



SCREENING & SUITABILITY POLICY

1 Statement

1.1 Statement

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland (the Society) is committed to protecting the people it assists, particularly those that are most vulnerable (including children).

Due to the nature of the services the Society provides to those we assist, all Society Representatives are to be properly screened prior to membership, volunteering activity or employment to minimise risk both to those we assist and to the organisation and its people.

In selecting people for roles within the Society, whether as a member, volunteer, employee, consultant or contractor, the Society will take all reasonable steps to ensure that those who take on roles are fit and able to perform those roles. This requires assessment, not just of their skills, knowledge and experience, but also of any criminal history that would preclude them from undertaking the work required.

The Society will, as a minimum, comply with all legislative requirements and ensure that an effective process exists to manage the collection, assessment and record keeping of information gathered via Nationally Co-ordinated Criminal History Checks (Police Checks) and Working with Children Checks (Blue Cards).

This policy will override any prior practices relating to the requirement (or not) of any category of person, be that member, volunteer or employee, to undergo Police Check or obtaining of a Blue Card.

2 Scope

2.1 Scope

This policy applies to members (including volunteer members) and employees, as well as certain consultants and contractors.

3 Definitions

3.1 Definitions

In this Policy:

“**ACIC**” means Australian Crime & Intelligence Commission

“**Authorised Personnel**” means the Society Representatives identified in the first column of the table in clause 6.3;

“**Blue Card**” means a card of that name issued to the applicant following completion of a Blue Card Check and provision of a positive notice letter;



“**Blue Card Check**” means a working with children check conducted under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening Act 2000, to see if a person is eligible to work in child-related work;

“**Disclosable outcomes**” means police history information relating to a Society Representative or potential Society Representatives as detailed in a Police Check;

“**Employee**” means an employee of the Society;

“**Police Check**” means Nationally Co-ordinated Criminal History Check;

“**Review Panel**” means the group established under clause 4.2 to assess disclosable outcomes against the requirements of a Society position;

“**Screening Personnel**” means the General Manager People and Safety and designated People and Safety staff;

“**Society Representative**” means a member of the Society (including a volunteer member) or employee.

“**Vulnerable person**” means:

- a) a child under the age of 18, or children
- b) an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma, or disability, or any other reason.

4 Responsibility

4.1 Complying with legislation and ACIC requirements

The State Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Society has appropriate policy and procedures in place to protect the people it assists and to comply with all relevant legislation.

4.2 Review Panel

A Review Panel has been established to assess all disclosable outcomes on a case by case basis against the inherent or essential requirements of a Society position having regard to the criteria in clause 6.5. The Review Panel is made up of the following Society Representatives:

- c) General Manager People and Safety
- d) Senior Child Protection Officer
- e) Up to three Vincentian members of the Society as appointed from time to time by the State President of the Society



5 Checks

5.1 Undertaking Police Checks and Blue Cards Checks

The Society will undertake Police Checks on all Society Representatives and potential Society Representatives to ensure that the Society can meet its objectives under this Policy.

Where required by law, Society Representatives are to obtain Blue Cards and nominate St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland as an organisation of which they are a member, volunteer or employee.

The checks will be conducted on the following basis:

- a) All existing and potential Society Representatives must have a satisfactory Police Check and Blue Card Check (if applicable) in order to be engaged by the Society.
- b) Where a Society Representative has resided outside of Australia in the ten years leading up to the timing of the Police Check, the Society Representative may be required to provide a statutory declaration relating to any offences committed while outside of Australia.
- c) Police Checks will be conducted for all Society Representatives every 3 years.
- d) Society Representatives who are required by law to have a Blue Card must ensure it remains current, with any renewal costs reimbursed by the Society.
- e) Consultants and contractors engaged by the Society to provide services:
 - i. wholly or partially directed towards vulnerable people; or
 - ii. where required by law or the Society's contractual requirements with the government or third parties,
 - a. must have a current satisfactory Police Check and Blue Card (if applicable). Where consultants and contractors sub-contract such work to others, the Society will ensure that the contractual arrangements with those providers impose the same responsibilities as are imposed on the Society.
 - b. Subject to the Society's legal and contractual requirements, a police check will not be required if the contractor or sub-contractor:
 - iii. works under supervision of a Society Representative; and
 - iv. the work is for ten days or less on no more than two occasions per year.
- f) The Society will pay for all Society Representatives' Police Checks and Blue Cards. Contractors and consultants will be responsible for providing a valid copy of a current Police Check Certificate and must bear their own costs of Police Checks and Blue Cards.

