

AMT Position Statement

Working with Children

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Child protection is covered under state and territory legislation in Australia. There is no single national framework setting out the requirements for obtaining Working with Children Checks or Police Checks.

With the exception of Queensland, massage therapists are not currently captured by child protection legislation in Australia. In Queensland, massage therapists are required to apply for a "Blue Card" if their practice incorporates the treatment of minors. In South Australia, massage therapists must lodge a statement outlining their child safe environment policies and procedures with the Department for Families and Communities.

In all other states and territories, massage therapists are not required to undergo any form of police or child safety checking procedures prior to working with minors, unless they are employed in child-related contexts such as preschools, day-care centres and schools.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK PROVISIONS

AMT is concerned by the lack of a coherent national framework for child protection in connection with the practice of massage therapy in Australia. Existing legislation should be amended to capture massage therapists in every state and territory.

Massage therapists should be required to undergo background checks before undertaking any work with minors in a clinical setting.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Massage therapists are included under the definition of Mandatory Reporters in NSW, South Australia and Northern Territory.

The AMT Code of Practice states that massage therapists have an ethical duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate statutory child protection authority in their state or territory, regardless of the current statutory requirements for mandatory reporting.¹

AMT STANDARD - TREATMENT OF MINORS

AMT's Code of Practice includes a standard for the treatment of minors.

When treating a minor, AMT members are required to:

- comply with relevant local statutes relating to child protection, mandatory reporting and working with children
- seek informed consent for treatment from a parent, legal guardian or caregiver
- have a parent, legal guardian or caregiver present throughout the treatment
- report suspected child abuse to the appropriate statutory child protection authority in their state.

AMT members do not have unsupervised contact with a minor.²



in good hands

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1. AMT standard, Treatment of Minors, <http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/practice-resources/AMT-code-of-practice-final.pdf#page=70>, p70.

2. AMT standard, Treatment of Minors, <http://www.amt.org.au/downloads/practice-resources/AMT-code-of-practice-final.pdf#page=73>, p73.