

CODE OF CONDUCT

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Drafted by	M McLean	Approved by Board on	16 May 2023
Responsible person	VALA Committee	Scheduled review date	Bi-Annually

ABOUT THE CODE

Throughout this document, 'we' refers to the VALA community of members, volunteers, organisers and participants.

If you attend any VALA events, use a virtual or physical place or space provided by VALA, or participate in a VALA project, we consider you to be part of the community.

By taking part in the VALA community, you agree to uphold and promote this Code of Conduct in all 'spaces' and places - whether physical, digital or otherwise - associated with VALA events, programs, and activities. This may include venues where event participants may be gathered, as well as social media channels.

This Code of Conduct has the status of a VALA Policy and is reviewed biannually.

CONDUCT WE ENCOURAGE

We are welcoming

VALA is a diverse community that welcomes and supports people from a wide range of backgrounds, identities and interests. To ensure that everyone has an enjoyable and enriching experience, please bring a spirit of respect and friendly inquiry to all your interactions.

We are respectful

Our community comes from a wide range of backgrounds and experience levels. Listen and support others to learn. Remember that everyone has their own field of expertise and experience. We encourage engagement with other participants' projects and ideas, but all criticism should be courteous and constructive, and should avoid rude language or personal attacks. Please communicate with your audience in mind. What you think is innocuous could be offensive to your audience.

We are kind

Be careful in the words that you choose. Endeavour to make your language inclusive.

We take responsibility

Every member of the VALA community has a responsibility to speak up if you notice someone is not adhering to the Code of Conduct. If you're not sure about something or have a concern, feel free to ask an organiser for advice - they will usually be identified at the beginning of events, or have special badges or lanyards.

Updated: May 2023

We are forgiving

People sometimes make mistakes. Please assume that participants and organisers are acting with the best intentions. If you choose to engage with them regarding something you feel is inappropriate or unfair, aim to be diplomatic and forgiving.

CONDUCT WE AVOID

Harassment and discrimination

VALA is dedicated to providing an enjoyable, safe, and harassment-free experience for everyone at our events and in our spaces. We do not tolerate harassment or discrimination in any form.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race or ethnicity, religion, or other personal attributes or identities
- unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices ● uninvited or public sharing of sexual images
- deliberate intimidation
- stalking or following
- threats of violence or incitements to violence against an individual
- sustained disruption of talks or other events
- sustained attacks on someone's project, work or idea
- inappropriate physical contact and invasions of personal space
- unwelcome sexual attention.

Recording other participants without permission

VALA takes photographs and audio and video recordings of sessions at VALA events. These images and recordings may be used to promote our activities or made available to people who are unable to attend.

If you do not wish to be photographed or recorded, please let the organisers and event participants know. Your wishes will be respected. At major events you will be provided with a lanyard indicating you do not wish to be photographed.

If someone indicates that they do not wish to be photographed, respect their wishes. If you are taking photographs at an event, make an effort to find out which lanyards indicate a person does not wish to be photographed. If you have a photo that someone is uncomfortable with, work together to ensure everyone's rights are respected.

It is best to avoid posting photographs of people on social media unless they have explicitly given you permission to do so - ask them before you post.

UPHOLDING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

VALA will assign and identify one or more Duty Officers at all VALA events and spaces. VALA will equip and support Duty Officers to understand and respond to harassment and other unwelcome behaviour in accordance with this Code and associated procedures.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact a Duty Officer or - if you cannot find a Duty Officer - another VALA organiser. If you are being harassed by a VALA organiser, please contact someone else you trust from the VALA community, preferably a Duty Officer, as soon as you are comfortable doing so.

Where it determines a community member has breached this Code of Conduct, VALA may take a range of actions, including but not limited to:

- requesting that the behaviour cease
- issuing a caution
- requesting the community member leave an event
- or revoking their event registration or VALA membership.

Where action is taken and permission from the affected person(s) is granted, VALA will contact the breaching community member's employer with a report on the breach and the action taken. In very serious cases VALA may choose to report the breach and action taken to the employer without permission from the affected person.

If requested, VALA organisers will be happy to help attendees contact police or crisis services, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel safe. We value your involvement and will do our best to take care of community members.

Please note, while we take all concerns raised seriously, we will use our discretion in determining when and how to follow up on reported incidents and may decline to take any further action. All concerns will be noted.

FURTHER READING

This code of conduct is based on several other similar policies and codes, primarily the [Open Knowledge Australia Code of Conduct](#) and associated Open Knowledge Australia policies.

The Australian National LGBTI Health Alliance has an excellent [guide to inclusive sex and gender diverse language](#). Feel free to extrapolate the guidelines for size, ability, education and ethnicity.

The Australian Network on Disabilities also has a [guide to inclusive language](#) you might want to look at.

The [Pacman Rule](#) provides implicit permission for people to join a conversation.

AUTHORISATION

VALA Committee

16 May 2023

VALA – Libraries Technology and the Future, Inc