

9 October 2023

Message from the Registrar

In 2017 the Independent Commission Against Corruption (**ICAC**) recommended that Local Aboriginal Land Councils strengthen their governance through developing their own rules and codes of conduct.¹

Codes of conduct set out the rules, standards and expectations of behaviour for Board members, staff and members.

Pursuant to section 179 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) (**ALRA**), the Registrar may prepare a model Code of Conduct that *may* be adopted by Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

In September 2019, the Registrar first developed DRAFT codes of conduct for Board members, staff and members of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (**Registrar's DRAFT Codes of Conduct**).

In light of the changes made to the ALRA in November 2022 (particularly the changes in relation to the dismissal provisions and the Registrar's investigative and disciplinary powers), the Registrar has completed a substantive review of the Registrar's DRAFT Codes of Conduct and has prepared revised versions of these documents.

The Registrar's DRAFT Codes of Conduct include more guidance for Board members, staff and members on:

- values, legal duties and standards;
- managing conflicts of interests and pecuniary interests;
- behaviour at meetings;
- public comment, including social media; and
- accountability for breaches of the code, including a dismissal provision.

It is hoped these revised DRAFT Codes of Conduct will provide a useful starting point and structure to assist Local Aboriginal Land Councils to develop their own codes of conduct. The process of developing your own code of conduct is an important process in strengthening good governance in your Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Local Aboriginal Land Councils are encouraged to consider how the Registrar's DRAFT Codes of Conduct can be adapted to make sure they have particular relevance to the Council, their members and their communities, and to the kind of organisation they want the Council to be.

If your Local Aboriginal Land Council is considering developing its own codes of conduct, please contact the Office of the Registrar for advice on (02) 8575 1160.

Yours sincerely



Nicole Courtman
Registrar
Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983

¹ *Governance and Regulation in the NSW Aboriginal Land Council Network*, Independent Commission Against Corruption, May 2017.