



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this policy is to ensure that *Wantaim PNG* takes all possible steps to ensure the protection of children against all forms of child abuse and that members and volunteers are skilled, confident and competent and well supported in meeting their protection responsibilities.

POLICY STATEMENT

Wantaim PNG considers child abuse unacceptable in all circumstances and takes its duty of care seriously and will always aim to provide the safest possible environments for children. This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) provides a foundation for *Wantaim PNG's* work. All *Wantaim PNG* members and volunteers have the responsibility to protect children "...from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".

Wantaim PNG is committed to ensuring that all possible and necessary steps are taken to realise the rights of children and to actively safeguard all children that we work with from harm.

Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for *Wantaim PNG* members and volunteers and upon or before election or appointment, each member or volunteer shall sign the Child Protection policy declaration (refer to attachment 1).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- *Wantaim PNG* believes that all children always have a right to be safe and *Wantaim PNG* has an obligation to provide child safe and child friendly environments and programs
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are made based on the best interests of the child.



Wantaim PNG

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all projects with children as target group and for:

1. *Wantaim PNG* members
2. *Wantaim PNG* volunteers, suppliers and supporters
3. *Wantaim PNG* visitors – these include people *Wantaim PNG* would invite to visit and support our programs onsite in PNG

All of whom are referred to collectively as ' *Wantaim PNG* Participants'.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

Wantaim PNG recognises that by the nature of its work it is at risk of being targeted by those wanting to exploit or harm children and that there are several potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs. *Wantaim PNG* understands that the effects of abuse on children are both devastating and long term. *Wantaim PNG* will not permit a person to work with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing. Therefore, *Wantaim PNG* undertakes the following preventative measures:

- Proactively assessing and managing risks to children in their programs (and in the communities in which we work) to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each stage of the project management cycle and its potential impact on children.
- Proactively assessing and managing risks to children in their sponsorship, marketing and communications, information, systems and technology and human resource operations
- Any *Wantaim PNG* Participant travelling to PNG for work involving children shall supply a current Working with Children Check
- Implementing new preventative measures when gaps are identified

As an organisation *Wantaim PNG* is to always be aware, vigilant and uncompromising when implementing our Child Protection policy. Members and others should continually be aware of risks, and be actively minimising opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS POLICY

It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee and President to ensure that all *Wantaim PNG* Participants:

- Sign onto and agree to abide by this policy and applicable local procedures
- Report any child abuse and protection concerns to the Executive Committee of *Wantaim PNG*, relevant local authorities and the police – this is a mandatory requirement and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action
- Cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations



Wantaim PNG

- Contribute to an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns and rights

For the recruitment of *Wantaim PNG* Visitors, each individual person must provide the following information, if they apply to work or travel with *Wantaim PNG*:

- Obtain and provide a federal police criminal record check
- Provide contact details of character referees
- Disclose whether they have been charged with child exploitation offences and their response.

Under this policy, it is the responsibility of the *Wantaim PNG* President and Executive Committee for each individual *Wantaim PNG* Visitor to:

- Ensure a documented federal police criminal record check has been received
- Contact and document the results of the conversation with the character referees
- Ensure a signed declaration of the *Wantaim PNG* child protection policy has been received

REPORTING

It is mandatory for all *Wantaim PNG* Participants to report concerns or allegations of child abuse that relate to a child or Participant involved with *Wantaim PNG* to the Executive Committee of *Wantaim PNG*, relevant local authorities and the police.

An allegation of child abuse is a serious issue. In following this policy and local procedures, it is essential that all parties maintain confidentiality. Sharing of information, which could identify a child, an alleged perpetrator or the informant/reporter could put them at harm so should be done so strictly on a 'need to know' basis. Unless abuse has actually been proved to have occurred, one must always refer to "alleged abuse".

Wantaim PNG will treat each report related to child exploitation and abuse confidentially and seriously. Where there is a complaint against a *Wantaim PNG Participant*, there may be 3 types of investigation:

- Criminal investigation
- Child protection investigation
- Disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice as opposed to a suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse, the *Wantaim PNG* President will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the allegation is about poor practice by the *Wantaim PNG* President, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to



Wantaim PNG

the *Wantaim PNG* Executive Committee who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by a *Wantaim PNG* Participant, will be investigated further and *Wantaim PNG* will notify relevant law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

For details on how to report concerns or allegations of a child exploitation and abuse incident, please refer to attachment 2.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every five years or sooner if deemed necessary to assess its effectiveness, appropriateness and accuracy.

POLICY AUTHORISATION

Policy Owner	President <i>Wantaim PNG</i>
Approved By	Executive Committee <i>Wantaim PNG</i>
Approval Date	06.07.2023
Review Date	no later than 30.06.2028



Wantaim PNG

Attachment 1: DECLARATION

As an international development organisation, committed to the wellbeing of amongst other children and to supporting the Convention on the Rights of the Child, *Wantaim PNG* does not tolerate child abuse.

All *Wantaim PNG* Participants¹ involved in projects with children as target group should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as *Wantaim PNG* representative and a positive role model to children. *Wantaim PNG* Participants must be concerned about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children.

Wantaim PNG Participants should seek to maintain *Wantaim PNG*'s professional reputation and uphold the principles of *Wantaim PNG*'s Child Protection policy.

As a *Wantaim PNG* Participant I will:

- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values of *Wantaim PNG*
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, and volunteers
- Report any concerns or allegations of child abuse immediately to the Executive Committee of *Wantaim PNG*, relevant local authorities and the police
- Treat all children with respect regardless of gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background
- Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of child abuse allegations being made
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- Use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium
- Comply with all relevant Australian and overseas legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Consult with the Executive Committee of *Wantaim PNG* if I have any questions regarding child protection and how it relates to my work/relationship with *Wantaim PNG*
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures

¹ This includes:

1. *Wantaim PNG* members
2. *Wantaim PNG* volunteers, suppliers and supporters
3. *Wantaim PNG* visitors – these include people *Wantaim PNG* would invite to visit and support our programs onsite in PNG



Wantaim PNG

As a *Wantaim PNG* Participant I will not:

- Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent locally – mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitive or abusive
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom I am working with
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment to, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Hire children as ‘house help’ or engage in any form of commercial exploitation of a child or provide shelter for children in their home in inappropriate circumstances
- Invite or have an unaccompanied child/ children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- Use *Wantaim PNG*’s computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or young people
- Disclose information that identifies children or their families or make it available to the general public

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Wantaim PNG

Attachment 2: REPORTING CHILD ABUSE INCIDENTS

You should report any behaviour that you suspect may be child exploitation and abuse, including possession of child exploitation material, or policy non-compliance by any *Wantaim PNG* Participant.

Any report made to you by anyone relating to child exploitation and abuse or policy non-compliance by a *Wantaim PNG* Participant.

If you are unsure what you have seen is child exploitation and abuse, please contact the *Wantaim PNG* President for confidential advice and further information about what constitutes child exploitation and abuse or policy non-compliance.

To report a child abuse incident, please provide as much information as possible, including:

- date(s) of incident(s)
- location and activity where the incident happened
- alleged offender's details, including name, nationality and occupation
- details of alleged incident(s)
- whether local law enforcement authorities or Australian Federal Police have been informed
- any other relevant information.

All information provided under the Child Protection Policy will be treated confidentially in accordance with relevant Commonwealth legislation, including the Privacy Act 1988.

A child abuse incident can be made by emailing a report to info@WantaimPNG.org or via mail:

Wantaim PNG Inc
PO Box 1301
Manly NSW 1655