

FemiliPNG Australia (FPNGA) is an Australian not-for-profit that works in partnership to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

FPNGA is a rights-based organisation; we all have the right to a life free of family and sexual violence. Our work is focused on creating and sustaining change, on building and maintaining partnerships, and on supporting locally-led development.

1. Statement of FemiliPNG Australia's commitment to child safeguarding

FPNGA recognises that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)) is the foundation of child safeguarding. All rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children. Of specific relevance to our work and this Child Safeguarding Policy, FPNGA recognises that children have the right to life, survival and development (article 6), to freely express their opinions (article 12), to protection from violence (article 19), exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation (article 34, 35 & 36).

FPNGA has zero tolerance to attitudes or behaviours that could or do result in the harm, abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation or sexual exploitation of children by our personnel, representatives, partners or stakeholders.

FPNGA is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that all children and young people with whom we work (both here in Australia and overseas in our development programs) are always provided with a child-safe environment. FPNGA has zero tolerance of inaction and slow or inadequate responses to suspected, reported or actual breaches of this Policy.

Anyone, at any time can report a child safeguarding concern, raise an issue or get in touch with us by email report@femilipngaus.org, or through our website <https://femilipngaus.org/making-a-complaint/>

2. Purpose of the policy

The primary purpose of this Policy is to keep children safe. In addition, this Policy seeks to:

- Create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.
- Provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations relating to the safety of children, including reporting harm, abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation and sexual exploitation or policy non-compliance.
- Demonstrate FPNGA's commitment to implement policies and procedures that promote the safeguarding of all children.
- Demonstrate our commitment to the Australia Council for International Development's [Code of Conduct](#), and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy (2017).

FPNGA is required to adhere to national, local and international child protection criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children. These include local laws where our programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

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3. Guiding principles

3.1 Zero tolerance of inaction on child abuse

Any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable. FPNGA has zero tolerance of inaction. This means FPNGA will act on every allegation in a fair and reasonable way with due regard for procedural fairness.

FPNGA will not permit people who present a risk to children to work for or represent our organisation. FPNGA will ensure that all staff and representatives, new and existing, are made aware of this Policy and their responsibilities to safeguard children.

Adherence to this Child Safeguarding Policy is a mandatory requirement for all personnel and representatives.

3.2 Child rights

FPNGA is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of all children, including the right to safety, without fear of abuse or exploitation, and to have their views heard on matters affecting them, as enshrined in the [CRC](#).

FPNGA believes that all children should be equally protected regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, age, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status, physical or mental health, criminal background or for any other reason.

3.3 Duty of care

FPNGA recognises its duty of care and legal obligations towards child safeguarding. FPNGA commits to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the children are kept safe from harm as the result of FPNGA's work, and to ensure our personnel and representatives have access to the training, systems and support they need to ensure this duty is met. This includes having child safeguarding policies and procedures in place and ensuring that personnel understand and can implement them.

3.4 Confidentiality

FPNGA will ensure it provides a service and environment where children are always respected and feel safe. This includes maintaining the confidentiality of children's information, unless required by legal or professional duty to disclose information, or the child gives permission for disclosure, if the child is able to. If FPNGA is compelled to disclose information, and it is appropriate, FPNGA will ensure the child's right to be engaged on the issue is met.

4. Operating context

A global problem: Child abuse is a global problem. It is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Children are abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect. Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than others. Children living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children from minority groups, children living in residential care, children living in emergency or conflict situations, children on impacted by migration and displacement and others are often at higher risk of abuse.

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Child safeguarding in PNG: While nationally representative data on violence against children is scarce in PNG, the PNG government notes that the limited available information indicates that children in PNG experience some of the highest rates of violence in the Asia-Pacific region and have very little access to child-friendly and rights-compliant justice systems¹.

