
VQ Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy: VQ Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment
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1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Equal Opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy (Policy) is to formalise Volleyball Queensland's (VQ) commitment to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all workers that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in any form.

VQ is an equal opportunity employer and will provide equality in employment and engagement. Employment and engagement decisions relating to appointment, promotion, transfer, training and development opportunities will be determined according to performance, individual merit and competence. VQ will give every worker a fair and equitable opportunity to apply for these opportunities and to pursue their career as effectively as others.

Regarding sexual harassment, VQ has a positive duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate, as far as possible, sexual harassment and certain other conduct contrary to that Act, including harassment on the grounds of sex. In accordance with section 55H of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld), VQ has prepared and implemented a Prevention Plan for Managing Sexual Harassment or Sex or Gender-Based Harassment at Work. The Prevention Plan details VQ's risk management approach, control measures, and review procedures.

VQ also has a positive duty to prevent bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) under Work Health and Safety laws, as they are psychosocial hazards that pose a risk to workers' physical and psychological health.

This Policy forms part of VQ's broader psychosocial risk management framework under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld), and is to be read in conjunction with the Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022 (Qld).

2. Commencement of this Policy

This Policy will commence from 15 July 2026. It replaces all other equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, bullying and harassment and sexual harassment policies, (if any and whether written or not).

This Policy operates in conjunction with VQ's Prevention Plan for Managing Sexual Harassment and Sex or Gender-Based Harassment at Work, which is required under section 55H of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld).

3. Application of this Policy

This Policy applies to all VQ's officers, employees, contractors or volunteers, collectively referred to as "workers".

This Policy does not constitute a representation by VQ or give rise to contractual obligations. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment nor any other workplace participant's contract for service.

4. Prohibition of Bullying and Harassment

VQ considers bullying and harassment of any type unacceptable, and it will not be tolerated. Further, bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) is unlawful under the following legislation:

- a) *Anti-discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*;
- b) *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*;
- c) *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*;
- d) *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*;
- e) *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*;

- f) *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth); and*
- g) *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld).*

Every worker covered by this Policy is not permitted to engage in conduct that is prohibited by this Policy.

Workers are encouraged to report any conduct which they think is prohibited by this Policy to their managers/supervisors, either as a formal complaint or to merely bring the matter to VQ's attention. VQ will then determine whether to take the matter further and, if necessary, investigate and take action to stop or re-dress any bullying or harassing conduct.

5. What is the "Workplace"?

For the purposes of this Policy, the "workplace" includes any place where work is carried out for VQ, including VQ offices and facilities, off-site locations, remote and home-based work environments, work-related events and functions including conferences, client and internal dinners, lunches, social gatherings, and VQ activities.

This Policy also applies to digital and online environments, including email, messaging platforms, social media, video conferencing tools, and any other communication channel used in connection with work.

Conduct covered by this Policy does not need to occur during business hours to be covered.

6. What is Unlawful Discrimination?

This Policy prohibits discrimination. Discrimination occurs when a worker or job applicant is treated less favourably than others based on personal characteristics protected by law.

Protected personal characteristics under federal and Queensland discrimination law include:

- a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury;
- parental status or status as a carer;
- race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background;
- age, whether young or old;
- sex;
- industrial activity, including membership of a trade union;
- religion;
- pregnancy and breastfeeding;
- sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual;
- marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto or same-sex relationship;
- political opinion;
- social origin;
- medical record; and
- an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics.

The above list is not exhaustive but outlines the common characteristics protected by law. It is also unlawful to treat someone less favourably because you assume they have a protected characteristic or may have it in the future.

Discrimination can occur:

Directly, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law. For example, a worker is refused promotion because of their age or cultural background.

Indirectly, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a protected characteristic. For example, redundancy decisions based on workers' compensation history rather than merit.

Discrimination can cause significant harm to workers and to VQ. It can create an unsafe working environment, result in the loss of trained and talented workers, the breakdown of teams and individual relationships, and reduced organisational performance.

7. Requirements of supervisors and managers

In the context of VQ, supervisors and managers include both paid staff and people in voluntary leadership or coordination roles. See Appendix A for examples of who may hold a supervisory or management role at VQ.

