

## Family Violence Policy

### Narrative

Family violence is a serious societal issue that poses significant harm to the health and wellbeing of our community and renders its victims vulnerable.

Commenting on the effects of family violence on victims, the report of the 2016 *Royal Commission into Family Violence* concluded that family violence “can cause terrible physical and psychological harm, particularly to women and children. It destroys families and undermines communities. Sometimes children who have directly experienced family violence or have been exposed to it go on to become victims or perpetrators of violence later in life, so that the effect of family violence is passed to the next generation”.

About Underwriting is committed to supporting those experiencing family violence as well as doing our part to deter the perpetuation of the conduct in the broader community.

### Definition of Family Violence

About Underwriting accepts and adopts the definition of family violence as set out in Section 5 of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (VIC)*, being behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour—

- is physically or sexually abusive; or
- is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or
- is economically abusive; or
- is threatening; or
- is coercive; or
- in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person; or
- behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to above.

### Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this family violence policy is to:

- Raise awareness among our employees about family violence and the impacts it has on people in the community and how we aim to support people experiencing family violence
- Create a safe working environment that promotes gender equity and models non-violent and respectful relationships
- Support those who are affected by family violence

- Create a supportive environment that will encourage people experiencing family violence to seek support.

### **Our Responses**

- Employee education
  - All of our employees will be made aware of the content of this policy and receive all prescribed training.
  - All of our employees will also be encouraged to undertake voluntary training.
- Employee undertakings
  - To foster a working environment in which all feel safe to seek help and support
  - To respect privacy and maintain confidentiality of clients experiencing family violence
- Disclosure
  - Disclosure of instances of family violence will be recorded, securely stored and used only for the purposes for which it was collected. It is acknowledged that a key purpose of recording is to ensure that victims of family violence need only tell their story once.
  - However, it is understood that circumstances may exist which require About Underwriting to provide certain information. The *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (VIC)* allows for the use and disclosure of personal information where it is reasonably believed that the use or disclosure of the information is necessary as prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Act, for example, to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.
- Referral & support
  - Persons affected by family violence will be referred to relevant support networks or authorities for assistance
  - It is also recognised that we may be perpetrators of family violence among our clients. We reserve the right to contact Victoria Police or refer the perpetrators to the relevant support services where it is deemed necessary.
- Publication and Amendment
  - This policy shall be made publicly available on About Underwriting's website and shall be updated as and when appropriate.
  - Dialogue is welcome on the contents of this policy and how we may improve our approach to family violence