



Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association

Governance and Democracy Policy

Ver 1.0

This is the Governance and Democracy Policy of the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association. This policy was adopted by the Branch Committee of Management on 15 September 2025.

MISSION AND OBJECTS

Mission

VAHPA is a democratic community of Allied Health Professionals. We are a political organisation. We work together to ensure that Allied Health jobs are good jobs and that the care we deliver is the best it can be. We stand for fairness, equality and for an end to discrimination. We understand that social structures have a profound impact on poverty and wealth. We recognise the significance of class-consciousness. We strive to end all forms of exploitation.

Solidarity makes us strong. We are union. We are VAHPA.

Objects

To give effect to this mission, VAHPA will:

- Improve the lives of members and their families.
- Achieve fair and reasonable pay and working conditions and prevent unfair treatment.
- Uphold and protect members' rights to freely associate and collectively struggle in solidarity.
- Protect the health, safety, and civil rights of members.
- Encourage and foster education, training, and advancement of members.
- Represent members in courts, tribunals, and other bodies.
- Encourage democratic participation and ownership of the Branch.
- Support the appointment of delegates and representatives across Victoria.
- Provide legal, financial, and industrial support where required.
- Cooperate with and, where beneficial, amalgamate, merge or affiliate with other organisations.
- Represent members in the trade union movement and international forums.
- Maintain financial sustainability, including borrowing, raising funds, and acquiring property.
- Facilitate political and industrial education, including delegate training and resource development.
- Support a worker-friendly environment in Victoria and beyond through active political engagement.
- Ensure Allied Health jobs remain secure, sustainable, and professional.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Governance Overview

Governance refers to the system of rules, processes, and principles by which VAHPA is directed, controlled, and operated. It ensures decisions align with our mission, goals, and values, and that accountability and transparency are maintained. And critically to ensure that

the organisation is able to meet regulatory and compliance requirements as established by law.

Principles of Good Governance

Integrity & Financial Control: Financial reporting and expenditure must follow clear delegations of authority. No Officer or employee may authorise their own expenditure outside pre-approved limits.

Democratic & Ethical Decision-Making: Decisions should reflect members' views and consent as provided by the process of representative democracy and include where necessary direct consultation and input.

Accountability & Transparency: The Secretary reports regularly on finances, remuneration, risks, and compliance. Minutes, financial statements, and key policies will be made available to members unless confidential.

Inclusivity & Diversity: Officers and staff should reflect the diversity of the membership.

Ethical Conduct: All Officers and staff must act with honesty, integrity, and respect, and comply with the Code of Conduct.

Conflict of Interest Management

All Officers and employees must declare conflicts of interest immediately. Declarations will be recorded in the register of interests. Individuals must abstain from related discussions or decisions.

Risk Management

The BCoM will maintain a risk register covering financial, operational, legal, and reputational risks. This will be reviewed annually.

DEMOCRACY FRAMEWORK

Branch Elections & Appointments

- Elections must be widely advertised through all available channels.
- Nomination and election information must be publicly accessible.
- Casual vacancies under three years may be filled by BCoM via merit-based selection, generally following an open EOI process.

Branch Decision-Making

- All BCoM decisions will be made by majority vote, provided quorum requirements are met in accordance with the Rules.
- Conflicts are resolved in accordance with the Rules and must be recorded in minutes.

Member Engagement & Transparency

- Members must be consulted on bargaining logs of claim and strategy.
- Member forums are required before lodging public sector health service claims.
- Delegates are the first point of contact for members.
- VAHPA will respond to enquiries within seven business days (generally within 24 hours).
- Publications and disclosures will include newsletters, annual financial/audit reports, BCoM/Audit Committee reports, meeting attendance, vacancies, remuneration disclosures, and Rules.

Education & Training

- BCoM members will receive financial training within six months of appointment.
- VAHPA will provide ongoing education and training for Delegates, Officers, and staff covering governance, industrial rights, political education, and compliance.

FINANCIAL & RISK MANAGEMENT

- All expenditure must comply with approved delegations of authority.
- Budgets will be prepared, statements examined, and quarterly reports provided to the BCoM.
- Union funds are to be invested and used at the direction of BCoM.
- The Secretary must disclose remuneration, conflicts of interest, and significant transactions to members.
- Registers covering Gifts, Related-Party Transactions, and Donations will be maintained and published.
- External audits and statutory reporting will be undertaken as required by law.

CONDUCT & ACCOUNTABILITY

- All Officers and staff must act with honesty, integrity, respect, diligence, and avoid conflicts of interest.
- Recruitment and promotions shall be merit-based, transparent, and approved by BCoM.
- Whistleblowing protections apply; no adverse action may be taken against genuine complainants.

- Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be investigated in accordance with the Rules. Sanctions may include reprimand, suspension, or referral to appropriate authorities.

TECHNOLOGY & DATA GOVERNANCE

VAHPA is committed to safeguarding member data, ensuring secure technology use, and maintaining transparency in communications. All Officers and staff must comply with VAHPA's cybersecurity and privacy policies.

POLICY REVIEW & DISSEMINATION

- This policy may be amended by resolution of the BCoM.
- This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, or sooner if required by changes to the Rules or legislation.
- A copy of this policy will be published on the VAHPA website.

VERSION CONTROL & AUTHORITY

- Draft Consolidated (2025): Governance Principles (2015) and Democracy Policy (2018).
- Authority: Branch Committee of Management.
- The Rules of the Health Services Union and the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 prevail over this policy.

VERSION CONTROL

- v1.0 – Craig McGregor, Branch Secretary, BCoM 15/09/2025. Supersedes Governance Principles (2015), Democracy Policy (2018).

SCHEDULE – CODE OF CONDUCT

*** End of Policy ***

Schedule - Code of Conduct for VAHPA Employees and Officials

This Code outlines the expectations for behaviour and standards that uphold the integrity, reputation, and effectiveness of our Union.

This Code of Conduct mandates the following:

1. **Honesty and Integrity:** All VAHPA officers and employees shall adhere to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their dealings with members, colleagues, and comrades. It is incumbent on everyone associated with VAHPA to behave in a manner that is transparent, collaborative and focused on improving the lives of all members.
2. **Care and Diligence:** All VAHPA officers and employees shall perform their duties diligently, showing meticulous care and dedication to all tasks assigned to them. All people associated with VAHPA have a responsibility to members; this must be taken seriously. We must work to advance and enhance the lives of our members while behaving with compassion and respect.
3. **Respect and Courtesy:** All people are entitled to be treated with respect and courtesy. Unions by their very nature can be volatile organisations. Our objectives and divergent means by which we strive to achieve these objectives may give rise to a competition of ideas. All officers, members and employees must be free to proffer and argue in support of their point of view, while being able to accept any final democratic position of the collective with grace and collegiality.
4. **Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence:** Every person has the right to live free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. Treating colleagues and comrades with respect and courtesy includes refraining from all forms of harassment, discrimination, and violence. Disparagement and disrespect, be it sexist, racist, ageist, gendered or founded in sexual orientation and preference, will not be tolerated. Violence, abuse, and sexual harassment will likewise not be tolerated. Bullying behaviour, gossiping about, or marginalising others, will not be tolerated. All such behaviour must be reported to the Committee of Management.
5. **Compliance with Laws:** VAHPA officers and employees shall abide by all fair and reasonable laws, regulations, and professional obligations in the execution of their roles.
5. **Confidentiality:** VAHPA officers and employees shall safeguard sensitive and confidential information, including personal details. The unauthorized disclosure of member information is strictly prohibited.
6. **Conflict of Interest:** VAHPA officers and employees shall disclose and take appropriate steps to avoid any real or perceived conflicts of interest that could compromise their impartiality.
7. **Appropriate Resource Use:** VAHPA officers and employees shall use union resources responsibly and efficiently, ensuring they are used for legitimate union-related purposes.

8. **A Community of Allied Health Professionals:** VAHPA is a democratic community of Allied Health Professionals. All union officers and employees shall respect our community and all members thereof. Communication with the membership is to be open, honest, accurate, supportive, and helpful.
9. **Political Consistency:** VAHPA is a political organisation. All VAHPA officials and employees are to uphold and espouse, wherever appropriate, the authorised political view of the organisation. Individual views are not to be expressed under the union banner.
10. **Professional Development:** VAHPA should work with all employees and officials to foster a culture of continuous improvement in professional skills and knowledge.
11. **Prohibition of Improper Use:** VAHPA officers and employees shall refrain from using inside information, power, or authority to gain personal or unauthorized advantages, either for themselves or others.
12. **Upholding Union Values:** VAHPA officers and employees shall always uphold the values espoused in the VAHPA Mission Statement and act in a manner that reflects positively on VAHPA's integrity and reputation.
13. **Reporting Misconduct:** Employees and officials have a responsibility to report any violation of this Code of Conduct or unethical behaviour they become aware of, ensuring accountability within the union.

This Code of Conduct reinforces our commitment to fostering a work environment characterized by professionalism, respect, and ethical conduct.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in the matter being dealt with under the “Unsatisfactory Performance or Conduct” procedure of the VAHPA Branch Employment Policy.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, VAHPA employees and officials contribute to maintaining a culture of professionalism, integrity, and collaboration, thereby advancing the union's mission.