Supervisors and managers are required to:

- a) model appropriate standards of behaviour;
- b) take steps to educate and make workers aware of their obligations under this Policy and the law;
- c) intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour;
- d) act fairly to resolve issues and enforce workplace behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard;
- e) help workers resolve complaints informally;
- f) refer formal complaints about breaches of this Policy to human resources;
- g) ensure workers who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised;
- h) ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made; and
- i) seriously consider requests for flexible work arrangements;
- j) make reasonable adjustments to accommodate workers with a disability or other protected characteristic where it is reasonable and practicable to do so;
- k) ensure workers are aware of and have access to the Prevention Plan; and
- l) participate in reviews of the Prevention Plan and support the implementation of control measures.

8. Requirements of Workers

VQ requires you to:

- a) not engage in discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or any other conduct prohibited by this Policy;
- b) treat all people with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times;
- c) respect each other's privacy and avoid offensive comments or behaviour, including in digital and online communications;
- d) report any incidences of prohibited conduct in the workplace;
- e) offer support to anyone who is experiencing discrimination, bullying or harassment and let them know where they can get help and advice;
- f) maintain complete confidentiality of information and cooperate during the resolution or investigation of a complaint; and

- g) familiarise themselves with the Prevention Plan and follow all control measures implemented.

9. Recruitment and Equal Opportunity

VQ is committed to recruiting all workers on the basis of genuine merit and suitability for the role, without discrimination of any kind. Recruitment and selection processes will be transparent, consistent and inclusive, ensuring equal opportunity for all applicants regardless of personal characteristics.

The following practices will apply:

- a) when advertising roles, clear and accurate position descriptions will be provided to outline required skills, experience and responsibilities;
- b) during interviews, only information relevant to the role and necessary to assess suitability will be requested;
- c) all recruitment decisions will be based on merit, skills, experience, qualifications, demonstrated abilities, and the requirements of the position;
- d) reasonable adjustments will be made in the recruitment process to accommodate applicants with disabilities or specific needs; and
- e) workers will be promoted based on merit, skills, experience, abilities and the requirements of the position.

10. General Equality

VQ aims to fulfil its obligations under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth) by developing and implementing a workplace program that will mitigate discrimination and contribute to gender equality in employment. Accordingly, VQ aims to:

- eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender in relation to employment matters;
- promote and improve gender equality in employment and in the workplace;
- support employees in removing barriers to the full and equal participation of all genders in the workforce; and
- foster workplace consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in employment and in the workplace.

11. What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

Workplace bullying and harassment is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

Examples of bullying and harassment include but are not limited to:

- abusing a person loudly, usually when others are present;
- repeated threats of dismissal or other severe punishment for no reason;
- constant ridicule and being put down;
- leaving offensive messages on email, messaging platforms or by telephone;

- sabotaging a person's work, for example by deliberately withholding or supplying incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, or not passing on messages;
- maliciously excluding and isolating a person from workplace activities;
- persistent and unjustified criticisms, often about petty, irrelevant or insignificant matters;
- humiliating a person through gestures, sarcasm, criticism and insults, often in front of others;
- spreading gossip or false or malicious rumours about a person with the intent to cause harm; and
- online or digital behaviour including sending offensive messages, excluding someone from group communications, or using workplace technology platforms to harass or intimidate.

The above examples may be regarded as bullying and harassment if the behaviour is repeated or if it occurs as part of a pattern of behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Workplace bullying and harassment is not:

- legitimate and reasonable management action such as actions taken to transfer, demote, discipline, redeploy, retrench or dismiss a worker, provided they are conducted in a reasonable manner;
- a single instance of inappropriate behaviour (unless it includes physical abuse or exceptionally cruel or malicious behaviour); or
- acts of unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment, which are addressed separately in this Policy.

Workers who experience bullying may become distressed, anxious, withdrawn or depressed, and may lose self-esteem and confidence.

12. What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome sexual behaviour that could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written.

Sexual harassment can include:

- comments about a person's private life or the way they look;
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring;
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging;
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes;
- displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects;
- repeated unwanted requests to go out;
- requests for sex;
- sexually explicit posts on social media or messaging platforms;
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life;

- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or digital communications;
- inappropriate advances on social media or online platforms;
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites in the workplace; and
- behaviour that may also be considered an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour at the time does not mean they are consenting to it.

