



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Second Annual Report 2024

National Strategy to Prevent and
Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030





PUBLISHING AND LICENSING INFORMATION

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National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (2021–2030): Second Annual Report 2024

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VERSION

The information in the *National Strategy Second Annual Report 2024* is current as at 16 December 2024.

CONTENT WARNING

Child sexual abuse is a challenging issue. Reading this document may bring up strong feelings for some people. Please take care of yourself and ask for help if you need it. You might want to talk to your family and friends, or your counsellor, doctor, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service. A full list of support services can be found on page 2-4.

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Help and support

If you need assistance or support, you can find a list of dedicated services at ChildSafety.gov.au.



CRISIS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

If you are, or someone else is, in immediate danger, call Triple Zero: **000**

Lifeline: **13 11 14** or www.LifeLine.org.au

13YARN: **13 92 76** or www.13yarn.org.au



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT AND ADVICE

ASKIZZY (for people with disabilities, carers and their families to connect with services across Australia):
askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder

Australian Sexual Assault Services Directory:
nasasv.org.au/support-directory

Blue Knot Foundation: **1300 657 380** or
www.blueknot.org.au

Bravehearts: **1800 272 831** or bravehearts.org.au

Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) Inc:
1800 008 774 or clan.org.au

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline:
1800 880 052 / TIS: **131 450** / NRS: **1800 555 677**

National Redress Scheme: **1800 737 377** or
nationalredress.gov.au

Rainbow Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Helpline:
1800 497 212 or fullstop.org.au/get-help/our-services/rainbowviolenceandabusesupport



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Kids Helpline: **1800 55 1800**
or www.KidsHelpline.com.au

Beyond Blue: **1300 22 4636**
or www.BeyondBlue.org.au

MensLine Australia: **1300 78 99 78**
or www.MensLine.org.au

QLife: **1800 184 527**
or www.QLife.org.au



FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT

1800Respect: **1800 737 732**
or www.1800Respect.org.au



STATE AND TERRITORY SERVICES

A comprehensive list of national, state and territory support services and groups is available at ChildSafety.gov.au.





Reporting child sexual abuse

Help is available if you have experienced, are experiencing, or are at risk of child sexual abuse. If you are worried that you, your child, or a child or young person you know is at risk, it is important to act on it and report it.

If you are, or someone else is, in immediate danger, call Triple Zero on **000**.

To report a crime, contact your local police on **131 444**.

If you want to report a crime anonymously, you can visit Crime Stoppers at crimestoppers.com.au or call their toll-free number on **1800 333 000**.

You can report online child sexual abuse, including online grooming, to the Australian Federal Police's Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation at accce.gov.au/report.

If you want to report illegal content, including online child sexual exploitation and abuse material, you can contact the eSafety Commissioner at esafety.gov.au/report.

If you suspect a child or young person is at risk, contact your relevant state or territory child protection organisation. This includes children and young people at risk of:

- harm
- sexual abuse
- physical or emotional abuse
- family violence
- neglect.

You can find links to these organisations and further information about reporting at ChildSafety.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's Traditional Owners and custodians of Country. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and thank them for their wisdom, guidance, and support in this project.

We acknowledge that child sexual abuse can impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, children and young people, and the effects can be amplified by the impacts of colonisation, removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and some subsequent government policies.

We acknowledge the dedicated work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over many decades in Australia to both align with and challenge governments and services about the relationship between colonisation, intergenerational trauma and current high rates of sexual and gendered violence affecting children, young people and adults in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We recognise the strength of culture in responding to child sexual abuse and the capacity of cultural practices to offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people healing and recovery.



Design by Jake Smith, Murrawarri Designer working on Wurundjeri land. The design is a contemporary depiction of the relationship between nature and community, using concentric circles and waves to celebrate our place and connection.



Acknowledgments

The Australian Government honours the contributions of victims and survivors and their supporters to the design, implementation and evaluation of the National Strategy. Their collective expertise and commitment to prevent and better respond to child sexual abuse has shaped the achievements outlined in this National Strategy Second Annual Report. The courageous stories of people with lived experience of child sexual abuse remind us of the importance and urgency of this work.

We acknowledge that victims and survivors have different life experiences and may have been subjected to multiple experiences of victimisation and discrimination. Responses to children, young people and adults need to listen and attend to this range of lived experiences. This may also include practitioners with lived experience of child sexual abuse.

We recognise that research and statistics are an important tool for improved understanding and raising awareness. However, the figures do not adequately convey the profound, long-term impacts experienced by victims and survivors and the families, friends, workplaces and communities who have supported them. We value the lived and living experiences of children, young people and adults who have experienced child sexual abuse as the foundation of best-practice responses.

We recognise the tragedy of those who have lost their lives. We equally recognise the strength and courage of victims and survivors and their stories of survival, hope and resistance.



Ministerial foreword

Every child and young person has the right to be safe from child sexual abuse. It is our collective responsibility to protect them and ensure that strong frameworks are in place to create safe environments for children and young people in all settings.

The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030 (National Strategy) provides a nationally coordinated, strategic framework for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. It seeks to reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia. The National Strategy was a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission), and responds to approximately 100 other Royal Commission recommendations to address child sexual abuse in all settings.

This Second Annual Report presents an implementation update on the 62 measures under the National Strategy's First Action Plans. It showcases the significant work that has been delivered by governments and organisations throughout 2024 to educate, prevent, respond and disrupt those who seek to harm our children.

In June 2024, the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Framework) was released. The Framework is central to ensuring the National Strategy's implementation is transparent and accountable. It will track progress against medium- and long-term outcomes by embedding monitoring and evaluation into all policies and programs.

In August 2024, we released 'The Shadows of the Web – Protecting our children in the digital world' documentary to raise awareness of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, Australia's response and the important role that tech companies play in safeguarding children online.

In October 2024, I launched 'My superhero voice', a children's storybook which offers practical examples of how adults can have important preventative conversations with the children and young people in their lives to keep them safe from sexual abuse. This storybook is a powerful reminder of the role we all have to play in having meaningful conversations with the children and young people in our lives.

The Second Annual Report highlights that significant progress has been made under the National Strategy's First Action Plans, but further action is required. In 2025, we will start developing a Second Action Plan which will build upon the foundational work begun under the First Action Plans.

We know that child sexual abuse is preventable. All Australians have a role in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. Working together, we can prevent child sexual abuse and better support those who have already experienced it.

The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP
Attorney-General



National Strategy Advisory Group statement

The National Strategy Advisory Group (Advisory Group) provides independent, frank and fearless advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030* (National Strategy). Members are a diverse group of individuals with lived experience of child sexual abuse, advocates, academics and professionals across child protection, service delivery, and the National Strategy's priority groups.

The Advisory Group are passionate about enhancing child safety and improving supports for victim and survivors of child sexual abuse. We strive to keep children and victims and survivors at the centre of our collective efforts. We are committed to addressing the existing challenge of victim blaming and for adults that harm to be held accountable for their choices. We are also invested in enhancing responses to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours and their families to stop behaviours from recurring or escalating. We are proud to be part of the governance for a National Strategy that is delivering meaningful action for the Australian community.

The Advisory Group particularly commend the *One Talk at a Time* Campaign (see National Action Plan Activity 6 on [page 33](#)). It is a significant investment in national awareness raising to prevent child sexual abuse, based on a carefully researched and responsive evidence base.

The Advisory Group are proud of our contributions to the development of media guides for responsible reporting on child sexual abuse, particularly the companion guide titled '[Engaging with the media about child sexual abuse: For victims and survivors](#)'. We believe these guides provide useful advice to empower victims and survivors in their engagement with media.

The Advisory Group applaud the work of the eSafety Commissioner to deliver a range of webinars, conversation cards, promotions and online toolkits to equip children and young people, parents, carers, and community workers to better navigate online child safety risks (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 4 on [page 39](#)). This work is internationally leading and of critical importance to preventing online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Advisory Group are committed to amplifying the voices and perspectives of children and young people in the design and implementation of child safety initiatives. We were proud to see the delivery of the National Child Safety Summit (Youth Summit), which brought together over 50 youth advocates and individuals with lived experience in June 2024 to discuss priorities for government in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse (refer case study on [page 59](#)). To complement this, we welcomed two new youth members in 2024, who provide invaluable insight into ensuring the National Strategy is responsive to the needs of young people.

Advisory Group members are passionate about upholding the Royal Commission's recommendations for transparency and accountability in the delivery of the National Strategy. We are pleased to see our feedback and contributions embedded within the National Strategy's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Framework), released in June 2024 (see National Action Plan Activity 25 on [page 100](#)). The co-design process embedded the voice of victims and survivors into this Framework – modelling the centrality of lived experience.

While we commend the achievements of the National Strategy's First Action Plans, there is much more work to be done. Throughout 2024, the Advisory Group have advocated for a robust Second Action Plan to build on existing work under the National Strategy. In our view, funding for the Second Action Plan must go beyond the First Action Plans to be responsive to the latest evidence of the prevalence and impact of child sexual abuse in Australia.

We believe it is important to continue several of the strategic priorities of the First Action Plans. Notably, we support a continued overarching focus on education and awareness raising, prevention and early intervention, supporting victims and survivors, workforce capability and capacity building for services responding to child sexual abuse and building a robust evidence base through research and evaluation.

We call for the Second Action Plan to include a significant focus on supporting healing and recovery for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, who account for one in four Australians. Victims and survivors cannot be allowed to fall through the cracks of the Commonwealth-State divide. All governments need to uplift support and increase funding for specialist services for victims and survivors, who deserve nothing less than our best efforts in this regard.

The Second Action Plan must increase focus on all priority cohorts under the National Strategy, including children, and ensure the lived expertise of victims and survivors is central to all measures. It should build upon the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign to increase community awareness and attitudes whilst maintaining a balanced approach between prevention and response, drawing on new and existing research. It is also essential to continue to tackle the issues of cybersafety that enable and facilitate child sexual abuse. The Advisory Group believes accountability by digital industry is critical to this success.

The Advisory Group is committed to continuing our work with the Australian Government in our combined efforts to preventing child sexual abuse and supporting and empowering victims and survivors through the National Strategy. We will continue to provide our voices in progressing this pivotal work in the coming years and remain committed to making a real difference.



Members of the National Strategy Advisory Group - 5 December 2023

Terminology

We recognise that not everyone agrees on terminology. We have carefully considered the terms we use in the National Strategy Second Annual Report (Second Annual Report). They are based on the opinions of many victims and survivors, and people with understanding and knowledge in these areas. In some instances, the terms we use differ from the National Strategy document released in October 2021. This reflects our improved understanding of the policy issue and/or people's lived experience.

We use the terms:

- **child sexual abuse** for any act that exposes a child or young person to, or involves a child or young person in, sexual activities that:
 - they do not understand
 - they do not or cannot consent to
 - are not accepted by the community or
 - are unlawful.
- **children and young people** for people under the age of 18.
- **children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours** for children and young people who have displayed sexual behaviours that fall outside the range of expected/typical or developmentally appropriate activity for a child or young person's stage of development. Concerning sexual behaviours may not include overt intent to harm and/or may be developmentally appropriate but expressed in an inappropriate context ¹. Concerning sexual behaviours may indicate a child has been harmed or may signal they are at risk of being harmed. Concerning sexual behaviours can occur in any setting, including in person and online, and may or may not be directed towards a child or another individual.
- **children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours**² for children and young people who have displayed sexual behaviours that fall outside what may be considered developmentally typical or socially appropriate, cause harm to themselves or others. When these

behaviours involve others, they may include a lack of consent, reciprocity, mutuality, and may involve the use of coercion, shame, force, or a misuse of power. Harmful sexual behaviours evoke worry about the development and wellbeing of the child, young person, or others involved, and where they involve other children or young people, the behaviours may cause significant harm and may be experienced as abusive by other children and young people involved. Harmful sexual behaviours may include illegal behaviours that require a criminal justice response. Harmful sexual behaviours can occur in any setting, including in person and online.

- **offender** for a person who is found by a court to have done something unlawful.
- **perpetrator** for an adult who has sexually abused a child or young person, but who may or may not have been convicted of this crime.
- **victims and survivors** for those who have experienced child sexual abuse. We recognise that not all people with lived experience of child sexual abuse will identify with these terms.
- **trauma informed approaches** ensure practices, policies and culture recognise and respond to the effects of trauma on a person's wellbeing and behaviour. A trauma-informed approach is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or therapeutic treatments. These interventions are part of, but not the same as, a system-wide trauma-informed approach. A trauma-informed approach does not require a service to provide therapeutic treatment addressing the symptoms of trauma.

Please see the glossary on [page 108](#) for a full list of terms and definitions used in the Second Annual Report.

1 NSW Government, Children First 2022-2031: our shared framework for preventing and responding to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children and young people

2 Please note this language has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – children with harmful sexual behaviours.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definition
ABF	Australian Border Force
ACCCE	Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation
ACMS	Australian Child Maltreatment Study
ACIC	Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AGD	Attorney-General's Department
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CSEA	Child sexual exploitation and abuse
Framework	National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
GP	General Practitioner
JACETs	Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team
National Centre	National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse
National Office	National Office for Child Safety
National Principles	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
National Strategy	<i>National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030</i>
NGO	Non-government organisations
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NSPWG	National Strategy Policy Working Group
PHN	Primary Health Networks
Royal Commission	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
SMG	Strategic Management Group
SOG	Senior Oversight Group
Voluntary Principles	Five Country Ministerial Voluntary Principles to Counter Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Introduction

This Annual Report provides the second update on the implementation progress of the National Strategy. It follows the [National Strategy's First Annual Report](#) which was released on 15 December 2023.

All national work to develop and implement the National Strategy was previously published in the Australian Government's Annual Progress Reports on the Implementation of recommendations from the Royal Commission (Royal Commission Annual Reports), which can be found at ChildSafety.gov.au. The National Strategy's Annual Reports support ongoing monitoring and accountability under the [National Strategy's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#). They outline key achievements to date and monitor our national progress against the National Strategy's activities.

This Annual Report is structured by the National Strategy's five key themes:

This Annual Report contains an update on key achievements and implementation progress over the past year (**December 2023 to December 2024**) for all 62 activities across the National Strategy's two initial action plans:

- The First National Action Plan (2021–2024) comprises 29 activities of shared national responsibility which are being delivered in partnership between Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.
- The First Commonwealth Action Plan (2021–2024) comprises 33 activities of Australian Government responsibility which are being delivered primarily by Commonwealth Government departments.

Theme 1

Awareness raising, education and building child safe cultures

Theme 2

Supporting and empowering victims and survivors

Theme 3

Enhancing national approaches to children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours³

Theme 4

Offending prevention and intervention⁴

Theme 5

Improving the evidence base

³ Please note the name of theme 3 has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – *Enhancing national approaches to children with harmful sexual behaviours*

⁴ Please note the name of theme 4 has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – *Offender prevention*

Each chapter includes a high-level overview of the implementation of activities under each National Strategy theme, including:

- what change is needed – this is based on the Royal Commission’s findings and current research and evidence underpinning the National Strategy
- the focus of government actions under the National Strategy to address the issue
- the relevant National Strategy activities that underpin the theme
- the medium-term outcomes from the Framework which outline what government actions are trying to achieve
- how non-government stakeholders and priority groups have been consulted and engaged in the implementation of the activities within the theme.

Each chapter includes an implementation progress update for each National Strategy activity relevant to that theme. It also includes case studies highlighting related work delivered by governments and/or the non-government sector across Australian and internationally that aligns with the intended outcomes for each theme and the overall objective of the National Strategy.

Since the launch of the National Strategy in 2021, the National Office has moved into the Attorney-General’s Department (AGD). The Annual Report notes which activities are led by the National Office to ensure transparency in the National Office’s work program. Furthermore, some of the names of National Strategy activities have been updated and/or the lead Australian Government agency has changed. These changes are footnoted throughout the Annual Report.

Acknowledging the diversity of victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, the progress update for each National Strategy activity prioritises reporting on how the National Strategy’s priority groups have been engaged, consulted and/or supported. The National Strategy’s priority groups are:

- victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their supporters
- children and young people and their support networks
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (First Nations peoples)
- Multicultural, multilingual and multifaith communities (also referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; CALD)
- people with disability
- LGBTQIA+ people
- regional and remote communities.



