

COUNCIL CASE STUDY – IMPLEMENTATION BY GLAMORGAN SPRING BAY

How Glamorgan Spring Bay have approached implementing the Child Safe Standards

Glamorgan Spring Bay is a very small council with the staffing and resource constraints experienced by around half of all Tasmanian councils. Alex Woodward, Director Planning and Development, reflects in a conversation on some of the reasons the council has been able to progress the way it has.

He said that the leadership group recognised early in the process that implementing the Standards and making the organisation and community a safer place for children and young people was not necessarily part of the skill of anybody to begin with. The executive team at Glamorgan Spring Bay wanted to get involved and make it happen because it was important. Alex took on the overall leadership role with the need to get help as a priority.

“We are a very small council, and the resources available, help from other councils and direct involvement with LGAT have helped us progress,” Alex said.

Alex outlined the approach they are taking on planning, material development, staff engagement, and implementation. Alex’s observations offer an overview of their ongoing approach.

We started by inviting the whole staff to join something that is about young people and their safety. We talked about keeping in mind the outcomes we could achieve together.

The process acknowledged the need to address uncertainties, unknowns, and concerns about risks and emphasised the importance of what they are doing. Alex summarised their approach.

We are going to do the best we can and show due diligence the best we can. We are going to involve other people and see what other organisations are doing as well.

The implementation team have the view that challenges of regulations and the responsibilities were ‘not something to be massively concerned about’. They decided they were going to roll it out and do everything they reasonably could given the council's circumstances.

Alex has a background in environmental health. He says that the experience of dealing with issues as they arise has helped the implementation team with the approach of getting started and adapting as you go.

“There is no blueprint to these things,” Alex said. “Council officers are used to dealing with complex problems and we have those skills.”

He describes the process of engaging staff as going through a logical process and stepping it out.

You explain to people what is going on and bring them on board as you go. It's not a matter of telling them that this is how things have to be done, rather it's working it through locally with everyone. Everything we have completed to date has been run past the executive team to get their input. They have to be comfortable because ultimately it has to be led from the top.

Our staff is a diverse team, and we needed to roll everything out by going to team meetings and having discussions with the different teams. It has to be informal, so people want to ask questions, want to understand the process and what it means for them. It's very important that everyone is comfortable to ask questions.

Alex said that their actions so far include updating all position descriptions and undertaking training on the Statement of Commitment they now have staff agreement on. These steps best suit their circumstances, and the training will lead to action on the other standards in 2025.