

YMCA 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 Being a Child or Young Person is a time to have fun, be carefree, splash around, play games – and the Y is a great place to enjoy being a Child or Young Person. At the Y, Safeguarding Children and Young People is our highest priority, so we want Children and Young People to hear our message loud and clear, we want them to “Feel Safe and Be Safe”.

1.2 Offering safe spaces for kids to enjoy being kids is one of our greatest privileges. We offer so many programs and services for Children and Young People as places of connection and belonging. These include Recreation Centres, Early Learning Centres, Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, gymnastics and camps.

1.3 We always want to see the world through the eyes of Children and Young People – to make sure we understand what they need to feel and be safe. That’s why we are committed to amplifying the voices of Children and Young People – and truly listening to them.

1.4 We believe in the power of inspired Young People, and for Young People to be inspired they must be safe, and they must feel safe. That is why our safeguarding vision is to empower all children and young people to feel safe and be safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities.

1.5 To achieve this vision, we have developed our Y Safeguarding Framework (Attachment Two).

1.6 At the heart of our Safeguarding Framework is our Safeguarding Vision, to 'feel safe, be safe'. Surrounding our Vision are our Safeguarding Pillars: Culture, Operations and Environment:

- We create safe environments that promote intergenerational leadership and governance;
- We create safe operations to ensure we have the right people, policies and processes that keep children and young people safe; and
- We create safe environments that empower children and young people to thrive.

1.7 At the Y, we have a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. We believe in children and young people's rights and actively champion this each and every day.

2. Information about the Y

Organisational Name: The National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Australia.

Location: Level 1, 2 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 14 independent Associations (known as Member Y Associations or Member Y's) that collectively form the National Council of the YMCAs of Australia. Each Member Y 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)



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elected by the Members and is supported by
the staff of YMCA Australia.

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

Contact Officers:

Melinda Crole
CEO, Y Australia
(melinda.crole@ymca.org.au)

Phil Doorgachurn
National Executive Manager – Safeguarding
phillip.doorgachurn@ymca.org.au

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 2019?

- Commenced enacting our National Safeguarding Strategy 2020-2023;
- Developed and commenced enacting our newly developed Safeguarding Framework;
- Established full capacity of our National Safeguarding Unit that holds subject matter expertise in strategic safeguarding, policy, empowerment, education and risk;
- After undertaking research that included children and young people's opinions and voice, the Y's National Safeguarding Brand under the banner of 'Feel Safe, Be Safe' was developed;
- Developed Community of Practices with similar organisations to share best practice safeguarding within organisations;
- Recruited to and hosted our Safeguarding Consultative Group, made up of Safeguarding Leads from across the Y Members;
- Established our first National Young Person Safeguarding Consultative Group;
- Developed our National Youth Voice Principle Statement;
- Maintained safeguarding as a standing item at all National Board meetings and key strategy meetings;
- Maintained safeguarding as a standing item at the National Board Governance and HR Committee;
- Maintained the production of 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;

- Reviewed the current Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards and began development of new Standards;
- Continued our engagement with the Australian Childhood Foundation as an independent, external accreditation and auditing partner for all Member Y Associations; *and*
- Continued delivering Safeguarding Training for Boards of Directors.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Identify persons who can act as the Board Safeguarding Leads for our Member Y Association Boards;
- Identify strategies to enable young people to be part of our Member Y Boards and governance structures;
- Continue to fund our National Safeguarding Unit to provide expertise and guidance to the Movement;
- Support our Member Y Associations to develop and publish annual Safeguarding Action Plans;
- Continue to embed the 'Feel Safe, Be Safe' positioning statement for safeguarding at the Y;
- Continue to develop new partnerships whilst maintaining current partnerships with other safeguarding organisations;
- Embed our National Risk Model into practice;
- Develop an annual safeguarding report identifying trends and analysis of cases, concerns and best practice;
- Develop our self-assessment tool based on our Safeguarding Framework; *and*



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- Develop and implementing a procurement template in line with anti-slavery legislation and practice.
- Continue to develop child safety communities for practise with like minded organisations committed to ensuring children's safety

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 2019?

