



Member Protection- In the News and In Maccabi

Issue 2: July 2014

A Maccabi Circular for all
Club Presidents and
Committee Members

Issued by:
Maccabi Australia Inc

**State budget report:
funding increases all
round for child
protection
authorities**

As you know, one of Maccabi Australia's major projects this year is working to increase the level of protection provided for our members while they are engaged in Maccabi activities. In doing this, we are reflecting the current trend of all state governments. Below, we report on recent government activity in this area, and Maccabi's progress in implementing stronger and better Member Protection Policies.

While there are already systems for working with children checks, the reporting of inappropriate conduct and other measures to protect children across Australia, there is increasing demand for the assistance of child safety authorities. For example, in Western Australia, a 25% increase in child protection notifications was seen from 2010-2011 to 2012-2013.

Recognising the need, each of the governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia has announced increases in funding for child protection authorities in their 2014-15 budgets. In summary:

Victoria: The Government has allocated an additional \$24.1 million to child protection, which will be used, amongst other things, to recruit at least 23 additional child protection workers. The Government has also announced that it will impose stricter child protection standards, including requiring more organisations and officers than previously to hold Working With Children Checks, and imposing a 'reportable conduct scheme' similar to that in place in NSW. These changes are discussed further below.

New South Wales: The Government has allocated an additional \$500 million (over four years) to fund child protection initiatives. This includes provision for 73 new caseworker support staff.

Queensland: The Queensland Government has indicated that an additional \$406 million (over five years) will be directed to create a better child protection system. In the 2014-15 financial year, amongst other things, \$6.5 million will go towards employing an additional 70 child safety officers.

Western Australia: The Western Australian Government has pledged an additional \$90 million (over four years) for child protection services.

Enhanced Protections in Victoria

The Victorian Government has announced it will introduce a reportable conduct scheme for organisations with a high level of involvement and responsibility for children. Under the proposed scheme, certain organisations will be required to report all allegations of child abuse to the Commission for Children and Young People. Additionally, the Child Safety Commissioner will be able to investigate an organisation's responses to allegations of abuse and the systems that they have in place for protecting children.

Child Protection Advocate for NSW

The *Advocate for Children and Young People Bill 2014 (Bill)* is likely to be passed by the NSW Parliament shortly. The Bill establishes the Advocate for Children and Young People (to replace the Commission for Children and Young People) to represent the needs and interests of children and young people, including advocating for and promoting their safety, welfare and well-being. The Bill also gives the relevant Minister power to require the Advocate to conduct a special inquiry into an issue affecting children or young people.

Roundtable on Working with Children Checks

On 16 June 2014, the Chair of the (National) Royal Commission, Justice McClellan, hosted a roundtable to discuss Working with Children Checks, and specifically, pre-employment screening for those who wish to work with children. Whether or not this will result in changes to working with children checks remains to be seen, but in the mean time, Justice McClellan's opening statement is available at:

<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/getattachment/04f7d736-d58b-492b-8df6-0205741cb836/Opening-Address>

Maccabi member protection initiatives

Over the past few months the Maccabi Australia Board has been working hard to put in place a range of member protection initiatives, a summary of which is set out below.

1. Philip Sheezel has been appointed to the Maccabi Australia Board to lead the development and implementation of the Member Protection Policy (**MPP**). Huge gains have been made in a short period of time as a result of his leadership.
2. The Independent Committee of Review chaired by Nina Bassat, the President of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, undertook a review of Maccabi Australia child protection activities and made a number of recommendations to the Maccabi Australia Board. Those recommendations were unanimously and formally accepted by the Board and they are currently being implemented. Implementation is expected to occur over the next 3 to 6 months. In accordance with these recommendations, we are currently proceeding with the following:
 - a) A new process has been established to handle all grievances regarding member protection issues. As part of this process, a Grievance Tribunal and a Grievance Appeals Tribunal have been established which are led by eminent members of the community who are independent of Maccabi.
 - b) MPP Integrity Officers have been, or are in the process of being, appointed in each state in which Maccabi operates, as well as nationally.

Maccabi member protection initiatives (cont.)

- c) A national MPP sub-committee has been established to manage the roll out of the MPP, and to make changes and update the MPP as required on a continuous basis.
- d) A comprehensive MPP Policy and Procedure Handbook (**Handbook**) is in its final stages of review and will be distributed to clubs in the coming months. Maccabi consulted both internally and externally to develop the Handbook.
- e) Following extensive stakeholder consultation, appropriate training will be delivered in conjunction with the Handbook to reinforce its content. We understand that without proper training at all levels, the Handbook (no matter how well written) will be ineffective.
- f) Victorian representatives have just completed the JCCV "Safeguarding Children in Organisations" Training Program, a five month program that is looking to be adapted for New South Wales organisations.

CLUB ACTION POINT:

Resolutions are required at the State and Club level to adopt the MPP at each level of the organisation. Below is a recommended resolution that we seek the passing of at upcoming Board meetings and AGMs as appropriate.

Suggested Resolution at the Maccabi State Level

The Board hereby:

- a) Adopts as By-Laws the Member Protection Policy (MPP) developed by Maccabi Australia Incorporated as attached and as amended from time to time by Maccabi Australia Incorporates;
- b) Endorses the MPP and agrees to take all steps necessary to immediately implement and comply with the MPP; and
- c) Requires that each member adopts the MPP as By-Laws, endorses the MPP and agrees to take all steps necessary to immediately implement and comply with the MPP.

The Board resolves that in the event of any conflict between any Grievance Procedures or Disciplinary Procedures set out in the Constitution or in its guidelines and rules of procedure and the MPP adapted by the Board from time to time, the MPP shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

Issued by:

Maccabi Australia Inc
Level 1 176 Bambra Rd
Caulfield South VIC 3162
P: 03 9563 5865



Lisa Borowick
President Maccabi Australia Inc

Barry Smorgon OAM
Chairman Maccabi Australia Inc

If you have any questions about member protection issues that are currently affecting your club, you can contact, via the office number, Ellana Aarons, Executive Director Maccabi Australia or Philip Sheezel, Chairman of the National MPP Sub Committee.