Becoming Child Safe

the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A Safer WA for Children

Child Safe PROJECT

Department of **Health**
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Communities**
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

This initiative is part of the WA Government's action to create a Safer WA for Children by implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Acknowledgement of Country

The content is big – take care

This presentation includes content that discusses the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**, which may be distressing or triggering to some in the audience.

Please feel free to:

- Step away at any time
- Take breaks as needed
- Reach out for support

Lifeline - 13 11 14

QLife - 1800 184 527

13 Yarn – 13 92 76

Bravehearts – 1800 272 831

Blue Knot Foundation – 1300 657 380

MensLine Australia - 1300 789 978

BeyondBlue - 1300 22 4636

Outline and introductions

1. Background to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
2. The WA Child Safe Knowledge Hub – where to go for information
3. Sector guidance and practical advice on implementation
4. Q&A

Who we are:

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Fiona Costello, Manager Child Safe Program, WA Council of Community Services
Natalie Kickett, Manager Child Safe Program, Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia

What is Child Safeguarding?

Child safeguarding refers to the actions that seek to protect children from harm arising from all forms of child abuse, including neglect. Child safeguarding actions aim to reduce the likelihood of harm and establish mechanisms to identify and respond to concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

A child safe institution is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Safeguarding children means putting in place policies, procedures and practices to protect children from harm, abuse, and neglect.
National Office for Child Safety (Australia)

"Every organisation has a responsibility to keep children and young people safe"
WA Commissioner for Children and Young People

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

*The National Principles aim to **provide a consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that protect children** from harm and are driving the approach to Child Safeguarding across Australia.*

Background:

- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations have their foundation in the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.*

- The Principles are the vehicle that gives effect to the10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission (volume 6).

- In 2019 the National Principles were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments for nation-wide adoption and implementation.

The National Principles are:

- Underpinned by a child-rights, strengths-based approach

- Designed to allow for flexibility in implementation across all sectors

- Aligned with existing child safe approaches at state and territory levels.

The 10 National Principles

#	Principle
1	**Child safety and wellbeing** is embedded in **organisational leadership, governance and culture**.
2	Children and young people are **informed about their rights, participate in decisions** affecting them and are taken seriously.
3	**Families and communities are informed** and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4	**Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected** in policy and practice.
5	People working with children and young people are **suitable and supported** to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6	Processes to **respond to complaints and concerns** are child focused.
7	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the **knowledge, skills and awareness** to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education.
8	**Physical and online environments** promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9	Implementation of the national child safe principles is **regularly reviewed and improved.**
10	**Policies and procedures** document how the organisation is **safe for children and young people.**

What is happening in WA?

- The **WA Government has committed to implementing the National Principles**, and to supporting the development of child-safe organisations for children and young people in Western Australia.

- The WA Government is working to develop independent oversight to **monitor and enforce the National Principles**.

- The WA Government is encouraging organisations that deliver services to children to **implement the National Principles** in anticipation of oversight.

- In November 2023, the WA Government issued a public **commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing**.

- The Department of Communities (DoC) is **leading a consistent and collaborative approach to implementation** across state Government and are supporting Non-Government Agencies through the Supporting Communities Forum.

Department of Communities
Child safe organisations knowledge hub

- The **Safer WA for children and young people** site intends to support implementation of Royal Commission recommendations, linking to:

  - Child Safe Organisations Knowledge Hub
  - how to report concerns for a child or young person
  - how children and young people can make a complaint
  - support for survivors of child abuse
  - information on redress and compensation.

- Creating a **Safer WA** for children is everyone's responsibility.

A Safer WA for Children

www.communities.wa.gov.au/saferwa

Safer WA for Children and Young People

Implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to create a safer WA for children and young people – it's up to all of us.

Last updated: 2 May 2024

The Western Australian Government apologises unreservedly for the sexual abuse of children in Western Australian Government institutions.

Safer WA for Children and Young People was developed as part of the Western Australian Government's implementation of the recommendations from the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse** ☑.

I'm worried about a child or young person

Resources to help if you're worried a child is unsafe.

How to make a complaint if you are a child or young person

You can lodge a complaint against organisations you come into contact with.

Child safe organisations

The Western Australian Government is committed to supporting the development of child safe organisations for children and young people.
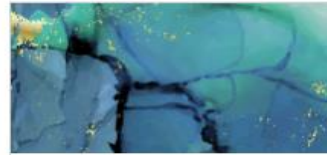
Department of Communities
Child safe organisations knowledge hub

Getting started

WA Child Safe Project - WACOSS and CASWA

National Principle 1: Child safe governance and culture

National Principle 2: Rights and participation of children and young people

National Principle 3: Informing and involving families and communities

National Principle 4: Upholding equity and respecting diverse needs

National Principle 5: Suitability and support of people working with children and young people

National Principle 6: Child focussed complaints processes

National Principle 7: Education and training of staff and volunteers

The **Child safe organisations Knowledge Hub** intends to support the WA community

The Knowledge Hub targets organisations, families, as well as children and young people, including practical examples, resources, tools, videos and recorded webinars.

