervisor, Manager or CEO.

6.7 The employee should avoid situations in which the appearance may be created that any person or body, through providing hospitality or benefits of any kind, is securing a favour from the company.

Improper and undue Influence

6.8 An employee should not take advantage of another Murray Irrigation employee's position to improperly influence them in the performance of their role to secure a private benefit for themselves.

7 Employee and Board contact

A Murray Irrigation employee's business and operational contact with the Board, including individual Directors, is only via the CEO unless otherwise approved by the CEO.

8 Use of Company Information

8.1 An employee must:

- protect confidential information and privacy,
- only access the information needed to undertake their role,
- not use confidential information for any non-official purpose,
- only release confidential information if authority is given to do so,
- only use confidential information for the purpose it is intended to be used,
- not use the Company's information for personal benefit or gain.

8.2 An employee should not use confidential or Murray Irrigation information gained through their position for the purpose of securing a private benefit for themselves or for another person.

8.3 An employee must not use confidential or company information and knowledge with the intention to improperly cause harm, detriment or embarrassment to the Company

or any other person. This includes the release of sensitive, private and personal information through any form of media or social media.

Security of Information

- 8.4 Employees should take care to maintain the integrity and security of confidential Murray Irrigation information they may use or have access to.

Use of Company Resources

- 8.5 Employees should use the Company's resources ethically, effectively, efficiently and safely in the course of undertaking their role and must not use them for personal benefit unless lawfully authorised to do so.
- 8.6 Employees are required to be scrupulous in their use of company assets and property, including intellectual property and should not permit their misuse by others.
- 8.7 Employees must not use the Company's computers or any technology used for recording sending or receiving data or information, to search for, access, download or communicate any material of an offensive, obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive or defamatory nature.

9 Reporting Breaches

- 9.1 Employees and contractors are required to report suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct to the Human Resources Manager or the CEO in writing.
- 9.2 Alternatively, suspected breaches of a more serious nature such as theft, fraud or corrupt conduct, and in cases where the person does not feel comfortable reporting to the Human Resources Manager or the CEO, such can be reported to our independent whistleblowing hotline operated by Grant Thornton Forensics Pty Ltd, who are authorised by Murray Irrigation to receive these reports.
- 9.3 Reports to this service can be made verbally by telephone or in writing by confidential post or email and if required, can also be made anonymously. The contact details for this service are provided below:
- a) Hotline telephone number 1300 582 346
(Available 9am-5pm Monday – Friday, if not attended ring back later)
 - b) Email at mil@myvault.net.au
 - c) Confidential Post to:

Strictly Private & Confidential
Murray Irrigation
C/- Fraud and Forensics Consulting
GPO Box 4736
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
- 9.4 With the consent of the employee or contractor making a report of suspected serious misconduct to the independent whistleblowing hotline service, their reports will be documented and provided to Murray Irrigation's nominated Whistle-blower Officer identified above. If sufficient information has been provided an investigation may then be conducted into the suspected misconduct.
- 9.5 Employees or contractors who make reports via the independent whistleblowing service can be afforded protection from potential recrimination and further regarding this including eligibility criteria provided at Section 10 below.

- 9.6 Where appropriate, the Human Resources Manager or CEO may make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, into breaches of the Code of Conduct regarding a member of staff and others engaged by the company and will determine the matter.
- 9.7 Where it has been determined not to enquire into a matter, the complainant will receive the reasons in writing.
- 9.8 Enquiries made into staff conduct that may give rise to disciplinary action then such action will follow the relevant disciplinary procedures in the employment agreements, policies and principles of procedural fairness.
- 9.9 Alleged claims under this policy against other employees that are found to be unsubstantiated, without reasonable evidence or founded on hearsay, vexatious, personalised and repeated may be deemed by their nature to be a breach of the Code of Conduct and also dealt with accordingly under this Code.

10 Whistle-blower Protection

- 10.1 All breaches should follow the reporting process set out in Part 9 above; however, in the event that an employee is uncomfortable with reporting a serious matter to either the Human Resources Manager or the CEO then they may contact the external hotline as outlined above.

Any employees or contractors reporting suspected misconduct can seek advice from the above officers prior to or after making a report.

Eligibility criteria for whistle-blower protection are that the report of suspected misconduct is made by either an officer, employee, contractor or employee of a contractor of Murray Irrigation plus the following:

- give their name before making the disclosure; and
- have reasonable grounds to suspect that their revelation indicates the company or an officer or employee has, or may have, contravened the Corporations legislation (which includes both the Corporations Act and the ASIC Act); and
- act in good faith.

The Whistle-blower confidentiality may be protected in a number of ways:

- ensuring confidentiality of the investigation,
- keeping the identity of the employee or contractor confidential unless it is specifically required by Law to be disclosed
- Offering the staff member leave while the matter is investigated
- Relocating the staff member or other staff to a different work group or Department.

- 10.2 The Whistleblowing process relates to serious matters such as:

- Theft, fraud or other dishonest or corrupt behaviour, including soliciting, accepting, or offering a bribe, facilitating payment or other benefit
- illegal activity (including theft, drug use/sale, violence or threatening violence and property damage)
- concealment of a wrongdoing