

Managing Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest for Committee Members will invariably arise because we all have lives outside of our Committee Role. The key is not to allow the role to advantage an individual Committee Member, their relatives or friends.

Management of conflict of interest is the key. Good management of conflict of interest is designed to minimize embarrassment, or criticism of the Committee or the individual.

Identification of a potential conflict is paramount. A conflict may exist because:

1. Personal interests, particularly but not exclusively personal gain or the potential for personal gain exists
2. Organisational interests, particularly but not exclusively where a member may have to consider the same matter within a different organisational setting
3. Other commitments or arrangements individuals have, within and outside our Club or sport
4. Family interests

An example of a conflict of interest is if a Committee Member is working for a particular company and that company is being considered to be contracted by the club to undertake work. What you need to cover yourself for is that the employee as a Committee member is not seen to have influenced the decision of which company at any level.

It is often the case that a Committee member may have a pre-existing conflict and only realise this when the matter is raised in a meeting or after a meeting. This does not matter, so long as when a member of the Committee recognises that a potential conflict exists, he or she advises the Chair immediately if in a Committee meeting, or as soon as practical at other times.

As a Committee we accept as the guiding principle that it is in everyone's interest to manage not just conflict of interest **but the perception that there is or was a conflict of interest.**

Accordingly, the ability for any Committee members to raise the issue of conflict of interest at any stage is encouraged. It is suggested that Conflicts is included in the early part of the agenda at meetings as habit.

In some occasions it is sufficient that a conflict is declared – “just to let you know I have a connection”.

Specific Measures that Committee may choose to adopt include these:

Process 1:

The Chair gives all members the opportunity at the start of each Committee meeting to

declare any conflict or raise any concerns regarding perceptions of conflict that have arisen or may arise in the course of tackling the agenda for that meeting.

Process 2:

On being advised of a potential conflict, the Chair acting on the advice of the Committee then decides whether:

1. A conflict exists, and it is substantial enough to continue to worry about, and
2. Whether the member needs to step out from the meeting / discussion, **or** whether we benefit from the person remaining, and
3. Any other action needed.

Options include allowing the person with the conflict to remain in the meeting but not vote and also the option of remaining in the room, speaking on the issue but not voting. It may be enough that a conflict is declared and recorded, and that the person with the conflict doesn't speak or vote on the matter. Whatever action is taken to manage the conflict, the action needs to be **minuted** or otherwise recorded clearly and transparently.

Process 3:

For ongoing matters where a Committee member has a conflict, the Chair needs to make appropriate arrangements with the member and others to ensure there is no impact from the conflict.

This is recorded in the minutes each time. If the discussion of a conflict of interest involves the Chair, then a Temporary Chair needs to be appointed by the rest of the Committee to manage the discussion.