

YMCA's of AUSTRALIA

Reporting on the Implementation of
Recommendations by Major Institutions
(Rec 17.3) from the Royal Commission



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We believe in the power of inspired young people. We know that a young person can only be inspired if they feel safe and are safe. We are committed to safeguarding all children and young people.
- 1.2 To help us achieve our purpose, our safeguarding vision is to ensure all children and young people are safe and feel safe, valued, heard and respected at the Y, in their families and their communities. We know we are ambitious in our approach to safeguarding, however we would not settle for anything less.
- 1.3 To achieve our safeguarding vision, we enact our five strategic priorities:
- We demonstrate effective leadership and commitment to safeguarding;
 - We deliver integrated governance arrangements;
 - We embed preventative safeguarding activities;
 - We respond appropriately to all safeguarding concerns; and
 - We empower and educate children, young people, families, communities and Y people.
- 1.4 The Y is proud of our commitment to safeguarding and continue to strive for excellence in this space. We continue to always put the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people first and ensure we are constantly listening to the voice of the child/young person to inform our safeguarding policy and practice.

2. Information about the Y

Organisational Name:	The National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Australia.
Location:	Level 1, 3 Bristol Street Essendon Fields VIC 3041
Website:	www.ymca.org.au
Organisational Category:	Sport, recreation, arts, cultural community and hobby groups.
Organisational Structure:	The YMCA Movement (The Y) in Australia is a federated structure currently comprising 15 independent Associations (known as Member Y Associations or Members) that collectively form the National Council of the YMCAs of Australia. Each Association must hold a Charter of Membership of the National Council and

is required to have entered into a Licensing Agreement with the National Council, as supported by mandatory governance and safeguarding licensing standards. YMCA Australia is a company limited by guarantee and is also governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. YMCA Australia's Board is (in the majority) elected by the Members and is supported by the staff of YMCA Australia.

While each Member Y Association is an independent organisation, we are united in our approach to safeguard all Children and Young People.

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3. This Report

3.1 This report has been compiled to present a consolidated view of the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations by all members of the National Council of the YMCAs of Australia.

3.2 This report is provided to the National Office of Child Safety on behalf and inclusive of all members of the National Council of the YMCAs of Australia.

3.3 To align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, we have formulated our responses under each National Principle. We have captured:

- Theme 1: Making institutions child safe, Measure 1.1. New or revised Code of Conduct, policies and procedures for child safe institutions (Report Volume 6 – Recommendation 6.6 and Volume 7 – Recommendation 7.8); and
- Theme 2: Children's voices, Measure 2.1: Children participate in decision that affect them (all relevant Volumes and Recommendations) together under each National Principle listed below.

National Principle 1 for Child Safe Organisations: Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

What have we been doing since December 2018?

3.4 At the Y, we understand that safeguarding requires effective organisational leadership and governance to keep children and young people safe. Over this past year we have embedded a range of effective safeguarding leadership and governance approaches and structures across the Y, including:

- A standing item for safeguarding at quarterly National Board meetings;
- A standing item for safeguarding at the National Board Governance and HR Committee;
- A formalised safeguarding Report to the National Board and National Board Governance and HR Committee that details progress against the Safeguarding Strategy, identified areas of safeguarding risk and good practice in safeguarding;
- The implementation of the Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards across the Y;
- The continued engagement with the Australian Childhood Foundation as an independent, external accreditation and auditing partner for all Member Y Associations;
- The development of the National Safeguarding Strategy 2020-2023;
- The development and delivery of Safeguarding Training for Boards of Directors; and
- The development and delivery of Executive and Senior Managers Safeguarding Training.

3.5 As we continue to drive the Y's culture to put the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people first, we have undertaken several projects to embed a safeguarding culture at the Y. Since 2018, this has included:

- The establishment of the National Safeguarding Unit inclusive of the following key roles:
 - National Executive Manager – Safeguarding Children and Young People
 - National Safeguarding Risk Manager
 - National Safeguarding Prevention Manager (Education and Empowerment)
 - National Safeguarding Prevention Manager (Policy and Practice)
 - National Safeguarding Case and Project Support Officer
- The identification of designated Safeguarding Leads for each Member Y Association;
- The development of the Y Introductory Safeguarding Video for all Y people;
- The undertaking of in-depth safeguarding research with children and young people engaged with the Y across Australia; *and*

- The development of the 'Tell Someone, Speak Up' Framework to facilitate an open culture which enables all children, young people, families, communities and Y People to speak out about maltreatment, abuse and neglect.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

3.6 At the Y, we are committed to continually improving our leadership and governance approaches by ensuring safeguarding remains a strategic priority in 2020 and beyond. As part of our continual improvement approach, we will undertake the following measures in the upcoming years:

- Identifying a safeguarding Board Lead at all Member Y Associations;
- Developing a framework that supports intergenerational leadership within the Y;
- Recruiting a Compliance Officer to measure the implementation and continuous improvement of the Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards;
- Implementing a National Workforce Development Plan outlining specific competency requirements for Directors, Leaders and Managers across the Y;
- Developing an annual Safeguarding Report which identifies and analyses safeguarding trends, data and opportunities for improvement in policy and practice from across the Y; *and*
- Developing and implementing a National Code of Conduct for all Y People, children and young people, families and communities.

