

## **Regional Early Education and Development (REED Inc)**

**Board Meeting** December 2018

### **Agenda Item 18.1**

**Prepared by** Mark Morrissey

**Status** for Decision

#### **Title**

Implementing a Child Safe Organisation (CSO) framework across REED Inc centres.

#### **Recommendation**

1. That the Board approve establishing a Child safe Organisation Framework in all REED Inc child care centres. That this is considered an organisational priority and all key components are implemented over the next 12 months. Noting that this is also an ongoing initiative.
2. That the Board delegate responsibility for all key actions involved in instituting a CSO framework to the General Manager of REED Inc.
3. Progress on CSO will be reported as a standing item in the General Manager's Report to the Board.
4. That all CSO elements and their implementation are be adopted as a REED key performance indicator (KPI)
5. That REED considers strategically and actively promoting the adoption of the CSO framework. This may involve inclusion of CSO in branding, centre naming and advertising. Suggest advice be sought from Candystripe consultants as to how this is undertaken.

#### **Background**

- The CSO framework is considered to be a critical component in ensuring infants and children are kept safer than in the past.
- CSO has been adopted and actively promoted by an increasing number of state and Commonwealth organisations who work with and for children.
- CSO is strongly supported by the Human Rights Commission through the National Children's Commissioner.
- CSO is evidence based and draws strongly on the relevant research.

## **The 10 key elements of a Child Safe Organisation.**

According to the Royal Commission, the 10 key elements of child safe institutions include:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture;
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
3. Families and communities are informed and involved;
4. Equity is promoted and diversity respected;
5. People working with children are suitable and supported;
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focussed;
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training;
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur;
9. Implementation of child safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved; and
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

Each element has a number of sub-elements that provide guidance on how it should be implemented. For example, element four (equity is promoted, and diversity respected) should be given effect by paying *“particular attention ... to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds”*.

A number of high qualities CSO implementation guides are freely available to assist REED to implement CSO.

### **Issues**

- Organisational culture is the key element CSO. The absence of an organisational culture that prioritises children’s safety is a key contributor to harm and abuse.
- All REED child care centres will be required to actively expected to support and understand CSO. This will require engagement and education.
- An implementation and action plan will need to be developed. This plan will be evaluated annually. This evaluation will be provided to the Board.

### **Value**

- CSO has the potential to lessen the risk of children being harmed.
- The CSO framework will strengthen REED’s reputation.
- CSO can be considered as a risk management strategy. Noting child harm and abuse is low likelihood/high impact.

### **Budget**

- Minimal budget impact expected.
- Implementation involves cultural change and a focus on strengthening existing practice to ensure it meets the requirements of CSO.

**Stakeholders**

Children parents and families of children who attend REED Centres.  
REED Board members.  
REED General manager and all staff.  
Local, state and Commonwealth Government.  
Community and child care industry organisations.

**Authority**

The Board has the authority to make this decision.

**Signed**

Mark Morrissey