

<b>Code of Conduct</b>			
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**PURPOSE**

Maari Ma is proud of the services we deliver and of our achievements in working towards improving Aboriginal Health.

We acknowledge the people of communities of the Maari Ma region have the right to expect Maari Ma to carry out its activities efficiently, fairly, impartially, honestly and with integrity.

The purpose of Maari Ma’s Code of Conduct is to provide a framework for decisions and actions in relation to conduct within and affecting employment. It underpins our commitment to a duty of care to all people receiving our services and anybody else who has contact with our organisation.

This Code describes the standards of conduct and personal and professional behaviour expected of our workforce to enable us to continue our work and promote Maari Ma in our communities with pride and commitment.

The Code tries to capture many of the situations that employees will encounter, but it cannot address every possible situation that can arise in the workplace. If a particular issue is not mentioned in this Code then you should not assume that appropriate standards of behaviour do not apply.

Every member of Maari Ma Health’s workforce has an obligation to demonstrate a high standard of conduct and ethics in the provision of services, to maintain the integrity of Maari Ma Health and to ensure the safety of clients and colleagues.

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## Code of Conduct

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

After more than 25 years of incorporation, we can reflect on our achievements and growth, and look to the future to ensure we continue to serve the communities of our region.

Our workforce has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to the success and quality of our services. We have grown from a small group of people to a professional, multidisciplinary organisation with over 130 staff, demonstrating commitment, compassion, drive and innovation.

Our success has been built on the trust and respect the communities have vested in Maari Ma. It is this relationship that gives the community the confidence to access our services. Because our success is so closely related to our reputation, it's up to all of us to protect that reputation.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and workplace practice for Maari Ma's workforce in carrying out our day to day activities. It incorporates the organisation values which were developed collaboratively by our workforce - standards and values to which we should all aspire.

The Code also recognises that we can all demonstrate ethical leadership in how we perform our role and is a statement of our commitment to the people and communities we serve.

A significant inclusion in this Code is our commitment to the White Ribbon campaign to stop violence against women and our attitude towards violent behaviour.

The Code should be read in conjunction with the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation Strategic Plan as we strive to achieve our vision:

*"Aboriginal people live longer and close the gap – families, individuals and communities achieve good health, wellbeing and self-determination supported by Maari Ma."*

We have earned the right to be proud as an award winning and innovative service with many more achievements and milestones ahead of us. I ask everybody who works for Maari Ma to be familiar with, understand and comply with this Code of Conduct so that we can all contribute to our continued success.

**Bob Davis,  
Chief Executive Officer**

### ***1. What is expected of everyone***

Understand the Code. Comply with this Code and the law wherever you are. Use good judgment and avoid even the appearance of improper behaviour.

Consider your actions and ask for guidance. If you are ever in doubt about a course of conduct, ask yourself:

- Is it consistent with the Code?
- Is it ethical?
- Is it legal?
- Will it reflect well on me and the organisation?
- Would I want to read about it in the newspaper?

If the answer is “No” to any of these questions, don’t do it.

### ***2. What is expected of Managers***

Managerial behaviour sets the tone for the conduct of all employees. As a Manager, you have a responsibility to model and promote this Code.

Managers are responsible for ensuring employees understand the Code, and any other relevant legislation, policies or other information required to satisfactorily perform our duties.

- Respond to questions and concerns.
- If approached with a question or concern related to the Code, listen carefully and give the employee your complete attention.
- Ask for clarification and additional information.
- Answer any questions if you can, but do not feel that you must give an immediate response.
- Seek help if you need it.
- If an employee raises a concern that may require investigation under the Code, contact the Human Resources Coordinator.

### ***3. Who this Code applies to***

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, contractors, students on work placements, visiting services and volunteers involved in Maari Ma’s services and programs.

### ***4. Acknowledgement of Country***

Maari Ma acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we provide our services and elders both past and present.

At all times we are mindful of working in an Aboriginal community controlled organisation; we value cultural respect and sensitivity as the foundation for all employees.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees work in partnership to deliver services and programs within our communities.

## 5. *Our values*

The values of community, compassion, culture, empowerment, quality and respect underpin our approach to our work with each other and our communities.

