



# Code of Ethics

**For the Variety family including employees,  
volunteers, partners and supporters.**

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**Version 2.0 - August 2024**

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# Our commitment

The values of Variety are at the heart of everything we do, and sound ethical behaviour and living our values is integral to our culture.

No matter what role you play as a member of the Variety family, whether a Board member, volunteer, fundraiser, employees, or committee member, it is all of our responsibility to uphold the values of equality, community, action and joy, and ensure we can come together to do our best for Aussie kids.

The Code of Ethics is an important way to ensure our community know what is acceptable and what will not be tolerated in the way we deliver our vision and mission. It's a way of ensuring we protect the legacy of those who have come before us and ensuring the work of this wonderful organisation continues well in to the future.

Thank you for your contribution to Variety and for engaging with us on our Code of Ethics.



**Tony Warner**  
CEO, Variety - the Children's Charity NSW/ACT

## Our vision

For all children in Australia to attain their full potential, regardless of ability or background.

## Our mission

To help children who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with disability.

## Our values

### Equality

We believe everyone deserves the same opportunities in life.



### Community

We believe it takes a community to raise a child.



### Action

We believe in rolling up our sleeves and getting stuff done together.



### Joy

We believe in the importance of lightness, laughter and fun.



Thanks to a **Variety Grant** Mikey can experience the joy of riding a bike at his school and joining in with his friends.

## Our impact

With the help of a **Variety Heart Scholarship** Layla is pursuing her Athletics dream of making the Paralympics.



A Sunshine Coach for Cecil Hills High School means the students can get out into the community, go on excursions and attend sports carnivals like so many other kids in NSW.

The students at Leonora District High School are enjoying \$8,072 worth of new Class VR accessories, thanks to our **Variety Bashers**.



5,000 kids who are sick, experiencing disadvantaged or living with disability experience the joy of Christmas at the **Variety Kids Xmas Party**, thanks to the Ladies of Variety.

**Variety's We Thrive Grant** helps lift young people living in out-of-home or kinship care into more independent living.





# Why do we have this code?

This Code describes how Variety and its community put our values and principles into practice every day. It outlines the commitments each of us make and our expectations of each other as we carry out our mission.

It sets out the behaviours we all need to demonstrate to bring these values to life, and what we need to live up to if we are to fulfil our purpose.

## ***We must never compromise***

our commitment to the Code.

By living our values and conducting our work through ethical actions, we ensure we are all on the same page as we strive to give all kids in NSW and ACT the same opportunities in life.

The benefits of having our community all aligned to our Code of Ethics include:

- The long history and brand of Variety is protected and enhanced.
- We create clarity in accepted behaviours that demonstrate our values.
- Where behaviours are not consistent with the Code, there is a clear process for speaking up.
- Informing the development of policies and strategies.

As this is so important to the organisation, the Board's Risk and Governance Committee have been assigned the responsibility for oversight of the promotion, maintenance and monitoring of the Code.



# Who does this Code apply to?

This Code applies to the Variety family, which is made up of a diverse community of people and organisations with a shared passion for helping kids in need.

They include:

- Our Board members, committee members and employees.
- Fundraisers, event participants and our wonderful volunteers.
- Suppliers and contractors who deliver services and products on behalf of Variety.

Whether you are working in a paid or volunteer capacity, as part of the Variety family, this Code applies to you.

Whatever our role, our actions and our behaviours can make a huge difference in growing our impact for the children and families we serve. They can also negatively impact the wellbeing of vulnerable members of the Variety family, or team, and our reputation as a children's charity known for its integrity.



# What are my responsibilities under this Code?

We are a charity with employees and volunteers. We are all responsible for our behaviours and the decisions we make, and the impact we have on others. Both the Board and identified leadership, including Variety employees and Variety committee members, need to be clear on the Code and lead by example.

Our responsibilities are to:

1. Live by our values at all times and understand our individual contribution to modelling these values for others.
2. Use the values to guide our everyday decision making and behaviours.
3. Ensure all members of the Variety family understand their responsibilities under this Code.
4. Remember your actions and decisions will be reviewed against our values no matter whether you are a Board member, employee or volunteer.
5. Promote a culture of fair and ethical behaviour.
6. Create a SPEAK UP climate that will enable employees, volunteers and fundraisers to discuss any issues.
7. Understand the intent of our policies and standards, and the laws that guide our work with kids, and use them every day to guide our actions.

# How do I SPEAK UP at Variety?

At Variety, we take concerns seriously and provide a number of ways that you can raise concerns in a confidential manner.

We all have a responsibility to SPEAK UP if we notice things that are not aligned to our values and beliefs, and should feel empowered to take action.

