



## Grants Committee

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help Grants Committee members of the Melbourne Women's Fund (MWF) to effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of the MWF and manage risk.

#### 2. Objective

The MWF's Grants Committee (or other governance structure as relevant) aims to ensure that its members are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of the MWF.

#### 3. Scope

This policy applies to the MWF's Grants Committee members.

#### 4. Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's professional or personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the MWF. These include direct interests as well as those of direct family members or other organizations a person may be involved with or have an interest in. It also includes a conflict between a Grants Committee member's duty to MWF and another duty that the Grants Committee member has (for example, to another charity). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.

These situations present the risk that a person may make a decision, or be perceived as having made a decision, based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the MWF and must be managed accordingly.

#### 5. Policy

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and should be openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of the Grants Committee as well as the responsibility of the MWF's Executive Committee, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with the obligations to the MWF.

Regarding the potential conflicts of interest amongst Grants Committee members, the MWF's Executive Committee require Grants Committee members to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- Promptly identify and disclose any conflicts of interest
- Carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

## **5.1 Responsibility of the Grants Committee**

The Grants Committee is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest among members of the MWF's Grants Committee
- monitoring compliance with this policy, and
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

The Grants Committee leadership, defined as its Co-Chairs and Co-Deputies, must ensure that Grants Committee members are aware of its conflict of interest governance standards, and they disclose any actual or perceived material conflicts of interests as required.

## **5.2 Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest**

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be discussed with the MWF Grants Committee and entered into the MWF's Grants Committee register of interests. It must also be raised with the Executive Committee. The register of interests must be maintained by the Co-Chairs of the Grants Committee; this includes recording the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it. We also request that any grants committee members provides the names of any leadership roles or board roles they occupy once commencing on the grants committee each year.

## **6. Action required for management of conflicts of interest**

### **6.1 Conflicts of interest of Grants Committee members**

Declaration of potential conflicts of interest will be a standing agenda item at Grants Committee meetings, e.g. Grants Committee members will disclose any changes to their declared interests, raise any conflicts of interest, and update previously declared conflicts of interest, at these meetings.

#### **What should be considered when deciding what action to take?**

In deciding what approach to take regarding conflicts of interest of Grants Committee members, the Grants Committee leadership, in each instance, will consider:

- The nature of the conflict
- Whether the conflict will impact on impartial decision-making
- Options to avoid the conflict
- The possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the MWF.

When the MWF Grants Committee considers that a material conflict of interest exists, the Grants Committee member who has the conflict of interest will not participate in the following Grants Committee activities relating to the conflict of interest:

- Vote on the matter,
- participate in any related debate or discussion to the matter, or
- be present in the room during the debate and voting on the matter.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a Grants Committee member from regularly participating in discussions, the Grants Committee may consider whether it is appropriate for the person conflicted to resign from the Grants Committee.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the Grants Committee leadership.

### **7. Compliance with this policy**

If the Grants Committee has a reason to believe that a person subject to the policy has failed to comply with it, it and the Executive Committee will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Grants Committee may take action that includes seeking to terminate their involvement in any MWF Committees.

If a person suspects that a Grants Committee member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they should first discuss that conflict with the potentially conflicted member. Should this be to no avail, they should notify the Grants Committee Co-Chairs.

### **Contact**

For questions about this policy, please contact us at [melbournewomensfund.grants@gmail.com](mailto:melbournewomensfund.grants@gmail.com)