National Strategy Implementation update:

Significant progress has been made during 2024 to implement the National Strategy's 62 activities. As of December 2024, implementation of 7 National Strategy activities was finalised. These activities are now considered completed and will no longer be reported on in future Annual Reports.

The National Office also commenced consultation and development of the National Strategy's Second Action Plan, which will steer reforms over subsequent years. It will build on the foundations laid by the First Action Plans, but also include new actions to address emerging issues and key gaps informed by the latest evidence. The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity for the Australian Government, together with the states and territories, to continue to lead efforts to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse.

KEY NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

March 2024

- The Department of Health and Aged Care and the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (National Centre) launched a [new set of resources](#) to strengthen the capability of the primary health care workforce to better respond to children and adults who have experienced sexual violence and child sexual abuse (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 11 – [page 57](#)).
- The Australian Federal Police (AFP) hosted the inaugural 5-day Victim Identification Foundation training course, which completed the suite of training recommended in the National Victim Identification Framework (National Action Plan Activity 18 – [page 77](#)).

April 2024

- AFP Manila, together with the Netherlands Police, facilitated and funded a basic Interviewing Vulnerable Witnesses Workshop for the Philippine National Police and the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation child exploitation investigators (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 20 – [page 87](#)).

May 2024

- The National Office released the National Strategy First Annual Report: A Guide for Children and Young People on 9 May 2024. This guide updates children and young people on tangible work being done and key new resources available to help them understand child safety and child sexual abuse and to recognise the signs of child sexual abuse (National Action Plan Activity 25 – [page 100](#)).
- The National Office, in collaboration with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, released a suite of resources and activities about building and being a part of a child or young person's safety team (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 6 – [page 41](#)).
- The National Office led the development of a trauma-informed, victim and survivor-centred multidisciplinary workplan through the Australia-US Joint Council on Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation. The US and Australian Government Ministers endorsed the workplan to combat online child sexual exploitation on 6 May 2024 (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 18 – [page 85](#)).
- The AFP ran a Victim Identification Taskforce in May 2024 with specialist representation from most Australian state and territory Police Forces and the New Zealand Police. During this taskforce, 30 victims were identified, 24 victims were referred, and 2282 media files were contributed to the International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database (National Action Plan Activity 18 – [page 77](#)).

June 2024

- The National Office released the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Framework) on 13 June 2024. The Framework will measure progress towards the National Strategy's objective – to reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia (National Action Plan Activity 25 – [page 100](#)).

August 2024

- The Attorney-General launched the Shadows of the Web – Protecting our children in the digital world documentary about the role of tech companies in keeping children and young people safe online on 30 August 2024 (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 6 – [page 41](#)).
- AFP provided law enforcement agencies in the Philippines (Manila) with Digital Forensics training from 4–16 August 2024, which enhanced investigators' abilities to conduct an initial triage of electronic devices found during search warrants (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 20 – [page 87](#)).

September 2024

- During National Child Protection Week, eSafety launched resources including animated videos to assist parents and carers to discuss the topic of online child sexual abuse with their children, and how to support a child who may have experienced this (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 4 – [page 39](#)).
- The Attorney-General launched the children's storybook, 'My superhero voice', in 11 languages. My superhero voice is an age-appropriate storybook which supports parents, carers and other adults from all cultures and backgrounds to have preventative conversations about child sexual abuse with children and young people (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 6 – [page 41](#)).

November 2024

- The Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2024 passed both houses of Parliament (National Action Plan Activity 9 – [page 52](#)).

IMPLEMENTATION GOVERNANCE

The National Strategy's 62 activities are being delivered by Australian, state and/or territory governments in consultation and partnership with non-government stakeholders and the community. This approach ensures the National Strategy's activities meet the diverse needs and expectations of our priority groups and reflect the views and experiences of non-government organisations (NGOs), academics, community members and individuals.

The National Strategy's implementation governance arrangements, which will be in place for the full 10 years of the National Strategy, are outlined at [Appendix A](#).

NON-GOVERNMENT ADVISORY GROUPS:

There are three non-government advisory groups that are consulted on the design and implementation of the National Strategy's measures.

- **National Strategy Advisory Group:** The National Strategy Advisory Group (Advisory Group) is a non government consultative body that aims to ensure the views and experiences of our priority groups, as well organisations, academics, community members and individuals, are embedded in the design, implementation and evaluation of the National Strategy's measures. The Advisory Group is comprised of people with lived experience, researchers, service providers and peak organisations, including members who identify as part of, or represent, each of the National Strategy's priority groups.
- **National Clinical Reference Group:** The National Clinical Reference Group (Reference Group) provides expert advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of measures related to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours under the National Strategy. The work of the Reference Group reflects the geographic, social and cultural diversity of Australia.
- **Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group:** The Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group help us understand, through collaborative discussions and feedback, how we can better develop and deliver National Strategy activities that help keep children safe. Members of the group are representatives of national peak bodies and large national organisations that work with children and young people.

The National Office is considering approaches for shared decision-making under the Second Action Plan to help ensure the National Strategy's policies and programs are designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that meets the needs of First Nations children and young people, families and communities.

GOVERNANCE GROUPS:

The 29 activities under the First National Action Plan are overseen by the Senior Oversight Group (SOG) and the Strategic Management Group (SMG). The SOG and the SMG consist of senior executive level government officials (Commonwealth Senior Executive Level Band 3 and Band 1 or equivalent, respectively) from Australian, state and territory governments.

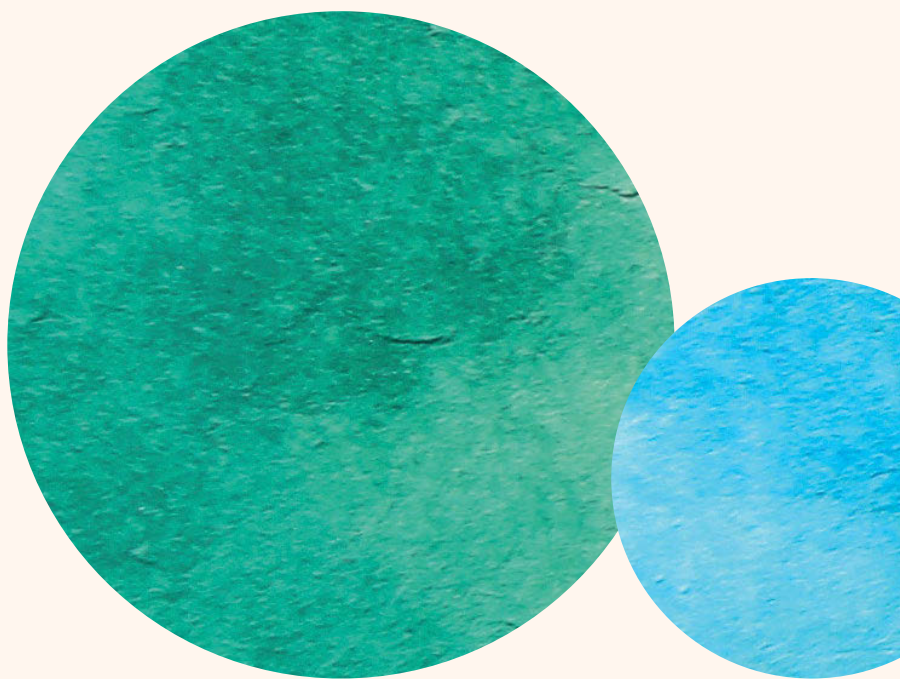
All National Strategy activities are overseen by the National Strategy Policy Working Group (NSPWG), with escalation to the Interdepartmental Executive Group (IEG) as required. The IEG and the NSPWG consist of senior executive level Commonwealth government officials (Commonwealth Senior Executive Level Band 3 or Band 1, respectively) from Australian Government agencies that are leading work under the National Strategy.

All senior governance groups are overseeing the development of the National Strategy's Second Action Plan.

The governance arrangements also include eight thematic inter-jurisdictional officer-level working groups with responsibility for progressing implementation of key National Strategy activities. The working groups report regularly to the SMG on progress against their work plans. The working groups include:

- Adult Prevention and Secondary Victim Response Working Group.
- Child Safe Organisations Working Group.
- Children and young people who have displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviours – Prevention and Response Working Group⁵.
- Education and Awareness Raising Working Group.
- Information Sharing Working Group.
- Law Enforcement National Strategy Working Group.
- Research, Evaluation and Data Working Group.
- Victim Support and Workforce Development Working Group.

All governance groups oversee the implementation of National Strategy activities across governments, including to promote consistency across jurisdictions.



5 Please note this text uses preferred terminology. The official name for this group is 'Children and young people with Harmful Sexual Behaviours – Prevention and Response Working Group'

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE NATIONAL STRATEGY'S OBJECTIVE

The National Strategy's objective explains what it will look like if the National Strategy is successful. The objective of the National Strategy is to reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia. This is an enormous and long-term task. It requires achievement of a wide range of outcomes for children and young people, adult victims and survivors, communities, families, services and institutions across all five of the National Strategy's themes. These outcomes are outlined in the [National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework \(Framework\)](#).

The tracking and reporting of collective progress towards National Strategy outcomes will be possible through the Framework's key outputs, including:

- an online data dashboard to report available data underpinning the Framework's indicators and measures
- the evaluation of the National Strategy's First Action Plans.
- The results from the first Australian Child Maltreatment Study^{1,2,3}, released in April 2023, provide new baseline data on the National Strategy's objective. This data will inform measurement of progress towards the National Strategy's objective and outcomes over 2021–2030.

PREVALENCE

1 in 4 (28.5%) Australians aged 16 years and over have experienced child sexual abuse.

This prevalence rate does not include online sexual victimisation.

Females are at higher risk of experiencing child sexual abuse.

Around **1 in 3 (37.3%)** females compared with **1 in 5 males (18.8%)** have experienced child sexual abuse. This gender disparity is wider for the 16–24 years age group (**35.2%** compared with **14.5%**) compared with older age groups.

RISK FACTORS

Contact sexual abuse is more prevalent than non-contact sexual abuse (23.7% compared with 18.1%).

Contact sexual abuse includes sexual touching, attempted rape, and completed rape.

Females were more than twice as likely to have experienced contact sexual abuse than males (**32.4%** compared with **14.2%**).

Most child sexual abuse offenders are people known to the child.

Around 1 in 12 Australians (**7.8%**) reported child sexual abuse perpetrated by adult family members. In addition, 7.5% of Australians reported child sexual abuse by an adult they knew outside the family, and 2.0% reported sexual abuse by an institutional adult caregiver.

In comparison, 4.9% of Australians reported sexual abuse by an adult they did not know, and 1.4% reported sexual abuse by children and/or young people they did not know.

The fastest growing group responsible for child sexual abuse is children and young people under the age of 18 who were current or former boyfriends or girlfriends when the sexual abuse occurred.

IMPACTS

When compared with those who had not experienced child sexual abuse, victims and survivors were more likely to have negative health and behavioural impacts:

2.7 times more likely to have self-harmed.

2.3 times more likely to have attempted suicide.

2.0 times more likely to be cannabis dependent.

NATIONAL STRATEGY CONTRIBUTIONS TO CLOSING THE GAP REFORMS:

First Nations children, peoples, communities and families are priority groups under the National Strategy. All National Strategy activities are being implemented in a way that considers the needs of priority groups, including First Nations people. There are also a number of National Strategy activities designed to specifically support and empower First Nations communities. The broader whole-of-community activities to prevent child sexual abuse will also include First Nations communities.

The National Strategy's implementation aligns with the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) to deliver a holistic, complementary and non-duplicative approach to preventing harm to children.

The following National Strategy activities support and contribute to the following Closing the Gap outcomes and priority reforms:

- **Outcome 10:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
 - Activities under Theme 4: Offending prevention and intervention aim to prevent adult offending and provide nationally consistent law enforcement responses.
- **Outcome 11:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
 - Activities under Theme 3: Enhancing national approaches to children with harmful sexual behaviours aim to support developmentally typical sexual behaviours and to provide a therapeutic, evidence-based response to prevent harmful sexual behaviours from re-occurring and/or escalating.
- **Outcome 13:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe and **Outcome 14:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.
 - All National Strategy activities aim to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by preventing and better responding to child sexual abuse.
 - Of particular relevance to First Nations children and families are activities under Theme 1: Awareness Raising, Education and Building Child Safe Cultures and Theme 2: Supporting and Empowering Victims and Survivors, including:

- The 'Keeping Our Kids Safe' resources support implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in a culturally safe way for First Nations children, young people and their community (see National Action Plan Activity 1).
- Co-designing, delivering, and evaluating First Nations-led, place-based healing initiatives to support First Nations victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their families (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 7).
- Delivering trauma-aware, healing-informed and culturally appropriate resources to support early disclosure experiences and access to specialist services for First Nations victims and survivors (see National Action Plan Activity 8).
- **Priority Reform 1:** Formal partnerships and shared decision making.
 - The National Office is considering approaches for shared decision making under the Second Action Plan. This will ensure the National Strategy's policies and programs are designed, implemented and evaluated in a way that meets the needs of First Nations children and young people, families and communities.
 - The three non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#) all include First Nations representation on their membership. For instance, in 2024, the Reference Group welcomed three additional First Nations members (see National Action Plan Activity 12).
- **Priority Reform 4:** Shared access to data and information at a regional level.
 - A number of activities under Theme 5: Improving the Evidence Base, are being delivered in accordance with Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles, including:
 - Under the Framework, the National Office is developing a data dashboard for reporting progress on the Framework's indicators and measures (see National Action Plan Activity 25). This dashboard will improve accessibility to national data on the prevalence, risk and impacts of child sexual abuse.
 - First Nations stakeholders are being consulted on the establishment of the Child Wellbeing Data Asset and the use of this asset for First Nations focused research (see National Action Plan Activity 29).



BROADER IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF ROYAL COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

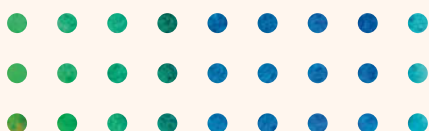
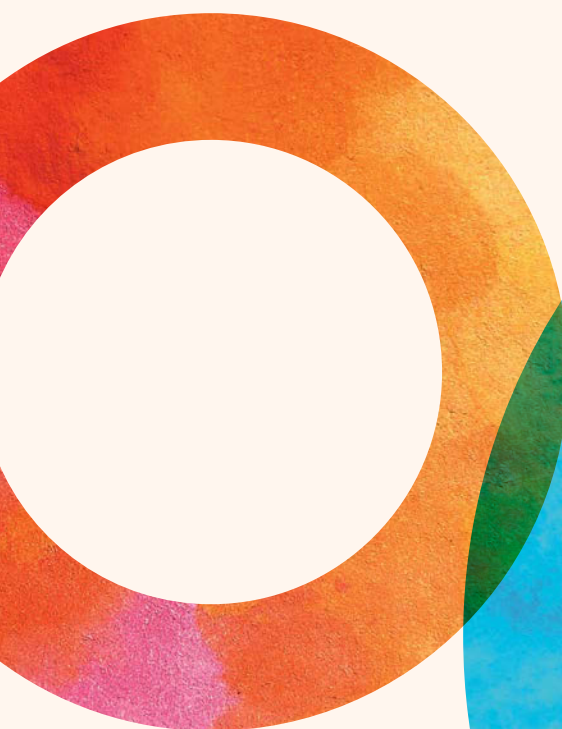
The National Strategy was a key recommendation of the Royal Commission, and responds to approximately 100 other Royal Commission recommendations to address child sexual abuse.

As the Australian Government's five consecutive years of Royal Commission Annual Reporting has been completed, implementation progress reporting of the Australian Government's recommendations will continue under the National Strategy.

The Royal Commission's Final Report made a total of 409 recommendations to better protect children from institutional child sexual abuse. Of these recommendations, 206 were directed wholly or partially at the Australian Government. This included 84 recommendations about redress for victims and survivors.

The Australian Government responded to these 84 recommendations by establishing the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse on 1 July 2018. Following the Scheme's second anniversary, an independent review was conducted between July 2020 and March 2021. The final report of the second year review of the National Redress Scheme and the final response of the Australian Government were published in August 2024 and are available at nationalredress.gov.au/about/about-scheme/reports-and-statistics/second-anniversary-review. The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Amendment Bill 2023 passed through the Australian Parliament on 20 March 2024 and by 4 April 2024 most measures in the [National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Amendment Act 2024](#) came into effect.

