



Safeguarding News

May 2023

Greetings all,

Welcome to your Safeguarding HeartBeat Newsletter.

I am pleased to return to work without any broken bones or injuries, after enjoying a fabulous holiday in Canada skiing with two of our three adult children. Two of the greatest blessings of our time away was enjoying relationship with our family and visiting some of the incredibly beautiful landscapes on Earth. We felt very privileged and humbled by these holiday opportunities and experiences.



Safeguarding Lines of Authority and Accountability:

We have remodelled the SOSJ Safeguarding lines of authority and accountability, which is a fancy way of saying 'organisational chart'! You can find this diagram on SPIRIT, and also on the SOSJ public website, under the 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Framework' pod. I encourage you to take a look, which you can do by clicking [here](#).

Adult Safeguarding news:

You will remember from the January 2023 newsletter, how we referred to SOSJ's safeguarding approach extending to *adults at risk* (or 'vulnerable adults'), in addition to children. Interestingly, the Victorian Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) have released a report [Line of sight: Refocusing Victoria's adult safeguarding laws and practices](#) (August 2022), which draws on stories that illustrate the impact of the system failure on adults who are at risk. One of the seven recommendations from the report, is that a new adult safeguarding legislation be introduced to establish a specialist adult safeguarding agency in Victoria. This new agency would receive and assess reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of at-risk adults via a well-resourced and publicised helpline; undertake investigations; and make and co-ordinate referrals to other agencies. You can read the report and view the recommendations by clicking [here](#). It will be interesting to see if these recommendations become a reality.

WA Reportable Conduct Scheme:

The new Reportable Conduct Scheme came into effect in Western Australia on 1 January 2023. This is effectively a scheme which adds another layer of compliance and oversight in relation to child protection concerns regarding employees. It requires Heads of Organisations, to notify the WA Ombudsman of allegations of, or convictions for, child abuse by their employees. It requires investigation of the allegation/s and a report provided to the WA Ombudsman in relation to the investigation outcomes and any actions resulting. It is important to note that Religious Institutions shall be added to the organisations covered by the scheme on 1 January 2024. You can click [here](#) to learn more about the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Aotearoa New Zealand Royal Commission:

The Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry is investigating the abuse and neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults within State and faith-based institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand between 1950 – 1999. The Commission was announced in 2018 and Commissioners were appointed in 2019, with the final report and recommendations originally due by 30 June 2023. The Inquiry has now been granted an extension to deliver the final report and recommendations by 28 March 2024. Inquiry Chair Coral Shaw has stated that... “The scale of abuse is beyond what anyone had ever imagined at the start of this inquiry”.

NSW Children’s Guardian:

Mr Stephen Kinmond OAM has been appointed for a five-year term as the new Children’s Guardian in NSW. Mr Kinmond has a wealth of experience within the child protection field, and I recall meeting him when he was the Deputy Ombudsman and being impressed by his empathy and insight.

First Nations:

As I think about Standard 1 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (i.e. *Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued*), I am encouraged to read that the Australian government has announced the final wording for the proposed constitutional amendment and the question that will be put to the public to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to government. They have also released the design principles that will underpin the Voice. It’s another significant step on the journey to ensure we better listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and opportunity for us to come together as a nation.

National Reconciliation Week:



Be a Voice for Generations is the theme of National Reconciliation Week this year, occurring from 27 May 2023 – 3 June 2023. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision. It is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. You can learn more about the events occurring in your area and even download posters for display, by clicking [here](#).

Finally, I share the below photos with you from our wonderful holiday.



I invite you to contact me should you have any safeguarding questions or matters you would like to discuss. I can be contacted by phone, email, or the old-fashioned way – in person!

Blessings,

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