

# **ARGYLE COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD**

## **CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Board of Argyle Community Housing Ltd (**Argyle Housing** or the **Company** has established this Code of Ethics and Conduct (**Code**) which:
  - a) sets out the principles and values of Argyle Housing;
  - b) applies to:
    - i) Argyle Housing directors; and
    - ii) employees, volunteers and contractors engaged by Argyle Housing, (together **Argyle Housing Staff**);
  - c) is to be read in conjunction with Argyle Housing's policies and procedures;
  - d) forms part of Argyle Housing Staff's employment or engagement with Argyle Housing; and
  - e) may be amended from time to time and any new version of the Code will be circulated to Argyle Housing Staff.
- 1.2 The Code sets the standards of behaviour required by all Argyle Housing Staff.
- 1.3 This version of the Code supersedes and replaces all prior Codes of Ethics and Conduct issued by Argyle Housing.

## 2. VALUES AND VISION

- 2.1 Argyle Housing's key values are as follows:
  - a) Respect: we have regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of everybody;
  - b) Opportunity: We seek out ways to improve and add value to the delivery of our services;
  - c) Accountability: We are accountable for what we do and how we do it;
  - d) Resilience: We face our challenges, we learn and we move forward.
- 2.2 Argyle Housing's vision is to deliver quality housing options and connections to community.

## 3. ARGYLE HOUSING'S COMMITMENT

- 3.1 Argyle Housing is committed to:
  - a) the provision of affordable and safe housing to support Argyle Housing's tenants to achieve better social outcomes for themselves and their families;
  - b) providing assistance with the development of innovative opportunities for the growth of affordable and sustainable housing solutions in NSW and the ACT; and
  - c) becoming a community partner that works collaboratively with Argyle Housing's tenants, support services offered to Argyle Housing tenants, industry organisations and other members of the communities in which Argyle Housing operates.

## 4. ARGYLE HOUSING'S REQUIREMENTS

### Argyle Housing Staff

- 4.1 All Argyle Housing Staff must hold a National Police Check and either a NSW Working with Children Check (**WWWC**) or an ACT Working with Vulnerable People registration (**WWVP**, whichever is applicable to the location in which they work. This applies for the duration of their employment or engagement by Argyle Housing.
- 4.2 If an Argyle Housing Staff member loses their WWWC or WWVP they must immediately notify their Manager or Team Leader, or the Board Chair, in the case of an Argyle Housing director. The Manager, Team Leader or Chair as applicable, will then follow the reporting process set out in clause 5 below.

4.3 All Argyle Housing Staff must:

- a) be familiar with and comply with any Argyle Housing Policies in force and as amended from time to time;
- b) annually, sign a copy of the Code confirming that they understand the Code and its application to their employment;
- c) declare any conflicts of interest as they arise using the reporting lines set out in clause 5 below;
- d) obtain the written consent of their Manager or Team Leader prior to:
  - i) entering into any secondary employment; or
  - ii) becoming a director of a company, including a family company.
- e) maintain confidentiality of all aspects of their work whilst employed by Argyle Housing and following termination of employment;
- f) immediately report to their Manager or Team Leader, or the Board Chair in the case of an Argyle Housing director, any possible violation of any law, regulation or breach of this Code.

**Argyle Housing**

4.4 Argyle Housing takes very seriously any breach of this Code or applicable laws and will adhere to mandatory reporting obligations to the relevant authorities.

**Annual Reporting**

- 4.5 Argyle Housing's Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) will report to the Argyle Housing Board on the Code annually as follows:
- a) reporting any serious breaches of the Code;
  - b) any actions taken as a result of such breaches of the Code; and
  - c) any other matter relevant to the Code.

**5. CONDUCT, BEHAVIOUR AND REPORTING**

**Conduct**

- 5.1 All Argyle Housing Staff must treat tenants and co-workers with respect.
- 5.2 All Argyle Housing Staff must be aware that some of Argyle Housing's tenants are vulnerable persons and/or have a disability. All Argyle Housing Staff must interact with Argyle Housing's tenants as follows:
- a) treat each tenant with respect and dignity;
  - b) observe and maintain a professional relationship with tenants, which includes:
    - i) the avoidance of physical contact with tenants which may result in emotional or psychological harm, or damage the professional relationship;
    - ii) not engaging in any form of inappropriate interaction or conduct with children, young people and or vulnerable adults that may lead to emotional, physical or other harm or damage; and
    - iii) not providing personal contact details to tenants and tenants' families without first obtaining the written consent of your Manager or Team Leader.
  - c) maintain the confidentiality of all Argyle Housing tenants' details both during and after your employment with Argyle Housing has ended.
- 5.3 Argyle Housing requires that:

- a) all Argyle Housing Staff working with tenants must be aware of the possibility of abuse occurring and ensuring that their own conduct is free of any perceived or actual abuse; and
- b) any Argyle Housing Staff who becomes aware of abuse of, or by, a tenant or who suspects that such abuse is occurring, must report this information immediately (or as soon as possible), in accordance with clause 5.7 below.

