



## **FACT SHEET**

### **Acceptable behaviour guidelines and farmers' markets (FM).**

This fact sheet is a generic guide for FM nationally for use when developing guidelines to assist manage unacceptable behaviour in a farmers' market community. This is not a legal document and AFMA has no legislated jurisdiction over any FM that chooses to reference it.

#### *What is a Code of Conduct?*

Acceptable behaviour guidelines are generally formalised using a 'Code of Conduct.' A code of conduct can be a useful tool for FM managers and governing entities to help guide consistent, transparent, and fair action over decision-making, to address unacceptable behaviour and result in conflict resolution.

AFMA encourages each FM entity to develop its own code of conduct that suits the unique characteristics of that market. A code of conduct should be underpinned by a clear set of roles and responsibilities for all tiers of farmers' market operation. For example, volunteers, stallholders, FM manager, FM governing entity and market shoppers.

The following are recommendations for inclusion in a Code of Conduct.

The code:

- Can be referenced in accordance with a 'disciplinary action' or 'managing disputes' clause.
- Aligns with the relevant state/territory regulatory-based legal jurisdiction in which the FM is located.
- Reflects the overarching FM Charter or operational guidelines.
- Identifies clearly who it applies to for example, consumers, stallholders, FM manager, FM governing entity and sponsors.
- Identifies the communication medium it applies to for example, social, print and voice and visual media and face-to-face and written communications.
- Allows for a grievance protocol for stallholders and consumers.
- Acknowledges the principles of positive behaviour.\*
- Highlights the importance of co-operative partnering between and amongst the FM governing entity, stallholders, consumers, sponsors, and local government.
- Acknowledges the different roles of the FM governing entity and the FM manager around decision-making.
- Includes explanations and examples of likely unacceptable behaviours.
- Includes disciplinary process for addressing unacceptable behaviour.
- Includes disciplinary actions for unacceptable behaviour.
- Is made available to all parties.
- Allows for the FM governing entity, the FM manager, and other relevant parties where appropriate, to review the Code of Conduct within a stated time frame.

\* respect, personal safety, inclusion, encouragement, confidentiality, and acknowledgement.

*Examples of 'unacceptable behaviour' could include but are not limited to:*

- When a person is discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity, gender, physical or mental health impairment or socio-economic status.
- Expectations of FM committee and FM managers to spend more than an agreed upon time to conduct duties outside a job description scope, around day-to-day operations of the FM.
- Any communication that makes anyone feel offended, afraid or threatened. For example, offensive remarks, personal threats or swearing.
- A FM manager or committee member who makes certain decisions or takes certain actions independently of the committee and its expectations.
- A stallholder who refuses to cooperate with consistent non-compliance of the FM operational guidelines. For example, COVID guidelines, waste, trading, on-selling or food labelling guidelines.

*Where does a Code of Conduct fit?*

There are usually procedural documents that farmers' market entities adopt to manage the smooth running of their farmers' markets.

The overarching document the ***Australian Farmers' Markets Model Rules*** has been developed by AFMA and guides the integrity of all listed farmers' markets nationally.

In addition to these Model Rules AFMA recommends two documents that should fall under this, which should be aligned with each other but can be stand-alone documents.

- **Operational Guidelines:** A set of rules that specifies day-to-day FM operations and requirements. It can include a mission statement that states the ethos behind that FM. (This reflects the AFMA Model Rules.)
- **Code of Conduct:** A set of standards that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and steps required for conflict resolution.

December 2022