

Member Code of Conduct

This Policy is applicable to: All Members

1. Introduction

The Gumala Aboriginal Corporation (**GAC**) is committed to the provision of a timely, efficient, consistent and quality service that meets our Members' expectations and is provided by respectful and helpful GAC employees.

It is expected that at all times, employees and Members show mutual respect and courtesy during their dealings with each other and any Suppliers, with whom GAC does business.

2. Scope

This code applies to all GAC Members, including directors.

This Code of Conduct has been formulated to provide a clear statement of GAC's expectation of its Members, in respect to their behaviour and personal conduct during interactions with GAC employees and Suppliers.

3. Definitions and Key Terms

GAC Gumala Aboriginal Corporation

Member Any approved Bunjima, Yinhawangka and Niyaparli persons who are entered on the register of Members by Gumala Aboriginal Corporation

Supplier Any entities (including their staff or premises) with whom GAC conducts business with, for the provision of goods and services for the benefit of the GAC membership

4. Member Expectations

GAC expects that during the course of providing assistance and in the day to day running of the corporation, that all members:

- Complete applications fully;

- Provide acceptable quotes and invoices, or other supporting documentation in support of applications;
- Are respectful and courteous to staff and suppliers;
- Will only communicate with GAC staff through approved business methods including by phone or by email; and
- Will not engage in any fraudulent behaviour or forgery.

Failing to complete applications properly or refusing to supply the appropriate supporting documentation for applications, may result in applications being declined for processing.

Members should be aware that any accommodation organised by GAC may require the payment of a bond, which is subject to the policy of the accommodation provider. GAC will not provide security bonds for accommodation, and it is the Members responsibility to provide for the payment of Bond/s.

GAC Members should also be aware that telephone conversations may be recorded in order to ensure a standard of behaviour is maintained during interactions between GAC and its Members. Further, where applicable, recordings may be used for further investigations where a breach of this policy is substantiated.

5. GAC Service Commitments

GAC commits that its employees will:

- Attend the counter, answer all telephone enquiries promptly and courteously;
- Ensure that all enquiries are dealt with directly, without unnecessary referrals or transfers; and
- Ensure that all correspondence is prompt, courteous and written in plain language.

In the event that an employee is unable to deal with a Member's enquiry, either;

- A relevant employee contact (name and contact information) will be provided to the Member, who will be able to deal with the request or enquiry; or

- Where a relevant employee contact cannot be provided, the Member's name and enquiry will be escalated to the appropriate Manager for them to delegate the enquiry or contact the Member directly.

6. Social Media

The term '*social media*' refers to a website, mobile application or technology which allows users to share and communicate information online – both publicly and privately. In engaging with GAC via social media, Members should refer to the pages and sites in the name of Gumala Aboriginal Corporation only, and not the private pages and sites of its employees.

Examples include but are not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and video-sharing sites such as You-Tube and photo-sharing sites such as Instagram.

In some instances, postings on the abovementioned sites are subject to various laws including defamation, anti-discrimination, intellectual property and bullying or harassment.

GAC requires that all comments which are posted on social media be professional and respectful and reminds users that anything which is posted can be seen by many quickly and is impossible to erase.

GAC prohibits postings on its Facebook/social media sites, that are likely to pose a risk to:

- GAC's reputation, by a post to any GAC page or on any external sites;
- Breaching any intellectual property rights or copyrights, by using photos, music or text on external sites without permission; and
- Defaming persons by providing incorrect statements, which are likely to hurt a person's reputation.

When using social media, GAC encourages its members to:

- Exercise common sense, when determining what is appropriate to share;
- Protect your privacy, as there is potential for the content to be made public;
- Do not say things which are dishonest or misleading;
- Respect confidentiality when posting online;
- Do not post material which is offensive, harassing, intimidating, hateful or sexist;
- Be conscious of the consequences of posting inappropriate material; and
- Comply with any relevant laws.

7. GAC Suppliers

GAC engages a number of Suppliers, who provide goods and services for the benefit of GAC Members. These Suppliers include, but are not limited to, service stations, hotel/motels and other retailers.

Due to past incidents, where Members have behaved inappropriately and disrespectfully, many Suppliers are reluctant to engage / trade with GAC. This is damaging for all GAC Members, especially given the difficulty in sourcing Suppliers in regional areas.

In order to protect GAC's professional relationships with Suppliers and other Members from being impacted by this behaviour – the expectations on Members and the Member Code of Conduct Policy extends to cover any Supplier, which GAC has engaged for the provision of goods and services, for the benefit of the membership.

Where GAC identifies that a Member has treated any GAC Supplier or their facilities disrespectfully, inappropriately, abusively or in any way that breaches this **Member Code of this Conduct Policy**, it will be reported directly to the Executive Officer, who may make a determination relating to contact or benefits of that Members – until such a time as the matter is brought to the attention of the Board.

8. Breach

This Code of Conduct sets out standards of behaviour which are expected to be maintained during interactions between Members and GAC. A breach of this Code means that a Member acts in a way which goes against the Code and may include, but is not limited to any:

- Unacceptable behaviour;
- Form of harassment;
- Illegal conduct; and/or
- Inappropriate contact.

8.1. Abusive Members

Abusive, offensive or inappropriate language used by a Member towards GAC staff or GAC Suppliers **will not** be tolerated. Where a Member becomes abusive or uses offensive or inappropriate language, the GAC employee may terminate the communication or ask the Member to leave. This type of behaviour is in direct contravention of this **Member Code of Conduct Policy**.

The GAC employee will report the matter to their line manager, and in accordance with incident reporting guidelines as set out for staff. Any breaches of the **Member Code of the Conduct Policy** will be recorded on the Member's profile in the GAC database.

