MEDIA RELEASE - PAN Leads Pagan Community on Child Protection

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The Pagan Awareness Network Incorporated (PAN) is toughening its rules relating to child protection.

"We're making sure the Association complies with or exceeds the expectations of the various state laws that operate around Australia," PAN President David Garland said today. "We run and provide support for many events around Australia for followers of Pagan and nature-based religions. Some of these events cater for families and are open to under-18s. This is an area where we have to get it right."

PAN's rule-changes will mean the following:

- All members of the National Committee will be required to have up-to-date Working with Children checks

- All subcommittee members, volunteers, workshop presenters etc. who will come into contact with under 18s at a PAN event must also have up-to-date Working with Children checks

- Committee members and volunteers will be expected to hold to to a similar reporting standard as teachers and health professionals and must report any situation where they suspect real or perceived risk of harm to a child, even if there is no legal requirement to do so.

"We are in the process of appointing a suitably qualified Child Protection Officer to make sure these rules are complied with, to deal with any issues and to liaise with the relevant authorities," Mr Garland said. "We will also work constructively with the people who run the events we support – this is an important facet of our community development aims. PAN is determined to do everything we can to protect children at our events. We also hope to model best practice for other groups and organisations that do similar work within the Pagan community."

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