Our partner in PNG: Femili PNG is a PNG NGO that runs case management centres to assist survivors of family and sexual violence, sorcery-accusation related violence (SARV) and child abuse to access the services they need. Femili PNG runs case management centres in Lae, Port Moresby and Goroka, and partners with service providers such as police, health centres, courts, safe accommodation providers and welfare. Femili PNG works a great deal with vulnerable children, including as clients and the dependents of survivors who are being assisted. Femili PNG has a comprehensive Lukautim Pikinini Gut Long Birua (Child Protection Policy), and an accompanying Child Protection Code of Conduct.

5. Definitions

Child	As defined by the CRC, any person under the age of 18 years is a child.
Child rights	Children have the “right to life, survival and development” where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural development.
Child protection	Child protection: The term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.
	Child safeguarding: Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children including to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds.
Contact with children	Incidental contact with children: Where contact with children is not planned or expected, but may occur by chance.
	Direct contact with children: Physical contact, face-to-face contact, written communication, oral communication, or electronic communication.
	Working with children: Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working with children can also include positions with access to child-sensitive data (such as their name and address), or positions that require or may have ongoing contact with children by letter, email, phone or social media. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works.
Personnel	A FemiliPNG Australia staff member, contractor or volunteer
Representative	A FemiliPNG Australia Board member
Abuse	Child abuse: Child abuse includes all forms of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, violence in the home (sometimes referred to as domestic violence or family violence), neglect, commercial sexual exploitation (such as child prostitution), child trafficking and child labour as defined below. Child abuse is not limited to only males or females, it can happen to any gender and involves the abuse of children’s rights as outlined in the CRC.
	Physical abuse: The use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physical abuse includes slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, grabbing, and throwing stones and other objects.

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/png/reports/protection-children-all-forms-violence-and-child-focused-justice-papua-new-guinea-0>

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<p>Abuse <i>continued</i></p>	<p>Neglect: The persistent failure, where there are means, or the deliberate denial to provide a child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.</p> <hr/> <p>Emotional abuse: A persistent attack on a child's self-esteem. For example, but not limited to, teasing, name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating, or isolating the child.</p> <hr/> <p>Sexual abuse: When a child is used by another child, adolescent, or adult, for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse involves contact and non-contact activities which encompasses all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing children to pornographic images, or taking pornographic photographs of children.</p> <hr/> <p>Child labour: Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. Child labour refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and that interferes with their schooling.</p> <hr/> <p>Child trafficking: Relates to any role in the recruitment, transportation, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threat, force, or other forms of coercion. This includes abuse of power.</p> <hr/> <p>Commercial sexual exploitation: Where a child is sexually abused or exploited and the child or a third person/s is remunerated in cash or kind.</p> <hr/> <p>Harm: Any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect and/or sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm may be intentional or an unintentional consequence of our action or inaction.</p>
<p>Reasonable grounds for belief of child abuse</p>	<p>This is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has or is occurring. Considerations forming such reasonable grounds may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant information from a credible person; and/or • relevant information about the alleged perpetrator; and/or • the child may have stated abuse has occurred; and/or • there may be other signs of abuse. <p>Note that 'proof' is not required at this stage</p>
<p>Child protection incident</p>	<p>A child protection incident is (a) any form of child abuse as defined in section 3 Definitions; or (b) any breach of this Policy or the Code of Conduct and that is: (c) committed by a FPNGA staff member or representative; or (d) where FPNGA has a duty of care towards the child.</p>

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6. Scope of this policy

- 6.1 This Policy applies to all FPNGA personnel and representatives at all times, including times not directly representing FPNGA.
- 6.2 By becoming a staff member, contractor, volunteer or representative of FPNGA and signing the code of conduct (see section 7), the obligations and requirements of this Policy are accepted as mandatory.
- 6.3 This Policy applies to partners who have agreed to acknowledge, adopt or comply with the Policy as outlined in our partnership agreement, contract or memorandum of understanding.
- 6.4 The content of this Policy, and the principles of child safeguarding will be advocated to our partners, donors, and others we work with as part of our organisational commitment to promoting child protection.
- 6.5 This Policy will be shared with all donor organisations, and available on our website.

