

Code of Conduct

V11



A R A L U E N

Imagining and achieving better lives

Policy Statement

Araluen believes that all participants and stakeholders deserve high quality services that achieve positive outcomes, resulting in people feeling safe and valued. To achieve this, Araluen expects its workforce to demonstrate Araluen's Values and Behaviours and uphold Zero Tolerance principles in their interactions with each other and the people they serve. Our Values and Behaviours, Zero Tolerance framework is the foundation for everything we do and how we do it at Araluen.

The purpose of this policy is to inform Araluen's workforce of the behaviour that is expected of them, and to ensure that everyone can enjoy working within an environment where they feel safe and valued.

Definitions

Workforce: Araluen's employees, volunteers, students, and contractors.

NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme

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1. Expectations of Workforce

1.1 Overall Expectations:

Araluen expects all staff to work in line with our Zero Tolerance to abuse, neglect and exploitation, our Values and Behaviours of Respect you; See you; Hear you; Inspire you; Empower you; and Working Together as One, this includes:

- Living and demonstrating our Values and Behaviours
- Complying with Araluen's policies and procedures.
- Living and demonstrating the principles of Zero Tolerance to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
- Complying with the requirements set out in Position Descriptions and contracts.
- Complying with reasonable and lawful instructions.

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- Complying with the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- Complying with the Victorian Disability Worker Commission's Code of Conduct.
- Respecting and valuing difference, not engaging in behaviours which discriminate against others based on race, gender, age, or sexual preferences.
- Respect the rights and dignity of colleagues and ensure the environment is conducive to being a positive workplace, free from occupational violence and aggression.
- Reporting any incidents of bullying or harassment or occupational violence and cooperating with investigations.
- Reporting any form of abuse, or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Providing high quality, respectful services to participants that realise their human rights, including their right to self-determination.
- Ensuring the health and safety of colleagues, participants, and visitors.
- Providing feedback about possible improvements and proactively seeking out information that will help others perform their role to the best of their ability.
- Maintaining respectful, joyful but professional relationships with the people they support. Employees must not have a sexual, familial, or financial relationship with the people they support.
- Wearing or carrying Araluen I.D badges and Araluen lanyards while performing work duties. Employees are issued Araluen I.D badges and Araluen lanyards when they commence employment with Araluen, which they will be responsible for.
- Staff are encouraged to engage in self-reflection regarding their work, challenges, and successes.
- Araluen management will provide regular Reflective Practice supervision sessions to ensure staff receive guidance, feedback, and support.

1.2 Privacy, Security & Confidentiality:

Araluen respects the privacy of all individuals and adheres to a variety of acts and processes designed to protect people's rights. As such, Araluen's workforce is expected to:

- Protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants by handling and storing information about them correctly and securely.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that information collected, stored, and disclosed is accurate, current, and complete.

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that people's personal information is protected from misuse, unauthorised access, loss, or disclosure
- Not disclose any information collected about participants or employees to anyone outside of the organisation (unless required by law or in special circumstances, e.g., where there is evidence that a person's safety may be at risk).
- Not make public comments (including on social media) about Araluen, without the written permission of the Chief Executive.

1.3 Conflict of Interest:

Araluen expects its workforce to carry out their duties in a way that is fair and impartial. To achieve this, the workforce must:

- Treat all the individuals they support equally.
- Not seek any form of 'reward' for performing their duties (e.g., gifts or favours)
- Not enter a personal financial arrangement with participants (e.g., borrowing or lending money)
- Disclose any issues that could be perceived as a conflict of interest. More information can be found within Araluen's Conflict of Interest policy.

1.4 Use of Assets:

Araluen's assets are purchased to help facilitate high quality services for participants. Use of Araluen's assets should be carefully considered to ensure that they remain intact, and in no way contribute to practices that may be construed as unfair, unlawful, or disrespectful. To achieve this, Araluen's workforce must:

- Keep equipment safe and secure and properly care for and maintain it
- Drive vehicles safely, abiding by road safety rules and never when affected by alcohol, prescription drugs of any description legal or illegal that will impair judgement.
- Restrict internet use to work purposes only
- Comply with Araluen's Use of Bank Cards policy
- Request permission to borrow equipment for work purposes and if approved, be responsible for its safety and security

1.5 Alcohol & Drug use

The consumption of alcohol or non-prescription use of drugs or other substances is not permitted. Please refer to Araluen's Drug & Alcohol Consumption Policy for more information.

