

## **Member protection and child safety**

Orienteering Australia has an extensive Member Protection policy, which largely draws on templates provided by the Australian Sports Commission. Matters relating to child protection, including screening requirements, are contained in this policy.

This is an area which is in something of a state of flux. The ASC is currently in the process of updating its policies (which will then be reflected in their recommendations/requirements for our Member Protection Policies) and has run a number of workshops in recent weeks. Paul Prudhoe attended one of these workshops last week and will report on it at the Conference.

The Royal Commission is also due to report in December. Whilst many of the matters it has been considering are historical and, to some extent, have been addressed by legal changes (especially relating to screening, and mandatory reporting of child abuse) of the last 10-20 years, it is still likely that the Commission will make recommendations which may then be taken up in state/territory and federal law over the next year or two.

Outside of the Royal Commission process, some states have strengthened their laws in this area, notably Victoria. As a result, Orienteering Victoria has given detailed consideration to this policy area over the last few months. Mark Hennessy will report at the Conference on Victoria's experiences. We may wish to consider whether any measures Victoria adopt should be considered as a basis for national policy, even if they are not (yet) legally required in other states and territories.

We had hoped that we would be in a position to bring some specific proposals to the Conference. As the ASC has not yet settled on its position (and the legal situation is likely to change), this will not be possible. The Board has the constitutional power to adopt a new Member Protection Policy (or equivalent) without further reference to a Conference/AGM, but as most of the implementation actions will need to take place at state level we obviously seek to engage closely with all State Associations on this.

Notwithstanding the lack of specific proposals on the agenda, the presentations at the Conference should have useful information for States and will provide us with a basis for further discussion once the situation becomes clearer.

Blair Trewin  
President  
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