



## Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of the Fishcare Victoria (FV) to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices FV has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

## Commitment to Child Safety

All children who participate in the Fishcare Victoria program have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children participants will always be our first priority and Fishcare Victoria has a zero tolerance to child abuse. Fishcare Victoria aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and Fishcare Victoria's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

## Application of this Policy

This policy was developed by Fishcare Victoria and in collaboration with staff, state committee and volunteers.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- State Committee Members
- Staff
- Volunteer
- Participants
- Teachers
- Parents

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns.

## Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that Fishcare Victoria is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

## Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

Fishcare Victoria encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

*We talk to them about the role of Fisheries officers and what to expect when approached by one. We also ask for feedback about our services.*

## Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation; and

## Recruiting staff and volunteers

Fishcare Victoria takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.
- Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and as part of the induction process for new staff or volunteers.

### **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Fishcare Victoria seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

Fishcare Victoria has appointed the State Coordinator as Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. That person can be contacted by sending an email to [info@fishcare.org.au](mailto:info@fishcare.org.au).

### **Risk Management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- Physical contact when demonstrating tasks or managing children.
- Conducting education classes

### **Reviewing this policy**

This policy will be reviewed every year and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers involved in Fishcare Victoria.