

4.0 Policies Related to Staff and Clients

4.4 Policy on Communication and Transparency

All Hagar Australia communications should consider a client’s right to privacy and confidentiality, and not put any client at risk of identification where it will or could lead to harm or retribution.

A story or image will not be published or used if it may put a client or their family at risk – even when identities are changed or obscured. Stories and images will give due respect to the dignity, values, history, religion and culture of the people with whom it works and portray them as equal partners in the development process.

Communication – protecting clients

No person is permitted to take any pictures, audio or videos of clients without formal permission by the Hagar Australia CEO. The taking of such pictures, audio or video of clients must be done in accordance with the Hagar International Communications Policy (attached at Appendix 3).

Pictures, audio or video of clients may only be taken by Hagar Australia staff without permission by Hagar Australia CEO under the following conditions:

- Where the pictures, audio or videos are taken for Hagar Australia work purposes;
- Such pictures, audio or videos are taken in a dignified, respectful way and clients are appropriately dressed and the photographic style cannot be considered sexually suggestive.
- Such pictures, audio or videos are taken on Hagar Australia equipment (and not personal equipment of Hagar Australia staff); and
- Hagar Australia staff obtains informed consent from the client and/or his/her parent/ legal guardian. Staff must describe how the photograph, audio or video clip will be used.

Realistically, once a photograph, audio or video clip has been posted onto the Internet or social media, there can be no certainty as to who will see it, or where, when or how it may be distributed.

Therefore, obtaining informed consent is increasingly challenging. It is unrealistic to ask children to understand the implications of Hagar Australia (or visitors) using identifiable images in hard copy, or posted onto the Internet.

With these factors in mind, Hagar Australia shall only use images of children where the child subjects are unidentifiable, and only with the informed consent from a parent and/or legal guardian of the child. Staff must describe how the photograph, audio or video clip will be used.

All images of clients will have a “removal date” of two years from the date the image was taken, at which stage such image must be removed and replaced by more recent images. When sending images or using images for communication purposes Hagar Australia will ensure all images, labels, meta data or descriptions used will not have anything included that might divulge identifying details about the client.

Communication – with the media

The CEO or Chairman will deal with all matters pertaining to discussions with the media. All media representatives visiting Hagar programs must sign the Media Code of Conduct (attached at Appendix 3 within Hagar’s International Communications Policy), which are then sent to the Program Office to maintain dual records. Hagar Australia will not denigrate other agencies or organisations by making false statements about them.

With regard to interviews granted to the media on any particular aspect of the operations or policy it is preferable that a list of questions be submitted first which can then be answered in writing. In case this is not possible a tape recording should be maintained of the interview for future purposes.

At all times Hagar Australia's objectives and core values will be communicated.

Transparency – with the public, clients and donors

Hagar Australia recognises that transparency is a key part of accountability. Without information on what activities we are undertaking, how well we are performing or what our financial situation is, it is difficult for stakeholders to engage or to hold us to account.

Hagar Australia will regularly provide information to stakeholders, including donors, which is readily accessible, accurate and up to date. Information is available on hagar.org.au, including, details of our programs, program countries and contact information. We send newsletters to our donors and supporters each quarter.

In all fundraising materials Hagar Australia will be truthful and accurate, only making claims it can fulfil. There will be no material omissions or exaggerations of facts, no use of misleading photographs or any other communication that may tend to create a false impression or misunderstanding to the public. The CEO will approve all fundraising text before going to print. The material will make clear the tax deductibility of donations.

An Annual Report containing a statement of Hagar Australia's purpose and goals, a financial report, summary of activities and details of Board members will be made available to donors and the wider public each year. The Annual Report is published on the Hagar Australia website.

Hagar Australia complies with Hagar International's Communication Policy and Guidelines for Branding Strategy and Design.