CODE OF PRACTICE FOR VINCENTIA COMMUNITY FORUM

Passed by special resolution on Thursday 20th August 2026

1. Statement of Objects

- To provide ratepayers, businesses and residents in Vincentia with a forum to discuss issues of concern.
- To facilitate discussion on issues and communicate the collective views of the community to relevant authorities including local, state or federal government or to other individuals and organisations as appropriate.
- To advocate for improved public facilities in Vincentia and seek grant funding from local, state or federal government to support such facilities.
- To obtain and disseminate information relevant to the Vincentia community.
- To encourage the involvement of the community in the decision-making processes of local, state and federal Governments that impact on Vincentia.
- To fulfil the role of the Accredited Community Forum (ACF) body for Vincentia while recognised by the Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) and comply with the Accredited Community Forums (ACF) Policy & Operating Model available to read HERE

2. Purpose

This Code of Practice sets out the standards of conduct, integrity, and professionalism expected of all members of Vincentia community Forum. It aims to:

- Ensure compliance with the Shoalhaven City Council Accredited Community Forum (ACF) Model Code of Practise
- Promote ethical behaviour
- Protect the reputation of the association
- Ensure trust among members, council, and the public
- Support transparent, respectful, and effective community engagement

3. Scope

This code applies to:

- All members, officers, and representatives
- Volunteers and affiliates acting on behalf of the association
- Activities conducted both in-person and online
- Situations where a reasonable person may perceive a member to be representing the association

4. Core Principles

Integrity

Members must:

- Act honestly, professionally, fairly and transparently
- Avoid misleading or deceptive behaviour
- Honor commitments and responsibilities

Professional Conduct

Members must:

- Maintain high standards of competence and professionalism

- Treat others with respect, fairness, and courtesy
- Avoid harassment, discrimination, or bullying
- Participate in meetings respectfully, follow the chair's directions, and allow others to speak
- Engage with external stakeholders—including Council, community groups, and residents—in a respectful, constructive, and professional manner, while retaining the right to question, challenge, or critique decisions that affect the community

Accountability

Members are responsible for:

- Their decisions and actions
- Complying with applicable laws and regulations
- Reporting unethical or improper conduct
- Distinguishing clearly between personal views and the association's positions

Confidentiality

Members must:

- Protect sensitive or confidential information
- Not disclose information without proper authorization
- Use data only for its intended purpose
- Respect privacy obligations when handling member information
- Understand that confidentiality does not override requirements for transparent minutes, resolutions, or public decisions

Conflict of Interest

Members must:

- Declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest
- Avoid situations where personal interests could influence professional judgment
- Withdraw from decision-making where conflicts exist
- Make declarations to the committee and ensure they are recorded in the minutes

5. Compliance with Laws and Policies

Members must:

- Follow all applicable laws and regulations
- Adhere to the association's rules, bylaws, and policies
- Respect intellectual property and privacy rights
- Comply with Shoalhaven City Council ACF requirements and guidelines

6. Representing the Association

When representing the association, members must:

- Act in its best interests
- Avoid making unauthorised statements
- Uphold its reputation and values
- Ensure public statements, including online posts, are accurate and consistent with approved positions
- Clearly state when expressing personal views that they are not speaking on behalf of VCF

7. Use of Association Resources

Members must:

- Use resources responsibly and only for authorized purposes
- Avoid misuse of funds, assets, or information
- Ensure transparency in financial matters
- Understand that resources include funds, equipment, documents, digital assets, and intellectual property
- Not use the forum's name, logo, or materials without approval

8. Reporting and Enforcement

Reporting Concerns

Members are encouraged to:

- Report breaches of this code in good faith
- Make reports in writing
- Support a culture of openness and accountability
- Submit reports to the committee or designated officer

Investigation

- Allegations will be reviewed fairly and confidentially
- Due process will be followed
- Conflicts of interest will be managed appropriately

Disciplinary Actions

Breaches may result in:

- Warnings or reprimands
- Suspension of membership
- Termination or other appropriate actions
- Actions will be taken in accordance with the Constitution and relevant legislation

9. Commitment

All members agree to:

- Uphold this Code of Practice
- Promote ethical behaviour within the association
- Continuously improve standards
- Support constructive, respectful community engagement

10. Review

This Code will be reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Reviews will be conducted by the committee and may include consultation with members.