



# CDPP

*Australia's Federal Prosecution Service*



## Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Cth)

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE  
CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK 2025

## **A. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK**

1. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for 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.

### **The CDPP's commitment to child safety**

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.

### **Interaction with children**

5. CDPP lawyers, external counsel 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. conferences to discuss the child or young person's evidence;
  - 6.2. conferences to discuss a prosecution decision, such as during plea negotiations, and to seek the child or young person's views in relation to that decision;
  - 6.3. guided court familiarisation tours;
  - 6.4. verbal and electronic communication from CDPP staff to provide updates on the prosecution; and
  - 6.5. 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 external counsel 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 child or young person in the context of the court process, for example, during cross-examination.
8. The CDPP has in place a set of *Child Safe Professional Behaviours* which apply to all CDPP staff 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 with a child or young person. Further a WAS Officer should be present at any meeting or conference between CDPP prosecutors and children/young people.
9. Compliance with the CDPP's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is a standard condition for counsel briefed by the CDPP.

#### **Child safety risk assessment and mitigation initiatives**

10. The CDPP has conducted a risk assessment and has assessed the overall risk rating as **low**. The risks that have been identified in the risk assessment are:
  - 10.1. accidental or incidental harm caused to a child;
  - 10.2. intentional harm caused to a child;
  - 10.3. CDPP prosecutors and/or Counsel not having appropriate regard to the rights, views, and/or wishes of child or young person victim or witness;
  - 10.4. CDPP not providing best practice victim support during the prosecution process; and
  - 10.5. CDPP failing to comply with requirements under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.
11. In order to mitigate these risks, the CDPP has put in place a range of preventive controls, including:
  - 11.1. 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 with child victims and witnesses and set behavioural standards that CDPP staff must comply with.
  - 11.2. Compliance with the CDPP's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (and therefore, the CDPP's child safe behavioural standards) is a standard condition that counsel briefed by the CDPP must agree to in accepting a brief.
  - 11.3. 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) Communicating with victims and witnesses: managing triggers and re-traumatisation.
    - (b) Working with witnesses/victims using a trauma-informed approach.
    - (c) Communicating with victims of crime.
    - (d) Working with Victims of Crime and the WAS.
    - (e) Working with Witness Intermediaries.

- (f) Court support dogs and victims of crime.
- (g) The Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

- 11.4. 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.
- 11.5. 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.
- 11.6. All WAS staff are qualified social workers and mandatory notifiers required to report concerns relating to child abuse or neglect.
- 11.7. All CDPP staff are subject to the APS Code of Conduct, reinforcing the requirement for CDPP staff to act with integrity and respect.
- 11.8. The CDPP has representation in the Child Safe Framework Community of Practice.
- 12. In the 2024-25 reporting period, the CDPP:
  - 12.1. commenced its review 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. commenced its review and update of the CDPP's Feedback and Complaints Framework to ensure it aligns with best practice and is appropriately child focussed;
  - 12.3. finalised its review of the CDPP's WAS Referral Guidelines to provide clarity about when a child victim or witness should be referred to the WAS; and
  - 12.4. commenced investigating options for additional prosecutor training covering communication with child victims / witnesses, pre-trial conferences and steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of harm when giving evidence.
- 13. In the 2025-2026 reporting period the CDPP will:
  - 13.1. 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;
  - 13.2. finalise its review and update of the CDPP's Feedback and Complaints Framework to ensure it aligns with best practice and is appropriately child focussed; and
  - 13.3. develop and implement further resources to support and guide CDPP staff and further embed a child safe approach to the CDPP's work.

#### **Compliance with the Child Safe Framework**

- 14. The CDPP is compliant with the four requirements of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.
- 15. There have been no reported incidences of child abuse involving CDPP staff.