1.6 Work Attire

Appropriate work attire may vary depending on the duties of the role the employee is performing. For example, supporting participants in active programs compared to working in the administration building.

Also depending on your role you may be issued and required to wear a uniform. If this is the case, dress code standards still apply by ensuring your uniform is kept clean and presentable. The following items of clothing are considered inappropriate for any Araluen working environment:

- Clothing with words, terms, or images likely to offend.
- Clothing which is too revealing or is likely to offend.
- Footwear:
 - For direct support roles or tasks involving participant transport, community access, or environments with physical risk: closed-toe, slip-resistant footwear is required.
 - For administrative roles: professional footwear is required; closed-toe shoes are recommended when entering participant activity areas or other higher-risk environments.

1.7 Identification badges (Araluen ID)

Araluen's identification lanyard and badge fosters an ethos, identity, pride and sense of belonging. These must not be altered in anyway, other than what Araluen has provided. These are to be worn or carried while performing work duties.

2. Expectations of Araluen

Araluen will respect and uphold the human rights of all the people who work for or alongside the organisation. Araluen is committed to acting in a reasonable and fair manner towards our workforce, who can expect the following:

- A workplace free from bullying, discrimination, harassment and occupational violence or aggression where incidents are taken seriously and investigated
- A supportive, safe working environment
- Strong communication and information that supports employees to perform their roles to the best of their ability.
- Equal opportunities for employment and fair appointment processes.
- Fair rates of pay and leave entitlements.
- That Araluen will abide by the Fair Work Act

- A safe and respectful workplace where complaints are addressed promptly and fairly, and support affected employees.
- Training on bullying and harassment, clear reporting procedures, and appropriate action against perpetrators.
- Araluen strongly supports employees Right to Disconnect. Employees have the right to refuse to monitor, read or respond to contact or attempted contact from Araluen or a third party, unless that refusal is unreasonable, outside their contracted hours. For more information, please visit this link [Fair Work - Right to Disconnect](#)
- Appropriate and lawful mechanisms for providing feedback, making complaints, enacting disciplinary procedures, and raising grievances including safe processes for reporting abuse that are free from reprisal.
- Adequate training and resources to allow people to safely enact their duties.
- Clear expectations about the duties and practices employees and relevant stakeholders are expected to perform, including current Position Descriptions.
- An inclusive workplace that respects the diversity of all people and cultures.
- Uphold the Information and Privacy Act (2000) in relation to information held about our workforce.
- The necessary information, instruction, training or supervision to enable employees to do their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.

3. Zero Tolerance

The Zero Tolerance commitment refers to a firm stance against any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm towards people with disabilities. The Zero Tolerance approach emphasises preventing, recognising, and responding to situations where individuals may be at risk of harm or experiencing harm. It underscores the importance of promoting the rights, safety, and dignity of people with disabilities in all aspects of service provision and support. Araluen requires our workforce to never engage in any form of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person with a disability. Araluen expects its workforce to report cases of abuse, harassment, exploitation, or neglect and to speak up if they suspect it may be occurring. Any breaches of our zero-tolerance policy are taken extremely seriously and are met with swift and decisive action, including thorough investigation, appropriate disciplinary measures, and, if necessary, cooperation with relevant authorities.

For more information about how Araluen manages abuse and neglect, please read the Preventing and Responding to Abuse of a Participant policy.

3.1 Zero Tolerance Obligations

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Under the Zero Tolerance Framework, Araluen's workforce must adhere to the following 5 obligations:

1) Provide services without engaging in abuse, neglect, or exploitation

Araluen's workforce Has a duty of care to all Araluen participants, and it is expected to never abuse, exploit, harass or neglect any person they support. This commitment reflects Araluen's unwavering dedication to upholding the rights, dignity and safety of every person we support.

2) Always report any form of abuse or suspected abuse

Araluen's workforce must:

- Take all allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harassment seriously.
- Report any abuse or suspected abuse to their manager and where necessary, relevant authorities.
- In circumstances where Managers fail to act on the first report made about abuse or suspected abuse, report the abuse to any senior manager, if no further action then report abuse to authorities such as the Disability Services Commissioner or the Victorian Police.
- Facilitate access to independent support, such as an advocacy service or the Office of the Public Advocate, where a person's rights have not been upheld
- Participate in training, information sessions and supervision that provides further insight into what abuse is and how this Code of Conduct must be applied.

