Child Safe Organisations
The Centre is a not-for-profit peak body representing around 100 member organisations delivering child, youth and family sector.

The Centre is committed to enhancing the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children in organisational settings by promoting the work of:

• Betrayal of Trust (2013) a Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations, and
• the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We do this by providing information, facilitating forums, attending consultations on child safety, submitting written responses Issues Papers and consultation papers.
Victorian Government introduced new laws to improve responses to child abuse as recommended by Betrayal of Trust.

The Centre delivered information sessions to Victorian organisations in 2015/16 on:

1. Principle based compulsory child safe standards aimed to create and maintain child safe environments.

2. Criminal offences to improve responses within organisations and the community to child sexual abuse.
In summary, the Victorian child safe standards require organisations to:
1. embed a culture of child safety
2. child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. code of conduct
4. Range of human resources practices
5. processes for responding to and reporting
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Organisations must also embed the following principles as part of each standard:
- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.
In summary, the Victorian new criminal offences:

- **Grooming offence** targets communication, including online communication, with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

- **Failure to disclose** child sexual abuse offence that requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so).

- **Failure to protect** a child from sexual abuse offence applies to people within organisations if they hold a position of authority within a relevant organisation that works with children, they know of a substantial risk another adult associated with the organisation may commit a sex offence against a child under 16 within the organisation’s care, they have the power or responsibility to remove or reduce that risk BUT they negligently fail to do so.
Information Sessions
Snapshot of the information sessions

- 2015/6 information sessions on criminal law reform and child safe standards
- Department of Health and Human Services and Commission for Children and Young People
- More than 1000 participants (board members to management) from category 1 and 2 organisations
- Participant evaluation forms
Feedback from participants:

- Supportive of new laws
- Presentation
- Continued demand for information sessions
- More support and guidance
- Understanding compliance
- Assistance with risk assessment
- Additional training needs
Where to from here
The Centre’s plan

• More forums on child safe organisations
• Information and updates
• Education on child abuse and grooming
• Training and education on child safe organisations
• Working with the Commission for Children and Young People who are now responsible for capacity building and shortly compliance