All positions advertised externally will state that the Society requires Police Checks and where applicable, Blue Cards.

Candidates selected for interview will be advised that, in the event they are the preferred candidate for a position, a Police Check and Blue Card (if applicable) will be required and employment will be dependent on an assessment of the results.



5.2 Exceptions

No-one will commence in a role without a satisfactory Police Check and Blue Card Check (if applicable) other than:

- a) In circumstances where one or more of the following apply to the Society Representative:
 - i. The Society engagement or activity is of a “one-off” nature and does not involve any form of direct contact with vulnerable people’ (for example, annual assistance with packing of Christmas hampers, , assistance with CEO/community sleepouts)
 - ii. The Society Representative has been granted an Associate Life Membership and is no longer capable of undertaking Society activities
 - iii. The Society Representative has not attained 18 years of age at the time of undertaking the Society engagement or activity
 - iv. The potential Society Representative attends introductory Conference meetings in the capacity of guest for the purpose of meeting Conference members, gaining an understanding of the works of the Conference and deciding whether to join the Conference at the conclusion of those meetings. A guest is defined as a person attending a meeting for the purposes of discernment as outlined above for a maximum of 3 meetings.

Note: No personal information relating to a Vulnerable Person is to be disclosed to a potential Society Representative as part of a Society engagement until such time as a satisfactory Police Check is obtained.

- b) In exceptional circumstances, where there is a delay in obtaining the results of the Check, the Review Panel may approve the commencement of Society representative role.
- c) The General Manager People and Safety may waive the requirement for a Police Check in circumstances where:
 - i. the position requires a Blue Card;
 - ii. the employee holds a current Blue Card; and
 - iii. the General Manager People and Safety considers the positive notice issued for the Blue Card is sufficient to meet the Society’s screening and suitability requirements for the particular role.

If a Society Representative commits a serious or other offence during his or her role with the Society, the representative must give notification to Screening Personnel.

6 Procedures

The Society will arrange to conduct Blue Card Checks where required for a Society Representative.

Police Checks may be conducted by the Society or through another accredited body nominated by the Society. The Society will ensure it has guidelines in place to assist Society Representatives with the police check application process.

6.1 Authorised Personnel

Persons authorised by the Society to request, access or use information released under the Police Check process are:

Position	Role	Responsible for
<i>General Manager People & Safety</i>	Screening Personnel & Review Panel Member	Police Check process; authorising new 'screening personnel'; Review Panel
<i>Screening Officer</i>	Screening Personnel	Lodgement of Police Check applications; renewal checks
<i>HR/Payroll Officer(s)</i>	Screening Personnel	Lodgement of Police Check applications; renewal checks
<i>Senior Child Protection Officer</i>	Review Panel Member	Review Panel determinations
<i>Vincentian (appointed by State President)</i>	Review Panel Member	Review Panel determinations
<i>Diocesan President</i>		Risk Assessment
<i>Chief Executive Officer, Senior Executive</i>		Risk Assessment
<i>Executive Officer - Diocesan</i>		Risk Assessment

6.2 Results of Check

- a) Once a ACIC Police Check response is received, it will either report 'no disclosable court outcomes', or 'disclosable court outcomes'.