A full list of the remaining 122 recommendations can be found at [Appendix B – Implementation Status of Royal Commission recommendations](#).



The Australian Government considers recommendations as 'implemented', to the extent that they apply to the Australian Government, if any of the following situations apply ⁶:

- **Implemented:**

- the Australian Government has delivered the core requirements of the recommendation and there is no further action required
- the Australian Government has funded it as ongoing work.

- **Implemented under the National Strategy:**

- the Australian Government is progressing the development and implementation of national work under the National Strategy. Progress will continue to be reported in the National Strategy's Annual Reports under the relevant activity update.

As at December 2024, the majority of the **122** recommendations directed at the Australian Government have been implemented – only **13** (11%) recommendations are still listed as 'in progress'.

Implementation progress for the 122 recommendations that the Australian Government has whole or partial responsibility for:

13 (11%)
recommendations in progress

59 (48%)
recommendations implemented



50 (41%)
recommendations implemented under the National Strategy

⁶ A number of these Royal Commission recommendations are jointly addressed to state and territory governments. The Australian Government acknowledges that state and territory governments are at different stages of implementing these recommendations – some jurisdictions may have already completed implementing these recommendations, to the extent that they apply to the jurisdiction's response to the Royal Commission and/or are progressing these recommendations independent of the National Strategy.



CASE STUDY: THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SALE, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA 2023



Ms Mama Fatima Singhateh during her visit with Commonwealth, state and territory stakeholders – November 2023.

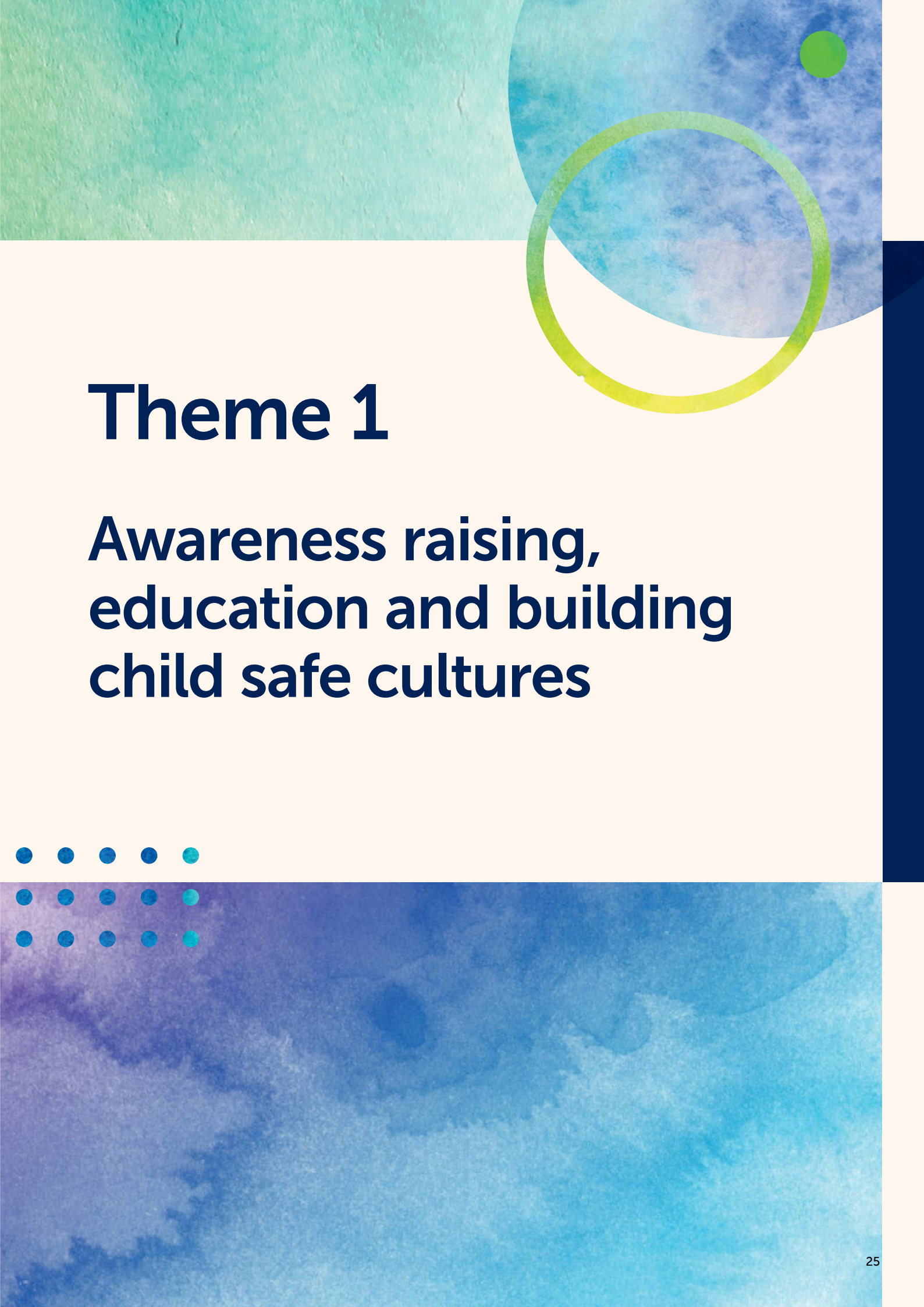
The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children (the Special Rapporteur), Ms Mama Fatima Singhateh, conducted an official visit to Australia from 30 October to **10 November 2023**.

The purpose of this visit was to assess Australia's progress on combatting and responding to the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including human trafficking and modern slavery, in light of international human rights norms and standards. The visit included identifying best practices and providing Australia with the opportunity to showcase international leadership in the child safety space.

The National Office supported this official visit by coordinating government meetings with Commonwealth, state and territory government officials from agencies with a focus on child safety and protection. The Special Rapporteur visited Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs, Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne.

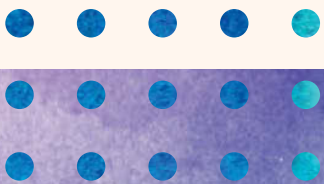
The Special Rapporteur's meetings with governments allowed for productive and informative discussions. The Special Rapporteur will present her findings at the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (due to be held between February and April 2025).





Theme 1

**Awareness raising,
education and building
child safe cultures**



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

What is needed? The Royal Commission found that organisational cultures and practices had allowed child sexual abuse to occur and inhibited detection and response – and that this continued to exist in contemporary Australian organisations. Many of the Royal Commission’s recommendations aim to raise awareness of child sexual abuse across all layers of Australian society and build child safe cultures within organisations. A well-informed community is better equipped to identify, respond to and prevent abuse from occurring. It will give victims and survivors access to the information they need. It will also change the misconceptions and stigma that stop people from asking for help.

The focus of government action: Commonwealth, state and territory governments are working to build a culture that respects the rights of children and young people to be protected, safe and listened to. This includes:

- engaging, educating and empowering children and young people, parents, kin, carers, families, communities and organisations
- educating and training organisations, professionals and students where their roles include working with children and young people
- engaging, educating and empowering parents and families to recognise and prevent harmful online behaviours
- building organisations’ capacity to be child safe and improving transparency and accountability
- working with the digital industry and raising awareness of their role in stopping criminal activity (including child sexual abuse) on their platforms and educating children and young people, families and the public about online safety
- improving national arrangements for information sharing to strengthen child safety and wellbeing.

What are we aiming to achieve?

1. Everyone has increased awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse
2. Communities, organisations and governments implement child safety policies and practices and have a culture where the best interests of children and young people, and victims and survivors, are a priority
3. Child sexual abuse is discussed openly, respectfully and without shame or stigma
4. Digital technologies are used to promote child safety and respond to child sexual abuse.

Relevant National Strategy activities:

National Action Plan Activities 1 – 6

Commonwealth Action Plan Activities 1 – 6

The design, implementation and evaluation of Theme 1 activities continue to be informed and guided by consultation with non-government stakeholders, including National Strategy priority groups and organisations that work with children and young people. In the past year, this consultation has been progressed through:

- the three non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#)
- project specific working groups such as the Children and Young People with Disability Advisory Group (this is related to National Action Plan Activity 1, development of resources)
- individuals who have opted in to consultation through the National Office’s consultation mailing list.

The National Centre (refer to National Action Plan Activity 5) also engages with priority groups through its Survivor-led Adult College and First Nations College. Learnings from these engagements also guide progression of work under this theme.





PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Key achievements over the past year include:

- The National Office developed resources to support and promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing in organisations, including:
 - an educational video on child safety risk management practices
 - easy to read documents for the Speak Up and Make a Complaint resource and Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people resource.
- The National Office facilitated three successful child safety conferences with the National Office's Child Safe Sectors Leadership group, focusing on:
 - technology based child safety
 - situational harm prevention approaches, safeguarding in the Church and the National Strategy for Volunteering
 - trauma-informed practices and approaches (see National Action Plan Activity 1).
- The National Office developed resources to accompany the 'One Talk at a Time' awareness raising campaign which are available on ChildSafety.gov.au, including:
 - *My superhero voice*, an in-language storybook that teaches children about what to do if something makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. This resource can be used as a prompt by adults to start conversations with children about body safety and child sexual abuse. The storybook is available in English and has been translated into Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Farsi, Hazaragi, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Thai and Vietnamese
 - a suite of resources and activities created in collaboration with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation about building and being a part of a child or young person's safety team
 - a webinar in partnership with Australian Childhood Foundation about child safety in sport, including how adults can have conversations with sporting clubs and organisations about keeping children and young people safe from child sexual abuse (National Action Plan Activity 6).
- The National Office ensured the voices and views of young people are represented through the addition of two youth members to the National Strategy Advisory Group in 2024 (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 1).

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 1: IMPLEMENT AND PROMOTE THE NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.9, 6.14 from the *Final Report* and Recommendations 16, 17, 18, 19, 32 from the Criminal Justice Report.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) set out a nationally consistent approach to promoting a culture of child safety and wellbeing within organisations. The National Principles give effect to the child safe standards that were recommended by the Royal Commission and outline the 10 actions all organisations should take to keep children and young people safe.

In the past year, the National Office for Child Safety (National Office) worked closely with state and territory governments and non-government sectors to develop a range of new National Principles resources to support and promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing in organisations.

This includes:

- engaging Children and Young People with Disability to develop National Principles resources to support organisations that work with children and young people with disability, their families, carers and kin
- an educational video on child safety risk management practices. This video aligns with the Child Safety Risk Management Guide published in 2023
- agreement with the Australian Human Rights Commission to review and update their Child Safe Organisation resources, including the National Principles eLearning resources
 - This work also relates to National Action Plan Activity 3 (enhance national arrangements for sharing child safety and wellbeing information).
- easy read documents for the *Speak Up and Make a Complaint resources* and the *Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people* resources.

Resources are available at ChildSafety.gov.au.⁷

The National Office also facilitated three successful child safety conferences with the National Office's Child Safe Sectors Leadership group, focusing on:

- technology based child safety
- situational harm prevention approaches, safeguarding in the Church and the National Strategy for Volunteering
- trauma-informed practices and approaches.

In 2025, the National Office will continue to work with states and territories and the non-government sector to implement and promote the National Principles. This includes:

- re-running promotions for the *Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles* resources. These resources help organisations implement the National Principles in a culturally safe way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their communities
- scoping development of child safety resources to provide sector specific support to implement the National Principles.

⁷ As at the date of publication, some resources were still forthcoming.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 2: SET UP AN ONGOING NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS TO REPORT ON THEIR PROGRESS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN CHILD SAFE CULTURES – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.14 and 17.3 from the *Final Report*.

The National Office is developing a new child safety annual reporting framework to support organisations to implement good practice child safety policies and processes and to embed cultures that prioritise the best interests of all children.

Over 2018–2022, the National Office coordinated the 5-year annual reporting process for non-government organisations (NGOs) as recommended by the Royal Commission (Recommendation 17.3). All NGO reports, which detail the organisation's child safety practices, are available at ChildSafety.gov.au.

Over 2024, the National Office analysed the reports and stakeholder feedback received during the 5-year reporting process, and led a two-stage consultation process to inform the design of the new reporting framework. The first stage of consultation re-engaged stakeholders who were

involved in the previous Royal Commission 5-year annual reporting process, via a survey, to better understand the barriers and enablers organisations face with annual reporting.

The feedback received in the first stage of consultation formed the basis of a public consultation paper and draft model for the reporting framework. The public consultation paper was disseminated widely, ensuring engagement with representatives from all of the National Strategy's priority groups. The paper was released in late-November 2024 with feedback due in early 2025.

Following feedback on the consultation paper and the draft model for the reporting framework, the National Office will consider next steps for implementing the new child safety annual reporting framework as appropriate.



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 3: ENHANCE NATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHARING CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING INFORMATION – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 8.6 to 8.8 from the *Final Report* and Recommendation 3 from the *Working with Children Checks Report* (2015).

The National Strategy aims to build child-safe cultures in which people working with children are supported to share information across jurisdictions and sectors to identify, prevent and respond to child abuse or maltreatment, and are adequately assessed on their suitability to work with children.

Throughout 2024, Commonwealth, state and territory governments have been working together to implement the outcomes of the November 2023 Ministerial Forum for Child Safety, collaborate on strengthening child safety and wellbeing information sharing arrangements, improve national consistency of working with children checks (WWCCs), and explore options to align jurisdictional reportable conduct schemes.

In May 2024, the Information Sharing Working Group established a sub-working group, chaired by New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, to develop possible legislative and administrative arrangements to implement the national information sharing scheme recommended by the Royal Commission (Recommendations 8.6 to 8.8).

In October 2024, states and territories agreed the benefits of nationally consistent legislative reportable conduct schemes, which oblige heads of institutions to notify an oversight body of any reportable allegation, conduct or conviction involving any of the institution's employees. They also agreed to recognise the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reportable conduct scheme recommendations (7.10–7.12) as the national model.

In November 2024, the National Office secured a supplier to undertake a feasibility study on the exchange of international criminal history information for WWCC processes. The feasibility study report is expected to be delivered by June 2025.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.2, 6.19 and 13.7 from the *Final Report*.

The Australian Government is providing \$77.6 million over five years from June 2024 to states and territories and non-government school sectors via a Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) Schedule. This funding will support delivery of evidence based, expert developed and age-appropriate Consent and Respectful Relationship Education (CRRE) in primary and secondary schools

As of 28 June 2024, all Education Ministers signed the FFA Schedule, with first year funding of \$20.4 million paid to jurisdictions and non-government school sectors following Commonwealth approval of their draft implementation plans. Early implementation of agreed CRRE activities has commenced.

CRRE is a preventative measure that supports the Government's commitment to end violence against women and children under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032*.

Further information is available at education.gov.au/consent-and-respectful-relationships-education-crre.

The CRRE measure also supports the Australian Curriculum 9.0, which aims to ensure students from Foundation to Year 10 receive age-appropriate education on positive, respectful relationships and consent.

CRRE is a key long-term measure to build positive attitudes in young people towards issues such as consent and healthy, safe and respectful relationships. This includes providing students and young people with the knowledge and skills to better communicate with one another, make responsible shared decisions, understand consent, resolve conflict, and engage in healthy and positive relationships.

The CRRE measure is guided by the National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Working Group, which includes government and non-government school sector representatives and experts.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.2, 6.11 and 6.21 from the *Final Report* and Recommendation 67 from the Criminal Justice Report.

The National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (National Centre) is a key recommendation of the Royal Commission. The National Centre is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2021 to:

- support and promote strategic research and address knowledge gaps on the issue of child sexual abuse
- build the capability of workforces through usable resources, promotion of best practice, and provision of education and training.
- reduce stigma and undertake awareness raising activities. The Australian Government committed \$22.5 million over 5 years to establish the National Centre, which is a joint venture between Blue Knot Foundation, The Healing Foundation, and the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Under this activity, the National Office is continuing to work with the National Centre to develop and deliver education and capacity-building measures.

