

Code of Conduct for Participants

January 2024

Introduction

Pathways to Politics for Women is increasing the number of women in Australian politics by equipping diverse women to boldly embrace their political ambitions, thrive as leaders and make a profound contribution to society.

Through comprehensive practical training, workshops, mentoring and career-long support, we provide unparalleled expertise for women who are serious about driving change through political leadership.

The program provides a safe space for women of diverse backgrounds, professions, cultures, and ideologies to fulfill their shared aspiration to pursue public office. Each cohort benefits from the wisdom and extraordinary candour of speakers from all sides of politics, including sitting and retired parliamentarians, who generously volunteer their time because, like us, they are committed to gender parity in our parliaments and councils, and want to help you on your journey.

The bonds and networks that are formed between participants throughout Pathways to Politics and beyond are very precious and hinge on mutual respect and support. This spirit of community and shared experience regardless of political perspective informs Pathways thriving alum network, which includes many women who have successfully run for elected office. We are proud of Pathways to Politics' ability over a number of years to genuinely create a trusted and safe space.

The ongoing success of Pathways remains contingent on our shared responsibility to respect differences and confidences, and to support one another. The Pathways to Politics for Women Guiding Principles, which are designed to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all, underscore multi-partisanship and cultural safety as key tenets:

- Regard, value and recognise the perspectives of others.
- Consider and honour differing points of view.
- Take full advantage of the rich backgrounds and abilities of all, recognising and valuing differences.
- Listen and speak with openness and respect.
- Support open discussion by respecting the confidence of presenters in accordance with the Chatham House rule (defined at the end of this document), unless otherwise advised; and by respecting strict confidentiality of things said by other participants.

This Code of Conduct sets out in more detail the behaviour and conduct expected of Pathways to Politics participants in order to maintain a supportive and inclusive environment. **In accepting a place in a Pathways to Politics for Women program,**

participants agree to abide by the following standards of behaviour. Decisions regarding consequences and penalties to be applied for breaches of the Code will be at the discretion of the Pathways Director in each state and territory and dependent on the circumstances particular to each case (see below).

Personal Responsibility

Participants are responsible for their own conduct at all times. They are expected to know and comply with all aspects of the Code and to conduct themselves in a responsible and professional manner relating to language, disposition, attendance and punctuality. **In accepting a Pathways to Politics for Women place participants agree to attend at least 80% of Program sessions in order to meet the hurdle requirement for completion.** Absences must be discussed in advance with Pathways to Politics staff.

Respectful treatment of others

The success of Pathways to Politics for Women is contingent on the maintenance of a supportive, non-partisan and confidential environment. While different perspectives, reflections and ideas will of course inform discussion, multi-partisanship is a key tenet of Pathways to Politics and failure to treat fellow participants, staff, guests and presenters in a professional and respectful manner will always be taken seriously and may have consequences for the participant involved. Such behaviour:

- can disrupt or interfere with the learning and experience of other participants and result in reluctance on the part of presenters and guests to share experiences and information with participants.
- may have a serious effect on the health and wellbeing of the person or people affected.
- may undermine the non-partisan nature of Pathways to Politics and harm the reputation of the program.
- can harm the reputation of the participant who has demonstrated this behaviour.

Therefore, participants are required to:

- always demonstrate respectful behaviour towards their fellow participants and towards Pathways to Politics staff, guests and presenters.
- respect the rights, dignity and worth of fellow participants, staff, guests and presenters.
- respect differences in political belief and party affiliation and seek to promote the spirit of multi-partisan co-operation within and beyond Pathways.
- maintain the confidences of presenters and guests in accordance with the Chatham House rule (defined at the end of this document), unless otherwise advised (for example,

unless advised that what has been said is to be kept in strict confidence or advised that what has been said may be attributed to the presenter).

- maintain strict confidentiality as to what is said during the program by other participants, and only share details with their express prior permission and/or with the organisers as part of raising any concerns relating to compliance with other parts of this code of conduct.
- refrain from conduct during or after sessions which could be regarded as harassment, discrimination, bullying and/or victimisation, including on social media.

Recording of images and appropriate use of online communication

Potential consequences of posting or linking to material online that is a breach of confidence, or is sensitive, confronting, insulting, offensive, illegal (e.g., copyright-protected material), bullying in nature or defamatory include:

- reluctance on the part of presenters and guests to share experiences and information with participants.
- distress for a person or people affected by any material, be it written or in image or video form, that can be deemed to be a breach of confidence, or to be insulting, hurtful or vilifying or bullying.
- damage to the participant's reputation.
- damage to the reputation of Pathways to Politics.

Therefore:

- participants are not permitted to take photographs or make recordings during any Pathways to Politics activity without the express permission of the Director. This includes any and all activities and channels related to the program.
- participants must not post any image, video or written material online that breaks the confidence of fellow participants, staff members, presenters or guests.
- participants must not post any image, video or written material online that may be deemed, interpreted, or reasonably perceived to be, offensive, insulting, hurtful or defamatory by a fellow participant, staff member, guest or presenter.
- posting or sharing any images or video clips on social media platforms or other internet sites can be a serious matter that may also have legal implications, such as under the [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#).
- participants must not post any material that could adversely affect Pathways to Politics' reputation.

Breaches of the Code

If a participant becomes aware of any breaches of the Code by another participant, they are encouraged to report their concerns to a Pathways staff member. However, we do not require a complaint to be made by a participant in order for a breach to be investigated. While the matter is under investigation, it is to be kept confidential by both the reporting participants(s) and the staff members concerned. Participants must not make false allegations against a fellow participant or any other person.

Following discovery of a breach, the participant/s against whom concerns have been raised may be invited to an interview with an appropriate Pathways to Politics staff member. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach, the matter may be dealt with by one or more members of staff, including the Program Director.

Possible penalties that may be imposed on a participant for whom an allegation of misconduct has been upheld range from a reprimand of the participant through to termination of participation in the program.

Definitions

Bullying: When a person or group of people intentionally use words or actions to cause distress, hurt or embarrassment, or to intimidate, oppress or damage someone else. It is usually done by people who have more power over someone else or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless. Bullying is not the same as conflict between people or disliking someone, but people might bully each other because of conflict or dislike. Bullying may take the following forms:

- **Verbal bullying:** words used intentionally to upset someone e.g. insults, racist or homophobic slurs.
- **Social bullying:** use of lies, spreading of malicious gossip, repeated mimicking, deliberate exclusion.
- **Physical bullying:** physical actions such as hitting used to hurt or intimidate.
- **Psychological bullying:** intentional use of words and actions to cause psychological harm such as intimidation, manipulation and stalking.
- **Cyberbullying:** when technology, such as social media, emails and texts, is used to verbally, socially or psychologically bully.

Defamation: Publishing untrue and derogatory material about a person that harms their reputation. 'Publishing' can be in words or images and can be spoken, written or via electronic media.

Harassment: Any unwelcome behaviour that offends, embarrasses, humiliates or intimidates another person. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours or engaging in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Vilification: An act capable of inciting hatred towards, contempt for, or ridicule of a person or group of people on the basis of race, religion, sexuality or gender.

Chatham House Rule: "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed". (<https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>)

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