

Guidance Note - Reportable Conduct Schemes



This Guidance Note provides background to, and details about, Reportable Conduct Schemes (RCS). In December 2017, the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RC) recommended *'that state and territory governments establish nationally consistent legislative reportable conduct schemes, based on the approach adopted in New South Wales'* (see Recommendation 7.9 of the Report). In short, this recommendation made by the RC was focused on preventing the poor handling, investigation and reporting of child abuse that had historically occurred in some organisations. **No** Girl Guiding organisation in Australia was included in the 3,489 institutions in which the RC was told child abuse had occurred.

As at September 2021, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) have also introduced a RCS. Other States are also working towards introducing a RCS.

Each of the current RCS is slightly different. Whether the RCS applies to Girl Guides varies. At this time there is a RCS that applies to Girl Guides in New South Wales and Victoria (in ACT Girl Guides is an exempt organisation).

A RCS allows for independent oversight of an institution's response to complaints of child abuse and neglect within the organisation. The RCS is administered by the children's commissioner in the relevant jurisdiction. This allows the children's commissioner to support and guide organisations about fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses. It also gives them the ability to monitor child abuse reports and make recommendations for changes in the processes of an organisation – or across the sector generally.

To make enforcement of the requirements of the RCS most effective, the legislation requires a single person be responsible for compliance. This person is called the 'head' of the organisation. There are significant penalties for failure of organisations to comply with the requirements of the RCS. While the leader of Girl Guide entities is the relevant Commissioner, the role of 'head' for the RCS may sit with the most senior staff member to facilitate ready communication.

The GGA Child Safe Child Friendly Framework provides all of the processes to support compliance with the RCS. Supporting compliance with the RCS is one of the reasons why it is so important that all Adults in Guiding complete a Girl Guide Incident Report and forward it to the correct person(s) in each state office if ever there are instances of child abuse and/or neglect or harm or risk of harm or even when it is suspected. You must check with your State Girl Guide Organisation about lodging a Girl Guide Incident Report involving these issues.