Annexure 2.A - Code of EthicS

## Introduction

Everyman's Welfare Service is a Christian Organisation seeking to glorify God. We hold the Bible as the written and inspired revelation of God, and its principles as authoritative in matters of faith, ethics and conduct. Staff are assumed and accountable, to pursue lives of holiness and righteousness both personally and in their ministries. The greatest asset which we as an organisation have is the integrity of our staff. Our style of ministry strongly links life and message together, calling us as staff to godliness of character and biblical depth. As such, we will strive to be Christlike people and consequently the Bible will be the foundation of our Code of Ethics.

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is not to try to determine rules for every possible situation and circumstance, rather it is designed to encourage ethical reflection and behaviour. To that end the following represents the behaviour which will be evidenced by Everyman's staff[[1]](#footnote-1) and Board Members who are conducting themselves in an ethical manner.

While we recognise that we all fall short, the standards set out below have their origin in the ideals which we espouse. They are an expression of our desire to be mutually accountable and to walk in integrity before God and a watching world.

## Biblical Principles

Key biblical principles for EWS

* Mark 12:29,30 - Our top priority is to keep God central in all we do.
* Mark 12:31 - Our second priority is to love our neighbour as ourselves. Love will characterise all we do, especially when we have been mistreated - 1 Pet 4:8.
* Gal 5:22,23 - The fruit of the Spirit will characterise us.
* Col 3:9 - We will be honest in all we do and say.
* Phil 2:3,4 - Humility must be a hallmark. We must think more highly of others than ourselves and look out for them. We will admit our mistakes, learn from them, repent of sin and be transparent.
* Eph 4:29 - We will speak graciously about others, building them up.
* Eph 4:32 - We will be kind and forgiving to each other remembering Christ's example.

## Policy Principles

The principles underlying this Policy are:

* Our reading of the Scriptures which leads us to identify certain practices as inconsistent with that calling.
* The exercise of grace and a commitment to provide accountability and help towards recovery and restoration.
* Recognition that there are degrees of moral violation which call for variations in response. As called for, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.
* Self disclosure is expected as appropriate to one’s supervisor.

While we envisage that in most situations issues will be appropriately addressed locally, severe failures call for an organisational response. As required, action will be taken by the CCOM and the Board of Directors consistent with Scriptural principles, civil law and policy up to and including termination of appointment.

## Inappropriate Behaviours

Particular behaviours which we believe are inappropriate for those who live in accordance with the Scriptures are as follows. This list is not exhaustive:

* Sexual immorality (such as premarital sex, adultery, homosexual behaviour or use of pornography);
* Abuse of addictive substances such as, but not limited to, illegal drugs and alcohol;
* Bitterness or unforgiveness
* Lack of integrity;
* Involvement in abusive relationships (sexual, physical or other abusive behaviour)

## Responsibilities of Welfare Representatives

The Welfare Representative is a key person in EWS and they have additional responsibilities, primarily because they are welfare professionals. The Welfare Representative is a person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and has relevant theological and professional training, and field education. He or she has the requisite values, attitudes, knowledge, and skills to work autonomously, or with a team, to promote Christ, and to relieve or restore the social functioning of individuals and families within the Australian Defence Force, Veterans, and Australia’s allies from a Christian perspective.

The Welfare Representative, as a professional practitioner in the field of welfare and community work, is concerned to promote the worth and well being of all individuals regardless of racial origin, sex, age or social status or other individual differences.

Welfare Representatives have a range of responsibilities to various groups and individuals.

## Responsibilities to Clients and Client Groups

The Welfare Representative is placed in a unique relationship to other persons because of employment and profession. Obligations arise from that relationship - to safeguard the dignity of the client, to maintain the integrity of the practitioner and to recognise the value and worth of all persons involved in the welfare work practice.

**Confidentiality**. The Welfare Representative shall regard all information concerning clients disclosed in the course of practice as confidential, except where:

With the client's permission referrals are to be made and other professional consultation is sought.

Failure to disclose information would breach the terms of the Welfare Representative's employment (such exceptions threat of suicide or confession of a civil crime, must be notified to the client).

**Accountability.** In exercising certain powers and using information, the Welfare Representative has an accountability to both EWS and to clients. However, special accountability to clients in preserving their dignity and autonomy is acknowledged.

**Respect**. The Welfare Representative has an obligation to treat clients with respect, to promote maximum self worth and dignity, regardless of racial origin, sex, age, social status or other individual differences, and to safeguard and promote the capacity for free choice by the client.

**Social Justice and Equity**. Welfare Representatives are concerned with issues of social justice and equity for clients including access to quality services and the opportunity for maximum client participation in service delivery.

**Well Being**. The Welfare Representative has an obligation to utilise all available skills and knowledge to promote the well being of individuals, groups and communities.

## Responsibilities to Colleagues

As a professional person the Welfare Representative has responsibilities to colleagues and can be expected to:

* Respect the practitioner skills and conceptual abilities of colleagues;
* Provide loyalty and support to colleagues where this does not contradict the principles of this code of ethics;
* Share knowledge, skills and insights with colleagues;
* Speak well of others, encouraging them especially concerning their giftedness, roles and ministries
* Bring to the attention of colleagues unprofessional or unethical conduct, and if unresolved, to refer the matter to the CCOM;
* Refrain from any personal behaviour which may damage the profession.

