



ALOLA AUSTRALIA LIMITED CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Alola Australia Limited ('Alola Australia') works in partnership with Fundasaun Alola, a Timorese NGO, to make positive and sustainable changes in the lives of women and children in Timor-Leste.

Alola Australia and our supporters raise awareness and funds to support Fundasaun Alola's mission which is to promote women's rights and increase women's leadership capacity; improve the health status of women and children; increase access to, and quality of, education for women and children; and strengthen women's small enterprises at the grassroots level. Fundasaun Alola's core values and principles are equality, justice, participation, and respect; and teamwork and voluntarism are critical elements to Alola's achieving its mission.

1. Introduction

Alola Australia recognises the rights of children, the importance of empowering women and strengthening participation in community development.

In realising its commitment to children, Alola Australia has developed a Child Protection Policy and Procedure (the Policy). This policy is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by both Australia and Timor-Leste, and which defines children as all people under the age of 18 years.

'Protection' refers to the actions designed to protect children from all forms of harm and exploitation - physical, neglect, emotional and psychological, sexual or racial, cultural and religious.¹ The Policy also gives particular attention to the protection of children at risk of, or who have experienced, abuse as a result of child trafficking, child pornography and child-sex tourism.

Alola Australia's status as a company registered in Australia makes it essential that the board demonstrate its commitment to protect children from harm or exploitation. A clear statement of policy on Child Protection forms part of this commitment.

2. Context

The Policy exists within the context of the Relationship Agreement between Fundasaun Alola and Alola Australia, and applies to all activities undertaken as part of that partnership.

It is expected that the primary settings in Australia where the requirements of this Policy are applicable, are as follows:

- Alola Australia's use of children's photos on its website, social media, annual report and any other communications/publications
- In-person events where children are in attendance (recognising this is expected to be in the presence of a parent or other responsible carer)

This Policy will also apply to any representative of Alola Australia undertaking activities in Timor-Leste.

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19 and other including Commission for Children and Young People 2015 guide to creating a child safe organisation.

The Policy is intended to also describe requirements in the manner of a procedure in order to simplify and streamline Alola Australia’s governance documentation.

3. Scope

Noting the context and settings referred above (section 2), this Policy applies to:

- The Board of Directors of Alola Australia
- The Members of Alola Australia, including but not limited to, Avos
- Any employees or contractors engaged by Alola Australia
- Any volunteers acting on behalf of Alola Australia
- People or organisations approved to raise funds for Alola Australia.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Policy does not apply to Fundasaun Alola, which has its own Child Protection Policy (as noted in the Relationship Agreement between Fundasaun Alola and Alola Australia).

4. Goal

The overall goal of the Policy is to protect children from abuse of all kinds in the delivery of Alola Australia’s activities whether in Australia², Timor-Leste or any other country.

5. Guiding principles and statement of responsibility

The Policy is guided by a set of principles derived from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- **All children have the right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation:** Alola Australia actively seeks to prevent and will not knowingly engage anyone (as a contractor, employee or volunteer) who poses an unacceptable risk to children, or support activities which pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- **A rights based approach to child protection policy and services:** Alola Australia is guided by the rights of the child in relation to its activities in Australia and its support of Fundasaun Alola in their work with the women and children of Timor-Leste
- **Child protection is a shared responsibility:** Alola Australia works in partnership with Fundasaun Alola to promote awareness of child protection issues and compliance with our respective child protection policies.
- **Zero tolerance of child exploitation and abuse:** Alola Australia does not tolerate child exploitation and abuse. Alola Australia works to reduce the risks of child exploitation and abuse associated with delivering development activities and educates its staff on their obligations. Alola Australia will not knowingly engage—directly or indirectly—anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children.

6. Policy implementation and monitoring

6.1. Policy responsibility

The Convenor of Alola Australia’s Audit Risk Management Committee (ARMC) is responsible for the implementation, ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the Policy. Responsibilities include the ongoing review of other existing and new policies and proposed projects to ensure that they are assessed in terms of presenting any risk of non-compliance with this Policy.

6.2. Education and promotion

Alola Australia, in partnership with Fundasaun Alola, will maximise opportunities to promote awareness of child protection issues and programs within the respective organisations, through community events and programs and publications including electronic media. This Policy will be referenced on the the Alola Australia website.

² Adapted from the Australian Government’s Child Protection Policy for the Australian Government’s aid program, originally released January 2013 and reprinted June 2014

6.3. Recruitment and selection

The Policy will be sent to position applicants and new volunteers as appropriate. Alola Australia commits to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children, on the basis of their criminal record, references, interviews, disclosures or complaints made in relation to them.

Recruitment and selection processes include an assessment of attitudes to children's rights and responses from referees that relate to working with or volunteering with children.

