

keeping children safe in recreation and sport

a concise guide for *all* participants

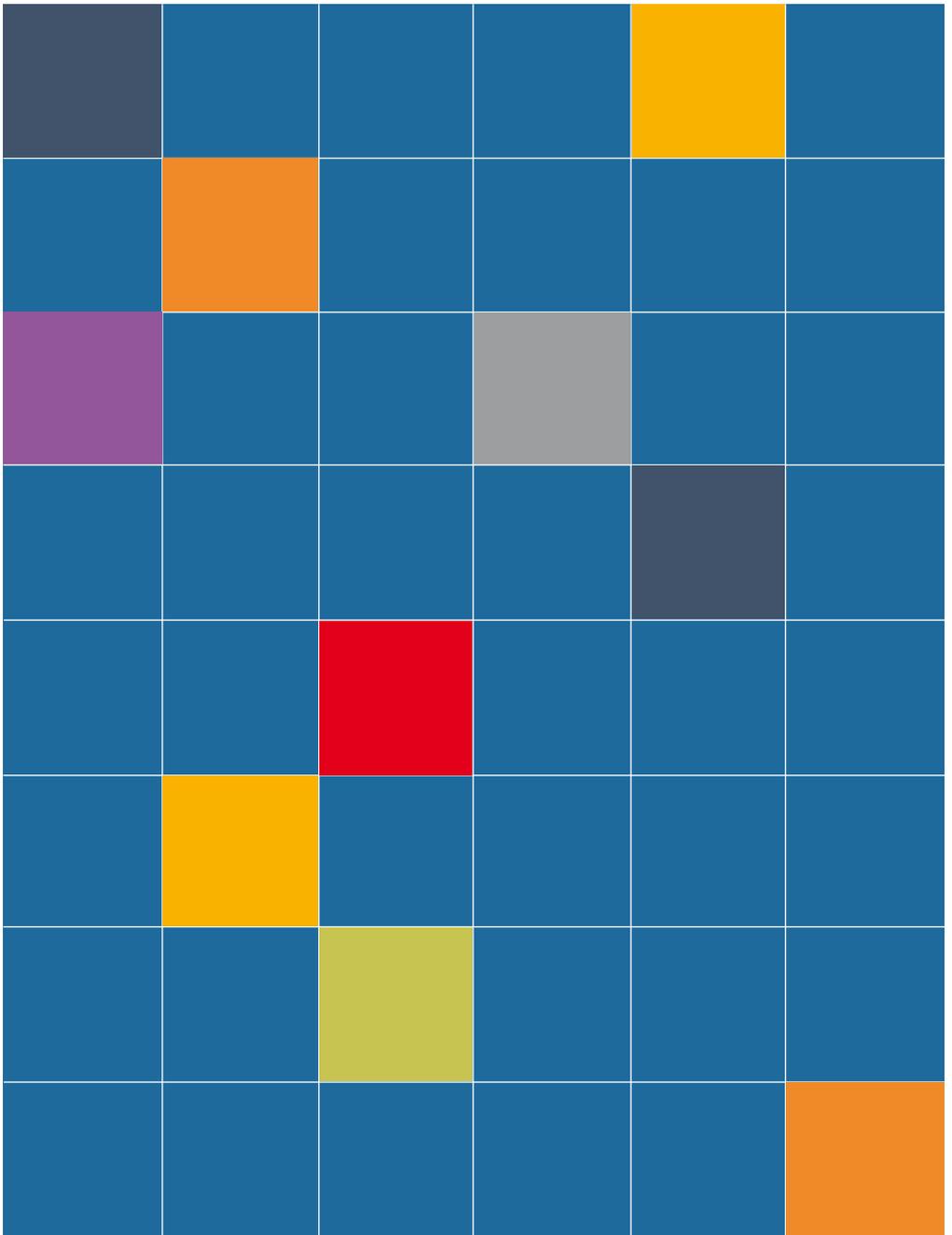


Our Club:
SUPPORTS Kids
Is SAFE for Kids
Is FUN for Kids

active for life



Government of South Australia
Office for Recreation and Sport



Simple guidelines for protecting our children
for parents, participants and any volunteer

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This booklet has been prepared by the
Office for Recreation and Sport

Front cover photograph courtesy of Athletics SA.

