

## About Us



**Children's Safety Australia Inc.** is a registered charity and incorporated association. Our mission is to maximise the safety and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people and encourage them to reach their full potential.

The organisation is based in Brisbane and was established in 2008 as a non-profit sister organisation to Personal Safety Australia, an organisation sharing our strong commitment to children's safety and wellbeing.

**Children's Safety Australia Inc.** acknowledges the vulnerability of children and young people to personal violence, as evidenced by the following:

- Child abuse is Australia's most serious social problem<sup>1</sup>. In Australia a child is reported abused or neglected every two minutes, a rate that has more than doubled over the last few years<sup>1</sup>. Conservative estimates suggest that 10 – 20% of Australian children (upwards of 550,000) are being abused or neglected every year<sup>2</sup>.
- All children are at risk of sexual abuse regardless of their age, gender, social class, race, religion or ethnicity. It is estimated as many as one in three boys and girls will experience some form of sexual abuse before they leave school<sup>3</sup>. Most children are abused by people they know and trust<sup>3</sup> and about one third of abuse is perpetrated by other children or young people<sup>4</sup>.
- At least one in six Australian children is bullied by another child or group of children on a weekly basis<sup>5</sup>. The most significant emerging problem is anonymous cyber bullying using the internet and mobile phones.
- The long term personal and community effects of abuse and bullying are immense, and include increased risks of substance addiction, personal violence, homelessness, poor health, educational failure, poor employability, mental illness, depression and suicide<sup>2</sup>. As a result, past victims of abuse and neglect are grossly over-represented in prison populations, as perpetrators of crime, and amongst the most economically and socially disadvantaged members of our society<sup>2</sup>.

As a result, children and young people need to be protected by adults and empowered with practical strategies and skills to effectively deal with threats to their safety when trusted adults are not around. We teach our children how to be safe in the water, in the sun and when riding their bikes, yet we often fail to teach them how to be safe with people, which is sadly their greatest safety threat. Subsequently, while **Children's Safety Australia Inc.** safety concepts and strategies apply to a broad range of situations, there is a focus on maximising children and young people's safety with people.

## Our Aims

**Children's Safety Australia Inc.** aims to achieve our mission to maximise the safety and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people and encourage them to reach their full potential by:

a) Equipping, empowering and inspiring children and young people with knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harmful behaviours\* by assisting them to:

- build a healthy self esteem and resilience;
- demonstrate respect and empathy for others;
- identify and effectively respond to potentially unsafe situations;
- identify, prevent and stop inappropriate behaviour including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, bullying and self-harming behaviour;
- access help from trusted adults and relevant organisations;
- report abuse and continue reporting until the abuse stops;
- avoid victimisation; and
- reduce the risk of engaging in offending behaviour.

b) Equipping, empowering and inspiring adults responsible for children and young people's safety with knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harmful behaviours\* by assisting them to:

- identify risks faced by children and young people;
- recognise, and appropriately respond to, indicators and disclosures of inappropriate behaviour;
- gain an awareness of dangerous safety messages and practices to avoid;
- relay and reinforce key safety concepts and strategies to children and young people and encourage the development of skills to maximise their safety;
- create a supportive environment to promote children and young people's safety and wellbeing and to build positive relationships with them; and
- role model key safety concepts and strategies.

\* Harmful behaviours include emotional, sexual and physical abuse, bullying, suicide, self harm and substance abuse.

Activities undertaken by **Children's Safety Australia Inc.** to achieve these aims may include:

- promoting awareness via the **Children's Safety Australia Inc.** website; newsletters; media releases, interviews and articles; competitions; and an awards program;
- developing and distributing promotional materials;
- developing and distributing resource materials; and
- developing and delivering training.

**References:**

<sup>1</sup> NAPCAN 2008, *Child Abuse and Neglect in Australia* (online). Available <http://www.napcan.org.au/what.htm>. [Accessed 25 May 2008].

<sup>2</sup> NAPCAN 2007, *Child Abuse and Neglect Fact Sheet* (online). Available <http://www.napcan.org.au/what.htm>. [Accessed 3 April 2007].

<sup>3</sup> Briggs, F & McVeity, M 2000, *Teaching Children to Protect Themselves*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

<sup>4</sup> McMenamin, B 2006, *Childwise Speak Up – An Australian campaign to protect children from sexual abuse*, Melbourne Vic.

<sup>5</sup> Rigby, K 2003, *Bullying among young children: A guide for teachers and carers*, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Canberra.