

Tourism Whitsundays Code of Conduct

Tourism Whitsundays (TW) will meet all requirements of privacy principles in relation to storage, use, and release of personal and or commercial “in confidence” information. TW will ensure the protection and correct use of databases of external contact, members and directories. TW maintains on record only the details included in each membership application.

TW Membership Terms and Conditions

Membership acceptance is subject to TW’s membership terms and conditions as follows:

1. All Tourism Whitsundays members must agree to be bound by the TW constitution, rules and by-laws, TW Code of Conduct and any other relevant specifications of membership classes.
2. The principal objective of TW is to grow the economy of the Whitsundays region, and while its membership packages focus on regionally based businesses, its membership is open to all businesses that have an interest in the broader region.
3. Membership is based on submission of the completed application form and agreement with these terms and conditions.
4. Membership is subject to formal acceptance by the TW Board.
5. TW reserves the right to decline membership:
 - a. where the level nominated is considered inappropriate;
 - b. where the individual/business has been previously declined; or
 - c. at Tourism Whitsundays’ discretion.
6. Membership is on a financial year basis from 1st of July to 30th June, payable by lump sum, monthly direct debit (under separate direct debit agreement), or other payment plan at TW's discretion.
7. **AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:** Membership will automatically renew each year.
 - You will receive an annual renewal notice prior to 1st July outlining level of membership and the appropriate annual fee.
 - If you wish to cancel, change details or amend membership level you must advise Tourism Whitsundays in writing within 30 days of renewal notice date.
 - If notice has not been received in writing, your membership will automatically renew for a further 12 months and payment will be required.
 - A membership invoice will be emailed to you
 - Any direct debit authorities for payment will also be amended accordingly.
 - If you do not wish to partake in Automatic Renewal of Membership, you can cancel this option at any time by advising Tourism Whitsunday in writing or by checking the “OPT OUT” box on the Registration Form
8. Annual membership subscriptions are as per the 2019/20 membership fee structure or as otherwise negotiated. Fees will not be refunded once accepted (other than by adjustment where necessary).
9. Members joining the organisation in the first quarter of the financial year will pay the full annual rate. Members joining thereafter will pay a pro-rata amount based on the monthly rate.
10. Members joining the organisation after the first quarter of the financial year will not be eligible for QTIC membership as a membership benefit. QTIC membership is not refundable after the first quarter of the financial year and will not be reimbursed with a cancelled membership.
11. TW membership fees are a deduction for tax purposes. TW is registered for GST and has an obligation to collect GST on all fees. **All fees listed are exclusive of GST.**
12. Any individual/business in any class of membership will not commence receiving membership benefits until payment has been received.

13. TW reserve the right to amend, add or remove any membership conditions at any time, in its sole discretion, without notice.
14. Termination:
 - 11.1. All members must give 14 days' written notice to TW of intended termination of any membership throughout the financial year.
 - 11.2. All members must give 30 days' written notice to TW if the membership is to not be automatically renewed at the beginning of the upcoming financial year.
 - 11.3. If any member in any class fails to become financial within 30 days of application of membership, or is more than 30 days overdue with any payment due to TW, TW reserves the right to discontinue or to terminate any membership benefits immediately, and may review the application/ongoing membership of that individual/business.

TW Membership Code of Conduct

The Whitsundays is a premium destination and consumer expectation is high. To create a sustainable economy we continually strive to improve our business practices and bridge the gap between expectation and delivery. We therefore encourage our industry to strive for best practice and have a code in place for all TW members.

The objectives for the code are:

- To provide guidelines to businesses on the minimum acceptable standards and practices in the Whitsunday region;
- To encourage self-regulation within the tourism industry;
- To lead by example;
- To contribute to a sustainable and quality tourism industry;
- Establish a framework for professional behaviour and practices.

Members agree to adhere to the following principles of professional ethics. Failure to adhere may result in the exclusion or termination of an operator from membership and its associated benefits.

