



Youth and Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

This Policy outlines the principles guiding the Housing Industry Association Limited's (HIA) approach to child and youth safety and protection.

2. Background

2.1 About HIA

HIA is a national, membership based building industry association. HIA operates on a not-for-profit basis.

HIA's membership predominantly comprises builders, trade contractors, manufacturers and suppliers and allied building professionals.

HIA has offices in all Australian states and territories and conducts operations across a number of areas including policy, research and advocacy; membership services and commercial services. These functions are shared amongst a number of different business units.

HIA's mission is to promote policies and provide services which enhance our members' business practices, products and profitability, consistent with the highest standards of professional and commercial conduct.

2.2 HIA's operations and involvement with youth and children

In the normal course of business, HIA does not interact with children, aged between 0 to 14 years. Additionally, the majority of HIA operations and staff do not have any contact or involvement with youths under the age of 18.

All financial members of the Association are members as business entities. All natural persons who are financial members are adults.

Whilst HIA does not primarily provide services to children, young people under the age of 18 may interact with HIA in the following circumstances:

2.2.1 HIA Apprentices

HIA operates a Group Training Organisation (GTO) business that involves employing apprentices for the purposes of increasing skills and workforce development in the residential building industry and placing those apprentices with host trainers who provide on the job training and day to day supervision of the apprentice.

HIA has a category of membership available for apprentices. A small percentage of HIA's apprentices are aged between 16 to 18 years of age. This includes some apprentices employed as 'school based' apprentices.

HIA staff may also, on occasion, attend schools and 'career and trade fairs' to promote potential careers in the building industry.

2.2.2 HIA Training

HIA operates a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) business that delivers qualifications, programs and structured training to individuals and participants in the building industry. The majority of training is delivered to adult students.

HIA does however, on occasion, deliver training to youths aged under 18 years, including via a small number of 'Vocational Education and Training' (VET) in schools programs and to private students enrolled for qualifications such as general WHS-related construction induction (white card) training.

Occasionally such training may be delivered on HIA premises (such as at HIA's Darwin Skills Centre) or offsite.

2.2.3 HIA Youthbuild

The HIA Youthbuild Foundation (Youthbuild) is a HIA charitable initiative in which young people learn and gain practical experience in the building industry.

Youthbuild most recently undertook a program of educational activities at a purpose built facility at Claremont College in Tasmania.

2.2.4 Funded programs activities

On occasion, HIA will deliver or participate in funded programs or activities that may involve the potential for interaction with youths aged under 18 years.

This has previously involved the delivery of Commonwealth funded mentoring to apprentices. A small number of apprentices were aged under 18 years.

In 2020, HIA was appointed by Icare (NSW Government insurance agency) to undertake a social media based behaviour change strategy to empower and increase engagement of young workers in site safety. This three (3) year project may involve some interaction with youths aged under 18 years.

3. Scope

This Policy covers all HIA employees, students, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors and affiliates to the extent they are involved in child-related work.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

Adult means any person over the age of 18 years old.

Apprentice includes trainees.

Child or Youth (or children) means any person under the age of 18 years old.

Child-related work means work requiring direct contact with a child or children including:

- physical or face-to-face contact;
- oral communication;
- written communication; and
- electronic communication.

Contact does not include providing information to children on HIA's website or through other means where there is no direct exchange of information or communication with a child. Contact must be direct and not incidental to the work.

5. Relevant Legislation And Standards

Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019

6. Policy Statement

HIA is committed to creating environments that are safe for children, young people and vulnerable people.

HIA acknowledges that the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019 (the National Principles") define an environment that is safe for children and young people as being one where:

- child safety and wellbeing is consciously considered and promoted;
- engagement with children and young people is genuine and valued;

- conditions within the environment reduce the likelihood of harm while increasing the likelihood that any risks of harm will be identified; and
- any concerns, allegations or disclosures made about the risk of harm are dealt with appropriately.

Where HIA activities directly involve children or reasonably anticipate the presence or potential involvement of children a risk management approach should be implemented by the relevant business unit involved to ensure the environment and the activities are appropriate and safe.

