

## MEMO

**TO: ALL ASSOCIATION CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS**  
**FROM: STATE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER**  
**DATE: 28 January 2004.**

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Prior to Christmas a Child Protection Package was forwarded to every Association in Soccer NSW. Within this package was information for your Association to ensure the correct establishment of Child Protection for 2004 and beyond. As Child Protection Officer for Soccer NSW I cannot stress to you strongly enough the importance of undertaking the requirements as set out in this package as this will not only ensure that your organisation is operating in compliance with the Child Protection Legislation BUT it will also assist to ensure that the likelihood of paedophiles and other unwanted persons entering our sport for self gratification is minimised.

If you have not received the Child Protection Package please contact me immediately.

### **BROCHURES**

It is a requirement of Soccer NSW that you ensure that your clubs are provided with a copy of the dark blue brochure "**GUIDELINES FOR ACHIEVEING CHILD PROTECTION FOR SPORT & RECREATION CLUBS**" (sample was in your package) and that sufficient copies are ordered by your Association from the DS&R for all of your club CPO's.

To order these Brochures phone the DS&R on 1300 366 407 or 90063773.

The other brochure provided in the package was orange and this is for your Association Child Protection Officer. Further copies of this brochure can also be ordered from the DS&R.

### **CLUB CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS**

Please ensure that each of your clubs have an appointed Child Protection Officer in 2004. This is an absolute requirement. A Club Child Protection Officer Notification Form was supplied in the package and you were to distribute these to your clubs and have them returned to your Association for quick reference if required.

### **OFFENDERS IN SOCCER**

We have recently identified four (4) persons within our organisation who are not suitable to work with children. These relate to four separate cases relating to offences committed outside of soccer involving children. These persons were identified through our work with the State Child Protection Crime Squad and DOCS and affirmative steps have been taken in relation to these matters. Our concern is that 3 out of 4 clubs involved knew of the matters but did nothing, even though one of the offenders was the coach of an U7 team. This work will be ongoing and unfortunately proves that we are not immune to the presence of serious offenders and it is for this reason that we must be on our toes and take notice of any reports involving the safety of children.



**CHANGES TO CHILD PROTECTION LAWS (not in force yet)**

I have recently been in contact with Parliamentary Counsel and although not in force yet, they confirm that changes to the current definitions of child abuse have recently been presented to the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. These recommendations have been assented and are waiting to be gazetted for enforcement.

These changes (when in force) will effectively lighten up the laws regarding the treatment of children in schools and sport. It will enable teachers and sports officials to take affirmative action to prevent injury to a child, to comfort a child if they are distressed and to place their hands on a child in order to show them direction.

For soccer, this will mean that coaches and officials will be able to step in and take affirmative action to prevent children from becoming involved in physical altercations with other players. In this regard if a coach holds a player back to prevent his participation in a player scuffle then this would be seen to be affirmative action and would not constitute a child related offence.

There are other positive amendments regarding verbal contact with children and it appears that common sense has also prevailed in this regard.

I will ensure that you are notified of any further progress.

Please remember that the existing laws are still in place until further advised.

**WHO ARE YOU?**

There is one very important piece of information that I need. I really need to know who our Association Child Protection Officers are. If you have not already sent in a signed form can you please complete the attached CPO Notification form and send it to me by post or Fax to (02) 88144485.

Please ensure that you give me an after hours home contact phone number and mobile number.

Yours faithfully,

Michelle Haigh  
**State Child Protection Officer**