

Vulnerable Persons' Protection

In the 2014-2015 year the District 9520 Youth Protection Committee in line with a directive from RI expanded youth protection to also include any elderly or infirm people involved in our programs or projects. In keeping with this change the committee's name has been changed from "The Youth Protection Committee" to "The Protection Committee." Early in the 2015 Rotary year the 9520 Protection Committee assessed our approach to protecting youth and other vulnerable people and strongly endorsed our protection philosophy as outlined in the following statement.

Rotary District 9520's Approach to Protecting Vulnerable People in our Care

At the August meeting of the Rotary District 9520 Protection Committee it was unanimously resolved, for the reasons outlined below, to continue and reinforce the approach adopted previously to protect vulnerable people in our care.

The 2014 Royal Commission highlighting the many instances of sexual abuse against children has horrified everyone. There has been a knee-jerk reaction by many, but sadly, Rotary District 9520 believes, in many instances in the wrong direction. Many schools and other organisations are saying, "We must get more people in our organisation DCSI checked." DCSI has been given more staff and money to try to keep up with huge numbers of screening applications. This approach is an easy way for organisations to show they are doing something, but will it help the problem? In most instances we don't think it will but sadly it's taking the focus, effort and funds away from measures which might really reduce sexual crime. District 9520 strongly believes DCSI checks are a very good thing and we commend the SA government for eventually introducing the system. We believe the critical question is "Who really needs them?" Statistics show abuse virtually never occurs in public. **Unless a paedophile is alone with his victim or a very small group of victims for time long enough for grooming to occur, there will virtually never be any abuse.** We believe only a relatively small number of carers are in this position. The District recently learned parents helping to start races at a school sports day in front of hundreds of others had to have DCSI checks.

Another statistic -"Less than 20% of child molesters have been caught before." This means **DCSI checks alone are leaving over 80% of child molesters, who are going to offend in the future, unchecked.**

District 9520's policy outlined in our policy documents is to put all our child and vulnerable people resources and efforts into **thoroughly investigating everyone involved in Rotary programs who realistically may be alone with vulnerable people for a period of time such that grooming and abuse may occur.**

This is to be done with **careful interviews, diligent reference checking** and **monitoring** of all such people.

And yes, we will definitely also get these people **DCSI checked.**

This approach also applies to Rotarians assisting the aged and infirm.

Our District has three policies for protecting all vulnerable people in our care. The first is a more general policy and the second and third apply specifically to Youth Exchange.

1. "Rotary District 9520 Guide to Protecting Youth involved in Short Rotary Programs & The Elderly and Infirm when Being Assisted by Rotary" (Revised July 2015)

2. "Rotary District 9520 Club Certification Policy, Procedures and Supporting Documentation for Protecting Youth Exchange Students" (Revised July 2015)
3. "Rotary District 9520 District Certification Policy, Procedures & Supporting Documentation for Protecting Youth Exchange Students" (Revised May 2014)

These policies follow.