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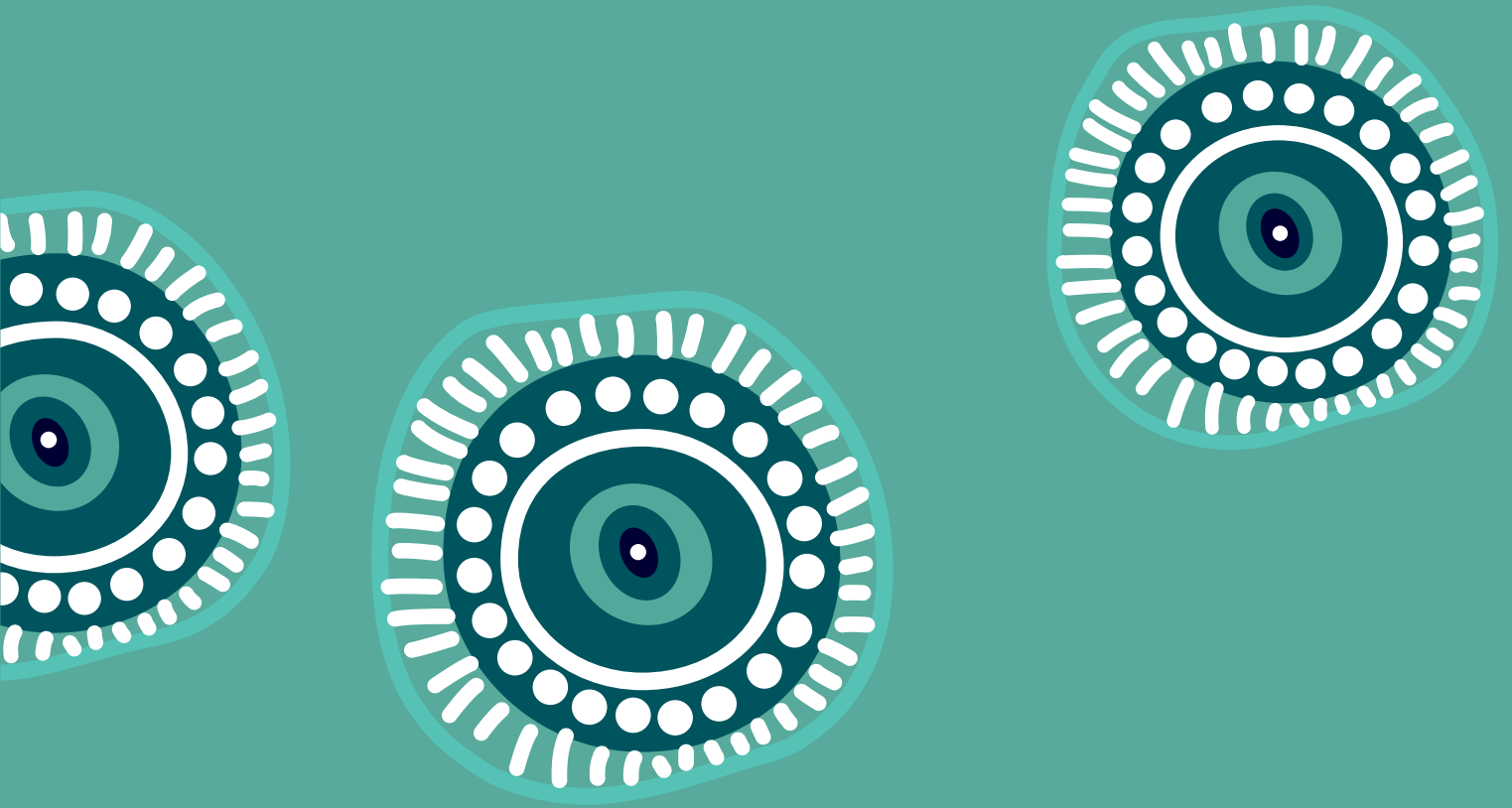


Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Child Safe Annual Statement of Compliance 2023-24

Published 31 October 2024





Australian Sports Commission Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where its offices are located, the Ngunnawal people and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the people of the Yugambeh Nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

The ASC extends this acknowledgment to all the Traditional Custodians of the lands and First Nations Peoples throughout Australia and would like to pay its respects to all Elders past, present and future.

The ASC recognises the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to society and sport in Australia and celebrates the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.