At the Y, we understand that our culture is one of the most important aspects of what makes us a safe place for all children and young people. We will ensure we continue to promote safeguarding culture across the Y, families and communities by:

- Developing a Movement wide framework which embeds the voice of all children and young people into our service delivery;
- Collaborating with our young person led Why Not? Platform to develop a Young Person Group to oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Strategy 2020-2023 from a young person's perspective; *and*
- Developing a National Y Safeguarding Brand internally and externally.

National Principle 2 for Child Safe Organisations: Children and Young People are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

What have we been doing since December 2018?

At the Y, we believe in the power of inspired Young People, as part of our shared vision, we know children and young people need to be empowered and informed of their rights. To ensure we empower all children and young people across the Y, in their families and communities, we:

- Undertook an in-depth research project and consultation with children and young people about how safeguarding affects them at the Y;
- Developed and tested child and young person resources about how to speak out about maltreatment, abuse and neglect through our 'Tell Someone, Speak Out' Framework;

- Actively engaged young people in the majority of leadership meetings to ensure we have an intergenerational approach to decision making at all levels at the Y;
- Actively increased the agency of young people by participating in the World Alliance of YMCAs global change agent program, a global program designed to build leaders of change throughout YMCA to work across the world and also within their local communities; *and*
- Developed the Why Not? Platform, an online editorial resource which amplifies the voice of young people across Australia about issues which affect them.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

Our ambitious three year Safeguarding Strategy has a key priority to empower young people. We are committed to achieving this priority by:

- Implementing and embedding our 'Tell Someone, Speak Up' Framework to enable all children and young people, families, communities and Y People to speak up about maltreatment, poor practice, abuse and neglect;
- Developing training for Young People on our 'Tell Someone, Speak Up' Framework including how they can stay safe at the Y, in their families and communities;
- Undertaking bi-annual surveys and research with children and young people, families and their communities to understand the safeguarding issues they face and how the Y can support them better;
- Developing a new safeguarding webpage specifically for children and young people, including the development of an online reporting button on the Y Website for children and young people to speak directly with the Y;
- Developing child and young person friendly resources for safeguarding and ensuring our work is written in plain English to ensure all children, young people, families, communities and Y People can access our documents;
- Collaborating further with the Why Not? platform (an online platform to amplify the voices of young people) to inform our National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and practice;
- Developing a toolkit with young people on how to engage children and young people in service delivery and design; *and*
- Continuing to actively improve the agency of young people by continuing with the global change agents program and exploring how this program can support the work of the National Safeguarding Unit.

National Principle 3 for Child Safe Organisations: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

What have we been doing since December 2018?

Our Safeguarding Strategy goes beyond just the Y, we truly believe that safeguarding children and young people involves us engaging with their families and communities to ensure we keep them safe. As part of engaging families and communities we have:

- Shared our complaints policies with families and communities to ensure they know how to raise a concern about the safety and welfare of any child or young person;
- Gained feedback from families and communities through feedback forms and discussions groups, and used the learning in our continuous improvement plans;
- Ensured that our policies and procedures are easily accessible on our publically available websites; *and*
- Held regular discussion forums with partner organisations from a range of sectors to seek alignment of safeguarding practice.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

To further develop our engagement with families and communities, we will:

- Develop and implement a national bi-annual family and community safeguarding research project to inform our approach to safeguarding;
- Develop a six monthly Y safeguarding newsletter focused at families and communities, helping to uplift knowledge and skills in the community;
- Continue to implement our consultation meetings with families and communities and actively embed feedback and learnings; *and*
- Develop and implement a quarterly community of practice with partner organisations to identify best practice in safeguarding and potential collaboration opportunities.

National Principle 4 for Child Safe Organisations: equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

What have we been doing since December 2018?

Australia is a multicultural society with children, young people, families, communities and Y People coming from a range of backgrounds and heritages. At the Y, we know that by fostering inclusive practice, Young People will be inspired to shape the future. In the last year we have:

- Began to implement diversity and inclusion training;
- Tested our 'Tell Someone, Speak Up' Framework in a range of languages and cultural formats to inform our safeguarding practice into 2020;
- Incorporated the unique needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ Children and Young People into our safeguarding training program; *and*
- Began the development of a National Y Inclusive Practice Policy.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

At the Y, we know we need to do more in this space, therefore we are aspiring to:

- Develop child and young person friendly safeguarding policies and procedures which are understandable to all communities;
- Approving and implementing a National Inclusive Practice Policy;
- Developing and delivering cultural safety training to support the implementation of the National Inclusive Practice Policy;
- Piloting our Tell Someone, Speak Up' Framework in a range of languages and cultural formats; *and*
- Developing resources on how to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ Children and Young People for Y People.

