



# Forum Arrangements and Code of Conduct and Ethics

Supported by the  
Port Macquarie  
Community College



Version 3: 11 April 2011

## 1. PREAMBLE

The Home Business Forum (HBF or the Forum), (formally known as the Hastings Home Based Business Club) was set up in May 2008 to provide support, networking and learning opportunities to home based business operators.

The NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) define a home based business as *“a business you operate at or from home, instead of at or from commercial premises. In some cases, all of the business is conducted in the home, and in others only the administrative aspects of the business are carried out in the home.”*

The Home Business Forum has entered into an auspicing agreement with the Port Macquarie Community College (PMCC or the College). The auspicing agreement is a separate document and has been signed by a member of the Management Committee on behalf of the Forum.

Forum arrangements and standards of behaviour are outlined in this document. As no document can cover all possible situations, members are requested to consider the “spirit” or “intent” of the arrangements and Code of Conduct and Ethics (CC&E) as well as the explicit provisions when applying it to particular circumstances.

The CC&E are standards that indicate the manner in which members are to conduct themselves in relation to each other, the College and the general community. They guide members and the Management Committee on how to uphold the integrity and good name of the Forum and the College within the general community. The CC&E does not replace any provision of an Act or Regulation.

On application to the Forum, members sign that they agree with the Forum arrangements and that they will abide by the CC&E.

## 2. AUSPICING AGREEMENT WITH THE PMCC

Forum members agree with a mutually beneficial auspicing agreement.

- The Forum appreciates and acknowledges the assistance and support that is provided by the College.
- HBF members agree to conduct themselves in such a manner that the integrity and good name of the College will be upheld.

- The College as an Incorporated Association has legal responsibilities. The Forum Management Committee will assist the College to comply with these responsibilities.
- The College provides public liability insurance for the Forum and voluntary worker insurance for the Forum Management Committee.
- The College assists the Forum with financial management processes and with other matters as agreed/required.

### 3. FORUM OBJECTIVES

Forum members agree to support the Forum objectives.

- To enhance personal and professional growth through a positive environment for operators of home based businesses in the Port Macquarie Hastings area.
- To provide networking opportunities and the building of contacts in a non-competitive environment.
- To provide educational opportunities and to build valuable business knowledge.
- To support, encourage and challenge one another to achieve success as business operators.
- To establish and improve linkages with other businesses and with other business groups.

### 4. FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Forum members agree with Forum arrangements, standards of conduct and ethical behaviour.

- Members include persons who are engaged in a home based business in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Government Area, NSW and have renewed their membership annually.
- Members need to be cautious when disclosing personal information to be included in the **Forum membership register** and are responsible for amending their contact details.
- The register of members is held by the Membership Secretary.
- Due diligence will be applied to protecting the privacy of members and members' personal details in accordance with the PMCC Privacy Policy.
- The Forum will not use, sell or disclose the personal information of members for any purpose other than for which it has been provided, unless required or authorised by law.
- Adjustment to **membership fees** are made through a recommendation by the Management Committee to the members, and voted on by the members.
- Membership fees (agreed to by the HBF 25 March 2011 meeting)
  - Admission to membership fee: Nil
  - Membership joining fee: \$25.00
  - Member Forum meeting attendance fee: \$15.00 per person.
  - Special event fees will be set as required.
  - Non-member Forum meeting attendance fee: \$20.00 per person.
- **Electronic email** will be used to **service notices** to members about meetings. Members are responsible for ensuring that the Membership Secretary has an accurate record of their email address.
- **Forum papers** and speaker notes have been prepared in good faith and with due diligence.

- Information provided to Forum members is of a general nature and each member is responsible for how they choose to use that information.
- Forum members are responsible for obtaining **specialist advice** when applying information obtained at Forum meetings to their own business.
- Members **maintain respect**, dignity and fairness when dealing with for each other; including an awareness of cultural sensitivities and an acceptance of diversity.
- Members **will not harass, discriminate**, or support others who harass and/or discriminate against others on “any ground” whatsoever. “Any ground” includes, but is not limited to; gender, age, race, religious belief, disability, sexuality and marital status.
- A **conflict of interest** could exist if a member has the potential to gain from a particular Forum or Management Committee decision. If a member becomes aware of the potential for a conflict of interest, then he/she is required to declare such interest and not be involved in any decision making process that is related to the matter.
- If a member becomes aware of an **unsafe or insecure environment**, they are responsible for bringing such hazards to the attention of a member of the Management Committee for immediate rectification.
- If a member has a **complaint or grievance** which they are unable to resolve with another member, they are to bring the matter to the attention of the Management Committee who will endeavour to assist the parties to resolve the matter.
- If a member has an unresolved complaint or grievance with the Management Committee, they are to bring the matter to the attention of the General Manager PMCC who will follow College procedures in order to resolve the matter.
- **Breaches of the CC&E** may lead to either the Management Committee or the General Manager PMCC requesting a member to resign from the Forum and not to be involved in future Forum activities.

## 5. FORUM MEETINGS

Forum members agree to support Forum meetings and activities.

- At Forum meetings, approximately 20 minutes is set aside to discuss Forum business and determine the future direction of the Forum. The Secretary maintains documentation regarding business discussion and decisions.
- A member can request items to be placed on the agenda for future meetings.
- Members make decisions at a meeting by a show of hands. There is no actual voting quorum. If in the future, a voting quorum is deemed necessary, the members will decide on the quorum.

## 6. FORUM FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Forum members agree with financial management arrangements.

- The College provides assistance to the Forum with financial management.
- The source of Forum funds is primarily from membership joining fees and forum attendance fees as set by the members.
- To subsidise Forum activities, the Management Committee with assistance from the College, may apply for grant monies.

- Receipts are to be given to Forum members for all fees.
- Receipts are to be obtained for all expenditure.
- Receipts must be submitted before reimbursement of any expenditure.

## **7. SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS**

Forum members acknowledge current or former support of individuals and organisation.

- A separate register of Forum supporters is maintained by the Membership Secretary.
- Forum supporters are kept informed about Forum activities.
- Forum supporters do not pay an annual fee, however do pay \$15.00 to attend a Forum meeting. (Decision at the 27 November 2009 Forum.)
- The following organisations provide or have provided support to the Forum.
  - Port Macquarie Community College
  - Small Business Field Officer Program (Federal Government)
  - NSW Government Industry and Investment
  - Department of Economic Development, Port Macquarie Hastings Council

## **8. REVIEW**

Forum members agree to a review of Forum arrangements and the CC&E.

- The auspicing agreement and this document outlining Forum arrangements and CC&E will be reviewed annually or as required.
- Significant improvements or change (other than wording improvements) will be brought to the members for a vote.

## **9. PROPOSED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Forum members agree to support the Forum as a sustainable entity.

- 2011 – Membership retention and expansion. Priority training topics and business items at Forum meetings.
- 2012 – Retain and expand membership. Set up Leadership Groups for functions such as education, membership, grants, marketing, events, awards, newsletter, communications and a web site.
- 2013 – Consolidate functions, membership retention and expansion, and hold a major event.

## **10. FORUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Forum members agree to support the Management Committee.

- Annually, the Management Committee will be elected by the Forum members.
- The Management Committee fills any vacant positions that may arise during the year.
- All positions on the Management Committee are voluntary.
- The position descriptions outline responsibilities and set boundaries. These were reviewed in April 2011 and are held separately to this document.