Minister's message

Message from Leon Bignell MP Minister for Recreation and Sport

Getting involved with club sports is a fantastic way for children and young people to learn new skills, make friends, stay fit and have fun.

The experiences they have as players and members of clubs also lay the foundations for their future involvement in sport and active recreation.

Everyone involved in sports clubs shares an important responsibility to care for and protect their young players. We need to create an environment that supports children and welcomes others to take part.

This guide aims to encourage clubs to spread this message of shared responsibility and make sure everyone working closely with children considers the importance of their role and understands their obligations.

I hope the clear explanation of these requirements, along with the useful checklists for volunteers, parents and players, will help you keep safety front and centre of your organisation's activities.

Thank you for helping to implement and maintain safe, supportive policies and practices to protect children and young people.



Leon Bignell MP

Minister for Recreation and Sport



Terms we use

Bullying

This occurs when somebody who is less powerful than another person or a group is deliberately harmed, typically repeatedly.

Child

Under South Australian law any person aged less than 18 years is a child.

Child-Safe Officer

This is the title of the person within an organisation whose role is to promote and support children's safety and welfare.

Club or Organisation

The sporting or recreation group to which you belong.

Participant

Children and adults who are involved in recreational and sporting activities as players, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers or members.

Parent

In the context of this publication the title includes parents, caregivers and guardians.

Volunteer

This title encompasses a broad variety of roles within recreation and sporting clubs. These include but are not limited to, the roles of coach, group leader, manager, club official, referee and supervisor.

Mandated Notifier

This person has a legal responsibility to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect based on reasonable grounds.

Terms we use

Prescribed position

A role that involves one or more prescribed functions as defined under section 8B (8) of the Children’s Protection Act 1993. These functions relate to regularly working with or around children in an unsupervised capacity and also the supervision and management of people in such roles.

Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

They are the person responsible for providing information and options to an individual making a complaint or raising a concern, as well as support during the process.

Member Protection Policy (MPP)

A Member Protection Policy is a document aimed at providing ethical and informed decision-making and responsible behaviours to support all members of an organisation.



A child-safe environment

A child-safe organisation is committed to protecting children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm and from neglect.

This commitment extends beyond creating an environment that minimises risk or danger. It is about building an environment that is both child-safe and child-friendly. An environment in which children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

This commitment is embedded in the organisation's culture, reflected in its policies and procedures, and is understood and practiced at all levels.

You have created a child-safe organisation when your club or group recognises its moral and legal responsibilities to ensure that children in its care are safe and establishes a safe and positive environment for them.

This approach will help your club to grow and prosper into the future.



Club members' commitment

Everyone in our club:

Is committed to promoting kids' wellbeing and protecting them from harm

Every child and young person has the right to join a club confident that they will be supported and protected. A good club will have policies and procedures in place to encourage this and all members will be aware of and have access to these documents.

Behaves according to our club's code of conduct

All parents, players, officials and administrators are required to read and thoroughly familiarise themselves with the club's code of conduct. These are the guidelines by which all members are bound.

Is always on the lookout for potential risks to the safety of our kids

Do not hesitate to talk to your club administrators, coaches or other officials if you have concerns about the safety or treatment of children. It is better to address a situation early than wait to see if gets worse.

Knows how to respond to and report behaviours that threaten or are harmful to children

If you are suspicious that a child has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of that occurring phone the *Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.*

Every member has a responsibility to be up-to-date with their club's reporting and complaint handling processes.



Club members' commitment

The people who run our club ensure:

Our club rules promote the wellbeing and safety of kids

Management is responsible for ensuring that the club has a current Member Protection Policy incorporating a Child-Safe Policy. The club must also have a clear code of conduct that is freely available to all members.

