



# **ROTARY AUSTRALIA WORLD COMMUNITY SERVICE**

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Australia will operate with National WH&S (harmonisation 2012-13) laws that define the obligations of workplaces and the treatment of workers. The model Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act aims to protect the health and safety of all workers nationwide, including volunteers. Protecting the health and safety of volunteers demonstrates that their commitment is valued by Rotary and recognises the vital role they play in the community. There are circumstances ( in the National law) when volunteers may be regarded as “workers” under the legislation therefore the aim of this policy is to establish a singular, comprehensive manner to treat the safety of volunteers involved in RAWCS projects.

2. Australian courts have long recognised that volunteers are owed a general duty of care by the people and organisations they support. This is the duty to do what a reasonable person in these circumstances would do where it is reasonably foreseeable that the volunteer could be injured. Some objects of the legislation as they apply to a volunteer organisation are to:

- a. secure the health, safety and welfare of volunteers
- b. protect persons at or near workplaces from risks to health or safety arising out of the activities of volunteers at service or near work;
- c. promote a workplace environment for volunteers that is adapted to their health and safety needs; and
- d. foster a co-operative, consultative relationship between volunteers and team leaders on the health, safety and welfare of volunteers performing service.

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY (WH&S) STATEMENT**

3. Rotary Australia World Community Service,

- a. will do what is “reasonably practicable”\* to ensure that its volunteers are healthy and safe.
- b. is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all its volunteers.
- c. believes that most work-related injuries and diseases are preventable and that a "zero accident" target is desirable.
- d. considers that there is nothing more important in the undertaking of community service than prevention of injury or ill-health to people in performing that service.
- e. recognises that its team leaders have primary responsibility for providing and maintaining a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

\* denotes a definition in the Act

## **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

4. This policy describes how RAWCS will go about implementing its commitment to WH&S. It specifically details the key actions and procedures required to meet this commitment, the responsibilities of the Directors and volunteers, and the special role and functions of the team leaders in ensuring the health and safety of volunteers.

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

5. RAWCS accepts primary responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy operating environment for all its volunteers. To achieve this outcome, RAWCS will introduce a workplace health and safety system which provides for identification and assessment of hazards and risks, consultation, education and monitoring of the work environment.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Directors**

6. A Board Director (officer) will take reasonable steps:

- a. that will support a health and safety culture amongst its team leaders and volunteers
- b. to ensure accountability from those responsible to implement any and all systems approved by the Board for preserving the workplace health and safety of all volunteers
- c. to allocate resources for the implementation of any systems for the health and safety of its volunteers and
- d. for the development of appropriate health and safety policies for the organisation and;
- e. will exercise due diligence to ensure that as a voluntary organisation RAWCS Ltd. complies with its health and safety duties.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Team Leaders,**

6. A volunteer team leader will cooperate with the Board to:

- a. require volunteers to fully support injury and illness prevention
- b. assist volunteers to identify and assess hazards
- c. consult with volunteers to eliminate or control hazards and assess risks and treatment options for the services they are expected to support
- d. conduct health and safety inspections
- e. investigate workplace injuries, accidents or illnesses and report them as per the procedures
- f. liaise with the Directors to resolve workplace health and safety issues
- g. remain well informed about workplace health and safety performance
- h. consult with volunteers about changes in the nature of activity at a project or site that may affect the health and safety of volunteers
- i. undertake regular workplace inspections and convene regular WH&S meetings.

### **Employee consultation**

7. Because of their contact with the type of project or activity volunteers may have knowledge of the processes and the potential hazards at the project site and also some options for treating these risks based on their work/life experience.

They may also be totally unfamiliar with the site or routines for support and hence consultation with those volunteers is even more important in those circumstances.

To identify and eliminate potential project, site or workplace hazards RAWCS will require volunteers to report any matters in respect of workplace health and safety to their team leader according to procedure.

