



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

CHILD SAFE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE 2020-21

Published 29 October 2021



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) recognises that we work and live on the lands of all First Nations People across Australia. The ASC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where its offices are located, the Ngunnawal, Wurundjeri WoiWurrung, Yugambeh and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pays its respects to all Elders past, present and emerging.

The ASC also recognises the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 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 — 2020–21 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 2021, as required under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

Having made diligent enquiries, I have reasonable grounds to believe that the ASC:

- has undertaken an annual risk assessment to identify the level of responsibility for, and contact with, children and young people and to 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.



Robert Dalton
A/g CEO
Australian Sports Commission
29 October 2021

Introduction

About the ASC

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is a corporate Commonwealth entity within the Australian Government's Department of Health portfolio. Established in 1985, it operates under the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989 and is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Minister for Sport. The Board determines the ASC's overall direction, decides on allocation of resources and policy for delegated decisions, and is accountable to the Minister for Sport.

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

The ASC comprises of:

Australian Institute of Sport — leading and enabling a united and collaborative high performance sports system.

Sport Australia — playing a central leadership role across the sports sector building collaboration, alignment and effectiveness with a focus on participation, and industry capability.

From grassroots to the pinnacle of elite international competition, we work together with the sport industry and the wider community to champion the role sport can play in engaging every Australian.

Children at the ASC

The ASC has a broad range of programs and services which are 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 risk of harm, including overnight accommodation through AIS Residences, physical interaction between children and educators or instructors, and medical treatment services such as physiotherapy and massage. A significant proportion of ASC employees have, or may have, contact with children, even where they are not delivering child facing programs, for example, onsite security services. Employees may also work in the development or assessment of programs and grants for children and young people, without having direct or indirect contact.

The AIS Caretakers Cottage has been awarded the Excellent rating by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), the highest rating a service can achieve under the National Quality Framework. The service has been awarded the Excellent rating three times and is one of only 35 services nationally to hold the Excellent rating across Australia. The Cottage is recognised for its collaborative partnerships with external organisations and inclusive partnerships with children and families.

The ASC also has a significant role in funding individuals and organisations across both recreational 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 Participation Grant Program. The ASC acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that organisations we fund implement adequate child safeguarding practices.

Table 1: ASC interaction with children and young people 2021–22

Direct interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – AIS Caretakers Cottage childcare centre – AIS Aquatic and Fitness – AIS Tours – AIS School Holiday program – AIS Residences – AIS Sport Science and Sport Medicine and AIS Recovery Centre – NSO Centres of Excellence – High performance Events and Camps – Events at AIS sites
Direct funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – dAIS grants – Local Sporting Champions grants
Indirect funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NSO participation funding – NSO high performance funding – Sporting Schools Program – Capability Building Grant Program

The global COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted ASC operations and the sport industry more broadly. Throughout 2020–21, some ASC delivered services for children and young people have been impacted, such as school camps at AIS Residences and AIS learn to swim programs. A large proportion of our workforce has also spent significant time working remotely. Our response to COVID-19 has focused on: ensuring a safe training environment for high performance athletes and support staff at our sites, particularly in the lead up to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games; providing clear communications to all stakeholders; and supporting our employees, NSOs and the broader sport industry.



Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our approach

The ASC is focused on embedding child safety into our organisational culture, reflecting this in our policies and procedures, and ensuring our employees understand and implement child safe practices, regardless of their role.

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 its 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 of prohibited and reportable 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 this 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.

In 2018, the ASC commissioned the Australian Childhood Foundation to conduct an initial review across the ASC operation of all children and young people related activities. The review provided a suite of recommendations to enable the ASC to meet best practice standards for child safe operations, which were used in the development of the ASC Child Safe Implementation Plan.

The ASC has Child and Athlete Safety Committee that 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 is a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme. This includes the Australian Institute of Sport and Sport Australia. In January 2021, the ASC adopted the Australian Government Grant Connected Policy, which means organisations listed as failing to join the Scheme, will be ineligible for Commonwealth funding, and recognised NSOs/NSODs were notified of this requirement.

ASC Child Safe Commitment Statement

In 2017, the ASC Board published the ASC Child Safe Commitment Statement.

The ASC is Australia's primary national sports administration and advisory agency, and the cornerstone of a wide ranging sports system. On behalf of the Australian Government, the ASC plays a central leadership role in the development and operation of the Australian sports system.

The ASC is strongly committed to Australian sport environments that are safe, supportive and friendly for children. We are committed to working with all involved in sport so that children can enjoy sport and feel safe, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Child safety must be embedded in every Australian sporting organisation's culture, reflected in their policies and procedures, and understood and practiced at all levels of the sport. This includes within our own organisation and facilities where children come to practice, play, learn and excel.

