

Keeping Children Safe in Recreation and Sport

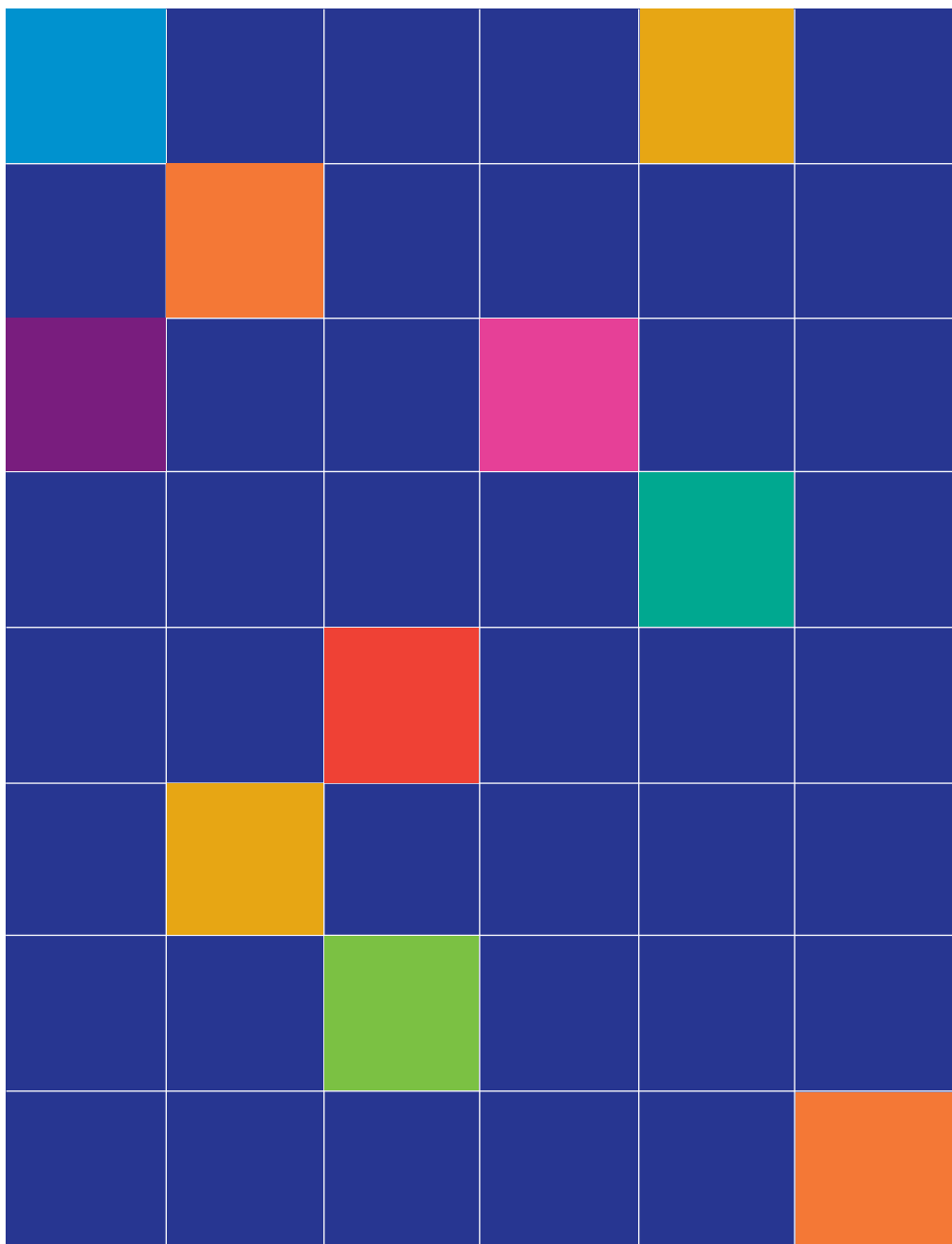


Let's show we care

be active.



Government
of South Australia



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 with the assistance of the:

SA Department for Families and Communities (Families SA)

NSW Department of Sport and Recreation



Minister's Message

I am very pleased to be able to provide this resource booklet to recreation and sporting organisations as a valuable tool to supplement your efforts in developing positive, safe environments for children and young participants.

The booklet has been produced with the assistance of Families SA to help you understand the issues surrounding child protection. The information it contains will be useful to many people who undertake various tasks in recreation and sporting groups or clubs.

