



# Code of Conduct

July 2023

## Message from the Chair

Meat & Livestock Australia has a proud 25-year history of leading the growth of the Australian red meat industry on behalf of our stakeholders, with a vision to foster long term prosperity through investments in research, marketing, traceability and sustainability.

We take this responsibility seriously and value the trust we've built with our stakeholders to deliver on our commitments through extensive consultation, planning and provision of our services. This responsibility extends

to the practical ways in which we conduct business within the framework of professional standards, laws, and regulations, together with our own policies, values and ethics.

Our Code of Conduct sets out the values and behaviours that define how we do business in a way that best supports our vision. I'm pleased to be endorsing the Code on behalf of the MLA Board and look forward to continuing to work together to uphold the high standards of our service to industry.



**Alan Beckett**  
Chairman  
Meat & Livestock Australia

## Message from the MD

Working in service to the Australian red meat industry is a source of great pride for all of us at MLA.

While we continue to deliver great outcomes for the industry, we cannot achieve this without the collective approach we share to hold ourselves to the highest standards and conduct our business ethically, responsibly and aligned to our company values. This is fundamental to everything we do.

The MLA *Code of Conduct* affirms these intentions and behaviours in one place. It connects our purpose and values within the context of our governance, policies and laws and aims to provide some guidance when faced with difficult decisions.

By agreeing to abide by the Code, we acknowledge what is expected of

us and signal to others what can be expected when working with MLA. It holds us accountable to do the right thing, be responsive and to give our best in all circumstances. The Code is a shared responsibility which applies to every single one of us, everyday.

What we achieve next is entirely dependent on how we bring our *Code of Conduct* to life. By putting our purpose and values at the centre of every decision we make, we'll have clear boundaries to navigate tough situations, build further trust and respect among our stakeholders and look out for each other.

If you have any questions about the *Code of Conduct*, please reach out to a member of the HR team.

Thank you for your support of this important responsibility.



**Jason Strong**  
Managing Director  
Meat & Livestock Australia



## Purpose of the Code

Our *Code of Conduct* is the ultimate guide for how we do things at MLA. It describes the standards of conduct we expect. The Code connects our Purpose, Values, and key MLA Group Policies, that help us to deliver the right outcomes for our stakeholders.

We all need to live by the Code every day – it applies to every single one of us, including our Board, leaders, employees and contractors. It affects how we interact with everyone we encounter, both at work and outside of work – colleagues, stakeholders, customers, government, business partners, suppliers, and the wider community.

The standards set out in the Code are not intended to be exhaustive and cannot anticipate every situation which may pose a legal, ethical or moral question. We are expected to exercise sound judgement when evaluating an issue of business conduct, and if in doubt seek advice – you can ask your manager, General Manager, MLA Legal or MLA Human Resources.



## Our commitments

MLA strives to increase the value of the red meat industry and promote the interests of all stakeholders through:

- effective operation of the company, including preparing and implementing strategies, budgets, plans and policies
- identification and implementing opportunities for improving results
- transparent and honest reporting of results
- effective management of the company's business risk and safety, occupational health and environmental issues
- protecting property and other assets, confidential information and intellectual property.

MLA will achieve these through:

- employing appropriately qualified and motivated management and employees
- the MLA Board effectively overseeing strategic and business proposals and planning
- effective internal risk management structures and audit functions overseen by the MLA Board and its sub-committees.

We're committed to:

1

Providing a work environment for our employees that is safe, free from harassment, prejudice and favouritism, where personal development is encouraged, equal opportunity is fostered, team work is valued, in which people want to perform and performance is recognised.

2

Providing value to the red meat industry by carrying out business in a sound and effective way and clearly, openly, accurately and honestly reporting on the company's operations to our members, industry stakeholders, investors, and government stakeholders.

3

Conducting business honestly, with integrity and providing our customers – including the customers of the red meat industry – with high quality products consistent with their expectations. We recognise we are in long-term partnerships with our customers for mutual benefit.

