

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL  
DISTRICT 9800, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA  
2016 (7<sup>th</sup> Ed)**

**1. BACKGROUND**

All Rotarians in Rotary District 9800 desire to ensure that all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in Rotary Organised Programs (ROPs) are respected, protected and safe from abuse and harassment.

The development and implementation of this updated policy for District 9800 represents a clear statement of policy which is required to be complied with by all clubs and Rotarians in the District.

The policy does **NOT** apply to the Youth Exchange Program which has a protection policy specific to it, but otherwise applies to **ALL** other programs (or projects) conducted by District clubs and Rotarians.

The policy seeks to provide a clear statement of principles and strategies aimed at protecting all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs from abuse and harassment.

**1.1 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY**

All Rotarians in District 9800:

- Are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in ROPs;
- Accept the responsibility to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs;
- Will act to ensure that their spouses or partners and other volunteers engaged in ROPs understand the core principles and strategies of this policy and apply them in their dealings with children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs.
- Are committed to Aboriginal cultural safety, culturally and/or linguistically diverse cultural safety and the safety of children with a disability.

This commitment will be implemented through the following strategies:

- The District Board will ensure that this policy is communicated to the clubs and Rotarians in the District and placed on the District website in the Governance section so that it is freely available to be viewed by all members of the public;
- The District Governance Director will take primary responsibility at Board level for the implementation and enforcement of this policy;
- The District Board will appoint a District Protection Officer, who will be responsible to the District Governance Director, and who will be responsible for chairing the District Protection Committee, will have responsibility for



developing and conducting training sessions for Club Protection Officers and District Youth Program committee members;

- The District Protection Officer shall recommend to the District Board the appointment of a Youth Exchange (YEX) Protection Officer and a Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer who will each be responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant protection policy by District Youth Program committees;
- Each club in the District shall be required to appoint a Club Protection Officer who will be responsible for the enforcement of this policy in ROPs of his or her club;
- The District will annually, and on an as needs basis, provide training in relation to this policy to Club Protection Officers at the District Assembly;
- The District will regularly, and on an as needs basis, provide training in relation to this policy to District Youth Program committee members.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 This policy has been developed along best practice guidelines to ensure that:**

- Each club in the District has the resources to implement the key strategies for the prevention of abuse and harassment to all persons engaged in ROPs;
- There is a system in place that encourages and facilitates the timely reporting of alleged incidents of abuse and harassment;
- All Rotarians, their partners and spouses and other volunteers in ROPs are clear as to their responsibilities regarding the prevention of abuse and harassment.

### **2.2 This policy applies to:**

- All Rotarians engaged in ROPs;
- The spouses or partners of Rotarians engaged in ROPs; and
- Other persons engaged as volunteers in ROPs.

### **2.3 Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)**

This policy is complimentary to the application of the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and, if there is any inadvertent inconsistency between the policy and the Act, the Act prevails.

### **2.4 District 9800 Harassment Policy**

The District 9800 Harassment Policy is a separate document but an integral component of this policy. The policy is set out on the District website in the Governance Section.

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

**Rotary Organised Programs (ROPs) (including projects) means**

Any District or club program or project initiated at a club, District or Rotary International level is a ROP.

### **Sexual Abuse means**

Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a person or forcing or encouraging a person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite gender. This includes non-touching offences, such as indecent exposure or showing a person sexual or pornographic material.

### **Physical Abuse means**

Physical abuse is any physical harm inflicted upon a person and includes but is not limited to:

- Providing insufficient nourishment for the person;
- Depriving the person of a reasonable amount of sleep;
- Requiring the person to do an unreasonable amount of work;
- Inflicting physical pain on the person.

### **Sexual Harassment means**

Sexual advances, requests for favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitise or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of another person, and comments about and individual's sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings;
- Sexually leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

### **Emotional Harassment means**

Emotional harassment is any action or comment which unreasonably disturbs the other person.. This includes but is not limited to repeated comments about a person's social background, home country, language, culture, personal appearance or other characteristics which are offensive, embarrassing or humiliating to the person to whom they were directed.

### **Abuse and Harassment**

Abuse and harassment refers to any form of harmful treatment described above whether it is sexual, emotional or physical.

**Young Person (or child) means**

A young person is a person under the age of eighteen years.

**Vulnerable Adult means**

Vulnerable adult means an adult person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**Working With Children Check Card (“WWCC”) means**

The card issued by the Department of Justice pursuant to the Working With Children Act 2005 after application has been made and police records checked.

**4. PREVENTION PRINCIPLES**

**4.1 Compliance with Working With Children Act 2005 (“WWCA”)**

By the operation of section 33 of WWCA it is an offence for a person to engage in child-related work knowing that the person does not have a current WWCC or is reckless as to whether he or she has one.