Involvement in recreation and sport provides wonderful opportunities for children and young people. Whilst having fun they learn valuable life skills such as fair play and cooperation. We also know that participating in sport, recreation and physical activity can provide great benefits as children move into adulthood.

I have been impressed by the endeavours of many groups to ensure that children are protected from harm whilst being active. The enthusiasm shown by staff of sport and recreation organisations together with the thousands of volunteers who drive our industry is what keeps sport running in our community.

Whilst I applaud the dedication of all of you, it is imperative that we remain focused and work together to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of young people is paramount in the planning of activities.

Finally, I thank you for your contribution to children and young people in your community. Reading this booklet shows you are passionate about ensuring children can participate in safe, fun and positive recreation and sport environments.

What you do is truly valued!



Michael Wright MP

MINISTER FOR
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
MINISTER FOR FINANCE
MINISTER FOR
GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES
MINISTER FOR RECREATION,
SPORT & RACING

Terms we use

In this booklet:

- “**child**” in South Australian law means a person under the age of 18 years
- “**group**” and “**club**” are used in turn. Adapt to suit your circumstance
- “**participant**” covers children or adults involved in recreation and sport activities either as players, coaches, officials or members
- “**parent**” is used to cover parents, caregivers and guardians
- “**volunteer**” is used to cover a variety of roles such as coach, group leader, manager, club official, referee or supervisor
- “**nominated person**” is someone within the group whose role is to look after any issues surrounding children’s welfare
- “**Mandated Notifier**” is a person with a legal responsibility to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect based on reasonable grounds
- “**MPIO - Member Protection Information Officer**” is a person nominated by a club and/or State Association whose role is to deal with harassment issues and/or member complaints. MPIOs have been trained but not all organisations would necessarily have one.



What is meant by Child Protection?

Child Protection is about keeping children safe from abuse and protecting them from people who may cause them harm.

Understanding how child abuse can occur will help increase your confidence to act in the best interest of any child or young person. The responsibility to protect children requires everyone involved in your group to feel able to report a suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect if they have reasonable grounds.

Child Abuse could be:

- **physical abuse** - when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child
- **emotional abuse** - an attack on a child's self esteem, e.g. through bullying, name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child
- **sexual abuse** - any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child
- **neglect** - where a child is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities

Child abuse results from someone doing something harmful or by a person failing to act to protect a child from being harmed or being at risk of abuse.

For recreation and sport, this means creating a positive and encouraging environment where children can take part in an activity feeling safe and free from any form of bullying, harassment or abuse.

A positive environment will contribute to children having fun, developing skills and feeling safe.

We recognise that recreation and sport groups generally work hard to provide safe, healthy environments for all their participants, especially children and young people.

The principles of good practice on pages 8 and 9 will help.

Who is responsible?

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

Previously teachers, medical practitioners, health professionals, social workers, childcare workers, day care providers, and people within government departments that provide services to children, by law have been required to report suspicions or incidents of abuse.

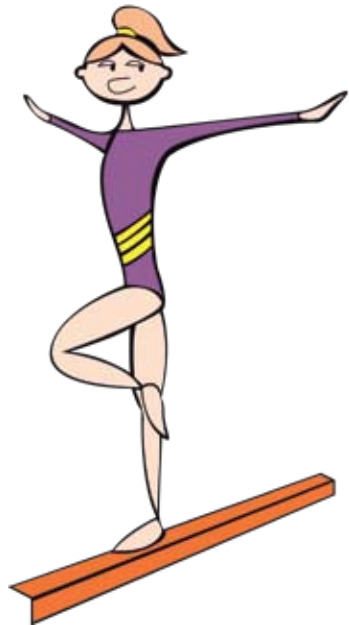
In December 2005 the Children's Protection Act of 1993 was revised and an Amendment Bill passed. This extended the legal requirement to include:

Any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, a Government department, agency or instrumentality, or local government or non-Government organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, being a person who:

- (a) is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or*
- (b) holds a management position in the relevant organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children*

What does this Extended Mandate mean?

Staff and volunteers of recreation and sport groups working with children now have a legal obligation to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect.



How to deal with Abuse

For parents and volunteers

If a child experiences abuse as part of their recreation or sport activity you should:

- report any form of abuse or behaviour that concerns you, even if it is verbal or emotional, to your group's nominated person
- be caring and understanding towards the child
- show that you believe what the child says even if you find the information uncomfortable
- do not blame the child in any way
- consulting with the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 is an appropriate course of action if you believe that a child has or may have been sexually or physically abused. You can remain anonymous if you prefer.

