



Privacy Policy

Approved by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Board on 2015

Version Control

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Purpose of Policy

This Policy has been written by St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW (“the Society”) to comply with its obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988 Act* (“the Act”) and the *Australian Privacy Principles* (“the APPs”¹).

As an organisation with an annual turnover of more than \$3m² as well as a provider of services which require the collection and storage of personal and sensitive information, the Society falls within the jurisdiction of the Act and the APPs.

This policy is intended to reflect the Society’s commitment to treat your personal and sensitive information with dignity and respect as well as to ensure that in the Society’s collection, use, disclosure and storage of your personal and sensitive information, your privacy is always protected. The Society is also a recipient of donations from a wide range of sources and is therefore also committed to protecting the privacy of all our donors and volunteers.

The specific legal obligations of the Society when collecting and handling personal information are outlined in the Act and in particular in the APPs found in that Act.

Functions and Activities of the Society

The Society is a not-for-profit, lay Catholic volunteer-based organisation that aims to make a real difference in people’s lives. The Society has been working in communities in New South Wales for 130 years. Through home visitation, Conference members³ visit people in their homes, providing support, friendship and material assistance, and through our Retail Centres, we not only provide a visible port of call for people experiencing hardship, but also raise crucial funds that are injected straight back into the local community to help those people most at risk.

The Society also addresses inequality and injustice through a range of other services including: homeless services; education and recreational programs; domestic violence services; assistance to migrants and refugees; clothing and assistance centres; mental health programs; vocational services for people with a disability; drug, alcohol and gambling counselling services; financial counselling; disaster recovery; rural services and food vans.

As a result, the Society often does need to collect, store, use and disclose personal and sensitive information to carry out these functions and activities. All collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal and sensitive information will be done for the purpose of providing effective care and assistance to individuals, families and other groups, as well as for complaint investigation and resolution. We may also use some personal information to increase our donor base⁴ to raise funds in order to continue carrying out our functions and activities.

1 The APPs are available on the *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner’s* website, www.oaic.gov.au and the “summary” of Apps is attached to this Policy (see Appendix 1).

2 This dollar figure is not a reflection of the Society’s annual turnover but rather a reference to the Act, which states under Section 6D (4a) that a business with an annual turnover of more than \$3m is not a small business and therefore is subject to the Act and the APPs.

3 Society members work together in groups known as “Conferences” that are usually attached to parishes, schools, universities, social groups, workplaces, or groups of individuals from the same local area. See www.vinnies.org.au for more information.

4 The Society will collect information to increase its donor base in accordance with the APPs.

Definitions

Conference Member: Conference members are those who are desirous of living their Catholic faith, or are committed to the ethos, mission, aims, and objects of the Society, and who seek to live out their faith and commitment in action through the spirit of Christian charity. Conference members belong to a Conference.⁵

Employee: An employee is a person who is hired to provide services in exchange for compensation – pay or salary.⁶ An employee is a paid member of staff. The Rule (Part III, 2012, Article 26) describes the role of employees in a way that clearly refers to paid persons as “employees”. This includes contractors providing services to the Society for a set time or specific task and those engaged in the performance of duties for the Society from a labour hire agency.

Integrity Hotline and website reporting: This is a confidential telephone line (1300 304 550) and email facility (vinniesnsw@stoline.com.au) managed and staffed by an independent third party for anyone to call between the hours of 6.00pm and 8.00pm (Monday to Friday) for advice and for making legitimate allegations of wrongdoing, either anonymously or not, for investigation.

Investigator: An Investigator is any suitably skilled employee of the Society with the assistance of the Internal Audit and Risk Manager or a third party engaged externally by the Society who is tasked with undertaking the investigation in this policy.

Member: The term member includes conference, associate and volunteer members.⁷

Volunteer: A volunteer is a person such as a student, intern, corporate and others who perform unpaid work for the Society such as through various schemes including “work for the dole” and “community service order” schemes. In this document “volunteer” does not include “members”.

Volunteer member: This is a person who respects the ethos, mission, aims, and objectives of the Society and who volunteers in any of the Society’s works. Volunteer members are registered by a procedure established by the State Council.⁸

⁵ Conference Member as defined in St Vincent de Paul Society’s “The Rule,” 7th Edition, 2012

⁶ See, for example, The Australian Taxation Office (ATO), which defines “employees” as a person who receives salary or wages <https://www.ato.gov.au/definitions/#P352-27686>

⁷ As per “The Rule,” 7th Edition 2012, Members can fall under 3 categories: Conference Member, Volunteer Member and Associate Member. See “The Rule,” pp. 56-57

⁸ See footnote 4 above.