Further, by operation of section 35 WWCA, it is an offence for a club to engage a person in child-related work knowing that such person does not have a current WWCC or is reckless as to whether he or she has one.

Child-related work is relevantly defined in the WWCA as work that involves, or is likely to involve, regular direct contact with a child in connection with an activity in circumstances where that contact is not directly supervised by another person.

Supervised has its ordinary, everyday meaning. A supervisor is a person who has the role of overseeing the work of another person while that person engages in the work.

District clubs, Rotarians and non-Rotarian volunteers on ROPs are **obliged** to comply with the WWCA by holding ensuring that all persons have a current a WWCC when engaged in youth programs, whether District or club programs.

**4.2 Primary Prevention Principle**

All Rotarians and non-Rotarian volunteers engaged in ROPs who will have regular direct contact with a child in connection with a District or club youth program **MUST** have a current WWCC.

This applies to all involved in the District programs of RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award), RYPEN (Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment), MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly), and the Science programs as well as club programs which involve regular direct contact with a child.

Further, for the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to all relevant aspects of the operation of Rotaract, Interact and Earlyact within the District.

#### **4.3 Further Prevention Principles**

- As clubs also may deal with vulnerable adults in undertaking ROPs it is the District policy that all Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers who have regular direct contact with vulnerable adults must have a current WWCC.
- District 9800 has created a structure at District and club level to educate Rotarians about identifying and responding to abuse and/or harassment.
- District 9800 has created a system that encourages and facilitates the timely reporting of any allegations of abuse and/or harassment.

### **5. PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

#### **5.1 APPOINTMENTS**

District 9800 has appointed a **District Protection Officer** who reports to the Board through the District Governance Director and whose responsibilities include –

- Communicating regularly with clubs about this policy;
- Providing annual training at District Assembly, PETS and SETS and on an as needs basis, for Club Protection Officers, Presidents and Secretaries regarding club compliance with the policy;
- Ensuring that established procedures for responding to allegations of abuse and/or harassment are followed appropriately;
- Ensuring regular reviews of the policy at least bi-annually;
- Chairing the District Protection Committee.

District 9800 has mandated that each club shall appoint a **Club Protection Officer** who will report directly to the President of his or her club and whose responsibilities include –

- Ensuring compliance with this policy by his or her club for all ROPs conducted by such club;
- Maintain a register of club members and details of their WWCC;
- Educate club members as to this policy, its purpose and the need for strict compliance;
- Liaise with the District Protection Officer, or another member of the District Protection Committee in his or her absence, in relation to any allegation or incident which has the potential to activate the policy procedures for handling reports and allegations, whilst ensuring that the club President is kept fully informed.

District 9800 has appointed a **Youth Exchange Protection Officer** who will report directly to the District Protection Officer and whose responsibilities include –

- Ensuring compliance with the protection policy applicable to the Youth Exchange Program only, known as the Rotary District 9800 Youth Abuse and



Harassment Prevention Policy and Certification Requirements (the YEXPP), by those persons participating in the Youth Exchange program;

- Ensure that the District Youth Exchange Committee maintains a register of WWCC for those participating in the program;
- Educate those participating in the Youth Exchange Program at least annually as to the YEXPP, its purpose and the need for strict compliance;
- Liaise with the District Protection Officer, or the District Governance Director in his or her absence, in relation to any allegation or incident which has the potential to activate the reporting guidelines in the YEXPP whilst ensuring the YEX Committee Chair is kept fully informed.

District 9800 has appointed a **Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer** who will report directly to the District Protection Officer and whose responsibilities include –

- Ensuring compliance with this policy by the District Youth Program (non YEX) committees of their respective District programs by those persons participating in such programs;
- Ensure that the respective District Youth Program (non YEX) committees maintain a register of WWCC for those participating in the programs;
- Educate those participating in the District Youth Program (non YEX) at least annually as to this policy, its purpose and the need for strict compliance.
- Liaise with the District Protection Officer, or the District Governance Director in his or her absence, in relation to any allegation or incident which has the potential to activate the policy procedures for handling reports and allegations, whilst ensuring the chair of the respective program committee is kept fully informed.

The District Protection Officer shall chair the **District Protection Committee** which shall comprise the following –

- District Protection Officer;
- Youth Exchange Protection Officer;
- Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer; and
- Such others as requested by the District Protection Officer and approved by the District Board.

The District Governor and District Governance Director shall be ex officio members of the District Protection Committee.

The functions of the District Protection Committee shall include the following –

- Coordination and regular provision of the education and training process relevant to this policy and the YEXPP;
- Review on a regular basis of the District protection policies to ensure currency;
- Recommendations to the District Board as to improvements that can be made to improve the processes and procedures under the protection policies to ensure compliance within the District.

