

SUMMARY REPORT

STRENGTHENING CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2015

→ who is this report for?

Children & young people who shared their views with the commissioner for children

→ why has it been produced?

Recently you met with the Commissioner for Children to talk about what organisations can do to help keep you safe from all types of abuse.

You have the right to be safe and to feel safe no matter where you are.

The Commissioner for Children has listened carefully to what you have told him and has included what you had to say in a written report about child safe organisations.

→ why did the commissioner for children talk to you?

It is really important that you get to have a say about things that affect you, and that you are listened to.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* says that you have the right to express your views and for adults to take what you say seriously.

AS ONE YOUNG PERSON SAID:

We know what young people think – as we are young people, we are the experts at what it's like to be a young person, not adults



USEFUL DEFINITIONS...

What are the different types of 'abuse'?

- 1.** Physical abuse includes physical punishment, pushing, slapping or other behaviour that hurts your body.
- 2.** Emotional abuse includes bullying, name calling, threats or harassment or other behaviour that makes you feel anxious, afraid, alone or worthless.
- 3.** Sexual abuse includes inappropriate sexual touching or contact.

→ what is a 'child safe organisation'?

A 'child safe organisation' aims to keep you safe from all forms of abuse.

What can organisations do to keep you safe from abuse?

- Make sure that staff are suitable to work with children and young people
- Set clear rules about everyone's behaviour, including adults' behaviour.
- Make sure everyone in the organisations know their rights and their obligations
- Include you and your families in decision making
- Encourage you to speak up if you feel unsafe or worried
- Take proper action if you speak up about abuse

→ what did the commissioner do to write this report?

The Commissioner has:

1. Talked with you about how organisations keep you safe; and
2. Held forums about child safe organisations for people who work with young people; and
3. Considered reports and research about what organisations can do to keep young people safe from abuse.

→ what did the commissioner find out?

1. You told the Commissioner that you want adults to listen to you more and to take what you say seriously. You want to be involved in conversations about how organisations protect your safety.
2. Adults need to get better at explaining to you that abuse is not just something that strangers do. Abuse is never OK, even if the abuser is someone that you know and trust.
3. Adults can do more to teach you about abuse and how adults should treat you so that you can recognise abuse and speak out if it happens.
4. You told the Commissioner that feelings of embarrassment, shame, personal responsibility or fear could stop you from reporting abuse. Organisations need to do more to make it easier for children and young people to speak out about abuse and to reassure them that proper action will be taken if they do.
5. Tasmanian organisations are committed to keeping children safe from abuse but some want some assistance to improve how they do it.
6. For a child safe organisation, being 'child safe' is its number 1 priority.
7. Doing background checks on people before they start to work with children is really important but there are lots of other things that organisations should do to keep you safe from abuse.

→ what is the commissioner doing now?

What you told the Commissioner is very important and your views have been included in a full report that he will present to the Tasmanian Government and to organisations that work with children and young people.

The Commissioner will keep talking with organisations about how they can better protect you from all forms of abuse.

**IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT
YOURSELF OR SOMEONE ELSE YOU
KNOW, YOU CAN CONTACT THE KIDS
HELPLINE ON 1800 55 1800.**

Commissioner
for **Children**
tasmania