

MEDIA RELEASE: 5 March 2014
For Immediate Publication



Maccabi Australia Member Protection Update

Maccabi Australia expects to receive the Independent Review Report, in relation to the abuse of club members in 2000, within the coming weeks. In the mean time we have continued to develop our policies and procedures, and begun the conversation with all our state and club representatives about the upcoming roll out.

The Board of Maccabi Australia (MAI) understands the importance of creating a safe, fair and secure environment for its members and all persons involved with our organisation on a national, state and club level. To this end MAI has for some time been developing formal codes of conduct and member protection policies (MPP) and procedures that will apply across the entire organisation. To oversee the development and implementation of these new MPP arrangements, a special MPP subcommittee headed by Maccabi Australia Board Member Philip Sheezel, a Director of the Maccabi Victoria Sports Foundation and Maccabi Victoria Past President has been established.

Other members of that committee include Max Futeran (Immediate Past President of Maccabi NSW), Tom Danos (Barrister), Brian Swersky (Chairman Maccabi Victoria) and Nicki Lefkovits (Psychologist).

The structure being implemented will see a Maccabi Integrity Officer (MIO) in place for each state as well as one appointed at the national level. A Grievance Tribunal, consisting of 3 independent persons, will also be established in each State to hear and determine any grievance or complaints made by or brought against a member. The MIOs will be the key contact for all Maccabi members, coaches, staff and volunteers. They will undergo specific training not only in understanding the Maccabi member protection policies and procedures but also will receive external training in areas such as safeguarding children and young people and dispute resolution procedures.

We are pleased that Alan Wein has kindly agreed to not only Chair the Appeals Tribunal which forms part of the MPP structures, but will assist in the roll out the training to all internal stakeholders. Alan Wein is a highly respected and qualified mediator and commercial lawyer. He is also a former Maccabi Victoria Board member.

Crucial to the training and education process in the roll out of this national MPP will be ensuring all club representatives and Maccabi members understand both their obligations and their rights. As this roll out occurs, we will encourage all members of the Maccabi community to take advantage of the training and information sessions that will be held.

MAI continues to consult with and develop its MPP policies with other community organisations. It is planned that the formal roll out of the MPP program will commence in the coming months. Protecting the interests of our members is the most important item on our agenda. First and foremost is the protection of the children under our care. We are committed to making sure that as far as possible our organisation provides its members with a completely safe and secure environment and that their rights are fully protected at all times.

Lisa Borowick President MAI
Barry Smorgon Chairman MAI

For any further information or enquiries regarding Maccabi's MPP program, please contact the Maccabi Australia Executive Director, Ellana Aarons on 03 9563 5865.