7. Implementation of National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019

National Principle	HIA's policies and procedures
<p>National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Policy is available and accessible to the public, on HIA's website, and is reviewed regularly. • This Policy is distributed to all new and existing staff via HIA's intranet. • All staff are required to act in accordance with HIA's Staff Code of Conduct, and associated policies, procedures and processes (including this Policy). • This Policy has been endorsed by HIA's Board of Directors. • HIA's Leadership (the Board and Senior Management) are committed via this Policy to ensuring child safety and wellbeing. • Staff involved in child-related work to be given training on children's rights, child safety and wellbeing. • Where HIA's activities directly involve children or reasonably anticipate the presence or potential involvement of children an appropriate risk management approach is to be implemented by the relevant business unit involved to ensure the environment and activities are appropriate and safe. • HIA Apprentices is accredited under the National Standards for Group Training and commits to maintaining compliance with these standards.
<p>National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIA has previously mentored over 6,000 young apprentices and provided pastoral care and guidance to over 20,000 HIA Apprentice employees. Functions of this mentoring and pastoral care include informing young apprentices of their rights and responsibilities, informing youth of their safety obligations and providing mental health assistance. • Prior to commencing an apprenticeship with HIA, HIA apprentices are informed of their employment rights and responsibilities, inducted on safe work practices and provided appropriate safety equipment and training. • Continuing feedback is sought (and received) from HIA's apprentices from their HIA field officers regarding their health, safety and wellbeing. • HIA Apprentice field officers additionally liaise with apprentices on mental health issues, bullying, harassment, depression and suicide prevention.
<p>National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the normal course of business, HIA staff have very little contact with parents or the broader community in the context of youth and no contact in regard to children under age 15. • The occasions when HIA does occasionally or potentially have the opportunity to connect with parents is at school career events, when HIA is employing apprentices or when delivering training to youth aged 16-18 years. • Parents and guardians may interact with HIA when giving consent for their child's participation in HIA activities. • HIA undertakes to provide clear and accessible information to parents and guardians about their child's participation in HIA activities.

<p>National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIA has a proven track record of equity and diversity. These principles are embedded in HIA’s daily operations and procedures and its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy. HIA is compliant with Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting requirements. • HIA has also undertaken a range of government and training levy funded special projects targeting disadvantaged, diversity and indigenous outcomes and priorities. • When conducting activities with children, HIA will ensure that the physical, online, and social environment is respectful, culturally safe and inclusive.
<p>National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported for any work involving children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where child-related work is an inherent requirement of their role, HIA employees and contractors are selected having undertaken appropriate police checks, referee checks and training in accordance with the ‘working with children’ statutory requirements that apply from state to state. • HIA maintains records of relevant staff qualifications, training and police checks.
<p>National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIA takes complaints from children and their parents or guardians seriously and envisages to deal with them promptly. • HIA Training has an ASQA endorsed formal complaints procedure as part of their Registered Training Organisation (RTO: 1091) status. • HIA Apprentices constantly handle apprentice concerns, some of which may be deemed complaints, and have youth friendly processes in place for dealing with these concerns/complaints. • Any serious allegations or disclosures are escalated to HIA’s Chief Executive – Infrastructure & Culture.
<p>National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training opportunities are embedded into HIA’s culture and staff policies. HIA Training and HIA Apprentices undertake continuous professional improvement practices for staff and contractors. • Staff who are, or will be, working with children will specifically receive resources and training on specific child safety policies and procedures relevant to their work. <p>Note: the majority of HIA staff and contractors do not have interaction with children (0-14). Only a small percentage of staff have interaction with youth (15-17).</p>
<p>National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children do not routinely attend or access HIA’s premises. • Most child-related activity occurs off-site - HIA does not host career expos or school students and HIA youth apprentice employees perform their work on their host trainer’s building site or otherwise undertake off the job training at a TAFE. • For those physical environments where youth under 18 years of age may access HIA facilities and face to face contact is involved (such as HIA’s Darwin Skill Center), HIA undertakes a risk assessment process to identify any child safety risks. • Host trainers of HIA’s employed apprentices are required to conform to HIA’s requirements and must adhere to their obligations under the applicable WHS legislation and any other law or legislation applicable to safety. • Online activity involving children is limited and must at all times be consistent with HIA’s social media policies. • For those projects or programs that involve social media or online contact with children, HIA will obtain parental or guardian consent to gather and use personal and sensitive information has been gained from children.

<p>National Principle 9: Implementation of national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Policy is subject to review on an annual basis. • Risk assessment for child related work will be undertaken by those HIA business units involved prior to the commencement of any new activity. • In the event issues are identified through feedback, internal processes or because of changes in the external legislative or regulatory requirements, an out of cycle review or amendment will take place.
<p>National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document is publicly accessible through HIA's website. • Other policies and procedures, and further information, are available to guide staff in meeting their obligations under this Policy.

8. Complaints and Reporting of Incidents

Reports, complaints or allegations relating to children who interact with HIA may be made to the Chief Executive – Infrastructure & Culture.

All such complaints will be treated as confidential.

Depending on the nature of the matters alleged, the complaint may be investigated in accordance with HIA's Employee Complaints and Grievance Policy.

For allegations of abuse, inappropriate/indecent contact or where breaches of legislation may be evident, HIA will be required to notify the police and other relevant statutory authorities and/or agencies.

9. Changes to this Policy

HIA may amend this Policy from time to time, and the amended Policy will be published on our website at www.hia.com.au. Any changes will be effective as of the date they are posted on this page.

10. Related Policy, Procedure and Other Documents

- HIA Staff Code of Conduct
- Employee Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Privacy Policy

Document Control

Policy Owner: Legal/Governance

Current Version: 1.1

Effective Date: 10 June 2021

Last Review Date: 23 November 2023