- Launched our child and young person co-designed Stay Safe, Tell Someone Model that empowers children and young people to tell someone if they are worried or concerned;
- Developed empowerment resources in our National Safeguarding Guidance;
- Delivered self-care webinars to young people across Australia;
- Delivered eSafety webinars in conjunction with Moores and young people to young people across Australia;
- Developed Bushfire resources to support children and young people in conjunction with the Australian Childhood Foundation;
- Developed and published a range of child-friendly Coronavirus to support children and young people including a Cartoon, animation and series of posters;
- Delivered our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program across Australia and on our socials throughout National Child Protection Week;
- Delivered our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program to our Partners including Local Government Authorities, State Governments and National Sporting Organisations;
- Worked with children and young people to design some of our centres’
- Established our first Young Person’s Safeguarding Consultative Group;
- Actively engaging young people in the majority of leadership meetings to ensure we have an intergenerational approach to decision making at all levels at the Y;
- Enabled young people to lead the design process of the National Office;

- Ensured a young person was part of the Panel to find a Safeguarding Accreditation Partner Organisation;
- Developed an anonymous [online reporting portal](#) on our National webpage;
- 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*
- Continued to develop 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 2021 and beyond?

- Embed our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program across all our Y's;
- Undertake 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;
- Develop 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;
- Collaborate 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;
- Review our empowerment toolkit in our National Safeguarding Guidance; *and*
- Continue 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 2019?

- Developed and delivered our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program for families and communities;
- Developed and delivered a range of Coronavirus resources for families and communities when speaking to children and young people in conjunction with the Australian Childhood Foundation;
- Developed resources in our National Safeguarding Guidance to support Member Y's to continue to engage with families and communities;
- Developed and delivered a number of eSafety Webinars and resources for families and communities;
- Undertook over 120 surveys with families and communities about our National Safeguarding Policy;
- Developed and published an online reporting portal for families and communities to share any safeguarding concerns;
- Gained feedback from families and communities through feedback forms and discussions groups, and used the learning in our continuous improvement plans; *and*
- Ensured that our policies and procedures are easily accessible on our publically available websites;

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Implement our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program across families and communities through an e-learning resource;
- Develop and implement a national family and community safeguarding research project to inform our approach to safeguarding;



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- Develop a 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*
- Continue to 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 2019?

- Hosted our first Diversity and Inclusion Summit;
- Held our National Youth Retreat using the theme of Diversity and Inclusion
- Developed our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program in a range of languages and cultural formats to implement across our diverse communities across the Y;
- Maintained our Y NSW Affinity Network to support LGBTIQ+ employees and volunteers;
- Embedded diversity and inclusion within our National Safeguarding Induction Video and resources;
- Developed specific guidance in our National Safeguarding Guidance for diverse children and young people;
- Continued to incorporate 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*
- Delivered a range of webinars aimed at young people from diverse backgrounds.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Review the learnings from our Diversity and Inclusion Summit, National Youth Retreat and AGM to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan;
- Develop a child and young person friendly version of the National Safeguarding Policy which is understandable to all communities;
- Developing and delivering cultural safety training to support the implementation of inclusive practice;



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- Implementing our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program in a range of languages and cultural formats; *and*
- Continuing to develop a range of resources on how to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQA 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 2019?

- Developed specific safer recruitment guidance in our National Safeguarding Guidance;
- Developed a comprehensive induction package for all Y People (employees and volunteers) including a Safeguarding Induction Video from the voice of children, Safeguarding Induction support pack for Managers and a Safeguarding Induction Passport;
- Continued to embed safe recruitment practices into HR Management Systems including appropriate vetting such as national and international police checks as well as Working with Children/Vulnerable People Checks;
- Began the review of our Y Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards requiring all members to adhere to our safe recruitment and culture process to ensure continuous improvement;
- Developed our new Y Safeguarding Training model based on training competencies for all Y People (employees and volunteers)
- Designed and delivered our Safeguarding Training for Trainers to support Member Y's to deliver online and face to face training to their Y People;
- Delivered Safeguarding training to our Member Y Boards and Executive Managers;
- Developed and published a monthly National Safeguarding Newsletter to our Member Y Safeguarding Leads and Executive Teams;
- Continued with our 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*
- Provided safeguarding updates and information available to all Y People through Y News every week.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Develop and embed Safe Recruitment training for all roles which recruit Y People and Contractors;
- Roll out our Safe Behaviours Training;
- Develop and implement further Safeguarding Training for Trainers Programs;
- Develop a Community of Practice for our Safeguarding Trainers;
- Review and embed our standardised recruitment templates for all roles across the Y;
- Develop and pilot an annual review process which incorporates safeguarding behaviour statements and questions;
- 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 2019?

