



Integrity in Decision Making

June 2011

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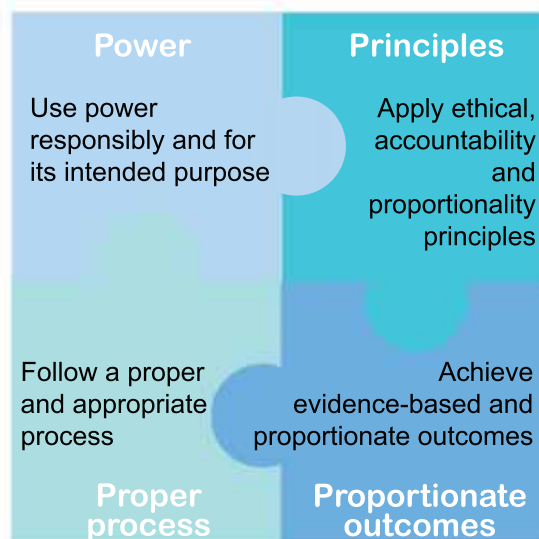
Decisions which impact on the Western Australian community are made by public officers every day and the community expects those officers to act with integrity when making decisions. Decisions made by public officers range from day-to-day operational decisions which may affect only one individual to major policy decisions that have broad impact across the community. Examples include:

- Policy decisions;
- Regulation, enforcement and compliance decisions;
- Decisions about services and product delivery to the community;
- Internal governance and management decisions including human resources, financial and procurement decisions; and
- Decisions about the security and appropriate release of information and records.

Integrity in decision making is crucial to good governance and sustaining public trust. The community needs to have confidence in the decisions made by public officers.

Integrity in decision making framework

The integrity in decision making framework outlined below is designed to assist public officers when making decisions.



Key questions for decision makers:

- Do I have the power to make this decision?
- What ethical, accountability and proportionality principles apply?
- What is the appropriate process for making this decision?
- How can I achieve a balanced and proportionate outcome?

The Integrity in Decision Making Framework

Power

Key question:

Do I have the power to make this decision?

Before making a decision, think about:

- The basis for exercising power – through statute or delegation
- Using the power for the purpose for which it was intended
- The extent and limitations of the power
- The relevant considerations when exercising judgement
- Where to get advice or relevant expertise

Principles

Key question:

What ethical, accountability and proportionality principles apply?

Before making a decision, think about:

- The legislation/regulation and ethical/conduct codes that need to be followed
- Conflicts of interest, confidentiality and procedural fairness
- The consequences of the decision to you, the public authority and to others
- Where to report concerns about decision making within your public authority

Key question:

What is the appropriate process for making this decision?

Before making a decision, think about:

- The information to be collected and considered
- Whether procedural fairness applies
- Recording and communicating the decision
- The information to be released, to whom, and when
- Informing about internal and external review processes
- Reflecting on the decision to consider potential improvements to the process for the future

Proper process

Key question:

How can I achieve a balanced and proportionate outcome?

Before making a decision, think about:

- Ensuring the decision is evidence-based
- The costs and benefits of the proposed decision
- Reflecting on the outcome to ensure it is balanced and proportionate
- The consequences of the decision
- Using feedback from past decisions as opportunities for learning and improving outcomes for similar decisions

Proportionate outcomes

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Pathways to assistance

The Integrity Coordinating Group has a website (www.publicsector.wa.gov.au/icg) which provides publications and other tools relating to ethics and integrity in Western Australian public authorities that may assist with decision making. These include:

- *Conflicts of Interests* guidelines;
- *Taking action on integrity issues* guide;
- *Integrity – Take the challenge* quiz;
- *ICG Glossary of integrity terms*; and
- Useful links to local, national and international integrity websites.

The following members of the Integrity Coordinating Group provide information and advice to public authorities on decision making.

Public Sector Commission

- Accountable and ethical decision making, including conflict of interest
- Human resources standards and management
- Ethics in the public sector
- Public sector monitoring and compliance
- Public interest disclosures



www.publicsector.wa.gov.au

Corruption and Crime Commission

- Building corruption resistant organisational systems and culture
- Misconduct identification and dealing with misconduct allegations



www.ccc.wa.gov.au

Ombudsman Western Australia

- Effective complaint handling systems
- Effective handling of complaints including managing unreasonable complainant conduct
- Procedural fairness
- Administrative decision making
- Good record keeping



www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Office of the Information Commissioner

- The freedom of information process
- Responding to information complaints and requests for review



Office of the Information Commissioner

www.foi.wa.gov.au