

# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

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Drafted by	Secretary	Approved by CoM on	31 OCT 2023
Responsible person	House Manager	Scheduled review date	NOV 2024

*Please note: this policy has been drafted for the risk level generally associated with office work.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Goonawarra Neighbourhood House Inc. (Goonawarra NH) is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of all people interacting with the organisation and discharging its workplace health and safety obligations.
- 1.2 This policy falls within the field of operation of Goonawarra NH's overall Risk Management Processes under the general supervision of the organisation's House Manager.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 Goonawarra NH recognises that workplace health and safety are integral to achieving excellence in service provision and work performance outcomes. The purpose of this policy is to, as far as reasonably practicable:
  - Prevent workplace injuries and illnesses.
  - Promote a safe and healthy workplace culture.
  - Provide a framework for consulting, collaborating, and communicating with workers and health and safety representatives.
  - Consider workplace health and safety in project planning and work activities.
  - Allocate adequate resources to prevent health and safety risks and promote a safe and healthy workplace.
  - Ensure that workers understand their rights and responsibilities and can identify and control risks in the workplace.
  - Drive continuous improvement in workplace health and safety.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers at Goonawarra NH, including all personnel affiliated with third parties.

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers will be referred to as **'staff' or 'staff members'**.
- 3.2 In this policy, **'workplace'** means places where people undertake work in connection with Goonawarra NH, whether on-site or off-site, including work-related conferences, functions, client events, retreats, and social events.

**3.3** 'Occupational violence' refers to any incident where a person is physically attacked, abused, assaulted, or threatened in the workplace.

## **4. Policy**

**4.1** This policy applies to any location where duties are performed (i.e., any workplace), as outlined earlier in 3.2.

### **Commitment to workplace health and safety**

**4.2** Goonawarra NH aims to safeguard the rights of all people to work in an environment that is safe and without risks to health and safety to the extent reasonably practicable.

**4.3** Goonawarra NH is committed to working in partnership with all employees to identify and address workplace health and safety issues. It encourages forming work groups and appointing health and safety representatives to represent employees on health and safety matters.

**4.4** Goonawarra NH is committed to continuously improving its workplace health and safety practices through the ongoing development of systems and processes to:

- Identify, assess, and control workplace hazards.
- Reduce the incidence and cost of occupational injury and illness.
- Provide a rehabilitation system for those affected by occupational injury or illness.

**4.5** Goonawarra NH is committed to facilitating employees' return to work as soon as practicable after a work-related incident or illness.

**4.6** Goonawarra NH is committed to ensuring that all workers are free from bullying and occupational violence in the workplace.

### **Workplace Health and Safety Committee and representatives**

**4.7** Where a Workplace Health and Safety Committee is required by legislation or the House Manager deems it necessary, Goonawarra NH will establish a Workplace Health and Safety Committee per the applicable legislation.

**4.8** Any Workplace Health and Safety Committee will meet at least quarterly. The head of the Committee will circulate an agenda before the meeting, and a designated note-taker will take the meeting minutes.

**4.9** Where required by law or deemed necessary, designated work groups shall each elect a workplace health and safety representative as their elected spokesperson. Representatives are encouraged to work with management to discuss workplace health and safety issues and to work with management to improve health and safety standards.

**4.10** Where the organisation is not required to establish a Workplace Health and Safety Committee and does not otherwise establish such a committee, Goonawarra NH may conduct regular health and safety forums.

## **Review**

**4.11** Goonawarra NH's Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedures will be reviewed at least every two years. The review will involve assessing the effectiveness of the policy and procedures by (among other things):

- reviewing overall health and safety performance
- ensuring continued compliance with the relevant legislation.

## **5. Above and beyond provisions**

**5.1** Goonawarra NH is committed to ensuring its safety procedures exceed minimum statutory requirements.

**5.2** Goonawarra NH will provide the following additional benefits to help ensure a safe system of work:

- a. Mental health days per the Neighbourhood Houses Agreement 2016
- b. Access to counselling via a dedicated employee assistance program
- c. Access to workplace health and safety webinars, apps, and resources
- d. Fostering a people-oriented organisational culture through supportive management.

## **6. Legislation and industrial instruments**

Workplace health and safety laws do not operate in isolation; other laws also regulate the conduct of employees and other stakeholders in the workplace. All officers, employees, contractors, suppliers, and volunteers must observe and comply with all laws that relate to their engagement, including, but not limited to:

- Workplace health and safety laws that operate in each state and territory.
- Workers' compensation legislation that operates in each state and territory
- Criminal laws, including recently introduced industrial manslaughter offences that operate in Victoria, NT, WA, Queensland, and ACT at the time of writing (broadly, these offences expose individuals to significant penalties and possible incarceration for negligent conduct causing death in the workplace)
- Anti-discrimination laws (each Australian jurisdiction regulates discrimination based on specific protected attributes, including sex, race, and age)
- Employment laws (including measures to address workplace bullying under the Fair Work Act 2009).