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Statement by the CEO – 2023-24

Compliance Statement

On behalf of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), I am pleased to present the Annual Statement of Compliance for child safety for the year ended 30 June 2024, as required under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

Having made diligent enquiries, I am confident that the ASC:

- has undertaken an annual risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for, and contact with, children and young people and evaluate the risk of harm or abuse, and has implemented appropriate and effective strategies to manage any risks identified
- has ensured that all child-related personnel have undertaken training on the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations contained in the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and relevant legislation
- has complied with relevant legislation relating to requirements for working with children, in all jurisdictions in which we operate
- has complied with relevant legislation, in all jurisdictions in which we operate, relating to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect as required or otherwise defined by state or territory legislation
- has complied with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations contained in the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

Kieren Perkins OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Sports Commission
30 October 2024



Child Safety at the ASC

Introduction

About the ASC

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is the Australian Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sport. It was established in 1985 under the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* and operates in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The ASC is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Sport. The Board determines the ASC's overall direction and decides on the allocation of resources and policy for delegated decisions. It is accountable to the Minister for Sport.

The ASC is administered from Canberra at the AIS Bruce campus and has offices in Melbourne and Sydney. The AIS campus is a 65-hectare multi-purpose facility with sporting, administration, commercial and residential functions. The ASC also operates the European Training Centre (ETC) in Varese, Italy and high-performance sports training facilities at Pizzey Park on the Gold Coast.

From grassroots to the pinnacle of elite international competition, we work with the sport sector, other government partners, businesses and the wider community to champion the role sport can play in engaging every Australian regardless of age, race, gender, cultural background or physical ability.

We exist because sport matters. It drives all we do at the ASC, including our culture. We stand for respect, integrity, teamwork and excellence. These values underpin how we treat each other and our stakeholders, how we deliver for sport and how we create the world's best environment at the ASC.

Children at the ASC

The ASC has a broad range of programs and services delivered directly to children, young people and their families. This includes programs run on the AIS campus at Bruce such as Learn to Swim, the AIS Caretakers Cottage Childcare Centre, AIS campus tours and high-performance services to athletes.

The nature of ASC programs and facilities creates conditions in which there may be a risk of harm, including overnight accommodation, physical interaction between children and educators or instructors, and medical treatment services such as physiotherapy. A significant portion of ASC employees have or may have contact with children, even where they are not delivering child-facing programs. Employees may also work in developing or assessing programs and grants for children and young people without direct or indirect contact.

The ASC has a significant role in funding individuals and organisations in community and high-performance sport. This includes our partnerships with national sporting organisations (NSOs) and national sporting organisations for people with disability (NSODs) and funding to the broader sport industry through programs such as Sporting Schools and the Play Well Participation Grants. The ASC acknowledges its responsibility and has embedded policy and procedures to ensure that the organisations we fund implement adequate child safeguarding practices.



Table 1. ASC interaction with children and young people

ASC interaction with children and young people	
Direct interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – AIS Caretakers Cottage Childcare Centre – AIS Aquatic and Fitness Centre – AIS Tours – AIS Residences – AIS Hub – AIS Sport Science and Sport Medicine – AIS Recovery Centre – AIS Mental Health Referral Network (MHRN) – AIS Sport Wellbeing and Engagement – European Training Centre – High Performance Events and Camps – NSO Centres of Excellence
Direct funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – AIS grants – Local Sporting Champions grants – Local Para Champions grants – AIS Elevate Learning Grants Program
Indirect funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NSO and NSOD participation funding – NSO high performance funding – National Integrity Manager Capability Enhancement Program – Sporting Schools program – Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program – Play Well Participation Grants



Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our Approach

The **ASC Child Safe Policy**, first published in 2011, outlines our commitment to child safety and our aim to create and maintain an inclusive, child safe environment that is understood, endorsed, put into action and adhered to by everyone.

Specifically, the ASC Child Safe Policy:

- is part of the ASC's proactive and preventative approach to upholding our commitment to the safety, wellbeing, participation and empowerment of all children accessing the ASC's programs, services and facilities.
- outlines prohibited conduct and imposes obligations on persons bound by the policy to respond to allegations or instances of prohibited conduct and to implement a commitment to child safety and child safe practices, including recruitment and screening of people that have contact with children.
- seeks to ensure that persons bound by the policy are aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, as well as the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- gives effect to the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The ASC updated our **Child Safe Policy** and **ASC Child Safe Commitment Statement** in 2023-24 to reflect changes in safeguarding practices and to align with best practice in the sporting sector. The updated Child Safe Policy introduced Prohibited Conduct, strengthened disclosure processes and updated the ASC's Child Safe Practices. The Child Safe Practices have been developed to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people.

The ASC adopted the **Win Well** pledge along with sport sector partners. The Win Well pledge is a genuine commitment from our leaders in sport, to prioritise and focus on the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of our athletes, coaches, staff, and sport as a whole. . The Win Well pledge has been incorporated into our child safe commitment statement.

