

Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and Conduct Policy

Purpose

This Policy defines CIGRE Australia's commitment to preventing discrimination and harassment. It applies to all CIGRE Australia employees, directors, volunteers, and members in their involvement with CIGRE activities and establishes expected behaviours at any CIGRE or CIGRE Australia event.

Document History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved	Review Date
1.0	8 May 2019	Initial Policy	CIGRE Australia Board	July 2020
2.1	6 June 2025	Restructured for clarity; updated legislation references; added bystander responsibility; included volunteers; inclusion of member conduct	CIGRE Australia Board	June 2028

Related Policies

- CIGRE Australia Diversity and Inclusiveness Policy

Contact Information

CIGRE Australia Secretariat
(02) 8896 4356

PART A: WORKPLACE OBLIGATIONS (EMPLOYEES, DIRECTORS, AND VOLUNTEERS)

1. Scope

This section applies to:

- Board members, employees, and volunteers
- All aspects of work and volunteering related to activity for CIGRE Australia
- On-site, off-site, and after-hours work-related activities including social functions and conferences

2. Commitment

CIGRE Australia is committed to providing a safe, flexible, and respectful environment free from all forms of discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment. All employees, directors, and volunteers must treat others with dignity, courtesy, and respect. CIGRE Australia has no tolerance for behaviour that breaches this policy.

3. Employee, Director, and Volunteer Rights

All employees, directors, and volunteers are entitled to:

- Merit-based recruitment and selection decisions
- A workplace free from all forms of discrimination and harassment
- Protection from sexual harassment
- The right to raise concerns without victimisation

4. Employee, Director, and Volunteer Responsibilities

All employees, directors, and volunteers must:

- Follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy and always conduct themselves professionally
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy, and respect
- Support people who experience discrimination, bullying, or sexual harassment
- Intervene when witnessing inappropriate behaviour, where it is possible and safe to do so
- Report observed incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Maintain confidentiality regarding complaints

5. Prohibited Conduct

5.1 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because of a protected characteristic. This can be:

Direct discrimination: When someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination: When an unreasonable requirement disadvantages people with a protected characteristic.

Protected characteristics under current Australian federal legislation include:

- Disability or medical condition
- Parental or carer status
- Race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin
- Age
- Sex, gender identity, or intersex status
- Industrial activity
- Religion
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or relationship status
- Subjection to family or domestic violence
- Political opinion
- Social origin
- Association with someone who has these characteristics

It is important to note that behaviour can be discriminating, even though it may not be intended.

5.2 Harassment

Harassment occurs when someone engages in unwelcome conduct that offends, humiliates, or intimidates another person and targets them based on a protected characteristic. Harassment includes:

- Racial harassment: Offensive comments, jokes, or slurs about someone's race, ethnicity, or cultural background
- Disability harassment: Mocking or demeaning someone's disability or medical condition
- Religious harassment: Ridiculing or denigrating someone's religious beliefs or practices
- Age-based harassment: Derogatory comments or stereotyping based on age
- Gender-based harassment: Derogatory comments based on gender
- Homophobic or transphobic harassment: Offensive remarks about sexual orientation or gender identity

Harassment is unlawful under Australian anti-discrimination laws and can occur as a single incident or series of incidents.

5.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment that requires special attention. It is:

- Unwelcome sexual behaviour that could reasonably make a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated
- Unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Potentially a criminal offense in certain circumstances

Sexual harassment includes:

- Unwelcome physical contact such as touching, fondling, or hugging
- Sexually suggestive comments, jokes, or innuendo
- Displaying sexually explicit or offensive materials
- Unwanted requests for dates or sexual activities
- Intrusive questions about someone's private life or body
- Sexually explicit emails, text messages, or social media posts
- Criminal behaviours such as sexual assault, stalking, or indecent exposure

Important aspects of sexual harassment:

- A single incident can constitute sexual harassment - it doesn't need to be repeated
- Intent is irrelevant - what matters is the impact on the recipient
- The same standards apply in digital communications and online meetings
- Sexual harassment can happen at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the same workplace, or between work colleagues outside of work

5.4 Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed toward a worker that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviours include:

- Demeaning language or sarcasm
- Threats, abuse, or shouting
- Coercion or isolation
- Inappropriate blaming
- Ganging up
- Constant unconstructive criticism
- Withholding necessary information or resources
- Imposing unrealistic requirements or deadlines
- Unreasonable refusal of legitimate requests
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Aggressive or intimidating conduct

5.5 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when someone suffers negative treatment because they:

- Made a complaint about discrimination or harassment
- Supported someone else's complaint
- Refused to do something because it would be discriminatory

5.6 Confidentiality

Breaching confidentiality regarding complaints or inappropriately disclosing personal information is a serious breach of this policy.

6. Legal Framework

Discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying are unlawful under Australian legislation including:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)
- Relevant state and territory anti-discrimination and workplace safety legislation

7. Consequences of Policy Violations

Employees, directors, and volunteers found to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization may face:

- Counselling
- Formal warnings
- Performance management
- Termination of employment or volunteer role
- Removal from CIGRE Australia positions

8. Merit-Based Decisions

All recruitment and role selection decisions will be based solely on merit - the skills and abilities measured against the position requirements - regardless of personal characteristics. This applies to both paid positions and volunteer roles.

9. Resolving Issues

CIGRE Australia encourages any person who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation to contact the Chief Executive Officer at (02) 8896 4356 or alternatively the Chairman or another member of the Board

PART B: MEMBER CONDUCT AT EVENTS

10. Expectations for Members

All CIGRE Australia members are expected to:

- Demonstrate professional and respectful conduct at all CIGRE and CIGRE Australia events (in-person and online)
- Refrain from discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), bullying, and other inappropriate behaviours as outlined in Section 5
- Treat other members, speakers, staff, and attendees with dignity and respect
- Understand that the prohibition against sexual harassment and other forms of harassment applies equally at events as it does in the workplace
- Speak up or report inappropriate behaviour when observed
- Support fellow members who may be experiencing inappropriate treatment

11. Consequences for Inappropriate Conduct

CIGRE Australia will not tolerate unprofessional conduct that may be prejudicial to the interests or reputation of the organisation. The Board reserves the right to:

- Issue warnings
- Remove members from events
- Cancel membership for serious or repeated violations