

30 November 2020

Ms Rebekah Kilpatrick
Head, National Office for Child Safety

**Reporting on the Implementation of Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Rec 17.3)
2020 Response of Paddle Australia**

Paddle Australia provides the following document (Response) as requested in correspondence received from the National Office for Child Safety (NOCS) dated 23 September 2020.

The intention of the Response is to update NOCS on the progress made by Paddle Australia in improving child safety and culture. The Response references the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and any references to Recommendations are to the [Final Report Recommendations](#).

The format of the Response is that suggested in the 23 September correspondence. Although that correspondence states that Paddle Australia is not required to address the specific Recommendations, rather only the general themes, where possible the Recommendations have been directly used to show the reasoning behind the initiatives undertaken by Paddle Australia and intentions for 2021 and beyond.

Section 1: Identifying the institution

- Paddle Australia
- Head office located at Level 2, 6B Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park, NSW 2127
- National Sporting Organisation

Section 2: General reporting against recommendations relevant to all institutions

Theme 1: Making institutions child safe

Measure 1.1:

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations / Child Safe Standards (or jurisdictional equivalent). This includes actions such as:

- developing or revising a Code of Conduct and ensuring staff and volunteer compliance,
- implementing and updating child safe policies and procedures,

- maintaining training for staff and volunteers on their child safety obligations and behavioural expectations, and
- maintaining risk management strategies for a child safe institution

Report Volume:

Volume 6 and Volume 7.

Recommendation(s) the measure is in response to:

Recommendations 6.4 – 6.6, 7.8.

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:

Recommendations 6.4 – 6.6 confirm that that all institutions should act with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration, and provide the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission, as follows:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture

The Board of Paddle Australia has approved the Child Safety Framework (Framework). The Framework includes the [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#), the [Looking After Our Kids. Code of Behaviour – Clubs](#), and the [Looking After Our Kids. Code of Behaviour – Paddle Australia Personnel](#). The Framework has been considered and endorsed by Sport Integrity Australia.

Agreement has also been reached with all of the member State Paddle Associations (SPAs) of Paddle Australia that they will similarly be bound under the Framework and there is also provision for all of the Member Clubs of Paddle Australia to be bound as well.

Work is underway to embed these policies within the culture of the organisations. As a part of the National Paddling Forum at the end of 2019, involving key representatives of Paddle Australia and all of the SPAs, a presentation was delivered by Sport Australia as to the key provisions of the Framework.

2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

The Framework speaks to the need to better engage with Children and Young People. In discussions with the SPAs it has been identified that the first step in this process must be to listen to our Children and Young People as to what they are looking for. Two groups have already been identified for a consultation process:

- Junior national teams; and
- Key Member Clubs around Australia, which have the highest concentration of young paddlers.

Contacts have been collected for each of these groups.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved

4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

5. People working with children are suitable and supported

An audit of Paddle Australia staff has already taken place to ensure that the relevant staff have up to date Working With Children documentation and each of the SPAs has similarly committed to undertake this exercise.

6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused

This is provided for in the Framework.

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

Paddle Australia has a Member Protection Information Officer in place who has kept abreast of relevant training including the Play By The Rules MPIO module. In his professional capacity with the West Australian police, the PA MPIO has previously been a part of the Sex Offender Management Squad.

All of the SPAs have committed to having a suitably trained MPIO for their respective states.

8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

Paddle Australia physical environments which involve Children and Young People are managed by appropriately trained staff.

9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

As well as through the Paddle Australia executive, Child Safety is included within the remit of Paddle Australia Ethics and Integrity Committee, which reports quarterly to the Paddle Australia Board. The Framework itself is listed to be reviewed every two years.

10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

As listed within the Framework, all advertisements for jobs within PA and the SPAs outline the child safety expectations of the organisations. The Framework itself is listed on the Paddle Australia website. Operational procedures (eg Team Managers Handbook) speak to child safety obligations.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:

Child Safe Organisations provides a [Guide for Parents and Carers](#), which will be distributed to the national paddling community early in 2021, if not in the remaining months of 2020, via the monthly national newsletter early in 2021, Paddle Pulse. The relevant edition of Paddle Pulse will also direct all members of the community to the PA website where the Framework will be accessible.