The ASC's Child and Athlete Safety Committee assists with embedding a child safe culture across the organisation. The Committee is chaired by the ASC Child Safe Champion who, as a member of the ASC Executive, is responsible for promoting the importance of child safety and how it applies to employees, contractors and site users.

The ASC Restorative Program recognises and responds to former AIS scholarship athletes who experienced harm from inappropriate practices or abuse as a result of their time at the AIS. Insights and learnings from the Restorative Program are used to inform future practices at the ASC and within Australian sport to make sport safe for children and young people.

The ASC is a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme and implements the Australian Government National Redress Grant Connected Policy. The ASC incorporates integrity policy requirements into agreements for services and funding, particularly those for NSOs and NSODs, and continues to work with Sport Integrity Australia to improve safeguarding in the sector.



ASC Child Safe Commitment Statement

The ASC is strongly committed to safe, supportive and friendly environments where children and young people are valued and enjoy sport.

We are proud to have adopted the Win Well pledge, where how we win is just as important as when we win. We will prioritise and focus on the physical, mental, emotional and cultural wellbeing of children, young people and athletes, to unlock their full potential and Win Well.

We are committed to providing meaningful acknowledgement, care and support to former AIS athletes who experienced harm in the past. We offered a public apology in May 2021 and have established the ASC Restorative Program. We will use insights from this program to learn from our past and to inform our enterprise safeguarding approach.

The ASC has adopted the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and is committed to implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and ensuring that child safety is reflected in everything we do. The ASC takes seriously our responsibility to provide an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe.

- We are committed to keeping children and young people safe.
- We encourage the involvement of children and young people.
- We involve families and the community in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- We promote equity and respect diversity.
- We ensure that our people are suitable and supported to work with children and young people.
- We encourage reporting of all complaints and concerns.
- We equip our staff, contractors and site users with ongoing education and training.
- We ensure that environments are safe.
- We maintain and improve our policies and practices.

The full commitment statement can be read on the [ASC website](#).



Child Safety Risk Assessment

ASC Risk Management Framework

The ASC Risk Management Policy and Framework outlines the risk management practices of our organisation and how we comply with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 2023. Across 2023-24, the ASC updated the Risk Management Policy and Framework as well as our Risk Appetite Statement.

In December 2023, the ASC released a new Risk Appetite Statement, which outlines that we have the **lowest risk appetite** for risks associated with the safety of children, young people, athletes and vulnerable participants.

We have a **low** tolerance for physical and mental harm to children and youth through inappropriate behaviour, bullying, harassment or predation.

We have a **low** tolerance for injury to children and youth through involvement in organised sport. We have the lowest tolerance for this risk where appropriate practices have not been followed or where supervision has been lax.

We have a **low** tolerance for risks that may create the perception sport is not a safe environment or that child safety requirements are not implemented rigorously.

In 2024, the ASC implemented a new Risk Management Policy and Framework and ASC Risk Management Procedure. The update saw enhancements to the ASC's risk matrix and consequences table, better informs all staff on the risk appetite of the ASC, and aids risk-based decision making.

The ASC regularly reviews its enterprise risk assessment and conducts risk reporting to the ASC Executive Committee. We are committed to ongoing safety on our site and for those participating in our programs.

Table 2. Child Safety Enterprise Risks

Risk Area	Description	Key risk controls
Integrity	There is a significant breakdown of integrity in programs funded or delivered by the ASC	<p>Integrity requirements in ASC Recognition Agreements and Grant Agreements</p> <p>Partnership with Sport Integrity Australia to support NSOs and NSODs to implement the National Integrity Framework</p>



<p>Unacceptable behaviours</p>	<p>Behaviours by staff, athletes, coaches, NSOs, NSODs or brand ambassadors falls short of community expectations</p>	<p>ASC Code of Conduct ASC Child Safe Policy Police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff Mandatory Child Safe online learning for all ASC staff Child Safe workshops for child facing staff</p>
<p>Participant safety</p>	<p>The safety of children, young people, athletes or vulnerable participants is compromised.</p>	<p>ASC Child Safe Policy Child & Athlete Safety Committee Child Safe Officers ASC Restorative Program Police checks and WWCC for all staff Mandatory Child Safe online learning for all ASC staff ASC induction program for new staff Online induction module for casual staff Child Safe workshops for child facing staff</p>

2024 Child Safety Risk Assessment

The ASC reviews its Enterprise Risk relating to Participant Safety on a quarterly basis, and controls are classified into preventative, detective and mitigative controls. Due to the depth and breadth of users participating in ASC programs, the ASC has a **HIGH** residual risk rating for the Enterprise Risk of Participant Safety.