The National Office funded the National Centre to conduct research titled 'Building a knowledge frame for responding to the needs of children and young people who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviour'. This research informs work under Theme 3 of the National Strategy to enhance national approaches to preventing and responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. The research synopsis can be found online at ChildSafety.gov.au.

Please refer to National Action Plan activity 23 on [page 88](#) for further information about the National Centre's contributions to the Child Safety Research Agenda.

Since the release of the National Centre's five-year strategy, Here for Change, the National Centre has delivered a range of programs, resources and training to support building workforce capability in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse. This includes delivery of 22 webinars and training courses which engaged 6,165 participants and publication of 31 knowledge resources. The National Centre also published a mapping tool for Minimum Practice Standards for Specialist and Community Support Services responding to child sexual abuse. It also published its Knowledge to Action Framework which underpins the approach to using knowledge to build workforce capability, reduce stigma and raise community awareness.

The National Centre continues to strengthen key relationships and forge strategic partnerships with all governments, and to honour the recommendations of the Royal Commission through direct alignment of its work with the National Strategy.

For a case study on the National Centre's additional work to improve the child safety evidence base, please refer to [page 106](#).



Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.2 and 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

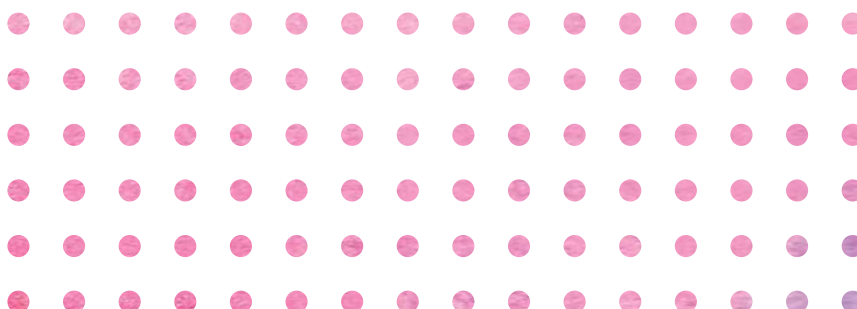
Launched in October 2023, the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign aims to encourage adults to learn more about child sexual abuse and have ongoing, proactive and preventative conversations with the people in their lives. Advertising of the campaign ran on television, radio, in cinema and online until 30 June 2024. Evaluation of the campaign's performance is underway with initial results indicating it has increased community awareness of the need to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse.

The campaign is accompanied by a range of educative tools and resources to assist its target audience to engage with the topic of child sexual abuse, and to support them to safely and confidently have preventative conversations with the people in their lives. Resources launched over the past year as part of the campaign include:

- *My superhero voice*, a storybook that helps adults teach children about what to do if something makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. It can be used as a prompt by adults to start conversations with children about body safety and child sexual abuse. The storybook has been translated into Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Farsi, Hazaragi, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Thai and Vietnamese
- a suite of resources and activities created in collaboration with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation about building and being a part of a child or young person's safety team
- a webinar in partnership with Australian Childhood Foundation about child safety in sport and how adults can have conversations with sporting clubs and organisations about keeping children and young people safe from child sexual abuse
- a video with content creator Josh Miller who talks about his personal experiences of having these conversations with his family and friends. The video received 111,000 views on Josh Miller's Instagram (@itsjoshmiller), with many users reflecting on the importance of these conversations
- a video with Commander Helen Schneider from the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) which addresses how adults can safely educate themselves on child sexual abuse, including how to safely search online
- a suite of videos and resources with children's author Jayneen Sanders, including readings five books from her Little BIG Chats series
- a song, with an accompanying animation and e-book, by children's band Teeny Tiny Stevies. The song is an age-appropriate way for children to learn about body boundaries and warning signs, not keeping secrets and talking to trusted adults if something makes them feel uncomfortable, and can be used as a prompt by adults to start conversations with children on these topics.

These resources are available from ChildSafety.gov.au and promotion on the @ChildSafety.gov.au social media channels.

The National Office continues to work on content to support First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with disability to engage with the campaign.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 1: SUPPORT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ITS OUTCOMES – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: N/A.

Strategic communication

The National Office has continued to build on work completed in 2023 to redevelop ChildSafety.gov.au. This website is the main platform through which the National Office communicates about the Australian Government's efforts to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse. Website updates over the past year include publishing additional educational content, such as a page about [online safety](#). In March 2024 alone, ChildSafety.gov.au was viewed 145,000 times, which represents more than a 1,440% increase in comparison to the previous year.

The National Office has continued to establish its presence on social media through [@ChildSafety.gov.au](#) on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. Content posted on these channels aims to promote new resources, share information about events and raise community awareness about child sexual abuse through educational content. Over the past year, the National Office has seen increased following and engagement on these channels, helping to drive traffic to ChildSafety.gov.au. LinkedIn and Instagram have performed particularly well, with followers increasing by over 2,500 on Instagram and 1,900 on LinkedIn since 1 December 2023.

The National Office has produced a number of resources to support and promote understanding of the National Strategy and its objectives. This includes:

- launching a short, animated video that explains the National Strategy in an accessible format. The video has been translated into Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Korean and Vietnamese, as well as Auslan
- developing Easy Read versions of key documents, including the National Strategy, to improve accessibility for people with intellectual disability, low English language proficiency and low literacy.

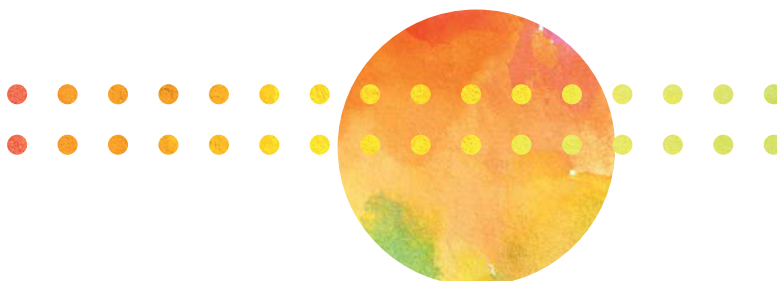
National Strategy Advisory Group (Advisory Group)

The Advisory Group provides advice on the development, implementation and evaluation of National Strategy activities, and to determine how resources, information and services can be tailored to the National Strategy's priority groups.

Established in 2022, the Advisory Group is comprised of 24 members and one specialist adviser, the National Children's Commissioner, Anne Hollonds, to ensure the views and experiences of the National Strategy's priority groups, NGOs, academics, community members, and victims and survivors are embedded in the design, implementation and evaluation of the National Strategy's activities. Membership includes representation from all states and territories and all priority groups.

The Advisory Group was co-chaired by the National Office and the inaugural co-chair, Hetty Johnston since 2022. In June 2024, the Advisory Group welcomed new co-chairs Deborah Tsorbaris, Chief Executive Officer, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, and Leah Bromfield, Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection.

At the end of 2023, the National Office finalised the end-of term review of the Advisory Group as per the Terms of Reference. The review considered the operation and effectiveness of the Advisory Group. The review findings indicated the Advisory Group's advice and expertise are effectively contributing to the implementation of the National Strategy activities. One important finding from the review identified a gap in the representation of young people in the Advisory Group's membership. As a result, the National Office undertook a recruitment process in early 2024 and welcome two new youth members, who attended their first meeting in June 2024.



The Advisory Group's membership list, including biographies, can be found at the [National Strategy Advisory Group Membership List page](#) on ChildSafety.gov.au. In 2024, the Advisory Group met on the following occasions:

- 14 and 15 March 2024 in Sydney
- 17 and 18 June 2024 in Brisbane
- 3 and 4 September 2024 in Melbourne
- 2 and 3 December 2024 in Hobart.

Across these meetings, the Advisory Group provided expert advice on:

- the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Strategy
- the scoping study and pilot service to prevent child sexual abuse reoffending
- proposed models for a new NGO reporting framework

- the development of resources to support disclosures and implementation of guidance on media reporting of child sexual abuse,
- information sharing and working with children checks
- improving safeguarding in sport
- the options to improve civil justice for victims of child sexual abuse offences.

Further details of the key achievements of the Advisory Group can be found online at the [Communiqués of the National Strategy Advisory Group](#) page on ChildSafety.gov.au.

The Advisory Group is not the only way people can be involved in the National Strategy's implementation. Any member of the public can be involved through an opt-in consultation mailing list, including the newly created youth consultation mailing list. The National Office regularly consults and partners with a diverse range of stakeholders to meet priority needs and to meaningfully engage with people with lived experience.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.13 from the *Final Report*.

The Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF) is the Australian Government's whole-of-government child safety policy. It sets four minimum standards for Australian Government entities to create and maintain behaviours and practices that are safe for children and young people. The National Office works closely with Australian Government entities to implement and ensure compliance with the CCSF.

Throughout 2024, the National Office undertook targeted engagement with Australian Government entities to build child safety capability and compliance with the CCSF. This included through a Community of Practice meeting, held in September 2024, and the development of new resources to assist entities to develop their statements of compliance, including a Statement of Compliance Checklist. This targeted support to Australian Government entities improved child safety capability and understanding, and led to 90 out of 100 non-corporate Commonwealth entities submitting 2024 annual CCSF compliance reports (Requirement Four).

Under Requirement 4 of the CCSF, non-corporate Commonwealth entities are required to publish an annual statement of compliance with the CCSF including a description of the entity's interaction with children; an overview of the entity's child safety risk assessment, including actions taken to mitigate risks and a summary of child safety initiatives undertaken and any future planned initiatives.

In 2024, the National Office commissioned a redesign of the existing eLearning modules to build engagement with and understanding of the CCSF. The revamped modules are due to be released in early 2025 and are expected to be widely used across all 100 non-corporate Commonwealth entities.

In 2025, the National Office will continue to build capability of non-corporate Commonwealth entities through the Community of Practice and development of additional resources. The National Office will also proactively engage with Commonwealth companies and corporate Commonwealth entities for whom the CCSF is not mandatory but highly encouraged. The National Office will consider ways to encourage voluntary uptake of the CCSF by these additional Australian Government entities.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations from the *Final Report* relating to the Child Safe Standards and 14.1.

Since December 2023, Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) has introduced a number of projects aimed at improving child safeguarding in sport, outlined below.

Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program (SISCIP)

The SISCIP is a strengths-based assessment of a sport's ability to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. After a summary report has been developed, SIA works with the sport to develop and implement a safeguarding action plan to close the gaps in areas of:

- Leadership, governance and culture
- Safeguarding risk management
- Child safe recruitment
- Safeguarding policies and practice.

As at 30 July 2024, 16 sports had completed the program and a further eight had recently signed up. An evaluation of the initial program has been conducted which found:

- 91% of the participants said they would recommend sports do the program
- 82% rated the process and improving their understanding of safeguarding as excellent/very good
- 73% rated the recommendations/actions in improving safeguarding in their organisation as excellent/very good.

The program has since been re-developed and now includes all 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and has been placed on a digital platform (hosted by the Australian Sports Commission and is the platform used by sports to gain accreditation).

Voice of the Child: Children and young people's perception of safety in sport

This project aims to gauge the views of children and young people aged 12 to 18 years about their experiences in sport. Each year, the online survey will ask 2,520 children and young people about positive and adverse experiences in sport, for example, pressure to win, bullying and other forms of harm.

The research will explore whether perceptions vary across various demographics (age, gender, location, cultural background, ability, intensity of participation) and contexts such as the behaviour of coaches and officials, other participants and parents or spectators. Initial survey findings are expected in early 2025 and will be repeated annually for five years. The results of the survey will inform safeguarding priorities and resources.

Webinars, eLearning and face-to-face education

SIA has developed a number of webinars and face-to-face education sessions for sports. The topics are focused on the skills needed to embed child safe practice:

- Understanding how children and young people can be exposed to risk or harm.
- Implementing a safeguarding risk management plan.
- Embedding safeguarding into organisational Culture.
- Child safe recruitment.
- Creating a culture of reporting (safeguarding).
- Identifying and addressing inappropriate behaviour in sport.
- Managing overnight camps and travelling alone in a vehicle with a child or young person.
- Inclusion, equity and diversity.
- Understanding safeguarding children and young people policy.

The webinars have been viewed more than 5,000 times by administrators across all levels of sport, with:

- 96% of attendees reporting that the webinar they attended was interesting and relevant
- 85% of attendees reporting they learnt new safeguarding strategies
- 86% of attendees reporting that they felt more confident to implement the strategies.

SIA has also updated the safeguarding eLearning course and is developing two new eLearning courses: one for coaches of children in high performance sport, and one for athletes in high performance environments, recognising the additional safeguarding risks that high performance sporting environments create. The Introduction to Safeguarding in Sport course is also in the process of being translated into Chinese, Arabic and Vietnamese.

In addition to the courses SIA provides, each sport has a dedicated Assistant Director that provides sports with ongoing support, advice and capability building.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.2 and 6.20 from the *Final Report*.

The Families Capacity Building (FCB) project has received \$3 million under the First Commonwealth Action Plan to:

- deliver targeted education for parents/carers, particularly those with priority needs, to prevent, recognise, respond to, and report harmful behaviours online, with a specific focus on issues related to online child sexual abuse and child exploitation
- identify and utilise new communication channels to reach parents/carers including through trusted third parties, for example schools, community organisations with established relationships with vulnerable families.

Key achievements for this reporting period include:

- 'Protecting children from sexual abuse online', a set of new resources for parents and carers provide practical advice on having conversations about online risks and child sexual abuse online in age-appropriate ways. These resources guide parents and carers through key actions with practical tips, videos and conversation starters to make these conversations easier. These resources are available in English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese and Punjabi.
- Keeping children safe online in communities resources designed for family and children sector professionals provide guidance, tips and reflection questions to help community workers to:
 - safeguard children and young people in their care from online harm, and
 - build their capacity to promote online safety and support families in their community.
- New conversation cards for parents and carers, developed jointly with the ACCCE to support conversations in CALD communities about online child exploitation
- webinars for parents, carers and community organisations on a range of online safety topics including reporting online harms
- Various promotional activities and new resources to raise awareness of online child sexual abuse including: exhibiting and presenting at a range of conferences, participating in a panel

webinar during National Child Protection Week, undertaking a broad media awareness campaign with parents and carers, an organic social media campaign, Electronic Direct Mails and associated stakeholder promotion including promotion on the ACCCE billboard in Brisbane

- Developed a kinship guide for First Nations families, for release in late 2024.

Throughout planning, implementation, and evaluation, eSafety continues consulting with National Strategy priority groups, including through:

- conducting user design workshops with diverse families
- working with researchers, peak bodies, eSafety's Youth Council, and parenting experts to better understand the needs of diverse families and professionals
- assembling an advisory panel made up of representatives from diverse organisations who support children, youth and families, including representatives from priority groups.

In 2025, eSafety will release a storybook for primary-aged children to increase parent/carer confidence to engage in activities to safeguard children from online harm. This book and other accompanying resources will support:

- age-appropriate conversations about healthy, safe, respectful, and supportive relationships
- talking about online child sexual abuse in ways that decrease shame and stigma
- understanding other appropriate safeguarding actions including checking children's comfort
- balanced age-appropriate supervision of online time and relationships.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 5: DELIVER AN ANNUAL DIGITAL INDUSTRY SUMMIT TO CREATE NEW SOLUTIONS FOR ONLINE HARMS – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY⁸

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and the overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report.

The National Office delivers an annual digital industry event focused on tackling new and emerging law enforcement challenges to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The delivery of the digital industry event recognises the importance of building strategic partnerships and dialogue between government and digital industry, noting this crime type cannot be tackled without industry cooperation.

These events facilitate opportunities for law enforcement and digital industry to engage in open conversations about the challenges that they face, the expectations of industry action, and to discuss intelligence and information sharing. The department has received positive outcomes and feedback from the three previous digital industry events, and is working towards delivery of the final event in the second half of the 2024–2025 financial year, exploring current themes and trends as identified by law enforcement.



8 All work under Commonwealth Action Plan activity 5 and 6 moved from the Department of Home Affairs to the Attorney-General's Department in 2022.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report and the overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report*.

Launched in September 2024, *The Shadows of the Web: Protecting our children in the digital world* is a 45-minute documentary to raise awareness about the important role of the digital industry in responding to the escalating threat of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Shadows of the Web is for any technology consumer or anyone with children and young people in their lives. It is about the role of tech companies in keeping children and young people safe online.