National Principle 5 for Child Safe Organisations: People working with Children and Young People are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

What have we been doing since December 2018?

Getting the right Y people is fundamental to safeguarding. At the Y, we have learnt from our past and ensure we apply safe recruitment and culture models to all of our practice. To ensure we attract and retain the right Y People, we have:

- Embedded safe recruitment practices into HR Management Systems including appropriate vetting such as national and international police well as Working with Children/Vulnerable People Checks;
- Implemented specific Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards requiring all members to adhere to our safe recruitment and culture process;
- Implemented specific safeguarding questions at all interviews, including roles which do not engage with children and young people;
- Implemented specific safeguarding questions for all reference checks and requirements for all roles to complete two references prior to commencement;
- Implemented a requirement for a risk assessment on all contractors to ensure they are safe to work at Y sites;
- Embedded minimum training requirements into all roles, all Y People are provided with annual training and required to complete the Australian Childhood Foundation training when joining the Y; *and*
- Made safeguarding updates and information available to all Y People through Y News every two months.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

To ensure we continue to embed our safer recruitment and culture model across the Y, we will undertake the following projects to ensure the Y is the safest place for all children and young people and therefore will:

- Develop and implement comprehensive Safe Recruitment Guidance for the Y and make it easily accessible to all children, young people, families, communities and Y People;
- Develop and embed Safe Recruitment training for all roles which recruit Y People and Contractors;
- Develop and embed standardised recruitment templates for all roles across the Y;
- Develop and pilot an annual review process which incorporates safeguarding behaviour statements and questions;
- Upskill Y People by developing a Safeguarding Workforce Development Plan with required core safeguarding competency requirements for roles;
- Consider the implementation of Site Safeguarding Leads at all Y Sites and Centres; and
- Consider the benefit of values based interviewing as part of the safe recruitment process.

National Principle 6 for Child Safe Organisations: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

What have we been doing since December 2018?

The Y strives for continuous improvement and actively encourages feedback from children, young people, families and communities. The Y takes all complaints seriously, including safeguarding concerns- and acts on them appropriately. To achieve this commitment, we have:

- Remained a full participating institution of the National Redress Scheme;
- Ensured all Member Y Associations have local safeguarding procedures which are accredited through the Australian Childhood Foundation;
- Created posters at Y sites outlining what safeguarding is and how children, young people, families, communities and Y People can speak out if they are worried about maltreatment, poor practice, abuse or neglect;
- Required all Y People to undertake the Australian Childhood Foundation online training (which encompasses managing complaints and safeguarding concerns) on commencement of their role and then annual refresher training every year thereafter; *and*
- Introduced Qualified and trained workplace investigators to manage safeguarding complaints and concerns against Y People.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

To continue to ensure we manage safeguarding complaints and concerns appropriately, we will:

- Develop nationally harmonised complaints handling procedures to enable feedback from all children and young people on all topics;

- Develop nationally harmonised safeguarding procedures which account for state, territory and regional differences;
- Develop nationally harmonised template documents for managing complaints and safeguarding concerns;
- Require all Y's to report all safeguarding concerns to the National Safeguarding Unit for quality assurance purposes as well as trend analysis to inform practice development and training requirements for Y People.
- Link the 'Tell Someone, Speak Up' framework to the Safeguarding Procedures to ensure we continue to be open and transparent in everything we do;
- Ensure we learn from all of our cases by developing and implementing a Safeguarding Concern Learning Form for Y People to reflect on how the concern was managed, including areas of good practice and improvement;
- Undertake national data analysis of safeguarding complaints and concerns to inform practice, policy and training improvements; and
- Embed a user friendly system to enable Children, Young People, families and communities to report any safeguarding complaints or concerns they have.

National Principle 7 for Child Safe Organisations: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep Children and Young People safe through ongoing education and training

What have we been doing since December 2018?

At the Y, we know our workforce are one of our greatest asset, and we invest in their development to ensure they are leaders in safeguarding and their areas of specialism. In the last year, we have:

- Continued to require all Y People to undertake the Australian Childhood Foundation online training on commencement of their role and annual refresher training every year thereafter;
- Developed a Y safeguarding video for Members to use at induction, during meetings or as part of their annual refresher training; *and*
- Provided Board and Senior Manager safeguarding training to Member Associations across the Y.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

To continue to work towards a fully competent and confident workforce in safeguarding, we will:

- Develop and implement a national safeguarding induction program which aligns with a 'Welcome to the Y' program to ensure safeguarding is embedded into practice and not seen as a 'stand-alone' topic;
- Discern feasibility of a "train the trainer" model to help upskill the workforce across the Y enabling leaders to cascade safeguarding training in their local settings; *and*
- Develop our own safeguarding training and ensure it aligns with industry safeguarding requirements for Y People in specific roles.

