



Working with children and young people policy

POL-C-043

Version 2.2 29 October 2025

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| ID | POL-C-043 |
| Version | 2.2 |
| Version date | 29 October 2025 |
| Type | Council approved |
| Approval date | 21 November 2025 |
| File | 18/1271; 19/1192 |
| Availability | Public and all staff |
| Keywords | Children, young people, vulnerable people, risk, safety |
| Responsible officer | Head, Legal Executive and Governance Support |
| History | V 1.0 22 February 2012 (Council) V 2.0 13 February 2020 (Council) V 2.1 November 2022 (Executive Management Group, no change) |
| Review date | November 2028 |
| Related documents | Charter for Children and Young People |
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1. Title

Working with children and young people policy

2. Introduction

The National Museum of Australia (the Museum) is a major cultural institution charged with researching, collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical material of the Australian nation. The Museum is established under the *National Museum of Australian Act 1980*, which along with the *National Museum of Australian Regulations 2019*, defines the Museum's role, functions and powers.

3. Scope

3.1 Description

This policy outlines the Museum's principles and processes for providing a safe and welcoming environment for children and young people. The policy applies to Museum staff, volunteers and contractors.

It covers the involvement of children and young people in all Museum activities, including visiting the Museum's public spaces, engaging with the Museum on its website or other online forums, and participating in the Museum's education and public programs.

3.2 Purpose

This policy is designed to:

- facilitate the safety of children and young people while engaging with the Museum onsite and online
- inform Museum staff, volunteers and contractors of their obligations to act ethically and responsibly towards children and young people at all times
- demonstrate and monitor the Museum's compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

3.3 Rationale

Each year significant numbers of children, young people and families visit the Museum's premises in Canberra and online. The Museum understands the provision of experiences and programs designed specifically for children and young people brings with it a set of legal and ethical responsibilities.

As a Commonwealth Government agency, the Museum is expected to implement the Commonwealth Child Safety Framework (the Framework) developed by the Australian Government following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Framework involves the Museum:

- undertaking risk assessments annually for Museum activities to identify the level of responsibility for, and contact with, children and young people, evaluating the risk of harm or abuse, and putting in place appropriate strategies to manage any identified risks
- establishing and maintaining a system of training and compliance to make staff aware of, and compliant with, the Framework and relevant legislation including working with children checks and mandatory reporting requirements.

- adopting and implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles).

4. Principles and guidelines

The Museum's commitment to child safety arises out of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Commonwealth and ACT government legislation, and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

4.1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child

Australia has ratified the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, however, it has not been incorporated into Commonwealth law. As an Australian Government agency, the Museum seeks to observe and implement the key provisions of the Convention.

4.2 Commonwealth and ACT legislation

The Museum is bound by and complies with all Commonwealth laws that aim to protect people from discrimination in Australian public life.

As a Commonwealth government body, the Museum as an entity is not bound by ACT laws in relation to working with children and young people, although Museum staff may have obligations as individual citizens under those laws (for example Working with Vulnerable People legislation described under National Principle 5). The Museum endeavours to work in accordance with ACT legislation and policies in this area, to ensure it delivers services to visitors that are consistent with ACT standards to protect children and young people.

4.3 Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Under the Framework, the Museum is expected to adopt and implement the National Principles. The National Principles provide a benchmark against which to measure the Museum's child safe practices and performance. This policy describes how the Museum facilitates compliance with the National Principles, having regard to the Museum's operations and programs.

National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Museum staff and volunteers are expected to abide by the APS Code of Conduct and demonstrate APS Values. The Museum holds its staff and volunteers to the highest standards of ethical behaviour and aims to create a culture of respect.

The Deputy Director, Visitor Experience has been appointed as the Museum's Child Safe Champion, with the role of advocating for child safety initiatives and overseeing the Museum's implementation of the Framework. Child safety is considered by the Museum's Risk Committee as part of its remit, including reviewing child safety risk assessments conducted each year and the periodic update of this policy and any related procedures. Additionally, child safety and wellbeing awareness is a focus across the Museum, particularly where Museum staff interact daily with children and young people.

The Museum has also developed a Charter for Children and Young People (the Charter) in consultation with children, young people and responsible adults. The Charter outlines, in child-appropriate language, the Museum's commitment to engaging with children and young people. The Charter will be made publicly available in appropriate and accessible ways.

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

The Museum seeks to educate and engage with children and young people about their rights and safety while visiting the Museum, including as participants in public programs, school programs and online. This involves:

- seeking feedback on Museum programs and activities from children and young people in order to ensure their perspectives are effectively incorporated.
- taking advice from specialists when designing spaces and programs for children and young people, with a view to making them safe, accessible and welcoming.

National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

The Museum seeks to ensure all visitors, including families, communities and the general public are informed and contribute to maintaining a child safe Museum. This includes:

- requiring responsible adults to attend alongside children in their care or gaining consent from responsible adults for the child's participation in Museum programs and activities
- creating opportunities to receive feedback and complaints from families and schools engaging with the Museum onsite and online
- displaying or otherwise making available the Charter for Children and Young People.

National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

The Museum includes child safety within a broader framework of policies that promote inclusion. The Museum provides information about child safety at the Museum that is accessible to children, young people and responsible adults. The Museum also provides support and information for staff and volunteers to develop their capability to work with children and young people with diverse backgrounds and needs.