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure coaches, other staff, officials and volunteers are suitable to work with kids

There are mandatory (legal) requirements for clubs to assess the suitability of members and staff who regularly work with children. Screening processes must include a criminal history assessment and other recruitment processes such as referee checks should also be undertaken.

All our staff, coaches, officials and volunteers receive ongoing training, support and development about working with kids

The club needs to be aware of the training available for all who work with our young people. This may involve coaching qualifications, child-safe training, Play by the Rules online training and building awareness of all club policies and procedures. All volunteers should receive appropriate induction.

Our kids can get involved in helping to keep our club child-safe and child-friendly

The club should seek opportunities to include young people in its decision-making processes. It is important for young people to know that they have a voice and are welcome to be involved in the running of their club.

Everyone in our club knows about our child-safe rules and policies and where to find them

The club may keep copies of the policies and code of conduct pinned to a noticeboard, accessible on its website, distribute them by email or a combination of these. Whatever the preferred option, the club must ensure that all members are aware of how to access these documents.

Club members' commitment

Our Kids:

Respect and look out for each other

Organised sport and recreation should be safe and fun. Young people should be taught the importance of ensuring that their friends are happy to be involved in the club. Should they or any of their friends have a problem it is important that they have the confidence to talk to an appropriate adult.

Actively participate in club activities and have a say about things

Kids' participation in the running of the club and its activities should be encouraged. They should feel comfortable in expressing their opinions and know that the club will listen to and act on what they have to say.

Know it is their right to feel safe and supported in our club

Kids are valuable and valued members of the club. It is important that they enjoy being involved and understand the importance of rules in ensuring the club is a good place to be. They should be informed of and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Will tell someone they trust straight away if they or their friends feel unsafe or are being hurt in any way

Should they or any of their friends have a problem it is important that children and young people have the confidence to talk to an appropriate adult.

If the club has a Child-Safe Officer, ensure that children and young people know who it is and that they can confidently speak to that person if they are feeling unsafe or are being hurt in any way.

They should also know that It is okay to speak up if they are worried about a friend or teammate being hurt (even if the friend doesn't want them to).

The club's Child-Safe Officer will know how to help.

Recognising abuse and neglect

Child abuse takes a number of forms

Physical abuse

This is when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child.

Emotional abuse

This is the result of often repeated attacks on a child's self-worth, e.g. through bullying (including name calling), threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating a child thereby undermining his or her confidence and social competence over time.

Sexual abuse

This is any sexual act or threat imposed on a child.

Neglect

This is when a child is harmed or at risk through a failure to have their basic physical and emotional needs met.



Managing abuse and neglect concerns

Dealing with child abuse

Everyone in a recreation group or sporting club has a responsibility to care for and protect all children who participate in its activities.

- Report any form of abuse or behaviour that concerns you. Remember this includes verbal and emotional abuse or neglect.
- Be caring and understanding towards the child
- Show you believe what the child says even if you find the information uncomfortable
- Reassure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Tell the child you are pleased they have shared this with you
- Phone the *Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78*.

You may remain anonymous.

Guidelines to assist organisations to deal with allegations/issues relating to misconduct towards children are available in the resources section at www.ors.sa.gov.au/create_a_child_safe_environment



Reporting abuse and neglect

Mandated Notifiers

The *Children's Protection Act 1993* makes it a legal requirement for certain people to report a reasonable suspicion or incidences of abuse or neglect. This obligation is known as mandatory notification and a penalty may stem from an individual's failure to comply. Notifications must be made to the Department for Child Protection [Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78](#).

Reasonable grounds may include:

- a disclosure of abuse by a child
- professional judgment, based on the notifier's experience and observations
- disclosure by a child or an adult that a child is being abused or is at risk.

Definition

Mandated notifiers are an employee of, or volunteer in, a government or non-government organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children.

These people:

- a) Are engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or
- b) Hold a management position in the relevant organisation.