## **5.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

District 9800 will provide annual training in relation to the District protection policies as follows –

- At PETS of President Elects;
- At SETS of Secretary Elects;
- At District Assembly of Club Protection Officers ;
- Of those participating in the Youth Exchange Program;
- Of those participating in District Youth (non YEX) Programs.

The District Protection Officer will be available to present at clubs if desired in relation the District protection policies.

Through such education and training clubs will be made aware of the resources both personal and documentary that are available to assist should issues arise during the course of a ROP.

## **5.3 TRANSPORTATION**

It is recommended practice that in the circumstances where there is just a child and a driver in a motor vehicle that such transport be restricted to the normal day-to-day activities in the immediate local area and such driver shall be a person with no less than one year's driving experience.

In the event that the journey is longer, such as a sightseeing tour or transport to a Rotary camp, it is recommended that a third person or more be present in the motor vehicle.

These recommendations are for the benefit of the child and the driver alike.

## **6. RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OR ALLEGATION**

### **6.1 DISTRICT PROTECTION PROTOCOL (DPP)**

The DPP will be implemented immediately if concerns are raised, orally or in writing, by any individual about any alleged abuse and/or harassment of any participant in a ROP.

### **6.2 CRITICAL ACTION STEPS OF THE DPP**

Step 1 – Any concern about the safety and well-being of any person taking part in an ROP shall be reported immediately as follows –

- If the ROP is a District Managed Youth Program (non YEX), to the Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer, the Youth Program Committee Chair and the District Protection Officer.
- If the ROP is a club program, to the Club Protection Officer, the Club President and to the District Protection Officer.



(Please refer to the flow chart accompanying this policy which is Schedule A)

Step 2 – The Club Protection Officer, or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer, will as soon as possible complete a District Protection Incident Report.

(Please refer to the Report form which is Schedule B)

Step 3 – The Club Protection Officer, or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer, will immediately disclose and discuss details of the allegations with the District Protection Officer to ascertain whether the reported incident is a matter of suspected abuse and/or harassment.. The District Protection Officer must inform the District Governance Director and the District Governor.

Step 4 – The Club Protection Officer, or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer, in association with the District Protection Officer, will as soon as possible develop a clear and documented Response Plan for meeting the needs of the alleged victim for protection and support, whether abuse or harassment be suspected or not. The Response Plan will identify the need for the involvement of external agencies or services including Victoria Police or the Child Protection Services of the Department of Human Services.

Step 5 – In the case of suspected harassment the District Protection Officer, and/or the District Governor, may refer the matter back to the Club protection Officer and Club President for possible resolution of the issue through counselling and/or mediation.

Step 6 – In the event that abuse of a child, vulnerable adult or any other person is reasonably suspected or confirmed, the Club Protection Officer or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer, in association with the District Protection Officer, District Governance Director and District Governor, will –

- Act to ensure the immediate safety of the child, vulnerable adult or other person;
- Inform the parents/carer/guardian of the child or vulnerable adult as soon as possible.
- Provide information about the child or vulnerable adult's incident to his/her parents/carer/guardian and advise regarding resources for specialist trauma counselling.
- Consult with the Victoria Police and/or Child Protection Authorities about their possible involvement.

Step 7 – The District Protection Officer will provide support and other advice to the Club Protection Officer or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer and the Club President or Youth Program Chair as required during the implementation of the Response Plan.

Step 8 – The District Protection Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the District Governor is informed of both the process and the outcomes to the Response Plan as soon as practicable.

Step 9 – The Club Protection Officer or Youth Programs (non YEX) Protection Officer and the Club President or Youth Program Chair are responsible for continuing to ensure that ongoing support for the child, vulnerable adult or other person is provided.

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Rotary International is recognised around the world for its many years of outstanding commitment to working with youth and vulnerable adults.

There is a wide depth of Rotary programs conducted in District 9800 every year which involve as participants children, vulnerable adults and other persons.

In accordance with the duty of care that the law imposes, it is strongly recommended that all clubs undertake a risk assessment of its ROPs.

(Please refer to the attached Risk Management Form which is Schedule C)

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This policy is implemented for the purpose of providing, as best one reasonably can, protection from abuse and/or harassment by children, vulnerable adults and other persons participating in ROPs.

The core essence of the policy is compliance with the law as provided in the WWCA.

Clubs and Rotarians in the District are obliged to comply with this policy.

Compliance with the policy will minimise the risk of abuse and/or harassment occurring and also provide a system that encourages and facilitates the timely reporting of incidents.

The policy is all about –

- Public protection;
- Rotarian protection; and
- Rotary brand protection.

**POLICY ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL  
DISTRICT 9800 INCORPORATED ON 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER 2014**