To facilitate the exchange of information, the team leader will regularly review, the health and safety performance of the project/site and raise any matters or issues on behalf of volunteers.

### **Volunteer Awareness of Occupational Health and Safety**

8. RAWCS will ensure that all its volunteers have a sound knowledge and awareness of the principles and practices of workplace health and safety.

9. To achieve this outcome, RAWCS will:

- a. inform all volunteers of RAWCS's health and safety policy as part of their induction process;
- b. provide training for volunteers to attend an occupational health and safety awareness training course as soon as possible after the date of their commencement with RAWCS.
- c. require volunteers to produce evidence of any pre-requisite training, skills or knowledge required for certain tasks, functions or roles of a project or activity.

### **Procedures for identification and assessment of workplace hazards and risks**

10. RAWCS expects all its volunteers to take an active role in identifying situations with the potential to cause harm or injury at project site, activity or workplace. RAWCS through its directors and team leaders will assist volunteers to identify potential hazards by:

- a. encouraging all volunteers to read publications, including relevant codes of practice;
- b. periodically providing access to audio /video material on health and safety to all volunteers as these become available;
- c. requiring the team leader or his/her deputy to undertake regular inspections of the project site, activity or workplace using the Work Safe Australia Workplace Inspection Check-list; and
- d. with each new project a full risk assessment be carried out prior to commencement of the project.
- e. ensuring that an inspection report is prepared after an inspection, which identifies any issues indicating a lack of a safe system of work or the need for more attention to the way health and safety is managed. This report is to be ee tabled at quarterly directors meeting.

### **Procedures for elimination and control of workplace hazards**

11. Where a health and safety inspection has identified a potential hazard, the team leader or his/her deputy in consultation with the Director may take immediate remedial action to eliminate or control the hazard. Where possible, the decision on what to do about a potential hazard should be made in consultation with the volunteers concerned. Such remedial actions are to be detailed in the inspection report.

12. Where an accident has occurred, the health and safety representative or his/her deputy, in consultation with the Director will take the following actions:

- a. make sure it is safe to approach the scene;
- b. see that the injured person is receiving first aid or medical treatment;
- c. see that nothing is removed or altered until enquires have been completed;
- d. undertake an inspection of the scene, where appropriate taking photographs or sketches
- e. obtain as much information as possible from the injured employee and witnesses about the accident; and
- f. check if the accident needs to be reported to the relevant authorities and if so report it using the supplied form

### **Responsibilities of workers (includes volunteers)**

13. While the Regional Committee and the Director may have a duty for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all, volunteers are expected to assist in ensuring that the health and safety management system operates effectively. All volunteers are expected to take reasonably practicable steps to:

- a. provide such evidence as the team leader may require of the volunteer before allowing that volunteer to perform certain duties or routines at a project site or activity
- b. use safe work practices and procedures;
- c. use appropriate safety devices, safeguards and equipment provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of RAWCS volunteers
- d. co-operate in all activities aimed at prevention of workplace accidents, injuries and illnesses;
- e. report unsafe or defective equipment and work arrangements to the team leader or his/her deputy;
- f. report all accidents, injuries and illnesses occurring in the workplace or occurring whilst travelling to or from the workplace to the health and safety representative or his/her deputy;
- g. where an incident or a near-miss has occurred, the volunteer will immediately complete an incident report;
- h. where an injury has occurred, the volunteer will complete, as soon as possible, a workplace injury and disease recording form; and
- i. attend occupational health and safety training courses as such courses become available.

**Review of the System**

14. To ensure that the health and safety management system remains effective in providing a safe and health work environment, RAWCS WH&S policy and procedures will be reviewed periodically. This review will focus on the effectiveness of individual elements of the system, feedback from volunteers, team leaders and any reports and the relevance of changes to which may have occurred in any applicable WH&S legislation or practices for the effective and safe management of volunteers, and any other matters which potentially impact on the system.