Staff and volunteers of recreation and sporting bodies who work with children fit these descriptions and so have a legal obligation (are mandated) to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Training is not a requirement but it is recommended that each club has a trained child safe officer.

It is illegal for any person to prevent another person from making a report or treat them badly for having made a report.

Club responsibilities

Relevant history assessments

Your club has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm. Choosing employees and volunteers who are suitable to work with children is part of fulfilling this duty.

Prescribed Positions

In a sport and recreation context prescribed positions are those involving:

- Regular contact with children that is not directly supervised at all times;
- Working in close proximity to children on a regular basis where that work is not directly supervised at all times; or
- Supervising or managing people who work with or around children on a regular basis.

The *Children's Protection Act 1993* requires your organisation to conduct a relevant history assessment for each staff member and volunteer who holds a prescribed position. Some organisations, persons and positions are exempt from this requirement. You should check with your club or association to see if any exemptions apply to your situation.

A relevant history assessment addresses whether a person is suitable to work with children based on the person's criminal history (if any) and the assessed risk to children.

The assessment process involves:

- Obtaining a criminal history report (National police check) or other criminal history information.
- Assessing the criminal history information in accordance with prescribed Standards. Visit www.decd.sa.gov.au/child-protection/child-safe-environments for further information.
- Deciding whether to employ or retain the person to work with children based on their determined level of risk, the requirements of the position and any other relevant circumstances.
- Your organisation may choose to have the assessment completed by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Screening Unit rather than conduct an assessment using the police check.

If you are working or volunteering in a prescribed position, your club will advise you about the process for undertaking a relevant history assessment.

Club responsibilities

Child safe policies and procedures

Every sporting or recreational organisation that provides a service to children or young people must have lodged or had lodged on their behalf a Child Safe Environment Compliance Statement with Department for Education and Child Development (DECD). Many governing bodies have done this on behalf of their affiliated organisations. Under this compliance organisations must develop and implement a Child-Safe Policy. This is often incorporated in the club's Member Protection Policy.

Clubs that are affiliated with state associations will generally accept this policy as part of the affiliation agreement. Organisations that are not affiliated need to develop their own policies.

Your club is responsible for ensuring that all members are aware of its Child-Safe Policy.

Informing members of where they can access the document is very important. Make the policy available on the club website if it has one, pin a copy to the clubroom noticeboard or email it to all members.

The Office for Recreation and Sport recommends that your club identify a person within its membership to take on the role of Child-Safe Officer.

To be clearly defined by the club, the role generally involves promoting awareness of the club's policies for establishing a child-safe environment, clarifying procedures to minimise risks to children, identifying the prescribed positions within the club, ensuring required relevant history assessments are completed and providing assistance when issues are identified.

Training is available through the Office for Recreation and Sport. Please check the website www.ors.sa.gov.au/upcoming_courses_and_events or for further information contact the *Office for Recreation and Sport* on 1300 714 990 or officerecsport@sa.gov.au

Private coaching or tuition

From April 2015, sole traders or people in partnerships must also meet certain obligations under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. Parents of children who are accessing these services should request to sight a criminal history report or a DCSI Child Related Employment Screening of the person providing the service.

For further information regarding this change www.decd.sa.gov.au/child-protection/child-safe-environments

Principles of good practice

Appropriate steps must be taken to maintain a safe environment for children in accordance with the following seven principles set by the Department for Education and Child Development.

Principle 1: Identify and analyse risk of harm

Your club should have a risk management strategy that identifies, assesses and takes steps to minimise the risk of harm to children because of the actions or inaction of any employee, volunteer or other child.

Principle 2: Develop a clear and accessible Child-Safe Policy

Your club should have a Child-Safe Policy that outlines its commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and safeguarding them from harm. The policy must be well communicated to all members and those to whom it applies. Member Protection Policy templates which include child-safe clauses are available on the *Office for Recreation and Sport* website www.ors.sa.gov.au

Principle 3: Develop codes of conduct for adults and children

Codes of conduct specify standards of behaviour and care when dealing and interacting with children. They also describe appropriate behaviour between children.