A National Criminal Record Check is required for all Alola Australia directors at appointment and reappointment, and *may* be required for Avos, members and volunteers depending on the nature of the work they undertake on behalf of Alola Australia (this will be determined by the ARMC). If any person who has provided a National Criminal Record Check becomes aware of a change in their criminal record, they must immediately inform the board of Alola Australia of their changed status. Failure to comply with this requirement will lead to immediate expulsion from the Board or membership.

If any of these individuals will be working directly with children, they will be required to undergo and provide evidence that they have obtained a relevant 'working with children' check.

Alola Australia reserves the right to show these National Criminal Record Checks to the DFAT, or other regulatory body, on request.

6.4 Fundraising approval processes

Individuals or organisations who seek to hold a fundraiser for Alola Australia will be provided a copy of this Policy, and notified of our obligation to ensure that all activities do not directly or indirectly jeopardize the safety or well-being of children.

6.5 Code of conduct

All current and potential Board Members, company Members, employees, contractors and volunteers who come into contact with children in the course of their volunteering will be required to read and accept the Alola Australia child protection policy and code of conduct (Attachment A).

6.6 Procedures for handling complaints / non-compliance

Any complaints or instance of potential (or actual) non-compliance with this Policy should be made in writing to the Convenor of the ARMC and must be investigated by a Board member nominated by the ARMC. The existence of the complaint, the investigation of the complaint and the resolution of the complaint must be the subject of a written report to the Board in line with privacy principles.

Alola Australia will report any reasonable belief of a criminal offence and cooperate with law enforcement agencies in investigating any breaches child protection laws.

6.7 Use of child photos and stories

Alola Australia will not use inappropriate or exploitative images of children or any other image that does not respect their right to privacy and dignity. Images of children taken and used in any form of publication by Alola Australia will be with the child and/or child's guardian's informed consent. Noting this requirement is also present in the Fundasaun Alola Child Protection Policy, Alola Australia will deem this requirement to be met, for all photos/images of children provided from Fundasaun Alola.

7 Review mechanisms

The Policy will be reviewed every three years (or earlier if required update(s) are identified) by the ARMC (with recommendation to the Board).

8 Definitions

Avo refers to 'grandmother' or adviser, as defined in the Alola Australia Constitution, whose function will be to provide the Board and all Members of the Company with wise counsel on the Company's activities, especially on matters that require sensitivity and reconciliation.

Member means a person who is a member of Alola Australia Limited.

Volunteer is a person recruited or appointed by Alola Australia to carry out the work of Alola Australia.

9 Document Control and Record of Variation

Title	Child Protection Policy
Policy Authorised by:	Alola Australia Board of Directors
Date authorised:	19 July 2021
Date to be reviewed:	July 2024

Version	Variation made	Date
01		20/06/2011
02	Policy Redraft – Claire Cunliffe	10/08/2015
03	Inclusion of definitions; and updated to reflect current best practice standards	20/03/2017
04	Policy Redraft – Helen Skinner	17/05/2021

10 References

- Fundasaun Alola and Alola Australia Ltd 'Relationship Agreement' unsigned version, current as at April 2021 AA Board meeting;
- Australian Government DFAT Child Protection Policy January 2009, reprinted 2014
- Fundasaun Alola Child Protection Policy, August 2015
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNICEF 2005, UN Human Rights standards and mechanisms to combat violence against children. Innocenti Research Centre, Italy
- UN Sustainability Development Goals
- <https://www.childwise.org.au/page/42/state-legislation-reporting-vic>

Attachment A:

Alola Australia - Child Protection Code of Conduct³

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Alola Australia Child Protection Policy and agree that while implementing Alola Australia activities I will:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- Adhere to Alola Australia’s child protection policy
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treat everyone with respect and inclusiveness
- Respect the privacy of children and their families
- Encourage the participation of children in Alola activities
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- Not groom or engage children in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts. I understand that mistaken belief of the age of the child is not a defense;
- Not breach any child protection laws or lore
- Not initiate or engage in unnecessary physical contact with children
- Not use any computers, mobile phone, or video and digital cameras inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to 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;
- Not have any unauthorized contact with children, develop a ‘special’ relationship or show favoritism
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- Immediately report any concerns or allegations of child abuse to a police and a member of the Board of Alola Australia; and
- Immediately disclose to the Alola Australia Board all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with Alola Australia that relate to child exploitation and abuse.

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

- Assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used;
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children 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 seen as sexually suggestive;
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form; and
- I understand that the onus is on me to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when undertaking Alola Australia activities.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

³ This code of conduct is derived from the DFAT Child Protection Code of Conduct (reprinted June 2014) with minor changes – and Commission for Children and Young People *a guide for creating a child safe organisation* 2015.