

Child Safe Action Plan

2023-2027







Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of Sport would like to acknowledge and pay its respects to the traditional custodians of our land, the Aboriginal people of New South Wales.

The Office of Sport would also like to pay its respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present.

Artwork
“Jennebe”
By Jasmine Sarin



Contents

Section 1	2
Message from the Chief Executive	3
Section 2	4
Why a Child Safe Action Plan?	5
Section 3	6
Our Plan	7
Pillar One - Awareness Raising	12
Pillar Two - Capability Building	14
Pillar Three - Embedding the Child Safe Standards	16

Section

1





Message from the Chief Executive

Participation in organised sport and active recreation is beneficial for children's physical and mental health and assists the development of physical literacy and social skills. Participation also builds resilience and teaches children how to win and lose, and about goal setting and time management. Participation also provides a positive way for children to release their abundant levels of energy and best of all it is fun.

Some 90% of primary aged children in NSW participate in an organised sport or active recreation activity each year. Many children participate several times a week and are involved in a wide range of different sport and active recreation activities throughout each year.

The benefits of this involvement in sport and active recreation are achieved when sport for children is delivered in a caring, nurturing and safe way.

Unfortunately, sport and active recreation organisations, like many others with a duty of care to protect children, have had failures of policy, procedures and systems that have resulted in children being abused and exploited by coaches, administrators and other participants. *The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (the Royal Commission)

highlighted the enduring trauma in the lives of so many children as a result of abuse by adults in positions of trust and authority in schools, churches, and sport and active recreation organisations.

The 10 Child Safe Standards that were recommended by the Royal Commission are now legislated in NSW and provide a framework for Child Safe Organisations.

This Child Safe Action Plan outlines how the NSW Office of Sport will continue to embed the Child Safe Standards in all that we do, as well as how we will influence and assist the sport and active recreation sector in NSW to do the same.

I look forward to working with you over the duration of this Child Safe Action Plan to build a sport and active recreation system that is safe and nurturing for children and where all the wonderful benefits of participation in sport and active recreation are achieved and enjoyed.

Karen Jones
Chief Executive
Office of Sport

Section

2





Why a Child Safe Action Plan?

The *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (the Act) aims to protect children. It seeks to embed the Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practice in organisations throughout NSW.

It requires the Office of Sport (the Office) to develop and publish a *Child Safe Action Plan* (the Plan) that details how we will influence change across the sport and active recreation sector over the next 4 years in relation to child safety.

What is the sport and active recreation sector?

The sport and active recreation sector in NSW includes over 12,000 providers, ranging from not-for-profit organisations to private operators. It is estimated that its workforce is more than 500,000 people, including both paid and volunteer roles.

The sport sector includes 97 State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) that are recognised by the Office of Sport. Affiliated to these SSOs are more than 10,000 local sport clubs. Within this sector there are several large multi-sport providers including PCYC and YMCA as well as organisations that advance sporting talent such as sport academies and the NSW Institute of Sport.

The active recreation sector is diverse and covers organisations offering outdoor education, outdoor recreation and adventure tourism. It includes providers such as Scouts, Guides, dance schools and gyms/fitness centres.

Children's participation in sport

According to AusPlay Survey data regarding participation in organised sport and active recreation in the 2021 calendar year the table below shows the percentage of children in NSW (0-14 years) who participated in organised sport and active recreation outside of school hours at least once a year.

Age group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	46.40%	54.30%	50.30%
5-8	89.00%	87.20%	88.10%
9-11	91.20%	91.30%	91.20%
12-14	87.20%	86.70%	87.00%

AusPlay defines adults as those 15 years and older. From the data collected for those aged 15-17 years the number that participated in sport and active recreation at least once per year is below. Note: This participation may have occurred during school time.

Age group	Male	Female	Total
15-17	95.8%	97.9%	96.8%

Section

3



Our Plan

Our Plan includes the strategies we will take in delivering our own services to children, as well as those we will take with other organisations in the sport and active recreation sector, especially those we fund and regulate, to:

- build awareness about the importance of child safety
- build the capability of child safe organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards
- improve the safety of children by implementing the Child Safe Standards in our organisation.

The Plan intends to promote sector-wide reform, build awareness of child safety, and embed the Child Safe Standards.

Developing our Child Safe Action Plan

The Office of Sport has developed its Child Safe Action Plan (CSAP) in consultation with the Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG), and the organisations we recognise, fund, and regulate.

A key element of our consultation was the establishment of a Sector Engagement Committee with representation from peak sector organisations including Sport NSW, Outdoors NSW, NSWIS, PCYC, YMCA and the Aquatics and Recreation Institute. Also represented were several SSOs and the regional academy network. This group is co-Chaired by the NSW Children’s Guardian and the Chief Executive, Office of Sport, with key staff from both organisations also attending.

