

Child and Youth Safety Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the City of Launceston's commitment to creating and maintaining a child and youth safe organisation. The City of Launceston prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, upholds their rights, and ensures their protection from harm across all services, spaces, and online environments.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all individuals engaged with or acting on behalf of the City of Launceston, regardless of whether their role involves direct interaction with children or young people. This includes:

- Mayor and Councillors
- Full-time, part-time, and casual employees
- Temporary and permanent employees, including apprentices, graduates, interns, trainees, and work experience placements
- Contractors and consultants
- Labour hire and agency staff
- Volunteers
- Employees on secondment from other organisations

There are no exclusions to this Policy.

POLICY

The City of Launceston recognises that child and youth safety is a shared responsibility. Every person connected to the City of Launceston has a role to play in upholding a culture that safeguards children and young people from abuse, harm, neglect, and exploitation.

The City of Launceston will actively embed child and youth safe practices in leadership, governance, operations, physical and online environments, and community relationships.

We commit to listening to and amplifying the voices of children and young people, as well as people with lived experience of child sexual abuse, in its ongoing efforts to contribute to a community which is safe for children and young people.

Statement of Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People (Adopted September 2024)

All children and young people have the right to feel and be safe.

Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility.

At the City of Launceston, we will continuously improve the way we engage with, and care for, children and young people. Children and young people want to be heard and to be believed. They

have opinions and perspectives about their safety, which must be respected, and they must be empowered to voice them.

At the City of Launceston, we are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people that we engage with. We have a responsibility to recognise the signs of harm to children and young people and a legal and moral obligation to respond appropriately and in a timely manner.

We recognise that some children face additional risk of harm. Children and young people have the right to be respected, feel safe and be protected from harm, irrespective of their gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, or cultural, religious, economic, and family circumstances.

We will establish and maintain an administrative and governance framework which serves to promote the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people; to empower them and to prevent harm to them. Where harm has been caused by us, we will take responsibility for that harm and act to ensure that it does not continue and is not repeated.

We will create an environment where children and young people feel safe and are safe, have their voices heard and are involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

PRINCIPLES

Royal Commission

Council acknowledges the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and its findings.

Tasmanian Commission of Enquiry

Council recognises its obligations under the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023.

Evidence-based Practice

We draw on the Australian Child Maltreatment Study and other research (see references) to guide actions.

Elements of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework

Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety

Council recognises the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to grow up connected to culture, identity and community. This principle applies across all ten Child and Youth Safe Standards and guides culturally safe practices.

Child and Youth Safe Standards

The Child and Youth Safe Standards are 10 principles that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people; they prevent abuse and harm to children and young people; they create a benchmark that organisations that engage with children and young people need to meet; and they ensure organisations that engage with children and young people embed strategies in their day-to-day practices to ensure these standards are met.

In complying with the Child and Youth Safe Standards, Council also acknowledges and adheres to the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety (Aboriginal Culture Safety). This means that the Council will provide an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and

young people have a right to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment, where they have connections to their community, culture and identity. The Aboriginal Culture Safety applies to all 10 Child and Youth Safe Standards. The Standards are as follows:

Standard	What this means
Standard 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.	All persons in Council care about children and young people's safety and wellbeing above everything else, and they make sure they act that way and lead others to also act that way.
Standard 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.	Children and youth are advised of their human rights, have a say in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.
Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.	Families and communities know about and are involved in Council's child and safety and wellbeing activities.
Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.	The rights of every child and young person are being met, and children and young people are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
Standard 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.	People working with children and young people are safe to work with children and young people and respectful of them. They are taught how to keep children safe and well.
Standard 6: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.	Children, young people, families, staff and volunteers are listened to and can share their problems and concerns.
Standard 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.	Staff and volunteers keep learning all the time, so they know how to keep children and young people safe and well.
Standard 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing, while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.	Children and young people are safe in online and in physical spaces.
Standard 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.	Council will keep reviewing and improving its child safety and wellbeing practices.
Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.	Council documents how it keeps children and young people safe and well and makes sure that everyone can see and has access to these documents.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Council must:

- Report conduct, as defined in the Act, to the Independent Regulator within 3 business days
- Investigate the conduct or appoint an independent investigator
- Provide updates, findings and outcomes to the Independent Regulator

Independent Regulator

The Independent Regulator is an external oversight body that:

- Provides education, guidance, and support to Council
- Receives and assesses reportable conduct notifications
- Reviews investigation processes and findings
- May conduct its own investigations
- Accepts reports from any person, not just organisational leaders

Information Sharing

To protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, relevant information is permitted and expected to be shared with other persons and bodies, which may include:

- The Independent Regulator
- The Commissioner of Police
- The Registrar appointed under the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* (Department of Justice)
- Investigators and other relevant organisation

Information must be shared lawfully, securely and in a timely manner.

Our Commitments

Commitment to People With Lived Experience of Child Sexual Abuse

Council will include the perspectives and lived experience of people in the Launceston community in its approach to contributing to a child safe city. Where possible, in its leadership role, it will implement programs and projects which acknowledge the impact of child sexual abuse and support the recovery of people impacted by it.