4

Open and honest dealing with our suppliers, recognising their contributions in providing best value for MLA's stakeholders. We expect from all our suppliers that they treat their employees fairly and ethically and to comply with the principles outlined in this policy.

5

Earning and maintaining the support of the communities which provide our license to operate, including peak industry councils, government and the community at large.

6

Manage the social, environmental and economic effects of our operations responsibly, and we have a zero-tolerance approach towards any conduct that may constitute modern slavery under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth).

## Our values

Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We play as one team, and we're stronger together as we strive for a better future.

MLA works in partnership with the Australian red meat and livestock industry and the Australian Government to deliver marketing, research and development products and services to cattle, sheep and goat producers. Our core purpose is to deliver world leading outcomes that fuel global competitiveness, sustainability and producer profitability for the enduring prosperity of the industry.

Our purpose and our values below help guide us in every action we take and decision we make.



**Integrity at heart**  
We are unwavering in our commitment to our stakeholders



**Future focused**  
We strive to continuously improve and push boundaries to a better future



**Stronger together**  
We embrace diversity and collaborate to deliver impact for our stakeholders

## Our Code of Conduct

**We comply with laws and regulations**



**We do the right thing**



## Putting the Code into practice

Use the Code to help you to do the right thing, including when faced with tough decisions, or when you aren't sure what to do. The Code helps you navigate the expected standards and behaviour we must demonstrate in our roles every day.

As employees, we all have a responsibility to:

- comply with our *Code of Conduct*
- work in the spirit of our values
- act in the best interest of MLA and our levy payers
- call out things when they don't seem right
- raise any concerns or issues with your leader, General Manager or Human Resources.

People leaders have a responsibility to:

- communicate our *Code of Conduct* to everyone
- lead by example, showcasing the spirit of our Values and Code
- take action when you are aware of behaviour that doesn't align with our Code or policies.

To put our *Code of Conduct* into practise, we ask three things of you:

- **Read it.** Make sure you understand it. If there is anything you don't understand, it is your responsibility to ask.
- **Agree to it.** Once you have read through it, we'll ask you to confirm that you understand and agree to abide by the standards and responsibilities outlined in it.
- **Follow it.** It is your responsibility to always follow the standards and behaviour that are asked of you in the Code.

## What happens if the Code is breached?

Any allegation that our code has been breached will be investigated, handled discreetly and with sensitivity. We'll respond to breaches fairly and justly and take the time to understand the intent and actions of a breach.

Breaches of our Code could have negative outcomes for the MLA Group and for each of us individually. We take these very seriously and they may result in consequences ranging from disciplinary action, through to termination of employment or contract. If someone breaks the law, they may be personally liable.

We also have an obligation and responsibility to report a breach to the appropriate authorities, where it's considered there's been possible criminal activity or an apparent breach of the law.

**We're good to each other**



**We take care to stay safe**



**We protect our business and reputation**



**We have the courage to speak up**



# 1



## We comply with laws and regulations

We conduct business lawfully and ethically. We are required to comply with different laws, rules and regulations and policies which apply to our day-to-day activities and the investment activities we're involved in.

We are all responsible for ensuring that we:

- are aware of, understand and comply with all laws, regulations and MLA Group policies that apply to our role and work
- carry out our duties to the best of our ability and in good faith
- do not engage in behaviour, or ignore behaviour by others, that breaches compliance requirements
- promptly raise concerns or suspected breaches with your leader and support resolution
- complete all training relevant to our role and raise anything you don't understand with your leader, a subject matter expert or Human Resources.

If working outside Australia, you must follow local legal requirements, including responsibilities for individual rights; safety, health, the environment and the community. Where these are less stringent than the standards prescribed by Australian law or international protocols, you should strive to follow relevant Australian standards. If it is unclear whether you need to be complying with a particular law, rule, regulation, policy or procedure, you must seek guidance from your manager or MLA Legal.





