

Maccabi Australia Media Release
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Maccabi Australia releases its Member Protection Policy

Maccabi Australia (MAI) is pleased to announce the release of its Member Protection Handbook and with it a structure that ensures proper governance and process. The Handbook has been developed through extensive consultation with all State Maccabi Associations and clubs as well as with a number of eminent lawyers, psychologists and child protection experts. The Handbook is set out in three volumes. The first contains formal codes of conduct and member protection policies (MPP) and procedures that will apply across the entire organisation. The second volume is essentially a management tool kit, providing those charged with the responsibility to implement the tools to do so. The third volume contains The Rules that are to apply before a Grievance Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal.

This marks an important milestone for MAI - the Handbook is available on our website – www.maccabi.com.au.

“The process of consultation has been extensive and we believe that the end result is a document that clearly articulates our strong commitment to protecting and keeping safe all our members and ensuring that their rights and interests are protected as fully as possible.” Barry Smorgon OAM, MAI Chairman. “Implementation of the policies will ensure all participants enjoy their involvement with Maccabi in a safe, secure, inclusive and enjoyable environment.”

MAI has worked diligently in recent months to ensure that the broader Maccabi organisation is properly equipped to deal with any grievances that may emerge including child abuse, discrimination, bullying, drugs and alcohol problems. The handbook provides guidance to all those who are involved with the Maccabi organisation - athletes, administrators, coaches or other trained professionals, clearly spelling out their obligations under the codes of conduct established.

To ensure that the policy has credence and substance, a new compliance structure has been implemented to deal with any breaches of the new rules and the codes of conduct.

- Every club, where practical, will have a **Club Member Protection Compliance Officer**, who will be the first point of contact for any issues that may emerge.
- In the event that the clubs are unable to resolve the issue or the matter occurs at state level, the matter can be referred to a **Maccabi Integrity Officer (MIO)**. A group of highly credentialed people have been appointed to these roles:

National matters – Dr Yvonne Fayman

New South Wales – David Lewis

Queensland – Ashleigh Lewis

Western Australia – David Lenhoff

Victoria – Dr Lesley Braun

Should the matter remain unresolved, it can then be referred to a **Grievance Tribunal**. A number of highly respected independent persons have agreed to sit on the various Grievance Tribunals and Appeals Tribunal as follows, with others to be confirmed and appointed:

Maccabi Grievance Tribunals:

Victoria – Rob Goldstein LL.B (Chairman), Hani Greenberg,
Searle Batten and Jonathan Kaplan

Maccabi Appeals Tribunal – Alan Wein LL.B (Chairman)

- A National **MPP Sub Committee** has been instituted under the leadership of Philip Sheezel. Members of this sub- committee include Tom Danos (barrister), Nicki Isaacs (psychologist), Brian Swersky (Maccabi Victoria) and Joel Liebovitz (Maccabi NSW).

Smorgon thanked all of these passionate and wonderful people for their commitment to the Maccabi Australia MPP program. He indicated that these changes coupled with the training and education of Maccabi staff, volunteers, coaches and committee members is our highest priority and we are committed to making a difference. Importantly, he indicated that the education would reach out to all members and parents.

Maccabi Australia is committed to ensuring that every person who participates with our organisation is treated with respect and dignity, and is protected from discrimination, harassment and abuse. The safety, wellbeing and rights of all members, but most specifically children accessing services, events and activities undertaken by our organisation is paramount.

He noted further that whilst the member protection policies and procedures are now in place and will hopefully go a long way to help protect our members, everyone in and around the Maccabi organisation had an obligation to respect each other and to be attuned to any incidents that may result in a breach of members' rights and interests. "We are satisfied that if breaches do occur, Maccabi now provides processes and people to support our members to hopefully resolve the issues as they arise."

Barry Smorgon OAM (Chairman)

Lisa Borowick (President)

Any questions regarding this statement can be directed through Ellana Aarons, Executive Director Maccabi Australia on (03)9563 5865 or ellana@maccabi.com.au