The *Office for Recreation and Sport* provides code of conduct templates on the website: www.ors.sa.gov.au

Encourage your coaches, managers and administrators to view the *Play By The Rules* interactive scenarios as a practical means of establishing good practices.

Principle 4: Choose suitable employees and volunteers

All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that your club engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work and volunteer with children. This includes the requirement to obtain and assess criminal history reports for employees or volunteers who work regularly with children.

Principles of good practice

Principle 5:

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

There should be ongoing supervision, support and training for employees and volunteers who work with children or their records.

The performance of such personnel should be monitored and they must be given opportunities to develop the necessary skills and understanding to promote child-safe environments.

The *Play By The Rules* website has free, online training for coaches, administrators, participants and officials. You'll find it at www.playbytherules.net.au

The *Office for Recreation and Sport* conducts various courses. Check the website: www.ors.sa.gov.au for details.

Principle 6:

Empower and promote participation by children in decision-making and service development

Your club should promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments. It must ensure that children know what constitutes appropriate behaviour and when and how to speak out if they feel uncomfortable.

Principle 7:

Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect

Your club's employees and volunteers must be able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm. This includes knowing how to report and respond to allegations of abuse and neglect.

It is important that your club ensures that all employees and volunteers who are Mandated Notifiers under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* are aware of their status and understand their responsibilities.

Checklist for parents

This checklist will help you to contribute to keeping children safe in your sport or recreation group.

Ideally the answer is YES to each question. If you do not answer YES, you should take action by speaking with your club so that you can.

- Does your club have a policy that covers child safety and wellbeing, e.g. a Member Protection Policy?
- Do you have a copy of or at least know what the policy is?
- Does your club have a Child-Safe Officer or a person dedicated to ensuring the safety of participants aged less than 18 years?
- Is there a code of conduct for participants, parents, volunteers and staff?
- Are there guidelines for how coaches, instructors, trainers, leaders and officials should behave around children?
- Do you feel your club is doing all it can to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment?
- Do people in your club talk about ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people?
- Does your child know that they should tell you immediately if anything or anyone makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable?
- It is important that you can listen carefully and non-judgementally to disclosures that may be unexpected and/or distressing. Does your child know that he or she can tell you unpleasant things without a negative reaction?
- Do you feel able to report an incident or suspicion of child abuse even if the matter makes you feel uncomfortable?

Further information is available from the *Office for Recreation and Sport* on 1300 714 990 or email participation@sa.gov.au

To report an incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect phone the *Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78*.

Checklist for volunteers

This checklist will help volunteers to contribute to keeping children safe in their sport or recreation group.

The ideal response to each question is YES. If that's not possible, the respondent should take action so that they can say YES.

- Does your club have a policy that covers child safety and wellbeing, e.g. a Member Protection Policy?
- Do you have a copy of or at least know what the policy is?
- Does your club have a Child-Safe Officer or a person dedicated to ensuring the safety of participants aged less than 18 years?
- Do people in your club talk about ensuring the safety of children and young people?
- Does the club have a code of conduct for volunteers?
- Are there guidelines for how volunteers should behave around children?
- Are you aware of how much physical contact is appropriate between yourself and a child?
- Do you ensure you stay in an open area in the sight of other adults when alone with a child?
- Are you aware that some verbal comments are abusive?
- Do you avoid using bad or aggressive language when talking to a child or in the presence of children?
- Do you know what to do to report an incident or suspicion of child abuse?
- Do you feel able to report an incident of child abuse even if the matter makes you feel uncomfortable?

Further information is available from the *Office for Recreation and Sport* on 1300 714 990 or email participation@sa.gov.au

To report an incident or suspicion of child abuse or neglect phone the *Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.*

Checklist for participants (including children)

We recommend that younger children go through this checklist with a parent or another trusted person.

The ideal response to each question is YES. If they cannot answer YES, their parent or trusted person should take action so that they can.

