



The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) investigated child sexual abuse in institutions, how these institutions responded, and what makes an institution or organisation safe for children and young people. The Royal Commission found that organisations need to provide an environment where children feel (and are) safe, protected, and respected. Organisations also need to make sure staff and volunteers have the skills, confidence, and knowledge to keep children safe.

In response to the Royal Commission, the Australian Government introduced the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (the Framework). Under Requirement 4 of the Framework, Commonwealth entities are required to publish an annual statement of compliance with the Framework, including an overview of the entity's child safety risk assessment.

The Annual Statement of Compliance for the 2021-22 financial year for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Reef Authority) is set out below.

1. Commitment to child safety

The Reef Authority is committed to building a positive and proactive child safe culture to support child safety and wellbeing in connection with its work. It endeavours to ensure children and young people feel safe, supported, and respected, and that their rights and needs are met.

The Reef Authority seeks to create and maintain behaviours, practices, and an organisational culture that acknowledges the importance of child safety and wellbeing. The Reef Authority is committed to:

- Implementing strategies and taking action to promote child safety and wellbeing and preventing harm to children and young people.
- Creating an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is acknowledged throughout its interactions with children and young people.
- Genuine engagement with and valuing children and young people.
- Creating conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- Creating conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying harm to children and young people.
- Reporting and responding to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.
- Supporting employees and volunteers to have the skills, confidence, and knowledge to keep children and young people safe.

2. Reef Authority's interaction with children as part of its operations

The Reef Authority is Australia's key management agency for the Great Barrier Reef and works with government, industry, and community to protect this spectacular area. For over 40 years, the Reef Authority's work has been guided by the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* and related legislation.

Most Reef Authority employees do not work directly with children and young people in the performance of their day-to-day work. The Reef Authority does undertake a number of programs in the course of which employees and volunteers may interact and work with children and young people - whether it be face-to-face, over the phone, or by way of electronic communication. These programs include:

- **Partnering with Traditional Owners**

Reef Authority employees work in partnership with Traditional Owners to develop Sea Country management of marine resources. Reef Authority employees engage with Traditional Owners in



their communities and facilitate a wide variety of cultural and 'caring for country' activities, including Junior Ranger programs, cultural heritage camps, Sea Country conferences, training, monitoring, and research. Reef Authority employees are likely to work with children and young people during the facilitation of these activities.

- **Reef HQ Aquarium**

The Reef HQ Aquarium is currently closed to the public due to its proposed refurbishment. Reef HQ offers virtual learning experiences and uses video conferencing to virtually connect with school students. The Reef Authority's education team prepares virtual education materials and lessons on YouTube.

- **Reef Guardian Schools' Program**

The Reef Guardian Schools' program connects students in their classrooms to environmental and sustainability projects (such as native habitat revegetation, cleaning up beaches, and recycling). The Reef Guardian Schools' Program currently involves more than 270 schools, 7,400 teachers, and 120,000 students from the early learning years to Year 12. The Reef Guardians Schools' initiative has a strong focus on working with children and young people face-to-face and virtually, along with providing them with written and visual education tools.

- **Eye on the Reef Program**

The Reef Authority's Eye on the Reef monitoring and assessment program enables visitors to the Great Barrier Reef to contribute to its long-term protection by collecting valuable information (about such things as reef health and marine animals) that is used to understand the bigger picture and inform how the Reef is managed. Visitors can download the free app to record reef health and animal sightings. This app can be downloaded and used by any member of the public with a smart phone, including children and young people.

- **Other Activities**

Reef Authority employees and volunteers undertake activities that either, directly or occasionally, involve children and young people. These include:

- Reef Authority endorsed events, stalls, and exhibitions whereby children and young people may visit temporary stands, displays, and booths.
- Work placements, student-based work experience, and incidental interaction with children and young people whilst performing work duties.
- Indirect contact whilst undertaking compliance activities, field trips, and work-related travel.

3. Child safe risk assessment and mitigation

In accordance with the requirements of the Framework, an annual child safe risk assessment was conducted by the Reef Authority to evaluate risks to child safety and identify appropriate mitigation strategies. The Reef Authority's overall risk rating is medium.

The key risk to child safety identified in the risk assessment is injury or harm to a child or young person whilst involved in any of the Reef Authority's activities. The consequences include:

- Physical injury or abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Lack of cultural respect, racism, or other vilification
- Reputational damage
- Financial loss or damage

The Reef Authority has undertaken measures to address and mitigate these risks.



The Reef Authority understands that managing child safety risks is an ongoing process and will continue to regularly analyse and review measures to mitigate risk.

4. Compliance with the Framework and future improvements

The Reef Authority is fully compliant with three of the four requirements of the Framework (see Table 1).

The Reef Authority is committed to exercising continuous efforts to be a child safe organisation through implementation of the Framework. Following an annual review of compliance against the Framework, further measures have been identified to further embed and improve compliance with the Framework (see section 4.1 - Measures to improve compliance).

Table 1. Summary table compliance with the Framework

Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4
Undertake risk assessments annually in relation to activities of the entity, to identify the level of responsibility for, and contact with, children, evaluate risks to child safety, and put in place appropriate strategies to manage identified risks.	Establish and maintain a system of training and compliance, to make staff aware of, and compliant with, the Framework and relevant legislation, including Working with Children Checks / Working with Vulnerable People Checks and mandatory reporting requirements.	Adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.	Publish an annual statement of compliance with the Framework including an overview of the entity's child safety risk assessment (conducted under Requirement 1).
Compliant	Compliant	In Progress	Compliant

4.1 Measures to improve compliance

Following the 2021/2022 review of compliance against the Framework, additional measures have been identified to further embed and improve compliance with the Framework. These measures include:

- Review and update the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy to ensure alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe organisations, and publish on the Reef Authority's website. This process is currently underway, along with a review of the information and resources available to promote a child safe culture.
- Finalise the Child Safety Reporting and Response procedure and publish on the Reef Authority's website.
- Create child safety information for children and young people using language they can easily understand.
- Establish a compliance system that:
 - Formally records which positions and employees require Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Checks and regularly review position requirements
 - Monitors staff adherence to training and WWCC and WWVP Check requirements
 - Monitors compliance with the Framework
 - Regular reviews and updates child-safety policies and procedures.
- Provide all new employees with education on the Framework as a whole-of-government policy, along with the Reef Authority's policies and procedures in relation to child safety, as



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part of their Reef Authority induction; with existing employees receiving biennial refresher training in these matters.

- Provide more specific child safety training for employees and volunteers who work directly with children and young people or who may have contact with children and young people as part of their work.

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