

## 2023 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE ANNUAL CHILD SAFETY STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMONWEALTH CHILD SAFETY FRAMEWORK

The Department of Defence is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and to creating and maintaining a child safe environment. Defence does not tolerate abuse or neglect of children and is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of youth with whom it comes into contact. We do this through supporting a youth safety culture and the promotion of individual and collective responsibility for youth safety and protection. Defence's commitment is demonstrated in its capstone youth policy manual known as YOUTHPOLMAN and encapsulates parts 1, 2 and 3 which are relevant to the Department, ADF Cadets and the Defence Work Experience Program.

The Department's primary engagement with youth is through participation in the Service Cadet programs that includes 29,785 youth participants and 4580 adult volunteers across 588 locations. Uniformed Defence youth totals less than 200. The majority of interaction is in person.

Defence has developed an enterprise level risk assessment identifying seven risks with the highest rating at medium. All risk controls are within the Department's capacity to address and are managed so far as reasonably practicable.

In 2023, Defence incorporated a youth protection reporting functionality in the corporate work health and safety management system further allowing for accurate reporting, management and analysis of incidents. In 2024 Defence will look to further strengthen its reporting functionality by introducing a Department wide incident case management system.

Taking into account the unique context of the Department's activities, Defence will continue to:

- require all ADF members, Australian Public Service employees, volunteers including members of the ADF Cadets, and contractors to demonstrate their commitment to youth safety through their agreement to undertake their duties in accordance with the appropriate Defence or ADF Cadet youth safety code of conduct
- complete suitability screening for all adults working with youth in the Defence environment and require all ADF members, APS employees, volunteers including members of the ADF Cadets, and contractors to complete appropriate youth safety education and training
- engage proactively with parents, guardians, specified next of kin and other agencies involved in the protection of young people whilst ensuring we maintain compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions related to children and armed conflict
- maintain clear processes for reporting and responding to disclosures, suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect in accordance with state and territory legislation.



**LTGEN Natasha Fox, AO, CSC**  
Chief of Personnel

8 October 2023