- Do you feel safe from abuse or harm (including bullying) at your club?
- Has anyone in your club talked to you and other children about how they can help you to be safe?
- Do you have a Child Safe Officer or some other person who you trust and can talk to about anything that worries you?
- Has your parent or guardian read this book?
- Do you know what sort of physical contact is okay between yourself and a leader, coach, official, trainer, instructor, teammates or other people in your club?
- Are you aware that some verbal comments can hurt other people's feelings?
- Would you tell your parent or a trusted person if someone tried to abuse you?
- Would you tell your parent or a trusted person if you knew of someone else who was sad or being hurt in any way?
- Do you know it is your right to feel safe and comfortable at all times?
- Would you phone the Kids Help Line (1800 55 1800) or the Youth Health Line (1300 131 719) to talk to someone if you felt unhappy or unsafe?

Further information is available from the [Office for Recreation and Sport](#) on [1300 714 990](tel:1300714990) or email participation@sa.gov.au

Other information and services

For more information on child protection and child-safe recreation and sport, look at these websites or call the listed phone numbers:

Child Abuse Report Line	13 14 78	
Kids Help Line (24 hour counselling)	1800 551 800	www.kidshelp.com.au
Department for Education and Child Development		www.decd.sa.gov.au/child-protection/child-safe-environments
– Child-Safe Environments for Organisations	(08) 8463 6468	
Department for Communities and Social Inclusion		
– Screening Unit	1300 321 593	
Office for Recreation and Sport	1300 714 990	www.ors.sa.gov.au/create_a_child_safe_environment
Play by the Rules		www.playbytherules.net.au
National Police Certificates	www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/apply-for-a-police-record-check	
Australian Sports Commission		www.ausport.gov.au
Shine SA (sexual health information, networking and education)		www.shinesa.org.au
Parents Help Line (information service for parents in SA)		www.parenting.sa.gov.au
Parenting and Child Health (a resource for parents and caregivers on everything related to the health and development of children)		www.cyh.com
Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)		www.wch.sa.gov.au/services
– Northern	(08) 8161 7389	
– Southern	(08) 8204 5412	
SA Police – Child Protection	(08) 8463 7600	
Nunkuwarrin Yunti (provides emergency assistance, counselling, information and referral services)	(08) 8223 5217	www.nunku.org.au
Youth Healthline	1300 131 719	



www.playbytherules.net.au

Play by the Rules

Fair and safe
behaviour
in sport
and recreation

Everyone needs to feel safe and to act fairly and respectfully towards each other.

Be a good sport

- Treat all participants in your sport as you like to be treated yourself.
- Co-operate with your team-mates, coach and opponents.
- Control your temper. Verbal abuse and sledging are not acceptable behaviours.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of their ability, gender or cultural background.

You must feel safe

- playing, at training and practice
- travelling to and from games and training
- with other players, your coach or team personnel

No-one should

- make you feel unsafe
- ask you to do anything that you are not comfortable with
- verbally abuse you or anyone else
- make racist or sexist jokes or comments
- allow offensive pictures or graffiti to be visible
- look at or touch anyone in ways that make them feel uncomfortable
- make uninvited sexual comments that offend, intimidate or humiliate
- discriminate against or harass anyone else

Bad sporting
behaviour is
unacceptable and
it can be unlawful.

www.playbytherules.net.au

Provides information and online training on equal opportunity and child protection laws to address inappropriate behaviour in sport. It complements the Australian Sports Commission's Harassment-free Sport Strategy.

