



# AIDA Values and Code of Conduct

Respect | Support | Strengthen

## Purpose

As the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) continues to grow as an organisation, we need to be fully cognisant of our original objective to provide a supportive and culturally respectful environment for our members where we can keep our identity as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors strong and healthy. Providing a culturally supportive space also strengthens our health and wellbeing and helps to protect us from health risks like anxiety, stress, and lateral violence.

At the time of the Salamander Bay meeting in 1997 there were less than 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors, today the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical graduates has increased ten-fold. With this growth comes the need to support and maintain the relationships that have contributed to our success as a national leader in health. This includes the relationships with each other as members, staff, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and our stakeholders.

Under Article 13 of the [AIDA Constitution](#), a person is eligible for membership if they are accepted by the AIDA Board of Directors as having a commitment to the aims, objectives and values of the Company. In this way members are constitutionally bound to ensure their conduct and the values this reflects, is in the best interests of the Organisation.

The sustainability of AIDA is founded on the strength of our membership. This means that when an AIDA member is engaged in an AIDA activity and/or is an AIDA representative and their conduct is both culturally and professionally appropriate, this serves to strengthen AIDA's reputation.

## Values

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association:

- is respectful and reflective of our connections to the past, present and future;
- pursues social justice, Indigenous and human rights;
- maintains cultural integrity, honesty and transparency; and
- fosters the highest standards of professionalism and excellence.

## Code of Conduct

All Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association members and employees must:

- at all times behave in a way that upholds the AIDA Values;
- treat everyone with respect, dignity, courtesy, sensitivity, and ensure that they do not become involved in or encourage discrimination or harassment;
- practice cultural safety and respect the diversity of experiences, expertise and opinions within the organisation;
- act professionally with discretion, confidentiality and sound judgement;
- act with care and diligence in the course of AIDA membership/employment; and
- declare all involvements or interests that may be either perceived or actual conflicts and stand aside, as necessary, from decision making on these matters.

## Context

The AIDA Values and Code of Conduct are intended as guiding principles, rather than deliberate actions, as it would not be possible to anticipate every scenario about professional conduct. Together, the Values and Code of Conduct will cover most cases in both common and unusual circumstances. To help illustrate how these guidelines will apply practically, there are some specific examples of actions, behaviour and conduct below. In some cases these reflect our values and in some cases they don't.

The type of values and behaviour that protect and strengthen our relationships with members, stakeholders and communities include social factors like tolerance and acceptance, emotional factors like encouragement and praise, psychological factors like discretion and transparency, and spiritual factors like cultural respect and integrity.

Cultural respect is a cornerstone of AIDA's Values and Code. Cultural respect is about recognising and protecting our rights, cultures and traditions as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This is achieved when AIDA is a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and where cultural differences are respected.

Conduct that creates a sense of division and/or fuels conflict such as lateral violence is in direct conflict with AIDA's aim to keep a strong and healthy identity as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors. Lateral violence is a range of behaviours including gossiping, social exclusion, bullying, jealousy, and shaming. In circumstances of lateral violence, a weapon that is sometimes used is identity 'authenticity'. This undermines Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and threatens our cultural strength upon which AIDA was founded.

## Application

AIDA members and staff are required to navigate a number of spheres and relationships when engaging in AIDA business, and different relationships often require a different emphasis in the Values and Code. When engaging with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities and community members for example, there may be a particular focus on being respectful and reflective of our connections to the past, present and future, and maintaining cultural integrity. Behaviour and actions that reflect and support this include acts of courtesy around Elders, acknowledging Country, culturally appropriate attire where necessary, and engaging appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Professionalism, excellence, transparency, and cultural integrity are key for relationships within AIDA among members and staff. This includes safeguarding against harassment and bullying, and respecting the diversity of both culture and viewpoints (personally and professionally). AIDA will continue to assist members and employees to uphold the Values and Code by hosting 'scenario and strategies' type forums at gatherings and workshops.

## Implementation

All AIDA members and staff are expected to be aware of and act consistently with the Values and Code of Conduct; organisational leaders including Board members, Student Representative Committee members and the Secretariat Management Team are also expected to promote them. Members receiving financial benefit from AIDA, for example to attend an [AIDA Conference](#), will be expected to adhere to Values and Code as well as any additional terms and conditions associated with the financial support. A breach of the Values and Code of Conduct can result in consequences ranging from a warning to termination of membership or employment. All complaints and potential breaches should be directed to: [president@aida.org.au](mailto:president@aida.org.au).

When respected, culture is a source of strength, resilience, happiness, identity and confidence. AIDA's Values and Code are designed to protect and promote these positive elements while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for our membership and staff.