It informs families and the community about the escalating threat of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, Australia's response and the challenges we face.

This 45-minute documentary takes a strong victim and survivor-centric approach. It includes:

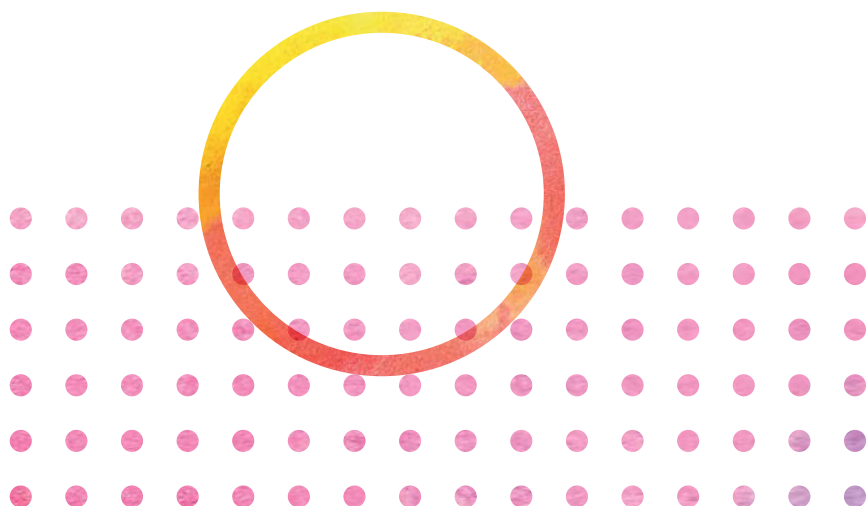
- an overview of the crime type, including recent trends
- Australia's whole-of-government approach to combatting online child sexual abuse
- victim and survivor stories
- the role digital industry continues to play in enabling online harms to children
- information, resources and support services to facilitate viewers to talk about and report online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

It includes testimonials from Australian law enforcement, the eSafety Commissioner, academics, victims and survivors and their advocates.

The documentary was developed in consultation with a cross-government reference group which included the relevant policy and media areas from the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, and eSafety.

It works alongside the '[One Talk at a Time](#)' campaign to encourage families and the community to have ongoing, proactive, preventative conversations with children and young people about the risks that the internet can present and how they can stay safe.

The documentary is available for private screenings both domestically and internationally. It will be available on Stan in Australia from 9 December 2024.



CASE STUDY: ACT CHILD SAFE STANDARDS SCHEME

The ACT's Child Safe Standards Scheme commenced on **1 August 2024**. It is now mandatory for providers of a service for children and young people in the ACT to implement the Child Safe Standards (See Part 5A of the ACT Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)). The 10 Child Safe Standards mandated by the Scheme align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and importantly include a focus on promoting and protecting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

The ACT Human Rights Commission is supporting implementation of the Child Safe Standards Scheme, including by assisting organisations to build their capability in becoming a child safe organisation and show continuous improvement over time. Using existing powers and functions, the ACT Human Rights Commission has power to accept complaints from community members and undertake Commission Initiated Considerations of systemic issues brought to its attention regarding alleged non-compliance with the Child Safe Standards.

More information can be found on the ACT Human Rights Commission website at: hrc.act.gov.au/childrenyoungpeople/act-child-safe-standards



CASE STUDY: PLAY BY THE RULES – START TO TALK CAMPAIGN

Play by the Rules is now a unique collaboration between Sport Integrity Australia, Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, all state and territory departments of sport and recreation, all state and territory anti-discrimination and human rights agencies, the Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW), eSafety Commission, and the AntiDiscrimination Board of NSW.

Play by the Rules provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players, parents and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment, child safety, inclusion and integrity issues in sport.

Play by the Rules leads 'Start to Talk', a national campaign which aims to encourage parents and sporting organisations to discuss how they can work together to create a child safe environment.

The campaign was developed in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission which identified sport clubs as having an important role to play in the prevention and detection of abuse.

Run throughout May and June 2023, the campaign achieved the following key results:

- 27 radio interviews
- 30,438 broadcasts of the campaign radio community service announcements
- 10,329 broadcasts of the campaign TV community service announcements.

Across these media engagements four ambassadors with experience as athletes, researchers and child safety advocates communicated the campaign messages:

- Katrina Fanning AO PSM
- Morgan Lander
- Dr. Aurelie Pankowiak
- Dr. Mary Woessner.

The campaign assets and resources continue to feature prominently on the Play by the Rules website.



CASE STUDY: MY SUPERHERO VOICE

On **26 September 2024**, the Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, launched children's storybook *My superhero voice* at a community event in Keysborough, Victoria. Developed as part of the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign, the storybook has been designed as a culturally inclusive and safe resource for adults to start conversations with the children and young people in their lives about child sexual abuse. The storybook draws on the strengths of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in creating safe environments for children and young people. *My superhero voice* reflects diverse representation in the characters' cultures, and is the first culturally safe storybook developed in partnership with the Australian Government to help prevent child sexual abuse

The storybook was written by Yvonne Sewankambo and illustrated by Nea Valdivia, and follows Nour as she learns cultural practices from her community to empower her to speak up when she feels uncomfortable. It was written for children aged 3-5 years old, and is available in English as well as being translated into 10 languages - Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Farsi, Hazaragi, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Thai and Vietnamese. It is available in e-book format on **ChildSafety.gov.au/storybook**.

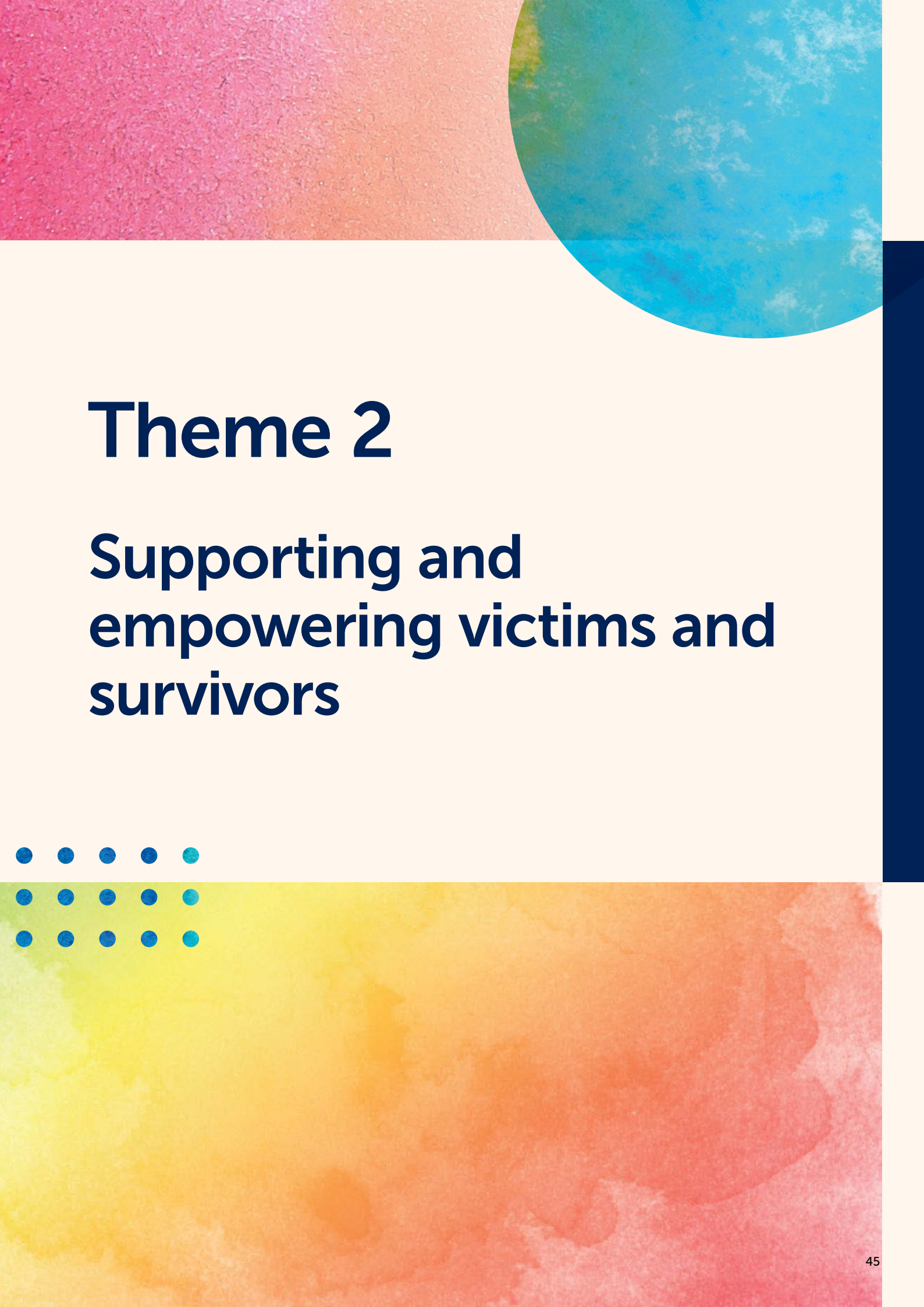
The launch event was opened by the Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, who highlighted the book's significance as a resource for preventing child sexual abuse in all communities. The event also featured a book reading by the author, and brought together community members, local organisations and multicultural media in a celebration of diversity and inclusion that reflected the themes of *My superhero voice*.



The Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Attorney-General, speaking at the Storybook launch on 26 September 2024.

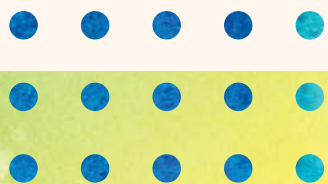


Yvonne Sewankambo (Author) and Nea Valdivia (Illustrator) attending the Storybook launch on 26 September 2024.



Theme 2

Supporting and empowering victims and survivors



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

What is needed? The effects of child sexual abuse can be cumulative, complex and longlasting. Victims and survivors may need access to trauma-informed help from a range of services during their lives and as their needs change. The people who help victims and survivors may also need support.

This includes:

- secondary victims
- family members, kin and carers
- witnesses to the abuse
- teachers and other school workers.

What are we aiming to achieve?

Trauma-informed services can improve victims and survivors' wellbeing and quality of life. They can also help interrupt inter-generational trauma.

The focus of government action: We will promote and support accessible, high-quality, trauma-informed and culturally safe services that support people as their needs change.

This includes:

- reviewing the service sector responding to child sexual abuse and considering service gaps and opportunities for system reform
- setting up a national information and referral service to help victims and survivors, practitioners and the general public navigate the service system and access help and information
- supporting healing for First Nations victims and survivors, their families, kin and community
- increasing support for non-offending family members of child sexual abuse offenders
- enhancing access to the national specialist trauma-informed legal service and setting up an online chat service providing free legal advice
- looking at ways to improve the availability of civil remedies for victims and survivors of Commonwealth child sexual abuse offences.

What are we aiming to achieve?

1. Victims and survivors are better recognised and believed at all stages of disclosure and complaint.
2. Victims and survivors, including secondary victims, are supported and empowered to manage the impacts of child sexual abuse.
3. Organisations responsible for harm restore trust from victims and survivors.
4. Victims and survivors, including secondary victims, have access to high-quality services.
5. The workforce and organisations are resourced to recognise and respond to child sexual abuse with high-quality care.
6. Service system responses (criminal, legal, statutory, educational, health and mental health sector) to child sexual abuse are coordinated to support victims and survivors.

Relevant National Strategy activities:

National Action Plan Activities 7 – 11

Commonwealth Action Plan Activities 7 – 12

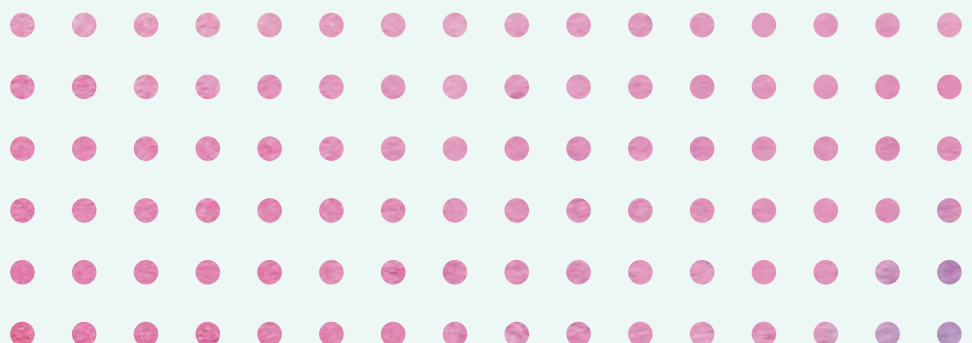
The design and implementation of Theme 2 activities continues to be informed and guided by consultation and engagement with non-government stakeholders, including the National Strategy's priority groups. In the past year, this consultation has been progressed through:

- non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#).
- project specific working groups such as the First Nations Expert Group (see National Action Plan Activity 8 and Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 7)
- public consultation processes (see National Action Plan Activity 7)

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Key achievements over the past year include:

- The National Office progressed work to deliver a new national information and referral service for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and others seeking help and information. The new national information and referral service is expected to commence by the end of 2025 (see National Action Plan Activity 7).
- AGD led the Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2024, which passed both houses of Parliament on 29 November 2024. The amendment to the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) will strengthen the protections afforded to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and vulnerable persons in Commonwealth criminal proceedings (see National Action Plan Activity 9).
- The National Office has selected a preferred supplier to deliver a national support service for non-offending family members of child sexual abuse perpetrators, anticipated for commencement in mid-2025 (see National Action Plan Activity 10).
- knowmore, a free, independent legal service that continues to deliver a traumainformed, culturally safe legal and support service to all victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. During January-July 2024, knowmore experienced a 27% increase in the number of clients seeking assistance in relation to non-institutional child sexual abuse (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 8).
- Youth Law Australia (YLA) continues to maintain a national, secure legal online chat system that delivers free legal assistance to children and young people experiencing or at risk of harm. During January-July 2024, YLA assisted with 815 matters related to child sexual abuse (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 9).
- The Department of Health and Aged Care with the National Centre launched a new set of resources to strengthen the capability of the primary health care workforce to better respond to children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 11).



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 7: DELIVER A NATIONAL INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHERS SEEKING HELP AND INFORMATION – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

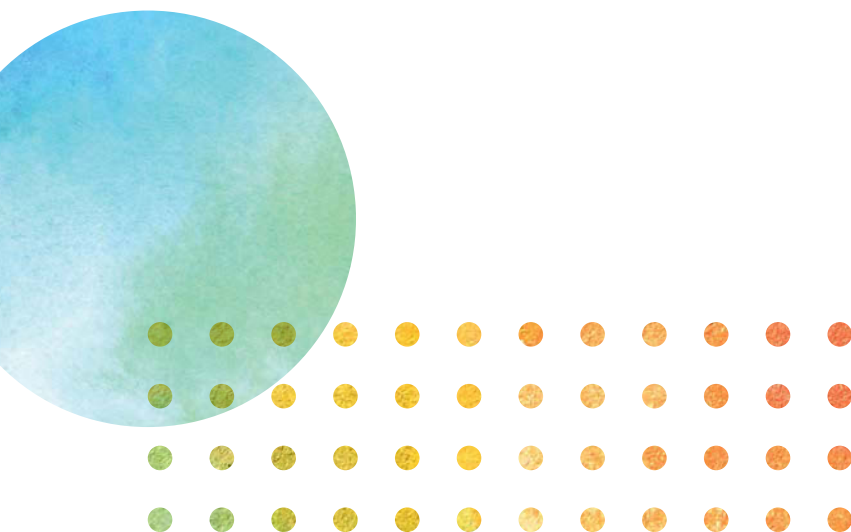
Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 9.1 and 9.5 from the *Final Report*.

The National Office is establishing a national information and referral service to assist victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, practitioners and the general public to navigate the service system and to access help and information.⁹ The service will include a national website, national helpline and specialist child sexual abuse service navigators, and offer a central point of access to information, resources and referrals to targeted and broad support services.

