



## Making Western Australia Safer for Children

 Healing Past Hurts

 Protecting Children Now

 Preventing Further Harm

# Supporting Communities Forum Child Safe Organisations Working Group

**Framework for selecting, supporting, and sharing implementation examples of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.**

## Background

Volume 6 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) emphasised that organisations working with children must be able to provide safe environments where the rights, needs and interests of children are prioritised and met. The Royal Commission defined child safe organisations as those that create cultures, adopt strategies and take action to prevent harm to children, including child sexual abuse.

In February 2019 the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) which enshrine the 10 child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission. Embedding the National Principles in the structures, policies and cultures of organisations is the focus of the remainder of the recommendations in volume 6.

Up to 25,000 organisations across Western Australia (WA) will be impacted by requirements to implement the National Principles. Access to relevant resources and support for organisations is important so they can reflect upon and improve their child safe practices in anticipation of legislative requirements to implement the National Principles.

## Implementing the National Principles

A significant body of work has been undertaken in WA to support implementation of the National Principles. The Department of Communities (Communities), in partnership with key government agencies, is leading implementation through a range of administrative and regulatory frameworks. The work to develop legislation and provide policy advice to

government on independent oversight of the National Principles is being led by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP) continues to have a key role in the voluntary capacity building approach to child safe organisations.

Broad consultation with the community sector and local government has identified the need for additional support to implement the National Principles, including a preference for working more collaboratively and a commitment to sharing information, resources, and learning. A new program of work is being led through the Supporting Communities Forum to build capacity and capability for implementation. A dedicated working group comprising senior leaders across state and local government, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, community sector and sport is progressing this work and has developed a project plan to identify demonstrations of National Principles implementation across sectors that will form the basis of a Child Safe Knowledge Hub.

## **Child Safe Organisations Working Group of the Supporting Communities Forum**

The Child Safe Organisations Working Group (the Working Group) is committed to supporting organisations in WA to improve child safety by implementing the National Principles. The Implementation Framework (the Framework) is designed to help achieve this commitment.

The Framework identifies the overarching vision, deliverables, and guiding principles for the project plan to the end of 2022. It details the selection criteria, governance and options for support that will help identify demonstrations of National Principle implementation including existing exemplars and emerging practices. The Framework compels the Working Group to embed key National Principles in processes throughout the delivery of the project.

### **Vision**

Organisations engaged in child-related work across WA have increased capacity and capability to create child safe organisations through access to shared learnings and demonstrations of National Principle implementation.

### **Project deliverables**

The project plan developed by the Working Group will deliver the following:

- examples of implementation that are already complete (exemplars),
- projects that have not yet started, or have commenced, that are working towards implementation of the National Principles (emerging practices), and
- a knowledge hub for child safe resources and implementation examples (Child Safe Knowledge Hub).

### **Guiding principles for the project**

Six guiding principles underpin the project plan. They reflect the values and attitudes that the Working Group collectively agree to be the foundation for delivering a project to support organisations to increase child safety through implementation of the National Principles. The principles are also important in supporting effective across sector work.

## **1. Cultural awareness and safety**

- The history, cultural rights, values, beliefs and diversity of Aboriginal children, young people and families are acknowledged and respected and work is undertaken to embed the principle of cultural safety in the delivery of demonstration projects.
- Cultural awareness and safety can be demonstrated by consulting with Aboriginal leaders, valuing Aboriginal knowledge and cultural beliefs and paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people.

## **2. Equity and access**

- The diverse circumstance of children, young people and families are acknowledged and respected and the rights of all children and young people to be safe regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic or cultural background are upheld.
- Barriers to equal access to child safe organisations for children and young people from diverse backgrounds are identified and removed.
- Equity and access can be shown through the development of information, resources and practices that are responsive to the needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, those unable to live at home and lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

## **3. Collaboration and partnerships**

- Opportunities to share learning, resources and work collaboratively are maximized.
- Genuine partnerships are established across organisations and sectors by building on shared a commitment to improving child safety and wellbeing.
- Collaboration and partnerships may include organisations mentoring others, establishing cross sector working groups or establishing opportunities between organisations for two-way transfer of skills, knowledge, and expertise in child safe practices.

