

9 FEBRUARY 2018

Sovereign Hill board moves to launch fresh investigation

The Board of Directors of Sovereign Hill has resolved to open a new investigation into sexual harassment claims published on Wednesday in *The Courier* newspaper.

The motion, moved last night at an extraordinary Board meeting in Ballarat, follows specific allegations of an explicit sexual nature that came to light in this week's news reports.

Sovereign Hill CEO Jeremy Johnson said:

"The Board and management of Sovereign Hill is unequivocal in their position against sexual misconduct and harassment in the workplace, or elsewhere. We convened an extraordinary board meeting as quickly as possible this week to discuss our organisation's policies and procedures around harassment and discrimination, and to consider the specific issues highlighted on Tuesday in *The Courier*.

"A number of the accounts of specific acts of a sexual nature reported in *The Courier* were not previously raised as part of any investigation. As such, the Board resolved unanimously that a thorough, independent investigation of those issues should take place as soon as possible, in the interest of all the parties concerned."

An independent and external investigation in 2017 into 12 claims of sexual harassment against a male employee resulted in two inappropriate comments being substantiated and the employee subsequently issued a first and final warning.

The latest investigation by Sovereign Hill will take place in parallel with, but separate to, Victoria Police's ongoing investigation into inappropriate behaviour. Sovereign Hill management will continue to cooperate with Victoria Police as required.

The Sovereign Hill Board also ratified a management decision taken yesterday to conduct a review of the organisation's harassment and discrimination policies and procedures, to ensure they observe best-practice principles, conform to modern-day standards, and create an environment where employees are empowered to bring forward any concerns of misconduct.

Mr Johnson added:

"Put simply, our organisation has been shocked by the claims made this week and we will work tirelessly to ensure we protect and promote fairness, respect and integrity at all levels of our great organisation."

-Ends-

For more information, please contact: Genevieve Manley, on 0438 349 662.

Note to editors:

Sovereign Hill is a not-for-profit, community-based, cultural tourism organisation administered by The Sovereign Hill Museums Association. The Association is controlled by a Board, which is elected by members of the Association, and serves in a voluntary capacity.

The Board, which consists of five women and seven men, meets regularly to monitor Sovereign Hill's progress against the goals and objectives. More information [here](#).