The national information and referral service is designed to address the Royal Commission's recommendation to establish a national website and helpline to assist victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to access help and information (Recommendation 9.5).

From late 2023 to early 2024, the National Office undertook a broad public consultation process to seek feedback from diverse stakeholders to inform the design and delivery of the national information and referral service (previously referred to as the 'national point of referral'). A summary of consultation outcomes can be found on the ChildSafety.gov.au website.

The National Office carefully considered all feedback and the associated implementation requirements and, from early-to-mid 2024, worked with states and territories to finalise the proposed service model. The National Office approached the market in October 2024 seeking expressions of interest to deliver the national information and referral service. The new national information and referral service is expected to commence by the end of 2025.



⁹ Please note this language has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – *Deliver a website and helpline to assist victims and survivors to access help and information*.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 8: DELIVER A TRAUMA-AWARE, HEALING INFORMED AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESOURCE TO IMPROVE EARLY DISCLOSURE EXPERIENCES OF, AND ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS – NATIONAL INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS AGENCY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.2 from the *Final Report*.

Project BIRD (believe, inquire and respond to disclosure) involves designing, piloting and evaluating a trauma aware, healing-informed and culturally appropriate national training package for frontline health care workers to improve early disclosure experiences of, and access to specialist services for First Nations victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

Resources to support training will include working with victims and survivors with diverse needs, for example, people from LGBTQIA+ communities and people with disabilities. Resources will also address preventing and responding to vicarious trauma experienced by health service staff. This activity works to contribute to the following Closing the Gap outcomes:

- Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.
- Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

It is also guided by the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. They include:

- Priority Reform 1 – Formal partnerships and shared decision making.
- Priority Reform 2 – Building the community-controlled sector.
- Priority Reform 3 – Transforming government organisations.
- Priority Reform 4 – Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

A key achievement for this project during the reporting period is the delivery of the training package including modules and associated support learning materials. The National Indigenous Australians Agency is working on options to deliver to organisations.



Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 52, 54 and 60 from the Criminal Justice Report.

The Crimes Amendment (Strengthening the Criminal Justice Response to Sexual Violence) Bill 2024 (the Bill) amends Part IAD of the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) to implement trauma-informed measures that better support vulnerable persons when appearing as complainants and/or witnesses in Commonwealth criminal proceedings. This includes prohibiting the admission of evidence of a vulnerable person's sexual reputation and requiring the court's leave to admit evidence of a vulnerable person's sexual experience. The Bill also empowers the court to order evidence recording hearings and allows evidence of vulnerable persons to be recorded if that recording could be used in subsequent proceedings.

The measures in this Bill have been developed in consultation with community and government stakeholders.

The Bill passed both houses of Parliament on 29 November 2024. The Bill can be found on the Parliament of Australia website at aph.gov.au.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.1 from the Final Report.

This national support service will provide support and advocacy to non-offending family members of child sexual abuse perpetrators at the time of crisis and throughout their healing journey. It will also work with other agencies, including law enforcement, to enhance their engagement with non-offending family members.

Key achievements for this reporting period include:

- In November 2023, a request for tender (RFT) was published, seeking a service provider to deliver First National Action Plan Activity 10 under the National Strategy. The RFT closed on 27 February 2024.
- The National Office received a number of competitive responses that were evaluated by an expert Tender Evaluation Committee. The criterion Tenderers responded to were:
 - service delivery
 - leadership
 - advocacy and engagement
 - management capability and key personnel
 - physical and digital infrastructure
 - pricing and payment arrangements
 - compliance and risk
 - benefit to the Australian economy.
- The Tender Evaluation Committee agreed on a preferred supplier and the Department will enter into contract negotiations in 2024, with an expected launch of the service in mid-2025.

In our commitment to transparency and accountability in implementing the National Strategy, the National Office has procured an evaluation provider to support the design and evaluation of both the National Action Plan Activity 10 and National Action Plan Activity 21 services.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 11: SHARE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE CHILD WITNESS INTERVIEWING – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9 from the Criminal Justice Report.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is part of the whole-of-nation response to improving child witness interviewing. Noting child witness interviewing is the responsibility of all law enforcement agencies across Australia, the AFP continues to work with jurisdictional counterparts to deliver this initiative. The AFP will provide information at or represent any Commonwealth issues both as part of Operation GRIFFIN and Child Abuse Royal Commission responsibilities. AFP

efforts will be coordinated by the Victim Liaison Coordination Officer (VLCO). Findings from the VLCO's Environmental Scan may be shared as part of Operation GRIFFIN where appropriate.

This activity is now considered complete under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 First Action Plans, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the Annual Report.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 7: DEVELOP ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALING APPROACHES – NATIONAL INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS AGENCY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.2 from the *Final Report*.

The Supporting Healing for Families activity will deliver and evaluate co-designed healing initiatives for First Nations peoples impacted by child sexual abuse in five locations:

- Alice Springs, NT.
- Derby, WA.
- Inner Gippsland, Vic.
- Western Adelaide, SA.
- Townsville, Qld.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) worked in partnership with SNAICC to co-design healing service models tailored to each community and embed the values and priorities of each community in the initiatives' design.

Following this co-design, the healing service models were finalised, and applications were opened through a competitive grants round, which has now closed. Delivery is expected to commence in the last quarter of 2024.

The healing initiatives will provide culturally appropriate service system options for First Nations individuals and families impacted by child sexual abuse, and work to address the absence of a trauma-aware and healing-informed, culturally safe and accessible service system for First Nations people.

This activity contributes to Closing the Gap outcomes 12, 13 and 14:

- Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.
- Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.

- Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

It is also guided by the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. They include:

- Priority Reform 1 – Formal partnerships and shared decision making.
- Priority Reform 2 – Building the community-controlled sector.
- Priority Reform 3 – Transforming government organisations.
- Priority Reform 4 – Shared access to data and information at a regional level.

This activity supports Priority 6: Social and emotional wellbeing and trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches of [The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031](#).

It also supports Outcome 3.1: Access to traditional and contemporary healing practice under the [National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023](#).

This activity links to a separate NIAA led healing measure funded under [The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032](#) to design, deliver, and evaluate community-led, locally informed, place based, trauma-aware and culturally responsive healing programs, focusing on First Nations peoples' children and families who are impacted by family violence or at risk of engagement with child protection systems.

Further information can be found on niaa.gov.au.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.4 from the *Final Report*.

knowmore continues to deliver a trauma-informed, culturally safe service model to provide legal and support services to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in non-institutional settings. Service delivery for this client group commenced in January 2022 and complements knowmore's existing service for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

knowmore is a national service with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Darwin. knowmore has established a regular visiting schedule for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, which has been well received by local services, clients, and communities.

knowmore can provide advice by phone to individuals in Australia. They also regularly travel to various locations across the country to offer face-to-face information, community legal education, and advice sessions.

knowmore has delivered a triage team as an additional support in their service model. The triage team allows clients, where needed, access immediate psychological and/or cultural support or legal advice. The triage team is led by a senior practitioner, comprises of social work and legal staff and facilitates engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement team as needed. The team were in attendance, or provided immediate follow-up assistance for 12% of all legal advice services, and for 24% of casework services from January 2024 to June 2024.

During the period of January 2024 to June 2024¹⁰:

- knowmore's website pages were viewed 90,226 times by 27,518 users with an average engaged time of 1 minutes and 22 seconds
- knowmore's 1800 line received 11,190 calls, a decrease of 10% since the last reporting period. Note: this may include phone data across various activities as the same platform is used for other programs
- knowmore has seen a 27% increase on the number of clients seeking assistance in relation to non-institutional child sexual abuse. 261 legal advices were provided to clients, compared with 189 from the last reporting period

- knowmore conducted a client survey, 92% said that knowmore was easy to contact; 100% said we listened to their legal problem; 92% said knowmore helped them understand how to deal with their legal problem; and 92% said they would definitely recommend knowmore to others
- 258 engagement events were conducted around Australia with 2,588 attendees and 247 organisations represented at these events.

knowmore has focused on service promotion and refining their service delivery model. Their efforts to elevate the profile of the service, strengthen their delivery model, and enhance relationships with referring partners have resulted in a 21% increase in client numbers, 319 clients for this period.

knowmore delivered core skills training to staff and specific induction training including, trauma-informed practice, suicide awareness, cultural awareness/cultural safety and managing vicarious trauma and burnout.

An independent evaluation of knowmore, conducted in 2023, made the following recommendations:

- Funding for knowmore's services to survivors of non-institutional sexual abuse should be continued.
- Consider opportunities to consolidate or integrate knowmore's funding streams.
- Consider establishing clearer benchmarks for service outcomes within any new funding agreements to ensure value for money.
- Consider strengthening knowmore's data collection on client experience.

knowmore and the Department will consider the recommendations for future planning and service offerings.

Further information and resources can be found at knowmore.org.au.

¹⁰ At the time of publication, data was only available for January – June 2024. knowmore will report July – December 2024 data to the Department in January 2025.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 9: SET UP AN ONLINE CHAT SERVICE TO DELIVER FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HARM (INCLUDING SEXUAL ABUSE) – ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.4 from the *Final Report*.

Youth Law Australia (YLA) delivers a national, secure live online chat system that provides free legal assistance to children and young people experiencing or at risk of harm, including sexual abuse. The national online chat service has been operational since March 2022. It is a complementary extension of YLA's well-established existing national youth law service and continues to develop expertise in recognising and responding to child maltreatment.

YLA is a longstanding community legal service with well-established referral and collaborative relationships in the legal sector and support networks. All YLA online chat service staff have legal qualifications, are culturally safe and trauma-informed, and completed Child Safe training on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Child Safe Standards. Staff training is ongoing to continuously improve the trauma-informed and culturally-safe practices, and all staff have current Working with Children Checks.

YLA makes referrals to organisations such as Headspace, Kids Helpline, the eSafety Commissioner, victims of crime agencies, 1800Respect, legal aid commissions, community legal centres and police.

In the period January 2024 to June 2024¹¹, key achievements included:

- providing 1,102 legal services with an average of 45% of its clients being under 18 years old
- providing 4,708 referrals to legal and nonlegal support services including counselling and mental health support services, crisis and emergency accommodation, family counselling and mediation and other government agencies

- assisting with 815 matters related to sexual abuse, including 80 child sexual abuse and 36 historic child sexual abuse matters, 181 matters involving child abuse material, in addition to other sexual assault and related matters.

The existing and online chat service fosters help seeking behaviours, is exclusively technology based and is accessed by all priority groups.

Approximately 45% of YLA's clients are under 18 years of age. In the period January to June 2024, of the 52% who stated their gender, around 33% were female, 18% were male and 1% were transgender or X (do not identify as either male or female).

An independent evaluation of YLA, conducted in 2023, made the following recommendations:

- Funding for YLA's online services should be continued.
- Consider expanding YLA service delivery to include additional hours.
- Consider expanding YLA service scope to include enquiries relating to harm received by phone.
- Consider undertaking an internal service review to ensure the service is culturally safe.

YLA and the AGD will consider the recommendations for future planning and service offerings.

Further information and resources can be found at yla.org.au.

¹¹ At the time of publication, data was only available for January – June 2024. YLA will report July – December 2024 data to the Department in January 2025.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report.

The National Office is undertaking a scoping study to assess the availability and accessibility of civil remedies for victims and survivors of Commonwealth child sexual abuse offences. Draft findings have been prepared on the basis of targeted consultations with states and territories, academics, non-government organisations and the legal sector, as well as desktop research and legislative analysis.

The findings provide a stocktake of the current civil remedy pathways and are helping to identify barriers faced by victims and survivors in seeking access to civil remedies, such as via state and territory compensation schemes and reparations provisions in legislation. The scoping study will be completed by mid-2025 and efforts towards its delivery will inform the Second Action Plan.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 11: IMPROVE HOW SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES WORK TOGETHER THROUGH PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORKS (PHNS) – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.7 of the *Final Report*.

The Department of Health and Aged Care is implementing the 2022–23 Budget measure – Supporting Health System Navigation for victims and survivors of sexual violence. The Australian Government committed \$48.7 million over four years to support Activity 11 including:

- \$45.5 million provided to Primary Health Networks (PHN) for the Supporting the Primary Care response to family, domestic and sexual violence pilot (the pilot)
- \$800,000 contracted for an independent evaluation of the pilot
- \$450,000 for the National Centre to develop nationally consistent resources to support the primary care workforce engage with victims and survivors of sexual violence (including child sexual abuse).

The pilot is an important step in ensuring that the role of primary care is supported, recognising that primary care is often the first point of contact for victims and survivors of sexual violence. The pilot aims to help victims and survivors of sexual violence navigate the health system through primary care and onto specialist supports.

The pilot is building the capability of primary care providers through training to assist in the early identification and intervention of sexual violence as well as family and domestic violence.

Link workers are funded to act as conduits between primary care and specialist services to improve integration and coordination between primary care and sexual violence services. This role focusses on how health services and sexual violence services work together.

The pilot covers 12 PHN regions where 11 regions (through consortium arrangements) will support a pilot for family and domestic violence and one PHN region will support a pilot for family and domestic violence only.

PHNs have held consultation and co-design sessions in their regions engaging health and primary care, the sexual and family violence sectors, youth and children services, as well as people with lived experience and community stakeholders. PHNs are at various stages of model development and implementation, with some still in the design stage and some PHNs having developed their model and training ready to launch. The more progressed PHNs commenced system integration activities and training of primary care practices in September 2024.

In March 2024 guided by a Project Advisory Group and extensive stakeholder engagement the National Centre launched a [new set of resources](https://nationalcentre.org.au) on nationalcentre.org.au. The resources to strengthen the capability of the primary health care workforce to better respond to children and adults who have experienced sexual violence and child sexual abuse. This includes two foundational level resources for General Practitioners, one on the topic of child sexual abuse and the other on sexual violence, as well as an 8-minute film exploring victim and survivor experiences with, and expectations of, primary health care. Building on these initial resources the National Centre released the [Practice Prompts for Primary Health Care](#) tool with three accompanying short videos. These resources provide practical support and guidance for practitioners on how to engage and speak with people who have been impacted by sexual violence and child sexual abuse.

Mary Haines Consulting in consortium with the Sax Institute has commenced data collection as part of its independent evaluation of the pilot.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 15.13 from the *Final Report*.

The Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force (ABF) are responsible for the safety and security of the National Immigration Detention Network comprising several Immigration Detention Centres located across Australia.

Through contractual requirement with the Detention Health Service Provider, the Department of Home Affairs and ABF provides health care that is broadly comparable to that available in the Australian community. These services include access to General Practitioners (GPs), mental health nurses, psychologists, counsellors and psychiatrists, and includes clinicians who specialise in torture and trauma counselling services. Referrals to specialist health care are made where appropriate.

All Detainees who identify as being survivors of torture and trauma, or who display indicators of a history of torture and trauma are offered referral to specialist counselling support services. This includes victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

The Department of Home Affairs and ABF work closely with external bodies and agencies that have a focus on Detainee health and wellbeing. These arrangements assist ABF in monitoring the conditions of immigration detention with the aim to promote a safe and secure environment.

Specialist services are provided by qualified staff on site or on a visiting basis, which includes external appointments and also telehealth appointments.

Detainees who live in the community (subject to Residence Determination) are managed through the Status Resolution Support Services program. The program supports detainees to manage their health needs in collaboration with the Detention Health Service provider and are responsible for referrals to specialist support services.

Mental health treatment and services are tailored to the needs of the individual and based on clinical assessment and advice.

