



Pacific Assist

Inspiring Self-reliance

**Safeguarding
Policies and Procedures
2020**

Version Number: 1

Approved by Board on: 15/1/2021

Last updated: January 2021

Scheduled review date: January 2023

Policy Statement

1. All people, regardless of their age, gender, race, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
2. Pacific Assist commits to promoting and protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, our work - particularly those that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We have no tolerance for abuse, neglect or exploitation. We will take a survivor-centric approach in all that we do.
3. All staff, volunteers, partners and third parties of Pacific Assist share responsibility for protecting everyone from abuse, neglect or exploitation. Beyond this, particular people have specific responsibilities, and they must carry out their duties without exception.
4. **Pacific Assist** has a process for managing incidents that must be followed when one arises.

Purpose

5. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - a. Help protect people that interact with, or are affected by, Pacific Assist.
 - b. Define the key terms we use when talking about protecting people or safeguarding.
 - c. Set out and develop the way Pacific Assist manages safeguarding risks.
 - d. Set out the specific roles and responsibilities of persons working in and with Pacific Assist.
 - e. Facilitate the safe management of incidents.
 - f. To support a positive and effective internal culture towards safeguarding.

Definitions

6. 'Safeguarding' means protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, Pacific Assist, particularly those that might be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. This refers to any responsibility or measure undertaken to protect a person from harm.
7. '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.
8. 'Reasonable grounds to suspect' is a situation where a person has some information that leads them believe that abuse, neglect or exploitation has taken place, is taking place, or may take place. It comes with a low burden of proof (in fact, no proof is needed at all), but is based on some information. Questions that may help a person to determine whether they have 'reasonable grounds to suspect' might include:

- a. Could you explain to another person why you suspect something? This helps to make sure that your suspicion is based on information, even if you have no proof.
 - b. Would an objective other person, with the same information as you, come to the same conclusion? This helps to make sure that your suspicion is as objective as possible.
9. A 'survivor-centric approach' means considering and lawfully prioritising the needs, right and wishes of survivors.

Roles and responsibilities

10. While the responsibility to protect people is shared by all who work at or with **Pacific Assist**, some individuals have specific obligations with which they must comply.
11. The members of the board of **Pacific Assist** are responsible for:
- a. Protecting all people that interact with, or are affected by, **Pacific Assist**;
 - b. Ensuring that there are appropriate and effective ways for **Pacific Assist** to do this;
 - c. Ensuring that **Pacific Assist** observes all relevant laws relating to safeguarding;
 - d. Ensuring that **Pacific Assist** takes a survivor-centric approach.
12. The Projects Manager of **Pacific Assist** must:
- a. Ensure **Pacific Assist** has effective and appropriate ways to manage safeguarding and legal compliance;
 - b. (If necessary) Ensure the appointment of a Safeguarding Manager with appropriate skills and competency;
 - c. Ensure that, within the charity's approach, reasonable steps are taken to protect people;
 - d. Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.
13. The Safeguarding Manager of **Pacific Assist** is the Projects Manager. The Projects Manager must:
- 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 **Pacific Assist** 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.
14. All Managers of **Pacific Assist** must:
- a. Promote a positive culture towards safeguarding;
 - b. Implement this policy in their area of responsibility;
 - c. Ensure that the risks of incidents have been considered in their area of responsibility;
 - d. Ensure that there are appropriate controls in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents;
 - e. Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation;

- f. Take a survivor-centric approach to potential incidents and ensure that any incident is dealt with transparently and accountably.

15. All Staff and Volunteers of **Pacific Assist** must:

- 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.

16. All partners and contractors of **Pacific Assist** must:

- a. Implement the provisions of this policy and **Pacific Assist's** procedures in their dealings with **Pacific Assist**;
- b. Report any suspicion that an incident may have taken place, is taking place, or could take place.

Managing safeguarding risk

17. The way **Pacific Assist** manages the risks of safeguarding will be:

- a. Holistic. **Pacific Assist** and its stakeholders will work to prevent, detect and take action on incidents.
- b. Risk-based and proportionate. **Pacific Assist** will regularly assess the risks to people in its operations and develop proportionate controls to mitigate those risks.
- c. Survivor-centric. **Pacific Assist** will put survivors at the heart of its approach to safeguarding.
- d. Lawful. **Pacific Assist** will ensure that it understands and complies with the law in everything it does, in all jurisdictions in which it works.

18. **Pacific Assist** will manage the risk of safeguarding by:

- a. Having up-to-date and documented risk assessments;
- b. Maintaining a register of **Pacific Assist** legal obligations for safeguarding and workplace health and safety in all the jurisdictions in which it operates;
- c. Having an action plan that sets out how it will manage safeguarding;
- d. Adhering to this Safeguarding Policy and its Code of Conduct;
- e. Doing due diligence checks of staff, volunteers and third parties;
- f. Implementing policies, procedures and systems that introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents;
- g. Conducting awareness-raising for stakeholders on risks, expectations, and individual responsibilities;
- h. Maintaining two reporting processes: the confidential reporting process, and the overt reporting process;

- i. Having an incident response plan;
- j. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness and proportionality of its safeguarding approach.

Managing incidents

19. Harassment, abuse, neglect and exploitation are all serious misconduct and **Pacific Assist** 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.

Reporting suspected incidents

20. All staff, volunteers and third parties must, as soon as practicable, report any suspicion that an incident has taken place, may be taking place, or could take place.
21. They may do this through direct reporting to:
 - a. Any member of the board;
 - b. The Projects Manager (who is the Safeguarding Manager);
 - c. The Women and Children's Advocate;
 - d. Their Project Coordinator.
22. If a person wants to report confidentially, including with anonymity, they may use the confidential reporting system. To make a confidential complaint, complainants can:
 - a. Speak directly to their project coordinator
 - b. Send an email to the project coordinator, projects manager, or info@pacificassist.org (received by the projects manager)
 - c. Complaints about the projects manager should be sent directly to the Chair (email and mobile are available on the Pacific Assist website under About Us: Our Team)
 - d. Phone us on +61 427 681 232 (AUS) – call answered by the projects manager
 - e. Mail a letter addressed to the projects manager, women and children's advocate, or the chair of the board to Level 4/420 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000 Victoria Australia
 - f. Anonymous complaints can be made by mail or by completing the "Email A Complaint" form on the website (leave the name, phone contact, and email address sections blank)
23. If a person believes that another person is at risk of immediate harm or the victim of a criminal offence, they must dial 000.

Responding to suspected incidents

24. All suspected, perceived, potential or actual incidents will be managed through the incident response plan.

External reporting

25. **Pacific Assist** 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.

Privacy and data protection

- 26. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Pacific Assist will protect personal information.
- 27. **Pacific Assist's** Privacy Policy applies.

Administration of this policy

- 28. This Policy will be reviewed every **two years**. The next review will be on **01/12/2022**.

Related policies and procedures

- 29. The following policies should also be consulted in relation to safeguarding:
 - a. Safeguarding Incident Response Plan
 - b. Risk Management
 - c. Rights, Protection, and Inclusion
 - d. Child Safety and Well-being
 - e. Project Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
 - f. Primary Stakeholder Participation, Contribution, and Local Ownership