7. Code of Conduct

- 7.1 FPNGA personnel and representatives are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship.
- 7.2 All personnel and representatives should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role at FPNGA, and be a positive role model to children.
- 7.3 FPNGA's Code of Conduct intends to protect children, personnel, representatives and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations. FPNGA's personnel and representatives are required to sign and adhere to this Code of Conduct at all times.

See Appendix A for a copy of our Code of Conduct.

8. Overview of our approach to risk assessment

- 8.1 FPNGA recognises the potential risks to children in the delivery of our work and programs. FPNGA proactively assesses and manages risks to children to reduce the risk of harm by:
 - **Maintaining an organisational risk register that includes child safeguarding:** Child safeguarding and risks to children are included in the organisational risk register which is monitored by the CEO and Board.
 - **Maintaining Child Safe Risk Assessment and Management Plans (RAMP):** A Child Safe RAMP examines each project and program for its potential impact on children. Activities and programs that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more stringent child safeguarding procedures. See appendix B for a copy of FPNGA's Child Safe RAMP template.
 - **Providing child safe training and professional development:** FPNGA's personnel and representatives (as relevant) are trained in child safeguarding and risk assessment. They are expected to be continually aware of potential risks to children and actively minimise opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.

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9. Overview of the use of stories, images and videos of children

- 9.1 FPNGA will always portray children in a respectful, appropriate and consensual way. The privacy and dignity of children being photographed will be of foremost consideration, as will sensitivity to their rights and wellbeing as both an individual and member of their community.
- 9.2 In addition to our Use of stories, images and videos policy (POL-022), FPNGA will apply the following guidelines on the use of children's images.
- No child client of Femili PNG or child at the Bel isi PNG safe house will have their image photographed or filmed by FPNGA personnel or representatives.
 - Children will be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
 - Children must be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
 - Children and young people under the age of 18 must be involved in the consent-giving process as much as possible. Efforts should be made to provide them with information in a way they can understand, and verbal consent should be sought if appropriate. Written consent must be obtained from their primary caregiver before collecting, storing, or using their story, image or video.
 - Information that would enable a child's identity and location to be readily accessed will not be used in publications and/or file names, and no identifying data or information will be used with images or attached to image files, including geolocation data, name and address of the child.
 - Children should be portrayed as part of their community.
 - Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
 - Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts.
 - When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.
 - All photographers will be screened for their suitability, including police checks where appropriate.
- 9.3 All images and videos of children will be stored securely, and used for a maximum of ten years.

10. Criminal record checks

- 10.1 Regular criminal record checks, in Australia called a National Police Certificate, are mandatory for all personnel and representatives.
- 10.2 If a reliable criminal record check cannot be obtained, at the discretion of the CEO, a statutory declaration or local legal equivalent can be required that:
- Describes efforts made to obtain foreign police checks,
 - Discloses any charges and spent convictions related to child abuse and exploitation.
- 10.3 **Criminal record checks during recruitment:** All personnel must provide criminal record checks as part of the recruitment process. This includes criminal record checks for all countries of citizenship, and for each country in which the person has lived or 12 months or more, over the past five years.
- 10.4 **Criminal record checks for existing staff:** All personnel must provide criminal record checks for their country of residence every three years OR on request of the CEO. If more than one country is lived in for 12 months or more during this period, checks must be provided for each country.

FPNGA's Recruitment Policy (POL-023) and Procedure (PROC-004) aim to support staff to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work with us. The policy and procedure must be referenced before commencing recruitment.

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It may not be practical to wait for all criminal record checks to be completed before a person begins work. At the discretion of the CEO, candidates may begin work under the following conditions:

- A minimum of two verbal referees have been contacted, and their references deemed acceptable.
- The contract is offered on condition of successful criminal record checks being provided.
- Candidates provide evidence that all required criminal record checks are in progress, such as a receipt for payment.
- No domestic or international travel is completed until the criminal record checks are provided to the satisfaction of the CEO.

