ADRA AUSTRALIA SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT (PSEAH)

1. INTRODUCTION

ADRA Australia is the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are committed to justice, compassion, and the protection of human dignity. ADRA maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** toward all forms of **sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH)**, whether within our organisation or in our engagement with the communities we serve.

This **Safeguarding Code of Conduct** sets out ADRA's core values and behavioural expectations. It is designed to prevent the misuse of power and to protect **children**, **vulnerable people at risk**, **affected communities**, and **ADRA personnel**. It promotes environments that are **safe**, **respectful**, and **inclusive** for all.

The Code also supports ethical decision-making and helps individuals understand their responsibilities in all interactions—with colleagues, partners, and the people we serve.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the ADRA Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy, which provides further guidance on safeguarding principles, responsibilities, and reporting procedures.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This Code is based on ADRA's **Six Core Safeguarding Principles**, adapted from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). These principles reflect ADRA's commitment to safety, dignity, and accountability:

1. Zero tolerance of inaction
2. Strong and accountable leadership
3. Victim-Survivor needs come first
4. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
5. Power imbalances (e.g. gender, disability) increase vulnerability
6. Transparent and accessible reporting builds trust

Safeguarding risks often arise from unequal power relationships. ADRA Personnel must recognise and never misuse positions of trust, authority, influence, or access for personal benefit.

These principles are designed to **align with and uphold** the standards set out in key safeguarding frameworks, including:

- **DFAT Child Protection and PSEAH Policies**
- **ACFID Code of Conduct** (focusing on safeguarding and accountability)
- **UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)**
- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

3. SCOPE

This Safeguarding Code of Conduct applies to:

- All **ADRA Australia personnel**, including employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, subcontractors, Company Board Directors, and Conference ADRA Directors—whether paid or unpaid, short-term or long-term.
- All **ADRA Australia partners**, including other ADRA offices and external organisations with formal agreements to implement development or humanitarian programs. This includes their staff, volunteers, and contractors involved in ADRA-funded programs.

The Code applies **at all times**, including outside of work hours, when individuals represent ADRA Australia in any capacity. It applies across all locations, funding sources, departments, and project types.
All personnel and partners must uphold ADRA's safeguarding standards, even where these exceed local laws or cultural norms. **Compliance is mandatory,** and no person may work on, visit, or travel to ADRA-supported sites without first signing this Code and the Safeguarding Policy.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN & VULNERABLE PEOPLE

This section sets out the mandatory behavioural standards all ADRA personnel must follow to uphold safeguarding principles and protect children, adults at risk, and communities.

I declare that I, _____ of _____
(Full Name) *(Position or Location)*

hereby commit to uphold the highest standards of professional and personal conduct in accordance with the ADRA Australia Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

I understand my responsibilities to protect the dignity, rights, and safety of children, adults at risk, communities, and colleagues, and I agree to comply fully with this Code at all times.

I agree that while engaged by ADRA Australia I will:

4.1 Disclosure and Reporting

a. Disclose to the ADRA Australia Safeguarding Focal Lead (safeguarding@adra.org.au) or HR Coordinator any criminal charges, convictions or accusations, and other outcomes of an offence that relates to exploitation and abuse of children and vulnerable people, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occur during my association with ADRA Australia;
b. Follow the reporting obligations as outlined in the ADRA Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy;
c. Immediately report concerns, suspicions or allegations (including any allegation by a child or vulnerable person) of exploitation and abuse and breach or non-compliance with the Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy in accordance with appropriate procedures;
d. Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as exploitation and abuse of children or vulnerable people.

4.2 Respect and Non-Discrimination

a. Treat children and vulnerable people with respect regardless of race, colour, age, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, or other relevant status;
b. Not use language or behaviour that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.

