

# Redland Bushwalkers Inc.

## Code of Conduct

### Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Conduct (“the **Code**”) is to promote an environment where members engaged in the various activities of Redland Bushwalkers Inc (the “**Club**”) always demonstrate respect and consideration for each other. This Code is intended to set minimum standards of behaviour for all persons involved in the Club’s activities.

### Introduction

The Club has policies promoting behaviour that demonstrates respect and care for the environment in its minimal impact guidelines, available at <https://redlandbushwalkers.org.au/etiquette-2>.

This Code focuses on the behaviour of individuals towards each other, acting either alone or together with others.

### Code of Conduct

The Club is established for adults aged 18 years or above. Children under 18 may only participate if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, with the express consent of the Activity Leader.

With this qualification in mind, every person participating in the activities of the Club should strive to ensure the following standards are met.

### Committee members and Activity Leaders

- Exercise their powers, perform functions and carry out duties honestly, in good faith and for a proper purpose, without seeking a benefit for themselves.
- Act with care and diligence.
- When acting in connection with Club activities, comply with all applicable Australian Laws.
- When acting in connection with Club activities, comply with any reasonable and lawful direction from the Committee.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of Club matters.
- Take reasonable steps to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Use Club resources in a proper manner for a proper purpose without unnecessary wastage.

### We respect fellow Club members and bushwalkers

- We welcome people from all walks of life irrespective of gender, age, race, religion, culture, colour, disability, sexual identity, and preference.
- We behave in a harmonious manner to and with others.
- We appreciate difference and welcome learning from others, building relationships based on mutual respect.
- We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, or discrimination in any form.
- We encourage, respect, and support the Club’s leaders as competent and motivated leaders are essential to the success of the Club’s activities.

- We practice respectful communication including:
  - Politeness, courtesy, and kindness
  - Actively listen
  - Avoid negativity
  - Talk with people — not to or about them
  - Don't overcriticize
  - Treat people equally
  - Be emotionally empathetic
  - Value and respect the opinions of others
- We respect the right of the Club's leaders to accept or reject walker applicants for specific activities based upon the assessed degree of difficulty and the assessed competence of individual walkers.
- We respect the right of bushwalkers to enjoy the peace and quiet of the bush without undue disturbance from technology.
- We help fellow bushwalkers in need, in situations such as: assisting with emergency communications, offering medical aid for which we are qualified, carrying the gear of an injured person, or sharing equipment.

## **We respect indigenous culture**

- We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we walk.
- We treat sites of spiritual or cultural significance with respect.
- We obtain permission from traditional custodians, landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.
- We do not damage aboriginal rock art or camp under overhangs that contain aboriginal rock art.

## **We respect landowners**

- We respect landowners and do not trespass on their land.
- We leave farm gates as we find them.
- We respect the rules of National Parks, and other land managers, regarding camping conditions, maximum numbers in wilderness areas, pets, permitted activities and park closures.

## **Responsibilities of the Club**

It is the responsibility of the Club to:

- Publish and promote this Code to all engaged in the Club's activities.
- Deal with any breaches or complaints made under this Code in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner.
- After the complaint has been resolved, all records will be disposed of securely.

## **Responsibilities of individuals**

It is the responsibility of individuals to:

- Ensure they read and understand this Code.

- Make themselves aware of the standards of behaviour as stipulated in this Code.
- Accept accountability for their behaviour.
- Follow the Club's procedures if they want to make a complaint or report a breach of this Code.

## **Handling misconduct/breaches of the Code**

The Club's procedure for handling of misconduct/breaches follows the principles of natural justice which require that:

- Both the complainant and the alleged offender know the full details of what is being said about them and are afforded an opportunity to respond.
- All relevant information will be considered.
- Decision makers must be unbiased, fair, and just and devoid of conflicts of interest – actual or perceived.
- Penalties imposed will be fair.

Acting in cases of suspected misconduct/breaches of this Code is primarily aimed at protecting the integrity of the Redland Bushwalkers Inc. and thereby maintaining confidence by all members in the Club. Sanctions should be proportionate to the nature of the breach.

### **Roles and responsibilities in handling misconduct/breaches**

1. The Committee member or other person delegated by the Committee investigates the suspected breach and prepares a brief for the Committee.
2. The Committee determines a breach and decides on the sanction.
3. All parties are notified of the decision.