The Committee met regularly throughout 2022 with a focus on building understanding of the Child Safe Scheme, sharing ideas in relation to the content of the CSAP and leveraging avenues of engagement with the broader sport and active recreation sector.

The Office also hosted a Child Safe Engagement Forum for SSOs that included presentations from the OCG and Sport Integrity Australia (SIA). The development of our Action Plan has occurred at the same time as National Sport Organisations (NSOs) are deciding if they will join the National Integrity Framework (NIF). If joining the NIF, NSOs must adopt a Child Safeguarding policy with effect at all levels of their sport and to be implemented throughout all their affiliated clubs and associations.

Another key initiative of sector engagement was a Child Safe survey that was distributed to organisations including

those recognised as providers under the NSW Active Kids and First Lap voucher programs. SSOs and Peak Bodies also distributed the survey to their membership bases and through their communication channels. The Office also engaged its Aboriginal Sport Officer Network to ensure the survey reached Aboriginal sport organisations.

Almost 1,300 responses from across the sport and active recreation sector were received to the survey.

Key child safe survey results

When asked if they were familiar with the Child Safe Standards:



When asked about awareness of the Child Safe Scheme:



When asked if they worked/volunteered in an organisation that was covered by the Scheme and provided with information about what a Child Safe Organisation was in the sport and active recreation sector:



When asked if their organisation had started to implement the Child Safe Standards:





- The majority of respondents (59%) were from local/ regional sport organisations, 11.5% were from private sport organisations and 9% from State Sporting Organisations.
- 15% were from the active recreation sector with 7% of respondents being from private recreation providers, 4% from recreation facility providers and 4% from recreation clubs.
- 4.6% of respondents identified as Aboriginal, 6.9% as people with a disability, 5.1% from culturally diverse backgrounds and 15.4% from rural/remote areas.
- The proposed strategies in the survey for awareness raising and capability building all received strong support and have all been included in this Child Safe Action Plan. The Office was able to weight the responses which will assist us to prioritise implementation of the strategies over the life of this Plan.

Nature of the Office of Sport's services or functions

The Office is the lead NSW Government agency for sport and active recreation. The Office aims to increase the levels of physical activity of the people of NSW by providing the leadership, policies, programs, funding and infrastructure necessary to enable higher rates of participation in sport and active recreation.

The Office is a direct provider of programs and services to children, including:

- Managing 10 Sport and Recreation Centres that conduct outdoor education programs for school groups as well as holiday programs for children and families
- Managing four major sport venues for rowing, equestrian and shooting sports, that host elite and local level sport and community events

- Facilitating sport and active recreation programs in partnership with community-based organisations, including in remote and disadvantaged communities
- Coordinating programs for young athletes in the South-East and Far-West areas of the State including holding camps, events and coaching programs. This is through currently managing Regional Academies of Sport in these areas which is not generally core business of the Office.
- Managing strategic partnerships with peak sector bodies
- Implementing nine Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans that were developed collaboratively with sport and active recreation organisation across NSW.

The Office supports participation in sector programs and services to children through:

- Managing the Active Kids and First Lap Voucher programs
- Providing grant programs to build facilities, develop talent and develop the industry. Programs include annual grants to over 90 SSOs and 11 Regional Academies
- Regulating Combat Sport contests, including those involving children aged 14-17 years
- Licensing Motor Vehicle Sport Racing Grounds, including those used by children
- Licencing Award Centres for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program.

The Office also influences the sector and builds sector capability through:

- Promoting effective and sustainable governance and best practice in sport integrity
- Supporting coaches and officials develop skills through networks, conferences, and education
- Promoting inclusion and diversity training and events
- Promoting good spectator behaviour through the Shoosh for Kids campaign delivered in partnership with sector organisations
- Supporting the Play by the Rules collaboration both financially and in-kind
- Advancing opportunities for girls and women in sport through the Her Sport Her Way Strategy
- Creating pathways to sporting success through the Future Champions Strategy
- Securing and maximising legacy outcomes of major sporting events
- Providing regular and targeted sector communications including via newsletters, social media and its website

Key risks in relation to child safety in sport and active recreation

There are a number of key risks that arise from the nature of sport and active recreation:

- Child safe cultures and practices fail to gain traction in sport and active recreation organisations due to competing priorities and high turnover of workers, including volunteers
- Grooming – adult and child relationships in sport and active recreation provide opportunity for grooming
- Close coaching relationships are common and can be exploited
- Personal boundaries can be eroded as touching and sharing of personal information is sometimes normalised
- Adults have opportunities to identify and target vulnerable children
- Violence and pain may be tolerated as being part of a sport, and athlete development
- Sexualised movements may be encouraged and rewarded
- Traditional club cultures and structures often value adults over children
- Hyper-competitive and intense cultures decrease likelihood of abuse or maltreatment being recognised and reported
- High risk locations are common including overnight camps and the use of shared change rooms
- Children may attend one-on-one coaching and treatment sessions.