## Responsibilities to EWS

As staff of EWS the Welfare Representative is expected to:

* Carry out the duties and responsibilities outlined as terms of employment;
* Assist in promoting the stated aims of EWS in terms of policy, procedure and practice;
* Distinguish in public statements or behaviour whether acting as an authorised spokesperson of EWS or in a private capacity;
* Use professionally approved channels to express criticism of employment practices which are detrimental to the profession;
* Be accountable to EWS for the full discharge of duties.

## Responsibilities to the Profession

Welfare Representatives have responsibilities to their profession. They have to:

* Maintain proper standards of practice, and uphold principles and ethics of the code at all times.
* Maintain and develop their standards of knowledge, skill and learning as welfare professionals.
* Promote understanding of the role and skills of professional welfare and community work.

## Responsibilities of Everyman’s Welfare Service

EWS will contribute to the knowledge, attitudes and skills of its staff and positively promote social well being in the community.

By the application of sanctions, EWS will move to protect individuals and communities against incompetent and unethical practices.

In the event of unprofessional or unethical conduct by a Welfare Representative being unresolved, a review of alleged incompetent or unethical practices will be conducted by the CCOM who may recommend sanctions including removing eligibility for, or employment with, EWS.

## Procedures

**Inappropriate Behaviours**

Often we as individuals are the only ones who know that we have failed to meet these standards, principles or behaviour. If a candidate for a Staff position has been involved in inappropriate behaviours or activities such as those listed above which may still have present effects on his or her life and Christian testimony, or should the person recognise a weakness in this area, it is expected that the candidate will declare their situation for advice and counsel. All such information shall be treated with proper discretion and utmost confidentiality. Our goal is to help establish people of integrity and sincerity toward optimal effectiveness and service. At the same time our goal is to maintain the integrity of EWS in our formal leadership.

Any Staff becoming involved in inappropriate behaviour or activities such as those listed above should disclose this to the appropriate supervisor and pursue personal help and restoration. It is at the supervisor’s discretion whether the matter is disclosed to the CCOM depending on factors such as the nature of the violation, whether it was a one-time occurrence or a pattern, whether the person has repented and altered their behaviour, whether they were discovered or self-disclosed, and whether others have been affected or become aware of the issue.

Staff who are aware of any such behaviours by other Staff should encourage them to stop the behaviour, deal with the issues involved and seek appropriate help. If, after acknowledging inappropriate behaviours, no steps are taken to change, the matter should be disclosed to their supervisor. In instances where Staff suspects immoral behaviour by other Staff, the suspecting Staff should first talk to the person involved. If the person acknowledges the immoral actions, they should again be encouraged to stop, deal with the issues and seek appropriate help. If the individual denies the suspected behaviour but the staff person has strong evidence to support their suspicions, the Staff person should disclose it to the appropriate supervisor and otherwise maintain confidentiality with respect to the information. If there is a need to report to law enforcement or other authorities, this should be coordinated with the appropriate supervisor. Importantly, any criminal matter is to be passed to the relevant authority as soon as practically possible.

Sexual misconduct, in its more subtle forms, can also be a misuse of authority and power which breaches a trust relationship. Even if someone else initiates or invites sexual attention in a relationship, it is always the responsibility of the Staff to maintain personal purity and respond in a manner reflecting scriptural principles of sexual conduct. Where a violation of this policy has taken place, it is the responsibility of the Staff involved to make direct contact with their supervisor in order to establish procedures for resolution. Disciplinary action as appropriate may also be undertaken in accordance with Chapter 2.

Where any person alleges that they have been harmed by a wrongful act of a Staff, the CCOM in consultation with a representative of the Board of Directors will sensitively, discretely and resolutely investigate the allegation to establish legitimacy of the claims. If evidence supports the claims they will ensure: pastoral care of victim; protection of other victims or potential victims; discipline of the perpetrator according to Biblical and legal principles with the purpose of restoration, if possible. In no way is this process to hinder the normal process of law enforcement.  If deemed necessary, relevant law enforcement personnel are to be informed as soon as practical.

## Conflict Resolution

EWS is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of His only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, we look to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us His wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to trust God and seek His help in living out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation:

## Personal Peacemaking

Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).

* We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
* We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
* We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29-32). If we have a problem with others, we will talk to them, not about them.
* We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
* If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will seek reconciliation without delay (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
* When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
* When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility We will seek to listen to others’ concerns non defensively in order to accurately understand,, and have verified by them, that we have understood their concerns in terms of content, feelings and meaning. We will attempt to appreciate how those who have concerns about us feel and why they feel the way they do. (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
* When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as He has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
* When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others’ interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

## Assisted Peacemaking

When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, we will seek the mediation of wise people in EWS and listen humbly to their counsel (Matt. 18:16; Phil. 4:2-3). If our dispute is with an EWS leader, we will look to other EWS leaders for assistance.

When informal mediation does not resolve a dispute, we will seek formal assistance from our leaders or people they appoint, and we will submit to their counsel and correction (Matt. 18:17-20).

When we have a business or legal dispute with another Christian, we will make every reasonable effort to resolve the conflict within the body of Christ through biblical mediation or arbitration, rather than going to civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If the other party is from another ministry, our leaders will offer to cooperate with the leaders of that ministry to resolve the matter.

When a conflict involves matters of doctrine or church discipline, we will refer the matter to the CCOM.

1. The title “staff” includes Accredited Representatives, Associates, administration staff and unpaid volunteers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)