# Blind Citizens Australia

# BCA Leaders’ Code of Ethics and Conduct

## Introduction:

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is a member based not-for-profit organisation which provides peer support, information and leadership opportunities for its members; and serves as the national representative voice of all Australians who are blind or vision impaired.

Incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee BCA operates within the framework of its Constitution, the Corporations Act 2001 (as amended) and relevant provisions of Australian Taxation Law.

BCA’s Directors and other leaders are committed to pursuing an ethical approach to all aspects of the organisation’s governance, work and outreach.

An ethical approach to not-for-profit governance should:

1. set out the fundamental principles that guide the actions of the organisation; its board and committees; and the employees and volunteers who work for it. *In what follows, we refer to this level as 'ethics'.*
2. set out the standards that those who deal with the organisation can expect. *In what follows, we refer to this level as 'conduct'.*
3. require the organisation to build these aspirations into its day-to-day operations, including monitoring and reporting standards, recognition and rewards for compliance, and penalties and sanctions for breaches.

The Statement of Ethics and Conduct that follows has been endorsed by the BCA Board as the standard expected of all Directors and Standing Committee members. All BCA members appointed to the Board or its Standing Committees are expected to agree in writing to be bound by these standards.

## 1. Commitment

### Ethics

I took up this position to work for something larger than myself. I will carry out this work honestly and in fairness to everybody involved, placing the interests of others before my own.

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. pursue as their highest priority the fulfilment of the mission of the organisation;
2. after that, promote the interests of the organisation itself;
3. after that, consider the interests of the organisation's stakeholders, its clients, its consumers, its employees, and the society and the environment in which it operates.

## 2. Compliance

### Ethics

I will work within the law, and within the rules, and I will see that our organisation does too.

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times while acting in their capacity as a BCA Leader:

1. ensure to the best of their ability and within the bounds of their authority that the organisation is observing sound financial practices and managing potential risks effectively, and is at all times in its dealings with other parties capable of meeting its legal and financial obligations;
2. ensure to the best of their ability that the organisation is complying with all applicable federal, state and local legislation and regulations;
3. observe the provisions of the organisation's constitution, its bylaws, its standing orders and its policies.

## 3. Conflicts

### Ethics

In my dealings with the organisation I shall be honest and open, and shall not take any advantage of my position as a BCA Leader.

### Conduct

No Director or Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. place their own interests, or the interests of any other person or body, before the interests of the organisation, or so act as to give the appearance of any such conflict
2. enter into any financial relationship with the organisation without the approval of the board, in whose deliberations on that issue the director/board member shall have taken no part
3. through their own conduct bring the organisation into disrepute.

## 4. Confidentiality

### Ethics

I shall keep secret any secrets that have been entrusted to me, and I shall freely tell anyone anything they are entitled to know.

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. preserve, where appropriate, the confidentiality of the organisation's business
2. protect the privacy of the organisation's employees, members and clients;
3. recognise their accountability to the organisation's members, and provide all information on the organisation's performance necessary to give meaning to that accountability.

## 5. Conscientiousness

### Ethics

I shall do the job fully and without reservations.

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. exercise their independent judgement on the issues before them
2. provide themselves with the information from within and without the organisation necessary to support the exercise of their judgements
3. invest the time and effort required to fulfil the requirements of the position by reading the materials, participating fully in meetings, and carrying out any duties assigned by the organisation.

## 6. Communication

### Ethics

I shall know what the organisation does, and why, and I shall tell the world about it.

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. educate themselves continuously to maintain the information base, the skills base, and the qualifications needed to oversee the affairs of the organisation effectively
2. communicate the significance of the organisation's mission, its strategy, and its culture to members, employees, stakeholders and the public
3. share with other BCA Leaders and members where appropriate the insights and practices they have developed in the course of their leadership role.

## 7. Community

### Ethics

**I will treat the** people **involved with the organisation respectfully, fairly and without prejudice.**

### Conduct

Every Director and Standing Committee Member shall at all times when acting in their capacity as BCA Leader:

1. observe and promote the human rights of all persons touched by the work of the organisation
2. oppose prejudice, address disadvantage, and promote diversity in all aspects of the governance and the management of the organisation
3. treat colleagues, members and other stakeholders with courtesy and respect.

***Approved by the Board***

***2 December 2019***