

# Rotary Club of Elizabeth

## Rotary District 9500 HARASSMENT POLICY

### **PURPOSE**

The Rotary Club of Elizabeth is committed to ensuring its members and visitors are not subjected to any forms of harassment.

### **SCOPE**

This document applies to all Members and Visitors.

### **LEGISLATION AND REFERENCE**

- Commonwealth Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Commonwealth OHS&W Act 1986
- South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984

### **DEFINITION**

Harassment consists of unwelcome, offensive, abusive or threatening behaviour, including sexual harassment and bullying. Harassment may include:

- Unwelcome physical contact
- Insulting or threatening language or gestures
- Continual unjustified comments about a person's work or work capacity
- Jokes and comments about someone's ethnic background, colour, race, or religion
- Offensive communications, such as pictures, posters, letters, e-mails
- Demeaning comments, insults, taunting, name calling or innuendos
- Deliberate withholding of important information
- Sabotaging of work, such as hiding documents, changing figures
- Exclusion from meetings or social events or not speaking to the victim
- Spreading gossip or false rumours
- Dangerous practical jokes or rituals

### **Harassment is NOT:**

- Administrative action by those in authority
- Appropriate performance evaluation as a volunteer
- Consensual relationships

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every member is responsible for ensuring that harassment does not occur within the club meetings or any other activity of the club. Any member becoming aware of any type of harassment must take the complaint seriously and the Club President or appropriate delegate must be notified of all complaints immediately.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **What can you do if you think you are being harassed?**

- Tell the person that the behaviour is offensive, and ask for it to stop. This could be done alone, or with a friend or member for support.
- If the behaviour does not stop, or you feel unable to approach the person responsible for the harassment, seek advice from the club President. The president can help you look at your options and will support you in the action you decide you want to take.
- If necessary, make a formal complaint to the President or appropriate delegate who will deal with the matter seriously, quickly, impartially and confidentially.
- Assault is a criminal offence and victims are advised to report the offence to the police.

## **Making a Complaint**

- Any member who believes that he/she is being harassed has the right to come forward and make a complaint to the Club President or appropriate delegate.
- While the Club would prefer to deal internally with complaints and is committed to doing so efficiently and sensitively, you may also lodge a complaint of harassment with the Equal Opportunity Commission.

## **Receiving a Complaint**

- If a complaint has been made the Club President or appropriate delegate will proceed to investigate the matter in the manner requested by the complainant. The complainant may choose to bring another person to the interview. The President or appropriate delegate will get a broad outline of the grievance, then a systematic account.
- Accurate notes will be taken using the complainant's own words where possible, these details will be checked with the complainant and his/her permission asked to proceed with the matter. The investigation will proceed promptly and confidentially.

## **Investigating the Complaint**

- The President or appropriate delegate will interview the alleged harasser, separately and impartially. He/she will be told exactly what he/she has been accused of and will be given the opportunity to respond fully to the allegations.
- If appropriate, the Club President or appropriate delegate will interview any witness to the alleged incident(s). Accurate notes will be kept of all discussions regarding this matter.

## **Complaint Substantiated**

- If the complaint has been substantiated both parties will be notified of the decision and the reasons for it.
- Immediate and appropriate steps will be taken to prevent the behaviour from recurring and, if appropriate, the harasser will be counselled and maybe requested to leave or request to leave the club.
- The complaint and its resolution along with any comments/response that the harasser wishes to make will be placed on the harasser's club record files. These notes will remain on file for a pre-determined time depending on the severity of the offence.
- If the person remains within the club after one month the Club President or appropriate delegate will check to see that, the behaviour has stopped and that the solution is working satisfactorily.

## **Complaint not Substantiated**

- Where the investigation fails to substantiate the complaint, both parties will be informed explaining the finding.
- The complainant will be informed of his/her right to take the case to the Equal Opportunity Commission if dissatisfied.

## **VICTIMIZATION**

- Victimization is unlawful under the South Australian Equal Opportunity Act and the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act.
- If a person, in good faith, makes an enquiry or a complaint, the law makes it clear that there must be no victimisation of that person, or of anyone else who gave information about the complaint.
- Victimization is treated very seriously and will not be tolerated.

## **REVIEW DATE**

The review date of this document will be December 2013 in the absence of any change in legislation, Australian Standard or Code of Practice that affects this policy or where the Rotary Club of Elizabeth deem it necessary.