If the check reports no disclosable court outcomes, the Screening Personnel will advise the contact person that the member, volunteer, or employee may commence.

If the check reports disclosable court outcomes, these must be assessed and a decision on membership/placement/ employment made by the Review Panel after undertaking a risk assessment in consultation with relevant Authorised Personnel, which may include a Diocesan President and Executive Officer. The decision may involve making particular arrangements or imposing conditions under which the applicant will undertake the role or activity

- b) Despite clause 6.2(a), a disclosable court outcome involving an offence that:
- i. is not punishable by imprisonment
 - ii. has a fine under \$1500; and
 - iii. is not child-related may be assessed by the Chair of the Review Panel alone, without reference to the Review Panel.



6.3 Assessing the Checks

A criminal record is not generally an absolute bar to membership, volunteering or employment and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Review Panel. The Review Panel will undertake a risk assessment having regard to:

- a) Relevance: The type of conviction/s in relation to the duties the person is, or may be, undertaking, including any offence involving vulnerable persons. The Society will only have regard to criminal history information that indicates a person is unable to perform the inherent requirements of the particular activity.
- b) Access: The degree of access to people assisted by the Society and particularly vulnerable persons, their belongings and their information; whether the person will work alone or as part of a team; degree of direct supervision (quality and quantity); location of work (residential, community or home-based settings).
- c) Proportionality: The nature of the offence and the circumstances in which it occurred.
- d) Timing: The length of time that has passed since the person's conviction and the person's record since that time.
- e) Employment history: Whether the person has been employed since the conviction/s.
- f) Individual's information: Findings of any assessment reports following attendance at treatment or intervention programs, or other references; and the individual's attitude to the offending behaviour.
- g) Pattern: Whether the conviction represents an isolated incident or pattern of criminality.
- h) Likelihood: The probability of an incident occurring if the person commences, or continues with, particular duties.
- i) Consequences: The impact of a prospective incident if the person commences, or continues with, particular duties.
- j) Treatment Strategies: Procedures that will assist in reducing the likelihood of an incident occurring, including, for example, modification of duties.

6.4 Privacy/record keeping/storage/destruction

- a) The Society will keep records sufficient to demonstrate that:
 - i. all Society Representatives have Police Checks and current Blue Cards (if applicable); and/or
 - ii. applications for Police Checks and Blue Cards (if applicable) have been made where a member/volunteer/ employee does not have one.
- b) Information about a person's criminal record will always be stored in a private and confidential manner and used only for the purpose for which it is intended.

In this regard, the Society will take reasonable steps to:

- i. make sure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and up-to-date
- ii. protect the personal information it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure



- iii. destroy or permanently de-identify personal information if it is no longer needed for any purpose for which the information may be used or disclosed.
- c) The Society will comply with all ACIC requirements relating to the handling and retention of personal information and police information.

7 Review

This policy is subject to two-yearly review from the date of approval by the State Council.

Any changes to relevant legislation or statutory requirements will result in immediate review.

Any member, volunteer or employee who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the Owner.

8 Further Assistance

Any members, volunteers or employees who require assistance in understanding or interpreting this policy or its application, should first consult their manager/supervisor. Should further advice or clarification be needed, they should contact the relevant Senior Executive Group member, their service/department or the HR Department.

9 Related Legislation and Society Policies

The principal legislation which is relevant to Society Representatives and related to this Policy includes Privacy Legislation, Occupational Health and Safety Legislation and legislation relating to child safety and protection.

This Policy touches on the principles contained in a broad range of Society policies such as:

- a) Child Protection Policy
- b) Privacy Policy
- c) Recruitment & Selection Policy
- d) Data Breach Notification Plan
- e) Fraud Policy

Details of all Society policies can be found on the Society's intranet.



10 Approvals

10.1 Signatories

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Innes'.

Mr Dennis Innes

State President

Date: 2 March 2019

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Mercer'.

Mr Kevin Mercer

Chief Executive Officer