

Statement of Commitment

Our commitment to keeping children and young people safe

DVConnect is committed to upholding the safety, wellbeing and rights of all children and young people who have contact with our services.

We operate from a gendered analysis of domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV), guided by trauma-informed, person-centred, safety-oriented, strengths-based and intersectional frameworks. We recognise that DFSV disproportionately impacts women, and that many women impacted by DFSV often take steps to keep themselves and their children safe. We also acknowledge that men who experience violence may also act protectively for children in their care.

While our work focuses on supporting people impacted by violence to increase their safety through non-judgemental responses, we do so knowing that DFSV often puts children (including unborn children) at risk within their families. We know too, that children and young people can use violence including DFSV, and that they should have access to safe and appropriate services. We also recognise that children can be exposed to harm in settings where DFSV is not the presenting issue, such as for those seeking support from VictimConnect.

We have a zero tolerance for any form of child abuse, neglect or harm caused by our employees, volunteers, students, Board Directors, contractors or other engaged by the organisation. Many children and young people accessing or connected to our services may already be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm due to DFSV. Our role is to prevent further harm wherever possible, respond swiftly and prioritise their safety in every decision and interaction. We ensure the child's safety is never compromised in the delivery of services to women and men who contact our organisation.

DVConnect has a duty of care to act when we believe, based on professional judgement, that a child or young person may be at risk of harm. All staff are required to report any suspicion or knowledge of a 'risk of significant harm' or belief that a child sexual offence has been committed, in accordance with our legislative and contractual obligations. Reports are made following the Queensland Child Protection Guide to identify and report harm or suspected harm – both in and out of business hours. Specific guidance on when and how to make notifications is outlined in our Child Protection Procedures and Practice Guidelines, tailored to our areas of work. When notifying the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (Child Safety) of a child's exposure of, or witnessing of, DFSV, specific details of the seriousness of the impact on the child must be provided.

Our commitment to cultural safety

We acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of systemic discrimination on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including intergenerational trauma and the Stolen Generations, and how these experiences continue to influence interactions with government systems such as Child Safety. We understand these impacts can create significant barriers to disclosure and accessing support.

We recognise the vital importance of cultural identity, connection to Country, kin and community as protective factors for children's wellbeing, wellbeing and sense of belonging. We are committed to respecting and upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural rights, as outlined in section 28 of the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*, which includes the right to enjoy, maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage, kinship ties, and distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationships with land, waters and resources.

We apply culturally safe approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through trauma-aware and healing-informed support, transparency in decision-making wherever safe and appropriate, and genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. This ensures our service delivery is culturally safe, inclusive and empowering, while upholding cultural rights and acknowledging the enduring impacts of intergenerational trauma.

All staff undertake mandatory diversity training covering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and contemporary issues to ensure understanding, respect and culturally appropriate practice.

Our commitments in practice

Our commitment is grounded in our Values and Principles, and our Purpose to supporting pathways to safety and healing from violence and interpersonal trauma. The safety and wellbeing of those impacted by DFSV and other violent crime is at the heart of all we do.

We commit to:

- **Leading by example** – Our Board and leaders modelling attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people, promoting a culture of safety, inclusion and respect, and prioritising child and cultural safety as core considerations in governance, operational decision-making, risk assessments and the organisational priorities.
- **Listening to children** – Empowering children and young people to be informed, to have a voice and to participate in decisions that affect them, including through accessible feedback processes.
- **Involving family, community and culture** – Involving and informing families, carers and communities in promoting child safety, recognising their vital role in protection and support.
- **Inclusive, responsive and respectful practice** – Respecting and valuing difference, including the physical, spiritual, cultural and emotional needs of children and families impacted by DFSV and violent crime. Recognising how these diverse needs shape identity, foster belonging and contribute to safety and wellbeing. Offering responses and services that ensure equity and access and embedding these principles in both policy and practice.
- **Staff suitability and support** – Ensuring all staff are screened, supported and understand their role to keep children safe through clear expectations, effective communication, ongoing training, supervision and awareness initiatives. Roles and responsibilities are defined in job specifications (position descriptions), performance agreements, and other documents to ensure clear accountability.
- **Addressing complaints and breaches** – Ensuring all complaints, allegations, concerns, breaches or suspected breaches of policies, procedure or law are taken seriously, responded to promptly and managed in a way that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Learnings from these matters inform continuous improvement.
- **Building staff capability** – Equipping staff with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through induction and ongoing role-appropriate education and training.
- **Creating safe spaces** – Providing physically, emotionally and culturally safe spaces, both online and in person, where children and young people feel safe, respected, heard and protected.
- **Driving continuous improvement** – Regularly reviewing policies, procedures and practices with staff input, and using learnings from incidents, feedback and other sources to strengthen our approach. This includes mechanisms to monitor compliance and evaluate effectiveness.
- **Embedding and upholding child safety in policy and procedures** – Implementing trauma-informed and evidence-based practices, policies and procedures to guide daily practice, uplift safety, respond effectively to complaints and concerns, meet legal obligations, minimise risks and enhance service quality, and regularly reviewing them to ensure they remain responsive and fit for purpose.

Our legal and regulatory framework

This Statement supports our compliance with:

- Child Safety Standards under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*
- Human Services Quality Framework
- relevant State and Commonwealth child protection, criminal, human rights and working with children legislation
- sector-specific practice principles, standards, guidelines and strategies, including those for DFSV and interagency responses in Queensland.

Visibility

This Statement is displayed on our website and is available in alternative accessible formats upon request, so that children, families, communities, Board Directors, employees and volunteers know that child safety is central to our Values, decisions, governance and daily practice.

Document history

Version	Approval date	Effective date	Document owner	Approved by	Summary of change/s	Next review
1.0	August 2025	August 2025	Director, Clinical Governance	Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New	August 2028