

# Safeguarding Children & Young People Guideline

Handbook for Clubs



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# Background to SLSA's Safeguarding Children and Young People Program

SLSA has a strong history in taking seriously the responsibilities of safeguarding children and young people. There have been two key events that have informed SLSA's development and implementation of a Safeguarding Children and Young People Program, which we summarise below to provide you context as to why this initiative is an important one for your club to commit to and act on.

First, in 2015, SLSA partnered with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) to undertake a whole of movement audit of Surf Life Saving's policy and practices in safeguarding children and young people. ACF's broad review of SLSA's approach to safeguarding culminated in a series of recommendations for SLSA in terms of developing and implementing a best practice approach for safeguarding children and young people. The SLSA Board endorsed the ACF's report and recommendations in February 2016 and a program of work to act on these recommendations commenced.

Second, in December 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its final report. This report presented a series of recommendations and presented a set of 10 standards that if implemented by arts, cultural, community and hobby groups, would make these institutions safe for children [https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_volume\\_6\\_making\\_institutions\\_child\\_safe.pdf](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_6_making_institutions_child_safe.pdf). Subsequently, SLSA reviewed and incorporated these standards as part of the preliminary project enacted through the ACF review.

The adoption of these various recommendations and strategies ensures SLSA is a leader in the Safeguarding Children and Young People space and operates under best practice in this area. The strategies adopted by SLSA are also supported by the Australian Sports Commission's Child Safe Sport Toolkit that sets out best practice for clubs to achieve safe environments for children and young people [https://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/integrity\\_in\\_sport/child\\_safe\\_sport/child\\_safe\\_sport\\_framework\\_toolkit](https://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/integrity_in_sport/child_safe_sport/child_safe_sport_framework_toolkit)

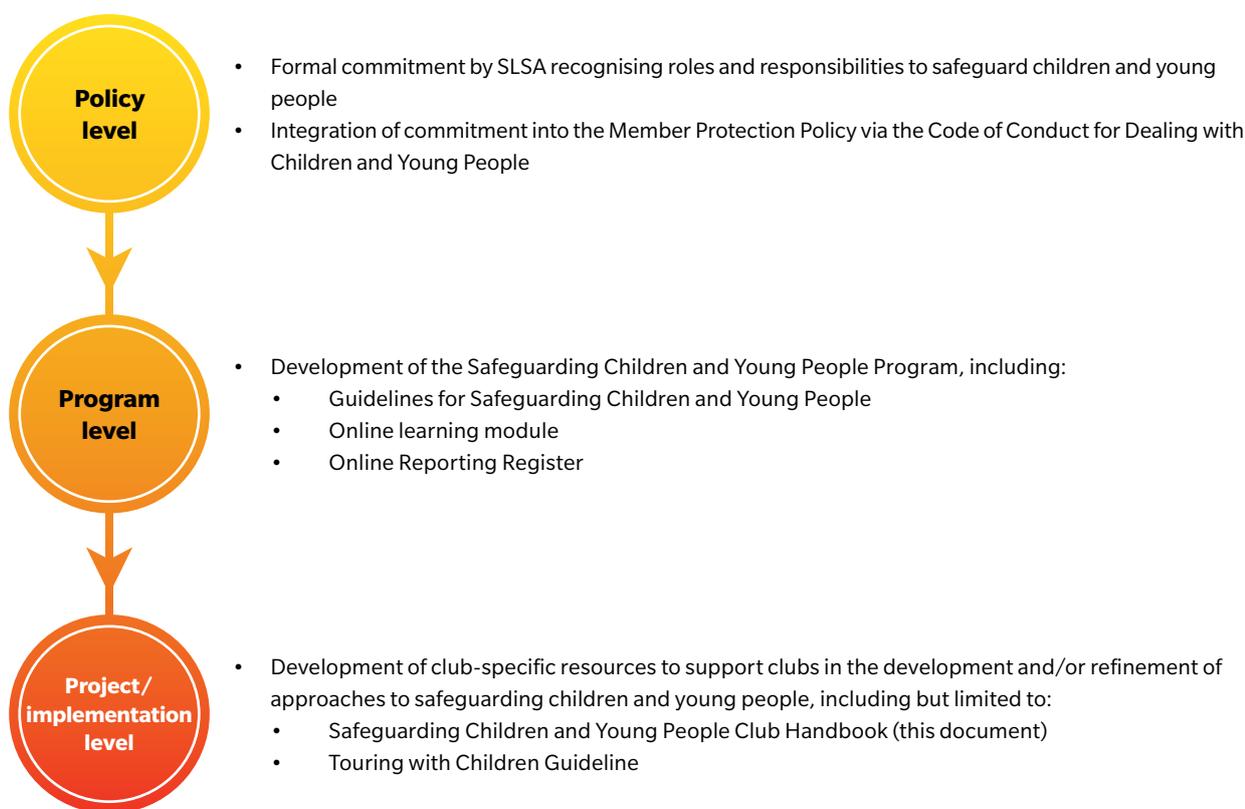
For us to fulfil on our commitment to safeguarding children and young people, we need our clubs to work with us to ensure we have policy and practice in place to protect our children and young people from harm at all levels of our movement and encourage their positive development in inclusive and supportive environments.



# Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook has been developed by SLSA as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people and to assist our network of clubs, administrators and members to understand SLS's Safeguarding Children and Young People Program and to develop and/or refine their approaches to safeguarding children and young people. Our comprehensive framework for safeguarding children and young people is summarised in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: SLSA's approach to Safeguarding Children and Young People**



Within this handbook you will find:

- An overview of SLSA's Safeguarding Children and Young People Program
- An outline of responsibilities and key areas of implementation for clubs to be aware of and action.

# About SLSA's Safeguarding Children and Young People Program



As illustrated in Figure 1, at the outset, we have formally committed to the safeguarding of children and young people, and so this becomes an integral part of SLS culture and operations. We have reflected the sentiments of the commitment in our overarching Member Protection Policy.

Subsequent to this commitment, we have developed the Safeguarding Children and Young People Program ('the Safeguarding Program'). The purpose of the Safeguarding Program is to build the capacity of clubs to protect children and young people from physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect, and create environments which are supportive of positive and enjoyable experiences. The Safeguarding Program targets key areas, including:

- Understanding the different types of child abuse;
- Identifying potential risks and dangers to children (e.g., going away on tours) and managing those risks;
- Ensuring all members are aware of the Code of Conduct for dealing with Children and Young People;
- Supporting members who challenge inappropriate behaviour; and
- Educating members on how to respond to child protection issues.

The Safeguarding Program is a comprehensive framework that includes a set of Guidelines for clubs with accompanying resources to support clubs to implement actions and meet evidence-based best practice standards of safeguarding with the aim to assist with reducing the risk of abuse of children and young people that come within a club's duty of care.

The Guidelines have been formally approved and endorsed by the Surf Life Saving Australia Board and are to be applied in conjunction with:

- a. All applicable Legislation within your respective state / territory in relation to protecting children
- b. All relevant policy and procedure documents, including SLSA's:
  - i. Member Protection Policy 6.05;
  - ii. Code of Conduct for People in Positions of Authority when dealing with Children and Young People
  - iii. Social Media Policy 6.20;
  - iv. Privacy Policy 6.02; and
  - v. General community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour concerning children.

Finally, to support effective implementation of this work and to fulfil the commitments outlined at the national level, SLSA recognises the importance of supporting our network of clubs by providing tailored resources to assist in the development and refinement of policy, procedure and practice to safeguard children and young people involved with and connected to the SLS movement. Accordingly, we have developed this handbook and compiled a set of tailored resources to assist clubs to better understand their responsibilities and be able to take ownership of the safeguarding agenda at their local levels.

# Implementing the Safeguarding Program: Responsibilities of Clubs

All clubs have a responsibility to create child-safe environments and minimise the risk of harm and/or abuse of children and young people. Everyone who participates in and/or contributes to a club has some responsibility to ensuring and maintaining safe environments for children and young people.

As part of our SLSA Safeguarding Children and Young People Guidelines, we have identified six key action areas for clubs to take responsibility to develop and/or refine strategies and initiatives as part of their approach to safeguarding children and young people.

We know, based on current research and evidence, clubs that implement the strategies we have identified in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Program, are more likely to provide safer and more enjoyable environments for children and young people, compared with clubs that do not implement such strategies.

These six key areas are outlined in Figure 2 below. To assist SLS clubs in developing and/or refining their approach to safeguarding children and young people, this Handbook includes worksheets and resources to help guide you through the process. Each step indicates a corresponding worksheet to help you implement this step in your club.

**Figure 2: Six key action areas for safeguarding children and young people**



We have developed a set of Worksheets to take you through the six key action areas and develop or refine your club's approaches to safeguarding children and young people. These Worksheets have been designed to highlight the importance of each step, provide an overview of the resources SLSA has developed to support each area, and to help you and your clubs think about how you can best implement strategies to create safe and inclusive environments for our children and young people – the next generation of SLS.