



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Child Safe Annual Statement of Compliance 2021-22

Published 28 October 2022



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 Woi-wurrung, 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 — 2021–22 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 2022, 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.

Kieren Perkins

CEO

Australian Sports Commission

28 October 2022

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 and operates under the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* and 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 Pizze 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.

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, including 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 proportion 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, Participation Grant Program and the Regional Sport Events Fund. The ASC acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that organisations we fund implement child safeguarding practices consistent with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.



ASC interaction with children and young people

Direct interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AIS Caretakers Cottage childcare centre - AIS Aquatic and Fitness - AIS Tours - AIS Residences - European Training Centre - AIS Hub - AIS Sport Science and Sport Medicine and AIS Recovery Centre - AIS Mental Health Referral Network (MHRN) - AIS Athlete Wellbeing and Development - 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 - Local Para Champions grants - AIS Athlete Education Scholarship Program - Compensation Grant Program - Commonwealth Games Australia Breakthrough 2022
Indirect funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSO participation funding - NSO high performance funding - Sporting Schools program - Capability Building Grant Program - Regional Sport Events Fund - Participation Grant Program - National Integrity Manager Grant Program

The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted ASC operations and the sport industry more broadly. The ASC campus was impacted by the ACT wide lockdown from August to October 2021 and as a result services to children and young people were restricted, including learn to swim, public tours and accommodation at the AIS Residences. A large proportion of the ASC workforce has spent significant time working remotely in 2021-22.

High performance activity on site reduced when the COVID-19 pandemic began and the ASC focused on ensuring a safe training environment for athletes who reside on campus. By the end of 2021-22, activity on site had resumed, with some services restricted or below pre-pandemic levels.

The ASC response to COVID-19 has focused on supporting employees, athletes and the broader sport industry. For example, AIS Residences has a detailed COVID response plan emphasising athletes' health and mental wellbeing and how to best support athletes and keep their families informed throughout the pandemic.

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. 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. 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.

The ASC first conducted an initial review of child safety across our operations in 2018. This review provided a suite of recommendations to inform the ASC Child Safe Implementation Plan. The ASC is committed to regular independent review to ensure our organisation is able to achieve best practice in child safe operations. In 2021-22, we engaged Child Wise, a national social enterprise specialising in child safety, to undertake two reviews across our business.

In July 2022, the ASC launched its Restorative Program, to recognise and respond to former Australian Institute of Sport (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 ASC Restorative Program will inform future practices internally and within Australian sport, to make sport safe for children and young people.

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. In 2021, the Safeguarding and Integrity team was expanded and is focused on implementing child and athlete safeguarding measures across the ASC site and programs.

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

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 has a low tolerance of risks related to children and young people and undertakes regular reviews of its enterprise risk assessment to ensure continuous business improvement and the ongoing safety of children and young people on its site and participating in its programs.

The ASC is currently maturing its approach to the assessment and management of enterprise risk, and participant safety has been prioritised within this process.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Integrity requirements in ASC Recognition Agreements, and Grant Agreements
Unacceptable behaviours	Behaviours by employees, athletes, coaches, NSOs, or brand ambassadors falls short of community expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ASC Code of Conduct – ASC Child Safe Policy – Mandatory Child Safe Training for all ASC employees
Participant safety	The safety of children, young people, athletes or vulnerable participants is compromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ASC Child Safe Policy and procedures – Mandatory Child Safe Training for all ASC employees – ASC Child Safe Officers



2022 Child Safety Risk Assessment

In September 2021, the ASC implemented risk assessment as a standing item on the Child and Athlete Safety Committee agenda, to enable the child safety risk assessment to be reviewed on a rolling basis. In addition, the ASC is in the process of maturing its approach to the assessment of controls, including preventative, detective and mitigative controls. An example of a risk event is shown in table below.

Child Safe Risk Assessment

Risk event	The ASC and third-party providers are not suitable or adequately screened to work with children	
Preventative control	Detective control	Mitigative measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WHS policies and procedures - Child Safe Policy and Procedures - Safeguarding and Integrity training for ASC employees - Annual Integrity Communication plan - ASC Child Safe Officers - Dedicated Safeguarding and Integrity team - Police Checks and Working with Vulnerable People/ Working with Children Checks for all employees - Australian Government National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy - Risk Management activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Safe Annual Statement of Compliance - Monitoring and Reporting of incidents and issues - 2021 Child Safe Site Review - 2022 Sporting Schools Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated Safeguarding and Integrity team - Child and Athlete Safety Committee - ASC Child Safe Officers

Due to the breadth of programs delivered by the ASC and the wide range of site users, the ASC retains a **HIGH** overall risk rating for participant safety, which includes children and young people. The risk assessment process identified that the ASC has robust controls across many of the risk areas identified in the risk assessment.

The ASC continues to have strong controls for the governance of child safety, including active support from the ASC Executive and Child Safe Champion, a dedicated Child and Athlete Safety Committee and a specialist Safeguarding and Integrity function. This has been further supported by two independent reviews conducted during 2021-22, demonstrating the ASC’s commitment to continuous improvement.

The risk assessment also identified that controls across the recruitment, screening and training of our people were strong, and during 2021-22, further investment has been made to improve the effectiveness of these controls.

Our focus for 2022-2023

In 2021-22, the ASC has implemented controls related to incidents, complaints and reporting, including delivering training to child facing employees and drafting child friendly communication resources for use across the site to increase awareness of child safe practices and options for raising concerns. In addition, the ASC launched a new integrated safety management system for managing WHS and child safety incidents, hazards, risks, investigations and corrective actions, improving reporting functionality across the ASC campus. Our focus for 2022-23 will be on the continued roll out of resources and improving the visibility of child safety messages and reporting mechanisms across the AIS campus and programs.