## **4. Accountability**

- A clear governance structure for overseeing demonstration projects is established.
- The likely impact of demonstration projects on children and young people are regularly reviewed and assessed to ensure they support the vision of the Framework.
- Accountability can be maintained through regular project reporting to ensure openness and transparency and ongoing evaluation of demonstration projects to allow early identification of issues that need to be addressed.

## **5. Flexibility**

- Organisations are encouraged to respond and adapt to changes that impact their ability to deliver demonstration projects, such as workforce or operational constraints caused by COVID related restrictions.

## **6. Best practice**

- The National Principles and corresponding key actions represent best practice in achieving child safe organisations that create a culture, adopt strategies and take action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

## Selection criteria for demonstration projects (exemplars and emerging practices)

It is important that the selected exemplars and emerging practices can showcase implementation of the National Principles across a variety of organisations and sectors, with consideration of diverse implementation methodologies. They should be able to demonstrate the unique challenges to implementation, highlight barriers that need to be overcome, opportunities, best practice and learnings that can be used to reflect upon and improve their child safe practices in anticipation of legislative requirements to implement the National Principles.

To determine the projects that are selected to form part of the suite of exemplars and emerging practices in the Child Safe Knowledge Hub the following should be considered for:

1. All demonstration projects (proposed exemplars and emerging practices):
  - Can implementation of at least one of the National Principles be demonstrated?
  - Can a process or model of implementation be articulated?
  - Does the project implement National Principles in ways that are culturally safe and inclusive?
  - Is the project engaging children and young people?
  - Is child safety supported by the organisation's leadership and governance?
2. Emerging practices:
  - What level of support is required for implementation and what support is readily available?
  - Is there opportunity for the project to partner with another organisation?
  - Will the project be finalised within the Working Group's timeframes?

Collectively the proposed demonstration projects should also provide:

- coverage across all ten National Principles
- representation across a variety of organisations and sectors
- a variety of models of implementation
- a broad spectrum of projects at different stages of implementation including those that are underway or well established and others that are yet to commence or are in early stages of development
- examples of projects where implementation of the National Principles is supported by funding as well as those funded inhouse or within existing resources; and
- examples from across both regional/remote and metropolitan organisations.

## Options for supporting implementation

While there is no specific funding attached to this project to support organisations to establish or continue demonstration projects, assistance can be provided through opportunities to work together, share resources and learnings. This could include:

- Creating partnerships for organisations to support each other, particularly for larger, more established organisations to assist smaller organisations.
- Establishing opportunities for organisations further along in implementation to coach or mentor others less progressed.

- Providing training related to implementing the National Principles.
- Developing proformas and blueprints to guide implementation that can be shared.
- Sharing existing resources such as training/e-learning modules and policies to support implementation of demonstration projects.
- Assisting to document the unique challenges to implementation, barriers that need to be overcome, opportunities, best practice and learnings.

## **Governance of demonstration projects**

Demonstration projects will be sought through a questionnaire aimed at identifying examples of implementation that are already complete (exemplars) and projects that have not yet started, or have commenced, that are working towards implementation of the National Principles (emerging practices). Responses will be considered by a small panel comprised of representatives from the Working Group. Selection of demonstration projects will be guided by the Framework.

The Working Group will also:

- provide ongoing monitoring of challenges, achievements, and outcomes for each demonstration project,
- establish a risk management process to be implemented throughout the delivery of demonstration projects, and
- explore opportunities to embed the National Principles in project processes (where applicable).

**Embedding the National Principles in project processes** will include:

- Engaging children and young people to participate in:
  - the design and facilitation of working group meetings and workshops
  - the selection of the demonstration projects; and
  - reviewing and monitoring projects.
- Recognising the diverse circumstances of children and young people. This will include:
  - seeking the expertise/support of Aboriginal leaders to review demonstration projects to ensure they are culturally safe and responsive,
  - engaging with colleagues from the disability sector to seek advice on support required by organisations delivering services to children and young people to implement the National Principles, and
  - including exemplars and demonstration projects that highlight challenges and opportunities for creating child safety in organisations working with diverse populations.