Child Safe Organisations provides a [Checklist for Online Safety](#), which will be undertaken and acted on in 2021.

Measure 1.2:

Improvements to institutional responding and reporting. This includes actions such as:

- implementing and maintaining effective complaint handling policies and procedures in place that set out how the institution should respond to complaints of child sexual abuse,

- ensuring these policies and procedures are understood by children, staff, volunteers and families, and
- appropriate follow-up by the institution after a complaint is made informed by a risk assessment framework that prioritises the safety of children.

Report Volume:

Volume 7.

Recommendation(s) the measure is in response to:

Recommendations 7.7 and 7.8.

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:

Paddle Australia has been collaborating with both Sport Australia and Sport Integrity Australia in the review of its complaint handling processes. Implementation has been held back by the delay in the provision of the new National Sport Integrity Framework, which is set to include updates to, amongst other things, the Member Protection Policy template.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:

Updating of Paddle Australia Grievance Resolution and Member Welfare Policies, incorporating the templates from the NSIF.

As noted above, socialisation of new policies and processes to the entire paddling community, including children and young people, will be assisted by inclusion in Paddle Pulse.

Measure 1.3:

Improvements to recordkeeping and information sharing:

- institutions should implement the Royal Commission's principles for records and recordkeeping to a level that respond to the risk of child sexual abuse occurring within institutions.

Report Volume:

Volume 8.

Recommendation(s) the measure is in response to:

Recommendations 8.1 and 8.4.

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:

Recommendation 8.1 states that institutions that engage in child-related work should retain, for at least 45 years, records relating to child sexual abuse that has occurred or is alleged to have occurred. Paddle Australia has ensured that all available documentation regarding previous claims has been retained.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:

It is mentioned above (Measure 1.1) that PA and the SPAs have committed to auditing staff to ensure compliance with Working With Children documentation. A centralised database is to be developed and administered by Paddle Australia, to streamline the administrative burden across the various organisations.

Recommendation 8.4 lays out five principles for collecting and keeping records going forward. Further work is required to determine the best solution for keeping these records. The five principles will be included in the development of this solution.

Theme 2: Children's Voices

Measure 2.1:

Children participate in decisions that affect them (Volume 6, Recommendations 6.5 and 6.6).

- information and examples about how children are able to express their views and how their voices have been incorporated into child safe practices, including the design of policy and decision-making.

Report Volume:

Volume 6.

Recommendation(s) the measure is in response to:

Recommendations 6.5 and 6.6.

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:

The Framework speaks to the need to better engage with Children and Young People. In discussions with the SPAs it has been identified that the first step in this process must be to listen to our Children and Young People as to what they are looking for. Two groups have already been identified for a consultation process:

- Junior national teams; and
- Key Member Clubs around Australia, which have the highest concentration of young paddlers.

Contacts have been collected for each of these groups.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:

Survey and focus group work is required with the groups identified above.

Section 3: Reporting for specific non-government institutions

Volume 14 Sport Recommendations

Recommendations:

14.1 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. A representative voice for the sector
Recommendation

14.2 The National Office for Child Safety should establish a child safety advisory committee for the sport and recreation sector with membership from government and non-government peak bodies to advise the national office on sector-specific child safety issues. Expanding Play by the Rules Recommendation

14.3 The education and information website known as Play by the Rules should be expanded and funded to develop resources – in partnership with the National Office for Child Safety – that are relevant to the broader sport and recreation sector. Improving communication Recommendation

14.4 The independent state and territory oversight bodies that implement the Child Safe Standards should establish a free email subscription function for the sport and recreation sector so that all providers of these services to children can subscribe to receive relevant child safe information and links to resources.

Report Volume:

Volume 14, Sport, recreation, arts, culture, community and hobby groups recommendations
Child Safe Standards Recommendation

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:

14.1 The implementation of the Child Safety Standards is addressed above.

14.2 N/A

14.3 It is agreed by PA and the SPAs that Play By The Rues resources should be used as a key component of the sport's response to this issue.

14.4 N/A

Yours Sincerely



Duncan Tweed
Chief Operating Officer
Paddle Australia