

CHILD SAFETY POLICY AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

This policy outlines Scenic Surrounds' expectations around child safety and the commitment to child safety expected by all Scenic Surrounds employees. Whilst we do not provide services that bring us into direct contact with children, at times we may attend sites where children are present. It is therefore important that we make clear our expectations around child safety.

- Scenic Surrounds is committed to child safety
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered
- We support and respect all children, as well as our employees and clients
- We are committed to the safety of all children
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures
- We have moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- Scenic Surrounds is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Scenic Surrounds has robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing employees
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM) backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our director/s and employees to achieve these commitments.

Training and supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Scenic Surrounds understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all director/s, employees, clients, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to fill the roles within our organisation. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legal responsibilities. Scenic Surrounds understands that when recruiting employees, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations to ensure there is no discrimination within our recruitment process. Candidates are assessed against a task related framework that is developed according to the position and job role. More than one interviewer assesses each candidate and scores each according to their fit for each selection criteria.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people who are engaged in work on sites where they may come into contact with an unsupervised child and who are not exempt, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check. For more information, please refer to the [Working with Children website](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/) <<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>>.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for staff and volunteers

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and reasonable to all employees and clients. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be employees, clients, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Scenic Surrounds are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

Legislative responsibilities

Scenic Surrounds takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police
- Mandatory reporting: due to the nature of services provided by Scenic Surrounds we do not fall under the mandatory reporting requirements
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Scenic Surrounds takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly.

We work to ensure all children, families, director/s, employees and clients know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.



Sven Andersen

Director

On behalf of **Scenic Surrounds**

Date: 17/07/2024

Review date: 17/07/2025