

Blazing Swan Policy on Work Fitness and Impairment

The Blazing Swan community acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations Australia peoples today.

1. Purpose, Scope and Use

In this Policy workers means any persons engaged by Blazing Swan Incorporated (BSI) as a volunteer, contractor or employee. In this policy 'fitness' refers to a state of sensory, cognitive and physical function, and of mood such as to enable a worker to perform their work tasks effectively and safely, and for the worker to be able to objectively monitor their own fitness in respect to those tasks. In this policy 'impairment' means a degradation of the expected range of sensory, cognitive or physical functions or an alteration of mood of an individual such as to negatively impact their effectiveness or safety in the workplace and potentially their own ability to assess their fitness for work.

Volunteers and others engaged with BSI have a very wide range of functional capacities and strategies. This reflects the diversity in our community and it is one of the strengths of the organisation. Everyone's normal range of sensory, cognitive or physical functionality and range and expression of mood is unique to themselves. A person will never be considered impaired on the basis that they are different from any other person, but only on the basis that they are not their regular selves.

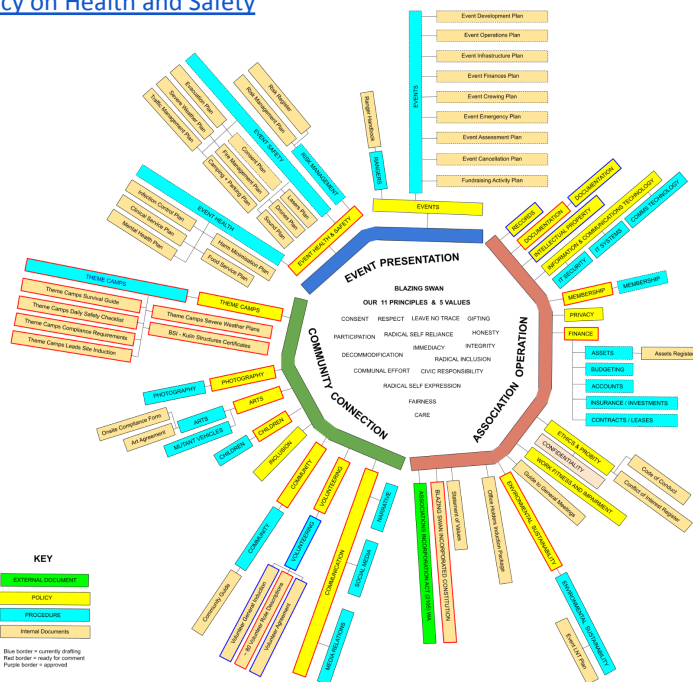
BSI's workforce is routinely called upon to operate in teams and may be exposed to hazards such as time pressures, remote locations and difficult environments. Impairment affecting an individual has the potential to impact not only the individual, but also the safety and productivity of the team and the Association. This Policy addresses maximising fitness for work in our workplace while also managing impairment and the adverse outcomes that may arise from it.

The use of the terms 'must', 'should', and 'may' or 'might' in this document have specific meanings. 'Must' allows for no choice. 'Should' points to a preferred option. 'Might' or 'May' points to one option among many, including but not limited to 'might not' and 'may not'.

This policy document is written in 'plain English' style and where there is any ambiguity the BSI Committee asserts the right to interpret the meaning of any part of the policy document as it sees fit and have that interpretation accepted by all parties as final. Note: Preferably use the expression volunteer 'with' BSI rather than volunteer 'in' BSI.

2. Reference Documents

- [Blazing Swan Constitution](#)
- Blazing Swan Principles and Core Values
- [Blazing Swan Policy on Health and Safety](#)



3. BSI is bound to comply with relevant laws, regulations and mandated standards, and in accordance with its stated Principles and Core Values.

BSI has binding obligations to act in accordance with its Constitution and with the rules governing organisations of its type. In creating and conducting Events such as Blazing Swan, BSI has binding obligations to act in accordance with all applicable Australian, State and Local Government laws, regulations and mandated standards for such Events, including BSI's own policies and procedures. Where standards are discretionary BSI undertakes to meet them to the best extent possible in the circumstances that apply at their Events. BSI also operates in accordance with the 11 Principles (Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self Reliance, Radical Self Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leave No Trace, Participation and Immediacy) and the 5 Core Values (Fairness, Honesty, Respect, Care and Integrity). In creating and implementing this Policy, and all the Structures, Procedures and Systems that flow from it, BSI is mindful of these obligations and expectations.