For employees, the first step is to speak to your manager. Managers have a duty to raise any concerns brought to their attention, but if you are not comfortable doing that you can also speak to any member of the leadership team including the CEO.

For employees and volunteers, you can email at any time [speakup@variety NSW.org.au](mailto:speakup@variety NSW.org.au). All emails to this address will be read and reviewed by Variety – the Children’s Charity NSW/ACT CEO and Head of Finance and Corporate Services. They will determine what action and follow up is necessary.

For all other members of the Variety family, you can email [speakup@variety NSW.org.au](mailto:speakup@variety NSW.org.au), or you can email [chair@variety NSW.org.au](mailto:chair@variety NSW.org.au) which will be received by the Chair of the Board.

You can also report your concerns by post to:

**SPEAK UP**

**Variety – the Children’s Charity NSW/ACT**  
**Locked Bag 2468, St Leonards NSW 1590**

Remember, by speaking up and raising concerns, you are living our values and doing the right thing.

*“What we experience as volunteers and employees is the joy and personal reward of seeing the results for the children, and meeting wonderful people.”*

# How do I make good decisions?

At Variety we all aim to make good decisions, aligned with our mission and values. It is valuable to have a clear process for making good decisions that we can all use and explain our thinking to others.

Key priorities for all of us in everything that we do is that we are:

- Child-centred – ensuring all that we do helps more kids
- Mission-focused
- Enhancing the brand
- Aligned with our values

Listen to the conversations around you. If you find yourself hearing or saying phrases like the ones below, you may well be facing an ethical dilemma or be acting outside the Code:

“No one will ever know.”

“It doesn’t matter how it gets done as long as it gets done.”

“Don’t worry, it’s the way we do things around here.”

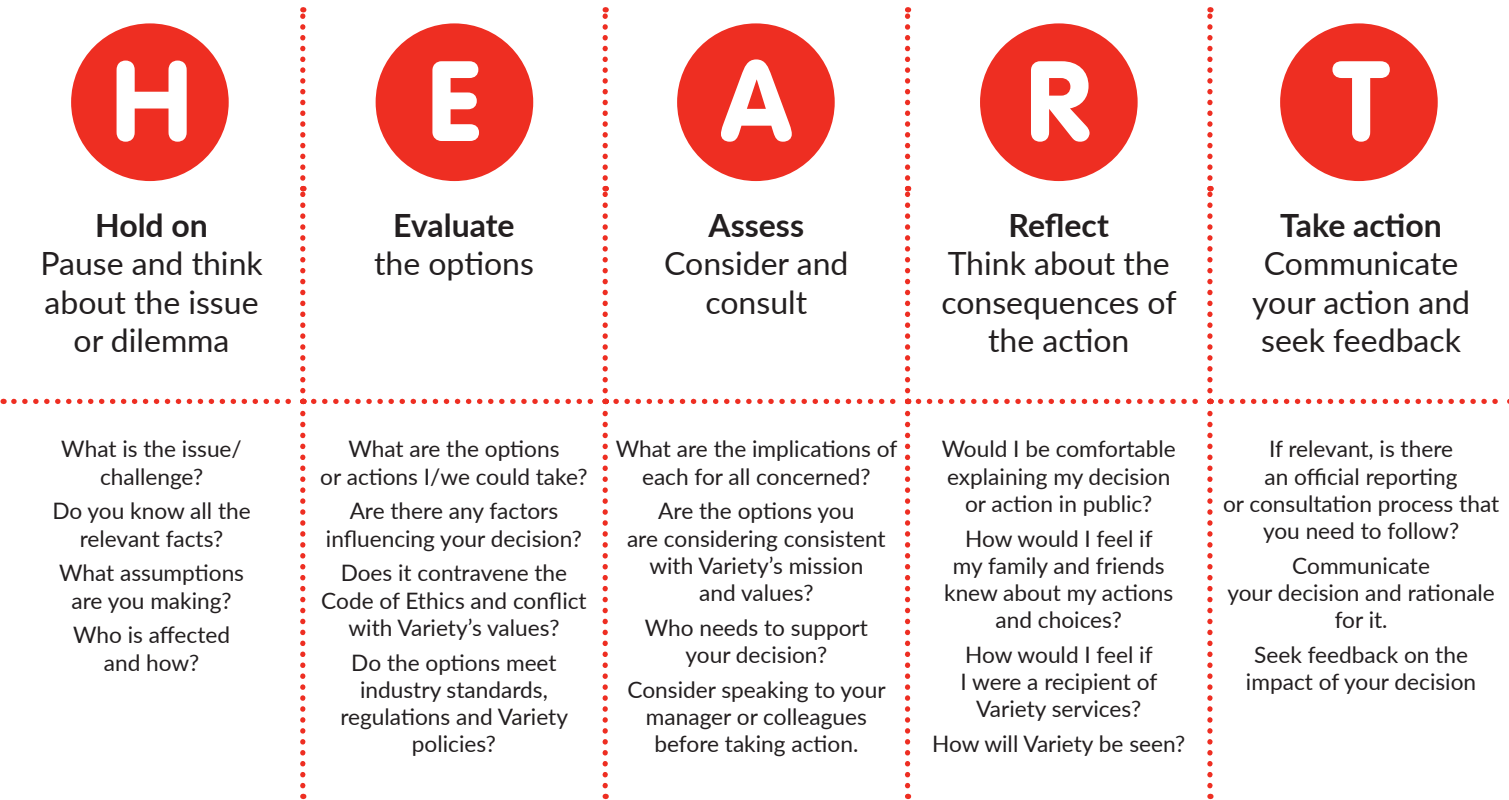
*“Everyone has a critical role to play in putting values at the heart of every decision we make.”*