For Maari Ma, this means:

- **Community**  
We acknowledge the connection and effectively communicate regarding programs to promote awareness and knowledge of health issues impacting on the Indigenous communities and their families, to work collaboratively towards healthier lifestyles and well-being for all Indigenous people.
- **Compassion**  
We respect people as individuals and will be empathetic in understanding people's pasts and the issues and challenges they face. We will make no judgement in the choices people have made and will actively work with people to assist in their healing process.
- **Culture**  
Aboriginal people have a rich culture involving custom, lore and value system based on the sustainability of their spiritual connection, belonging, obligation and responsibility to care for their land, people and environment.
- **Empowerment**  
Empowerment of community and staff increases the capacity of people (or groups of people) to make choices and to transform those choices into actions and outcomes, to make informed choices about their health care.
- **Quality**  
We strive for best practice in everything we do. Our workforce is skilled, competent, confident and innovative. We demonstrate integrity and pride in our work. We encourage and recognise outstanding performance.
- **Respect**  
We treat others in the community and the workplace with respect, compassion, courtesy, listen and allow them to have their say and express their opinions and ideas, encouraging self-confidence and dignity, building a respectful rapport between staff and community to encourage positive attitudes and behaviours.

## 6. *Personal and professional behaviour*

In order to serve our communities, Maari Ma requires a professional standard of behaviour that:

- demonstrates respect for the rights of the individual and the community;
- promotes and maintains public confidence and trust in the work of Maari Ma.

You are accountable for your decisions and general conduct. You should not behave in a way that:

- may cause offence or embarrassment to other employees or the community;
- could harm the reputation of Maari Ma or any of its clients or employees.

When carrying out your duties:

- Do not intentionally disobey or disregard any lawful and reasonable direction from a person who has the authority to give the direction.
- Act with integrity and honesty in all matters and be accountable for your actions.
- Carry out your work efficiently, economically and effectively, and ensure that the standard of your work reflects favourably on Maari Ma.
- Comply with the policies and procedures of Maari Ma Health, whether or not you approve of these policies.
- Do not seek to influence any person in order to obtain promotion, or other advantage.

## **7. Violence and criminal activity**

Maari Ma will not tolerate violence or condone violent behaviour.

Maari Ma acknowledges trans-generational trauma and the ongoing impact of violence in communities. As employees of Maari Ma, we must reject all violent behaviour.

Maari Ma has taken a strong stand against violence. The impact of violence and violent behaviour is considered in managing our workforce and the communities' expectations of us as service providers.

Maari Ma supports the White Ribbon campaign to stop violence against women and have appointed White Ribbon ambassadors to advise, support and promote the campaign in our workplace and communities.

Maari Ma does not condone criminal activity. In the event an employee is charged with a criminal or violent offence, a risk assessment and review of employment will be undertaken.

## **8. Discrimination**

Do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, in your treatment of individuals or groups on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, or any other ground covered by equal opportunity or other anti-discrimination legislation. Sexual harassment is also unlawful.

Discrimination includes treating an applicant in a job selection process less favourably because of a characteristic or circumstance that has no bearing on their capacity to perform the job for which they are competing.

Refer to the '*Discrimination and Harassment Policy*' for additional information and guidance.

### **9. Workplace bullying/harassment**

Do not bully or otherwise harass other employees or members of the public. Behaviours that characterise bullying may include victimisation and unwelcome, offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at another person or a group of people. Bullying may lead to the person or group of people subjected to the behaviour feeling victimised, offended, demeaned, humiliated, intimidated, or suffering detriment or disadvantage.

Do not encourage or support other staff in harassing or bullying or act in a way that places harmonious working relationships between staff at risk.

Everyone has an obligation to take action to address and prevent bullying and harassment.

Refer to the '*Workplace Bullying Policy*' for additional information and guidance.

### **10. Social media**

Be cautious when using social media to ensure:

- Comments do no harm to individuals or the reputation of Maari Ma.
- You do not represent your comments as views or policy of Maari Ma.
- You do not engage in discriminatory, defamatory or abusive commentary.

Refer to the '*Social Media Policy*' for additional information and guidance.

### **11. Gifts and conflict of interest**

Avoid and resolve any conflicts of interest arising when personal interests may clash with work requirements. You may also experience conflicts of interest between your professional codes of ethics (for example as health care professionals) and your personal beliefs or opinions.

Having a conflict of interest is not unusual and it is not wrong in itself. However failing to disclose and manage the conflict appropriately is likely to be wrongdoing.

Seek advice from your manager and report any potential conflict of interest so reasonable steps may be taken to protect the employees and Maari Ma.

Do not accept gifts, bribes or other inducements to alter or provide preferential services or benefits to any other person.

From time to time, token gifts may be offered by clients of our services to express their appreciation, for example food, inexpensive drinks, flowers or baked cakes. Staff should recognise that an Aboriginal person offering a gift as a result of a service provided is a sign of great respect. It is acceptable to accept token gifts and ideally share within the work team.