FPNGA's Recruitment Procedure (PROC-004) outlines the type of criminal record checks that are required depending on the role. Refer to this tool when deciding on the level of record check required. Positions where staff, volunteers or Board members are working directly with children, have access to child-sensitive data, or have ongoing contact with children by letter, email, phone or social media require a higher level of checks.

11. Awareness of this policy for FPNGA personnel and representatives

- 11.1 FPNGA will provide specific training to all staff on child protection, and staff will be supported to ensure commitments are met. Child protection training will be arranged for FPNGA staff, volunteers or representatives who work with children, on an annual basis.
- 11.2 New staff will be provided with a comprehensive induction on this Policy and Code of Conduct on joining the organisation.
- 11.3 The CEO is the designated focal point for all child protection issues and will manage and oversee significant child protection issues.
- 11.4 To extent that FPNGA organises visitors to the Femili PNG project locations in Lae, Port Moresby, Goroka and other Femili PNG relevant locations, FPNGA will take the following preventative measures:
 - Brief all visitors on child safeguarding requirements and mechanisms for reporting any suspicion or allegation of abuse
 - Provide all visitors with a copy of Child Safeguarding Policy (POL-001)
 - Require all visitors to read and sign the Code of Conduct; and
 - Ensure visitors are always accompanied by FPNGA or Femili PNG staff while visiting project or partner locations.

12. Working with our partners

- 12.1 FPNGA's interagency model of working in close coordination with partners such as Femili PNG requires FPNGA to promote child safeguarding as a responsibility shared by all.
- 12.2 In accordance with our operating model, FPNGA is committed to developing broad understanding among the stakeholders of the importance of child protection and ways to achieve it. Partner practices in child safeguarding will be assessed as part of our partner appraisal processes.
- 12.3 FPNGA will encourage partners to acknowledge, adopt and comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy through Memorandum of Understanding and other agreements.
- 12.4 Some partners may require additional capability building in child protection which FPNGA will offer through training and guidance, as appropriate to the context.
- 12.5 In some cases, this Policy cannot bind other stakeholder organisations. However, as part of our commitment to child protection, FPNGA will make clear to all its zero tolerance of inaction on child abuse and influence other stakeholders to adopt similarly robust approaches to child safeguarding.

13. Responding to and reporting child safeguarding concerns: An overview

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Remember: Any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable, and FPNGA has zero tolerance of inaction. This means FPNGA will act on every allegation in a fair and reasonable way with due regard for procedural fairness.

Who should report?	All FPNGA personnel and representatives must report	
What should be reported?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, FPNGA staff member / volunteer or representative, partner staff member or any other stakeholder regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of a child (this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm to a child – intentional or unintentional) Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by FPNGA personnel that breaches our Code of Conduct or Child Safeguarding Policy. Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by partner personnel or representatives (intentional or unintentional) that breaches the Child Safeguarding Policy. 	
When to report?	Immediately	
Who should you report to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CEO of FPNGA, or The Chair of the Board of FPNGA <p>If the disclosure relates to the actions or behaviour of the CEO and the Chair of the Board, or the CEO and Chair of the Board are unavailable, you may make a report to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FPNGA Development Advisor FPNGA Child Safeguarding Focal Point Any FPNGA Board member 	
Contact details	childsafefamilipngaus.org	Delivered to the CEO and Child Safeguarding Focal Point
	reportfamilipngaus.org	Delivered to the CEO, Chair of the Board and the Finance Manager
	chairfamilipngaus.org	Delivered to the Chair
	infofamilipngaus.org	Delivered to the CEO, Finance Manager, Finance Officer and Fundraising and Communications Officer
	+61 2 6183 6737	Contact phone number, 8am – 4pm, Monday - Friday
	https://familipngaus.org/making-a-complaint/	Website contact form
How should I report?	Verbally or in writing.	

