



RANZCO

The Royal Australian
and New Zealand
College of Ophthalmologists

Child Protection Policy

Approved by: Board

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1. Purpose and scope

RANZCO does not tolerate child exploitation or abuse, and recognises that there are a number of potential risks to children in the delivery of projects, particularly to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. It is a shared and collective responsibility of all adults to prevent child exploitation and abuse. RANZCO is committed to preventing and responding to child exploitation and abuse.

This policy aims to protect children from exploitation and abuse of all kinds in the delivery of RANZCO's activities. It also serves to provide a risk management framework for RANZCO in relation to child protection, and clear guidelines and expectations for staff and others. RANZCO has developed this policy in-line with the Australian Government aid program's Child Protection Policy.¹

This policy applies to all staff and others. 'Staff' refers to: full time, part time, international and national and also those engaged on short term contracts such as: consultancies, researchers, photographers etc. 'Others' refers to: visitors, volunteers, Board members, trustees, staff in partnership agencies, and any other individuals or groups that have contact with the organisation.

2. Definitions

Child

In line with the Australian Government aid program's definition of 'child',¹ RANZCO considers a child to be a person under the age of 18 years.

Abuse

Child exploitation and abuse traumatises children and adversely affects their development and well-being. Abuse includes:

a. Physical Abuse

The use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. This may include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling or poisoning.

b. Emotional Abuse

Inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. This can damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.

c. Neglect

Failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where possible) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being.

d. Child Sexual Abuse

The use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or older child/adolescent. This can include physical acts as well as voyeurism, exhibitionism and exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography.

3. Key principles

- RANZCO does not tolerate child exploitation and abuse. Such actions will result in criminal, civil and/or disciplinary sanctions. RANZCO will not knowingly engage anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children.
- RANZCO is committed to upholding the rights and obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,² and recognises that some children, such as those with a disability are particularly vulnerable.
- RANZCO requires the commitment, support and cooperation of staff and others to effectively manage risks to children. Staff and others must meet the terms of this policy and will be held accountable for compliance.
- Careful management, including risk assessment, can reduce risks to children that may be associated with RANZCO activities.
- Fair and proper procedures are followed when decisions are made affecting the victims and their families, witnesses and alleged perpetrators.

4. Recruitment practices

RANZCO is committed to child-safe recruitment, selection and screening processes. These processes are essential to ensure the most appropriate person is chosen for a position that involves contact with children.

Recruitment procedures for international volunteers must include:

- Documented criminal record checks before engagement for personnel who will be in contact with children. This may include the Australian Federal Police Code 28 check, which can be applied for online, or the equivalent in New Zealand. RANZCO will reimburse this cost upon receipt of the record check and invoice.
- Documented verbal referee checks.
- Interview plans incorporating behavioural-based interview questions that are specific to positions that involve working with children.

- A documented request for an applicant to disclose whether they have been charged with child exploitation and their response.
- A requirement for all staff and others to read and sign the RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct (Attachment A).
- Procedures to ensure that breach of the RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct will result in dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties. This is outlined in RANZCO employment contracts.
- Recognition that RANZCO holds the right to prevent a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.

5. Reporting of alleged exploitation or abuse

It is mandatory for all RANZCO staff and others to report:

- Any behaviour that is suspected to be child exploitation and/or abuse, including possession of child exploitation material or policy non-compliance by staff or others.
- Any report made to them that relates to child exploitation and/or abuse or any other policy non-compliance by staff or others

Reports are to be made to the RANZCO Chief Executive Officer, using the *Reporting of Suspected Child Exploitation and Abuse* form (Attachment C)

Any employee who intentionally makes false and malicious allegations will face disciplinary action.

Where appropriate, children and community members with whom we work will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about staff and others.

5.1 Reporting Process

- RANZCO will take all concerns and reports of child exploitation and/or abuse seriously and act on these immediately.
- Implementation of the reporting process must respect the rights and safety of the alleged victim and alleged offender.
- All reports should be handled confidentially.
- All steps taken should be documented and a final case report should be prepared upon conclusion.
- Appropriate support should be arranged for people affected e.g. counselling.
- An initial assessment will be made based on the information provided and a decision will be taken (in consultation with the RANZCO Chief Executive Officer) on next steps. Legislation will guide the process, which will depend on whether the allegation constitutes a criminal offence, or whether it is a breach of the RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct. The latter will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

- RANZCO will reflect on lessons learned through the management of the allegation and assessment process.