4.3 Sexual Conduct and Relationships

a. Not engage any child in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts;
b. Not engage in transactional sex, defined as the exchange of money, employment, goods, services, assistance, or other benefits for sex or sexual acts, regardless of local laws, customs, or apparent consent;
c. Not develop special relationships with a specific child or vulnerable person or children or vulnerable people, show favouritism or give gifts or particular attention to a child or vulnerable person;
d. Not initiate opportunities for unsupervised contact with a child or group of children, or vulnerable people;
e. Not show special favours to one child or vulnerable person over others or allow a child or vulnerable person to overstep the rules;
f. Not ask a child or vulnerable person not to tell anyone else about their conversations, activities or interactions;
g. Not discuss sexually explicit activities or sexually intimate relationships with a child or vulnerable person or show sexually explicit images to a child or vulnerable person;

h. Never possess, control, distribute, obtain or transmit exploitation material or pornography involving children or vulnerable people;

4.4 Physical Contact and Safety

a. Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working with or near children or vulnerable people;
b. Avoid involvement in unsupervised one-on-one counselling with minors, children or vulnerable people;
c. Not invite unaccompanied children or vulnerable people into my home or hotel, or into a closed room unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
d. Not sleep close to unsupervised children or vulnerable people unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present;
e. Not use physical punishment on children or vulnerable people;
f. Not inappropriately touch a child or vulnerable person where that touch would not be a part of your role;
g. Refrain from hiring children or vulnerable people 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;
h. Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour and labour involving vulnerable people.

4.5 Substance Use

a. Under no circumstances give illicit drugs or any beverage containing alcohol to a minor or vulnerable person.

4.6 Use of Technology and Images

a. Use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or vulnerable people or access exploitation material through any medium;
b. When photographing or filming a child or vulnerable person for work related purposes, I must: assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable person;
    1. obtain informed consent from the child or vulnerable person and parent or guardian of the child or vulnerable person before photographing or filming. As part of this, I must explain how the photograph or film will be used. Such consent must be written or, if this is not possible and verbal consent is given, consent must be witnessed and documented
    2. ensure photographs, films, videos and other media present children and vulnerable people in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. They should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
    3. ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
    4. protect the privacy of children and vulnerable people and ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about them when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

4.7 Digital Communication

a. Not communicate with a child or vulnerable person outside of the usual channels of communication such as sending letters home or talking with the parents. Personal correspondence using emails, social media and web forums which is unknown to the parents is inappropriate;
b. Not initiate opportunities for unsupervised contact with a child or group of children, or vulnerable people.

4.8 Relationships and Power Imbalances

a. Not engage in sexual relationships with program beneficiaries, including children or vulnerable people, or community members where a power imbalance exists;
b. Declare any personal relationships or conflicts of interest that may affect professional responsibilities in accordance with ADRA's policies.

5. STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

I understand that, as a person engaged by ADRA Australia, it is my responsibility to exercise sound judgment and avoid any actions or behaviours that could be perceived as sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment of children, vulnerable adults, or ADRA Australia personnel during my involvement in ADRA activities.

I will not engage in any criminal or unethical behaviour, or in any actions that violate human rights or compromise the reputation and values of ADRA Australia. Any conduct that breaches this Code of Conduct or the ADRA Australia Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy will not be tolerated. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment, contract, or volunteer assignment.

I acknowledge my obligation to immediately report any allegations, concerns, or suspicions of exploitation, abuse, or policy non-compliance to the Safeguarding Focal Lead at: **safeguarding@adra.org.au**.

6. PERSONAL DECLARATION

I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the **ADRA Australia Safeguarding Code of Conduct** and the **Child and Vulnerable People Safeguarding Policy** for the entire period of my engagement with, or representation of, ADRA Australia.

I understand that any breach of the Code or Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, contract, or volunteer engagement, depending on the severity of the breach.

I acknowledge that ADRA Australia may conduct routine screening and background checks, including through **AdSafe** and other appropriate mechanisms, both during the application process and at regular intervals throughout my engagement.

I commit to reporting, through appropriate channels, any suspected or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct.

Organisation	Project Title
Position	
Name	
Signature	Date