Commitment to the LGBTIQA Community

Council acknowledges the vulnerability of LGBTIQA children and young people due to societal discrimination and stigmatisation. Council will actively seek out and support initiatives which aim to address this discrimination and act to ensure that its own policies and procedures support equitable opportunities for the LGBTIQA community.

Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Council recognises that there are cohorts in the community more vulnerable to child sexual abuse and the additional impact of intersectional factors increasing some individuals' vulnerability.

Council commits to identifying and addressing these additional vulnerabilities and putting in place measures to address them where possible.

UNICEF Child Friendly City Initiative

Council has made a commitment in its Strategic Plan 2025-2035 (Goal 3.2a) to becoming a UNICEF designated 'Child Friendly City'. This initiative "supports municipal governments in realising the rights of children at the local level using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation".

It achieves this through the development of networks that bring together government, the private sector, academia, media and, importantly, children themselves who wish to make their cities and communities more child friendly.

This goal encapsulates the cultural shift to the prioritisation of child safety instead of institutional protection in a positive frame which will have benefits for the whole community and help to deliver many other goals in the Strategic Plan.

Governance and Resourcing

Council will ensure adequate resourcing, oversight and review.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

[22-PI-030 Code of Conduct](#)

[22-PI-036 Workplace Behaviour Policy](#)

[22-PI-028 Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

[22-PI-027 Working with Vulnerable People Policy](#)

[21-HLPr-004 Incident Management Procedure](#)

[22-PI-034 Issue Resolution Policy](#)

[22-PI-032 Disciplinary Policy](#)

Additional policies and procedures currently in development which will also support the implementation of this policy:

- Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Engagement Framework
- Equity and Inclusion Framework
- Volunteer Management

RELATED LEGISLATION

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas)

Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)

Criminal Code Act 1924 (Tas)

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tas)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022

REFERENCES

Child Safe Organisations National Principles

Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, Second Edition

Introducing Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, Department of Justice
Nukara Strategy (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)
Australian Child Maltreatment Study
'Change for Children' Strategy (Tasmanian Government)
Speaking Out for a Safer Tomorrow: Our Messages for Change. The Voices for Tasmanian Youth
(Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania)
30 Lessons (and counting) A Tasmanian Government Department's reflection on the experience,
impact and benefits of a lived experience advisory panel (Child Abuse Royal Commission
Response Unit, Department of Justice)
Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: Survivors at the Centre

DEFINITIONS

Child

A person under the age of 18 years.

Young Person

A person aged between 12 and 25 years, recognising the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood.

Child and Youth Safe Organisation

An organisation that actively creates and maintains environments where children and young people are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm, and where their rights and wellbeing are upheld.

Reportable Conduct

Any behaviour by an employee, volunteer, contractor, or other associated person that involves physical violence, sexual offences or misconduct, grooming, significant neglect, or significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or young person. This also includes any failure to report or protect a child from such conduct.

Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Registration

A statutory requirement for individuals working or volunteering with children, young people, or other vulnerable persons, ensuring they have undergone appropriate background and suitability checks.

Child and Youth Safe Officer

A designated employee responsible for promoting child safety within the organisation, providing advice, supporting compliance with child safe standards, and acting as a point of contact for child safety concerns.

Independent Regulator

The external authority established under the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* responsible for oversight, monitoring, and enforcement of child safe standards and reportable conduct notifications.

Incident Reporting Procedure

The formal process by which any suspected or actual breaches of child safety, including reportable conduct, are documented, reported, and managed within Council.

Cultural Safety

The establishment of an environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, where there is no assault to, challenge to or denial of their identity, culture, and rights.

Risk Assessment

The process of identifying, evaluating, and prioritising risks to child and youth safety, followed by implementing controls to mitigate those risks.

Contractor

Any external party engaged by Council to provide goods or services, including consultants, subcontractors, and service providers.

Volunteer

Any person engaged by the City of Launceston who provides unpaid support or assistance to Council activities, programs, or events is considered a volunteer, and must comply with the relevant provisions of the *Volunteering Act* and other applicable legislation, policies, and procedures.

Worker

For the purposes of the Child and Family Framework (CHFF) and related policies:

- Worker includes employees, contractors, volunteers, and Councillors who perform work for or on behalf of the Council in any capacity.
- A Worker is any individual who has direct or indirect contact with children or young people or plays a role in supporting a child-safe culture.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed 1 year after the date of approval.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Reference number	14-PI-041
Version	DRAFT 29/10/2025
Review	DC to set 1 year after approval
Key function	Governance
Document type	Policy
Responsible Network	Delivery and Performance
Approved by	Council
Action Officer	Senior Leader Governance
Text search key words	Child youth safety

To be communicated to <i>(To be identified by Approver)</i> (Insert ✓ in relevant row)		Department/Area only
		Networks via General Manager and Team Managers
		Specific Areas:
		•
	✓	Organisation-wide
		Website
		Intranet (via a link)
		External notification e.g. Department Premier and Cabinet, Director Public Health, Tasmania Police
		•

Hard copy distribution	N/A
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