National Principle 8 for Child Safe Organisations: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for Children and Young People to be harmed

What have we been doing since December 2018?

Part of the Y's Safeguarding Strategy is to ensure all children and young people feel safe and are safe. This principle particularly applies to the physical and online environments for all children and young people at the Y. Over the last year we have:

- Developed local policies, procedures and processes at the Y to ensure safeguarding is considered in both the physical and online world;
- Ensured that our physical environments comply with workplace health and safety regulations and safeguarding requirements (such as regular checking of change rooms and dedicated safe spaces for children and young people);
- Engaged with children and young people to inform the design of some Y facilities and sites; and
- Developed the Why Not? Platform to ensure it considers all aspects of safeguarding through appropriate policies, procedures and training of the editorial committee.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

In the upcoming years, we have identified that we need to undertake more safeguarding work on the online environment to ensure all children and young people are kept safe. At the Y we know that children and young people are using online environments more than ever and that the gap between adults and children and young people needs to be reduced. To facilitate this, we will:

- Develop nationally harmonised social media and e-safety policies as informed by resources from the e-Safety Commissioner;
- Develop, implement and review an e-safety module for Y People as part of the Safeguarding Workforce Development Plan;
- Develop and implement guidance to support Y's in making physical and online environments safe for all children and young people;
- Develop and embed national safeguarding risk assessment templates and safeguarding risk management techniques;
- Explore the opportunity to implement national procurement of mobile phones and data with safety features attached, including the ability to check Y People's behaviour online and on their work phones;
- Develop and embed a procurement template to prevent the Y engaging with any supplier or supply chain that promotes or engages in modern slavery; and
- Develop safe spaces for children and young people at all Y facilities.

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

What have we been doing since December 2018?

At the Y, we know that continual reflection, review and improvement is essential in keeping all children and young people safe. We fully understand and commit to our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe and not to become complacent in our approach. In the past year, we have:

- Continued to ensure all Y's are accredited by the Australian Childhood Foundation every three years, with annual self-reviews as guided by Australian Childhood Foundation Accreditation framework;
- Formed a National Project Working Group for Safeguarding to inform our safeguarding practice; *and*
- Built Safeguarding reviews into Member Ys continuous improvement plans.

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

At the Y, we know that safeguarding is a continuous journey. We want to ensure we have a culture of continuous improvement to provide the best outcomes for all children and young people. Therefore, we will:

- Review how we are implementing our Safeguarding Strategy
- Finalise and publish our National Safeguarding Implementation Plan;
- Undertake a tender process for an audit/accreditation provision for Member Y Associations to align with the National Principles;
- Undertake a national safeguarding survey enabling children, young people, families, communities and Y People;
- Undertake a review of our Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards to ensure they align with the National Principles; *and*
- Develop and implement a quarterly community of practice with partner organisations to identify best practice in safeguarding and potential collaboration opportunities.

National Principle 10 for Child Safe Organisations: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for Children and Young People

What have we been doing since December 2018?

We have developed and implemented our Australia-wide Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy since December 2017 and have continued on our journey to ensuring our safeguarding policies and procedures are at the fore-front of safeguarding practice by:

- Ensuring all Member Y Associations continue to embed the National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy;
- Embedding local Safeguarding Procedures into Member Y Associations;
- Requiring all Member Y Associations to report all major and critical safeguarding concerns to Y Australia for analysis and continuous improvement; *and*

- Undertook an in-depth research project and consultation with Children and Young People about how safeguarding affects them at the Y;

What are we going to do in 2020 and beyond?

To continue to ensure the Y is the safest place for all children and young people and that our policies and procedures are creating a safeguarding culture we will:

- Undertake a review of the National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Review by seeking feedback from children, young people, families, communities and Y People;
- Develop a child and young person friendly version of the National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy;
- Develop a National Procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns; *and*
- Develop national safeguarding guidance to help Member Y Associations implement the National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.

4. Reporting against institution specific recommendations

The Y is considered under Recommendation 14.1 which states “All sport and recreation institutions, including arts, culture, community and hobby groups, that engage with or provide services to Children should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.”

Section 3 of this Report details our implementation and continued plans to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

5. Attachments

To support this Report, we have attached the following two documents

- Attachment One: YMCAs Safeguarding Children and Young people Strategy 2020 - 2023; and
- Attachment Two: YMCA Safeguarding Unit Organisational Structure.