5.2 Relevant Laws

State and Territory laws provide legal protection to children and families that are affected by child exploitation and/or abuse that occurs in Australia. Reports of child exploitation or abuse by staff or others will be reported to the relevant State or Territory police.

When working outside Australia, staff and others are required to abide by local legislation. Under Australian Commonwealth law, an Australian citizen or resident can be prosecuted for an offence committed against a child in another country.

For further information about what constitutes child exploitation and/or abuse, or policy non-compliance, contact the RANZCO Chief Executive Officer or Project Officer Asia Pacific.

6. Educating the Organisation

RANZCO is committed to educating staff and others about their responsibility to protect children and how to create child-safe environments. This includes how to report concerns or allegations about child exploitation and/or abuse.

7. Review

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed every three years. A review may be initiated earlier at the direction of the RANZCO Chief Executive Officer.

8. References

1. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2013/2014) *Child protection policy for the Australian Government's aid program*. Available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/child-protection-policy.pdf> (Accessed: 18 May 2016).
2. United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (Accessed: 18 May 2016).

9. Record of amendments to this document

Page	Details of Amendment	Date amended
Entire document	Created	30/05/2011
Entire document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Updated to align with AusAID Child Protection Policy 2013	10/09/2013
Entire document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ReviewedMinor changes throughoutReferences updated	07/2016

Attachments:

Attachment A: RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct

Attachment B: Photography Release Form

Attachment C: Reporting of Suspected Child Exploitation and Abuse Form

Attachment A

RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct

The RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct applies to all staff and others. 'Staff' refers to: full time, part time, international and national and also those engaged on short term contracts such as: consultancies, researchers, photographers etc. 'Others' refers to: visitors, volunteers, Board members, trustees, staff in partnership agencies, and any other individuals or groups that have contact with the organisation.

RANZCO staff and others involved in activities which potentially involve children must read, understand and sign this declaration.

I agree that as a representative of RANZCO I will:

- Treat children with respect and without discrimination.
- Not use language or behaviour toward children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including for payment.
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not sleep close to children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission.
- Not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras or social media appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children.
- Not access child exploitation material through any medium.
- Not use physical punishment on children.
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including laws in relation to child labour.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and/or abuse, and any suspected Child Protection Policy non-compliance, in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence relating to child exploitation and/or abuse, whether the offence occurred before or occurs during my association with RANZCO.

When photographing or filming a child or using children’s images for work related purposes, I must:

- Understand and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions relating to the capture and use of images of children.
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent/guardian of the child before photography occurs.
- Ensure that children are presented in a dignified and respectful manner, and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Ensure that images are honest representations of the facts.
- Ensure that any file labels, metadata and text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

I have read and understood the RANZCO Child Protection Policy and RANZCO Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Attachment B

Photography Release Form

Name of author/photographer and organisation represented:

Location of photograph: _____

Date captured: _____

Name of person(s) featured in photograph: _____

Age of person(s) featured in photograph: _____

Eye condition and treatment provided (where relevant):

Description of activity (eg. teaching visit) (where relevant):

If a minor is photographed, authorisation is required from their parent/care provider

I understand that the pictures taken may be used for publication and/or projection by means including newsletters, annual reports, scientific journals and conference presentations for purposes such as reporting on eye care activities, medical education, raising awareness or raising funds.

Name of subject or care provider: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form via email to: Attn: General Manager – Communications, at:

ranzco@ranzco.edu

ATTACHMENT C

Reporting of Suspected Child Exploitation and Abuse Form

This form is to be completed as soon as possible after becoming aware of a potential breach of the RANZCO Child Protection Policy. Send completed reports to the Chief Executive Officer, RANZCO.

Please ensure that all information contained in this report remains confidential.

PART 1: Your details

Name: _____

Your role with RANZCO: _____

PART 2: Details of alleged offender

Name: _____

Nationality: _____

Occupation: _____

PART 3: Alleged incident(s)

1. Date(s) and place (s) of incident(s):

2. Details of alleged incident(s):

3. Have relevant law enforcement authorities been informed, or other actions been taken?

4. Other relevant information?

- I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information above is true and accurate.
- I understand that it is my duty at all times to ensure that the rights of children are held paramount.
- I understand the serious implications in falsely accusing or reporting staff or others of actual, or suspected child exploitation or abuse.

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____