

Australia and New Zealand Insurance Industry Awards 2007



Submission from Ansvar Insurance for Services to the Community Award

*In 2006 Ansvar Insurance enjoyed 34 community partnerships with not-for-profit groups. Each group provides valuable support to improve and enrich the lives of our youth so that they may contribute positively to the community in which they live. To highlight how the partnership achieves this we will highlight the **ChildSafe** program for the Australia and New Zealand Insurance Industry Awards.*

About ChildSafe

Many community sector organisations do not have adequate processes operating to safeguard children in their care. Some have sufficient policy materials but very few have the mechanisms to articulate their policy into accountable practice, in particular by volunteers.

There is also a lot of duplication between organisations at present in this area, which is a poor use of limited resources. ChildSafe, an initiative of Scripture Union Australia, wants to save organisations from having to constantly reinvent the wheel.

ChildSafe is a Safety Management System for organisations working with children and young people. The system brings together policy and practice across a spectrum of child safety issues: protection of children from abuse or harm, high quality risk management processes for activities involving children, and levels of responsibility and accountability for people within an organisation working with children.

The outstanding values/benefits of ChildSafe

The primary beneficiaries are children, whose safety is improved through an organisation implementing ChildSafe. ChildSafe already affects the safety and care of an estimated 150,000 children each year.

Clients include SU Australia, SU New Zealand, The Salvation Army Southern Territory, The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Youth for Christ Australia, YWAM Melbourne, The Lutheran Church of Australia, OAC Ministries, The Presbyterian Church of Queensland, Wollongong Church of Christ, Northside Christian Church (Brisbane), Churches of Christ in Western Australia.

Organisations implementing ChildSafe benefit in a number of ways: improved supervision and accountability, improved risk management resulting in fewer untoward events, improved public perception, increased likelihood of affordable Public Liability insurance, reduced internal resources devoted to policy development and legislative compliance.

In a climate of considerable community angst and mistrust, these organisations are seen to be comprehensively addressing issues of child safety.

Staff and volunteers within these organisations also benefit by better understanding their roles and the limits of their responsibility, having structured processes in place for Risk Management Planning, screening and recruiting, Emergency Response and a range of other processes. Personnel feel assured that they are operating within a system of excellence.

The Ansvar Insurance/ChildSafe partnership

Ansvar Insurance had been looking for a web-based solution to the issue of risk management for churches and other volunteer based organisations for more than three years. Child and youth based organisations are increasingly staffed by young people who are internet savvy.

Another concern for Ansvar Insurance is *after the event*. No matter how well risk is managed, it cannot be entirely removed, and we want our clients to clearly document their duty of care, to a level which would stand up in court. A web-based tool assists in providing a clear audit trail.

Scripture Union, a highly respected Christian organisation mobilises thousands of volunteers each year to work in holiday programs, at camps, secondary and primary schools, through sports, recreation, outdoor education and school chaplaincy. Child safety is of prime importance to its reputation.

Ansvar Insurance and Scripture Union had been partnering on other initiatives, and were keen to support the development of ChildSafe as a web-based risk management tool.

In 2006 Ansvar Insurance provided a grant which assisted the creation of ChildSafe Online. It is currently in pilot stage, expected to go live within the next few months.

Lachlan Colebatch, Client Risk Services Manager Ansvar Insurance, explains:

Ansvar Insurance is supporting a leading program which we believe will greatly assist our church clients in risk management through prevention. It's cutting edge, is cost efficient, is an ideal solution to a significant problem facing our clients – protecting the youngest members of our society through the use of clear guidelines with a defined audit trail and removing the ad hoc processes of the past.



Dave Boldy, Executive Officer of ChildSafe, welcomes the support of Ansvar Insurance.

I regard the relationship with Ansvar Insurance as a partnership, in that both parties contribute to the overall endeavour. As well as being the recipient of successive Ansvar Insurance Community Education Program grants, there is a range of ways in which we are working together.

We have jointly hosted a series of functions in five state capitals where Ansvar Insurance invites key clients and ChildSafe provides a presentation on Child Safety. Lachlan Colebatch and I have met regularly over the past couple of years to discuss the development of ChildSafe. Lachlan has provided input into the design and functionality of ChildSafe Online.

Case Study 1

Salvation Army Southern Territory

The Salvation Army has been implementing the ChildSafe program for the last three years. Sonia Jeffrey, Assistant Territorial Youth Secretary, says ChildSafe has given a very large organisation, heavily reliant on volunteers, a framework to offer safe programs to young people.

Sonia speaks to the award criteria:

The Benefits

The best thing about ChildSafe is it provides a framework to manage volunteers. We wouldn't have known where to start for example, in sending children off site to camps, in buses or cars, driven by volunteers. ChildSafe has given us standards.

Leadership

The Salvation Army is very hierarchical. The ChildSafe program fits our structure. It works on levels that complement this internal structure. So the program is promoted through our grassroots leadership, and, as part of the ChildSafe slogan, **Safe People Safe Programs**, 4,500 of our grassroots volunteers have been police checked, and more than 2,000 have completed the first level of training.