In 2023-24, the ASC conducted an internal risk review for our Residences facilities to:

1. Identify opportunities to strengthen and mitigate risks relating to overnight accommodation; and
2. Ensure that safe experiences for guests are prioritised.

The internal risk review built on external reviews conducted in 2018 and 2021 and was a proactive step in advance of scheduled youth sporting events on site.

Following the risk review, the ASC is implementing strengthened controls related to supervision and staffing, including delivery of targeted child safe training across our Reception and overnight staff, and increased security presence overnight. Improvements to communications material and bookings processes for high performance camps are being implemented, to ensure that athletes, camp managers and families are informed and able to meet child safe responsibilities.



Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Implementation of the Framework

The ASC adheres to the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles for Child Safety. A summary of our compliance with the Framework is outlined below.

Compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Requirement 1: Undertake risk assessments annually

Rating: Compliant

- Child safety is considered and included in the ASC Risk Management Framework and Enterprise Risk Register.
- The ASC has a Child Safety Action Plan, which outlines proposed controls to manage child safety risks and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- The ASC Child Safe Policy outlines the requirement for an annual risk assessment for child safety.
- In 2023-2024, the ASC has completed a risk assessment of our Residence operations, in addition to quarterly review of the enterprise risks.

Requirement 2: Establish and maintain a system of training and compliance

Rating: Compliant

- The ASC Child Safe Policy outlines training requirements for employees.
- The ASC requires all permanent, fixed term and casual staff to complete mandatory child safety online learning each year and all new staff participate in an induction which includes a dedicated session on child safety.
- In 2023-24, the ASC delivered further face-to-face training to child facing staff across the organisation, including safe behaviours, safer recruitment and targeted sessions for our Residences staff.
- The ASC has implemented mandatory screening for all employees, including police checks and working with children checks (WWCC) or equivalent. The ASC maintains records for the WWCC for employees.

Requirement 3: Adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Rating: Compliant

- The ASC has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is embedding the Principles in our programs. The Child Safety Action Plan is updated annually and outlines actions to implement the Principles.



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- The ASC has a Child Safe Champion, a dedicated Safeguarding and Integrity team, and a Child and Athlete Safety Committee.
 - In 2024, the ASC updated our Child Safe Policy to include prohibited conduct and refreshed the Child Safe Officer Network.
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Requirement 4: Annual reporting

Rating: Compliant

- The ASC has implemented a process for annual reporting and publishes an Annual Statement of Compliance in October each year.
 - The Annual Statement of Compliance is approved by the CEO and reported to the ASC Board.
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Additional obligation: Funding third parties

Rating: Compliant

- The ASC includes child safety requirements for all organisations we recognise and fund, including through Grant and Recognition Agreements.
 - The ASC has an annual statement of compliance reporting process for funded NSOs and NSODs, who are required to complete a checklist and declaration to confirm progress against child safety requirements in NSO Grant Agreements.
 - The ASC implements child safety requirements into grant programs, including the Australian Government National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy.
 - The ASC has included mandatory questions into the grant application portal and compliance checks are conducted as a part of grant assessment processes.
-



Our Progress

In 2023-24 the ASC updated and relaunched our **Child Safe Policy** and **ASC Child Safe Commitment Statement** to strengthen our commitment and practices for safeguarding. The new Policy introduced Prohibited Conduct and updated the Child Safe Practices, providing further clarity on conduct boundaries when working with children and young people. To support the updated Child Safe Policy, an updated **Child Safety homepage** was created which includes a Report a Concern page, providing a direct pathway for concerns to be raised. We are expanding our communication to young people and their families, for example through the inclusion of child safe messages in AIS Swim School quarterly newsletters. The ASC also released an updated Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct Policy, which strengthens our commitment to the prevention of harm, in line with positive duty obligations.

Staff education continued to be a priority, including inductions, annual eLearning and externally facilitated child safe workshops. Targeted sessions were delivered to our Residences teams to ensure that child safety is an active and ongoing focus. The Child Safe Officer Network has been refreshed, expanding membership to ensure representation from across the ASC. Child Safe Officers participate in training and attend regular meetings to maintain strong governance and ensure that members can support safeguarding activities in their areas and act as ambassadors for child safety within the ASC.

The Sporting Schools program underwent a digital systems transformation from August 2023 to March 2024 that prioritised child safety in design. As a part of the transformation, all coaches and coaching providers must register and provide WWCC details in the new portal, which includes a WWCC verification process, ensuring timely and consistent screening for those delivering to children. All Sporting Schools bookings must be made through the portal, giving the ASC greater oversight and direction over those who are delivering the Sporting Schools program.