The ASC takes seriously our responsibility to provide an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe.

- We are committed to keeping children safe*
- We promote equity and respect diversity.*
- Our employees, contractors and site users know the behaviour we require.*
- We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable*
- Induction and training are part of our commitment.*
- We encourage the involvement of children and their families.*
- Our employees and contractors understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse.*
- 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 Framework outlines the risk management practices of our organisation and how we comply with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

The ASC Risk Appetite Statement helps us understand the risk trade-offs required to support well informed decision making and what constitutes acceptable risk taking. The Risk Appetite Statement addresses risk related to child safety and states that the ASC has a **LOW** tolerance of risks related to children and youth. This includes physical and mental harm to children through inappropriate behaviour, bullying, harassment or injury, and risks that may create the perception that sport is not a safe environment.

The Enterprise Risk Register also contains key risks related to child safety.

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.	Integrity requirements in ASC Recognition Agreements, Sport Investment Agreements and Grant Agreements
Unacceptable behaviours	Behaviours by staff/ athletes/ coaches/NSO's/brand ambassadors fall short of community expectations	ASC Code of Conduct ASC Child Safe Policy Mandatory Child Safe Training for all ASC staff
Participant safety	The safety of children, young people, athletes or vulnerable participants is compromised.	ASC Child Safe Policy and procedures Mandatory Child Safe Training for all ASC staff ASC Child Safe Officers

2021 Child Safety Risk Assessment

In 2021, the ASC conducted a child safety risk assessment in line with the ASC Risk Management Framework. The risk assessment included consultation with key stakeholders, such as the ASC Child and Athlete Safety Committee. Due to the breadth of programs delivered or funded by the ASC and the complex nature of relationships with NSOs, the ASC has a **HIGH** overall risk rating for child safety. Noting, the risk assessment process identified that the ASC has strong controls across many of the risk areas identified in the risk assessment.

Risk assessment summary

There was clear and ongoing support from the ASC Board and Executive for the implementation of child safeguarding measures which mitigates risks associated with institutional leadership, governance and culture. For example, they championed our: adoption of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework; appointment of the ASC Child Safe Champion and dedicated child safety resources; and the embedding of child safety into policies and procedures. The ASC has implemented strong governance frameworks for child safety, including the ASC Child and Athlete Safety Committee and reporting to the ASC Board and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Our processes for recruitment and screening were identified as having strong controls and in the past year, we continued to proactively address risks related to our people, such as mandatory child safe training and regular internal communications.

Our childcare centre has an industry leading approach in involving families and communities in the promotion of children's safety and wellbeing and in their focus on the importance of agency for children in their programs and practices. This has included the promotion of children's voices in decision-making and the introduction of the child's voice in pedagogical documentation.

Throughout 2020-21, the safety and wellbeing of our site-based children, athletes and employees has been a priority, and the ASC has been an industry leader for our response to the COVID 19 pandemic and the return to COVID safe sport. Program areas conducted risk assessments in response to COVID-19, with a strong focus on health and safety risks for children, athletes, their families', employees, community and site users. For example, the AIS Caretakers Cottage has a detailed COVID response plan, including emphasis on the welfare of families and on how to best support children and parents throughout the pandemic.

Our focus for 2021-2022

The risk assessment identified child safety risks relating to incidents, complaints, and reporting of inappropriate behaviour, and requirements to ensure that these processes are child friendly. Therefore, a focus for 2021-22, is ensuring that processes for handling incidents and complaints are effective, child focused, understood by our people, and fully embedded in our processes.

We will also focus on how we can better communicate and engage with children, families and communities across our sites and programs to ensure children's views are represented in our approach to child safety.

Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Implementation of the Framework

The ASC has adopted the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles for Child Safety. A summary of our compliance with the Framework is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Requirement 1: Undertake risk assessments annually
Rating: Compliant
<p>Child safety is considered and included in the ASC Risk Management Framework, including the ASC Risk Appetite Statement and Enterprise Risk Register.</p> <p>The ASC conducts an annual risk assessment for child safety, to review and update the level of responsibility for, and contact with children, to re-evaluate risks related to child safety, and to review current controls and treatments to manage identified risks. The outcomes of the risk assessment are reported to the Executive via the Chief Risk Officer.</p> <p>The ASC has a Child Safety Implementation Plan, which outlines proposed controls to manage child safety risks. The Plan is updated on an annual basis.</p> <p>The ASC Child Safe Policy outlines the requirement for an annual risk assessment for child safety.</p>
Requirement 2: Establish and maintain a system of training and compliance
Rating: Compliant
<p>The ASC Child Safe Policy outlines training requirements for employees.</p> <p>The ASC requires all permanent, fixed term and casual staff to complete mandatory child safety training each year. This training covers the ASC commitment to child safety, the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, mandatory reporting obligations and other reporting requirements for child safety.</p> <p>The ASC has a procedure for identifying all child facing roles and our recruitment processes include child safety screening requirements. Employees in roles identified as having contact with children are required to have and maintain relevant working with children checks (WWCC), with monitoring of WWCC conducted on a quarterly basis. The ASC maintains a register of child facing roles and the WWCC status of employees.</p>