Sexual harassment is covered by this Policy when it happens at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the same workplace, or between colleagues outside of work, including in online and digital environments.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment. It does not need to be repeated.

All incidents of sexual harassment, regardless of their perceived severity or who is involved, require workers and managers to respond promptly and appropriately.

VQ recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person may offend another. This Policy requires all workers to respect other people's limits.

Sexual harassment does not include behaviour that is genuinely welcomed or consented to, either expressly or by clear implication.

13. What is Sex or Gender-Based Harassment

Sex or gender-based harassment is the harassment of a person on the basis of their sex or gender, by unwelcome conduct of a demeaning nature, with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the person, or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have anticipated the person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct.

Examples of sex or gender-based harassment include:

- denying opportunities or promotion based on gender or perceived gender;
- excluding someone from social events or team activities based on their gender;
- making negative comments about a worker's gender identity; and
- questioning whether someone is capable of a role based on gender stereotypes.

14. Vilification

This Policy prohibits vilification. Vilification is public conduct that incites hatred, severe contempt, or severe ridicule of a person or group on the grounds of their race or religious beliefs or activity. Conduct may be constituted by a single occasion or by a number of occasions over a period of time. It includes use of the internet, including social media, or email to publish or transmit statements or other material. Vilification is unlawful under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld).

15. Psychosocial Hazards and Risk Management

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment are psychosocial hazards under the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Qld). VQ has a duty to identify, assess, eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks so far as is

reasonably practicable, in accordance with the *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022* (Qld).

- VQ will manage psychosocial risks using the hierarchy of controls, which requires VQ to first consider eliminating the hazard, then substituting or isolating it, then implementing engineering or administrative controls, and finally considering personal protective measures as a last resort.
- VQ will consult with workers and their representatives when identifying psychosocial hazards, assessing associated risks, and determining and reviewing control measures.
- Control measures for psychosocial hazards will be monitored and reviewed regularly, and following any incident, report or change in workplace circumstances that may affect their effectiveness.
- Psychosocial risk management at VQ is a shared responsibility. Managers and supervisors have specific obligations set out in the Requirements of Supervisors and Managers section. All workers have obligations set out in the Requirements of Workers section.

16. Victimisation

This Policy prohibits victimisation of a complainant, the respondent or any person who acts as a witness to a complaint.

Victimisation means to subject a person to detriment because they made or are a witness to or otherwise involved with the complaint. If a complaint of victimisation is made, it will be dealt with according to the complaint's resolution procedure set out below.

17. Complaints Resolution Procedure

The objectives of the complaint resolution procedure are to:

- provide a mechanism within which individuals can raise a legitimate complaint without fear of retribution and have it effectively handled.
- provide an opportunity for individuals to be made aware of their unacceptable behaviour and to take corrective action; and
- prevent the behaviour from reoccurring while respecting the rights of both the complainant and the respondent; and

VQ encourages workers to raise any complaints early, so it can advise the complainant of the options under the complaint's resolution procedure. VQ considers it is easier to resolve a problem if it is raised early.

VQ confirms that all complaints will be treated seriously and dealt with promptly.

To address a range of circumstances, the complaints resolution procedure set out below has an informal process and a formal process.

17.1 Informal complaint

The complainant may approach the respondent to advise them that their behaviour is not appreciated, and the complainant would like it to cease.

It is often the best way to resolve a complaint and to move on. The respondent may not realise that the complainant is offended by their behaviour, and this gives them the opportunity to take corrective action with fewer people involved.

If the conduct does not stop, the complainant may raise a formal complaint.

17.2 Formal complaint

A formal complaint may be lodged:

- without the informal process being undertaken; or
- where the informal process did not produce a resolution.

As a guide:

- formal complaints should be made to supervisors or managers
- VQ will consider and appropriately investigate the complaint if it is deemed appropriate in the circumstances
- depending on the circumstances of the complaint, the respondent may be sent home on full pay during the investigation
- the complainant may be asked to clarify or provide more detail in relation to the complaint.
- details of the complaint will be communicated to the respondent, and they will be given the opportunity to respond
- other witnesses may be interviewed and evidence considered; and
- VQ will form a view as to whether the complaint is substantiated and the appropriate outcomes
- where an incident constitutes a notifiable incident under the WHS Act, VQ will comply with its mandatory reporting obligations to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.
- the complainant may be supported by a health and safety representative; and
- the complainant may use the issue resolution and dispute resolution procedures in Part 5, Divisions 5 and 7A of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld).