Anyone, at any time can report a child safeguarding concern, raise an issue or get in touch with us by email reportfamilipngaus.org, or through our website <https://familipngaus.org/making-a-complaint/>

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<p>What will happen next?</p>	<p>The CEO in consultation the Child Safeguarding Focal Point and/or the Chair of the Board will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step. This will involve one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision about the allegation • Reporting to local police and/or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed • Reporting to the Australian Federal Police when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed regarding child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and/or child pornography • Reporting to local child protection services as necessary • Reporting to funders, donors and other parties as required by Memorandum of Understanding, contracts or other agreements. • Handling the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter • No further action taken • Providing support to all stakeholders (including reporter) as necessary and appropriate
<p>Confidentiality (as opposed to secrecy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing child protection concerns. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with essential personnel and representatives. • The names of people involved, and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by Australian or overseas law or when a report to police or child protection authorities is made.
<p>Disciplinary action</p>	<p>Disciplinary action will be taken against any personnel or associate found to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have failed to report a child protection concern • Have intentionally made a false allegation • Have made a serious breach of the CPP and/or COC (minor breaches may result in action such as refresher training or increased supervision) <p>Disciplinary action may include the following sanctions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPNGA personnel – disciplinary action / dismissal • FPNGA stakeholders / representatives – up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with FPNGA • Where relevant – reporting to authorities

See the Child Safeguarding Reporting Procedure (PROC-000) for more information about what to do to respond to a child safeguarding report.

Remember: It is not the role of FPNGA personnel or representative to prove that a child safeguarding incident has occurred, but to report any knowledge or concern, founded or otherwise, that they may have of a child safeguarding incident occurring.

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Responding to the disclosure by a child

- When a child/young person tells you they have been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless.
- You may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.
- If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously.
- It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.
- When a child or young person discloses they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:
 - Listening carefully
 - Telling the child/young person you believe them
 - Telling the child/young person it is not their fault and they are not responsible for the abuse
 - Telling the child/young person you are pleased they told you.
- You will not be helping the child/young person if you:
 - Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
 - Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to tell you and not to investigate (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
 - Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved.

13.1 FPNGA will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly, and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.

13.2 All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. FPNGA will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected.

13.3 The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the investigation.

- Children and community members with whom FPNGA works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about FPNGA personnel and representatives.

Remember: You can discuss concerns, ask questions, provide feedback and suggestions about Child Safeguarding and this policy with the CEO and/or Child Safeguarding Focal Point.

14. Involving children and young people

14.1 FPNGA is committed to child and youth participation. We will provide opportunities for children’s views to be heard during all aspects of any program, project or activity that targets children and young people.

FPNGA does not currently work directly with target communities in PNG. As a support organisation for Femili PNG, we take the lead from Femili PNG’s team.

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15. Policy amendments

All policies are subject to review and endorsement by the FemiliPNG Australia Board. Suggestions about this policy are welcome and should be directed to the FemiliPNG Australia CEO. Any amendments or changes to the Policy will be submitted to the Board for endorsement.

The CEO is responsible for maintaining this document, including updating confirmed changes, informing staff of the changes, and disseminating the latest version to all personnel.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as needed to meet governance obligations and/or changes in legislation.

16. Related documents

Document number	Document name
DOC-001	Statement of Organisational Principles
POL-023	Staff Recruitment Policy
PROC-004	Staff Recruitment Procedure
PROC-004	(Appendix) Criminal Record Checks information
TEMP-002	Child Safe RAMP
TEMP-001	Position Description
TOOL-001	Code of Conduct
POL-022	Use of stories, images and videos
POL-004	Complaints Handling Policy
-	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Anyone, at any time can report a child safeguarding concern, raise an issue or get in touch with us by email report@femilipngaus.org, or through our website <https://femilipngaus.org/making-a-complaint/>

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