

# CHILD SAFETY STATEMENT

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October 2016

Regional Arts Victoria is committed to the safety of children and young people who participate in our programs as audience members, participants, and creators.

In preparing this Statement, Regional Arts Victoria has referenced the Child Safe Standards developed by the Victorian Government. More information about these Standards can be found at: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

This Statement is prepared to assist Regional Arts Victoria employees, artists and volunteers to prepare and deliver programs which might involve children or young people.

This Statement will next be reviewed in October 2017.

## 1. PRINCIPLES

Three principles are applicable to all seven Child Safety Standards. Regional Arts Victoria is committed to:

1. Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children. Our work in this area is outlined in our Indigenous Engagement Strategy (next due to be reviewed in 2016).
2. Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our Cultural Engagement Strategy, due to be approved by the Board of Management in 2016, summarises our work with cultural diverse communities.
3. Promoting the safety of children with a disability. Regional Arts Victoria's has a Disability Action Plan in place for 2016-18 which commits us to ensuring people with a disability of all ages can access and shape our work.

## 2. STANDARDS

These seven Child Safety Standards are used to guide Regional Arts Victoria's work with children and young people.

### 2.1 Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Regional Arts Victoria's Child Safety Statement summarises not only our shared commitment to child safety, but outlines what other programs, projects and policies reflect this commitment.

Employees will be consulted annually on the revision of this Statement, and provided with the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on how each of us can ensure our approaches to working with children and young people are safe. This process will be led by the General Manager and Director to clearly demonstrate the commitment of Regional Arts Victoria's leadership to child safety.

### 2.2 Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

This Statement outlines Regional Arts Victoria's commitment to child safety.

### 2.3 Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

The Australia Council for the Arts has prepared a series of protocols for working with children in art, available to view at [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/children-in-art-protocols/](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/funding/children-in-art-protocols/). Unless explicitly stated otherwise, Regional Arts Victoria expects all people working on our programs to comply with the standards outlined in these protocols.

#### 2.4 Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

All Regional Arts Victoria artists, employees and volunteers who are expected to work with children or young people as part of their role with us **must** have a current Working with Children's check. Employees, artists or volunteers who do not currently have a Working with Children's check may not have direct, unsupervised contact with children or young people participating in our programs.

All employees must also comply with all Regional Arts Victoria policies and procedures, including the Employment Policy which outlines processes for hiring and training employees. Employees are also encouraged to discuss with their Manager opportunities for further training and development in the area of working with young people and minors where relevant.

#### 2.5 Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Regional Arts Victoria has a zero tolerance approach to suspected child abuse. Any employee, contractor, volunteer or other stakeholder participating in Regional Arts Victoria programs should immediately report to the General Manager or Director if they suspect child abuse might have occurred.

The General Manager is responsible for recording any suspected child abuse. On receiving these reports:

- if the matter has been reported during business hours, the General Manager will call the appropriate regional child protection service in the area in which the instance occurred. Contact numbers for this service can be found at: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/child-protection-contacts](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/child-protection-contacts)
- if the matter is felt by the reporting party to be an emergency, in which a child's immediate safety is at risk, and/or occurs outside of office hours, the General Manager will call 000 or the After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 131 278

All reports of this nature will be kept strictly confidential, with any person who makes the report to the General Manager to be provided with updates on how the matter has progressed until it is deemed closed by one of the relevant contact agencies noted above.

The General Manager **is not** expected to investigate any allegations without the guidance and support of a suitable qualified child protection worker.

#### 2.6 Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

The risk of child abuse is considered a potentially health and safety hazard at Regional Arts Victoria. This means that strategies for identifying and reducing risks are the same as those outlined in the company Occupational Health & Safety Policy.

This Policy requires all employees have a shared commitment to safety at Regional Arts Victoria. It also outlines a process for reporting and removing risks.

#### 2.7 Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Children and young people are critical participants in the work of Regional Arts Victoria. The 2015-17 Education & Families plan outlines a number of goals and objectives for including people aged 0-21 in our programs as artists, participants, and audience members.

This commitment will continue with the delivery of the Arts & Education Access program from 2017. The Arts & Education Access program is the principle means by which Regional Arts Victoria will continue to promote the participation and empowerment of children and young people in our work.