### Behaviour

- 5.4 If any Argyle Housing Staff observes unethical or inappropriate behaviour being demonstrated by any Argyle Housing Staff, including:
- a) by one Argyle Housing Staff member against another; or
  - b) by an Argyle Housing Staff member against a tenant (including any member of the tenant's household); or
  - c) by any Argyle Housing director against a Argyle Housing Staff member or tenant,
- then they must adhere to the reporting lines contained in clause 5.7 below.
- 5.5 Inappropriate behaviour includes: (a) abuse (physical, verbal or emotional) towards another person; (b) discrimination on the grounds of age, physical ability, ethnicity, any gender, marital or family status, religious or cultural background and sexual orientation; (c) bullying and harassment; and (d) any behaviour that is likely to cause harm to vulnerable or disabled persons.
- 5.6 If any Argyle Housing Staff observes unethical or inappropriate behaviour, they must follow the reporting lines contained in clause 5.7 below.

### Reporting lines and investigation

- 5.7 If an Argyle Housing Staff member forms the opinion that a Argyle Housing Staff member has engaged in unethical or inappropriate behaviour (as described in clause 5.4 above):
- a) they must report this to their Manager or Team Leader, or the Board Chair in the case of an Argyle Housing director;
  - b) each Manager or Team Leader must report that information to the People & Culture Manager and the Compliance Officer within two business days; and
  - c) the Manager or Team Leader will evaluate the information received and if required, for example in the case of an allegation of a serious breach of the Code, will report the breach to the CEO.
  - d) If there is a suspected breach by the CEO, an employee can refer to the Board Chair and/or People & Culture. Information can be sent to the Board Chair via Argyle Housing's Company Secretary, Mark Langan [langan@companymatters.com.au](mailto:langan@companymatters.com.au)
  - e) If there is a suspected breach by one of the Argyle Housing directors, information can be sent to the Board Chair via Argyle Housing's Company Secretary, Mark Langan [langan@companymatters.com.au](mailto:langan@companymatters.com.au)
  - f) If there is a suspected breach by the Chair or Company Secretary, information should be sent to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee in writing to PO Box 1026 Bowral 2576 marked Private and Confidential.
- 5.8 If any member of the community forms the opinion that an Argyle Housing Staff has engaged in unethical or inappropriate behaviour (as described in clause 5.4 above), they are encouraged to contact the CEO directly.
- 5.9 If any Argyle Housing Staff forms the opinion that their Manager or Team Leader has breached the Code and therefore cannot report to that person, then they should report their concerns to the People & Culture Manager.
- 5.10 If an employee cannot follow the reporting lines contained in clauses 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 above, they should report the behaviour in accordance with Argyle Housing's Whistleblower Policy.

- 5.11 Subject to clause 6 below, any breach of the Code or suspected breach of the Code will be taken seriously by Argyle Housing and investigated in accordance with Clause 6. Argyle Housing takes a zero-tolerance approach to breaches of the Code.

