

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF MEDICAL WOMEN

and

MEDICAL WOMEN'S SOCIETY

CODE OF CONDUCT

A Message from the President AFMW

As members of AFMW, we are committed to advancing the professional development, education, and training of medical women. Our goal is to enhance health and welfare, particularly for women and children in Australia.

To reach this goal, every AFMW member should encourage a positive and healthy culture where everyone's contributions are valued, and everyone is treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. Teamwork and mutual respect are key.

Members can expect to be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. Bullying or harassment will not be accepted.

This Code helps us achieve our goals by fostering a positive culture. Please get to know the Code and follow its principles.

Dr Brenda Masters President AFMW

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF MEDICAL WOMEN and Medical Women's Society

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) is the national body representing Medical Women across Australia. Members of the State/Territory Medical Women's Societies (MWS) are by virtue of their regional membership also members of AFMW. Medical women not affiliated with a regional organisation may become members as individuals.

PURPOSE

Our Code of Conduct outlines:

- Standards of professional and ethical conduct that are expected of members,
- the behaviours which are expected of all members,
- those behaviours which are unacceptable and not tolerated, and
- The consequences of non-compliance.

The Code of Conduct enables a positive and healthy culture and assists AFMW and its affiliated State and Territory Medical Women's Organisations to fulfil their aims.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Code of Conduct is mandatory, and all AFMW / MWS members are required to comply with the Code and its principles.

All members are to be given a copy of the Code of Conduct, and the document is to be readily accessible on the AFMW Website.

- New members joining AFMW / MWS are to be given a copy of the Code of Conduct as part of their membership application and must acknowledge their agreement to comply.
- Existing members are to be sent a copy of the Code of Conduct and given 60 days to withdraw their membership should they not agree to comply.
- AFMW Councillors are to be sent a copy of the Code of Conduct which they must sign and return to the AFMW Secretary as acknowledgement of their agreement to comply.

REVISION HISTORY

Version 1	Approved by	Notes
18 Jan 2025		Draft submitted to AFMW Council meeting for initial review – State organisations and Councillors provided feedback for consideration
19 June 2025		Revised version presented to Council meeting and adopted
June 2026		12 month revision & inclusion of changes/additions.

Table of Contents

A Message from the President AFMW	2
PURPOSE	2
IMPLEMENTATION	3
REVISION HISTORY	3
Table of Contents.....	4
1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 AFMW / MWS VALUES	5
Collaboration	5
Openness	5
Respect	5
Empowerment	5
3 THE CODE OF CONDUCT.....	5
3.1. Promote a positive organisational culture	5
3.2. Demonstrate honesty and integrity	6
3.3. Act professionally and ethically.....	6
4 APPLYING THE CODE	6
4.1 Who does the Code apply to?	6
4.2 Responsibilities under the Code	7
4.3 What happens if there is a breach of the Code	7
4.4 What to do if you are concerned about a breach of the Code	8
4.5 Protection for people who raise concerns about a breach of the Code	8
5. REFERENCES	8
APPENDIX 1	9

1 INTRODUCTION

A Code of Conduct establishes a framework for promoting professional and ethical behaviour and decision making and offers guidance on reporting breaches of its standards. It supports the creation and maintenance of a constructive environment conducive to achieving organisational goals.

2 AFMW / MWS VALUES

AFMW / MWS values integrity, trust, service and accountability.

CORE values in our conduct are demonstrated by:

Collaboration

- We are committed to working together to achieve our goals.
- Our leaders are role models for our core values, and they are accountable.

Openness

- We foster cooperation through open communication.
- We encourage & support each of us to speak up and voice our ideas as well as concerns, by making it clear that speaking up is worthwhile and valued.
- We communicate clearly and with integrity.

Respect

- We actively listen to each other.
- We welcome new ideas and ways of doing things.
- We treat each other with dignity and respect, and care about those around us.
- Each of us is responsible for the culture and performance of our organisation.
- We have zero tolerance for bullying and no-one, no matter how senior, is exempt.

Empowerment

- We encourage and support individual decision making and innovation.
- As individuals, we can improve our organisational culture and performance by addressing issues that are barriers to our progress.

3 THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code requires all AFMW / MWS members to adhere to the following standards. These standards apply to activities under AFMW / MWS auspices, including social activities, and comments in the press or on social media where a person's membership can be inferred.

3.1. Promote a positive organisational culture

Members must:

- 3.1.1. Treat other members with courtesy and respect, and with due sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- 3.1.2. Treat other members in a way that promotes harmonious and productive working relationships.

