



**8.7**

**WARD:**

**GENERAL MANAGER:**

**PREPARED BY:**

**TRIM FILE NO:**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

**WHOLE OF MUNICIPALITY**

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**36/01/192**

**1. Draft Statement of Commitment to child safety  
October 2017**

**PURPOSE**

Seek formal endorsement of the statement of commitment to embed a culture of child safety at the City of Port Phillip where children and young people have the right to feel and be safe.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1.1 Formally endorses the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety (attachment 1).

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Victorian Government Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations found that there is a need to make organisations in Victoria safer for children, to protect them from various types of child abuse. The Victorian Government committed to implementing all of the Inquiry's recommendations as set out in its 2013 Report Betrayal of Trust. This included the introduction of child safe standards to ensure child safe environments in all organisations that provide services to children.
- 2.2 The City of Port Phillip (CoPP) Council is required to comply with the new Victorian Government's compulsory Child Safe Standards. CoPP must create a child safe organisation that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- 2.3 A culture of child safety must exist throughout the organisation, not just for those who work directly with children. A child safe culture will have strategies in place to prevent, detect, report and respond to abuse including: sexual abuse, grooming, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.



### 3. KEY INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Commission for Children and Young People, the authorising body charged with overseeing the implementation and compliance with the CSS, states that having a formal statement of commitment affirms the organisation commitment to child safety and clearly states that the organisation has a zero tolerance for child abuse. *A guide for creating a child safe organisation – December 2015*
- 3.2 The Statement of Commitment to Child Safety (The Statement), see attachment 1, forms the basis of CoPPs public commit to continuing to prioritise the safety of children and young people. The Statement will be visible internally and externally and requires all levels of the organisation to commit to a culture where the welfare of children and young people will always be a priority.
- 3.3 The Statement forms part of the seven compulsory CSS of which Council must comply. The Statement is one of many things that Council is implementing to demonstrate its commitment to implementing and comply with the CSS.
- 3.4 A briefing paper presented to Council on 16 August outlined the work Council is currently undertaking in order to work towards compliance with the CSS. In summary the work to date includes:
  - 3.4.1 Detailed needs analysis that informed the development of a comprehensive implementation plan
  - 3.4.2 Governance structure established to refine and deliver the implementation plan
  - 3.4.3 Training and information sessions about the CSS being conducted across Council
  - 3.4.4 A draft Child Safe operational policy and ongoing development of practices and procedures to implement the policy.
  - 3.4.5 A self-assessment compliance tool established to identify, reduce and remove the risk of child abuse.



## **FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **4. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY**

- 4.1 We embrace difference and people belong
- 4.1.1 Access to services that support the health and wellbeing of our growing community.
- 4.1.2 A safe and active community with strong social connections

### **5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS**

- 5.1 The Statement of Commitment to Child Safety was developed in consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare who were engaged to support Council to review current practices and develop an implementation plan that is guiding Councils work as we move towards compliance with the CSS.
- 5.2 Internal consultation with Managers and Coordinators was conducted to inform the development of the Statement. Once endorsed the Statement, and parts thereof, will be used to promote, highlight, support and advocate for the right of children and young people to be and feel safe.
- 5.3 Community consultation, including the voices of children and young people, is planned to ensure that all relevant policies and practices are representative and reflective of the needs of the community. Key factors in the consultation process will be to ensure that children, young people and their families understand that Council has zero tolerance to child abuse and that all adults play an active role in removing, report and preventing child abuse.

### **6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Council is required to comply with the Victorian CSS which recommends having a visible commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- 6.2 The Commission for Children and Young People (The Commission) are the authorised body that oversee and promote compliance with the CSS. The Commission has stated that the CSS are a guide for organisations to use to assist with the development of policies and practices that keep children and young people safe. In the absences of a compliance checklist (due out early September) or assessment process. The Commissions website outlines how they will assess any concerns about a organisations compliance as follows:
- make further inquiries about an organisation’s compliance with the standards
  - provide additional education and advice to the organisation so that it may comply with the standards
  - liaise with regulators and funders of the organisation
  - begin enforcement action which may result in a Court imposing a civil penalty.

### **7. SUSTAINABILITY – Triple Bottom Line**





**7.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1.1 There are no known environmental implications.

**7.2 SOCIAL & CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.2.1 The Commission for Children and Young people state that creating a culture of child safety within an organisation is vital to lowering the risk of harm to children.

7.2.2 Council needs to make an explicit and visible commitment to child safety. An open and strong culture that supports child safety is an active step in deterring potential abusers.

**7.3 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

7.3.1 There are no known economic implications.

**7.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.4.1 There are financial implications associated with becoming a child safe organisation. The majority of additional cost is during the implementation phase which includes establishing processes for training, monitoring recruitment processes and evaluating practices and procedures aligned with being considered a child safe organisation.

7.4.2 Following the implementation phase ongoing costs will become embedded in annual operating budgets.

**8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**8.1 TIMELINE**

8.1.1 Ongoing work that is ensuring Council is actively working towards compliance with the CSS includes the following:

8.1.1.1 Child Safe operational policy is going to ELT on 20 November 2017 for endorsement. This operational policy articulates the organisations approach to ensuring children and young people are protected and their right to feel and be safe is enacted.

8.1.1.2 Commence a review and compliance project that has an action orientated approach with specific targets for risk control and consistency. This will focus on key high risk operational job classifications and contracts and procurement processes to ensure they are compliant with the associated work checks and training requirements.

Commence: Late 2017

8.1.1.3 Continue to deliver key recommendations and initiatives as outlined in the implementation plan and the self-assessment compliance tool.



- 8.1.1.4 Consolidate an internal and external communication plan to ensure staff and the community are informed and educated about the CSS and the role everyone plays in creating and maintaining a child safe organisation.

## 8.2 COMMUNICATION

### **KEY MESSAGES**

1. The CoPP is committed to being a child safe organisation that has zero tolerance to child abuse and we are continuing to progress towards compliance with the child safe standards.
2. The welfare of children and young people will always be a key priority and all CoPP employees will understand their responsibilities.
3. The CoPP will have a whole of organisation approach to delivering our commitment of being a child friendly city that genuinely considers the needs of children and young people.

## 9. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 9.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.