For any serious matter your club should notify the association or peak body and they will investigate the issues and liaise with Families SA. If appropriate they may also consult SA Police.

No child is expected to tolerate any abuse.

It is your role as a parent or volunteer to take action and your right to expect the situation to be dealt with appropriately and confidentially.

Screening and Criminal History Checks

All organisations, groups or clubs must have a screening process for volunteers (paid or un paid) who work with children, or who supervise others working with children.

Criminal histories, whilst not yet mandated, are required for certain prescribed positions.

Strategies to use to improve screening of staff and volunteers:

- identify positions that present the most risk
- conduct face-to-face interview/conversation, ask for and make contact with a “referee”
- use statutory declarations and have an induction or orientation process for new volunteers / members to explain their rights and obligations
- ensure volunteers/staff receive support and supervision is provided
- implement a mentoring strategy where senior coaches guide and support young coaches
- provide volunteers the opportunity to attend training and or up skill them for example: Essentials for Coaching Children or the Child Safe Officers course.

Contact your state recreation or sport body or go to the Play by the Rules website or the Office for Recreation and Sport website, to find out more.



Seven Principles of Good Practice

Provide a safe and positive environment

These Seven Principles of Good Practice form part of the government regulations which clubs and organisations are expected to adopt as proactive and preventative strategies.

1. Identify and analyse potential areas of risk so your risk management strategy promotes the wellbeing of children and young people:

Consider appointing a Child Safe Officer and have them appropriately trained. Promote and advertise their role throughout your club and that they are the person participants, parents, or any club member can speak to if there is a concern or issue.

2. Develop a simple policy on child protection or make an addition to your organisations existing Member Protection Policy:

Resource materials including member protection policy templates and fact sheets are available from the *PlaybytheRules* or the Office for Recreation and Sport websites.

3. Develop codes of conduct that specify unacceptable behaviour; ethical behaviour; and professional boundaries:

Keeping sport fun and safe has codes of behaviours for various roles within a sporting club and is available from the Office for Recreation and Sport website.

Encourage your coaches, managers and administrators to view the *PlaybytheRules* interactive scenarios as a practical way of establishing good practices.

4. **Implement a screening process for staff and volunteers that includes reference checks. People who work with children must be suitable:**

Certain circumstances may require the implementation of Statutory Declarations or Working with Children forms, which can be obtained from the Office for Recreation and Sport website.

5. **Support, train and supervise to enhance the capacity of staff and or volunteers working with children and young people to maintain a child safe environment:**

Playbytherules website has *free*, online training for coaches, administrators, participants and officials. The Office for Recreation and Sport conduct various courses that are promoted on their website calendar.

6. **Promote the participation of children and young people in the decision making process:**

Young participants should be encouraged to speak to the Child Safe Officer if they are being bullied, harassed or feel uncomfortable at any time. Participants also need to understand their responsibilities and they should respect the clubs code of conduct.

7. **Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect:**

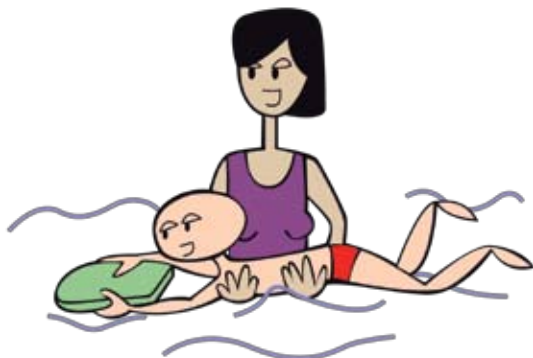
Ensure that all persons within the club who are mandated notifiers under the Act are aware of this and know how to respond appropriately. Where there is an incident of suspected child abuse, the Child Safe Officer, Member Protection Information Officer (if the club has one) or designated club official should immediately make contact with the relevant authorities to seek advice.

Your role as a Parent or Volunteer

Parents and volunteers need to recognise that protecting children requires a whole-of-community approach to be successful.

