

Invitation to join the Australian Child Safeguarding Business Coalition

Australian Childhood Foundation and Y Australia are establishing an Australian Child Safeguarding Business Coalition ('Coalition') to drive action on child safeguarding across Australian businesses and improve outcomes for children and young people.

This is a cross-sector initiative that seeks to bring together key decision makers and influencers from organisations that may not directly work with children and young people, but which may impact upon their rights and safety through their products, services, and operations. A number of leading Australian businesses have already indicated their intention to join.

Why is the Coalition being established?

Led by Australian Childhood Foundation and Y Australia, with funding from Westpac Group's Safer Children, Safer Communities program, the Coalition will work collaboratively to assess risks to children and young people, develop policies and practices and share resources to help enhance organisational child safeguarding within participating businesses. The need for a child-safe culture within Australian businesses is a community priority, as noted in a recent consumer poll:¹

- **88.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed** that, *Australian businesses already give enough consideration to how their organisations can impact on children.*
- **81.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed** that, *In general, the majority of Australian businesses are aligned to the protection of children.*
- **87% disagreed or strongly disagreed** that, *In general, the majority of Australian businesses are acting on national child abuse awareness and prevention initiatives.*

Who should participate?

Businesses such as the financial services, travel and tourism, technology and social media, telecommunications, fashion, consumer goods and food and beverage may inadvertently put the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at risk through their products and services, marketing and distribution methods, and relationships with and investments in local communities. For example, child trafficking, unsafe online environments, weak employment practices, ineffective supervision and monitoring of business spaces, poor privacy safeguards and inappropriate digital marketing have all been shown to negatively impact on children's safety.

More and more there is an expectation that business address key risks and impacts on the human rights and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society. This includes increasing statutory expectations to embed the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the eSafety Commissioner's *Safety by Design* principles as well as taking action to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation through customers using financial platforms, technology and/or child labour across supply chains.

It is evident that child safeguarding should be part of any company's commitment to an ESG framework, enhancing its potential value to investors and other important stakeholders.

What is the ask?

- An initial 30min interview to understand your business, risks and answer any questions
- 2 X half-day co-design workshops with key decision makers or delegates to design the strategy and work plan

To find out more about participating in the Coalition, including joining an initial co-design process in August 2022, please contact Brigette McGuire, National Executive Manager, Australian Childhood Foundation at bmcguire@childhood.org.au



¹ (Source: Forethought Australian Childhood Foundation Consumer Poll 2022)