1. Business relations

- Operators shall, where possible, inform their customers of pertinent facts concerning the service offered to consumers;
- Operators shall provide factual and timely information to trade and consumers;
- Operators shall inform their employees, TW, trade and industry of any alterations to their product or services;
- Any practices that are illegal or may be deemed as damaging to the integrity of the tourism industry shall have membership cancelled;
- When advertising or promoting their business or the Whitsundays, operators are to avoid using superlatives or misleading information in accordance with fair trading regulations;
- Operators will offer fair and impartial representation of other members and/or products they represent, and act in a professional manner if information is sought by a competitor;
- Operators should encourage membership of TW to enable sustainability, growth and economic success to the region.

2. Conduct of members

- Members are encouraged to support sustainable practices that minimise operational and environmental impacts and operate in a manner that enhances and preserves the natural, social, cultural, and economic values of the region;
- Members should lead by example;
- Not injure or attempt to injure, maliciously or recklessly, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation of other members of the organisation or of Tourism Whitsundays;
- All feasible steps should be taken to manage the public's exposure to risk and hazards and manage this according to current best practice;
- All operations shall be in accordance with statutory requirements relevant to their operations inclusive of discrimination, harassment and safety;

- Members are required to aim to strive for excellence in quality of service to customers and to foster best practice ethics;
- Members shall treat other members and staff with respect and in a professional and courteous manner;
- Members will act to promote the best interests of the region as a premium destination.

3. Dealing with complaints

- If a complaint is made about another operator by trade, consumers or another business that operator shall take steps to amicably deal with the complaint;
- If the complaint breaches the code of conduct, negatively impacts on your business and/or the region it should be reported through the complaints procedure (see below).

Compliance and monitoring

The code will be used to inspire and reward better business practices and be used as a catalyst to help industry develop. Breaches will be seen as areas of business and industry improvement. If the code is breached – the reasons why will be investigated and a program of self-improvement developed in consultation with relevant agencies to overcome the issue. This could require such things as work force development, management training, customer service training etc. However if the code is breached more than three times, TW may, at their discretion, terminate membership and benefits and all relevant agencies will be notified of the breach. Monitoring will be undertaken in a number of ways, including:

- By the industry itself – who agree to monitor other members as part of the code;
- Customer feedback via our websites;
- Direct customer complaints to TW;
- Liaison with other agencies - such as the Council;
- Site inspections by TW staff;
- Other monitoring of consumer, trade & industry feedback where relevant.

Breaches of the code include

- Misuse of brand;
- Failure to honour the objectives;
- A report of misconduct or unsafe practices;
- Other instances as deemed to breach the code as determined by TW at our discretion.

Reporting a breach or complaint

- A detailed, written statement is completed using the TW Complaints Form. This includes complaints by or via members or direct complaints by customers to TW and/or other government agencies;
- Once completed and signed the form should be forwarded to the relevant authority at TW;
- TW will acknowledge receipt of the breach/complaint in writing to the complainant within 14 days of receipt;
- If the complaint does not breach the Code of Conduct it will be resolved by TW – this will be via liaison with the complainant and all interested parties;
- If the Code of Conduct has been breached TW will notify the organisation, business or individual of the complaint allowing ten days for the organisation to respond in writing;
- A detailed report outlining the breach and the communication to date will be tabled at the next TW Board meeting, with recommendations regarding applicable actions;
- The TW Board will assess the complaint/breach, the response from the organisation, business or individual and determine future actions;
- TW will work proactively with the member to address the issues or problems;
- If the code is breached on more than three occasions alongside failure to implement recommendations made by the Board, membership and benefits will be terminated and all relevant agencies notified of the breach.

Who should you make your complaint to?

If your complaint is about a standard of service, a TW project, communications from, or the behaviour of, a staff member:

- direct your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer;

If your complaint is about a standard of service, business practice or the behaviour of a TW member:

- direct your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.

If your complaint is about a member of the Board, or the Board of TW:

- direct your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.

If your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer:

- direct your complaint to the Chairman of the TW Board.

What happens then?

You will receive an acknowledgement from TW within 14 days of TW receiving your complaint. This acknowledgement will explain the actions TW has agreed to. The complaints procedure is outlined in the TW Complaints Policy.

Member (Business Name):

Owner/Manager:

Signature:

Date:

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Return form to membership@tourismwhitsundays.com.au