Department of Communities
Events

Child Safe Recruitment and Staff Support

With a focus on National Principle 5, this workshop included a range of guest speakers and covered the topics of recruitment, the role of screening, employee inductions and ongoing support.

View the PowerPoint presentation >

Webinar recording:

The Knowledge Hub's events page includes:
- Recorded webinars
- Links to the Child Safe Project
- Mailing list registration

Future events
- WA Children's Week Seminar 2025

Department of Communities
Additional resources

Practical resources and examples to implement the National Principles are available online.
www.communities.wa.gov.au/childsafeorgs

Email
csaroyalcommission@communities.wa.gov.au

What is a Child Safe Organisation?

- Creates an environment where **children's safety and well-being** are at the centre of all thoughts, values and actions.

- Emphasises **genuine engagement** with, and **valuing of, children**

- Creates **conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm** to children

- Creates conditions that **increase the likelihood of identifying any harm**

- Responds effectively to any **concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions** of harm

Why organisational culture matters in preventing harm to children

- Child Safe Commitment Statement

- Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy

- Code of Conduct

- Risk Management Plan

- Recruitment process

- Complaints management

What does an unsafe culture look like?

- Rigid hierarchy, fear of challenging authority

- Invisibility of marginalised children (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth, Aboriginal kids, kids with disability)

- Low trust in complaint systems

- Silence or denial when issues are raised

- Normalisation of subtle boundary violations

- Staff discomfort with conversations about trauma or identity

Features of protective culture

- **Psychological safety:** people feel safe to raise concerns without fear

- **Inclusion:** all children feel recognised and respected

- **Shared responsibility:** safeguarding isn't left to one person

- **Cultural humility:** staff remain curious, reflective, and open

- **Active listening:** to children and families, especially those whose voices are most often sidelined

- **Ongoing Reflection:** Regular monitoring and evaluation scheduled.

Where to next:

A Pathway to a Child Safe Organisation:

- Phase 1 – Prepare and Plan

- Phase 2 – Develop and Implement

- Phase 3 – Monitor and Continuous Improvement

- Phase 4 – Sustain the Change

Download this and more resources via the WACOSS Child Safe Webpage

https://www.wacoss.org.au/wa-child-safe-project/

A Pathway to a Child Safe Organisation

PHASE 1 - Prepare and Plan

- All leadership, staff, and volunteers understand their responsibilities
- Complete the WA CCYP self-assessment tool to identify the gaps and risks
- Role model an ongoing child-safe culture at every level of the organisation
- Develop a risk management plan to address identified gaps and risks
- Understand your legal obligations (mandatory reporting, WWCC, etc)
- Sign up to the Child Safe Project eNewsletter
- Explore the Child Safe Organisations Knowledge Hub
- Embed input from children, families, and communities in all phases

PHASE 2 - Develop and Implement

- Train staff, volunteers, and leadership
- Appoint a child-safe champion or committee
- Develop a commitment statement and get the governance sign-off
- Update or create child-safe policies and child-friendly versions
- Identify high-risk or high-priority areas for immediate action
- Embed child safety into onboarding, training plans, and policy manuals

PHASE 3 - Monitor and Continuous Improvement

- Create feedback mechanisms for children, families, staff, and volunteers
- Embed implementation discussions into regular supervision, meeting agendas, and reporting
- Allow leadership to assess progress and manage risks based on data
- Use complaints, incidents, and feedback to drive change and learning
- Celebrate and communicate small and large successes

PHASE 4 - Sustain the Change

- Regularly update policies based on feedback and legislative change
- Report on child-safe progress to governance, leadership, and stakeholders
- Provide ongoing education and refresher training for staff and volunteers
- Include child safety as a standing item in operational and governance meetings

Why Child Safe Organisations are Important for Aboriginal Children and families

- Legacy of Colonisation, Institutional Racism and Intergenerational Trauma

- Royal Commission Findings and Message

- Current Engagement with Systems and Services

Building Child Safe Organisations for Aboriginal Children and Families

- Honours Aboriginal culture

- Keep kids safe

- Support justice and care for every child

- Support community-led care

- Build strength and healing

- Trauma Informed

CASWA's Work to Support Child Safety

- Building and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders statewide

- Build awareness of abuse as a violation of safety and wellbeing, including physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, and neglectful harm

- Promote understanding of the National Child Safe Principles to support safe and inclusive environments

- Provide resources and tools to apply the National Safety Principles into organsational governance and supports everyday practice

- Work in ways that respect and value Aboriginal culture

Questions?

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