

Geelong Arts Centre's Commitment to Child Safety Child Safe Standards

On 26 November 2015, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (the Act) was amended to introduce the Standards which apply to all organisations that provide services or facilities for children in Victoria. The Act aims to improve the way organisations implement programs and services for children, in order to prevent harm and to actively respond to allegations of child abuse that may occur.

In December 2019, the previous Department of Health and Human Services published its [review of the Victorian Child Safe Standards](#). The Victorian Government endorsed all 15 of the review's recommendations. Following the review, [new Child Safe Standards](#) will be introduced on 1 July 2022.

The new Standards have been introduced with an overarching aim of driving cultural change within organisations, so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers.

Geelong Arts Centre's Commitment to Children and Young People

All children working with or engaged by the Geelong Arts Centre have a right to feel and be safe, respected, valued and protected from harm. All children and young people should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities. Geelong Arts Centre is strongly committed to the safety and well-being of all children that interact with our organisation as employees, audience members, program participants or hirers by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted to our care is our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Centre has developed a framework to implement the Standards which will;

- promote the safety of children;
- prevent the risk of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and cultural abuse and neglect of children;
- ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report allegations of child abuse;
- continuously improve responses to any allegations of child abuse;
- pay particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people;
- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and promote the safety of children with a disability; and
- encourage all children to 'have a say', especially on issues that are important to them or about decisions that affect their lives.

Geelong Arts Centre has a Child Safe Policy which outlines the framework for managing and preventing the risk of harm to children and young people who engage with the Centre. This includes appropriate recruitment checks for Supervisors of Children and, that all persons working with or engaging with children at the Geelong Arts Centre, or through any of the Centre's programs, must adhere to the Centre's Child Safe Code of Conduct and hold a current Working with Children Check.

We have appointed Child Safety Officers who are the first point of contact for all enquiries in relation to the safety and well-being of children engaged by the Centre. Child Safety Officers are appointed from the following departments at the Centre:

- Visitor Services
- Front of House
- Technical
- Stage Door
- Creative Learning Team
- Corporate Services

To get in touch with a Child Safe Officer, contact the Geelong Arts Centre on 5225 1213 or contact us through the Geelong Arts Centre [enquiry page](#).