Stakeholder workshop

# HEART Model for ethical decision-making



In most situations, it is not difficult to make the right decision. Occasionally you may be faced with an ethical dilemma that is more difficult to solve and you will have to make a judgement. In these situations, the HEART model may help you to make ethical decisions that are consistent with our values.



Do you need any help with the HEART model? If so, feel free to contact the Variety CEO on (02) 9819 1000 or [ceo@variety NSW.org.au](mailto:ceo@variety NSW.org.au).

# What if I breach the Code or don't comply?

Failure to live up to the standards in the Code could damage our reputation, impact our future ability to help kids, and undermine the legacy of those who have come before.

As part of your engagement with Variety, whether as an employee or volunteer you have an obligation to understand our policies and standards, and to act appropriately.

We must all comply with all industry regulations and the law.

If you're concerned about the behaviour of a Variety volunteer or employees, you're encouraged to raise concerns as early as possible.

Consider raising your concern directly and respectfully with the person whose behaviour you are concerned about – the behaviour might be unintentional and the person may respond to feedback.

If the behaviour continues or is a clear breach of the Code of Ethics, it is important that volunteers and employees follow the SPEAK UP process and follow the procedures outlined. We will listen to you and support you.

*“Whether an employee or volunteer, we are all here to make a contribution. One of the values is Action and getting stuff done. If this is not happening for example, it is important to have a conversation to see if the person will rectify their behaviour.”*

Stakeholder workshop



# Living our values

Our values outline how we conduct ourselves, clarify what we expect from each other and guide how we make decisions.

Whether you are new to Variety or have been working with Variety for decades, we all have a shared responsibility to uphold the high standards that are expected.

This Code of Ethics puts down on paper the ethics that are already shared in practice between everyone, so we can all stay on the same page.

# How do I demonstrate our values?

Equality	Community	Action	Joy
We believe everyone deserves a fair go in life	We believe it takes a community to raise a child	We believe in rolling up our sleeves and getting stuff done	We believe in the importance of lightness and laughter
Am I treating everyone with respect?	How am I building strong relationships?	Do I take personal responsibility?	Am I bringing our best self to work?
How am I speaking up for what we believe in?	How do I recognise how people have helped?	Am I pitching in to help others?	Do I make time to play?
Am I elevating the unsung heroes?	Am I keeping our mates close and connected?	Do I challenge the status quo?	Have I celebrated our achievements?



# Equality =

We believe everyone deserves a fair go in life



We strive to ensure all children in Australia are given the same opportunities in life.

We level the playing field, like supporting a child with a disability to play sport that brings them so much joy.

We value the diversity of voices and invite employees and volunteers to participate in decision making.

*"Everyone should be treated the same, no matter what role they have, including being given opportunity to try new things."*

Stakeholder workshop



*"We support existing talent through our Scholarship Program. The program enables children to fulfil their potential. With this support, those in our community who are disadvantaged can follow their dreams and aspirations."*

Stakeholder workshop

Equality means that we:

**Treat everyone with respect.**

- Saying thank you for the contribution people make, whether it is large or small.
- Speaking and listening to people with an open heart; not criticising or judging colleagues, team mates, the kids or the families.
- Fulfilling agreed commitments and expectations.
- Being systematic, timely, open and clear with our communications with one another.
- Upholding the dignity of the kids, families and carers we support.

**Speak up for what we believe.**

- Getting the word out there about the life-changing services we offer to kids and families, so more kids have access.
- Using Variety's mission and values to make decisions and guide our behaviours.
- Encouraging everyone to voice their opinions and views.

**Elevate the unsung heroes.**

- Valuing the contribution and commitment of our volunteers and supporters.
- Celebrating the achievements of the kids we support, whether that is riding a bike for the first time or pursuing their dreams.