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

Rating: Implementing

The ASC has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is implementing the principles. Our approach is based on continuous improvement and our risk assessment is used to inform prioritisation of implementation actions. Updated annually, the Child Safety Implementation Plan outlines our proposed actions to implement the Framework and National Principles and tracks our progress.

The ASC has appointed a Child Safe Champion and has a dedicated child safety team. The ASC reports regularly to senior executives and the ASC Board on child safety. The ASC Child Safe Policy was extensively updated and published on the ASC website in January 2021. The Policy will be reviewed annually as a part of our commitment to regularly reviewing and improving our implementation of the National Principles. In 2021–22, the ASC is working to develop and implement child friendly versions of the Child Safe Policy and other communication resources aimed at children, athletes and families, as a part of this review.

The ASC has strong processes for the recruitment, screening and training of our people who work with children. Child safety is embedded into our processes, including our online recruitment platform, and we maintain a register for tracking WWCC. All staff must complete mandatory child safe training, and in 2021 a team of Child Safety Officers was appointed.

The ASC Complaints Policy was updated in May 2021 and details how we deal with child safety complaints. This Policy is supported by our child safety procedures and the Child Safe Policy.

Physical and online safety remain a priority for the ASC. The ASC campus includes a broad range of programs and facilities used by children and we are committed to ensuring these physical environments are safe. We have continued to implement improvements to our facilities and infrastructure and are working to ensure users of our facilities have a clear understanding of our expectations and requirements for child safety.

Requirement 4: Annual reporting

Rating: Compliant

The ASC has implemented a process for annual reporting, with the first Annual Statement of Compliance published in October 2021. This process will be used to inform future annual reporting.

The Annual Statement of Compliance is approved by the CEO and reported to the ASC Board.

Additional obligation: Funding third parties

Rating: Compliant

The ASC includes child safety requirements in organisations we recognise and fund, including through NSOs/NSOD Sport Investment Agreements and grant agreements (where applicable).

In January 2021, we adopted the Australian Government National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy. Organisations listed as failing to join the National Redress Scheme will not be eligible for Commonwealth funding. Recognised NSOs/NSODs were notified of this requirement.

Our progress

The ASC has made significant improvement to child safety within our organisation in 2020–21. From 1 January 2021, we introduced mandatory annual child safety training for all ASC employees. This program has been completed by 95% of permanent and fixed term employees and is being rolled out to the casual workforce. Additionally, the ASC has delivered child safety training for targeted employees and will be implementing additional child safe training to employees in child related roles. Supporting this, a team of Child Safe Officers was appointed, to act as child safety ambassadors and be a source of support, advice and expertise on child safe issues for employees, children and their families.

The AIS Caretakers Cottage has been focused on incorporating indigenous perspectives into programming and ensuring that diversity is respected in policy and practice. The Centre has participated in NAIDOC week and Reconciliation week using child centred activities and has been incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources into the Centre to foster children's early understanding of shared histories.

The ASC has been focused on embedding our child safety requirements into agreements which we have with other organisations, including through grant funding processes, agreements which we have with users of our programs and facilities and the adoption of the Australian Government National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy. This will continue to be a focus for 2021–22.

In January 2021 the ASC published an updated Child Safe Policy, to better protect children accessing the ASC's programs, services and facilities. In 2021–22, we will be focusing on development child friendly versions of the Child Safe Policy, and ways in which we can ensure that children, young people and their families are informed and participate in decisions relating to child safety at the ASC.

In May 2021, our Board offered an apology and ongoing support to former AIS athletes treated inappropriately in the past, which included children. In conjunction with the apology, the AIS Be Heard service was established. This is a confidential and independent support service available to any former AIS athletes and staff, across all sports, to share their experiences and seek the appropriate support services. At the same time, we have reviewed and updated our Complaints Policy, and are continuing to develop and implement supporting child safe procedures and reporting processes.

In 2021–22 the ASC is undertaking an external review of child and athlete safeguarding practices at the AIS campus. The review is being undertaken against the National Principles, to assist us in ensuring that we are doing everything we can to keep children and athletes safe when attending or participating in high performance activities at the AIS. Recommendations from the review will be included in the ASC Child Safety Implementation Plan.



Name _____
Age Group _____

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