

# Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy

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## 1. Purpose and scope

This Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy has been developed to demonstrate RANZCOG's commitment to promoting and protecting the best interests of the children and vulnerable people with whom we work and engage.

This policy provides a framework for the prevention, identification, reporting, and management of child and vulnerable people abuse, exploitation, and neglect while ensuring a safe environment and compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements such as the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy 2017 and the New Zealand Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

This policy applies to all people who are engaged by RANZCOG to perform any College and Global Health related activities, including RANZCOG staff, volunteers, members, trainees and Board and Council members. This policy also applies to partners (including their staff and volunteers), consultants, contractors and subcontractors.

RANZCOG acknowledges that only some of our College business and Global Health activities involve 'working with children' and other vulnerable people.

## 2. Policy principles

RANZCOG commits to the following principles for child and vulnerable people safeguarding:

- Zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, and neglect.
- Child and vulnerable people protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensuring the best interests of vulnerable people is paramount.
- Assessment and management of child protection risk and impact.
- Participation and empowerment of vulnerable people in decision-making that affects them.
- Compliance with local and international child and vulnerable people protection laws and regulations.

## 3. Definitions

A **child** is any person under the age of 18 years.

**Abuse, neglect or exploitation** means all forms of physical and mental abuse, exploitation, coercion or ill-treatment. This might include, for example:

- a) Sexual harassment, bullying or abuse;
- b) Sexual criminal offences and serious sexual criminal offences;
- c) Threats of, or actual violence, verbal, emotional or social abuse;
- d) Cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime;
- e) Coercion and exploitation;
- f) Abuse of power.

**Safeguarding** means protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, RANZCOG, particularly those that might be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. This refers to measures and actions taken to protect children and vulnerable people from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

A **vulnerable person** includes a child, senior persons, people from a low socio-economic background, First Nation People, people who are not native speakers of the local language, people with low levels of literacy or education and people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.

**Fellow, member, affiliate, associate, and trainee** have the same meaning as set out in the RANZCOG Constitution.

**Staff** is any person conducting work for the college including permanent, temporary, and casual employees, consultants, contractors, and third-party hires.

For brevity, the broad terms **members, staff** and **representatives** will be used to cover the groups that the policy applies to.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

While the responsibility to protect people is shared by all who work at or with RANZCOG, some individuals have specific obligations with which they must comply.

The RANZCOG Board are responsible for:

- a. Protecting all people that interact with, or are affected by RANZCOG;
- b. Ensuring that there are appropriate and effective ways for the College to do this; and
- c. Ensuring that RANZCOG observes all relevant laws relating to safeguarding.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- a. Ensure the College has effective and appropriate ways to manage safeguarding and legal compliance;
- b. Ensure that the College takes reasonable steps to protect children and other vulnerable people;
- c. Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.

The People and Wellbeing team is responsible for:

- a. Manage reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- b. Ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, policies and procedures, and Code of Conduct;
- c. Ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligations to report suspected incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- d. Manage reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- e. Provide support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their responsibilities.

All Supervisors, Managers and Executive Directors are responsible for:

- a. Promoting a positive culture towards safeguarding;
- b. Implementing this policy in their area(s) of responsibility;
- c. Ensure that there are appropriate controls in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents;
- d. Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation;

All staff, members, trainees, volunteers, contractors and representatives are responsible for:

- a. Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, policies and procedures for safeguarding;
- b. Comply with all requirements;
- c. Report any incident to the appropriate authority when it is reasonable to suspect that a person's safety or welfare is at risk;
- d. Report any suspicion that a person's safety or welfare may be at risk to the appropriate authority; and
- e. Provide an environment that is supportive of everyone's emotional and physical safety.

## 5. Code of conduct

All staff, members, volunteers, contractors, and representatives must adhere to RANZCOG's Code of Conduct and in addition adhere to the following:

- Treat all children and vulnerable people with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that interactions with children and vulnerable people are age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.
- Report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of abuse, exploitation, or neglect in accordance with this policy.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children and vulnerable people.
- Obtain consent from a child's parent or guardian before taking photographs, videos, or collecting personal information.
- Follow good practice on informed consent from the child's or vulnerable person's parent or guardian and/or child as age appropriate, for any treatment or examination.
- Do not engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour with vulnerable people, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

## 6. Managing Safeguarding risks

RANZCOG will manage the risks of safeguarding by:

- Having up-to-date and documented risk assessments;
- Adhering to this Safeguarding Policy and its Code of Conduct;
- Doing due diligence checks of staff, volunteers and third parties;
- Implementing policies, procedures and systems that introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents;
- Conducting awareness-raising for stakeholders on risks, expectations, and individual responsibilities;
- Maintaining a confidential reporting process;
- Having an incident response plan;

- Complying with the relevant law in everything the College does, in all jurisdictions in which it works; and
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness and proportionality of its safeguarding approach.

## 7. Reporting and managing incidents

RANZCOG is committed to timely reporting and responding to any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of child abuse, exploitation, or neglect. All staff, members, volunteers and representatives must, as soon as practicable, report any suspicion that an incident has taken place, may be taking place, or could take place.

They may do this through direct reporting to:

- a. Any member of the Board;
- b. The Chief Executive Officer;
- c. The Executive Director of People, Wellbeing and Facilities;
- d. Their Manager or Supervisor.

If a person believes that another person is at risk of immediate harm or the victim of a criminal offence, they must dial 000 in Australia or 111 in New Zealand. Managing incidents of harassment, abuse, neglect and exploitation are all serious misconduct and the College reserves the right to:

- a. Take disciplinary action against those it believes are responsible, which may include dismissal;
- b. Take civil legal action;
- c. Report the matter to law enforcement.

External reporting

The College will:

- a. Report any suspicion of a criminal offence to the police or the relevant criminal judicial body;
- b. Meet all donor requirements regarding the reporting of incidents;
- c. Report any qualifying matter to the ACNC.

## 8. Policy implementation

All RANZCOG personnel and associates who are engaged to perform any part of a RANZCOG Global Health programme or project or other relevant College activities will receive a copy of the Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy.

RANZCOG will provide regular training, support, and resources to all relevant personnel to ensure they understand and comply with this policy and their obligations under the DFAT Child Protection Policy 2017 and the NZ Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

## 9. Governance

The RANZCOG Global Health Committee and People and Wellbeing team are accountable to the Board for fulfilment of duties and responsibilities as outlined in this Policy, and the overall risk management of College and Global Health activities. The Committee's proceedings are recorded in minutes and reported to the Board and Council.

## 10. Review

The College may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve its efficacy and operation.

## 11. Related documents

RANZCOG Code of Conduct

Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination Policy

Complaints Policy

Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedure

[Child Protection Policy 2017 | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(dfat.gov.au\)](https://www.dfat.gov.au/child-protection-policy-2017)

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
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