



Conflict of interest policy

Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help Management Committee members of **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.** to effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to protect the integrity of **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc** and manage risk.

Conflicts of interest are common. Being open about them and handling them carefully helps maintain trust.

2. Objective

The **committee of management** (called the 'Committee' in this policy) aims to ensure that Committee members are aware of their obligation to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.**

3. Scope

This policy applies to the Committee, Sub-committee and volunteer staff members of **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.**

4. Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the charity.

Personal interests include direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder).

It also includes a conflict between a Committee member's duty to **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc** and another duty that the Committee member has (for example, to another charity). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.



A perceived conflict of interest exists where a reasonable person may think that a person's judgement could be influenced by a personal interest, even if this is not the case.

These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the charity.

Therefore, these situations must be managed accordingly.

5. Policy

This policy has been developed to address actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest affecting **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.**

Conflicts of interest are common and do not need to present a problem to the charity as long as they are openly and effectively managed.

It is the policy of **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc** and the responsibility of the Committee, to ensure that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest are avoided wherever possible and effectively managed when they arise.

The Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc will manage conflicts of interest by requiring Committee members to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and disclose interests and conflicts of interest
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

5.1. Responsibility of the Management Committee

The Committee is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest across the charity
- monitoring compliance with this policy, and
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

The charity must ensure that its Committee, Subcommittee members and volunteers are aware of the ACNC governance standards, particularly Governance Standard 5, and that they disclose any actual or perceived material conflicts of interests as required by Governance Standard 5.



5.2. Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into the **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc's** register of interests, as well as being raised with the Committee.

If all Committee members have the same conflict of interest, the **Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc** must consider whether it is still able to comply with the ACNC Governance Standards, especially Governance Standard 5.

Conflicts of interest may be identified in several ways, including:

- the Chair calling for declarations of conflicts of interest at the beginning of Committee meetings or when specific agenda items arise
- Committee members proactively declaring interests and conflicts of interest when they become aware of them
- completion of conflict-of-interest declaration forms when required
- requirements set out in the Constitution of Illawarra South Coast Central Services Association

Where every other Committee member shares a conflict, the Committee should refer to ACNC Governance Standard 5 to ensure that proper disclosure occurs.

The register of interests must be maintained by the Secretary of the Association. The register must record information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

5.3 Confidentiality of disclosures

Conflicts on Interest will be recorded on the Association's Register of Interests, which is maintained by the Secretary.

The register and any associated records will be stored securely in the Association's Google Drive and Member's-Only area of the ISCCSO website.

Access to these records will be limited to Committee members and Association members where appropriate, to ensure transparency while respecting the privacy of individuals involved.

Personal information will only be shared to the extent necessary to manage the conflict of interest.

6. Action required to manage conflicts of interest

6.1. Actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest of Committee members



Due to the nature of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship, Committee members may have personal relationships with members of the Committee, Sub-committees or volunteers (for example close friendships, sponsorship relationships, partners and/or spouses).

These relationships do not automatically constitute a conflict of interest. Where a matter arises that could reasonably be *perceived* or have the *potential* to affect impartial decision-making, the relationship should be declared a conflict of interest.

In such cases, the Committee will determine the appropriate management of the conflict in accordance with this policy.

6.11 Possible Financial Conflicts of Interest

The Committee of The Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc has the following procedures to prevent or minimise conflicts of interest of a financial nature.

1. Our Bank accounts require two signatories to approve monies to be withdrawn.
2. Signatories to bank accounts should not include closely related individuals (e.g. partners, spouses, siblings, parent-child relationships). Debit cards should not be issued to more than one related individual as they allow funds to be accessed by one person without requiring a second approval.
3. Debit Card have a low balance limit and do not exceed \$500.
4. Where a motion involves a conflict of interest (e.g. reimbursement of expenses), only one related individual may vote and the other must abstain.
5. Cash holdings in the literature store are kept as a minimum, with banking required when the amount exceeds \$100.
6. Cash must be reconciled against receipts to ensure accuracy. Volunteers are required to verify amounts at the end of their shifts.

A management of Resources Policy for ISCCSO Inc. has been developed to support these procedural steps.

6.12 Other Possible Conflicts of Interest

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the Committee (*excluding the Committee member who has made the disclosure, as well as any other conflicted Committee member*) must decide, whether or not those conflicted Committee members should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.



In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a Committee member from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the Committee considering if it is appropriate for the person to resign from the Committee.

6.2. What should be considered when deciding what action to take

In deciding what approach to take, the Committee will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the charity's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the charity.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the Committee (excluding any conflicted Committee member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting.

The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

7. Compliance with this policy

If the Committee has reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, the Committee will investigate the surrounding circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Committee may take action. This may include seeking to terminate their position on the Committee.

For example, Clause 18.4 of the Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc Constitution, prohibits involvement in an association with substantially similar objectives, stating:

18.4 It is considered essential that no office bearer referred to in the last preceding clause hereof, should hold any office in any other movement, body, association or institution which has for a main objective dealing with in any way with the problem of alcohol and / or other drugs, or for the providing of amelioration, treatment or amenities for persons affected by such problems.

Concerns about potential conflicts of interest should be raised with the Committee or the person responsible for maintaining the register of interests.

Contacts



For questions about this policy, contact the Committee or the Committee Secretary by email at aawollongong@gmail.com.

This policy is intended to support transparency, trust and fairness and not to discourage service participation.

Approved by: Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.

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