



25 February 2019

The Hon Dr Talbot, MLC

Chair

Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People

Western Australian Parliament

Via email: [jscccyp@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:jscccyp@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Dr Talbot,

**Re: Inquiry into the Monitoring and Enforcing of Child Safe Standards**

We are writing on behalf of Child Wise in response to the invitation for submissions to the *Inquiry into the Monitoring and Enforcing of Child Safe Standards*.

Established in 1991, Child Wise works with communities and organisations to create and embed systems, processes and approaches that build child safety capacity. Child Wise pioneered the use of child safety standards within organisations where children and young people spend time, and over more than two decades has developed an in-depth understanding of the approaches which are most effective in ensuring child safety.

Building child safety capacity in an organisation is not a tick-box compliance exercise, but a cultural shift to one where the rights and safety of children are embedded in the organisation's practices. Child Wise has had the most success in helping organisations understand and implement the Child Safe Standards when a proactive, risk-driven approach is taken.

While traditional auditing may occur far after the fact to allow for the problem to be corrected, a good monitoring function allows for early identification and correction before a problem festers and causes an organisation to be non-compliant. This is particularly important in the area of child safeguarding, and one of the key messages from the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (the Royal Commission), which found that it is not enough to have policies and procedures, they need to be understood and lived in an organisation.



Child Wise therefore believes that the monitoring and enforcing of the Child Safe Standards should be a statutory function, however there needs to be adequate resourcing for this role. In some jurisdictions additional statutory functions have been granted to existing bodies but no capacity to perform those functions has been built, and as a result monitoring and enforcing is not as effective as it should be.

If the monitoring and enforcing function is given to the Commissioner for Children and Young People (the Commissioner), Child Wise believes it is important to make sure that the Commissioner's existing functions are not lost. Through advocacy, research and consultation, with a particular focus on the wellbeing of children, the Commissioner in WA is considered to be one of the leading facilitators enabling the voice of children to be heard.

Child Wise also believes there is opportunity to work in partnership with the not-for-profit sector to implement the Royal Commission's recommendations, in particular Recommendation 6.11.

At Child Wise, our core aim is the creation of child safe communities. To this end, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with Joint Standing Committee regarding this Inquiry. Please contact us should you wish discuss this submission.

Yours sincerely

**Jane French**  
**Executive Director**

**Selina Horrocks**  
**State Manager WA**