



Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Child Safe Policy

Our commitment to child safety

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare (CHRL) is committed to the safety of children and young people. We encourage participation of children and young people in CHRL events and activities and provide a safe environment where children and young persons are supported and respected. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently in accordance with our policies and procedures.

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is:
 - a. To promote a child safe, child friendly organisation by ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young persons is maintained at all times when participating in CHRL events and activities;
 - b. To provide standards, procedures, and best practice principles for the management of people under the age of 18 who are involved in CHRL activities; and
 - c. To provide guidance for CHRL staff and Landcare members on matters relating to the participation and supervision of children and young people at CHRL activities.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all CHRL staff, members and volunteers undertaking and participating in CHRL activities and events.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy document, the following definitions apply:
 - a. Child: a person under the age of 16
 - b. Young person: a person aged 16 up to 18

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 CHRL will identify a child safety officer (CSO) within its staff who will be required to obtain and maintain a Working with Children clearance.
- 3.2 The CSO and CHRL Executive Officers will be responsible for receiving and acting on concerns and allegations regarding the safety and well-being of children and young people participating in CHRL events and activities.
- 3.3 CHRL will provide advice and training to staff, site coordinators and members on this policy and related documents.

4. Child Safe Environment

- 4.1 All staff and members of CHRL have a responsibility to protect the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young persons with whom they have contact, whether or not they are a member of CHRL.

- 4.2 All CHRL staff and members responsible for planning, carrying out or assisting with activities involving children and young persons have a duty of care to make their safety and welfare the primary consideration.
- 4.3 All staff and members participating in CHRL activities must agree to abide by the CHRL Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children and young persons. All staff and members must ensure appropriate behaviour is always exhibited as outlined in the CHRL Code of Conduct.
- 4.4 The CHRL Volunteer Manual shall provide further guidance for members relating to the participation and supervision of children and young persons in CHRL volunteer activities.
- 4.5 All staff and volunteers, including children and young persons, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of this policy, the Code of Conduct, and the Volunteer Manual.
- 4.6 This Policy and related documentation will be reviewed annually and published on the CHRL website.

CHRL Activities for School Groups, child-related community groups, public events

- 4.7 CHRL staff and members will present and facilitate Landcare activities for school groups, child-related community groups (such as Scouts) and public events. CHRL staff and members will not be responsible for the supervision of children and young persons during these activities and events.
- 4.8 Supervision of children and young persons in school groups or child-related community groups undertaking CHRL activities will be provided by school teachers or community group leaders respectively, and/or parents/guardians.
- 4.9 Supervision of children and young persons at public events will be provided by parents/guardians.

Children and young persons undertaking CHRL volunteer activities

- 4.10 Adequate supervision of children and young persons participating in CHRL activities is required to promote a child safe environment and prevent injury, both physical and psychological.
- 4.11 The level of supervision required should be determined by the age, experience and abilities of the children and young persons, and an assessment of the activity's risks.
- 4.12 Children participating in CHRL activities must be under the direct supervision of a parent/guardian, who is a member of CHRL, at all times.
- 4.13 Children are not eligible for individual membership of CHRL.
- 4.14 Young persons are eligible for membership of CHRL subject to the provision of a completed parental consent form in addition to ordinary membership procedures.
- 4.15 Organisers of activities involving young persons must ensure there are enough adult members available to provide adequate supervision at all times.
- 4.16 Organised activities involving young persons should have a minimum of two adults in attendance and providing supervision at all times.
- 4.17 Where both male and female young persons are involved in an activity, supervisors of both genders should be present where possible.
- 4.18 One-on-one contact between adults and children or young persons (family members excepted) should be avoided. If one-on-one interactions are required, they should always be conducted in view of other people.
- 4.19 Transportation arrangements for children or young persons to and from a CHRL site is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Taking and using images of children and young people

- 4.20 Written consent must be obtained from the parent or guardian of persons under the age of 18 years before they participate in any photographic, sound or video recording that may be used by CHRL or media, for any CHRL educational, training, promotional purposes, video, print, CD, DVD, sound or online media (including social media).
- 4.21 CHRL must not name or identify children and young people used in images or publish any personal information without the express permission of the child's or young person's parent or guardian.