# Community



*"Variety was founded on the principle that it takes a community to raise a child. Catherine's story epitomises the value of Community and the spirit with which we respond to supporting kids."*

Stakeholder workshop

## We believe it takes a community to raise a child.

We are here to support families and help kids realise their full potential. We are part of a Variety family that works hard to transform lives and bring joy to kids, and we take our responsibility to our community seriously. All of us at Variety, employees and volunteers, serve one another as a community, so we can be the best we can be to help kids in need.



## Community means that we:

### Build strong relationships.

- Showing friendship and creating an atmosphere of belonging.
- Being inclusive and celebrating the value everyone brings to the mission.
- Harnessing each other's strengths.
- Supporting the growth of others.
- Respectfully sharing diverse views and listening to alternative perspectives.

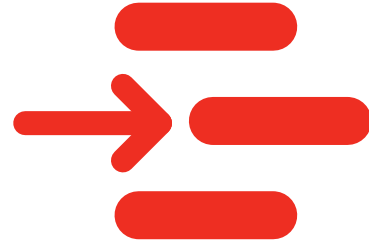
### Recognise how people have helped.

- Acknowledging every effort, whether small or big, in delivering the mission.
- Recognising the extraordinary work of our volunteers.

### Keep our mates close and connected.

- Thinking creatively about engaging our friendship and community networks in the mission.
- Having lunch, tea, coffee, socialising together, celebrating birthdays, hunting for Easter eggs, celebrating what we can do as a team!
- Pitching in and helping each other out.

# Action



*"Board members and other volunteers regularly get involved in all the activities to make sure the employees are supported"*

Stakeholder workshop

**We believe in rolling up our sleeves and getting stuff done**

We know the feeling of joy when we are actively making a difference in the lives of kids. We provide practical support and joyful experiences for kids, families and carers. We have fun doing it! The attitude of "can do" permeates the Variety family. We are better able to live the value of Action when we openly communicate and work with one another.



**Action means that we:**

**Take personal responsibility.**

- Encouraging others to work with us to deliver the Variety mission.
- Leading by example in using the values openly to make decisions and guide behaviours.
- Reflecting honestly on what we have achieved and identifying how we can improve.

**Pitch in to help each other.**

- Keeping an eye out to help out where required.
- Doing what is asked of us.
- Collaborating with and between internal Variety teams and external teams.
- Documenting and sharing relevant information with one another.

**Challenge the status quo.**

- Creating values-aligned fundraising models.
- Being open to change and challenging the way we do things to ensure we are achieving our mission in the best way possible.
- Reflecting on and learning from our mistakes and experiments.



# Joy



## We believe in the importance of lightness and laughter.

We aim for everything we do to be filled with joy including the support we give to the families, our employee meetings, relationships with our suppliers, our events and fundraising activities, and volunteer communications.

The joy that we experience together is part and parcel of creating a happy community. This happy community gives us a sense of belonging, connection, a feeling of being more relaxed with one and other and ultimately more motivated to go above and beyond to help kids in Australia.

***"It is so simple giving a tricycle to a child living with disability, yet the difference it makes to their sense of enjoyment of life and the families, having a sense of being cared for and see their child blossom is priceless."***

Stakeholder workshop



## Joy means that we:

### Bring our best selves to work.

- Utilising our strengths and the strengths of our networks.
- Working enthusiastically with kids and stakeholders.
- Dealing responsively and constructively with challenges.
- Keeping ourselves and the people we work with accountable to our mission and values.

### Make time to play.

- Coming together for social activities to get to know one another and have fun.
- Enjoying delivering the mission.
- Having fun, however not at the expense of another's happiness.

### Celebrate our achievements.

- Thinking creatively about engaging our friendship and community networks in the mission.
- Remembering to say thank you for the efforts of others, whether small or big





# How was the Code developed?

- This Code was developed by Variety – the Children’s Charity NSW/ACT in 2018 with the support of The Ethics Centre. This document has been updated in August 2024 with input for the Board and Employees.
- Its development involved stakeholder workshops with volunteers, the Board, employees, committees and the Chair’s Council.
- The Code was reviewed and tested with a diverse group of stakeholders.
- The development of this Code and its implementation has the whole-hearted support of the Variety NSW/ACT Board, the employees and committees.
- We consider it to be a living document that will be reviewed with the Variety family to ensure it is relevant, upholds our high standards and is useable and accessible for years to come.

For an electronic copy of the current version, and for additional information and tools, visit [variety.org.au/nsw/code-of-ethics](http://variety.org.au/nsw/code-of-ethics)





## **Variety - the Children's Charity NSW/ACT**

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