Scotland Island Residents Association Incorporated (SIRA)

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY (Anti-sexual assault and harassment)

This policy seeks to ensure that in all activities undertaken by SIRA, there is a safe environment for all participants, including children and vulnerable people. This includes prevention of sexual assault, discrimination, harassment and bullying. SIRA shall also promote a culture that allows and encourages the reporting of breaches of this policy.

This policy applies to SIRA committee members, members, volunteers and contractors.

# Definitions

Abuse: Refers to all aspects of abuse, that is, neglect, physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, sexual, financial and social.

Bullying: Repeated unreasonable and inappropriate behaviour which comprises behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades, insults or humiliates a committee member, ordinary member, volunteer or contractor and is a risk to health and safety.

Discrimination: Can be direct and can occur by specific exclusion or adverse treatment based on a person’s personal characteristics, such as their gender, race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or national identity, age or sexual orientation.

Sexual harassment: Unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature including suggestive comments or jokes, unwanted staring or touching, intrusive questions about a person’s private life, repeated requests for dates or sex.

Vulnerable People: 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.

# Obligations

Committee members, ordinary members, volunteers and contractors;

* Shall not engage in abuse, bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment.
* Are encouraged to report instances of abuse, bullying, discrimination or sexual harassment.

The SIRA committee undertakes the following to manage its obligations under this policy:

* Nominate a Safe Environment Officer to provide support to committee members, members, volunteers and contractors
* Maintain a rigorous contractor and volunteer recruitment, screening and selection process. For any employee or volunteer who will be working with children or vulnerable people, they must provide a recent Working With Children Check (WWCC) available at <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>
* Ensure that members of the committee are familiar with the policy, and that all ordinary members may access the policy online.
* Report suspicions of abuse of children or vulnerable people with advice from appropriate government agencies.
* Treat all complaints seriously and confidentially and take immediate action.
* Promote an environment where victims feel able to report sexual abuse, bullying, discrimination and harassment.

# Criminal Offences

Forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment and bullying can also constitute criminal offences, including:

* physically assaulting a person, including sexual assault;
* stalking; and
* obscene communications including through emails, social media and phone calls.

SIRA will act immediately on reports of possible criminal offences.

# Where Abuse has Occurred

Members, volunteers, contractors and others are encouraged to report criminal abuse or harassment to the police or a relevant government agency. Instances of abuse, bullying, discrimination and harassment may also be notified to a member of the SIRA committee. The details of those reporting such instances will be kept private and confidential, although the committee member may encourage the victim to report their abuse to a government agency.

# Appendix

Suggested Interview Questions for screening contractors and volunteers who will be working with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.

Introductory Statement: The questions asked in this interview may make you feel uncomfortable but they are a necessary part of our child safety policy and must be answered. The answers you provide will be kept confidential where possible but may be divulged to other Leaders within the Organisation. Please note that information provided may be held for a long period of time as part of our Safe Environment Policy.

1. Why have you applied for this position and why do you feel you are suitable for the role?

2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.

3. Please describe any negative experiences you have had with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.

4. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child, an aged or vulnerable person?

If so, how did you handle this situation?

5. Have you ever been investigated or accused of violent or sexually related offences?

If so, what were the circumstances?

6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position that we should be aware of?