### **Informal Approaches**

- Wherever possible, a person who believes they have been affected by a breach of the Code should first talk with the person or people involved to seek to resolve the problem, before making a formal complaint.
- If the person affected is not able to talk with the person or people involved, they may wish to talk confidentially with a Committee member for advice and support. Such discussions and advice and support should be treated as confidential by all involved. The discussions and advice may be sufficient to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the affected person.
- The outcome from an informal approach may be that the complainant decides there is no problem or that the problem is minor and does not need further attention.
- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been properly addressed or is continuing, a formal approach may be initiated as indicated below.

## Formal Approaches

- A person may make a formal complaint about behaviour that appears to breach the Code.
- The complaint must be made in writing to the Secretary via the Club's email address ([redlandbushwalkersinc@gmail.com](mailto:redlandbushwalkersinc@gmail.com)). Any supporting documents, such as emails, texts, messages etc. should be included where appropriate.

## Sanctions for Breaches of the Code

For an individual these are the types of remedial actions/sanctions that may be applied:

- Written apology by the offender to those affected by the breach.
- Letter of reprimand from the Committee.
- Period of suspension from Club activities.
- Removal of person from a specific role or position on the Committee.
- Expulsion from the Club.

The Committee will determine remedial action/sanction to be imposed, after consideration of the offending behaviour, and any previous complaints that may have been made and upheld against the offender.

## Breaches of the Code

The following behaviours are breaches of the Code:

- Violent or abusive behaviour towards another person
- Vilification of any kind towards another person
- Discrimination against another person based on their age, gender, disability or sexual identity and preference
- Discrimination against another person based on their race, culture, religion, or any other irrelevant personal characteristic
- Victimisation of another person for exercising their rights through this Code
- Failure to maintain a safe environment free from violence, abuse, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

## Complaint Procedure

1. The complaint is owned by the complainant and may be withdrawn at any time. All materials relating to the complaint will be treated as confidential.
2. The Complaints Officer is a person, who is authorised by the Committee to handle the complaint in accordance with the complaints procedure.
3. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Committee may nominate two people to handle the process.
4. Complaints are notified in the first instance via the Club's email address: [redlandbushwalkersinc@gmail.com](mailto:redlandbushwalkersinc@gmail.com).
5. The Complaints Officer/s must not handle a complaint which gives rise to a conflict of interest either actual or perceived for that person. In these circumstances, the Committee should authorise another person to act as Complaints Officer.

6. The Committee will decide whether the nature and seriousness of the alleged offending behaviour warrant a formal resolution process.
7. Vexatious or trivial complaints will not be pursued.
8. The Complaints Officer must advise the respondent of the complaint and provide all details and information concerning the complaint.
9. The respondent must be given an opportunity to provide his or her account of the alleged behaviour giving rise to the complaint.
10. The Complaints Officer must establish whether the **facts** of the complaint are in dispute.
11. If the facts are in dispute the Complaints Officer shall seek further information about the behaviour and circumstances of the complaint, including corroboration by third parties who may have been present at the time of the offending behaviour. Third parties shall be informed of their duty to keep the nature and content of their discussion with the Complaints Officer confidential.
12. The Complaints Officer should work with both parties to seek a resolution to the dispute including actions to be taken and possible sanctions to be applied. In appropriate circumstances this may involve a discussion with all relevant parties together.
13. The Complaints Officer will provide a written report to the Committee stating the extent to which the complaint has been maintained and recommending actions and sanctions as appropriate. Before submitting the report to the Committee for consideration, the Complaints Officer provides both parties with the factual element of the report to confirm completeness and accuracy.
14. Having received the Complaints Officer's report, the Committee will make its determination and advise the relevant parties.
15. Both complainant and respondent will be provided with written advice of the finding of the Committee and how any sanctions to be applied will be implemented.
16. Where either the complainant or respondent does not agree with the Committee's determination either party may seek to have the matter referred by the Committee to a mediator for resolution. Costs involved by the appointment of a mediator are shared between the parties. If the mediation does go to an external mediator, any applied sanction will be suspended until the external mediation process is complete.