Recruitment, Induction and Training process

- 4.22 CHRL will ensure staff and members understand that the safety of children and young persons is everyone's responsibility.
- 4.23 CHRL induction documentation, the CHRL Code of Conduct and the CHRL Volunteers Manual will address child safety policy and procedures. The CHRL sign-on sheet will be updated to identify participants who are under 18.
- 4.24 Induction and training for young person members will take into consideration their age, skills, and experience to ensure they feel respected and can participate safely.

Risk Planning and Management

- 4.25 Using existing CHRL risk management processes, identify and remove/minimise potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young persons involved in CHRL activities.

5. Child Safe Reporting Requirements

- 5.1 CHRL is strongly committed to ensuring that all concerns that are raised in respect to the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person will be taken seriously.
- 5.2 All staff and members of CHRL must immediately report a concern or allegation to their Site Coordinator or the CSO where they believe a child may be at risk of harm. This includes:
 - a. any suspicion, observation, concern, or allegation about a member's conduct on duty that may place a child at risk of harm;
 - b. information provided to them from any other person that a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed by a member;
 - c. any correspondence or communications (including conversations, letters, notes, emails, text messages and social media or web forum interactions) that indicates that a child may be at risk of harm from a member;
 - d. images, texts, emails, social media, or web-based material that involves a member and relates to child pornography or the exploitation of children;
 - e. any use of CHRL technology to store or send images of child pornography or child exploitation; and
 - f. any knowledge of a member being charged or convicted of an offence that involves reportable conduct. 'Reportable conduct' is defined in Section 20 of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 as:
 - i. a sexual offence;
 - ii. sexual misconduct;
 - iii. ill-treatment of a child;
 - iv. an assault of a child;
 - v. an offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900; or

- vi. behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child

CAUTION: Members reporting concerns should not forward material containing child pornography or child exploitation via electronic means.

- 5.3 CHRL staff or members who have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child or young person is at significant risk of harm and are concerned about the imminent risk to safety, welfare, or wellbeing of the child, should immediately contact NSW (New South Wales) Police or the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.
- 5.4 Where a member directly witnesses conduct that they believe places a child at risk and constitutes an allegation of a child protection nature, the member should:
 - a. Wherever possible, discreetly remove the child from the situation to a place of safety. This may be possible by interrupting a conversation or directing the attention of the involved member elsewhere.
 - b. Make notes as soon as practicable regarding the conduct witnessed.
 - c. Immediately report the conduct and provide a copy of notes made to the Site Coordinator or the CSO.
 - d. Not discuss the conduct with the member or child concerned without seeking advice from the CSO.

Receiving an allegation of a child protection nature

- 5.5 Members who are approached by another person, including a child, who raises a concern, or an allegation of a child protection nature should:
 - a. Document the concern or allegation in the person's own words;
 - b. Avoid asking leading questions of the person making the disclosure;
 - c. Obtain appropriate support for the child who is at risk, as soon as practicable; and
 - d. Immediately report the concern to the Site Coordinator, where they are not named in the complaint, or directly to the CSO.
- 5.6 The Site Coordinator receiving the allegation of the child protection nature will immediately inform the CSO.
- 5.7 The CSO will work with an officer of the CHRL Executive Committee to conduct an assessment of all complaints and allegations received that involve a child or young person and may seek advice from relevant external authorities to make a determination as to whether the allegation constitutes an allegation of a child protection nature against a member and refer to the NSW Police/and or other relevant external agencies.

Confidentiality

- 5.8 Any allegation of a child protection nature will be treated confidentially, and information shared only with people involved with the reporting and investigation of the allegations. CHRL staff and members who are made aware of an allegation must take all reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of the identity of all persons involved. This includes the person/s making the allegation/s, the alleged victim/s, the respondent/s of the allegation/s and any witnesses.
- 5.9 The CSO will make and retain appropriate records of any concerns or allegations using the CHRL incident report form. Records will be stored in a secure location to maintain the confidentiality of those records.

Failure to report

5.10 Failure to report or respond to an allegation of a child protection nature against a member may place children and young persons at risk of harm and may constitute reportable conduct pursuant to sections 43B and 316A of the Crimes Act 1900.

6. Related Documents

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Code of Conduct

Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Volunteers Manual

7. Related Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Children's Guardian Act 2019

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Crimes Act 1900

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015

Disability Inclusion Act 2014

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

*CHRL Child Safe Policy
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