## **WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **1. Responsibilities**

#### **1.1 The Chairperson & Committee Members will:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Consult with the House Manager about and participate in Goonawarra NH's workplace health and safety culture.
- Risk identification, assessment, and control principles are used to reach Goonawarra NH's health and safety objectives.
- Ensure all workers receive appropriate training on the policy, related procedures, and their obligations under workplace health and safety laws.

#### **1.2 The House Manager is responsible for coordinating health and safety management on behalf of the Committee of Management. The House Manager will:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Coordinate identifying, developing, implementing and reviewing workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
- Assist Goonawarra NH employees in identifying and assessing measures to control workplace hazards and risks to health and safety.
- Assist Goonawarra NH employees in monitoring and evaluating hazard- and risk-control measures.
- Identify, develop, and provide appropriate workplace health and safety-related information, instruction, and training.
- Monitor and advise on legislative and technical workplace health and safety changes.
- Monitor and report regularly to the Committee of Management on Goonawarra NH's workplace health and safety performance.
- Help employees and health and safety representatives to follow policies and safe work procedures.

### **1.3 Employees and Volunteers will:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Participate in workplace health and safety training, actions and activities and support Goonawarra NH in its efforts to achieve its workplace health and safety and, where relevant, rehabilitation objectives.
- Follow lawful and reasonable workplace health and safety instructions from managers or supervisors.
- Report any workplace incidents, accidents, injuries, or hazards to supervisors or the House Manager.
- Work in a way that does not endanger the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Properly use and maintain safety equipment.
- Make sure visitors follow safety rules in the workplace.

### **1.4 Contractors of, visitors to and volunteers of Goonawarra NH will:**

- Demonstrate a commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Follow lawful and reasonable workplace health and safety instructions from Goonawarra NH.
- Report any workplace incidents, accidents, injuries, or hazards to Goonawarra NH.
- Have control measures to address risks, including complying with relevant policies and practices.

**1.5** This procedure outlines the process Goonawarra NH and its workers should use to raise workplace health and safety concerns and how Goonawarra NH will respond.

**1.6** The Workplace Health and Safety Policy and related procedures will be displayed in the workplace, and all employees and volunteers will be provided with copies. New employees/volunteers will receive a copy of the documents during their induction.

## **2. Emergency Evacuation**

**2.1** Fires, bomb threats, gas leaks and similar incidents are workplace risks. Goonawarra NH will provide workers with information on emergency evacuation procedures to cover all identified scenarios relevant to the workplace.

**2.2** All workers must be aware of the procedures to follow if evacuation is required and follow any direction given by employer representatives in the event of an evacuation. All workers must participate as directed in any emergency evacuation drills.

## **3. Reporting**

**3.1** If an employee identifies:

- A workplace health or safety incident, accident, injury, or hazard, including a near miss.
- Any non-compliance with Goonawarra NH's Workplace Health and Safety Policy or Procedures

must be reported to the House Manager immediately.

**3.2** Where a hazard or near miss is identified and reported, the employee must submit an incident report to the House Manager, who will work with the employee to:

- Identify, assess, and select measures to control hazards and risks to health and safety.
- Monitor and evaluate hazard- and risk-control measures.

**3.3** Incident reports are available from the House Manager

**3.4** If the employee believes they have not received a satisfactory response or the hazard or risk still poses a threat, they can report these concerns to the Committee.

## **4. Workers' compensation**

**4.1** Suppose an employee develops an illness or injury in connection with work. In that case, they should report the incident to their supervisor immediately and consider whether to submit a worker's compensation claim.

## **5. Breaches**

**5.1** Any breach of this policy or associated workplace health and safety procedures may result in disciplinary action, including counselling, dismissal, or cessation of the person's engagement with Goonawarra NH.

## **6. First Aid**

**6.1** A first aid kit is located at the Office.

**6.2** All staff employed with Goonawarra NH are First Aid Qualified.

## **7. Emergency Contacts**

**7.1** Goonawarra NH must have details of the person/s whom each employee would wish to be notified in case of any emergency. Details will be noted in each employee's personnel file, and employees should inform the House Manager of any changes.

## **8. Related Documents**

Risk Management Policy

Bullying Policy

Anti-discrimination Policy