

Housing Industry Association

Code of
Ethics 2023



Introduction

The Housing Industry Association Limited (HIA) is Australia's only national industry association representing the interests of the residential building industry.

HIA recognises the importance that participants in the industry play in community development. The home building and renovation sector is interwoven into Australia's economic and social fabric. Activity in the residential building industry has a direct impact on our economy. It creates jobs and generates work for hundreds of thousands of small businesses. It also stimulates growth in the manufacturing, retail and real estate sectors, to name a few.

The significance of residential building however goes beyond its economic value. Finding and building a home is a significant emotional and social investment. The house is the place for living. It is where family memories are created and futures are imagined. Housing creates social stability and community connection. The types and forms of houses that are constructed are built into Australia's cultural imagination.



The HIA Code of Ethics

HIA maintains the HIA Code of Ethics (Code) in order to promote and reinforce confidence in the residential building industry and in HIA as embodied by our members who have committed to the ethical standards established by the Code.

PURPOSE OF THE CODE

HIA promotes high standards of professional and commercial conduct for the residential building industry. The purpose of the Code is to help HIA Members meet these standards when conducting business and dealing with their employees, clients, partners and colleagues.

In the course of conducting their business, challenges will continually arise for members because many decisions involve areas, where there is no clearly articulated rule or legal requirement and the choice between right and wrong may not always be clear.

The Code establishes a framework for dealing with these issues in an ethical manner. The Code is underpinned by the following fundamental principles:

- Honesty and integrity
- Fairness and fair dealings
- Reliability, accountability and responsibility
- Respect
- Professionalism

These principles have been designed to reflect HIA's core values and commitment to be the voice of the residential building industry.

APPLICATION

The Code applies to all HIA Members. It is divided into 3 sections.

Part I: Values & Principles

Part II: The Code in Operation

Part III: Implementation & Administration

Members should be guided by both the content and spirit of the Code.

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Part I: Values & Principles

The following values are aspirational and provide the foundation for the Code. They should inform and guide HIA members in the way they conduct they work, conduct business and behave as industry professionals.

OUR ETHICS:



Honesty and integrity

We will be honest, transparent, and straight forward in all our business and professional relationships and endeavour to do what is right.



Fairness and fair dealings

We will deal fairly and reasonably with our employees, suppliers, business partners and clients.



Reliability, accountability, and responsibility

We will follow through with our commitments and take responsibility for the consequences of our decisions and actions.



Respect

We will treat our employees, suppliers, business partners, clients, industry colleagues and the general public with mutual respect, civility and dignity.



Professionalism

We will discharge our legal and professional responsibilities to the best of our abilities and behave in a way that builds trust and credibility in the residential building industry.

Part II: The Code in Operation

VALUES INTO ACTION



Honesty & integrity

This includes:

- being open, truthful and straightforward in all professional relationships;
- being transparent about our fees and any other costs or payments;
- not taking unfair advantage of a client, an employee, or another business;
- avoiding sharp or manipulative business practices;
- ensuring all our communications and understandings are clear;
- being clear with our clients about the service we will be providing.



Fairness & fair dealings

This includes:

- providing commercially reasonable terms and conditions;
- competing fairly and honestly – We will achieve our competitive advantage by providing our clients with superior services and competitive pricing, not by disparaging our competitors;
- paying undisputed invoices on time;
- if there is a genuine reason for not paying an invoice or charge, communicating our concerns about any non-compliant, unsatisfactory or defective products or services in a timely manner to avoid or minimise disputes.



Reliability, responsibility & accountability

This includes:

- being accountable for our actions – Doing what we say we will do;
- doing our best to correct our errors or omissions if things go wrong;
- acting with skill, care, and diligence;
- addressing complaints and concerns in a timely, appropriate, and professional manner.



Respect

This includes:

- treating people as we expect to be treated;
- providing a culture that delivers a safe and healthy workplace;
- ensuring we do not engage in or tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate conduct;
- being respectful and mindful of the resources entrusted to us industry professionals, including people, money, property and the natural environment.



Professionalism

This includes:

- developing and maintaining an appropriate level of relevant knowledge and skills;
- demonstrating a commitment to operating in accordance with all relevant laws, statutory requirements and industry standards;
- behaving in a manner that is professional and courteous;
- not engaging in any activity that may bring ourselves, HIA, other Members or the residential building industry into disrepute.

Part III: Implementation & Administration

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE

HIA Members are required to commit to the principles of the Code and are expected to behave in an ethical and professional manner as a condition of membership.

COMPLAINTS

HIA recognises in exercising its responsibility to uphold and maintain the integrity of the Code, that from time to time there may be circumstances giving rise to a potential breach of the Code.

It is a requirement of this Code, that Members cooperate with any investigation of an alleged breach of the Code and actively participate in the Code Complaint Process.

Complaints and allegations of non-compliance with the Code will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and administered in accordance with the Code Complaints Guidelines included at Attachment A to the Code and any other rules, policies or procedures for complaints and member conduct that HIA may establish from time to time.

The Code Complaint Process is intended to be a constructive process with an educative focus to improve our behaviour and enhance professionalism. The Code Complaint Process is not designed to resolve disputes and HIA is unable to impose fines or require Members to take (or not take) a particular course of action.

If there has been non-compliance with the Code, any action against the Member will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and frequency of the conduct and serve to deter the affected Member and others from behaving in such a manner in future.

CODE REVIEW & QUALITY CONTROL

The HIA Ethics Committee is responsible for monitoring the timeliness, effectiveness and integrity of the Code and the Code Complaints Process.

The Code is intended to articulate an enduring set of ethical values and principles for the residential building industry and HIA Members. However, as expectations and practices may change over time, periodically HIA will review and update the Code and any supporting guidelines to ensure they remain relevant and reflect contemporary industry practices and behaviour. This review will be conducted no less than every five (5) years.

Complaints data will be also reviewed to identify any trends and identify knowledge, skill or training needs for HIA Members.

EDUCATION & SUPPORT

HIA may, from time to time, develop and publish additional information and guidelines to support and assist Members in applying the values and principles outlined in this Code and for dealing appropriately with ethical issues that may arise.

HIA may also organise educational activities for Members and the general public on the role and the application of this Code.