3) Never engage in any form of sexual abuse or misconduct, and report any such conduct by other workers, people with a disability, family members, carers, and community members

Araluen's workforce must:

- Always and immediately report sexual misconduct and abuse.
- Recognise the power imbalance between themselves and participants and the way that impacts the types of behaviour that is appropriate.
- Never engage in any sexual conduct, activity or behaviour with a participant or any person accessing any of Araluen's services, including sexual advances, personal or sexualised comments or actions committed by force, grooming intimidation, coercion, or manipulation.

4) Show respect for people's cultural and linguistic background, age, gender identity, sexual orientation and abilities when providing services

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- Be aware of and actively listen to the expressed needs, values, and beliefs of people from cultural, religious, and ethnic groups that are different from their own, about culturally relevant needs that affect the delivery of services. This includes participants, their families, advocates, and carers.
- Consult with participants, their families, carers, advocates, and other supports to clarify cultural expectations when they are not clear or adequately met.
- Respect religious or spiritual beliefs and practises that are different from their own.
- Ensure cultures that are different from their own are acknowledged and respected.

5) Staff must act ethically, with integrity, honesty, and transparency

Araluen's workforce must:

- Respect the privacy of participants, their families, carers, advocates, and all community members.
- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, privacy, and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions.
- Display professionalism, competence, care, and skill while providing services, including being respectful to others, maintaining professional boundaries and behaving in a way that ensures the safety and dignity of others.
- Communicate in a language, form, manner, and tone that enables participants to understand the information provided and to make their preferences known
- Always recommend and provide supports that serve the needs and interest of participants.
- Never use the power afforded to them over participants or any other vulnerable person for personal gain.
- Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to participants.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect, and abuse of participants.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

Victorian Disability Worker Commission (VDWC)

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission is a regulatory body charged with the responsibility of ensuring that employees who are responsible for supporting people with a disability, adhere to a strict Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been written by VDWC in alignment with the NDIS Code of Conduct.

Where an employee breaches the Code of Conduct outlined within this policy, Araluen will conduct an internal investigation and may need to report the matter to the VDW who may also conduct their own investigation. Circumstances involving the alleged assault, abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a person with a disability may also need to be reported to the police. The consequences for breaching the Code of Conduct vary according to the severity of the individual's behaviour or misconduct, but may include:

- Training to improve a person's skills and capabilities
- Working with the Commission to improve a person's conduct
- For more serious breaches, the Commission can issue an order that stops a person from providing disability services in Victoria.
- If an alleged criminal act is involved, the matter may be referred to the Police and could result in dismissal from Araluen.

All employees, participants and stakeholders are encouraged to report any concerns they have about the behaviour or conduct of anyone employed by Araluen. Concerns should be raised with relevant Management Team or People and Culture.

Participants wishing to raise a complaint about the conduct or behaviour of an individual can do so by talking to the Manager or Senior Manager of the service they attend or a staff person they feel comfortable with. Araluen's complaints process is outlined within the organisations Feedback and Complaints policy.

4. Values and Behaviours

At Araluen Our Values are the key principles for the standards of behaviour that we believe in and have chosen as the most important to Us. Our Values voices were heard from participants, families & carers and our staff.

Our Behaviours are the observable measurable representation of our Values in Action, we have identified 4 supporting behaviours for each Value.



Our Culture is shaped by our framework of shared **Values**, that guide our **Behaviours** in how we approach our work and interact with each other.

There was a lot of harmony in the responses from our community, which helped us identify the 6 Values, anchored in foundational human heartfelt needs, and the 4 Behaviours that we can all demonstrate to bring each of those Values to life.

Our Values and Behaviours Framework is the foundation for everything we do and how we do it at Araluen.

Related Documents

- NDIS Code of Conduct
- Victorian Disability Worker Commission Code of Conduct
- NDS Zero Tolerance Framework
- WorkSafe Victoria guidelines
- Araluen policies:
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Feedback and Complaints
 - Preventing and Responding to Abuse
 - Diversity and Inclusion
 - Person Centred Support
 - Use of Araluen Bank Cards
 - Drugs and Alcohol Consumption Policy
 - Reflective Practice
 - Reflective Practice Guide to Conversations

Legislation

- Information and Privacy Act 2000
- Disability Act 2006
- Fair Work Act
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004

Review and Authorisation

This policy should be reviewed annually. The General Manager, People and Culture in collaboration with the Quality Team will be responsible for reviewing and where necessary updating this policy.