



Vulnerable Persons Safety Policy



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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The Vulnerable Persons Safety Policy (the Policy) is a part of the Association of Apex Clubs of Australia's (the Association) policies and processes to ensuring that safe environments will be created to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of vulnerable people who receive services, come in contact with, or participate in programs developed by or on behalf of the Association at any level.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The Policy applies to any person representing the Association including:
 - 2.1.1 Association Directors;
 - 2.1.2 Appointed members of the National Board (including any sub-committees thereof);
 - 2.1.3 Any person employed by the Association (on a full-time, part-time, contract or casual basis); and
 - 2.1.4 The members, guests, associates and volunteers of any incorporated Apex Club.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 Vulnerable Persons refers to those who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependency on others or experiences of disadvantage, and could include people with a physical, intellectual or psychological disability, the frail aged, children, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees, and those living in poverty.
- 3.2 Elder Abuse refers to all aspects of abuse of elderly people, that is, neglect, physical, verbal, sexual, financial and social.
- 3.3 Apexian/s means the person or people defined in clause 2.1.
- 3.4 Identifying a vulnerable person - while it is not possible to supply an exhaustive list of persons who may be vulnerable within the context of charities and community service work, the following could be considered a guide:
 - 3.4.1 immaturity, either in terms of age or development;
 - 3.4.2 any infirmity, including early dementia or disease;



- 3.4.3 mental illness;
- 3.4.4 intellectual disability;
- 3.4.5 illiteracy or limited education which may impair a person's capacity to understand inability or limited ability to speak or understand the English language;
- 3.4.6 chronic alcoholism;
- 3.4.7 physical disabilities including deafness or loss of sight;
- 3.4.8 drug dependence;
- 3.4.9 cultural, ethnic or religious factors including those relating to gender attitudes
- 3.4.10 intoxication, if at the time of contact with police the person is under the influence of alcohol or a drug to such an extent as to make them unable to look after or manage their own needs;
- 3.4.11 Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders;
- 3.4.12 children; and
- 3.4.13 persons with impaired capacity.

4 Legislative and Corporate Requirements

4.1 The following Acts, Regulations and Guidelines provide the legislative framework for the Policy:

Commonwealth legislation

- 4.2 *Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth)*
- 4.3 *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- 4.4 *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

Australian State legislation

- 4.5 Criminal Law / Code Act (if/as applicable)
- 4.6 Children Protection Act / Regulations (if/as applicable)
- 4.7 Department of Families and Communities Guidelines (if/as applicable)
- 4.8 Equal Opportunity Act (if/as applicable)

Apex Australia

- 4.9 All policies, procedures and ethical guidelines as appropriate.



5 Policy Statement

- 5.1 The Association recognises its legislative obligations and is committed to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people with whom we come in contact.
- 5.2 The opinions of vulnerable people are encouraged and respected. We listen and act upon any concerns that are raised with us.
- 5.3 We ensure that vulnerable people know how to access a complaints procedure available to them.
- 5.4 We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.
- 5.5 Support is provided for the rights of vulnerable persons when and as required.
- 5.6 Support is provided for Apexians and encouragement is given for their active participation in building and maintaining a safe environment for vulnerable people in our communities.

6 Application of Policy

- 6.1 The Association will undertake the following to manage its obligations under the Policy:
 - 6.1.1 Take all reasonable steps to ensure the most suitable and appropriate people are engaged (for the National Board) or recommended to be engaged (for clubs and other non-directly controlled entities) to work with, and/or provide services to vulnerable people.
 - 6.1.2 Applicants for any employed position which is substantially and directly involved with vulnerable people will be screened for their suitability to provide services; screening may involve interviews, referee reports, checking qualifications and previous employment history in working with children and obtaining criminal history reports. Identifying such a position will involve consideration of the nature of the service provided (proximity or intimacy), the frequency (incidental contact, regular and/or on-going contact), and the vulnerability of the person.
 - 6.1.3 Staff employed and to whom clause 6.1.2 applies will undergo a criminal history screening not less than once every three years.
 - 6.1.4 A Children and Vulnerable Person's Safety Contact Officer is nominated by the National Board as a first point of contact. The Officer will provide advice and support to children, vulnerable people and Apexians regarding safety and well-being.



- 6.1.5 Maintain a listing of any current position/s as per clause 6.1.2 and the nominated Children and Vulnerable Person's Safety Contact Officer which will be made publicly available by verified individual request through the Apex Australia Website.
- 6.1.6 Take steps to increase awareness within the organisation about providing an environment where vulnerable people are safe and protected from abuse.
- 6.1.9 Provide training to National Board Members and Regional Communicators about Association and regulatory requirements and their contact with children and vulnerable persons.
- 6.1.10 Maintain supportive and responsive procedures for fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations, where relevant, and dealing with complaints and issues effectively as they arise.
- 6.1.11 Take appropriate security measures for the collection and maintenance of appropriate records related to children and vulnerable persons when and as required.
- 6.1.12 Collaborate and consult with other relevant agencies in matters concerning the protection of vulnerable people.
- 6.1.13 Develop, monitor, evaluate and review risk management strategies and procedures when and as required to minimise potential harm to vulnerable people.

7 Reporting Requirements

- 7.1 All Apexians have the obligation (in addition to, and not to derogate from any relevant state legislation) to notify the relevant State Government authority if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a vulnerable person has been or is being abused or neglected as well as notifying the Association's Children and Vulnerable Person's Safety Contact Officer.
- 7.2 An Apexian must immediately notify the Association's Children and Vulnerable Person's Safety Contact Officer if that person believes they would fail a criminal history screening for the purposes of determining whether that person is suitable to work with children or vulnerable persons.



- 7.3 The practice will ensure Apexians are appropriately supported, records are kept confidential and secure, and any organisation responsibilities (in addition to any mandatory reporting obligation/s) are pursued where relevant.
- 7.4 The Association will sensitively support any Apexian who, though not a mandated notifier, suspects incidents of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable person.

8 Review

- 8.1 The Policy will be reviewed periodically as required by the Association's Corporate Governance Framework.

9 Access to the Policy

- 9.1 The Policy is available for public inspection on the Association's website:
www.apex.org.au

10 Further Information

- 10.1 For further information about the Policy please contact:

Association of Apex Clubs of Australia
Legal and Compliance Director
Ph: 073245 3730
Email: counsel@apex.org.au