



## HARM PREVENTION POLICY

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### 1. PURPOSE

The Older Women's Network Qld Inc (OWNQ) recognises that it is exposed to certain harmful risks due to the nature of its activities in the environment in which it operates. The key to the success of OWNQ is the effective management of harmful risks to ensure that its objectives are achieved. Members, service users, paid and unpaid staff, volunteers, contractors and other stakeholders may experience or be dealing with the consequences of actual or potential harm during their involvement with our service. These incidents may be directly or indirectly related, or entirely unrelated, to our service provision. Whatever the circumstances, we have a responsibility to our stakeholders to ensure their safety and prevent harm whenever this is possible.

It is essential therefore that we identify when and how harm might occur to our stakeholders and design and implement appropriate harm prevention and minimisation strategies.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy will apply to all stakeholders who come into contact with the Older Women's Network Qld (OWNQ).

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy should be applied in conjunction with OWNQ Risk Management Policy.

OWNQ is committed to protect its stakeholders when they have contact with the organisation and take all possible action to prevent harm by undertaking the following actions:

- (a) assessing the risk of harm and taking into account all potential risks in the service environment
- (b) identifying and documenting the range of circumstances within and outside the service where the safety or wellbeing of stakeholders may be compromised
- (c) taking action to reduce the potential for harm to stakeholders and to ensure their safety within the service
- (d) informing stakeholders about the ways their safety and wellbeing will be protected, and any actions they are required to take or not take while using the service
- (e) minimising the risk of aggressive behaviour or physical threat
- (f) minimising the range of other health and safety risks that could arise in the service or activity environment
- (g) reviewing the approach to harm prevention regularly, and particularly after any critical incident has occurred.

### **4. PROCEDURES**

#### **4.1 Assessing and reviewing the risk of harm**

##### **4.1.1 Supervision of Activities**

Staff or specified volunteers must provide supervision during OWNQ activities which adheres to uphold the following principles:

- (a) No theft, vandalism, aggression or violence
- (b) No racist, sexist, intimidatory or discriminatory behaviour
- (c) Provision of a safe environment for all stakeholders
- (d) Ensuring staff/volunteer numbers are adequate prior to conducting an activity or event

##### **4.1.2 Staff and Volunteers**

- (a) Staff and volunteers will be made aware of occupational health and safety issues as they apply to working at OWNQ.
- (b) All staff and volunteers are to be made aware of the OWNQ grievance procedures.
- (c) All staff will be offered regular training and supervision .

#### **4.1.3 Nature of the service or activity and physical surrounds**

- (a) Refer OWNQ Risk Management Policy No 21. Risk Analysis is to be undertaken prior to conducting specific significant events.
- (b) Refer OWNQ Workplace Health & Safety Policy No 54 - care must be taken to ensure that the premises being utilised for administration or activities are a safe environment.

#### **4.2 Informing stakeholders about harm prevention rights and responsibilities**

Stakeholders have a right to be protected from harm to their safety or wellbeing, and they have a responsibility to play an active role in protecting themselves and others from harm. OWNQ must inform stakeholders of these responsibilities by such actions including:

- (a) Housekeeping prior to the commencement of an activity advising fire evacuation procedures, location of restrooms and any other circumstances that may arise during the event.
- (b) Workplace Health & Safety Policy to be included on OWNQ's Website.
- (c) Notices displayed at activities reminding stakeholders of their responsibilities.

#### **4.3 Minimising and responding to aggressive behaviour and physical threat**

OWNQ must promptly respond to aggressive behavior or other physical threat towards stakeholders to prevent harm being caused. All stakeholders are to treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, appearance or presumed mental state. In the event of an incident staff or volunteer should try to defuse the situation if and where possible.

When situations become threatening or violent:

- (a) call for assistance (security or the Queensland Police Service) and give details of the location and nature of the incident and seek to remove self and others from danger, or risk of further danger.
- (b) stay out of danger if not directly involved and leave the area if safe to do so.
- (c) assess the situation carefully before undertaking any physical intervention – physical intervention will only occur as a last resort, when no other option seems viable, or in order to prevent serious injury.
- (d) where injuries have occurred, only attempt assistance where there is no risk – do **not** place more people in danger.

#### **4.4 Minimising and responding to other risks to safety and wellbeing**

- (a) Premises used by OWNQ for administration or activities must be inspected by the lessor annually and all issues relating to building safety remedied as soon as is practical
- (b) Building electrical services and fire protection services are inspected at the required intervals
- (c) First aid kits are maintained at an adequate level, with usage recorded and replenished as soon as is practical
- (d) Adequate signage is provided indicating emergency evacuation procedures, and all incoming staff are made aware of emergency procedures
- (e) Emergency telephone numbers are prominently displayed in administration and activity areas
- (f) All first aid procedures are undertaken using protective gloves and antiseptic hand wash is provided

#### **4.5 Review of Harm Prevention Processes**

Processes, Policies and Procedures that deal with Harm Prevention must be reviewed on an annual basis - in conjunction with the risk assessment that is provided to the Management Committee - Refer OWNQ Risk Management Policy

#### **4.6 Reporting of Risks and Incidents**

This policy requires volunteers, members, stakeholders and staff to report internally a wide range of incidents and information, so that the necessary assessment of the OWNQ response, (e.g. reporting to external authorities) can be made. Examples of incidents to be reported may include:

##### **4.6.1 General incidents**

- (a) Any incident where emergency services are called or present.
- (b) Unconsciousness or fainting episode.
- (c) Any incident which might be a critical incident for OWNQ, regardless of whether it occurred on OWNQ premises or during work time, or not.

##### **4.6.2 Vehicles**

- (a) Accidents
- (b) Damage

##### **4.6.3 Accidents/Incidents**

- (a) Minor injuries
- (b) First aid
- (c) Incorrect medication taken
- (d) Medical treatment
- (e) Accidental fires (however brief)
- (f) A serious incident or emergency on an excursion or activity

#### **4.6.4 Crime**

Any crime on OWNQ premises or during OWNQ services and activities.

#### **4.6.5 Violence**

- (a) Assault or other violence.
- (b) Verbal abuse, aggressive or threatening behavior.
- (c) If a person has a weapon.
- (d) Violence against property.
- (e) Deliberately lit fires.

#### **4.6.6 Threats**

All threats, regardless of how serious the risk level implied might be, including:

- (a) verbal threats,
- (b) phone threats,
- (c) threats passed on by another person,
- (d) threats against property,
- (e) threats of suicide or self-harm,
- (f) any situation where you feel unsafe.

#### **4.6.7 Discrimination or Harassment**

Discrimination against or harassment of any person is not tolerated. Report it regardless of whether the offender or victim is a stakeholder, a staff member, a volunteer or anyone else at OWNQ.

#### **4.6.8 Poor staff interactions with clients and the public**

If you believe that a volunteer or staff member's disrespectful or aggressive manner or poor interpersonal skills may seriously increase the risk of violence, report it to the Coordinator.

#### **4.6.9 Complaints and allegations**

Complaints and negative comments or feedback about OWNQ or its volunteers or staff (written or spoken). Allegations of unprofessional conduct about staff (written or spoken).

### **4.7 Incident Form**

All incidents must be reported by completion of an Incident Report Form.