



8th February 2013

Bulletin No. 1: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse

As you know Girl Guides Australia is part of a world-wide voluntary organisation which promotes and encourages the development of girls and women. Our Mission is to enable girls and young women to grow into confident, self respecting, responsible community members. This does not occur without careful planning and implementation of policies, procedures and programs covering a wide range of matters, including child safety issues.

Girl Guides has always been an organisation concerned with the wellbeing of girls. By way of example, our collaboration between the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and UNWOMEN, in 2011 Girl Guides across the world made a formal commitment to the project 'Stop the violence. Speak out for girls' rights' Your girls may have already undertaken activities associated with this initiative and more information on this project can be found at:

<http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/news/21277>

You may also know that earlier this year the Australian Government established a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse. Detailed information on the Royal Commission can be found by going to <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Girl Guides across Australia applauds the establishment of this Royal Commission. In keeping with our commitment to promoting the safety of all children, Girl Guides will engage in the process and assist the Commission in any possible manner. Our organisation has been working with the Commission since its inception and we are pleased to say that the feedback that we have provided, relating to terms of reference and process has been well received and taken on board.

We have policies relating to child safety already in place. These involve police checks and compliance with all relevant legislation as it relates to individual states and territories.

It is anticipated that the Royal Commission will commence making initial recommendations over the next few months. While we wait for these recommendations Girl Guides will continue to apply the policies currently in place. When the Reports are published by the Royal Commission, our



organisation will welcome them and integrate and implement the recommendations as appropriate. We anticipate that our members, all parents and supporters of Girl Guides will fully embrace any changes and continue to display the same high level of dedication to the safety and well being of our girls.

As you would appreciate, on such crucial issues as that which the Royal Commission is directed to address, Girl Guides strongly recommends direct contact with your State and National Leadership on these matters rather than through other forms of communication such as social media. Therefore if you do have any questions, issues or concerns regarding the Royal Commission please contact me through Girl Guides Australia on 02 9311 8000 or by email cc@girlguides.org.au or your local State Commissioner.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours in Guiding

Helen Geard

Chief Commissioner
Girl Guides Australia