Collection of personal information⁹

The Society will try to only collect the personal information that is needed to carry out the functions or activities of our organisation.

Personal information refers to information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable: (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.¹⁰

The main ways in which we collect personal information about you is:

- when it is given to us directly by you; and
- when it is given to us by your nominated advocate, if you have one.

The Society might also have access to your personal details if you:

- make an enquiry or lodge a complaint in person, in writing, online or by phone and other means (such as social media) as we require personal information to carry out investigations or review a variety of matters brought to the attention of the Society;
- require assistance and we provide you with information, vouchers or other related support;
- request that we visit you at home; or
- make a donation or join one of our mailing lists.

When you provide the Society with your personal information you will be advised by the Society employee, member or volunteer with whom you are dealing with the purpose for which the information is being collected.

If you are a donor, mailing list registrant, 'Vinnies' shopper or volunteer, we may use your personal information to provide you with ongoing promotional materials and marketing communications about our events, products, services and fundraising initiatives by telephone, email, online or by other means. You can choose to opt out of these lists and the options for doing so are simple but vary depending upon the document or service you are using.¹¹

Collecting sensitive information¹²

The Society will limit the collection, storage, use and disclosure of sensitive information to instances where the information is directly relevant and reasonably necessary for us to carry out our functions or activities.¹³ This includes complaint investigation and resolution.

Sensitive information refers to information or an opinion about an individual's:

- racial or ethnic origin;
- political opinions;
- membership of a political association;
- religious beliefs or affiliations;
- philosophical beliefs;
- membership of a professional or trade association;
- membership of a trade union;
- sexual orientation or practices;

9 APP 1

10 See *Privacy Act 1988*, "General definitions."

11 To opt-out of receiving emails we have an "unsubscribe" option contained in the emails and to opt-out of receiving mail we have a tick-box.

12 APP 3

13 APP 3 – see specifically subclause 3.4 (e).

- criminal record; that is also personal information;
- health information about an individual¹⁴;
- genetic information about an individual that is not otherwise health information;
- biometric information that is to be used for the purpose of automated biometric verification or biometric identification; or
- biometric templates.¹⁵

The Society is often contacted by individuals who require the Society to provide them with assistance which can involve the provision of sensitive information. Such instances where sensitive information is provided can include: information provided about health, employment, family, housing, nationality, gender and religion for the purpose of arranging financial assistance, accommodation and counselling.

If sensitive information is required, the Society will always discuss with you what your sensitive information will be used for, give you the opportunity to discuss any concerns you might have and we will record whether or not consent was given by you for us to use the sensitive information you provided to give you the assistance required or that we can reasonably provide.¹⁶

Indirect collection

When it comes to providing you with assistance, including complaint investigation in particular, we may collect personal information indirectly from publicly available sources or from third parties such as:

- your authorised representative or advocate if you have one; and
- applicants, complainants, respondents to a complaint or application or the third parties' employees and witnesses.

Anonymity¹⁷

Where possible, the Society will allow you to interact with us anonymously or using a pseudonym. For example, if you contact our independently managed integrity hotline¹⁸ by email or phone with a general question, we will not need your name unless you choose to provide this to us. However, for most of our functions and activities we usually need a name, contact information and enough information about the particular matter to enable us to fairly and effectively handle the inquiry, request, complaint or application.

You have the right to choose not to provide personal information to the Society, but in some instances where personal information is not provided we may be limited in the assistance we can provide.

Collecting through our website

The Society has its own public website — <http://www.vinnies.org.au> (“website”). It is usual practice for the Society to collect information about visitors to our online resources. This information is very limited and only used to identify generic behavioural patterns such as which webpages users visit and what content is popular.

Where our website allows you to make comments, give feedback or make a credit card payment, we may collect your email address and other contact details. We may use your email address to respond to your feedback and, on occasion, to contact you for surveying purposes and ongoing communication. We store this personal information on servers located in Australia.

You can choose to opt-out of receiving further information or correspondence from us and the options to opt-out are simple but do vary depending on the document or service you are using.

¹⁴ For more information see Health Records and Information Privacy Act NSW 2002: <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/fullhtml/inforce/act+71+2002+FIRST+0+N#pt.1-sec.6>

¹⁵ See *Privacy Act 1988*, “General definitions.”

¹⁶ See Appendix 2 (Client Consent Form)

¹⁷ APP 2

¹⁸ Refer back to “Definitions” in this policy.

