



Islamic Council of Victoria

ICV Board Public Comment and Media Policy

Policy Statement:

1. Public comment includes comments by ICV Board members and Board sub-committee members:
 - to the media or the community;
 - made on radio or television;
 - opinions provided to print media such as newspapers, magazines and journals;
 - speaking engagements including conferences, seminars;
 - written comments such as letters, memos or email messages; and
 - comments made at social events or official functions.
2. Board members are bound by the ICV Constitution and relevant legislation to act in the best interests of the ICV at all times. This duty prevails regardless of whether a Board member is acting in their capacity as a Board member, or in any other capacity.
3. Board members may only provide a public comment in their capacity as an ICV Board member or make a public comment on any matter that relates to the business of the ICV, with the prior approval of the President.
4. The President is the primary media spokesperson, and can delegate this authority for the ICV and shall routinely ensure that media delegations are in place to allow timely response to media requests.
5. Board members acting in a capacity other than that of a Board member, will not make any public statements that directly criticise the ICV or the Board.
 - It may be the case however, that Board members could be called upon to make a public comment about a decision, policy or the activities of the ICV when they may, by virtue of their capacity in other roles, hold a contradictory view.
 - In these circumstances, Board members will use their discretion when making a public comment.
 - When acting in a capacity, other than as a Board member, a Board member can make a public comment on behalf of the organisation they represent which may not be directly aligned with a decision, policy or activity of the ICV. The Board member must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the audience is aware the comments are not being made in their capacity as a Board Member of the ICV.
 - Any public comment, regardless of the capacity in which it is made, must not be a direct criticism of the Board or the ICV, or be reasonably capable of creating a perception that



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the Board member has a personal bias towards a particular view that is in conflict with the objectives of the ICV.

6. The Board member will make the President aware of the relevant public comment before it is made or, or if that is not practicable, as soon as possible, after it is made.
7. Public comments made by the President are limited to matters relevant to the role and function of the Board, ICV, and ICV staff under the *ICV Constitution*.
8. Board members can propose to the President, that the ICV issues a public comment on a matter that is the business of the ICV.
9. Where a Board member believes that the ICV should issue a public comment on a matter where there is an agreed policy, they should contact the President.

Rationale:

Comments made by Board members that are inconsistent with the position of the ICV may raise a perception of bias and indicate that a conflict of interest may exist.

Purpose and Objectives:

1. To clarify the Board's policy in respect of public comments made by Board members that may contradict or are inconsistent with a decision, policy or activity of the ICV.
2. To assist Board members make decisions about public comments that are relevant to a decision, policy or activity of the ICV.

Application:

This policy applies to the all Board members and members of Board Committees.

Definitions:

Conflict of interest A conflict of interest may arise when a Board member has a personal or professional association with a person, body or agency which has an actual or perceived interest in, or may receive a benefit from, a decision or act of the ICV.

Board members may be aware of existing conflicts of interest or become aware of potential conflicts of interest through ICV activities, the Board agenda or through other means.



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Principles to be observed when handling conflicts of interest:

1. Board members must perform their role impartially in the public interest at all times.
2. Board members are bound by the Victorian law and the ICV Constitution. This includes the duty to:
 - a. avoid bias and not to place themselves in a position of conflict of interest;
 - b. act in good faith and in the best interests of the public entity.

Expected outcomes:

1. Board members are able to apply this policy and the Board Conflict of Interest Policy to decisions about public comments.
2. Board members discuss issues with the President prior to making any public statement that may not be consistent with this policy.
3. Where a Board member has made a public comment that may not be consistent with this policy, the Board member advises the President as soon as possible after the comment was made.
4. Public comments made by individual Board members are representative of the Board as a whole. Public comments made by Board members are only with the prior agreement of the President.

Related policies, protocols and guidelines:

This section sets out any other policies which need to be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Board Conflict of Interest Policy

Key words

Public comment – media – public statement – conflict of interest

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Manager responsible: Secretary		