

Child Safe Statement

Housing Plus Group work with children, young people, and adults in all its services and are committed to providing safety, comfort, housing, and support services to improve people's lives through independence and choice. Our work is informed by our values of being Trusted, Customer Centred, and being a Valued Partner in the communities we live and work with.

We believe all children and young people are unique, come from diverse backgrounds, and have different life experiences. We acknowledge and embrace their individuality, abilities, gender, cultural connections, religious and spiritual beliefs and have their own sense of identity, and we provide an inclusive, culturally safe, non-judgmental, and safe service to children, young people, and adults.

We ensure that all children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children and young people, feel safe and are safe when participating in Housing Plus Group services by providing safe environments and engaging respectful, culturally responsive staff who uphold each child and young person's dignity and right. and safe people

We honour the rights of children and young people and believe they are valued, respected, and actively empowered and seek opportunities to speak and listen to their voices about what matters to them, what can keep them safe, and how we can support them to get the most out of the services at Housing Plus Group. Children and young people's voices and feedback is also valued by all in the organisation and is included when we review our programs to ensure we are providing the best services for and with them. We believe children and young people when they tell us they feel or are unsafe. We provide appropriate age-information on how adults should behave and how to disclose potential or actual harm or abuse. We advocate for children and young people when they cannot advocate for themselves. We uphold children and young people's right to privacy, while recognising our duty of care and legislative responsibility to keep children and young people safe includes informing mandated services.

We take child and young people's safety seriously and do not tolerate child abuse or harm including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and cultural abuse and neglect, and are continually working on creating and maintaining a child and young person's safe culture. This includes working with families, other service providers, volunteers, and contractors, to ensure they know their role and are also keeping children and young people safe when they are accessing our organisations buildings, services, and environments. We provide information and support about how to make child protection reports to keep children and young people safe. We keep trust by acting transparently, culturally appropriately, respecting all people's dignity, and using our organisational behaviours of Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy (PRIDE Behaviours) in all our relationships when representing our organisation.

We recognise the power imbalance that exists between adults and children and young people that can stop children and young people from telling us that they feel or are unsafe. We also recognise the risks of people keeping silent and not saying something when seeing or hearing potential or actual harm or not removing risks from physical or online environments. We are committed to removing all child protection risks and harm and speaking up and advocating to keep all children, young people, and adults safe at our organisation.

We prioritise child safety outcomes by ensuring we employ staff and volunteers who actively and ethically are committed, acknowledge, understand and adhere to Child Safe requirements and legislation. We have ongoing support and professional development, including critical thinking and reflective practice forums, with all staff and volunteers to maintain child safe knowledge, skills, and awareness. We celebrate differences and actively recruit employees and volunteers with different cultural backgrounds or experiences to ensure that children and young people with diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds feel safe and welcome. We are committed to

providing Child Safe physical environments, including our buildings, facilities, and spaces that children and young people access. We demonstrate our organisational values through our PRIDE behaviours, and these are evident in our work with everyone, including with and around children and young people. These behaviours reflect who we are, not just what we do.

We include child safe conversations and document risks and concerns in many of our processes and systems, including reports to management and the Board to demonstrate our commitment to fairness, transparency, and accountability in having child safety included in our everyday business. We are valued partners and work collaboratively with other organisations and service providers to keep children and young people safe and respond appropriately to risks. We include the requirement to meet the Child Safe standards in our contracts and service agreements with external contractors, including how we will respond if child safe concerns are identified to keep children and young people safe.

Housing Plus Group has a risk management approach to child safety and has systems to immediately respond to concerns and reports of risk of harm. We have policies and procedures to support keeping children and young people safe, including within Housing Plus Group services, to promote child safe environments and to respond to concerns raised by children, young people, the community, and staff. Complaints are welcomed, responded to promptly and appropriately, and action is immediately taken to protect children and young people. We are also committed to constantly reviewing all our Child Safe processes to ensure we are effective and current in best practice to keep children and young people safe.