## 6. BREACHES OF THE CODE

- 6.1 Where non-compliance is reported in accordance with clause 5, an investigation will be commenced.
- 6.2 The investigation process will be governed by:
- a) the principles and rules of natural justice;
  - b) applicable legislation;
  - c) the Code;
  - d) Argyle Housing's Policies;
  - e) and any relevant employment instrument such as an award or agreement.
- 6.3 Any investigation will be completed within 14 days of receipt of a complaint or notification under this Code.
- 6.4 Following completion of any investigation, Argyle Housing will take action that it considers appropriate. There are a range of steps Argyle Housing may take or be required to take to comply with its mandatory reporting obligations under law which may include:
- a) complying with its legal obligation pursuant to Part 3A of the *Ombudsman Act 1974* to report allegations of reportable conduct to the Ombudsman. Reportable conduct in relation to children and vulnerable people may be defined as:
    - i) any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence);
    - ii) any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child or vulnerable person;
    - iii) any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child or vulnerable person, whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child or vulnerable person;
    - iv) any breach of the Privacy legislation or Argyle Housing's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
  - b) in circumstances where non-compliance with the Code is reported and proven as a result of an investigation, appropriate action will be taken by Argyle Housing which may include any of the following:
    - i) compliance with its mandatory reporting requirements by giving notification of the breach to an external agency, including registration boards, government agencies and the police.
    - ii) termination of employment for the individual who engaged in conduct that breached the Code;
    - iii) suspension of employment whilst an investigation is carried out;
    - iv) re-training for an individual if required; or
    - v) any other action Argyle Housing deems necessary in all of the circumstances.

## 7. GIFTS OR BENEFITS

- 7.1 Argyle Housing Staff and/or their immediate family members (living in the same household) must not accept from tenants, suppliers, donors, sponsors and/or other persons they come into contact with, in the course of their employment with Argyle Housing, any of the following:
- a) private fees;
  - b) gratuities; or

- c) any other form of remuneration or inducement, unless written authorisation has been provided to that Argyle Housing Staff member by their Manager or Team Leader, and the CEO.

7.2 Gifts offered to individual Argyle Housing Staff by tenants or sponsors may only be accepted if the value of the gift is no more than \$50. The recipient of any gift must reasonably assume that the value is \$50 or less.

7.3 Any gift received and its value must be recorded in the **Gifts Register** which is held by the People & Culture Manager.

7.4 If Argyle Housing believes that any member of Argyle Housing Staff has been receiving benefits as referred to in this clause or gifts in excess of \$50 in value, this will be treated very seriously by Argyle Housing and may result in termination of employment or the contract for services.

7.5 Gifts offered to the organisation by corporate partners may only be accepted if the value of the gift is no more than \$300.

7.6 Any corporate gift received and its value must be recorded in the **Gifts Register** which is held by the People & Culture Manager.

## 8. ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

8.1 The consumption of alcohol is prohibited before the commencement of duty, while on duty or on Argyle Housing premises.

8.2 The consumption of prescribed medicinal drugs before the commencement of duty and/or while on duty is not permitted where work performance and/or the safety of other employees may be adversely affected.

8.3 The consumption of illegal drugs is not permitted before commencement of duty, while on duty or on Argyle Housing premises.

8.4 An Argyle Housing Staff's failure to comply with this clause will be treated very seriously by Argyle Housing and may result in termination of employment or the contract for services.

## 9. REVIEW OF THE CODE

9.1 Unless the Argyle Housing Board determines otherwise, this Code will be reviewed annually.

## 10. APPROVED AND ADOPTED

10.1 This Code was approved and adopted by the Board on 21 February 2022.

## 11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

11.1 By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that:

- a) have received a copy of Argyle's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- b) have read and understood the Code of Ethics and Conduct;
- c) will comply with this Code of Ethics and Conduct and its amendments;
- d) understand that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, including the termination of my employment or contract for services.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Version Control

VERSION	DATE	REVISED BY	DESCRIPTION	BOARD APPROVED
1	Sep 2013	Argyle Housing	Development of Code of Conduct	Approved
2	July 2014	Argyle Housing	Inclusion of Social Media	Approved
3	Aug 2014	Argyle Housing	Format Update	Approved
4	Oct 2014	Argyle Housing	Format Update	Approved
5	Jan 2015	Argyle Housing	New format & content	Approved
6	Feb 2015	Argyle Housing	Inclusion of Chairman Letter	Approved
7	May 2015	Company Secretary	Code of Ethics and Conduct	May 2015
8	Jun 2016	People & Culture	Policy Review - Update of section 4	June 2016
9	Apr 2017	Company Secretary	Format & content review	Approved
10	Oct 2017	Company Secretary	Code of Ethics and Conduct	October 2017
11	Jan 2019	People & Culture	Update of section 2	January 2019
12	Sep 2019	Company Secretary	Consistency with Conflict-of-Interest Policy	September 2019
13	May 2020	Company Secretary	Annual Review	24 June 2020
14	June 2021	Company Secretary	Annual Review	29 June 2021
15	Feb 2022	A/CEO	Update of section 7	February 2023
16	Jul 2023	Company Secretary	Annual Review	24 July 2023