Analytic, session and cookie tools

If you visit our Website to read, browse or download information, our system may record information such as the date and time of your visit to the Website, the pages accessed and any information downloaded. This information is used for statistical, reporting and website administration and maintenance purposes.

Like many other websites, our Website may use 'cookies' from time to time. A cookie is a piece of information that allows our system to identify and interact more effectively with other devices. The cookie helps us to maintain the continuity of your browsing session and remember your details and preferences if you return. You can configure your web browser software to reject cookies however some parts of our Website may not have full functionality in that case.

When we send emails or other electronic messages to you, we may record where you open the message and click on particular links. This helps us to better understand what information is of interest to them.

If you consider sending us any other personal information through our Website or other electronic means, you need to be aware that the information may be insecure in transit, particularly where no encryption is used (e.g. email, standard HTTP). We are subject to laws requiring us to protect the security of personal information once it comes into our possession. The Website may contain links to other sites and we are not responsible for the privacy practices or policies of those sites.

Use and Disclosure¹⁹

The Society uses and discloses personal information collected for the purpose of carry out its functions and activities, which could mean using personal information between Society services (Conferences and Special Works) or disclosing personal information to third parties.

Only relevant personal and/or sensitive information will be used with Society services or disclosed to third parties in the provision of services and to assist the client in moving toward independence. Such information may include any or all of the following:

- client name, address and phone number;
- demographic details (including gender, residential status and income source);
- general information on the client's circumstances and the assistance required;
- expected overall amount and duration of payments recommended to be made by clients undergoing budget counselling;
- general plan for the budget counselling; and
- when the client will be home to receive Conference assistance.

The Society will not disclose personal information to another party if an individual explicitly denies consent for the disclosure. However, where an individual denies consent to the disclosure of personal information, the Society may be limited in the assistance we can offer.

Funding agreements

The Society is party to a number of funding agreements with both State and Federal governments which require that it retains particular records and information on individuals conducting its programs and services as well as individuals receiving assistance.²⁰ These additional requirements ensure that the appropriate applicants are conducting the work being funded as well as to ensure that the funded programs are achieving the best results.²¹

¹⁹ APP 6

²⁰ For example, this includes the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme and emergency relief.

²¹ Refer also to the section, "Identifiers" in this policy.

The Society will not breach the privacy of individuals when reporting to its funders and permanently de-identify personal information.

Email lists

The Society collects your email address and, if you provide it, other contact details when you subscribe to our publications or email lists. We only use this information for the purpose of sending regular updates on the activities of the Society, such as fundraising and appeal mailings.

There are simple options available to opt-out of receiving emails or further correspondence from us and the options vary depending on what document or service you are using.²²

Publication of submissions and reports

When reporting, the Society uses or provides de-identified information. If the Society is asked for personal information relating to any reported complaint or matter from a third party, the Society will seek consent from an individual prior to any disclosure, and will not disclose information if consent is not provided.

Before the Society publishes submissions or reports (for example the Society's *Strategic Plan*) we will de-identify all personal information.

Disclosure of sensitive information

The Society only discloses sensitive information for the purpose for which it was given to us by you or for directly related purposes an individual would reasonably expect or agree to.

Disclosure of personal information overseas²³

The Society is a charity organisation that operates all over the world and aims to increase its donor base. From time to time we do provide some personal information to other charities and data co-ops to increase our donor base but these charities and data co-ops are based in Australia and are subject to Australian privacy laws. The Society does not share the sensitive information of individuals unless it is reasonable or permitted to do so.²⁴

The Society will take reasonable steps to ensure that third parties overseas, including the Society's own overseas factions the Society may share personal information with, is compliant with Australian privacy laws.

Identifiers²⁵

The Society does not use any government assigned identifier as a primary form of identification, such as an individual's Tax File Number or Medicare Number.

The Society will often generate their own unique client identifier and take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal and sensitive information relating to individuals are de-identified, particularly when such information is required for reporting or other statistical purposes.

Centrelink Confirmation E-Service

In order to check your eligibility for concessions, rebates and services the Society will often request information on you from Centrelink.

²² For example, if an individual makes a donation using our mailing facility they may choose whether or not to provide information for us to add their contact details to our mailing list.

²³ APP 8

²⁴ The Act stipulates that, "An act or practice of an organisation done or engaged in outside Australia and an external Territory is not an *interference with the privacy of an individual* if the act or practice is required by an applicable law of a foreign country." See *Privacy Act 1988*, "13D Overseas act required by foreign law."

