



## DONALD SIMPSON COMMUNITY CENTRE

### Client Protection Policy

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Policy Statement

The Donald Simpson Community Centre is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, Members, Visitors, Volunteers and particularly to Children, Aged and Vulnerable People.

The Donald Simpson Community Centre's Client Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of Abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

### 1.2 Scope

This Client Protection Policy applies to:

- All Employees, Members, Volunteers, Conveners, Contractors, Hirers and Visitors within the Donald Simpson Community Centre, engaged in Donald Simpson Centre activities or who are engaged by the Donald Simpson Community Centre.

### 1.3 Authority

This Client Protection Policy was adopted for use by the Board of the Donald Simpson Community Centre on 23 February 2023

The Board of the Donald Simpson Community Centre is committed to implementing the Client Protection Policy and to training our Employees, Members, Volunteers, Conveners, Contractors, Hirers and Visitors within the Donald Simpson Community Centre and those who are engaged in Donald Simpson Community Centre activities or who are engaged by the Donald Simpson Community Centre, in its content and application.

### 1.4 Definitions

**Abuse**, can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

**Elder Abuse**, a single repeated act, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

**Physical Abuse**, any non-accidental physical assault including:

- Hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers), shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and /or other drug administration.

**Sexual Abuse**, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, including: sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or sexual intimidation.

**Emotional Abuse**, the chronic behaviour of one person which is directed at another person or the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include:

- Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising, racist comments or other extreme acts directed at an aged or vulnerable person.

**Financial Abuse** may include:

- Misappropriation of money, valuables or assets,
- Forging signatures on cheques,
- Accessing a person's funds electronically and /or
- Forced or unauthorised changes to legal documents.

Financial abuse may also occur where a person takes advantage of an older person who has already lost (or is losing) capacity, by coercing or arranging for the older person to sign a document in circumstances where the older person is unable to understand the nature of the document.



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**Neglect:** characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs.

Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.

**Child,** any person under the age of 18.

**Leader,** any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a named organisation. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Activity coordinators,
- Small group Leaders,
- Music, drama or other Leaders,
- Counsellors,
- Youth Leaders,
- Teachers,
- Volunteers,
- Sports Coaches and Organisers.

**Member,** any person, including children, who attends or participates in the named Organisation's activities, objectives or strategic plan.

**Organisation,** the Donald Simpson Community centre located at 172 Bloomfield Street, Cleveland.

**Volunteer,** any unpaid person who is invited to assist in the care of Aged and Vulnerable people.

**Vulnerable Personal,** any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

## 2. Policy Review

This Client Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the Board. The Organisation's governing body will inform all interested parties when the date of review will occur, and any changes recommended by the interested parties should be submitted in writing to the governing body for consideration one month before the review date.

Any proposed changes will be considered by the Board for inclusion in the policy.

## 3. Obligations

### 3.1 Responsibility

The core expectations of any responsible Organisation require that organisation to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

### 3.1 Legal

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law.

The Donald Simpson Community Centre is committed to adhering to all laws that are relevant.

### 3.1 Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse but are unacceptable behaviour for the Donald Simpson Community Centre. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate touching.



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- Recording or filming without prior consent.
- Acts of violence committed by a Worker, Leader or Volunteer or any other person in the course of an activity.

The Board of the Donald Simpson Community Centre will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

Each client of the Donald Simpson Community Centre has the right:

- To full and effective use of his or her personal, civil, legal and consumer rights;
- To quality care which is appropriate in the context of the Centre's activities;
- To personal privacy;
- To be treated with respect and accepted as an individual.;
- To complain and to take action to resolve disputes;
- To be free from reprisals, or a well-founded fear of reprisal, in any form for taking action to enforce his or her rights.

## 4. Selection & Screening

### 4.1 Employees, Agency Staff, Contractors & Volunteers

Employees, Conveners, and Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children, aged and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer services, the following precautions will be taken:

- All employees and/or volunteers must complete an application form

which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them

- An interview will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- A Police and/or Community Services check or a Blue Card which complies with the legislation requirements of Queensland will be requested and received prior to the Employee or Volunteer commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working in childcare or aged care.

## 5. Training

All new Workers/Employees, including Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy and receive advice on:

- The content and application of the Organisation's Client Protection Policy.
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

Advice based on current "best practice" and changes to legislation will be provided regularly



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### 6. A Safe Environment

Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, working in pairs is the preferred method.

Wherever possible, workers will not visit Aged or Vulnerable Persons in their homes unless a friend or relative is present or another Worker accompanies them.

When transporting people under their care, Workers will take them directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another Worker.

Workers will respect a Member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

### 7. Disciplining Children

It is not the responsibility of the Donald Simpson Centre or its Workers, Volunteers or Leaders to discipline a Child. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the Organisation, or becomes an obstruction to the care of other Children or Members, and may cause harm, the Child will be removed and referred back to the parent or guardian.

At no time will any Centre individual administer any form of physical, emotional, financial or mental discipline.

### 8. Reporting Procedures

**The Donald Simpson Community Centre actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including Sexual Abuse.**

**The Donald Simpson Community Centre is committed to building an environment where either a victim or employee/volunteer feels able to report such abuse.**

Employees and/or volunteers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to the Manager or Board, through the Chairman, of the Donald Simpson Community Centre.

Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, or observation of behaviour.

An independent person will be appointed by the Donald Simpson Community Centre with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise.

**The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.**

A document reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by the Donald Simpson Community Centre for handling allegations of abuse.

The escalating procedures will be as follows:

- The automatic suspension from all work or other duties within the Donald



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Simpson Community Centre of any person while under internal investigation, or by the police or another tribunal, for committing abuse.

- **The automatic termination of their employment, or involvement with the Donald Simpson Community Centre if found guilty of committing abuse, either by internal investigation or by a court or other authorised tribunal.**

If there is reasonable suspicion that a Member has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and the Organisation's insurer will be contacted immediately.

The Police will also be notified if a Member discloses an incident of Abuse that has occurred somewhere other than the Donald Simpson Community Centre premises, (e.g. an outing).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure.

This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the Member to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the Member that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.

- Reporting the abuse to the police and the Donald Simpson Community Centre's insurer if appropriate.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a Member, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

## 9. Alcohol & Drugs

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on the Donald Simpson Community Centre's grounds or during an activity is not to be allowed or condoned by any Worker. Any Member found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled. (This prohibition of alcohol consumption does not apply during the conduct of Centre activities where alcohol is provided or sold by the Centre.)