

# Metropolitan Community Church Brisbane – Code of Conduct

## Preamble

While our Ways of Working Together are aspiration goals that MCC Brisbane aims for, this Code of Conduct (**Code**) describes minimum standards of behaviour expected of all attendees at MCC Brisbane to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

## Conduct

1. MCC Brisbane attendees will not engage in unlawful activity at MCC Brisbane events, or that affects other attendees. This includes all behaviour which contravenes an Australian or Queensland law. In particular, the following conduct is unacceptable:
  - a. Bullying, harassment, threats and intimidation, vilification, sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind;
  - b. Theft or destruction of property belonging to other attendees, MCC Brisbane or Merthyr Road Uniting Church;
  - c. Fraud against MCC Brisbane attendees or MCC Brisbane
  - d. Wilfully disrupting MCC Brisbane's worship services;
  - e. Assault, including sexual assault.

Allegations of unlawful conduct will be reported to the Queensland Police Service by the MCC Board. The Board will do everything it can to assist police with their inquiries.

2. MCC Brisbane attendees will seek consent in their interactions with others.

The board of MCC Brisbane recognises romantic relationships may develop between MCC Brisbane attendees/visitors. All MCC Brisbane attendees will seek informed, voluntary, and revocable consent in all of interactions with other MCC Brisbane attendees/visitors. If one person is silent, this is not consent, and the other person should immediately stop the unwanted behaviour. This includes:

- a. Intrusive questions about a person's gender, sexuality or sexual activity;
  - b. Unsolicited and unwanted phone calls or messages, including images;
  - c. Repeated sexual advances;
  - d. Unwanted physical touching; and/or
  - e. Sharing of personal details or images without consent.
3. MCC Brisbane takes a harm minimisation approach to alcohol and other drug use. We recognise there are many factors which contribute to the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs. We endeavour to care for people experiencing difficulty with alcohol and other drugs by referring them to appropriate support. However, consistent with MCC Brisbane's position on unlawful activity, the unlawful use, distribution or sale of alcohol or other drugs at MCC Brisbane events is strictly prohibited.
4. MCC attendees will follow the reasonable directions of the pastor or board member in relation to problematic behaviour that is impacting other people and/or property.

## Responses

The MCC Brisbane Board is responsible for managing MCC Brisbane, including responding to behaviour which breaches this Code of Conduct.

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Once the MCC Brisbane Board becomes aware of an allegation of behaviour which is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct, it may take any of the following steps as appropriate:

- Have a confidential discussion about the allegation(s) with the person(s) involved, including the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator;
- Determine what response is appropriate in the circumstances, having regard to the available evidence;
- Consistent with the principles of natural justice, notify the alleged perpetrator of the response options the MCC Brisbane Board is considering, and provide the alleged perpetrator with an opportunity to respond to this proposed course of action;
- Consider any information provided by the alleged perpetrator and make a final decision about the response option to be applied in the circumstances, and notify the alleged perpetrator of this outcome; and
- Notify the alleged victim that the MCC Brisbane Board has taken action in response to their allegations.

After making reasonable inquiries, the MCC Brisbane Board may exercise its discretion by applying one or more of the following options in response to allegations of a breach of this Code of Conduct:

- take no further action based on the available evidence;
- informally counsel the alleged perpetrator and/or alleged victim;
- issue a formal written warning to the alleged perpetrator;
- require the alleged perpetrator not to attend any MCC Brisbane events in person, for a period of time;
- require the alleged perpetrator to cease attending MCC Brisbane events.

### Definitions

**Attributes** are defined by the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) as including:

- a) sex;
- b) relationship status;
- c) pregnancy;
- d) parental status;
- e) breastfeeding;
- f) age;
- g) race;
- h) impairment;
- i) religious belief or religious activity;
- j) political belief or activity;
- k) trade union activity;
- l) lawful sexual activity;
- m) gender identity;
- n) sexuality;
- o) family responsibilities;

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p) association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes.

**Bullying** means repeated and unreasonable behaviour that creates a risk to health and safety.

**Consensual sex** means an agreement and willingness to take part in sexual activity, including engaging in activity in person or online/via mobile applications. Consent must be informed, voluntary and revocable. Without consent, sexual activity is unlawful.

**Informed consent** means you are of an age and state to provide consent and that you understand what you are giving consent for. In Queensland, it is illegal to have consensual sex below the age of 16. If you, or the person you are with, are drunk, drug-affected, or passed out, informed consent is unable to be given.

**Voluntary consent** is a willing and positive expression of desire to engage in sexual activities. If it's voluntary, it means no parties are coerced by fear, force, or threats. If a party is silent, there is no consent.

**Revocable consent** means that the agreement can be withdrawn at any time and the activity must stop immediately. It also means that even if you had given consent on one occasion, it does not mean you have given consent for a future or different activity.

**Discrimination** is defined by the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) as including **direct discrimination** and **indirect discrimination**.

**Direct discrimination** happens if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an **attribute** less favourably than another person without the attribute is or would be treated in similar circumstances.

For example, an older applicant is not considered for a job because it is assumed they do not have the same capabilities as a younger person.

**Indirect discrimination** on the basis of an attribute happens if a person imposes, or proposes to impose, a term:

- with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply; and
- with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply; and
- that is not reasonable.

**Fraud** means dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means.

**MCC Brisbane attendees** – includes all people who attend worship services and other events held by MCC Brisbane and extends to small groups and social events.

**MCC Brisbane Board** – this means those people who, from time to time, are elected to the MCC Brisbane Board, responsible for the management of the church.

**MCC Brisbane events** – includes worship services and other events held by MCC Brisbane and extends to small groups and social events.

**Natural justice** – means the right a person has to be made aware of, and respond to, information that will be used in the course of a decision that will negatively affect that person.