



## Child Safe

*This document outlines the Child Safe Policy of the Can:Do Group.*

The Can:Do Group, in line with the Children's Protection Act 1993, aims to ensure that all children are safe from harm and are cared for in a way that allows them to reach their full potential. 'Child' means a person under 18 years of age.

### Statement of Commitment

The Can:Do Group:

- has a zero tolerance policy to child abuse, harm and neglect
- has a duty of care to children, to take reasonable steps to keep them safe from harm and provide a safe environment
- has a commitment to the safety of children with a disability, and to the cultural safety of CALD children
- has a commitment to respecting different cultural traditions and child rearing practices while keeping children safe
- has an emphasis that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure a child safe environment, including staff, board, management, volunteers, contractors, and families of children
- has values of participation of children in the development of child safe policies and procedures, and how children are to be consulted in the process of developing and updating policies and procedures relating to child safety
- will take every concern and allegation seriously, in line with the principles of procedural fairness
- will believe children when they raise a concern or make an allegation

### Culture of reporting and transparency

The Can:Do Group will:

- Create a culture where workers and clients feel supported to speak up when they witness or become aware of information about an alleged abuse, and that they feel they can do so without fear of punishment or retribution.
- Follow Information Sharing Guidelines (ISG)
- Mitigate barriers to both client and worker disclosure of incidents of abuse. Refer to feedback and complaints procedure, reporting procedures (service manuals) and incident management process.
- Have clear Whistleblower protections to encourage transparency and prevent abuse from going unreported.

### Definitions

**Child:** A person under the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified in relevant legislation).

**Child abuse:** "All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power"

**Child protection:** Any measure taken to safeguard children from abuse or harm.

**Grooming:** Any act with the aim of befriending, building rapport, and gaining the trust of a child for the purpose of subjecting them to abuse. Signs of grooming include giving gifts or special attention, or inappropriate touching such as tickling or wrestling with a child.



**Online grooming:** Establishing a relationship with a child or young person online with the aim of meeting him/her in person for sexual activity. This can include online chat or sexting, and the abuser may lie about their age or identity.

**Harm:** Different states or territories may have differing definitions of harm in relation to child protection legislation, but in general it refers to any significant detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

**Reasonable grounds for belief:** "A belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- the child is in need of protection
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or
- the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds<sup>2</sup>."

**Sexual abuse:** Occurs when an adult or another child or young person uses power and authority to involve a child in sexual activity, and can be physical, verbal or emotional.