- 3.1.3. Not bully or harass other members or discriminate against them in any way.
- 3.1.4. Not encourage or support other members in harassing or bullying, or in acting in a way that is contrary to harmonious working relationships between members
- 3.1.5. Where appropriate, attempt to settle any complaints, disagreements or grievances involving other members directly with them in the first instance. If the issue is unable to be resolved, refer to the State Committee or AFMW Council.

3.2. Demonstrate honesty and integrity

Members must:

- 3.2.1. Avoid situations which may give rise to pecuniary or other conflicts of interest and should any conflicts or possible perceptions of such conflicts arise declare them immediately.
- 3.2.2. Ensure that their actions and decisions are not influenced by self-interest or considerations of personal gain or other improper motives.
- 3.2.3. Not accept gifts or inducements that are intended to influence their decisions or actions.

3.3. Act professionally and ethically

Members must:

- 3.3.1. Carry out their duties diligently and efficiently.
- 3.3.2. Observe all laws, and professional codes of conduct and ethics particularly s5.2.3 of the Medical Board Ahpra Code of Good Medical Practice.
- 3.3.3. Avoid conduct that could bring AFMW / MWS or any other members into disrepute.
- 3.3.4. Act in a way which protects and promotes the interests of AFMW / MWS.
- 3.3.5. Only provide official comment on matters related to AFMW / MWS if authorised to do so.
- 3.3.6. If holding an office bearer position advise the State Committee and/or AFMW Council as applicable of any criminal charges and convictions against them involving offences punishable by imprisonment.
- 3.3.7. Report any misconduct by AFMW / MWS members, such as corruption, fraud, and maladministration, to the State Committee or AFMW Council, and/or to the appropriate external statutory body.

4 APPLYING THE CODE

4.1 Who does the Code apply to?

This Code applies to all AFMW / MWS members.

4.2 Responsibilities under the Code

- 4.2.1.** All AFMW / MWS members are responsible for applying and complying with the Code.
- 4.2.2.** The Chair of any meeting is responsible for managing compliance during the meeting.
She may find it useful to begin by outlining meeting rules to ensure respect, equal speaking opportunities, and active listening. Appointing a moderator can help assess the meeting's efficiency and rule adherence.

4.3 What happens if there is a breach of the Code

- 4.3.1.** Inappropriate conduct by a member/s may occur in verbal communication, in a meeting, in an email, or in other written communication including social media.
- The consequences for breaches of this Code will depend on the nature and seriousness of the matter.
 - It is the responsibility of each AFMW / MWS member to address any disrespectful or inappropriate conduct by a AFMW / MWS member/s, and to do this contemporaneously, and in a fair and reasonable manner.
- 4.3.2. During AFMW / MWS Meetings:**
In meetings, it is important to address any inappropriate conduct by members promptly. While it is typically the responsibility of the chair to manage such situations, any attendee has the ability to intervene.
- It may be that a 'time-out' period is needed.
 - If a member/s persists with inappropriate conduct, then the meeting can require that the member leave either for the remainder of the meeting, or whilst the agenda item is being discussed.
- 4.3.3. Outside of AFMW / MWS meetings** breaches of the code should be first brought to the attention of the AFMW / MWS committee (as most appropriate to the circumstances). The Office bearer who is alerted has a responsibility to address serious alleged breaches of the Code, and to do so promptly.
- 4.3.4. Possible outcomes** for an AFMW (MWS) member who has breached the Code may be:
- Requirement to issue an appropriate apology or withdrawal of comments,
 - Counselling / mediation,
 - Removal from council / committee membership,
 - Removal from office bearer role,
 - Referral to Government agencies, such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and/or
 - Termination of membership

4.4 What to do if you are concerned about a breach of the Code

Report any serious breach of the Code to the President, or to the Vice-President if it involves the President. Allegations of corruption must be reported to external agencies.

4.5 Protection for people who raise concerns about a breach of the Code

It is a criminal offence to retaliate against a whistle-blower under State/Territory Public Interest Disclosures legislation if the disclosure is covered by the legislation.

5. REFERENCES

1. NSW Health Code of Conduct PD2015_049
2. Medical Board Ahpra Good Medical Practice Code Oct 2020
3. Constitution of the Australian Federation of Medical Women Dec 2020
4. Australian Public Service Commission Code of Conduct May 2022 (s13 Public Service Act 1999)

APPENDIX 1

AFMW / MWS Code of Conduct Declaration Form (e-document)

I have read and understood the AFMW / MWS Code of Conduct and agree to comply with its principles at all times whilst a member of the AFMW / MWS.

By signing this Code I acknowledge my commitment to the Code and its principles, and my contribution to a positive organisational culture that is safe and supportive for all members.

..... *Print name*

..... *Signature*

..... *Date*