Key for 2022-2023 will be the implementation of recommendations from the two independent reviews, with a specific focus on improving education and induction processes for employees, athletes, contractors and stakeholders, and ensuring children's views are represented in our approach to child safety.



Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Implementation of the Framework

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

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 has implemented a rolling process for 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.</p> <p>The ASC has a Child Safety Action 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. In 2021-22, the ASC delivered further face to face training to selected cohorts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - safer recruitment - responding and reporting for child safety - foundations for building trauma awareness. <p>The ASC has implemented mandatory screening for all employees, including police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC)/Working with Vulnerable People checks (WWVP). The ASC maintains records for the WWCC/WWVP status of employees.</p>

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 implementing the principles. Our approach is based on continuous improvement, with external reviews and our risk assessment process used to inform prioritisation of implementation actions. Updated annually, the Child Safety Action Plan outlines our proposed actions to implement the Framework and National Principles and tracks our progress. The ASC has a commitment to external review to ensure that implementation of the principles is regularly reviewed and improved. In 2021-22, two external reviews were completed.

The ASC has appointed a Child Safe Champion and has a dedicated Safeguarding and Integrity 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 and is updated on an annual basis.

The ASC has strong processes for the recruitment, screening and training of our people who work with children. Child safety is embedded into our recruitment processes, including our online recruitment platform. All employees must complete mandatory child safe training.

The ASC has focused on improving our practices related to child safety disclosures, concerns and complaints. Training has been delivered to key cohorts, and the ASC is currently rolling out communication material to employees and across our site to enhance awareness of reporting mechanisms.

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. The Child Safe Policy was updated in March 2022 to include annual reporting requirements.

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 for all organisations we recognise and fund, including through Grant and Recognition Agreements. In October 2021, we implemented an annual compliance reporting process for NSOs/NSODs, to confirm their commitment to child safe operations and gauge progress against child safety requirements in NSO Grant Agreements.

The ASC has adopted the Australian Government National Redress Scheme Grant Connected Policy. This requirement is included in grant agreements, and compliance checks are conducted as a part of grant assessment processes.



Our progress

The ASC continues to improve on child safety within our organisation and the best practice implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. In June, complimentary to mandatory annual child safety training for all employees, the ASC delivered face-to-face training to child facing employees and hiring managers. This externally facilitated training was designed to boost employee confidence in the implementation of child safety requirements and the recruitment process.

The ASC continues to support Sport Integrity Australia to safeguard the sport sector. In October 2021, funded NSOs/ NSODs completed an Annual Statement of Compliance to report on their child safety initiatives and compliance with child safety requirements within grant agreements. In June 2022, compliance with safeguarding and integrity requirements were reviewed as a part of the ASC Recognition process for all recognised NSOs and NSODs. We will continue to refine our compliance and monitoring activity in 2022-23.

We have strengthened child safety requirements in ASC grant program processes including guidelines, terms and conditions, and agreements. For example, in 2021-22 grant applicants to the Participation Grants and Regional Sport Event Fund were required to show evidence of their compliance with minimum child safety requirements as a part of the application process. The ASC has included mandatory questions into our grant application portal related to child safe requirements.

The AIS Caretakers Cottage 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 consultation with children and the community in developing the centre philosophy and guiding principles. The AIS Caretakers Cottage is also implementing children's perspectives into the recruitment process. We have continued to develop our policies, procedures and guidance materials for child safety, and exploring ways we can ensure children, young people and their families have opportunities to contribute to decisions relating to child safety at the ASC.

The ASC engaged Child Wise to conduct two independent reviews in 2021-22. This included a review of the high performance operations at the AIS and a review of the Sporting Schools program. The reviews provided an independent assessment of our compliance against the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and identified key areas for improvement in our program operations. Key themes from these reviews included:

- communication with families and community
- child safe education and training for employees, stakeholders and site users
- children and young people are safe, informed and actively participate in decision making.

The outcomes of the reviews have been used to inform priorities for the 2022-23 year.

The AIS delivers a large number of mental health, wellbeing and personal development programs to high performance athletes across the sport sector, including those who are under 18. The AIS commenced delivery of the Campus Experience Project, which aims to inspire and enhance the experience of athletes living and training on the AIS site. The project is providing brighter and more welcoming physical spaces for athletes, as well as wellbeing workshops, engagement opportunities and personal development programs. Engagement with athletes has been central to the development and implementation of the project, with regular consultation and opportunities for feedback. As a part of the project, a mural of Australian champion basketballer and AIS Alumni Patty Mills was installed at the AIS Residence of Champions.



In May 2021, our Board offered an apology and ongoing support to former AIS athletes treated inappropriately in the past and established the AIS Be Heard service. Building on this, the ASC established the Restorative Program in July 2022. The Restorative Program has been established to recognise and respond to former AIS scholarship athletes who experienced harm from inappropriate practices or abuse as a result of their time at the AIS. The ASC is committed to providing meaningful acknowledgement, care and support to these athletes. The Program consists of three core elements:

- access to counselling and wellbeing services via the Mental Health Referral Network
- participation in restorative engagement, such as a meeting with a senior ASC representative
- a one-off financial payment, for applicants eligible for a payment.

Insights and learnings from the ASC Restorative Program will inform future practices for the ASC enterprise child safe program and more broadly across the Australian sport sector.





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