

SAFEGUARDING PEOPLE AUSTRALIA

Heather



*“Learning how to ensure the people
with whom you work and interact
are safe from predators is the most
powerful habit you will ever acquire.”*



Hetty JOHNSTON AM, GAICD

With a history in senior finance and administration roles, community campaigning and while state leader of the Australian Democrats, Hetty Johnston's daughter disclosed sexual assault by a much loved family member. It was a devastating time. Bravehearts was established in August 1997, the first of its kind to focus on child sexual assault and to challenge the silence, secrecy, shame and fear that facilitated its growing incidence in Australia and around the world.

Since then, Hetty and her family have dedicated their lives to this issue with Hetty soon becoming Australia's leading voice in the fight against child sexual assault—breaking the silence on this once taboo subject.

Since March 2021, Hetty has embarked on a new path, helping organisations to ensure the safety of the people with whom they work or interact through effective safeguarding governance and practice.

"I believe taking organisations on this journey is my most important work yet. Watching the penny drop from the Board table and tumble into the consciousness of every person throughout the organisation is incredibly rewarding. Teaching people about the nuances of sexual assault, what to look for, how to react, what to do... helping them understand the very real threat to the people they care for and love, at home and at work."

Hetty was a safeguarding consultant to the 2018 Commonwealth Games, she was instrumental in bringing about countless State and Commonwealth inquiries and legislative reform, including the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and collaborated with EY to bring Australia's first Safeguarding risk and response offering to life. More recently, Hetty consulted as the Expert Safeguarding Lead for Ansvar Insurance.

As co-chair of the National Office for Child Safety Advisory Group and various other committees, she continues to advise governments, State and Commonwealth on safeguarding matters.

"Hetty Johnston's global leadership in designing and establishing policies for safeguarding young people demonstrates her ability to combine her passion for keeping children safe while always focusing on clear, steady and pragmatic policy solutions."

"As an astute leading businesswoman, Hetty has translated advocacy into tangible programs, actions and partnerships with business and government. As a consultant, she now uses her high-level demonstrable skills to assist organisations to focus on effective safeguarding policies for children, young people and vulnerable adults."



CHERYL VARDON DUniv (Griffith)

Former Principal Commissioner – Qld Child & Family Commission
Chair Queensland NWHB
Adjunct Professor Griffith University



HELPING ORGANISATIONS TO PROTECT! THOSE WHO CAN'T PROTECT THEMSELVES!

Prioritising the protection of children and vulnerable adults has never been more fundamental to the financial and reputational viability of your enterprise, regardless of what that is.

New regulatory frameworks and criminal laws are requiring wholesale cultural and operational awareness and compliance.

Boards and Executives are being held accountable.

The time to act is now.

I CAN HELP!

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS

SAFEGUARDING IN AN ORGANISATION DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN...

...it requires leadership from the top, a systemic focus on safety, an increase of awareness and training, the adoption of strategies, good governance, risk management and practices that together, create a culture where the best interests and safety of children and the vulnerable are the first priority.

Australia has seen 3 recent Royal Commissions into protecting our most vulnerable, children, aged care and disability:

- All found that poor governance, culture, policy, procedure, and practice, collaborated to facilitate horrific sexual abuse against thousands of vulnerable children and adults.
- All three found that systemic failures in board leadership presented the most significant risk of all.
- They found that Boards had failed to lead and set a safe culture.

Just as with the introduction of Workplace Health and Safety, boards and executives must lead this Safeguarding journey to become an entrenched part of Australian culture.

OUR PROUDEST NATIONAL HABIT

THE BUCK STOPS AT THE TOP

SAFEGUARDING IS NO LONGER A NICE THING TO DO IT'S MANDATORY!

- Boards carry the serious legislative and regulatory 'duty of care' responsibilities.
- Boards have responsibility personally and organisationally for their failures in the protection of vulnerable people to whom they have a duty of care.
- Organisations risk becoming unviable. Reputational damage, regulatory penalties, criminal charges, compensation obligations, loss of income and funding, and the likely outcome of being uninsurable will certainly wreak havoc on any individual, organisation or business.

"I have known her (Hetty) for over 25 years. There would be few people in our country in the area of child safety and the prevention of, and proper response to child abuse in all its forms, that would have greater knowledge, experience and commitment than Ms Johnston."



ROBERT (BOB) ATKINSON AO APM

Commissioner,
Queensland Police
Service 2000 - 2012
Commissioner

Royal Commissioner into
Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
2013-2017. Current Queensland Government - Chair,
Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce Co-chair,
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council.



Hetty

HOW I CAN HELP

WHAT I BRING!