18. Possible Outcomes of a Complaint

If the complaint is found to be unsubstantiated, no further action will be taken unless it is found to be frivolous or vexatious, in which case disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

If a complaint is substantiated, the possible outcomes include:

- providing the complainant with counselling or time off work.
- action to redress the respondent's conduct/behaviour
- mediation
- an apology
- transferring the complainant or the respondent to a different work location or area
- giving the respondent a verbal or written warning
- terminating the employment/engagement of the respondent, including summary dismissal; and
- other disciplinary action.

19. Sexual Harassment Prevention Plan

VQ has developed and implemented a Prevention Plan for Managing Sexual Harassment and Sex or Gender-Based Harassment at Work in accordance with section 55H of the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Qld). The Prevention Plan:

- identifies specific psychosocial risks in VQ's workplace, including risks arising from sexual harassment and sex or gender-based harassment;
- details control measures for each identified risk, applied in accordance with the hierarchy of controls;
- sets out consultation procedures with workers and their representatives;
- documents VQ's monitoring and review processes; and
- is readily accessible to all workers through VQ's internal document management system.
- All workers must familiarise themselves with the Prevention Plan.

20. Review of Prevention Plan

The Prevention Plan will be reviewed:

- as soon as practicable after a report of sexual harassment or sex or gender-based harassment is made, to assess whether existing control measures remain adequate;
- if a health and safety committee or health and safety representative requests a review;
- if there is a change in the workplace, work practices or workforce that may affect the risk of sexual harassment or sex or gender-based harassment; and d. at least every three years.
- Any changes made to the Prevention Plan will be communicated to all workers. The Prevention Plan may be updated separately from this Policy in accordance with review requirements.

21. Support and Protection

All VQ workers are protected from victimisation or any form of adverse treatment when making a bullying or harassment complaint. Confidential support is available to every member of the VQ workforce. Details of the EAP, which provides free and confidential counselling and support services, are available from your manager or via the VQ website. Workers may also seek external support and information from the following bodies:

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ): www.worksafe.qld.gov.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au
- Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland: www.adcq.qld.gov.au
- Fair Work Commission (for workplace bullying orders): www.fwc.gov.au

22. Liability

You may be liable for breach of this Policy and the law if you engage in bullying or harassment in breach of this Policy or you request, instruct, induce, encourage, authorise or assist another person to engage in such conduct. VQ officers may also face personal liability under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) for failure to exercise due diligence in relation to psychosocial risks.

23. Breach of this Policy

Failure of any worker to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include summary dismissal.

24. Effect of this Policy

This Policy may be raised by VQ in legal proceedings, but it does not create or contribute in any way to legally binding obligations on VQ.

25. Questions

If you have any questions about your rights or obligations under this Policy or the effect of this policy, you should speak to your direct Manager or CEO.

26. Variations

VQ reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this Policy from time to time.

27. Related Documentation

- VQ Prevention Plan for Managing Sexual Harassment and Sex or Gender-Based Harassment at Work
- VQ Bullying and Harassment Policy (superseded by this Policy)
- VQ Disciplinary Policy
- VQ Complaints Handling Procedure
- VQ Code of Conduct
- VQ Child Safety Policy
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)*
- *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022 (Qld)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*

Appendix A: Examples of Supervisors and Managers at VQ

The following table provides examples of roles that may carry supervisory or management responsibilities at VQ, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This list is not exhaustive. A person holds a supervisory or management responsibility where they have oversight of other workers, volunteers or participants, or where they are responsible for directing or coordinating the work or conduct of others.

Role	Capacity	Supervisory Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer	Employee	Oversight of all VQ staff and operations
Competitions and Events Manager	Employee	Oversight of competitions team and casual event workforce
Events Lead	Employee	Supervision of casual event staff on competition days
Venue Supervisor	Voluntary	Day-to-day supervision of rosters/breaks at tournaments and events
Referee	Voluntary	Direction and oversight of athletes and assistant coaches
Board Member	Voluntary	Governance oversight of the organisation
Committee Member	Voluntary	Oversight within the scope of the relevant committee's responsibilities