

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

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Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Committee members, all regular members, visitors and volunteers.
- on-site, off-site, online via social media, social functions; conferences – wherever and whenever members may be as a result of any activities on behalf of the Astronomical Society of NSW.
- Members treatment of other members, visitors, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of any activities on behalf of the Astronomical Society of NSW.

Aims

The Astronomical Society of NSW is committed to providing a safe, flexible and respectful environment for members, and visitors, free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

All Astronomical Society of NSW members are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

By effectively implementing this Policy, we will attract and retain valued members and create a positive environment for members.

Whilst it is important to recognise the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), Article 19, which provides for:

- Everyone to have the right to hold opinions without interference; and
- Everyone to have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of their choice;

these rights are subject to restrictions provided by law and are necessary for respecting the rights and reputations of others.

Members rights and responsibilities

All members are entitled to:

- An environment free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised.
- reasonable flexibility to accommodate their family responsibilities, disability, religious beliefs or culture.

All members must:

- follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this Policy.
- offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment.
- avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of members.
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Additional responsibilities of Committee members

Committee members must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour.
- take steps to educate and make members aware of their obligations under this Policy.
- intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour.
- act fairly to resolve issues and exercise good judgement, making sure interested parties are heard.
- help members resolve complaints informally.
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this Policy to the Committee for investigation and resolution.
- ensure members who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised.

Unacceptable conduct

Discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment are unacceptable at the Astronomical Society of NSW and are unlawful under the following NSW legislation:

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48](#)

Members (including Committee members) found to have engaged in such conduct may be counselled, warned or disciplined. Severe or repeated breaches can lead to formal discipline up to and including expulsion from the Society.

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

Directly, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

or

Indirectly, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

Protected personal characteristics under NSW discrimination law include:

- A disability, disease or injury.
- Parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members.
- Race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background.
- Age, whether young or old, or because of age in general.
- Sex.
- Industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union.
- Religion.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual.
- Marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship.
- Political opinion.
- Social origin.
- An association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

It is also against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future.

Bullying

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic, it is a form of discrimination.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people.

Under Federal law, this behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination – it may be a one-off event.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- Sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language.
- Threats, abuse or shouting.
- Coercion.
- Isolation.
- Constant unconstructive criticism.
- Deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to access their entitlements.
- Unreasonable refusal of requests for any Society benefit.

Bullying is unacceptable in the Astronomical Society of NSW.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include:

- Comments about a person's private life or the way they look.
- Sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring.
- Brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging.
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes.
- Displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects.
- Requests for sex.
- Sexually explicit posts on social networking sites.
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature.
- Intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life.
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages.
- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites.
- Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.

All members have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.

All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require the Committee to respond quickly and appropriately.

The Astronomical Society of NSW recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all members to respect other people's limits.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting, or threatening to subject someone, to a detriment because they have, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating a concern or complaint.

Victimisation is a very serious breach of this Policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal action against the perpetrator.

The Astronomical Society of NSW has a zero-tolerance approach to victimisation.

Gossip

It is unacceptable for members at the Astronomical Society of NSW to talk with other members, visitors or members of the public about any complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Breaching the confidentiality of a formal complaint investigation or inappropriately disclosing personal information obtained is a serious breach of this Policy and may lead to formal action.

Resolving issues at the Astronomical Society of NSW

The Astronomical Society of NSW strongly encourages any member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, sexually harassed or victimised to take appropriate action by contacting a member of the Committee.

Members who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from the President for advice and support or action their behalf.

More information

If you have a query about this Policy or need more information please contact the Committee.

Review details

This policy was adopted by the Astronomical Society of NSW Committee on Wednesday 07th February 2018

This policy was last updated on Wednesday 07th February 2018.