The Executive Officer (**EO**) may make a determination, which may limit or cease responses or benefits to any GAC Member who is abusive or uses offensive or inappropriate language with any other Member, GAC employees or Supplier/s - until such time that the matter is brought to the attention of the Board.

8.2. Complaints

Where a Member is dissatisfied with the standard of service, conduct, action or lack thereof by GAC, an employee, Director or representative of GAC – please refer to processes as set out in **Section 5.1 Complaints and Disputes Policy**.

Where a GAC employee is satisfied that a Member has contravened this **Member Code of Conduct Policy**, they may lodge a complaint to the Corporate Services Manager or to the Operations Manager.

The complaint will be handled per the processes set out in the **Complaints and Disputes Policy**.

Note: All complaints received by GAC will be treated with the utmost seriousness. However, GAC will decline to deal with any complaint of a malicious, frivolous or vexatious nature.

All complaints must be made by an identifiable Member with sufficient information to enable an investigation. Complaints which are made anonymously will not be acted upon.

8.3. Consequences of a Breach

Where GAC is satisfied that a Member has breached this Member Code of Conduct, the following process will be undertaken. The Member will:

1. receive written correspondence setting out the circumstances of the behaviour that resulted in a breach warning;
2. receive an invitation to speak with the Corporate Services Manager or Operations Manager to provide an explanation for the breach;
3. the EO will notify the Board of the explanation provided by the Member. If the Board are not satisfied with the reasons provided they may:
 - a. invite the Member to teleconference to further explain the circumstance of the breach;
 - b. if the Board are not satisfied with the response or explanations provided, they may pass a resolution to have the Member's benefits suspended for a period of time that the Board deems appropriate.

In the event that the Board passes a resolution to have a Member's benefits suspended, the Member will be provided with written notice of the resolution and outcome. GAC may also exercise its rights under Rule 5.7.4 of the **GAC Rule Book**, for cancellation of a membership, if GAC is satisfied that the Member has significantly interfered in the operation of the corporation.

9. Standards of Behaviour

All registered Members are to adhere to the following:

1. To behave with respect, integrity and honesty according to the values of GAC.
2. Not be disrespectful or behave in an inappropriate manner, during interactions with GAC staff, other Members, GAC Suppliers or other related parties with whom GAC does business.
3. Show a duty of care to all Members of GAC, including GAC staff.
4. Intimidation, harassment, vindictive attitudes or inappropriate behaviours will not be tolerated.
5. Respect the privacy, safety and needs of other Members of the community, including GAC staff and staff of Suppliers.
6. To not breach confidentiality by using information from communications, correspondence or meetings and related activities of GAC in a negative, derogatory and harmful way.
7. Not make any improper use of resources, information or assets of GAC in order to gain or seek to gain a direct or indirect benefit or other advantage.
8. Be punctual for meetings and appointments.
9. To not significantly interfere with the operation of the corporation.

10. Guidelines for Assistance

10.1. Urgent Applications

If a Member requires urgent assistance, they should contact the office and request an appointment / to speak to a Member Services Officer. Applications for urgent assistance will be assessed on a case to case basis, depending on the capacity of the Member Service Team, and the situation at hand.

10.2. GAC Employees

Where a Member needs to see a specific GAC employee or must visit GAC to address a specific piece of correspondence, the Member must directly contact the office or employee requested to make an appointment. If applicable, the correspondence file reference should be quoted, when requesting an appointment with a GAC employee. If in relation to a letter or piece of correspondence from GAC, the correspondence file reference should be quoted when requesting the appointment.

10.3. Member Calls

Continual phone calls to the GAC office impacts on the corporation's ability to manage its business and in extreme cases will be considered as harassing phone calls. In circumstances where a Member continually harasses GAC staff, including multiple calls to the office may be considered to have breached [Section 9.9].

Telephone harassment may occur where the calls are annoying, threatening and harassing, and may occur in the following ways, amongst other things:

- Making repeated telephone calls, relating to information which has already been given;
- Pretending to be someone else or providing false information relating to processing times or previous conversations with staff; and/or
- Making obscene comments, suggestions or requests.

In making a determination of whether a call is harassing, the following will be considered:

- The timing of the phone calls, throughout business hours;
- The frequency of the phone calls and how often they occur;
- If the caller was asked to stop calling in relation to the application / information; and/or
- If the caller continues to call regardless of the previous information provided.

An example of such is where GAC receive in excess of 3 calls per day or up to 5 calls per week, relating to information which they have previously been provided and was not expected to change within the timeframe of the harassing behaviour.

10.4. Access to Information

Members must understand that GAC employees cannot allow access to information relating to any other member/s, including program balances and application status. GAC have implemented processes which enable Members to provide authorisation for another to enquire, make applications on behalf of and act as an authority on that account. Where this is required, please contact the GAC office and request a **Permission to Act on Behalf** form.

Where there are legal authorities in place, eg. power of attorney, court orders, GAC must be notified and supplied with evidence of this authority, and the authorised individual representing the member will be asked to complete an **Authority to Act** form.

11. Related Documents

Complaints and Disputes Policy

12. Review History

Date:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
September 2017	Executive Officer and Board	
February 2018	Governance / Corporate Services	Inclusion of 'suppliers, their staff and premises'
March 2019	Governance / Corporate Services	

13. Next Review

Date:	Position Responsible:
March 2020	Executive Officer and Board

14. Authorisation

GAC Board of Directors on 18 April 2019

Date	Version	Revision description
30 August 2017	0.A	Policy Draft
1 September 2017	1.0	Final Approved
8 September 2018	1.0A	Policy Amendment (inclusion of suppliers)
22 February 2018	2.0	Board Approval
Feb/March 2019	2.0A	Review
18 April 2019	2.0A	Board Approval