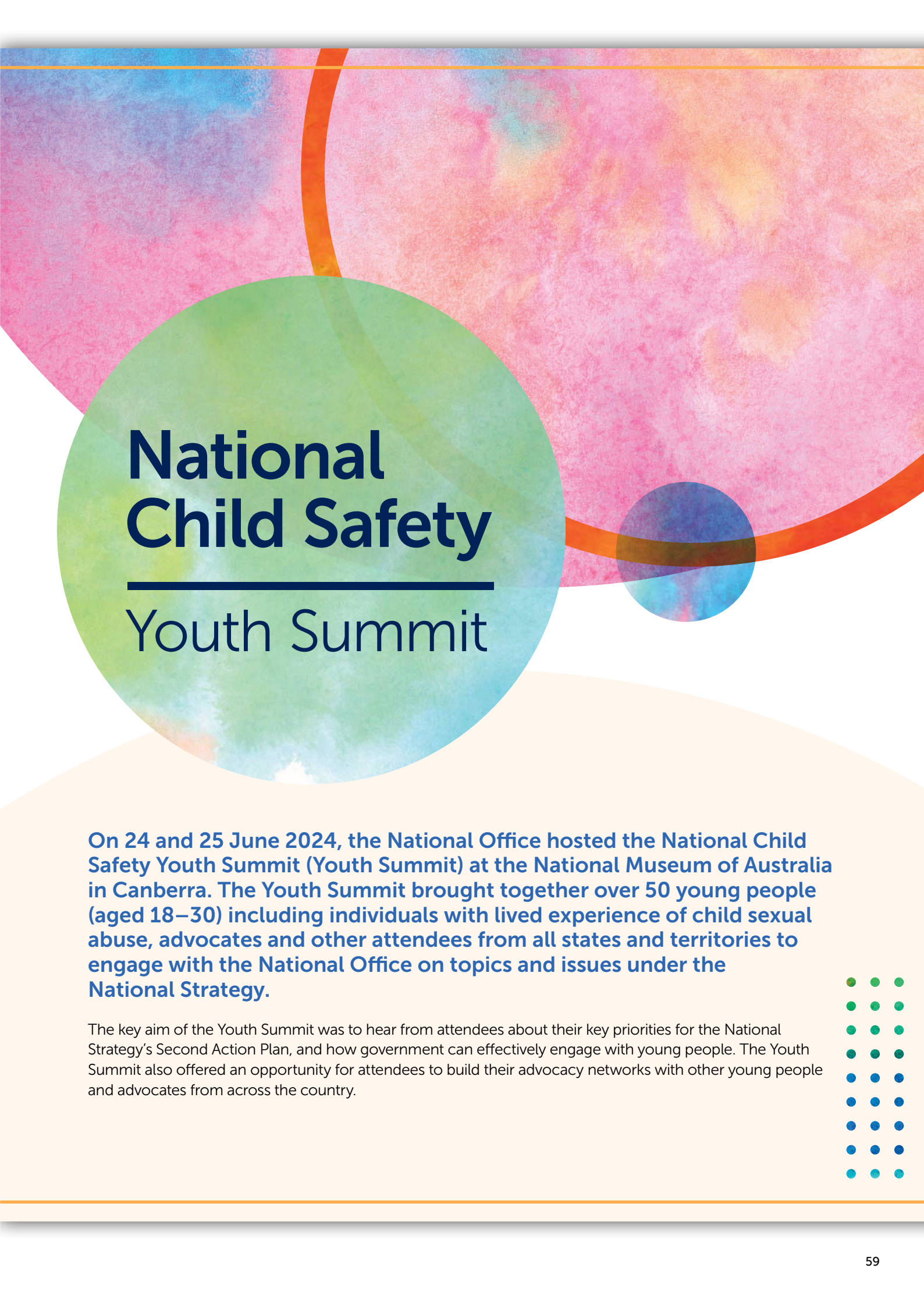
Qualified staff hold membership of the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), which ensures that these staff have access to professional development and networking to build their capacity to provide best practice service delivery. These services include professional development and capacity building for service providers, networking, research, volunteer programs and case consultations.

The Department of Home Affairs and ABF conduct internal and external oversight and assurance checks, to ensure that people in immigration detention are receiving the support they need for their health, safety and wellbeing. For example, internally there is the Independent Health Advice Panel which monitors and advises on improvements. Externally, the Department of Home Affairs has a statutory obligation to report to the Commonwealth Ombudsman about an individual's detention circumstances if they have been detained for a cumulative period of two or more years – and then every six months. These reports include an individual's detention circumstances, case progress and health.

Individual Management Plans are regularly reviewed and provide a holistic understanding of a Detainee's health, behavioural and welfare needs. This has to be established within 21 days of the person's arrival in immigration detention. The mental health assessment process includes scheduled and triggered rescreening at 6, 12 and 18 months and then every 3 months for people in an Immigration Detention Facility. These are the minimum review timeframes.

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030* First Action Plans, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the Annual Report.



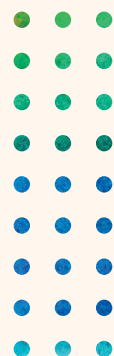


National Child Safety

Youth Summit

On 24 and 25 June 2024, the National Office hosted the National Child Safety Youth Summit (Youth Summit) at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. The Youth Summit brought together over 50 young people (aged 18–30) including individuals with lived experience of child sexual abuse, advocates and other attendees from all states and territories to engage with the National Office on topics and issues under the National Strategy.

The key aim of the Youth Summit was to hear from attendees about their key priorities for the National Strategy's Second Action Plan, and how government can effectively engage with young people. The Youth Summit also offered an opportunity for attendees to build their advocacy networks with other young people and advocates from across the country.



Attendees heard keynote addresses from Anne Hollands, the National Children's Commissioner, and Grace Tame, survivor of child sexual abuse, writer, and advocate and 2021 Australian of the Year. The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Attorney-General, and the Hon Anne Aly MP, Minister for Youth, also addressed the Youth Summit, emphasising the Australian Government's commitment to ensuring the safety of children and young people.

The Youth Summit allowed for our voices to be heard, for community and collective advocacy to be nurtured and for shared storytelling and connection to occur. Such a connection is indescribable. Experiences of sexual abuse can result in feelings of otherness and a distinct lack of belonging. Youth Summit attendees became a community – many reporting that the Youth Summit felt like coming home.

(Jade, Youth Summit Attendee)

The conversations and friendships that blossomed at the Youth Summit culminated in a shared assurance that we are getting somewhere. That young people with experiences of sexual abuse cannot be silenced – a better system and future is possible and that we – key players, truth-tellers and change makers – all deserve a seat at the table.

(Jade, Youth Summit Attendee)

Attendees of the National Child Safety Youth Summit with the Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP – 25 June 2024.



CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT BOYS AT RISK TRIAL

Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, the Australian Government committed \$34.8 million for a national early intervention trial for young men and boys aged 12 to 18 years who present with adverse childhood experiences including family and domestic violence (FDV), and who are using or at risk of using family, domestic or sexual violence (FDSV).

The Australian Government Department of Social Services is leading this work. The National Office was a member of the Adolescent Boys at Risk Program Advisory Group, which provided strategic advice during the development of the trial.

The trial will assess different approaches to the delivery of therapeutic individual support services that are trauma and healing informed for eligible young men and adolescent boys to:

- support their recovery and healing from their experience of FDV
- help them to avoid choosing to use FDSV
- build the evidence base on effective support service approaches to supporting young men and boys exposed to FDV to reduce the risk of them using FDSV.

Supports will include one-on-one counselling, case management and youth mentoring along with personalised safety plans and assessments. Services have been chosen that are culturally safe and responsive, trauma and healing-informed, take a strengths-based approach, and tailor their approach to the individual needs and circumstances of participants.

The trial grant opportunity closed in June 2024 and 12 trial sites have been announced including a mix of metropolitan, regional, and remote locations. Service delivery is expected to commence in early 2025.



CASE STUDY: CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

NSW Health commissioned the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to broaden the reach of existing respectful relationship programs for First Nations children and young people.

The Safer Communities for Children program (4 – 8 year olds) has been culturally adapted for Aboriginal children and their families in NSW using a co-design approach with an Aboriginal Advisory Group comprised of NSW Aboriginal Health leads from 15 local health districts, and academic advisers from the Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University.

The Love Bites program consists of a Junior program for 11 – 14 year olds and a separate program for 15 – 17 year olds. This program has been adapted for Aboriginal young people as the result of co-design involving Aboriginal workers and community knowledge holders. Incorporating local cultural healing practices, the sessions have been designed using the 'Eight ways of Aboriginal Learning,' which focuses on knowing, being and doing.

NAPCAN has also developed and implemented a Community Hub online platform to support local communities across NSW to coordinate the delivery of the Safer Communities for Children and Love Bites programs. The Community Hub platform will host resources, enable networking and connection to program trainers in local communities and data collection.



Theme 3

**Enhancing national
approaches to children
who have displayed
harmful sexual behaviours**



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

What is needed? The Royal Commission found that there was no nationally comprehensive and coordinated policy approach for preventing, identifying or responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. There was limited knowledge and understanding of the issue within the community, and inconsistencies and gaps in how Australia responds to this issue.

The focus of government actions: We will develop a framework to understand, prevent and respond to children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours, based on a public health model. This means we will act early when concerning or harmful sexual behaviours first appear, and help children and young people access a therapeutic response.

We will build our national capability, with the aim of implementing relevant Royal Commission recommendations over the National Strategy's 10 years. This includes:

- establishing a group of experts to inform governments' work
- developing national guidelines and standards for responding to, supporting and protecting children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours
- setting up a national clinical and therapeutic framework to help health professionals respond to harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people
- increasing workforce capability and supporting the community to better understand and respond to the range of sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people, including developmentally expected, concerning and harmful sexual behaviours.

Theme 3 activities aim to support positive sexual development and behaviours and improve responses so that children and young people can access supports that meet their safety and wellbeing needs, regardless of where they reside in Australia.

Lack of common understanding and response to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours means children and young people may face stigma and not be able to access the support they need, when they need it. When provided with an appropriate and holistic assessment, and a therapeutic response tailored to their individual needs, harmful behaviours are more likely to stop and less likely to escalate.

What are we aiming to achieve?

1. Building knowledge so everyone can understand and recognise developmentally expected, concerning and harmful sexual behaviours.
2. Children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours receive access to high-quality assessment and proportionate therapeutic responses and support.
3. Families, kin, carers, communities and workforces receive support and are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours, and those impacted by harmful sexual behaviours.

Relevant National Strategy Activities:

- National Action Plan Activities 12 – 16.

All Australian Governments are working together to progress these activities, which sit across the public health model (refer Figure 1). Activities include primary, secondary and tertiary responses to improve prevention while allowing a range of interventions to be implemented so that children and young people who are at risk of or who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours receive a response proportionate to their needs and context.

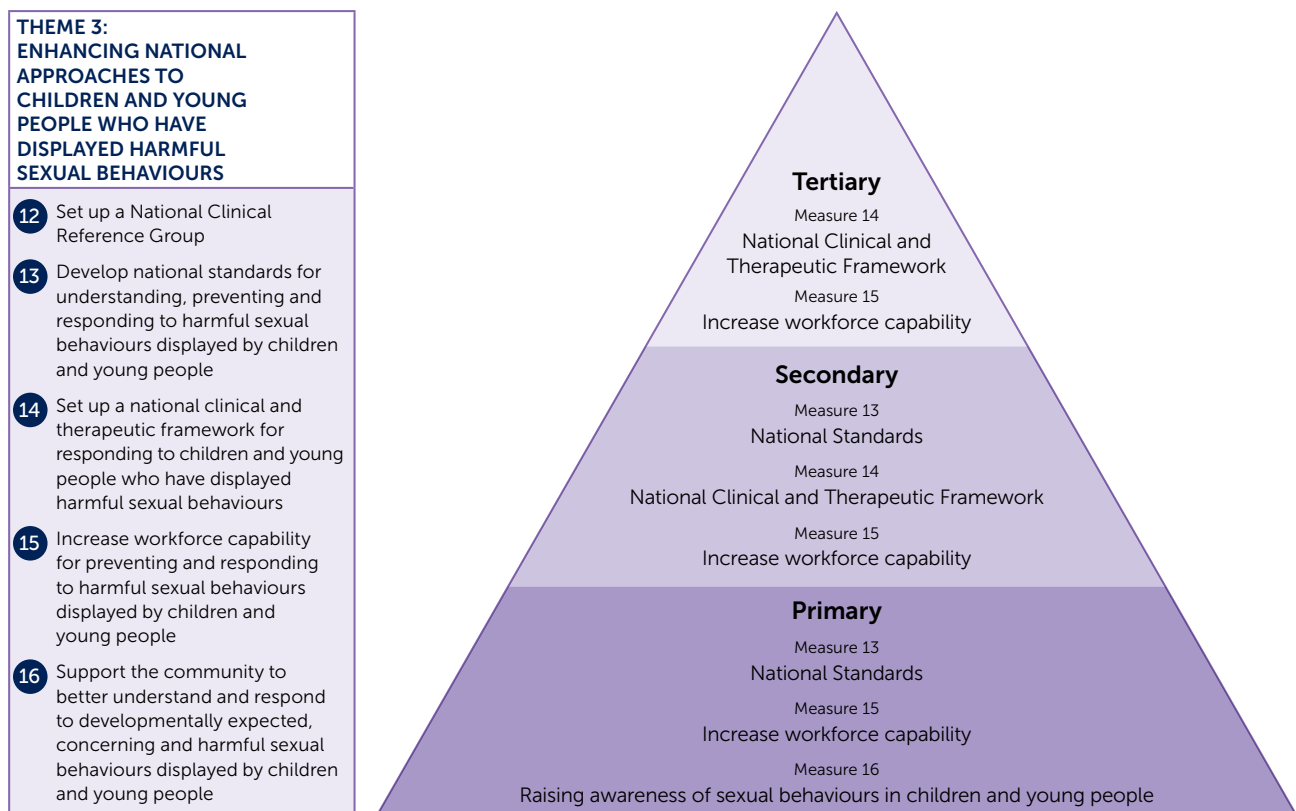


Figure 1: Theme 3 measures under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 (left) as they apply to the public health model (right)

The design and implementation of Theme 3 activities continues to be informed and guided by consultation and engagement with non-government stakeholders, including the National Strategy priority groups. In the past year, this consultation has been progressed through:

- non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#)
- state and territory governments and their relevant networks
- sector stakeholders including advisory bodies and professional networks
- young people including those at the National Child Safety Youth Summit
- individuals who have requested to be contacted for consultation through the National Office's consultation mailing list.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Key achievements over the past year include:

- Finalising the National Clinical Reference Group's (Reference Group) mid-term review, which found that the expert advice the Reference Group adequately meets the needs and expectations of the National Office and its jurisdictional stakeholders (see National Action Plan Activity 12 for more information).
- Undertaking targeted consultation with priority populations to inform the development of the draft Understanding Sexual Behaviours Displayed by Children and Young People: National Principles and Key Terminology (see National Action Plan Activity 13 for more information).
- Finalising a supplier to develop and deliver the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework (see National Action Plan Activity 14 for more information).
- Consulting directly with young people about their experiences navigating child and adolescent sexual development information (see National Action Plan Activity 16 for more information).



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 12: SET UP A NATIONAL CLINICAL REFERENCE GROUP – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 10.1 and 10.2 from the *Final Report*.

The National Clinical Reference Group (Reference Group) provides expert advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of activities related to preventing and responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. The National Office established the Reference Group in April 2022 following an Expression of Interest process.

The Reference Group's membership includes health professionals and clinicians with direct experience supporting and providing a therapeutic response to children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours. Members also include leading researchers with academic expertise relating to concerning or harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people, child sexual abuse, childhood development and childhood sexuality. The Reference Group reflects the geographic, social and cultural diversity of Australia by including direct representation from and/or engagement with the National Strategy's priority groups.

The Reference Group's membership list, including biographies, can be found at the [National Clinical Reference Group Membership List](#) page on ChildSafety.gov.au.

In 2024, the National Office welcomed three new First Nations members who have added significant value and cultural insight to increase First Nations cultural knowledge and expertise on the Reference Group.

In 2024, the Reference Group met on the following occasions:

- 12 March 2024 in Sydney
- 19 June 2024 in Brisbane
- 5 and 6 December 2024 in Melbourne.

Across these meetings, the Reference Group provided expert advice on:

- ensuring draft national principles and key terminology for understanding and responding to sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people (Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles – see National Action Plan Activity 13 for more information) appropriately reflect the contexts and

needs of First Nations children and young people and their families, kin and carers

- the scope, purpose and audience of potential future resources to support the implementation of the Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles
- defining service types for the workforce responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours
- gaps and opportunities to increase capability to understand, prevent and respond to harmful sexual behaviours in primary, secondary and tertiary sector workforces
- the development of the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework for responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours
- the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Strategy.