As a parent or volunteer you can help to create and support a safer environment for children. Some things that you can do are:

- ask your club for a copy of its policy on child protection, e.g. a Member Protection Policy
- follow the policies and practices relating to child protection
- be aware of guidelines or codes of conduct for staff, parents and volunteers
- be a role model – do not bully or abuse any child
- talk to the child if you have concerns about any form of bullying, harassment or abuse
- report any incident or suspicion of child abuse to your group's nominated person
- if your club does not have a nominated person refer to the contact list on page 14 for help or assistance
- obtain further information from the website www.playbytherules.net.au
- talk to the children in your group so that they understand how to stay safe while participating in a recreation or sport activity



Your role as a Participant

As a participant you should:

- enjoy the activity and always feel safe
- be aware of any code of conduct – show respect to other people
- do not abuse, hurt or bully other people in your club – this includes verbal as well as physical abuse.
- tell someone you trust straight away if you are being hurt or mistreated

How to deal with Abuse

For participants, including children.

If you are experiencing abuse in a recreation or sport activity you should:

- tell your parent or another person you trust straight away – tell them exactly what is happening
- if you need to talk to someone other than your parent, if you are being physically or sexually abused, or feel you are not being taken seriously phone the Youth Healthline on 1300 131 719

You do not deserve to be abused in any way.

Remember that you have done nothing wrong. It is important for you to tell someone if you are being abused so that they can help to stop the abuse from happening to you and others.



Checklist for Parents

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

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

- Does your club have a policy that covers child protection, e.g. a Member Protection Policy?
- Do you have a copy or at least know what the policy is?
- Does your group have a Child Safe Officer, Member Protection Information Officer or dedicated person responsible for children's safety?
- Are there codes of conduct for participants, parents, volunteers and/or staff?
- Are there guidelines on 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 environment?
- Do people in your group talk about ensuring the safety of children and young people?
- Does your child know that they should tell you straight away if anyone has tried or tries to abuse them?
- Are you an approachable parent whose child is able to tell you unpleasant things without a negative reaction?
- Do you feel able to report an incident or suspicion of child abuse even if you feel uncomfortable?

Further information is available from the Office for Recreation and Sport on (08) 7424 7677 or email participation@saugov.sa.gov.au

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

Checklist for Volunteers

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

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

In relation to your recreation or sport club:

- Does your group have a policy that covers child protection, e.g. a Member Protection Policy?
- Do you have a copy or at least know what the policy is?
- Does your club have a Child Safe Officer, Member Protection Information Officer or dedicated person responsible for children's safety?
- Do people in your group talk about ensuring the safety of children and young people?
- Are there codes of conduct for volunteers?
- Are there guidelines on how you should behave around children?
- Are you aware of what level of physical contact is appropriate between yourself and a child?
- Are you aware that some verbal comments are abusive?
- Do you ensure you stay in an open area in the sight of other adults when alone with a child?
- Do you avoid using bad or aggressive language when talking to a child and in the presence of children?
- Do you know what action to take if you need to report an incident or suspicion of child abuse?
- Do you feel able to report an incident of child abuse even if you feel uncomfortable?

Further information is available from the Office for Recreation and Sport on (08) 7424 7677 or email participation@saugov.sa.gov.au

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

Checklist for Participants (including Children)

Go through this checklist with your parent or another trusted person. You should answer YES to each question.

If you cannot answer YES, ask your parent or another trusted person to take action so that you can.

In relation to your recreation or sport activity:

- Do you feel safe from abuse or harm?
- Has your group talked to you and other children about how they can help you to be safe?
- Do you have a Child Safe Officer, Member Protection Information Officer or dedicated person responsible for children's safety?
- Has your parent read this book?
- Do you know what sort of physical contact is okay between yourself and a leader, coach, official, trainer, instructor or other person in your group?
- Are you aware that some verbal comments are abusive?
- 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 being abused?
- Do you feel it is your right NOT to be abused in any way?
- Would you phone the Youth Healthline (1300 131 719) if you were physically or sexually abused?

