

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear, fair, and consistent framework for managing concerns and misconduct of Buller District Council (BDC) subcommittee members. It outlines the standards of conduct expected of all members, the process for addressing concerns when they arise, and the circumstances that may lead to a member's resignation or removal. This process is intended to support a respectful, safe, and productive environment for volunteers, while ensuring decisions are made transparently, proportionately, and in accordance with Council policies, the Elected Members Code of Conduct, and relevant legislative obligations.

Expectations of Conduct

Subcommittee members must:

- Follow the BDC Elected Members Code of Conduct at all times
- Treat others respectfully
- Avoid abusive, threatening, or inappropriate behaviour
- Avoid actions that bring the Council or subcommittee into disrepute
- Use social media responsibly and in line with the Elected Members Code of Conduct

Understand that:

- All subcommittee business is subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act (LGOIMA). This means subcommittee meetings and workshops are open to the public unless the Act provides a lawful reason to exclude them.
- Public excluded discussions may only occur in limited circumstances, such as matters involving commercial sensitivity, privacy obligations, or other grounds permitted under LGOIMA.
- Personal opinions posted publicly may still reflect on Council and the individual

Note:

The BDC Elected Members Code of Conduct is expected to change following upcoming central government requirements.

However, this onboarding/offboarding process will remain the same.

Escalation Process for Concerns or Misconduct

All concerns should be raised with the Subcommittee Chair in the first instance.

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, the process below applies. A list of behaviours and actions that may trigger the offboarding process can be found at the bottom of this policy to support clarity and fairness for all volunteers.

Step A. Informal Conversation

- The Chair discusses the concern with the member.
- Expectations are clarified.
- Aim: resolve early and respectfully.

Step B. Formal Warning

- If behaviour continues or is serious:
- A written warning is issued by the Group Manager Community Services.
The warning outlines:
 - The behaviour of concern
 - Relevant Code of Conduct sections
 - Required changes
 - Consequences if behaviour continues

Step C. Request for Resignation

If behaviour does not improve, or if the breach is significant (e.g., abusive behaviour, repeated CoC breaches, reputational harm):

- The Community Committee may formally request the member's resignation.

Step D. Removal

If the member refuses to resign:

- The Community Committee may remove the member from the subcommittee.

This must be:

- Fair
- Evidence-based
- In line with the BDC Complaints Policy
- Overseen by the Chair, Deputy Chair, and Group Manager Community Services

Behaviours and Actions That May Trigger Offboarding

Subcommittee members are volunteers, and the expectation is always to approach any concerns with care, respect, and fairness. However, certain behaviours or actions may require the Community Committee to begin the offboarding process. These expectations are consistent with the BDC Elected Member Code of Conduct, the BDC Complaints Policy, and Council's health and safety obligations.

The following may trigger the offboarding process:

1. Repeated or Serious Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- Including (but not limited to):
- Disrespectful, aggressive, or intimidating behaviour
- Abusive, threatening, or harassing language or actions
- Bullying or undermining other members, staff, or volunteers
- Behaviour that damages trust or prevents the subcommittee from functioning effectively

2. Misuse of Social Media

Such as:

- Posting comments that bring the subcommittee or Council into disrepute
- Engaging in online arguments about subcommittee or Council matters
- Sharing confidential information
- Making public statements that imply they speak on behalf of Council when they do not
- Targeting local businesses or individuals in a way that could be seen as inappropriate or harmful

3. Breach of Confidentiality

Examples include:

- Sharing private discussions outside the subcommittee
- Disclosing sensitive information about community members, staff, or Council matters
- Passing on internal documents without permission

4. Conflict of Interest Issues

Including:

- Failing to declare a conflict of interest
- Participating in decisions where they have a personal or financial interest
- Using their position for personal gain or to benefit friends, family, or businesses

5. Behaviour That Compromises Health and Safety

Such as:

- Ignoring Council health and safety requirements
- Creating unsafe situations for themselves or others
- Refusing to follow reasonable safety instructions

6. Actions That Disrupt Subcommittee Functioning

For example:

- Consistently refusing to follow agreed processes
- Preventing the subcommittee from making progress
- Undermining decisions once they have been made
- Creating ongoing conflict that cannot be resolved informally

7. Bringing Council or the Subcommittee Into Disrepute

This may include:

- Public behaviour that reflects poorly on Council
- Conduct in the community that damages trust or confidence
- Repeated complaints upheld under the BDC Complaints Policy

8. Failure to Engage Constructively

Such as:

- Persistent non-attendance without reasonable explanation
- Refusal to participate in required induction or training
- Repeatedly ignoring communication or requests from the Chair

9. Serious Misconduct

This includes:

- Fraud, dishonesty, or misuse of Council resources
- Discrimination, harassment, or unlawful behaviour
- Any behaviour that would reasonably make continued membership untenable

Tone and Approach

Because subcommittee members are volunteers, the process should always begin with:

- A gentle conversation
- Clarification of expectations
- Support to resolve the issue

Leaving the Subcommittee is only considered when:

- The behaviour continues, or
- The behaviour is serious enough that it cannot be ignored

