



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL
HISTORIANS ASSOCIATIONS INC.

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
FOR PROFESSIONAL HISTORIANS IN AUSTRALIA
(Final Draft 2/6/01)

1. PREAMBLE

The Code has been formulated to embrace the practice of all members of Professional Historians Associations in Australia. The Code is intended to consolidate high standards of professionalism, integrity and scholarship. It provides standards by which historians may measure the propriety of their conduct in their relationships with colleagues and the profession; their relationship with clients; and their responsibilities to the community. Adherence to the Code is a condition of membership of all Member Associations of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations (ACPHA).

2. GENERAL CONDUCT

- 2.1 Members are obliged to accept the standards, endorsed by the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations, and to accept the self-imposed disciplines of their profession.
- 2.2 In their professional role, members should at all times be courteous and considerate to others.
- 2.3 Members are entitled to expect that their personal choice of style, approach, evaluation of evidence and interpretation will be respected by their colleagues, and that any grounds for disagreement with their conclusions will be fairly stated.
- 2.4 Members should not publicly question the integrity or competence of their colleagues. Complaints of this kind should be directed to the Executive of their Professional Historians Association.
- 2.5 Members who make statements and recommendations, express opinions and give evidence, should do so objectively and truthfully, and on the basis of adequate research.
- 2.6 Members should take care to know of, and comply with, all legal requirements affecting their work.

3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

- 3.1 Members are expected to follow scholarly practice, including the acknowledgement of the work, ideas and methods of others.
- 3.2 Members should, whenever appropriate, assist in the work and professional development of colleagues and students.
- 3.3 Members should keep themselves informed of developments within their profession and be committed to continuing their professional development.

- 3.4 Members should avoid discrediting their profession by attempting work beyond their level of competence.
- 3.5 Members should avoid placing themselves under an obligation to any person or organisation if so doing could undermine their professional integrity.
- 3.6 Members should acknowledge help from informants. They should respect an informant's request for privacy, except where compulsion of law requires disclosure.

4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

- 4.1 Members should carefully plan and adhere to a firm and achievable date for the completion of a project.
- 4.2 Members should not misrepresent the requirements, findings, problems or possible consequences of a project.
- 4.3 If a conflict of interest between a member and client becomes apparent, it should immediately be disclosed to the client.
- 4.4 Members should seek and receive appropriate fees for their services.
- 4.5 When undertaking a commission, members should abide by the agreed fee, conditions and timing of payment, unless the contract has been re-negotiated.
- 4.6 Members should inform clients immediately, and in writing, of any unforeseen circumstances which may require renegotiation of the contract.
- 4.7 Members should not accept compensation, financial or otherwise, from more than one party for services on the same project, unless the circumstances are fully disclosed and agreed to by all interested parties.
- 4.8 Financial arrangements with clients should always be restricted to matters concerning professional fees, ie. work should not be done in exchange for services.
- 4.9 Members should advise the client when a project requires the expertise of other professional disciplines and, if possible, recommend a contact.
- 4.10 Members must not use confidential information to the advantage or disadvantage of the client, nor disclose such information except where required by law.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COMMUNITY

- 5.1 In their professional role, members are responsible both to those employing them and to the wider community. Any conflict between the client's interests and that of the community should be immediately brought to the attention of the client and every effort should be made to resolve it.
- 5.2 Members must not suppress evidence that they consider relevant to the task, or to distort or misuse evidence.
- 5.3 Members should respect the historical resources and material available to them with a view to their conservation as well as immediate use. Members should encourage the gift, loan or copying of source material to be held in the appropriate public repository.

6. BREACHES OF THE CODE OF ETHICS OR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- 6.1 If a member is alleged to have acted unethically or unfairly, a PHA and/or ACPHA may institute an enquiry constituted under the prescribed guidelines, and may decide to either exonerate, caution, dismiss the complaint, censure, or recommend suspension, resignation or expulsion of a member.