Further information is available from the Office for Recreation and Sport on (08) 7424 7677 or email participation@saugov.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:

Play by the Rules		www.playbytherules.net.au
Australian Sports Commission	(02) 6214 1111	www.ausport.gov.au
Office for Recreation and Sport	(08) 7424 7677	www.recsport.sa.gov.au
Kids Help Line	1800 551 800	www.kidshelp.com.au
Youth Healthline	1300 131 719 or (08) 8303 1691	
Parents Help Line	1300 364 100	www.parenting.sa.gov.au
SA Department for Families and Communities (Families SA) – Screening and Licensing Branch	(08) 8207 0373	www.dfc.sa.gov.au
Children, Youth & Women’s Health Services		www.cyh.com
Child Abuse Report Line	13 14 78	
SA Police Sexual Assault Unit	(08) 8207 5000	





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 thing 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



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Office for Recreation and Sport
Phone 8416 6677
www.rec sport.sa.gov.au

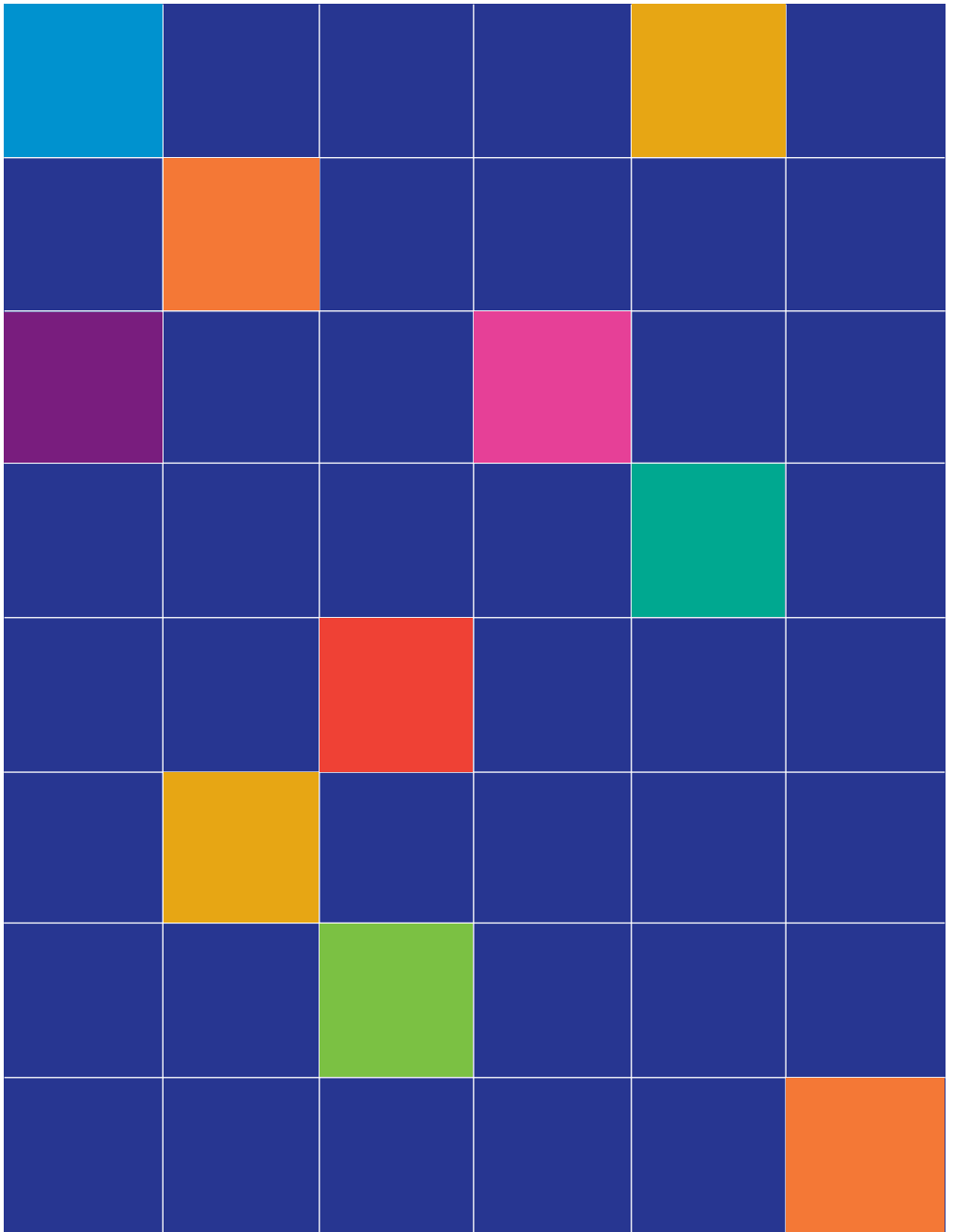
Equal Opportunity Commission
Phone 1800 188 163
www.eoc.sa.gov.au



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

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