²⁵ APP 9

The Society's will then manage Centrelink Confirmation E-Service in the following ways:

- ensure clients are fully aware of the purpose for which personal information is being collected;
- request that the client fills out a Client Consent Form²⁶;
- access Centrelink Confirmation E-Service and confirm
 - the client's personal information such as name, address and date of birth;
 - the client's dependants;
 - the government benefits being provided to a client and their family;
- only utilise the information to the extent necessary to perform the required services; and
- securely retain the information accessed through Centrelink Confirmation E-Service.

Quality of personal information

The Society will take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information collected, stored, used and disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date. To ensure this we will:

- aim to record information in a consistent format;
- where necessary and/or possible we will confirm the accuracy of the information we collect from a third party or a public source; and
- promptly add updated or new personal information to existing records.

The Society will also review the quality of personal information before it is used or disclosed.

Storage and security of personal information²⁷

The Society takes steps to protect the security of the personal information we hold from both internal and external threats by:

- regularly assessing the risk of misuse, interference, loss and unauthorised access, modification or disclosure of that information;
- taking measures to address those risks, for example, by keeping a record (audit trail) of when someone has added, changed or deleted personal information held by us electronically; and
- maintaining electronic security of our premises and information systems, including password protection for electronic files.

Confidentiality and security of information collected about individuals is of the highest priority and we will destroy information that we reasonably think will not be necessary for us to carry out our function or we will destroy information seven years after it has been provided to us.

Accessing and correcting personal information²⁸

The Society will take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information collected, used or disclosed is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

We will make the necessary changes to the personal information details held about you where you or your nominated advocate notifies us of errors or changes required. We will make the changes as soon as practicable.

We will provide written reasons for a denial of access or a refusal to correct personal information, including mechanisms available to complain about the denial of access or refusal to correct. If we do not agree to make requested changes to personal information we will notify you in writing setting out the reasons, including whether there is a law that allows or requires us not to.

²⁶ See Appendix 2.

²⁷ APP 11

²⁸ APP 12, APP 13

If you would like to access the personal information held about you by the Society you should make a written request to the following:

Privacy Officer
St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW
PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049 or
email privacy@vinnies.org.au

How to make a complaint²⁹

If you wish to make a complaint to the Society about how we have handled your personal information you should put your complain in writing and address it to the Privacy Officer. If you need help lodging a complaint you can contact the Society on (02) 9568 0262 or email privacy@vinnies.org.au or mail PO Box 5, Petersham NSW 2049

How to contact us

Phone	(02) 9568 0262
Email	vinnies@vinnies.org.au
Post	PO Box 5 Petersham NSW 2049
In Person	2C West St Lewisham NSW 2049

Australian Privacy Principles — a summary for APP entities

from 12 March 2014



APP 1 — Open and transparent management of personal information

Ensures that APP entities manage personal information in an open and transparent way. This includes having a clearly expressed and up to date APP privacy policy.

APP 2 — Anonymity and pseudonymity

Requires APP entities to give individuals the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym. Limited exceptions apply.

APP 3 — Collection of solicited personal information

Outlines when an APP entity can collect personal information that is solicited. It applies higher standards to the collection of 'sensitive' information.

APP 4 — Dealing with unsolicited personal information

Outlines how APP entities must deal with unsolicited personal information.

APP 5 — Notification of the collection of personal information

Outlines when and in what circumstances an APP entity that collects personal information must notify an individual of certain matters.

APP 6 — Use or disclosure of personal information

Outlines the circumstances in which an APP entity may use or disclose personal information that it holds.

APP 7 — Direct marketing

An organisation may only use or disclose personal information for direct marketing purposes if certain conditions are met.

APP 8 — Cross-border disclosure of personal information

Outlines the steps an APP entity must take to protect personal information before it is disclosed overseas.

APP 9 — Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers

Outlines the limited circumstances when an organisation may adopt a government related identifier of an individual as its own identifier, or use or disclose a government related identifier of an individual.

APP 10 — Quality of personal information

An APP entity must take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete. An entity must also take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it uses or discloses is accurate, up to date, complete and relevant, having regard to the purpose of the use or disclosure.

APP 11 — Security of personal information

An APP entity must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An entity has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.

APP 12 — Access to personal information

Outlines an APP entity's obligations when an individual requests to be given access to personal information held about them by the entity. This includes a requirement to provide access unless a specific exception applies.

APP 13 — Correction of personal information

Outlines an APP entity's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

www.oaic.gov.au

For private sector organisations,
Australian Government
and Norfolk Island agencies
covered by the *Privacy Act 1988*

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