



Conflict of Interest Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and related procedures is to:

- Protect the integrity of Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Co-operative (ESRHC) with all relevant stakeholders;
- Uphold the member and community confidence in the decision-making processes of the Board;
- Ensure the decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, equitable and free of any bias, and
- Ensure compliance with corporate best practice.

2. Basis for Policy

The Housing Act 1983 - Performance Standards for Registered Agencies
The Co-operatives National Application Law Act 2013

3. Policy & Procedures

3.1 Definitions

Conflicts of interest include both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, and there are penalties under these Acts for not declaring a conflict of interest.

Pecuniary – An interest a person has in a matter due to the reasonable likelihood or expectation of financial gain or loss to the person or an associate of the person (e.g. relative, partner, employer).

Non-pecuniary – an interest which may include family relationships, friendships, positions within the Co-operative or other interests which do not involve financial gain or loss.

3.2 Examples of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when:

You have, or a family member, relative, friend, or associate, has a personal interest in a matter that could lead, or lead a fair person, to think that you could be influenced in the way you carry out your Co-operative responsibilities. For example:

- You are a member of a Tenant Selection Committee and a relative of yours or a friend applies for Community Housing with your Co-operative.
- You or your partner, relative or friend works for a company that quotes on a job for your Co-operative.
- Your Co-operative is voting on the membership of an applicant that is a relative or friend of yours.
- You are on the Maintenance Committee within the Co-operative and you have applied to the Co-operative for some maintenance to be done on your property.

Be very aware of potential conflicts of interest in these situations:

- Tendering or quoting for work
- Involvement in committees or sub-committees
- Involvement in Appeals procedures
- Allocation of properties
- More than one family member being involved in the finances of the Co-operative e.g. it is not recommended to have more than one family member able to sign cheques or approve electronic banking payments

3.3 Declaring a Conflict of Interest

Our actions must be seen by others to be free from any conflicts of interest. This means you need to consider what others might think of the situation, including unsuccessful tenderers, other members/tenants, the Department of Health and Humans Services (DHHS), the Housing Registrar, other Government departments and the general public.

Members, tenants or staff of the Co-operative must declare in writing to the Chairperson of the Co-operative (or a designated officer) that they have a conflict of interest as soon as they are aware that one exists.

If members become aware during a meeting of a conflict of interest this will be recorded in the minutes and the member must withdraw from further discussion and voting on the matter.

3.4 Member to leave meeting during discussion and voting

A member who has a conflict of interest must leave the meeting whilst any matter involving the member is discussed and voted upon.

The minute taker shall record the time the member leaves and returns to the meeting.

3.5 Chairperson to seek advice if unsure

If the Chairperson is unsure whether a conflict exists or how to deal with it, the Chairperson should seek advice from the DHHS or the Housing Registrar, and may seek legal advice at the Co-operative's expense, before dealing with the matter.

3.6 Resolving Conflicts

The Co-operative must find an option to resolve the conflict of interest which ensures impartiality, transparency, fairness and protection of the public interest.