- Senior Executive and Non-Executive Board and Governance Experience
- Nationally recognised expertise in Safeguarding
- Subject matter 'grassroots' knowledge
- Personal reputation and profile
- Accessibility
- Confidence

INSTALL THE 10 STEPS TO COMPLIANCE & COMPETENCY

1

Ensure the Board are fully committed and understand the critical strategic importance of Safeguarding.

6

Conduct a Risk Assessment.

2

Create a Safeguarding Committee and identify Safeguarding Lead.

7

Engage your stakeholders.

3

Undergo a Safeguarding Maturity Assessment.

8

Create the systems, policy, practice necessary to comply with regulations.

4

Understand the legislative and regulatory landscape.

9

Provide the skills training necessary to meet service provision requirements,

5

Set a Governance Framework approach.

10

Engage a Continuous Improvement Policy and Practice.

COMPETENCY TRAINING TOPICS AND TEMPLATES

- Leadership Matters
- Situational and Online Risks
- Recurment Requirements, Complaints, Incidents and Reporting
- Equity & Rights for the vulnerable, Families and Community
- Essential steps to Compliance and Competency
- How to Prevent and Recognise abusive behaviours, grooming and offending.

HOW I WORK

INTRODUCTION

The Board is the key to effective safeguarding. The Board through its Executive Leadership team are responsible for ensuring the protection of vulnerable people. This is why I like to introduce myself to the Board at the earliest opportunity. In this way I can provide a clear understanding of the scope of works and the critical role and responsibilities faced.

However, I recognise that each organisation is different and may require varied approaches.

Below is my preferred approach however, I am happy to discuss alternative approaches that produce the same result.

In any event, the Board must be 100% committed to safeguarding as an organisational priority.

NEXT STEPS

- Meet with the Executive Team
- Support the establishment of a Safeguarding Committee and appointment of a Safeguarding Lead (SGL) or Chief Safeguarding Officer (CSGO)

TRAIN THE TRAINER APPROACH

- Work with CSGO/SGL to undertake a Safeguarding Maturity Assessment (or desk-top review)
- Review Safeguarding Risk Assessments including all online, offsite and onsite spaces
- Review Policy, practice, procedure and competence across all Safeguarding Principles, Standards, Legislation and Regulation
- Review stakeholder engagement practices and processes
- Create a Safeguarding Board Report framework
- Provide training to Exec Team (and Management Team if required) or train the trainer

OTHER SUPPORT

- Complaints assistance and advise
- Annual conference speaker or other organisation events
- Annual competency and compliance check-up
- Talk to me about any other Safeguarding needs..

"When Ansvar committed to support our insureds with best practice safeguarding risk solutions, we sought the best of help and advice.

Hetty has been that source for us. What a coup it has been to have Australia's leading expert work with our company to guide us and to lead thinking, develop resources and support our staff, brokers and clients."



ANTHONY BLACK

General Manager – Risk Solutions Ansvar Insurance Ltd

SOME USEFUL FACTS AND STATS TO KEEP IN MIND

FALSE ALLEGATIONS

A critical review of false allegations of child sexual abuse found that across multiple studies, rates of false allegations usually fell in the range of 2-5%. *O'Donohue and colleagues' 2018.*

Academic findings pinpoint false allegations of sexual abuse from children at just 2.5% to 5%. In children under 6 years of age, this falls to 2%. *Oates et al. 2000; Everson & Boat 1989.*

False allegations of sexual assault by women have been identified as comprising 2% - 10% of all allegations. *Lisak et al. 2010.*

Children

Approx. 1 in 5 children will be sexually assaulted in some way before their 18th birthday.

'There were about 5.7 million children in Australia in 2016. It's difficult to know for sure how many children are sexually abused, but best estimates put it at roughly 8 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls (or 1 in 3.57). Put all those numbers together, and you could fill the MCG eight times over with children living in Australia right now who have been or will be sexually abused. Of those instances of abuse, 90 to 95 per cent will be committed by men (*Gilmore, 2017*)'.

Disability

Research shows that children with a learning disability are 2.5 times more likely to be the subject of a sexual abuse allegation than children without a learning disability, regardless of other confounding factors (*Helton, Gochez-Kerr & Gruber, 2018*).

Aged Care

50 residents in aged care facilities report sexual assault each week. (*Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety 2021*).

Offenders

During 2018-19, nearly all (97%) of sexual assault offenders recorded by police were male. (*The ABS' Sexual Violence - Victimisation Report*).

Reporting

90% of child sexual abuse goes unreported to authorities. (*Martin, E., & Silvertone*)

A review of disclosure studies showed that significant proportions of adults had never disclosed their experiences of child sexual abuse, either officially or informally (*McElvaney 2015*).



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