Innovation

What is unique about the program is that it can work for the Scouts, for schools and for churches. I haven't seen anything else that provides the crossover from a risk management perspective, into different parts of the community.

Grassroots engagement

The Salvation Army has a 96% approval rating in Australia. Any parent bringing their child to a program or camp does that with confidence because of this reputation. Whilst ChildSafe is an internal risk management system, it allows us to maintain our public reputation. We have a strong system which covers all activities that rely heavily on volunteers interacting with children.

The Community's support of the program

The Salvation Army is delighted with ChildSafe. It has made the work much harder, but that is positive. It means we have an appropriate level of professionalism and accountability. Certainly some of our volunteers do not like the paperwork and balk at change. But we know with confidence, there is now in place a system which goes all the way to the grassroots for reporting back.

The Success

It is absolutely successful. **Safe People Safe Programs** gives us confidence that we are engaging the right people and that all programs are safe, appropriate and fit within our value system.

Case Study 2

Scripture Union New Zealand

Scripture Union New Zealand has begun implementing the ChildSafe program to better provide a risk management process to their camping and schools programs.

Meredith MacKenzie, Administration Manager, talks to the criteria:

Value

This is a two pronged answer. ChildSafe is helping us refine our appointment processes for leadership positions on camps and at schools. The paperwork demanded through ChildSafe is of great value to us in ensuring greater accountability and less risk to our participants, the children and young people.

The other side of the value equation is that it is helping us look at risk management and the quality side of our programs. For example, it is forcing our camp directors to think through a risk model and assess whether particular activities are safe. It requires them to be far more scrupulous in assessing risks.

Leadership

There is nothing in New Zealand which comes close to what we need in managing risks in a volunteer context. Other camping organisations are asking us about ChildSafe and want to apply it in their contexts. ChildSafe definitely leads the way.

Innovation

It is highly innovative and that's why there is nothing else like it.

Grassroots engagement

The program is aimed at the grassroots of our organisation – the volunteers interacting with the students. We still need to do a lot of training. ChildSafe is a change of culture and we have to bring people on the journey. Whilst the initial paperwork and training for individuals is time consuming, once it is established the program will operate far more efficiently.

The Community's support for ChildSafe

Obviously families engaging Scripture Union's services will be very supportive of any program designed to guarantee their children's safety, from all respects. Our own constituency – the volunteers – are predominantly supportive. Some who have worked with us for a long time are more resistant to change but welcome this initiative.

Success

Whilst it is still in its establishment phase, the program has already raised issues. For example, an incoming leader of a schools group didn't want to sign the ChildSafe paperwork. On investigation, we understood why and were more than happy to release him from our program. With regard river safety, the *safe programs* part of ChildSafe is forcing us to ask questions we had not asked previously. And that is a good thing.

Case Study 3

Presbyterian Church of Queensland

Keith Booker, General Secretary, is a firm advocate of the advantages of ChildSafe:

Benefits

There are several benefits. ChildSafe is broken down into individual segments, which makes it very user friendly. Also a number of church organisations are using it. This is of great benefit as it allows user groups to work together. We can bring different perspectives to the area of child safety and the program provides a framework in which to discuss the risk management issues.

Leadership

Whilst our churches had been addressing these issues already, ChildSafe takes us to another level. It adds a discipline to the risk management process. It completes the thoroughness of the system, providing uniform checks and balances.

Innovation

We have been piloting the online system, which has been very helpful. It is a much more user friendly way of ensuring the requirements and going forward to the future. It provides a very reliable recording system.

Grassroots engagement

We have fully implemented the training part of the program which means all our churches are effectively managing the first stage of the program.

The Community's support for ChildSafe

Our individual churches have willingly embraced the program. The roll out process has gone remarkably well and our congregations support the extra discipline I referred to previously.

Success

It is a fantastic system which I have already recommended to other not-for-profit organisations. Another advantage is that it can be constantly upgraded when online, as government requirements change, or new information on risk management processes becomes evident.

Conclusion

Support of ChildSafe fits with the vision and values of Ansvar Insurance and is written into our annual business plan, that states:

We are committed to allocating part of the profit to providing funds for community education projects. Preference will be given to those projects aimed at assisting young people to develop a positive attitude to life.

ChildSafe is a perfect fit with our values. This program provides a vital tool to not-for-profit organisations all over Australia and New Zealand, no matter what their size, to manage their volunteers in a professional way. Their slogan Safe People Safe Programs makes their objectives crystal clear.

Ansvar Insurance is providing its clients with access to a tool which will help them govern their own organisations with a greater confidence, minimise their risks and therefore reduce their insurance claims. And young people can enter an environment in complete confidence. The checks and balances are in place. They can happily engage in what they went looking for – having fun safely. It is a win-win for everyone.