

Council

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHILD SAFE
AWARENESS POLICY

Draft Consultation on Proposed Child Safe Awareness
Policy

Meeting Date: 2 August 2022

Number of Pages: 9

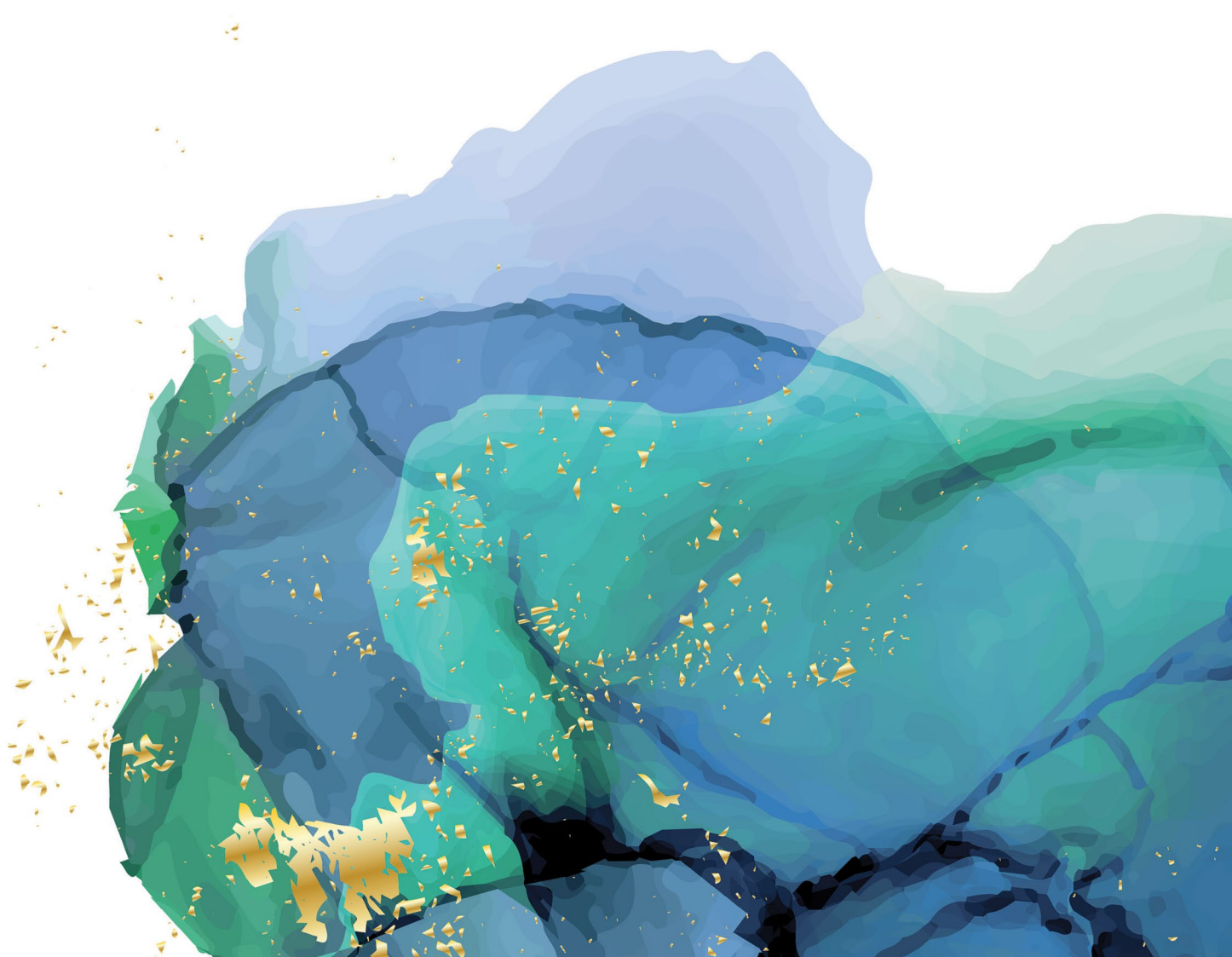


This initiative is part of the WA Government's action to create a Safer WA for Children by implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Child Safe Awareness Policy for Local Government

Consultation DRAFT

July 2022



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Child Safe Awareness Policy for Local Government

Disclaimer

This policy template was developed through a co-design process with Local Governments in June 2022. The Department of Communities undertakes that this information was correct at the time of publishing. It is provided for general information and does not constitute legal or other professional advice.

Instructions

Please read the accompanying notes and then use the following template as guidance to develop your own Child Safe Awareness Policy.

Policy Statement

[Local Government] supports and values all children. Local Government makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children, including protection from abuse. This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained.

[Local Government] takes seriously its commitment to encourage local organisations to be child safe and ensure children are empowered, is committed to being child safe and demonstrating a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse.

This policy recognises that [Local Government] is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership in supporting organisations to be child safe to protect children from harm or abuse.

This policy serves as a framework that outlines our role in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, support, awareness raising and sharing information. We will be guided by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Scope

Child safety is everyone's responsibility.

This policy applies to all Elected Members, employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students and interns. It applies to occupants of Local Government facilities and venues, contractors and suppliers and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the City/Town/Shire, irrespective of their involvement in child-related work.

Definitions

Child/young person: Means a person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who is apparently under 18 years of age.

Child Safe Organisation: Refers to organisations that:

- Create an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions.
- Place emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people.
- Create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- Create conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm.
- Respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm¹ (note: in the context of local governments this would involve referring to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate).

Child safe: In this policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children/young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.

Harm: Means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's or young person's wellbeing including physical, emotional, or psychological development².

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission: What is a child safe organisation? [What is a child safe organisation? \(humanrights.gov.au\)](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/what-is-a-child-safe-organisation)

² Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) [WALW - Children and Community Services Act 2004 - Home Page \(legislation.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/homePage.nsf/0/00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000?open)

Principles

- The rights of children are upheld.
- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe.
- Children have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously.
- The best interests of children and young people come first when making decisions.
- Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, helps reduce the risk of harm and abuse.
- Communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Roles and responsibilities

[Local Government] will ensure the following functions of this policy are resourced and assigned to the relevant officers for implementation

- Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at [Local Government] venues, grounds and facilities or events).
- Connecting and supporting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

[Local Government] does not have oversight, control, responsibility, or accountability for third parties to uphold legal and moral compliance for child safety, or to be a child safe organisation. The City/Town/Shire is taking on a leadership role within community to support community organisations fulfil their responsibilities.

Local Government roles involved in the implementation of this policy (examples only)

- CEO
- Community Services
- Communications
- Governance

Local government is not responsible for developing child safe messages but is responsible for sharing them.

Related Legislation (examples only)

- Child Care Services Act 2007
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Local Government Act 1995
- National Principles for Child Safety Organisations
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2020
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
- Others?

Related Local Government Policy (examples only)

- Aboriginal / First Nations / Cultural Policy
 - Child Safety Policy
 - Code of Conduct
 - Communications
 - Community Signage
 - Complaints Management
 - Engagement Policy
 - Information Technology
 - Record Keeping
 - Strategic Community Plan
 - Strategic and Operational Risk Plans
 - Volunteer Policy
 - Working with Children Checks
 - Youth Policy
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Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or upon the introduction of other policy or legislation related to child safety.

Approval

Date

Name Title

Signature

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