4. BSI and its workers share a duty of care towards each other and to others.

Blazing Swan and the people working with it share a duty of care towards each other. Blazing Swan Incorporated will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all workers, while workers must take reasonable care for their own and others health and safety by ensuring their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves and others, and they comply with all reasonable instructions. policies and procedures.

BSI will communicate its requirements of and expectations for its volunteer workers through induction, instruction and information. BSI will develop and sustain programs in partnership with BSI's workers to promote and achieve the best possible levels of fitness for work, and design work tasks that sustain and grow fitness for work.

5. Supervisors have a responsibility to monitor and detect potential and possible impairment in the workers in their workplace, and to prevent workers placing themselves or others at risk.

Supervisors who know the workers they work with are best placed to judge if a worker is unfit to work at the commencement of shift or at any time during their work shift. Supervisors are expected to approach a worker in a discreet, respectful and sensitive way if they believe the worker might be impaired outside of their normal range of abilities.. If a supervisor believes that the impairment - in the context of the work that the worker is doing or is proposing to do - would put the worker or others at risk of harm, the supervisor should direct the worker to cease work for the welfare of the worker and others.. The worker should be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter privately with the supervisor.

If the worker is markedly impaired, another worker should be designated to assist them to return to the worksite Headquarters (HQ) and handover supervision and care of the impaired worker to a responsible person. In all cases a worker who has ceased work due to an impairment should report back to the site HQ. Assessment of the worker will decide whether they can engage in alternative duties, rest onsite, or should be removed from the worksite for further assessment and management. Consideration should be given to the possibility of an underlying medical issue including but not limited to hyper/hypothermia, dehydration, exhaustion and pre-existing medical conditions. Supervisor or any other person monitoring that worker should not hesitate to call a medical emergency if they believe the person needs medical attention. The site log should record the event including that the worker returned to HQ, the reason, the date and time and outcome.

6. BSI's focus will be on making hazardous situations safe and on the recovery of the workers health and wellbeing.

Volunteer workers join BSI driven by a desire to contribute to the Blaze community and the Blaze. One of the main risks identified for volunteers is overwork and work stress. Supervisors will be asked to consider the background to any impairment situations they encounter with a view to improving future health and wellbeing outcomes. That consideration should be proportional to the seriousness of the situation, and always proceed from the premise that the worker is motivated and often best placed to suggest ways of avoiding or better managing similar situations of impairment in the future. Any investigation of impairment should always consider whether work stress, work expectations or work facilities (or lack of them) might have contributed to or worsened the circumstances of the impairment. All workers have a responsibility to take agency in avoiding impairment of their work fitness, in managing their work fitness, and in progressing their recovery from impairment situations.

7. BSI will follow up all recommendations made by supervisors who have managed and or reviewed instances of worker impairment in the workplace.

BSI takes its responsibility to provide a safe workspace for its workers seriously. All instances of worker impairment will be logged at Site HQ. BSI has systems in place to ensure all instances of impairment are reviewed, and all opportunities are taken to improve the safety of the workplace. Summary reports will be provided to the BSI Safety Consultant and, as suitable, BSI's elected Work and Health and Safety Representative.

8. Fitness for work is also a question of attitude and approach

Fitness for work is just one aspect of work readiness. BSI should always consider whether people have been adequately trained, whether the roles have been designed and resourced correctly, and whether the systems for supervision and support of the workforce are adequate. Issues such as morale and confidence in management play a significant role in work readiness. Workers who have confidence in their management are much more likely to accept safety advice and directions from management, especially where this involves asking workers to do extra work. BSI should always assess what additional work burdens might be created by safety systems and mitigate them where possible. Where the additional work burden can not be mitigated it should be reflected in a reduced expectation of productivity from our workforce. BSI will promote a no-blame culture for reporting hazards, incidents and near misses as an essential step in encouraging workers at every level of the organisation to use the reporting systems to their fullest potential.

END

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