

Code of Conduct for the ESA Annual Conference and Events

All ESA events should be a safe, welcoming and respectful space

The Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) values the diversity of views, expertise, opinions, backgrounds, and experiences reflected among ESA members and the broader ecology community. To this end, ESA is committed to providing a safe, productive and welcoming environment for all participants at ESA meetings and events, to enable an effective forum to consider and debate science-relevant and professional viewpoints in a professional, fair and respectful, and fair manner. This Code of Conduct is important to promoting diversity and creating an inclusive, supportive and collaborative environment for everyone and aligns with ESA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy available here:

<https://www.ecolsoc.org.au/about-us/esa-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-policy-statement>

All ESA meetings and events participants – including, but not limited to, delegates, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, ESA staff, members of the media, vendors, and service providers (hereinafter “participants”) – are expected to abide by this ESA Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to activities including, but not restricted to, professional gatherings organized by ESA, such as conferences and workshops; social occasions organized by ESA; communications relating to ESA or with ESA members, such as presentations, messages, conversations (including on-line platforms) and communications relating to ESA conferences and events.

Expected Behaviour

With respect to any behaviour or performing activities associated with ESA, as an ESA member and/or participant, you are expected to:

- treat all participants with kindness, respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions (including those you may not share);
- communicate openly, with respect for other participants, being mindful to critique *ideas* rather than *individuals*, using discretion to ensure respect is communicated;
- refrain from demeaning, discriminatory or harassing behaviour and speech directed toward other participants;

- be an active bystander, be mindful of your surroundings and your fellow participants, including alerting ESA staff or representatives if you notice a dangerous situation, unacceptable behaviour or someone in distress;
- respect the rules and policies of meeting and event venues, accommodation, or any other venue associated with ESA meetings and events, including public spaces visited with fellow participants.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Harassment includes speech or behaviour that is not welcome by others or is personally offensive. Behaviour that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another – harassment intended in a joking manner can still constitute unacceptable behaviour.

In communications and/or performing activities associated with ESA, ESA does not tolerate harassment, bullying, intimidation, discrimination or any other form of unacceptable behaviour. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- physical or verbal abuse of any participant;
- exclusionary behaviour or unwelcome, discriminatory or offensive comments, for example, or exclusionary behaviour. This includes but is not limited to comments related to age, appearance or body size, employment status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, individual lifestyle, marital status, national origin, physical or cognitive ability, political affiliation, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, sexual orientation, race or religion;
- inappropriate or unwanted physical contact;
- unwanted sexual attention;
- use of sexual or discriminatory images in public spaces, social media or in presentations;
- deliberate intimidation or stalking, or harassment;
- harassing photography or recording, including taking photographs or recording of another individual's oral presentation or poster where the presenter has withdrawn permission;
- sustained disruption of talks or other events;
- bullying behaviour, including using perceived superior status or rank to embarrass, belittle or humiliate;
- retaliation for reporting unacceptable behaviour.

Immediate serious threat to public safety

Anyone experiencing or witnessing behaviour that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety at any time should contact local law enforcement (by calling 000) and immediately notifying facility security.

Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour

If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you are the subject of unacceptable behaviour, have witnessed any such behaviour, or have other concerns, please notify an ESA

staff member or representative as soon as possible. Appropriate action will be taken through ESA leadership. All reports will be treated seriously and responded to promptly.

To report incidents of any sort during or following an ESA event, please contact ESA at codeofconduct@ecolsoc.org.au. All reports will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. This does not preclude seeking third party medical support if deemed necessary.

Consequences

ESA members and participants are accountable for ensuring that their actions and behaviour align with the ESA Code of Conduct. Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behaviour is expected to comply immediately. If the behaviour continues:

- ESA staff (or their representative) or venue security may take any immediate action deemed necessary and appropriate, including removal from the meeting or event without warning or refund;
- the matter will be referred to the ESA Equity Working Group and ESA Board for consideration of further consequences, which may include prohibition from attending future meetings and events, or membership renewal;
- the matter will be dealt with under ESA's Equity and Diversity dispute resolution process (link to be added).

For any questions or feedback about this policy, or the dispute resolution process, please contact ESA at codeofconduct@ecolsoc.org.au or ph: 0409 279 068.

CODE OF CONDUCT DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Reporting

A breach of the ESA Code of Conduct can be reported by emailing or by verbal reporting to an ESA staff member or nominated Equity & Diversity mentor (see the Conference handbook or ESA website for details).

Dispute resolution at an ESA meeting or event

When a complaint is received during an ESA meeting or event:

- Immediate action will be taken to investigate the reported behaviour, including contact with both the complainant and nominated perpetrator and witnesses. Investigations will be undertaken within a fair and unbiased perspective.
- Privacy of all parties will be protected where possible and as appropriate at all times, with consideration given to consent being given by the complainant.
- Where necessary, immediate action will be taken to ensure the unsatisfactory behaviour ceases and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the complainant and other participants.
- The matter will then be referred to the Equity & Diversity Working Group to determine appropriate and timely action.

- Where appropriate, a Conflict and Dispute Resolution panel chaired by a member of the Equity & Diversity Working Group will be convened to investigate and make recommendations.
- Recommended actions may include mediation, behaviour education, withdrawal of conference registration, cancellation of membership or other actions as deemed suitable to the individual case.
- A de-identified report of all Code of Conduct breaches will be provided to the Conference Working Group and the ESA Board.

Dispute resolution outside of an ESA meeting or event

- When a complaint has been received it will be acknowledged within 24 hours and/or one working day, where possible.
- The matter will be referred to the Equity & Diversity Working Group to determine appropriate and timely action.
- Where appropriate, a Conflict and Dispute Resolution panel chaired by a member of the Equity & Diversity Working Group will be convened to investigate and make recommendations.
- Recommended actions may include mediation, behaviour education, withdrawal of conference registration, cancellation of membership or other actions as deemed suitable to the individual case.
- All matters will be treated confidentially.
- The complainant will be kept informed of progress and outcomes.
- A de-identified report of all Code of Conduct breaches will be provided to the Conference Working Group and the ESA Board.