### **12. Outside employment**

You may not at any time during your employment engage directly or indirectly in other employment or business including self-employment without first obtaining written consent from the Maari Ma Chief Executive Officer. This includes volunteer work such as the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, or Army, Navy or Air Force Reserves. Maari Ma will not unreasonably withhold this consent. The purpose of this is to ensure that you are able to work safely and that your employment with Maari Ma is not conflicted.

You may undertake outside or secondary employment subject to:

- The other employment not impacting on your health and ability to undertake your employment responsibilities with Maari Ma.
- There being no conflict of interest between the work and philosophies of the employments.
- You requesting, and being granted, approval to do so.

### **13. Nepotism and patronage**

It is unacceptable to favour your relatives (nepotism) or people you know (patronage) in your decision making and provision of service. For example, if your relatives or friends are the subject in a work matter for which you are a responsible decision maker (such as job selection, allocating training and development opportunities, or a tender process) you must ensure that you are not improperly involved.

### **14. Use of Maari Ma Health resources (time, equipment and other assets)**

- Protect all Maari Ma resources (for example, against theft and fraud) and use those resources in the manner intended.
- Do not use organisational resources for your personal benefit or the benefit of anyone other than Maari Ma.
- Do not engage in personal activities during work hours that interfere with or prevent you from fulfilling your job responsibilities.
- Use common sense. For example, the occasional personal phone call or email from your workplace is acceptable. Excessive personal calls or email is a misuse of assets.
- Seek permission before using Maari Ma property or equipment for personal purposes.
- Use resources in a manner that causes no harm to the community or environment.



- Do not use Maari Ma internet and email resources to access, store, transmit or download pornographic, sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate and offensive material.

Examples of Maari Ma resources include:

- Maari Ma's money
- Any general items that Maari Ma has purchased (stationery, furniture, food)
- Employees' time at work and work product
- Computer systems and software
- Telephones
- Wireless communication devices
- Photocopiers
- Vehicles
- Our work sites and accommodation

### **15. Confidential Information**

Understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Confidential information requires special treatment and protection. People who provide confidential information to Maari Ma have the right to expect this information will be treated as confidential. If you have access to confidential information, you must ensure it remains confidential, and at all times act in accordance with legislation and our policies relating to dealing with private information.

This includes not discussing clients or client information and releasing any organisational information (about our business, our clients or our staff) unless you have the authority to do so.

Further details and direction is found in the *Data Breach Response Plan Policy*.

### **16. Work health and safety**

#### **Arrive Safe – Work Safe – Go Home Safe**

Take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of yourself and of others while at work. Use any equipment provided for health and safety purposes and respond to any reasonable instruction you are given in relation to health and safety.

Be able to work safely by not being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at work.

Refer to the '*Work Health & Safety Policy*' for additional information and guidance.

### ***17. Ability to meet essential requirements***

Notify your Manager of any loss, suspension of, or change to, a registration, accreditation, licence or other qualification that affects your ability to meet relevant essential requirements of your job or to perform your duties.

### ***18. Action that may be taken if there is a breach of the Code***

Maari Ma takes all reports of possible misconduct seriously. We will investigate the matter confidentially, make a determination whether the Code or the law has been violated, and take appropriate corrective action. If you become involved in a Code investigation, cooperate fully and answer all questions completely and honestly.

Action that may be taken may include, but is not limited to:

- Counselling.
- Formal disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- Referral to AHPRA or any other relevant registration board in the case of a registered health practitioner.
- Referral to the police if suspected criminal activity is involved.

### ***19. What to do if you are concerned about a breach of the Code***

Report any breach or concerns about a breach of the Code to your Manager. If you are not comfortable about reporting to your Manager, or the matter relates to your Manager, you should report the matter to a more senior Manager.

Maari Ma will protect any employee who raises a concern honestly, but it is a violation of the Code to knowingly make a false accusation or interfere or refuse to cooperate with a Code investigation.

*Honest reporting does not mean that you have to be right when you raise a concern - you just have to believe that the information you are providing is accurate.*

Any retaliation against an employee who raises an issue honestly is a violation of this Code.

### ***20. Further information***

If you have any difficulties, questions or need more help regarding this Code, you should discuss them with your Manager, the Human Resources Coordinator or any other senior Manager.

*21. Acknowledgment of this Code*

I \_\_\_\_\_  
Name in full

acknowledge that I received the Code of Conduct on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

By signing this acknowledgment you are confirming that you have read and understood the obligation you have to comply with this Code at all times while working with Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation.

Please forward the complete signed document to [workforce@maarima.com.au](mailto:workforce@maarima.com.au) for inclusion on your employee file.