

a parent's guide to  
COSPLAY

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## What is cosplay? Where did it come from? WHY?

These are questions common to cosplayers – hopefully, this booklet will give you a better idea of what cosplay, and the SPCC, are all about.

### So – what is it?

The term ‘cosplay’ was coined in the nineteen-eighties to describe fans who dressed and acted/played their favourite cartoon, scifi or computer game characters at a convention. The term is an amalgamation of the words ‘costume’ and ‘roleplay’.

The SPCC (Society for the Promotion of Cosplay Culture) was cre-

ated during the planning of the 2010 Wellington Cosplay Ball to facilitate the organisation and promotion of cosplay and costume-related events around the country.

A huge range of skills are applied to cosplay. Cosplay is a creative hobby akin to quilting, painting, clothing design or sculpting; and often involves a mix of skills. In the creation of a costume, any number of techniques may be used to create something that may only ever have been seen in two dimensions. The SPCC aims to create a national pool of resources to help people learn more about techniques used in costume and prop construction, and



help connect people wanting to learn with people or institutions willing to teach; and simply enjoy the hobby of cosplay!

### Where did it come from? Why cosplay?

Cosplay is about the creation of a costume, and showing it off to people who appreciate the time and skill that has gone into the construction of it. Some costumes are more abbreviated than others. This doesn't necessarily mean it was any less time-consuming or difficult to make – a bikini sculpted from fibreglass and leather for a Princess Leia costume, for example. The community in NZ, and the SPCC particularly, strongly encourage age-appropriate costumes. Costumes are open to interpretation. If a design that looks great in 2D may look hideous in 3D. It can be altered to make it more flattering, or more modest, without losing the spirit of the original.

Many cosplayers dress up because they admire the character or costume they've chosen. This may be because the character appeals to them in some way, or simply because they like the costume. Both schools of thought exist harmoniously in the New Zealand cosplay community, and each has its own merits. It is very similar to theatre – some study their character to pose for photos or act out skits in character, and some simply look the part without care about acting it.



## A bit about the community itself...

Much of the organisation of cosplay events in New Zealand is done online, with the largest online community being the Cosplay New Zealand (CNZ) forums. CNZ is a meeting-place and message board, and has a remarkably close-knit bond between members – cosplayers look out for each other. Youngsters and newbies are looked after and pointed in the right direction when needed, and if inappropriate action occurs – cyber bullying, unwelcome advances, or over-sharing of personal information for example – action is taken.

CNZ, and the SPCC want to provide a supportive atmosphere where techniques can be shared, costumes showcased, and help is always available; whether it be with beating a difficult pattern into submission or any problem that is getting on top of our members. Anyone is welcome in the community, provided they act with respect and consideration to other members.

Cosplay in the international forum is gaining wider respect and acknowledgement. There is an international competition held annually in Japan, called the World Cosplay Summit – at present, New Zealand is not represented (although Australia is). We hope to see New Zealand competing at an international level some day! Right now, the only thing we lack is structure – we most certainly have the talent.





## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What sorts of people are in the group? Do you let anyone join?**

Anyone is welcome in the community, provided they act with respect and consideration to other members. They don't even have to cosplay themselves – parents are always welcome to come and see what the young'uns are getting up to, or just find out more about the hobby. We have members who have studied costume design at a tertiary level, members who have worked in the costume industry for film and television, historical costumers, fashion students and designers, and we're all geeks at heart!

### **What is the age range?**

Our members cover a huge age range – we have members as young as nine years old, who have joined with family members, through to people in their seventies.

### **Is there a sign up fee?**

The SPCC has a membership fee of \$20 per year, and this gets you access to SPCC exclusive resources and benefits – membership to the CNZ forums is free.

### **What if there's a meeting my daughter/son can't make, do they have to come?**

Absolutely not! Cosplay is a hobby, not a lifestyle – like any extra-curricular activity, other things may come first.

### **If there's a certain event I don't think is appropriate for them, do they still have to go?**

Again, absolutely not. Cosplay is all about having fun, and attendance at events is never compulsory.

### **How much does this hobby cost?**

Well, that depends. It can vary hugely depending on what is being made – fabrics, trims, sculpting and craft supplies all cost; however the SPCC is working on putting together a “tools library” system for some of the more expensive equipment, in addition to collating a list of stores to buy supplies from. Cosplay should be fun, not so expensive you end up eating cardboard for a month!

### **Are there contact people I can get in touch with?**

Of course! The SPCC officers are always willing to talk with anyone wanting information on any society or general cosplay activity. All officers are contactable through the SPCC website, <http://www.cosplay.org.nz>.



## Keen to learn more?

For more information on the SPCC, please visit our website at [www.cosplay.org.nz](http://www.cosplay.org.nz). Our society Charter is available for view, as is information on membership and membership perks.

To visit the CNZ forums, please visit [forum.cosplay.co.nz](http://forum.cosplay.co.nz).

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