National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

The Museum seeks to ensure staff and volunteers are suited to working with children and young people by:

- assessing applicants for positions that work directly with children and young people on their suitability for the role, including their understanding of child safety and their skills in working with children and young people
- requiring all staff and volunteers, on engagement, to undergo a national police history check to identify whether the applicant has any police information recorded, such as offences that may be relevant to the care, instruction and supervision of children and young people
- requiring certain Museum staff, volunteers and contractors who work directly and regularly with children and young people to hold a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) card issued under ACT legislation. The purpose of the WWVP process is to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people by establishing mandatory background checking and risk assessment systems for all staff when engaging with vulnerable people in the ACT.

National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

Any complaints about interactions between children or young people and Museum staff, volunteers or contractors are handled through the Museum's existing complaint handling procedures and are to include the following:

- The complaint will be referred to the appropriate manager.
- The manager will contact the complainant and attempt to resolve the issue immediately.
- If an immediate response is not possible, the Museum will attempt to resolve the issue within 10 working days, or advise the complainant why the complaint will take longer to resolve.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Museum's response, the complainant can contact:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission or, in some circumstances, the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner.

Staff are required to report any suspicious or inappropriate conduct towards children and young

people on Museum premises to their supervisor immediately. Any such incident must also be reported (either by the supervisor or the staff member) to the Museum's Chief Security Officer as soon as practicable. All reports will be dealt with in accordance with the Museum's Security management procedures.

Staff members should note that amendments to the *Crimes Act 1900* (ACT) introduced in September 2019 require that any person who reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report it to a police officer as soon as practicable. This is a very broad obligation applying to all adults within the ACT, irrespective of whether the information comes to them in a professional, personal or other capacity.

National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

The Museum will provide information and support to staff and volunteers who work with children and young people to improve skills and awareness of child safety, including:

- an overview of child safety obligations on induction to the Museum
- skills-based information to assist staff to feel comfortable in engaging with children and young people
- training in specific child-safety procedures when working in public-facing roles, for example, processes for dealing with lost children.

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

The Museum has a risk management framework in place for programs and activities conducted on Museum premises and online to address risks arising in these environments.

In addition to preparing an annual risk plan for child safety, Museum staff are required to consider child-related risks when preparing risk plans for specific projects or events.

The Museum's approach to managing risks associated with child safety include:

- ensuring that staff, volunteers and contractors have undergone a National Police History Check and, where necessary, a WWVP check, and that these assessments are current
- articulating appropriate behaviours for staff, volunteers and contractors who work with children and young people
- reinforcing with visitors (including parents and teachers) that children need to be in the care of a responsible adult at all times
- operating CCTV cameras in most public spaces and galleries, which are continually monitored by Museum security
- incorporating child safety into the Museum's risk assessment documentation and ensuring strategies to mitigate risks are identified.

National Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

The Museum commits to reviewing this policy by the review date.

The Museum commits to reviewing its child-safe practices and processes, including risk assessments, documentation and information and support available for Museum staff, volunteers and contractors. It will seek to engage with children, young people, families, staff and volunteers when reviewing child safety policies and procedures, to address weaknesses and make improvements to the Museum's child safety framework.

National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

This policy and the Charter for Children and Young People will be promoted to Museum staff and made publicly available on the Museum's website.

5. Definition of terms**Child**

A person aged 0–11 years.

Young person

A person aged 12–17 years.

Vulnerable person

A child or an adult experiencing disadvantage as described in the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT).

Responsible adult

A parent, carer, teacher, guardian or other person who is responsible for supervision of a child while on Museum premises.

Risk assessment

An assessment as to whether a person poses an unacceptable risk of harm to a vulnerable person.

6. Definition of responsibilities**Child Safe Champion**

Responsible for implementation of this policy and the Framework within the Museum, including activity against the key action areas specified in the National Principles.

Front of House

Ensures the safety of visitors while in public spaces and galleries. Staff from this team also assist with the delivery of education and public programs, assist with evacuation procedures and arrange police checks for volunteers.

Security

Ensures the safety of all visitors while in public spaces, including first aid.

Education

Delivers programs for preschool, primary and secondary school children and young people.

Programs

Delivers programs and events for children, families, young people and vulnerable people including holiday workshops, festivals, early childhood excursions and other activities.

People and Culture

Arranges police checks for staff and provides technical advice in relation to health and safety.

7. References

[Age Discrimination Act 2004 \(Cth\)](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)

[Crimes Act 1900 \(ACT\)](#)

[Final Report](#), Royal Commission into Institutional Response into Child Sexual Abuse, Sydney, NSW, December 2017

[Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)](#)

[Human Rights Commission Act 2005 \(ACT\)](#)

[Keeping Children and Young People Safe](#) ACT Community Services, July 2024

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018 (endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019)

[United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990

[Working with Vulnerable People \(Background Checking\) Act 2011 \(ACT\)](#)

8. Implementation

8.1 Coverage

All Museum staff, volunteers and contractors who have contact with children and young people.

8.2 Other related policies

[Complaints handling procedures](#)

Security management procedures (internal)

Front of house host handbook (internal)

8.3 Exclusions

None

8.4 Superseded policies

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8.5 Monitoring

The policy is to be reviewed by November 2028.