

8 FEBRUARY 2018

There's no doubt the past few days have been difficult for the team here at Sovereign Hill. Our great people have been concerned with the attention drawn upon our award-winning tourist destination, particularly the suggestions that a culture of misogyny exists and that sexual harassment has been tolerated.

Any suggestion of workplace harassment of any kind concerns my board, leadership team and me greatly. We take seriously our duty of care to employees and aim to instil a culture of respect, integrity and responsibility every day. Indeed [our organisational values](#) motivate our professional behaviour between colleagues, visitors, sponsors, suppliers and other stakeholders.

We have taken action in the past 24 hours to ensure our policies and procedures still stand up to modern-day expectations. We have initiated a review of our Code of Conduct, Anti-Discrimination & Harassment Policy, reporting and investigations procedures and training and induction programs.

Like any organisation concerned with creating a fair and respectful workplace, we review these policies and procedures on an annual basis as part of normal business operations but I will bring forward this annual review in light of recent events. I am confident they are industry best-practice because they have been developed in collaboration with our employees, industry experts, relevant authorities and our employees' union, the Media and Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

If our review determines we could improve the way our people are educated on the policies and procedures, we will act immediately in the interests of continuous improvement. Like many organisational leaders, I seek to role-model the right behaviour and engender a culture within which our employees feel empowered to report discrimination and harassment freely and without prejudice, and that the process for this is easy, confidential, respectful and robust.

I appreciate that coverage in recent days might be influencing people's perception of Sovereign Hill and given that, I think it is important to reiterate some facts:

- The fully independent investigation Sovereign Hill commissioned in 2017 into 'Employee X' resulted in two of 12 allegations being substantiated. They related to Employee X making two inappropriate comments on two separate occasions. Penalties were applied to the employee, including a first and final warning. In light of a police investigation being initiated, we have stood Employee X down until further notice and he will not attend our workplace.
- The Courier reported on Thursday that a woman ('Ms 3') was dismissed for pushing Employee X. Multiple witness statements brought forward as part of our investigation (many from female employees who also lodged formal complaints about Ms 3's behaviour) are completely at odds with the female employee's account reported in The Courier. The investigation determined that the female employee had engaged in misconduct; not the other way around.

We are continuing to cooperate with Victoria Police's current investigation and will act appropriately on any findings.

I am determined to ensure Sovereign Hill maintains its iconic position as a premier tourist attraction and acclaimed outdoor museum. I am also focussed on ensuring our organisation continues to be an inspiring and supportive place to work for our hundreds of terrific employees and a major contributor to the Victorian economy and local community.

Jeremy Johnson

CEO

Sovereign Hill Museums Association