- Ensured 'Complaints' was a central element of our Safeguarding Framework;
- Designed and published our National Online Reporting Portal to help children and young people raise concerns;
- Published our National Safeguarding Guidance with a specific chapter on complaints and concerns;
- Redesigned our safeguarding webpages to ensure they are child focused and accessible;
- 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;
- Participated in the Australian Human Rights Commission review of Gymnastics Australia;
- Began the collation of national data in relation to safeguarding complaints and concerns;
- Published our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program that was co-designed with diverse children and young people to empower them to tell someone if they are worried or concerned;
- Placed our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Posters around our Centres;
- Developed and published our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Video;
- Promoted our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program during National Child Protection Week encouraging children and young people to tell someone if they have a worry or concern;
- Ensured our complaints processes were embedded in our safeguarding webinars for children, young people, families and communities; *and*

- 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.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- 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;
- Continue to 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; *and*
- 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.

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 2019?

- Developed and published our Safeguarding Induction Video;
- Developed and published our Safeguarding Induction resources for Managers;
- Developed and published our Safeguarding Passport for all Y People;
- Developed and published our Safeguarding Training Model;
- Designed and delivered our Safeguarding Training for Trainers course to a range of Y Leaders;
- Embedded safeguarding learning into team meetings;
- Designed and delivered a range of safeguarding webinars for Y People, children, young people, families and communities;
- Delivered our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program to our Y People;
- Piloted our Safe Behaviours Training;
- Developed an education and training section in our National Safeguarding Guidance;
- 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; *and*
- Provided Board and Senior Manager safeguarding training to Member Associations across the Y.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Embed our Feel Safe, Be Safe Training across our workforce;
- Deliver Safeguarding Training for Trainers in our Safe Behaviours Training;
- Design and deliver specific Manager Safeguarding Modules;



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- Assess the quality of learning from our safeguarding training; *and*
- Hold a Community of Practice for our Safeguarding Trainers.

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 2019?

- Designed our eCommitment – setting out how our Y's will keep children and young people safe online;
- Developed eSafety Guidance for our Y's including templates on how to manage online learning and interactions, particularly during the Covid pandemic;
- Designed and delivered an eSafety workshop for young people;
- Delivered eSafety podcasts for young people to stay safe online;
- Developed eSafety posters and resources for children, young people and parents/caregivers;
- Developed a strong working partnership with the eSafety Commissioner's workforce;
- Applied and were awarded an eSafety grant from the eSafety Commissioner to develop our Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program to the online world;
- Developed our National Risk Model;
- Developed resources to support our Y People to engage with children and young people in the design of services and facilities;
- Continued to ensure 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 including the design of our new National Office; and

- Collaborated with 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 2021 and beyond?

- 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 Training Model;
- Embed our 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
- Continue to 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 2019?

- Designed and published our Safeguarding Framework to align with the National Principles;
- Reviewed our progress against our Safeguarding Strategy;
- Reviewed our strategy and policy documents to align to the National Principles;
- Established our National Safeguarding Consultative Group of Safeguarding experts from across the Movement;
- Established our National Safeguarding Young Person's Consultative Group;
- 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;
- Developed our National Safeguarding Continuous Improvement Model;
- Developed our lessons learnt form to review safeguarding cases and practice;
- Embedded continuous improvement into our Feel Safe, Be Safe Training;
- 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 2021 and beyond?

- Co-design an Accreditation/Review process with our Members to ensure we are continuously working towards embedding the National Child Safe Principles;

- Contract with an external partner to continue to review our progress against our Framework, legislation and the National Child Safe Principles;
- Undertake a national safeguarding survey enabling children, young people, families, communities and Y People;
- Developing and embedding new Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards to ensure they align with the National Principles; *and*
- Reviewing our National Safeguarding Guidance to ensure they align to our new Safeguarding Children and Young People Licence Standards and international best practice.

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 2019?

- Undertaken a comprehensive review of our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy through survey and focus group consultation (480 responses).
- Devised our third version of our National Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy;
- 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*
- Published our National Safeguarding Guidance providing templates and resources for the development of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

What are we going to do in 2021 and beyond?

- Seek approval for our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy at our 2020 AGM for implementation in 2021;
- 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*
- Support Member Y's with the development of specific Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

4. Reporting against institution specific recommendations

4.1 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.”

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

5. Attachments

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

- Attachment One: the Y’s Safeguarding Children and Young people Strategy 2020 – 2023 (also available on our website- [link here](#)) ; and
- Attachment Two: the Y’s Safeguarding Framework (also available on our website- [link here](#)).