

FPC003 – Vulnerable Supporter Care Policy

Approval date	15 December 2025
Next review due	December 2028
Last review	December 2025
Policy type	Operational
Owner	Supporter Services Team Leader (Fundraising, Partnerships & Community)
Approved by	Director Fundraising, Partnerships & Community

1. Policy Purpose

Oxfam Australia (OAU) receives donations from a wide range of supporters and is committed to treating all members of the public fairly and with compassion. This policy sets out our commitment to ensuring that no vulnerable member of the community is knowingly solicited for donations. We recognise our responsibility to protect individuals who may be at risk of exploitation and uphold the highest standards of ethical fundraising.

2. Scope and Eligibility

This Policy applies to:

- Oxfam Australia staff members;
- Oxfam Australia existing and prospective supporters;
- Oxfam Australia Board of Directors; and
- All fundraisers, including our third-party providers, over the telephone, via email, in-person and online.

3. Our Commitment

Oxfam Australia commits to never knowingly solicit donations from individuals identified as vulnerable. We commit to:

- Training staff to recognise signs of vulnerability and to respond appropriately.
- Prioritising dignity, respect and safeguarding over financial contributions.
- Refunding donations made by vulnerable individuals if it is determined that the donation was not made with full, informed consent.

- Encouraging and being open to conversations with caregivers and next of kin on preventive measures to voluntary donations made proactively by vulnerable persons.

4. Identifying Vulnerable Individuals

To identify vulnerable individuals, OAU staff look for indicators including:

On the telephone or in person:

- Difficulty understanding or retaining information or understanding English.
- Asking the same questions or appearing confused.
- Expressing feelings of pressure, distress or uncertainty.
- Offering to donate large sums or an additional donation to one made recently, in contradiction to historical patterns.
- Disclosing medical, cognitive or financial difficulties.
- Disclosing they have a guardian.
- Disclosing challenges with independent or unstructured living.
- Signs of being under the influence of medication, alcohol or another person's control.
- The supporter's family/carer informing us of the supporter's vulnerable state.

By email or written communication:

- Messages that are incoherent, contradictory or confused.
- Requests for clarification multiple times on simple matters.
- Disclosure of financial hardship or reliance on others for decision-making.
- Emails sent late at night with distressed or disorganised tone.
- Offer to donate large sums in contrast to history of previous amounts or an additional donation to one made recently.
- The supporter's family/carer informing us of the supporter's vulnerable state.

5. Steps we take

What steps will Oxfam Australia take if vulnerability is suspected?

- We will pause the conversation and explain that we are unable to proceed with the transaction.
- We will escalate the matter immediately to the manager or the safeguarding officer, whichever appropriate, and further investigations will take place if required.

- If the intended donor is an existing supporter, we will log the interaction in detail in their record in our database.
- If they are a member of the public with no prior contact with Oxfam Australia, we will create a record in our database and log engagement as reference, in case they make contact again.

What steps will Oxfam Australia take to refund payments if it is discovered that we have received a donation from a vulnerable person?

- The incident will be reported immediately to the team leader.
- The donation will then be refunded in full, regardless of the amount.
- A respectful message will be sent to the individual (or their representative) confirming the refund and our safeguarding commitment.
- The incident will be documented and the supporter's record flagged as one belonging to a person identified as vulnerable, to prevent future recurrence.
- We will work with the caregivers/next of kin on preventive measures to avoid repeated voluntary donations made proactively by the vulnerable person.
- We will review the case to identify any gaps in training, processes, or system support and implement the necessary improvements accordingly.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff and external agencies representing Oxfam Australia are responsible for adhering to this policy.
- Relevant managers are responsible for ensuring compliance and providing training.

7. Related Documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- FRG001 - Gift Acceptance Policy
- Our legal and ethical responsibilities
- Our Safeguarding Policy

8. Information about this Document

Version	Date effective	Summary of amendment
1	Dec 2025	Policy created