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Annual Statement of Compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

Our Commitment

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) is committed to protecting and safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Agency is committed to promoting a child safe culture and providing an environment where children and young people feel and are safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Particular attention is paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Every person involved in the Agency has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play, individually and collectively, to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Our operations and interaction with children

Agency employees may have incidental and at times direct contact with children as part of their responsibility to implement the Australian Government's policies and programs to improve the lives of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Direct contact with children is primarily in regional areas where employees may visit public places, communities and premises of funded grantees.

The Agency also funds grantees and Government Directed Activities that may have incidental or direct contact with children. This includes providers under the Remote School Attendance Strategy and early childhood services.

NIAA's child safety risk assessment

In 2024 the Agency conducted a risk assessment to determine the overall child safety risk rating. The rating for the Agency remains medium and is based on the residual likelihood that Agency employees, grantees and grant recipients may not comply with the existing requirements of the policy and controls.

This risk assessment identified both incidental and direct contact with children, primarily as part of the regional NIAA employees' roles and responsibilities.

The risk assessment also identified funded grantees as potentially having more contact with vulnerable persons (including children) in communities than NIAA employees – particularly through IAS Outcome 1.2 and 1.3. The most significant risk being a failure to comply with NIAA policies and contractual requirements. All Grantees who have a NIAA Grant Agreement (Head Agreement and Project Schedule) must complete a mandatory annual

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Statement of Compliance (SoC) to confirm compliance with their obligations for working with vulnerable people (including children) and the WHS Act. Organisations who do not provide a SoC may be subject to sanctions, including withholding payments and termination of their agreements should they not comply.

The Agency undertakes site visits for grant activities which receive a medium, high or extreme activity risk assessment rating. NIAA engagement staff may ask to sight an organisation's relevant artefacts relating to WWVP and WHS risk which in addition to their annual statement of compliance.

The Agency understands that managing child safety risks is an ongoing process and will continue to regularly analyse and review the measures we have in place to mitigate risks.

NIAA's compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The NIAA remains compliant with all four requirements of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF), the core requirements of which are:

- undertake annual risk assessments
- establish a system of training and compliance
- adopt the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and
- publish an annual statement of compliance.

The Agency introduced a Commonwealth Child Safe Framework eLearning course to make employees aware of, and compliant with, the Framework and relevant legislation. The Agency released additional guidance to staff to further embed the national principles for Child Safe Organisations. This guidance included mandatory reporting obligations, child safety resources and child protection reporting information.

Child safe initiatives in the reporting year and future activities

- The Agency conducted a review of compliance for recording checks for staff in positions identified as requiring a check in line with State and Territory compliance, including reporting on these checks.
- Additional priority work has been undertaken to improve grantees complying with SoCs.
- The Agency has also established the Integrity Advisory Function to improve Agency Integrity protocols and processes.

