

# CIRCULAR 2020-17 | MAINTAINING INTEGRITY WHEN WORKING REMOTELY



<b>Circular Number</b>	2020-17
<b>Issue date:</b>	18 August 2020
<b>Application:</b>	All Victorian public sector bodies
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="#">Short guide: how to maintain integrity when working remotely</a> <a href="#">Long guide: maintaining integrity when working remotely (180KB, DOCX)</a> <a href="#">Guide to engaging with lobbyists in the Victorian public sector</a>
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## Key points

As part of the Victorian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant proportion of Victorian public sector employees are required to work remotely. It is anticipated that many will continue to work remotely in the future.

The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) Commissioner has noted that misconduct and corruption risks are heightened when there are changes in the way government services are delivered during times of crisis.

Victorian public sector employees have obligations under the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (Code of Conduct), the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies, and the Victorian Government Professional Lobbyists Code of Conduct (Lobbyists Code). While working arrangements have changed, these obligations remain the same.

Ensuring these obligations are met is essential to maintaining integrity in the public sector and public trust in government.

## Updates

The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) has developed 3 new guides to assist Victorian public sector employees comply with their obligations under the Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Code while working remotely:

- [Short guide: how to maintain integrity when working remotely](#)
- [Long guide: maintaining integrity when working remotely \(180KB, DOCX\)](#)

- [Guide to engaging with lobbyists in the Victorian public sector](#)

The Maintaining Integrity when Working Remotely guide provides practical advice that Victorian public sector employees can follow to ensure they continue to comply with the Code of Conduct while they work remotely. This guide supports the Code of Conduct by providing additional guidance in relation to the values of Responsiveness, Integrity and Impartiality, relating to issues that are particularly relevant to managing integrity risks, as identified by the IBAC Commissioner, while working remotely. While the guide has been drafted in specific reference to the Code of Conduct, it will also be useful for employees covered by the Code of Conduct for Public Sector Employees of Special Bodies.

The Engaging with Lobbyists in the Victorian Public Sector guide replaces the previous guide titled Engaging with Lobbyists – Guidance for Public Sector Employees. It is designed to reaffirm Victorian public sector employees' obligations under the Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Code when engaging with lobbyists and emphasise that they continue to apply when they are working remotely.

## Requirements

Victorian public sector employees must be aware of the obligations that are placed upon them by the Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Code.

Victorian Public sector employees are required to familiarise themselves and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Code. They are also required to comply with any additional policies and processes at a local departmental or entity level that support the application of the respective Codes.

The purpose of the binding nature of the respective Codes is to promote behaviours that are essential to uphold and enhance the community's trust in government.

## Background

A significant proportion of Victorian public sector employees are working remotely, and many are likely to do so into the future.

The Maintaining Integrity when Working Remotely and Engaging with Lobbyists in the Victorian Public Sector guides are to support Victorian public sector employees to meet their obligations under the Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Code when working remotely.

## Scope

This Circular applies to Victorian public sector employees. All Victorian public sector employees are encouraged to review the Maintaining Integrity when Working Remotely guide, or the short guide, and the Engaging with Lobbyists in the Victorian Public Sector guide.

## Date of application

18 August 2020.