# 2

## We do the right thing



Integrity is at the heart of everything we do – in our dealing with governments, members, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Acting ethically, with integrity and fairness, is at the core of what we stand for.

We make sure our personal, business, financial and other interests don't conflict with, or have the potential to conflict with our work duties or the best interests of MLA Group. By complying with our [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#) and our [Procurement Policy](#), we agree to:

- act in the best interest of MLA Group at all times
- disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest
- avoid any dealings or relationships that may create a conflict with our obligations to MLA Group
- excuse ourselves from any decision making that may be, or perceived by others to be, a conflict of interest
- not take advantage of our positions or the opportunities arising from them, including the use of information from MLA Group for personal gain or by passing information to others
- disclose conflicts of interest involving the potential employment or engagement of a relative, close friend or associate, and develop a strategy with my manager to manage the conflict
- make sure we know, understand and act within our delegated authority as outlined in the [Delegation of Authority Policy](#).

We always act with honesty and integrity, so we have zero tolerance for any form of fraud, bribery or corruption – directly or indirectly. We expect third parties acting on our behalf to do the same.

As a matter of principle, we don't solicit or accept gifts and gratuities. However, we understand that small tokens of goodwill may be exchanged, and that from time to time you may be invited to attend an event because of your job. We need to make sure we comply with our [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) and exercise caution when offering or accepting gifts and/or hospitality to ensure it isn't perceived as improperly influencing a business outcome.

We:

- do not solicit or accept any form of gift, service, hospitality (including cash) that may influence or appear to influence a business decision

- never offer or make any payments in money, product or services for an improper business advantage or to any foreign government official – directly or indirectly – in return for favourable treatment or to affect any government decision
- make sure we know, understand and act in accordance with our [Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy](#)
- exercise the highest standard of care in preparing financial reports on our activities to provide accurate, timely and clearly understandable disclosures on our activities to members, other stakeholders and to government
- accurately represent all material financial information disclosed in the company's accounts and no information is concealed from MLA's internal or external auditors.
- No political contributions may be made by MLA. MLA may, on approval by the Managing Director, make gifts or payments to governments, government agencies or registered organisations in support of humanitarian, athletic and/or civic causes if such gifts are for the benefit of the red meat industry.
- We're committed to operating responsibly and establishing and adhering to the highest ethical standards and operating without infringing on human rights.
- We must act as if we are in a partnership with our customers, members and industry stakeholders for our mutual long term benefit. We are committed to being a responsible corporate citizen and recognise our role in dealing effectively and appropriately with the communities in which we operate.
- We don't tolerate the use of child labour or any forms of modern slavery or human trafficking in our business or supply chains. We have implemented due diligence processes which enable MLA to assess modern slavery risks in our supply chains, as well as to report and remediate as necessary where modern slavery practices are identified.
- We have a shared responsibility for the protection of the environment, and we always strive to minimise our environmental footprint through sustainable management and use of our resources.

# 3



## We're good to each other

Maintaining a safe and inclusive working environment where we treat each other with dignity and respect is fundamental. We promote diversity and inclusion, and we're respectful and fair in the way we work with our colleagues, members, industry stakeholders, customers, suppliers and communities in which we operate.

We do not tolerate unlawful harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, vilification and victimisation. We all have a role to play in maintaining a workplace that is free of these behaviours. If we see these behaviours, we call it out.

We comply with our [Workplace Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#) by:

- living our values
- not engaging in any conduct that is unlawful or inconsistent with this policy
- promptly completing training on the subject when directed
- raising concerns or suspected breaches with your leader and supporting their resolution
- addressing and not ignoring behaviour that is inconsistent with this policy, whether that conduct is directed at us or someone else.





# 4

## We take care to stay safe

The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, stakeholders, suppliers and the wider community is of the highest importance while undertaking our work. We strive to create a culture where all employees are responsible for keeping themselves and others safe.