Key levers for change

Internal levers



Leadership



Recruitment and induction



Staff training



Child safe policies and procedures



Internal communications



Risk Management processes



Contractor and Procurement agreements

Sector levers



Sector leadership



Sector communications



Recognition - Active Kids and First Lap Voucher programs



Funding and grant programs



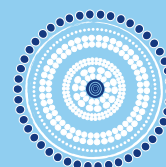
Regulation – Combat Sports and Motor Vehicle Sport



Licensing of Award Centres - Duke of Edinburgh's International Award



Regional Plans and associated regional networks that have recognised and prioritised child safety



Aboriginal Sport Development Officer Network



Roles and responsibilities of OCG and prescribed agencies

Office of Children's the Guardian (OCG)

The OCG has the role of implementing the Child Safe Scheme across NSW. To do so, the OCG will assist organisations implementation of the Child Safe Standards in several ways:

- Provide guidance to prescribed agencies in developing CSAPs through consultation and review of plans
- Provide generic and sector-specific support to build capability in organisations to implement the Child Safe Standards
- Engage with key stakeholders, including children and the broader community, to raise awareness of the Child Safe Standards
- Monitor, investigate and enforce the Child Safe Standards through ongoing risk assessments of priority sectors and organisations.

Office of Sport (the Office)

The Office has the roles of:

- Implementing the Child Safe Standards across its operations, including at its Centres, Venues, programs and academies
- Providing sector leadership and opportunities for sector engagement to raise awareness of the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme
- Communicating with the sector about the Child Safe Scheme
- Influencing uptake of the Child Safe Standards and compliance with the Scheme through leveraging its funding and recognition programs
- Building organisational capacity through development and promotion of resources and tools
- Assisting children from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), LGBTQI+ and those with different abilities to participate and benefit from sport and active recreation.

Child Safe Action Plan 2023-2027

Pillar One Awareness Raising

Objective: Child safe organisations and the community are aware of the Child Safe Standards

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
1.	Establish and maintain a Child Safe Sector Engagement Committee to facilitate cooperation, collaboration, and information flow between sector organisations, the Office and OCG.	Feb 2022 - Dec 2024	Sport Integrity Unit (SIU)	Peak industry organisations regularly meet to share information about the Child Safe Scheme. Sport and active recreation sector organisations receive information about the Child Safe Scheme from OCG and the Office.	Number of meetings held per year. Number of organisations represented on Committee.
2.	Develop and maintain a one-stop-shop webpage with essential child safe information and links to relevant organisations and resources. Webpage to include information on the key risks to child safety in sport and active recreation as well as information for parents and carers.	July 2023	SIU and Corporate Communications (CC)	Sector organisations and the community can easily access quality information about child safety matters.	Unique visits to webpage. Activated links.
3.	Use the Office communication channels to regularly promote information and messages about the Child Safe Scheme and its requirements to sector organisations including to organisations recognised under the Voucher Programs.	Ongoing	SIU & CC	Sport and active recreation organisations receive regular messages about child safety.	Number of communications per year - newsletters, socials, eDMs, etc...
4.	Recognise and promote best practice in Child Safety including highlighting inclusive practices for children from diverse backgrounds and abilities.	Ongoing	SIU & CC	Sector organisations have examples of good practice in child safety that they can relate to and replicate.	Number of case studies developed.

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
5.	Child Safe requirements are included in all annual funding contracts for key sector organisations including State Sporting Organisations and Regional Academies of Sport.	Ongoing	Sector Capability and Grants Unit	Key sector organisations are required to comply with mandatory obligations through funding agreements.	% of annual funding agreements that include information about Child Safe mandatory obligations.
6.	Information about the Child Safe Scheme and the obligations of Child Safe Organisations are included in grant program information.	July 2023	SIU and Grants Unit	All sector organisations applying for Government grants through the Office are informed of the Child Safe Scheme and mandatory obligations.	Number of grant program applications with Child Safe Scheme information.
7.	Child Safety is included in all Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans and is a standing item on Regional Steering Committee meeting agendas.	Ongoing	Regional Delivery	Child Safety is regularly promoted through regional sport and active recreation networks.	% of Regional Plans with Child Safety as a priority.

Survey note: Over 80% of survey respondents thought these strategies were great, with the highest support (95%) being for the development of a one-stop-shop website.

Ultimate Outcomes:

- Children and young people are safe in the organisations that they learn, play, and live in.
- Reduction in child abuse in organisational settings.
- Improved responses and reporting of child abuse.

