

## Red Shed Inc. Smoke Haze and Air Quality Policy

**Effective Date:** 01/06/2024

**Review Date:** 01/06/2025

### **Purpose:**

Red Shed Inc. is committed to protecting the health and safety of all employees, members, and visitors from the harmful effects of poor air quality and smoke haze, which may arise from events such as bushfires, controlled burns, or other pollution sources. This policy outlines procedures to mitigate risks and provide a safe environment for all outdoor and on-water activities.

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all Red Shed Inc. employees, members, visitors, and contractors participating in outdoor and on-water activities. It includes provisions for monitoring air quality, responding to poor air quality events, and adjusting activities to minimise exposure to unhealthy conditions.

### **Policy Statement:**

Red Shed Inc. recognises the risks posed by smoke haze and poor air quality, particularly during on-water activities. In line with national air quality guidelines (such as the Air Quality Index, AQI), this policy outlines measures to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants when air quality is compromised.

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## **1. Air Quality Monitoring**

### **1.1 Monitoring Air Quality:**

- Red Shed Inc. will regularly monitor air quality levels using reliable sources such as the **Air Quality Index (AQI)** from government environmental agencies, the **Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Health Department**, and real-time air quality apps (e.g., AirVisual, AQICN).
- The AQI will be the primary tool used to assess air quality, focusing on the presence of harmful pollutants, particularly **PM2.5** (fine particulate matter) and **PM10**.
- Air quality will be monitored before all scheduled on-water and outdoor activities, with real-time monitoring during periods of potential smoke haze or pollution events.

### **1.2 AQI Levels and Activity Guidelines:**

- Red Shed Inc. will follow the AQI index as per the following guidelines:
  - **Good (0-50 AQI):** All activities proceed as normal.
  - **Moderate (51-100 AQI):** Activities proceed with caution. Sensitive individuals (those with respiratory conditions, heart issues, or young children) are advised to limit outdoor exposure.
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- **Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150 AQI):** Activities proceed with extra caution. Individuals with pre-existing health conditions should avoid strenuous activities outdoors or on the water.
- **Unhealthy (151-200 AQI):** All outdoor and on-water activities will be suspended or cancelled. Alternative indoor activities may be offered.
- **Very Unhealthy to Hazardous (201+ AQI):** All outdoor and on-water activities will be cancelled, and all participants will be advised to stay indoors with windows and doors closed.

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## 2. Smoke Haze and Poor Air Quality Response

### 2.1 Immediate Response to Smoke Haze:

- If smoke haze is visible, or air quality degrades quickly, staff will immediately assess the AQI using available air quality monitoring tools.
- On-water activities will be halted if AQI levels exceed **150 (Unhealthy)**, and participants will be advised to return to shore.
- Participants will be informed to reduce exertion, cover their nose and mouth if necessary, and seek shelter indoors.

### 2.2 Communication of Air Quality Risks:

- Participants will be informed of air quality conditions and any potential risks at the start of their activity or through pre-session communications (emails, app notifications, etc.).
- If air quality deteriorates during an activity, staff will immediately inform participants and provide guidance on how to respond.

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## 3. Health and Safety Measures

### 3.1 Sensitive Individuals:

- Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions (e.g., asthma), cardiovascular diseases, or other health conditions that make them more vulnerable to poor air quality will be advised to avoid outdoor activities when AQI levels reach **101 or higher (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)**.
- Red Shed Inc. will provide information on minimizing exposure, such as reducing physical exertion, using respiratory protection (e.g., P2/N95 masks), and limiting time spent outdoors.

### 3.2 Protective Measures:

- Staff will ensure that indoor areas, including the Red Shed facility, are well-ventilated with appropriate filtration systems to reduce indoor air pollution.

- Participants will be encouraged to take breaks indoors during periods of poor air quality and avoid strenuous activity when AQI levels are elevated.
- Red Shed will provide access to **P2/N95 masks** for staff and participants during periods of moderate to poor air quality, particularly for those with underlying health conditions.

### 3.3 Hydration and Recovery:

- Participants will be reminded to stay hydrated, as smoke and pollution can lead to dehydration and dry airways.
- Staff will monitor the well-being of participants during outdoor activities, particularly those who may be more susceptible to air quality issues.

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## 4. Activity Adjustments and Cancellations

### 4.1 Modification of Activities:

- Outdoor and on-water activities will be modified or limited when AQI levels exceed **100 (Moderate to Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)**.
  - Activities may be shortened or replaced with lower-exertion exercises indoors.
  - If conditions improve within a short period, activities may be resumed with staff approval.

### 4.2 Activity Cancellations:

- All outdoor and on-water activities will be cancelled if the AQI reaches **151 (Unhealthy)** or higher.
- Red Shed Inc. will notify participants of any cancellations via email, SMS, or the Red Shed app, ideally with a minimum of **1 hours' notice** before the scheduled start time.
- Alternative indoor activities or rescheduled sessions will be offered where feasible.

### 4.3 Rescheduling Guidelines:

- Red Shed Inc. will aim to reschedule any cancelled activities to a later date when air quality improves, depending on facility availability and participant convenience.
- Priority will be given to maintaining participant safety over activity completion.

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## 5. Communication and Notification

### 5.1 Pre-Session Communication:

- Red Shed Inc. will provide regular updates on air quality conditions through email notifications, app alerts, or on-site announcements.
- Participants will be advised to check real-time air quality data prior to arriving for outdoor activities, particularly during periods of known smoke haze or bushfire season.

## 5.2 On-Site Communication:

- Staff will be equipped with radios or mobile phones to communicate quickly and effectively about changing air quality conditions.
  - Clear instructions will be given to participants in the event of an air quality-related cancellation or activity modification.
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## 6. Policy Review and Compliance

### 6.1 Compliance:

- All employees, members, and visitors must adhere to the air quality guidelines and safety measures outlined in this policy. Non-compliance may result in exclusion from activities or disciplinary actions for staff.

### 6.2 Review:

- This Smoke Haze and Air Quality Policy will be reviewed annually or following any major air quality events. The review will ensure alignment with up-to-date air quality guidelines and the needs of Red Shed Inc.
  - Feedback from staff, members, and participants will be considered in each review to enhance the policy's effectiveness and practicality.
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### This policy has been approved by

**Name:** John Gasson

**Position:** President

**Date:** 01/06/2024

### Contact Information:

For questions or concerns regarding first aid at Red Shed, please contact [admin@redshed.org.au](mailto:admin@redshed.org.au) or 0447 137 111.