



Maccabi Australia Public Statement – 1 July 2014

In September 2013, Maccabi Australia appointed an ad hoc committee of review to investigate misconduct by Shannon Francis towards Maccabi members in 1999 and 2000 and related matters. In April 2014, Maccabi Australia received the committee's report. Maccabi Australia has been studying the report with some care, taking advice from various experts, and considering how to best implement the recommendations contained in the report. Maccabi Australia is now able to make a public statement about the matters contained in the report.

The independent committee, consisting of community leaders Nina Bassat AM, Harry Rosenberg and Daniel Aghion, spent considerable time conducting an investigation including the interview of witnesses. After their deliberations and based on their findings, the committee determined that whilst Maccabi as an organisation did not respond as it should have done, they found no evidence of a "cover up" in the sense of active concealment or a deliberate failure to act. They have provided a series of recommendations to ensure the better handling of such matters in the future. Maccabi Australia would like to thank Nina, Harry and Daniel for their commitment to this process, and for so generously giving of their time and expertise to this Committee.

As can be expected there was much for Maccabi to take on board with the findings and recommendations, all of which were unanimously adopted by the MAI Board.

"We are doing all we can as an organisation to learn from past events and we are currently working to put in place the best possible member protection policies and procedures that we can," Barry Smorgon OAM (Chairman Maccabi Australia) said.

Maccabi has committed to rolling out an extensive training program that will help educate everyone in a position of authority at all levels of the organisation about the Maccabi Member Protection Policy (MPP) and codes of conduct that they are required to adhere to and what they should do if any breach occurs. This includes coaches and other paid professionals as well as all Maccabi members and volunteers.

An entirely new MPP structure has been put in place. This includes Member Protection Compliance Officers at club level, State and National Integrity Officers as well as independent Grievance Tribunals and an Appeals Tribunal.

Overseeing the implementation and development of the Policy and its roll-out is a national MPP Sub-Committee, chaired by Philip Sheezel. This Sub-Committee will also monitor actual experiences at all levels to ensure that our MPP processes are up to date and that Maccabi continues to learn. Philip, along with Ellana Aarons and Maccabi Victoria's Jacque Lerner have completed the JCCV "Safeguarding Children in Organisations" Training Program, a program which the community in NSW is looking to provide for its organisations.

"Maccabi Australia sees this process as an opportunity to take on best practice and lead the community in the area of member protection, and specifically child protection. As the largest grass roots organisation in this country, we accept the responsibility of leading the way in ensuring our children and young people are safe," Smorgon said.



Smorgon went on to say, “We encourage those people who believe they have been abused to come forward, whether this abuse took place within or outside the Maccabi environment.-All members of Maccabi and the general community will be supported should they come forward. “

Smorgon and Executive Director MAI Ellana Aarons have recently met with the victims to work through the findings and recommendations of the Committee as well as the steps that have been undertaken in the meantime to develop the required systems, protocols and processes. Smorgon said that “MAI thanks the victims of Shannon Francis for having the courage to share with us what they have gone through so that we can learn from this most unfortunate incident and be in a better position to protect our present and future members. We hope that all Maccabi members embrace our member protection training and education program as it is rolled out over the coming months.”

To confidentially report an allegation of abuse within Maccabi, please contact Ellana Aarons on 03 9563 5865.

To report an allegation or seek support, you may also contact one of the following organisations:

- Jewish Care Victoria’s Front Door will ensure you are linked in with the supports that will listen, understand and assist you. Ph: 03 8517 5999
- Jewish Care NSW First Call on 1300 133 660
- Jewish Care WA on (08) 9275 6743
- Tzedek - 1300TZEDEK (1300 893 335) or info@tzedek.org.au

Questions regarding this statement to be directed to Ellana Aarons, Executive Director Maccabi Australia on 03 9563 5865