Two AIS Community Engagement programs connected high performance athletes with Australian school aged children during 2023-24. The **Mental Fitness** program saw athletes presenting to over 6,000 high school students to help improve mental health and wellbeing. The Good Village AIS Problem Solvers Program offered primary school students the chance to learn about science, humanities, arts and economics from Australia's top athletes. Athlete Ambassadors in these programs are required to undergo child safety screening and training as a part of their induction program, upholding our commitment to ensuring people working with children are suitable and equipped with the knowledge to keep children and young people safe.

The ASC has worked to integrate child safety into the design of our sector facing training, resources and guidelines. In August 2023, we launched the **PE Essential Skills course**, designed to help primary teachers build the skills and confidence to deliver purposeful and engaging PE, including a module on how to deliver safe and inclusive PE experiences. In February 2024, the **Australian Concussion Guidelines for Youth and Community Sport** were published to provide clear and consistent guidance on concussion for parents, teachers, coaches, sideline staff and others involved in youth and community sport. **Resources** are available for parents and teachers to help identify and manage concussion in sport.

The ASC delivered the Start Strong in HP Sport program, designed to provide stage appropriate wellbeing education for Pathways, Emerging and Developing athletes and their parents and supporters. Education products and resources were designed to be child friendly and encourage young athletes to actively participate in their integrated holistic development in high performance sport.

During the year, the ASC provided special initiative funding for the SIA Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program to 24 eligible NSOs and NSODs. This funding is aimed at strengthening child safeguarding processes and practices to support the implementation of NSO and NSOD Child Safeguarding Policies.



In November 2023, the ASC launched Australia’s Sport Participation Strategy, known as Play Well. Co-designed with the sport sector, Play Well is a united approach with the vision that ‘everyone has a place in sport’. Through Play Well, the ASC is redefining participation as more than just competing. It is about creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces where everyone can belong and thrive.

Our mission: “ We will create safe, welcoming, inclusive and fun sporting experiences achieved through six priority areas.”

The Strategy is built around six priority areas, one of which is Transforming Culture. Fostering a culture of inclusivity, safety, teamwork and respect will directly support child safety in sport. Five Project Squads have been announced that will help deliver the 34 priority activities identified in the Play Well strategy. The Positive Environment Squad will focus on activities that create quality experiences for everyone involved in sport, and has representatives from the sport, education and government sectors.

The new strategy and the Play Well ethos compliments [Australia’s High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy](#), built on creating an environment where athletes and sports can Win Well.

Play Well Participation Grants

One of the first initiatives introduced to activate the Play Well Strategy is the roll out of the Play Well Participation Grant Program. Sixty-nine applicants received funding across a total of \$10.3 million, comprising 40 national sport and peak physical activity organisations and 29 Local Government Councils. The Play Well Participation Grants embedded child safety across the lifecycle of the grant program to ensure that every organisation we fund meets minimum child safety requirements.

Figure 1. Child Safety in the Play Well Participation Grant process

Guidelines	Application	Assessment	Delivery of Grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Grant Connected Policy for National Redress included as eligibility criteria. → Child safety requirements outlined in Program Guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Applicants required to complete questions on child safeguarding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Shortlisted applicants subjected to a safeguarding assessment. → Applicants required to adopt & implement the <i>National Principles</i>. → Applicants required to comply with relevant child safety laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Funding agreements included child safety clauses. → Onboarding webinar outlined child safety expectations. → Organisations received a Play Well Participation Grant <i>National Principles</i> Factsheet.



Our Focus for 2024-2025

In August 2024, the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme commenced, which requires all providers of services to children and young people to implement the Child Safe Standards. The ACT Child Safe Standards are aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which the ASC has adopted and is implementing. In 2024-25 we will further embed the Standards across the AIS campus.

The ASC is focused on further building equity, inclusion and culturally safe practices into our programs and services for children and young people, in line with our strategic goal to promote and support inclusive and diverse sporting environments. Figure 2 below outlines our planned focus.

Figure 2. ASC planned activities under the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations



Principle 4

Equity Upheld and Diversity Respected

- Launch of the Anti-Racism in Sport online eLearning
- Development and implementation the ASC's Intersectionality Framework
- Expansion of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion learning framework for staff



Principle 6

Child-Focused Complaint Process

- Updating communication resources to support complaint handling processes, including the Report a Concern page
- Embedding of internal complaints monitoring and reporting processes
- Updating the ASC Child Safe Policy to include case categorisation



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