If a person is not following your sport's guidelines and is behaving inappropriately or if you think that you have been abused, discriminated against or harassed, then tell someone about it:

- a friend, colleague or parent
- a club official or contact officer
- your state or national association
- your department of sport and recreation
- your equal opportunity or anti-discrimination body
- the Australian Sports Commission
- your child welfare agency or the police



Government
of South Australia

Office for Recreation and Sport
Phone 1300 714 990
www.ors.sa.gov.au

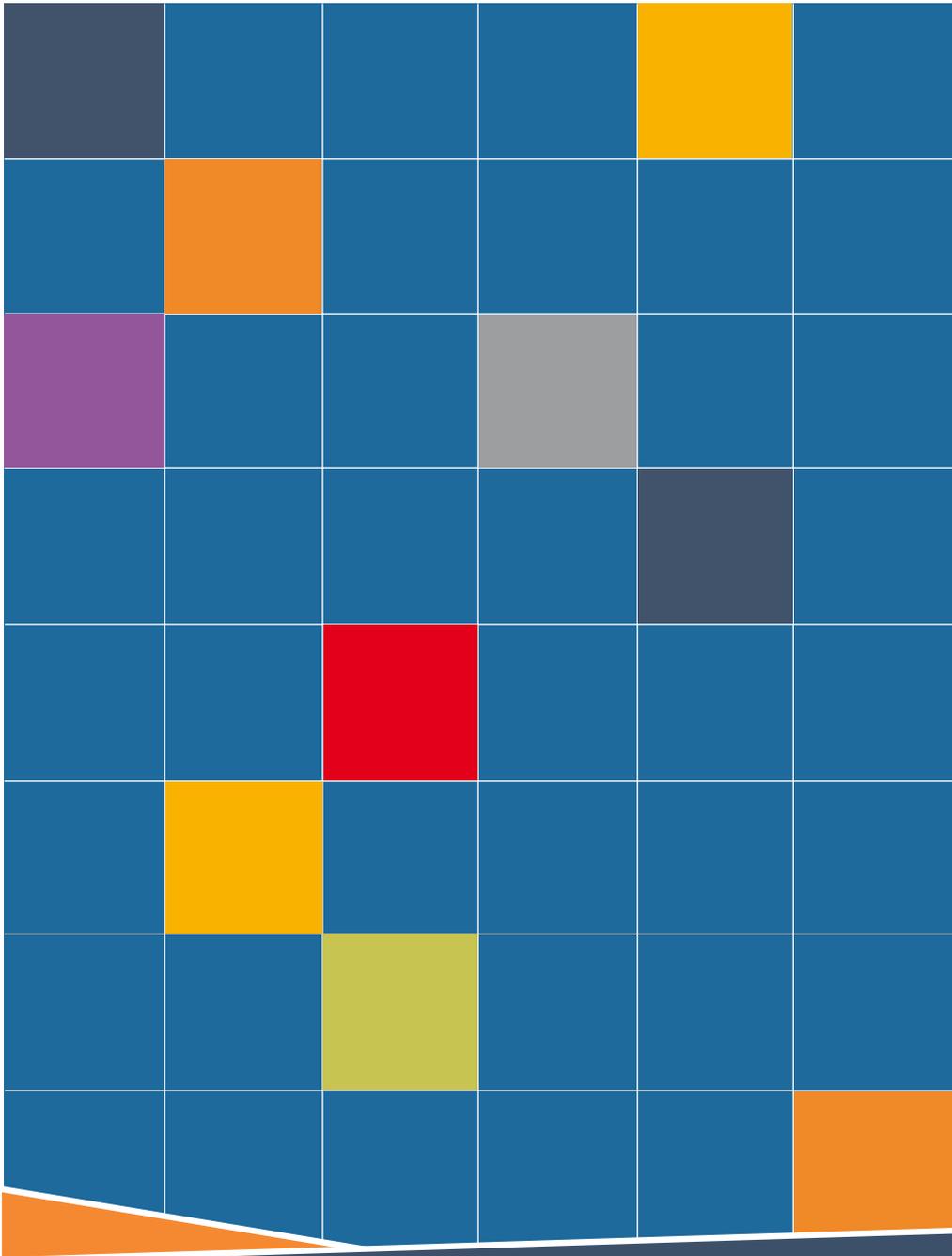
Equal Opportunity Commission
Phone 1800 188 163
www.eoc.sa.gov.au



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission
www.ausport.gov.au

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