CDPP

Australia's Federal Prosecution Service

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth)

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK 2026

A. THE CDPP'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

1. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth) (**CDPP**). As Australia's Federal Prosecution Service, the CDPP takes seriously its leadership role and responsibility to treat victims and witnesses with courtesy, compassion, cultural sensitivity and respect, and to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

2. The CDPP is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This commitment, along with respect for and recognition of the rights of children and young people, underpins each engagement that CDPP staff has with a child or young person in the context of the CDPP's work.

3. The CDPP has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and a commitment to engage with child victims and witnesses in a way that is trauma informed and reduces the risk of causing further harm. To achieve this, the CDPP has in place policies, national legal directions and training resources, to guide the interaction of CDPP staff with children and young people.

4. The CDPP's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets the framework for the way in which the CDPP creates a child safe organisation, and is guided by the following considerations:

    4.1. recognition of children's rights and interests;

    4.2. building and maintaining a child safe culture and environment;

    4.3. ensuring all staff are aware of and comply with relevant requirements; and

    4.4. providing support and protection to staff who report incidents under the policy.

B. INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN

5. CDPP lawyers, counsel briefed by the CDPP and the Witness Assistance Service (**WAS**) staff may interact with children and young people in the context of the CDPP's work. This interaction usually occurs during the prosecution of offences where a child or young person is a victim of, or witness to, a crime. These offences are ordinarily investigated by the Australian Federal Police or State or Territory Police and referred to the CDPP for prosecution.

6. The usual interaction between CDPP staff and children or young people who are victims or witnesses during the prosecution process includes:

    6.1. online, telephone (including text messages) and in person conferences to:

        (a) provide information and support;

        (b) discuss the child or young person's evidence;

        (c) to seek the child or young person's views in relation to a prosecution decision; and

        (d) to facilitate a child or young person watching their recorded interview;

    6.2. engaging with the child or young person in the context of the court process, for example, as they are giving evidence.

7. CDPP staff and counsel briefed by the CDPP may also have limited interaction with children or young people in the context of prosecuting offences alleged to have been committed by them. This

interaction is ordinarily limited to engaging with the accused young persons in the context of the court process, for example, during cross-examination. Communication outside of court would ordinarily be via the young person's legal representative.

8. The CDPP has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy which includes a set of *Child Safe Professional Behaviours* which apply to all CDPP staff and counsel briefed by the CDPP performing work activities where contact with a child or young person would reasonably be expected. This includes a requirement to ensure that two adults are present in any face-to-face contact (both virtual and in-person) with a child or young person. Further a WAS Officer should be present online or in person at any meeting or conference between CDPP prosecutors and children/young people.

C. CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION INITIATIVES

9. The CDPP has conducted a child safety risk assessment and has assessed the overall risk rating as **low**. The risks that have been identified in the risk assessment are:

   9.1. accidental or incidental harm caused to a child;

   9.2. intentional harm caused to a child;

   9.3. CDPP prosecutors and/or Counsel not having appropriate regard to the rights, views, and/or wishes of child or young person victim or witness;

   9.4. CDPP not providing best practice victim support during the prosecution process; and

   9.5. CDPP failing to comply with requirements under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

10. In order to mitigate these risks, the CDPP has put in place a range of preventive controls, including:

   10.1. The CDPP has a Victims of Crime Policy and a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy in place to guide the interaction of CDPP staff and counsel briefed by the CDPP with child victims and witnesses and set behavioural standards that CDPP staff must comply with.

   10.2. Prosecutor induction training includes a module on working with the Witness Assistance Service. CDPP staff also have access to additional training resources that cover topics relevant to working with children and young people in the context of CDPP work and identified risks, including:

      (a) Working with witnesses/victims using a trauma-informed approach.

      (b) Communicating with victims and witnesses: managing triggers and re-traumatisation.

      (c) Communicating with victims with a cognitive impairment or disability.

      (d) Communicating with victims and witnesses when language is a barrier.

      (e) Working with Victims of Crime and the WAS.

      (f) Working with Witness Intermediaries.

      (g) Court support dogs and victims of crime.

      (h) The Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (APS Academy).

10.3. The WAS Referral Guidelines require prosecutors to refer all matters involving children victims/witnesses to the WAS within 21 days. WAS regularly reports on the timeliness of these referrals, including the reasons why referrals may have been made late, to help ensure any systemic delays are identified and treated early.

10.4. It is a mandatory employment condition for all WAS employees to hold a current Working with Children Check in the state or territory in which they are based.

10.5. All WAS staff are qualified social workers and mandatory notifiers required to report concerns relating to child abuse or neglect.

10.6. All CDPP staff are subject to the APS Code of Conduct, reinforcing the requirement for CDPP staff to act with integrity and respect.

10.7. The CDPP has representation in the Child Safe Framework Community of Practice.

11. In the 2025-26 reporting period, the CDPP:

11.1. Reviewed and enhanced the following policies and resources to guide CDPP staff and further embed a child safe approach to the CDPP's work:

(a) Victims of Crime Policy

(b) Witness Assistance Service Referral Guidelines (to broaden the number of children who are referred to the Witness Assistance Service for support)

(c) Right of Review Policy (which broadens the matters that are eligible for review).

11.2. Reviewed and improved the CDPP's written correspondence victims.

11.3. Finalised its review and update of the CDPP's guidance in dealing with feedback and complaints to ensure it aligns with best practice as identified by the National Office for Child Safety.

12. In the 2026-2027 reporting period the CDPP will:

12.1. finalise its review and update of the CDPP Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safe Professional Behaviours included in the Policy to ensure they are fit for purpose;

12.2. develop and implement training to lawyers who work with children on communication skills and using a trauma informed approach;

12.3. deliver training on the Right of Review Policy

12.4. review and improve the CDPP's Victims of Crime Manual which provides significant guidance to lawyers on using a trauma informed approach and their responsibilities towards victims of crime, including child victims and witnesses.

D. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK

13. The CDPP is compliant with the four requirements of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework namely the CDPP has:

    13.1. undertaken a child safe risk assessment;

    13.2. published policies, training and resources on the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and related child safety practices;

    13.3. adopted and implemented the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations; and

    13.4. published this Annual Statement of compliance.

14. There have been no reported incidences of child abuse or formal complaints relating to the treatment of children involving CDPP staff or counsel briefed by the CDPP during the reporting period.