We're all responsible for understanding and complying with our safety obligations, and ensuring we:

- take care to perform our job safely and with regard to the safety of others
- understand and follow all relevant safety policies, standards, procedures and processes
- comply with the [Work Health, Safety and Environment Policy](#)
- comply with the [Alcohol and Drug Policy](#)
- report a hazard, incident or near miss in a timely manner
- understand that our actions and choices can have significant consequences for safety.

Our employee assistance program provides free, confidential and professional counselling.

Access it by calling 1300 687 327 (from anywhere in Australia) and +61 3 8620 5300 (from anywhere overseas).



# 5



## We protect our business and reputation

MLA is a service provider to the Australian red meat and livestock industry and the way in which we conduct ourselves and the decisions we make can have a direct impact on our reputation and the trust of our members, industry stakeholders, employees and the wider community.

We respect, secure, protect and care for the assets and resources of MLA Group and others – this includes physical property such as company equipment, and intangible property such as company and personal information, confidential information and intellectual property. We will use these assets and resources only for their intended purpose. Under privacy laws, we have a number of obligations concerning personal information we collect and we place great importance on protecting this information.

We:

- use MLA time, material and facilities for purposes directly related to company business
- use company property for its intended purpose and not for personal gain
- safeguard confidential information and do not share any information about MLA, its members, customers, employees or suppliers with any person who is not authorised to see it – both while working for MLA and after
- take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of unauthorised access to our facilities, information, data or other assets
- protect MLA's information and data from unauthorised use, disclosure or theft
- understand and comply with the [Privacy Policy](#) and [Data Governance Principles](#), [Information Technology Policy](#), [Information Security Policy](#) and [Corporate Credit Card Policy](#)
- promptly complete training on these matters when directed.

We are ambassadors of MLA and our industry. To protect our brand and reputation, we comply with our [Social Media Policy](#) and [Media Policy](#) by:

- upholding the integrity and reputation of MLA and not using public platforms (including social media) to the detriment of MLA or in any way that's damaging to our industry
- acting and communicating responsibly, and in accordance with our policies and procedures in all of our online content and interactions whenever they can be attributable to MLA, our employment and work for MLA, or have the potential to negatively impact on MLA
- not making statements or providing information to media unless authorised to do so by MLA. Media enquiries can be directed to the Corporate Affairs and Media Manager or General Manager, Communications & Adoption.





# 6



## We have the courage to speak up

We're all individually accountable for complying with the Code, and we have the courage to call things out when they don't seem right. If you see or know of something that you believe doesn't meet the expectations set out in this Code, in our policies and procedures, or is potentially illegal, you have an obligation to report it.

If the concern is in relation to conduct directed towards you, you can raise this in accordance with the [Grievance and Dispute Resolution Procedure](#). If the concern is in relation to particularly serious or fraudulent behaviour, we support anyone raising or helping to address a breach through our [Whistleblower Policy](#).

A particularly serious concern may be in relation to:

- fraudulent or corrupt behaviour or conduct
- illegal or criminal activity (like theft, selling or using drugs, criminal damage to property or other intentional breaches of any law or regulation)
- unethical and fraudulent behaviour that may breach our policies (such as dishonestly altering company records or data, adopting questionable accounting practices)
- modern slavery
- impeding internal or external audit processes
- abuse of authority
- any other conduct which may cause material financial or non-financial loss, brand damage, breach of confidentiality, or anything that's materially detrimental to the interests of MLA Group
- taking or threatening to take detrimental action against anyone who makes a disclosure under the [Whistleblower Policy](#).

You can access our Whistleblower Hotline by calling 1300 30 45 50 (in Australia) or +61 3 9811 3275 (outside Australia).

This confidential service is managed independently through a third-party service provider and is available 24 hours every day.







**Meat & Livestock Australia**

Level 1, 40 Mount Street, North Sydney NSW 2060

Phone: 02 9463 9333 | Email: [info@mla.com.au](mailto:info@mla.com.au)

[mla.com.au](http://mla.com.au)