Pillar Two Capability Building

Objective: Child safe organisations build their capability to implement the Child Safe Standards

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
8.	Promote Child Safe resources and tools including the OCG Child Safe Self Assessment and Play By The Rules.	Ongoing	SIU and CC	Sector organisations know of and use available tools and resources to assist to embed the Standards.	% of PBTR use from NSW. Data from OCG Child Safe Self Assessment.
9.	Develop and promote sector specific Child Safe resources that address identified sector needs and sector risks.	Ongoing	SIU	Sector organisations have access to a range of sector specific online training and resources to assist them embed the Standards.	Downloads of sector resources from the Office/OCG websites.
10.	Provide education and training to sector organisations, via webinar and face-to-face workshops, and OoS/OCG co-developed eLearning, to support practical implementation of the Child Safe Standards.	Ongoing	SIU & Regional Delivery	Support and information is available to organisations to assist them in implementing the Standards.	Number of training sessions completed.
11.	Build capability in sector organisations and staff to provide child safe training through delivering train-the-trainer courses in Child Safe Sport training and Member Protection Information Officer training.	Ongoing	SIU	Sector organisations have capability to deliver child safe courses to their affiliates.	Number of organisations that have undertaken training courses.

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
12.	Inform and encourage organisations recognised through the Office licencing and regulatory schemes to access child safe resources and explore measures to require completion of Child Safe Sport training courses by key personnel.	Ongoing – phased for different program types for operational reasons	Policy and Planning	Organisations recognised or regulated by the Office have personnel with knowledge and basic child safe training.	Number of recognised organisations that have received information on the Child Safe Scheme and available training.
13.	Inform and encourage organisations approved through the future Office voucher schemes to access child safe resources and explore measures to require completion of Child Safe Sport training courses by key personnel.	Timelines dependent on future of voucher programs post 2022/23	Policy and Planning	Organisations approved by the Office have personnel with basic knowledge and child safe training.	Number or percentage of approved organisations that access resources.

Survey note: Over 70% of survey respondents thought these strategies were great, with the highest support levels (94%) being for the promotion of tools and resources created for the sport and active recreation sector. The lowest score (73%) was for organisations being recognised by the Office being required to demonstrate that key people have completed Child Safe Sport training.

Ultimate Outcomes:

- Children and young people are safe in the organisations that they learn, play, and live in.
- Reduction in child abuse in organisational settings.
- Improved responses and reporting of child abuse.

Pillar Three Embedding the Child Safe Standards

Objective: Child safe organisations implement the Child Safe Standards

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
14.	<p>The Office leadership to continue to build a child safe culture at the Office and maintain robust systems and processes that keep children safe. Improved systems and processes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment, induction and on-going training of staff; • requirements in relation to procurement; and • a new complaint management system that includes child focussed complaints. 	Ongoing	Chief Executive / CSSC/ Leadership Team	Children are safe whilst involved in the Office activities.	Child Safe Steering Committee (CSSC) to monitor KPIs in relation to Child Safety across the Office, including ways to measure staff engagement and understanding.
15.	Maintain and continuously improve the suite of the Office Child Safe Policies and Procedures and familiarise staff with requirements through regular training.	Ongoing	Operations/ Human resources	All staff understand the standards of behaviour required when working with children and the requirements of the Office policies.	% of staff that complete child safe training annually.
16.	Conduct regular site and program level risk assessments and compile information to better understand strategic and systemic child safe risks.	Ongoing	Operations/ Audit and Risk	Risks are identified and controlled at all the Office Centres, Venues and programs.	Annual review of site specific risk management plans which include a child safe section.
17.	Implement a comprehensive Child Incident Reporting System that captures all child safe incidents at the Office and analyse data to determine trends and inform future initiatives.	Ongoing	Operations	All child safe incidents are reported and documented.	Quarterly analysis of data.

	Actions	Completion date	Owner	Outcomes	Data points
18.	Establish a new Youth Advisory Committee to consult with children about the Office programs, sites, venues and services as well as providing leadership development opportunities.	Ongoing	Operations	Annual camp held and children's views recorded, documented and presented to CSSC.	Annual report on YAC activities.
19.	Induct all children attending the Office programs and services and provide information about child safety, behaviour standards and how to make a complaint or raise a concern.	Ongoing	Centre, Venue and Program Managers	Children are aware of their rights, expected behaviours and know how to raise a concern.	Number of programs conducted.
20.	Provide parents and carers of children attending the Office programs and services with information about our child safety, behaviour standards and how to make a complaint or raise a concern.	Ongoing	Centre, Venue and Program Managers	Parents and carers are aware of our expected behaviour standards and know how to raise a concern.	Number of programs conducted that have provided parents and carers with information.

Ultimate Outcomes:

- Children and young people are safe in the organisations that they learn, play, and live in.
- Reduction in child abuse in organisational settings.
- Improved responses and reporting of child abuse.

Office of Sport

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View or download this report from the

Office of Sport website: www.sport.nsw.gov.au/running-your-club/safe-and-fair-clubs/child-safe-sport