Further details of the key achievements of the Reference Group can be found online at the [Communiqués of the National Clinical Reference Group](#) page on ChildSafety.gov.au.

In 2024, the National Office finalised the mid-term review of the Reference Group as per the Terms of Reference. The purpose of the review was to ensure the focus and membership of the Reference Group aligns with the First National Action Plan of the [National Strategy](#) and any changing priorities. It also assisted in considerations for the Reference Group's ongoing role ahead of developing National Strategy Second Action Plan.

The Review made five recommendations and highlighted a number of strengths and areas for improvement. The findings indicate that the expert advice the Reference Group has provided on the National Strategy adequately meets the needs and expectations of the National Office and its jurisdictional stakeholders.

The National Office is progressing the recommendations and will undertake a final review of the Reference Group at the completion of the First National Action Plan. Further information about the outcomes of the mid-term review can be found at ChildSafety.gov.au.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 13: DEVELOP NATIONAL GUIDELINES OR STANDARDS FOR UNDERSTANDING, PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISPLAYED HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS¹² – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 10.1, 10.2, 10.5 and 13.6 from the *Final Report*.

This activity has involved developing principles and key terminology to guide a national approach to understanding and responding to sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people and to establish language and terminology to support a shared nationally consistent understanding of this complex subject (the Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles). The Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles will inform future work on Theme 3 activities by enabling a focus on prevention, intervention and promoting early responses when concerning or harmful sexual behaviours have been identified, to prevent escalation or future harm.

The draft Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles were developed through consultation with the National Clinical Reference Group (Reference Group) (see National Action Plan Activity 12 for more information) and targeted sector stakeholders including:

- Commonwealth, state and territory government agencies with intersecting priorities
- non-government organisations in the child sexual abuse sector, including peak bodies and national and local organisations
- advisory bodies and individuals that are representative of the National Strategy's priority groups.

In 2024, further consultation was undertaken to validate initial consultation outcomes and to seek broader feedback from priority populations. This included consultation with:

- First Nations stakeholders to strengthen consideration of First Nations issues and perspectives
- young people through the Child Safety Youth Summit (see case study on [page 59](#)) and Prevention of Gender Based Violence Youth Advisory Group

Outcomes from this additional consultation will be considered in early 2025 and a final draft progressed for Commonwealth and state and territory government endorsement and public release in the second half of 2025.

¹² Please note this language has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – *Develop national standards for responding to, supporting and safeguarding children with harmful sexual behaviours*

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 14: SET UP A NATIONAL CLINICAL AND THERAPEUTIC FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONDING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISPLAYED HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS¹³ – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

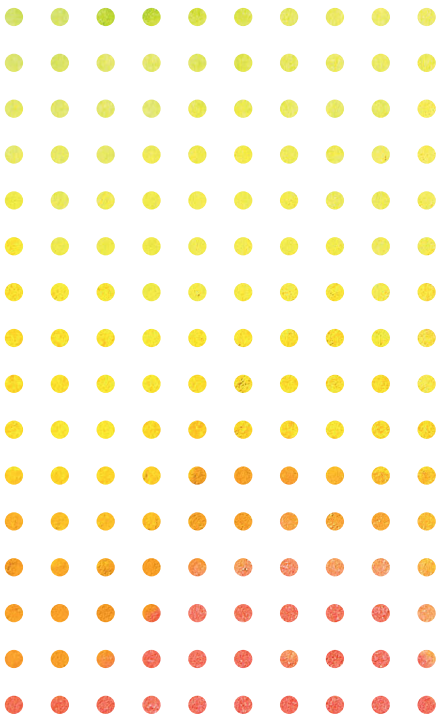
Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 10.1, 10.7 and 12.12 from the *Final Report*.

The National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework will be a service delivery framework, which will set out best practice principles, service features and functions, components of workforce capability building and operational considerations for service providers. It will guide the design, development and operation of services delivered by any provider, aiming to establish a consistent, high quality service system for children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviour in Australia.

The National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework is being developed in close collaboration with state and territory government officials responsible for services that support and respond to children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours, the National Clinical Reference Group (see National Action Plan Activity 12), the National Strategy Advisory Group, as well as other relevant sector experts.

The National Office has procured the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP), which has expertise in therapeutic and clinical responses to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours, to develop and deliver the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework in 2025.

The ACCP facilitated 19 consultation workshops in November 2024 to inform the initial development of the Framework. These workshops were attended by individuals, services, and agencies who provide responses to children, young people, and families impacted by concerning and harmful sexual behaviours. This included government, non-government and private sector services, including those providing specialist tertiary harmful sexual behaviour services and those providing secondary preventative or general therapeutic services.



13 Please note this language has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – It now includes reference to ‘therapeutic’ alongside ‘clinical’, noting that therapeutic responses can occur outside of clinical settings.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 15: INCREASE WORKFORCE CAPABILITY FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE DISPLAYED HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS
– NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 10.1, 10.6 and 12.13 from the *Final Report*

Increasing workforce capability for preventing and responding to harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people is ongoing, noting that National Action Plan Activity 13 and 14 directly contribute to increasing workforce capability.

The finalisation and implementation of the Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles (see National Action Plan Activity 13), and the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework (see National Action Plan Activity 14) will inform future work under Activity 15.

Throughout 2024, the National Office consulted with state and territory governments and the National Clinical Reference Group on how the foundational work under the National Strategy will increase workforce capability and capacity, and where gaps and opportunities still remain. This advice will be used to progress Activity 15 under the Second Action Plan.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 16: SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS AND HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 10.1 from the *Final Report*.

Activity 16 will focus on supporting the community to better understand and respond to developmentally typical sexual behaviours, and concerning and harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people. It will include addressing misinformation and community stigma about children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

Activity 16 will be informed by the Understanding Sexual Behaviours Principles (see National Action Plan Activity 13) that establish terminology and promote understanding of sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people and will build upon resources developed as part of the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign (see National Action Plan Activity 6).

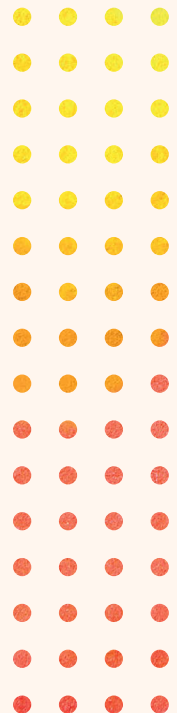
In 2024, the National Office consulted with young people about navigating child and adolescent sexual development information. This included consulting the participants of the National Child Safety Youth Summit (see Case study on [page 59](#)) and members of the Prevention of Gender Based Violence Youth Advisory Group. During these consultations, young people provided valuable insights into how they currently access information about their sexual development, what information children and young people want to know, and what information they want adults to know about this topic.

The National Office is using this expertise and advice to inform work under this Activity to support the broader community to better understand typical sexual development and wellbeing in children and young people and to prevent and respond to concerning or harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children and young people.

CASE STUDY: NEW SOUTH WALES (NSW) SAFE WAYZ PROGRAM

Safe Wayz is a new NSW Health state-wide program for children under the age of 10 who have displayed problematic¹⁴ or harmful sexual behaviours, and their families and carers. Safe Wayz takes a collaborative, public health approach to support communities to prevent the behaviours from happening and to provide child and family-focused education and supports. These supports include information, counselling and referrals for children and families who are struggling with, and are impacted by, the behaviours.

NSW Health is developing a practice framework and resources to support the implementation of the Safe Wayz program. This includes guidance on providing early intervention and specialist counselling and support services. A Safe Wayz communication toolkit on the program has been developed and provided to Local Health Districts for engagement with children, young people, families and program providers.



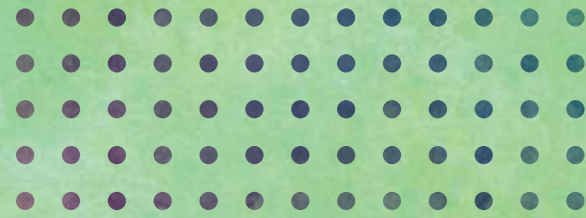
¹⁴ NSW uses the terminology 'problematic sexual behaviours' to refer to behaviours which are described as 'concerning sexual behaviours' under the National Strategy.

CASE STUDY: NSW INTERAGENCY PROBLEMATIC AND HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS (PHSB) STANDARD AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

■ NSW Health has established an Interagency PHSB Standards and Training Committee with representation from government and non-government sector organisations.

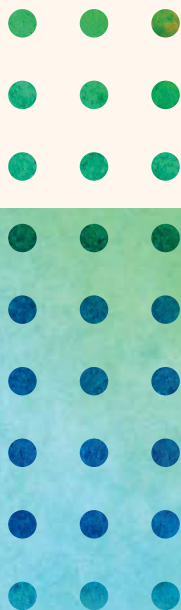
The Committee is developing and implementing a workforce uplift plan to build capability across workforces in understanding children and young people's sexual development and preventing and responding to children and young people who have displayed problematic and harmful sexual behaviours.





Theme 4

Offending prevention and intervention



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

What is needed? The Royal Commission found a lack of early intervention services in Australia for people who have sexual thoughts about children and young people. Most available support programs were only available to people who had been convicted of child sexual abuse offences. Preventing offending from ever happening is the best way to protect children. Community programs that intervene before a child or young person has been harmed means that law enforcement can focus their resources on responding to high risk offending – where a strong criminal justice system response will always be needed.

Child sexual abuse is difficult to identify, investigate and prosecute. Evidence suggests that online child sexual abuse is a growing crime type that requires strengthened law enforcement and intelligence responses.

What are we doing? We will introduce services to stop people before they start harming children. We will also introduce programs that support police and others to uncover and prevent child sexual abuse. We will balance community prevention and intervention programs against new and stronger law enforcement responses. This includes:

- improving how police share information to help them find children who are being abused and to find those doing the abuse
- improving financial intelligence to stop online child sexual abuse
- creating programs that stop people before they offend and that reduce repeat offending
- making sure laws stay current to protect children in Australia and online and to hold offenders to account
- working with countries and online companies to improve the global response to child sexual abuse
- working with the Indo-Pacific and South-East Asia regions to provide support to stop child sexual abuse
- strengthening the Australian Government's ability to prosecute offenders.

What are we aiming to achieve?

1. People and organisations are aware and comply with their responsibilities regarding child safety.
2. Justice and service providers are better connected to identify and respond to offenders, perpetrators and people at risk of perpetrating child sexual abuse.
3. Statutory frameworks and justice responses are focused on stopping child sexual abuse including preventing further abuse.
4. High-quality services for offenders, perpetrators and people at risk of perpetrating are available, used and have appropriate referral pathways in and out.

Relevant National Strategy activities:

1. Building knowledge so everyone can understand and recognise developmentally expected, concerning and harmful sexual behaviours.
2. Children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours receive access to high-quality assessment and proportionate therapeutic responses and support.
3. Families, kin, carers, communities and workforces receive support and are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours, and those impacted by harmful sexual behaviours.

Relevant National Strategy Activities:

- National Action Plan Activities 17 – 22
- Commonwealth Action Plan Activities 13 – 30

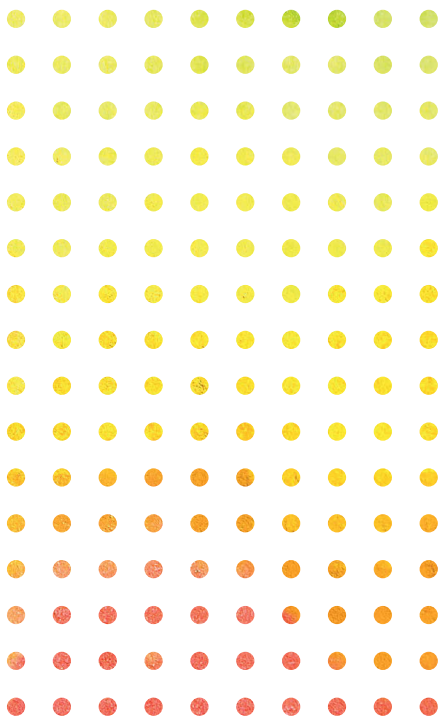
The design and implementation of Theme 4 Activities continues to be informed and guided by consultation and engagement with non-government stakeholders, including the National Strategy’s priority groups. In the past year, this consultation has been progressed through:

- non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#)
- clinicians with experience working with child sexual abuse offenders or people at risk of committing related offences
- digital industry organisations
- First Nations organisations and individuals
- other national helpline providers.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Key achievements over the past year include:

- The AFP ran a Victim Identification Taskforce which identified 30 victims, and referred a further 24 victims. A total of 2282 media files were contributed to the International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database (see National Action Plan Activity 18).
- The AFP Technology Detection Dog (TDD) program completed 88 searches and located 207 items. The program targets concealed technical devices containing illicit content such as child abuse material when executing online child sexual abuse-related search warrants (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 24).
- The National Office led the development of a trauma-informed, victim and survivor-centred multidisciplinary workplan to support stronger protections for children in digital spaces. US and Australian government Ministers endorsed the workplan on 6 May 2024 (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 18).
- Between August 2023 to April 2024, the ABF worked closely with Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) to assess the vulnerabilities, identify targets and disrupt travelling child sex offenders who use cruise ships to facilitate child sexual exploitation and abuse (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 15).
- With the support of industry, AUSTRAC closed over 1800 financial accounts linked to over 1000 Australia-based entities which were involved in sextorting children and young people (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 17).



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 17: EMBED MEMBERS OF ALL AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND POLICE FORCES IN THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE LED AUSTRALIAN CENTRE TO COUNTER CHILD EXPLOITATION – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*

This initiative is improving frontline national and regional coordination to fight online child sexual abuse, including improving covert activities, child protection triage and victim identification. This includes trans-pacific intelligence and information sharing to bolster Australia's capability.

There are a number of agencies and services that have been seconded into the ACCCE including Queensland Police Service (QPS), Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), Office of the eSafety Commissioner, New Zealand Police Force (NZPF), and the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) Bank. These partnerships have enhanced partnership, knowledge sharing and coordination

between the countries. The ACCCE continues to liaise and work with all state and territory policing agencies and international agencies through joint investigations, taskforces, and training.

Further secondment opportunities to the ACCCE are being considered.

Further information can be found at accce.gov.au.

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 First Action Plans*, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the *Annual Report*.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 18: IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL VICTIM IDENTIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*

The National Victim Identification Framework (NVIF) brings together state and territory law enforcement agencies into a national victim identification capability, resulting in a faster, efficient and effective national approach to identifying victims and offenders. Outcomes include proactive and reactive identification and removal of children from situations of sexual exploitation nationally and internationally, and raising national capability in the specialised area of victim identification to ensure children are removed from harm.

The AFP has facilitated a number of joint-agency taskforces and training courses to uplift capability and enhance collaboration to fight online child sexual abuse and identify victims. In May 2024, a Victim Identification Taskforce was held with specialist representation from most Australian state and territory Police Forces and the New Zealand Police. During this taskforce, 30 victims were identified, 24 victims were referred, and 2282 media files were contributed to the ICSE database.

Victim Identification Specialist recruitment has been finalised in Perth and Brisbane.

In March 2024, the inaugural 5-day Victim Identification Foundation training course was held in March and was attended by AFP, and state and territory investigators as well as an investigator from New Zealand.

This completes the suite of training recommended in the National Victim Identification Framework.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 19: DELIVER A DIGITAL FIELD TRIAGE TOOL AND TRAINING PROGRAM – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*

The Digital Field Triage Tool named 'National Investigator' allows investigators to triage electronic devices at warrants containing child abuse material. This provides a national uplift of capability and capacity in frontline investigation digital triaging. The associated training program delivers a best practice approach to child protection investigations and enhances capability and interoperability across all policing jurisdictions nationally.

National Investigator – Digital Field Triage Training has been delivered to 68 AFP members across the country. Through the training, participants developed the required skills, knowledge, and capabilities to triage digital devices in the field and obtain evidence in accordance with best practice guidelines and

legislative requirements. This training has met the objectives of providing the tangible skills and building investigator confidence in how to triage digital devices in the field with or without the assistance of digital forensics.

The feedback received from the AFP course participants indicates the digital forensics triage techniques has been well received with the following results post-training (as 22 July 2024), 33 trained members have triaged a mobile phone, 30 have utilised a writer blocker and 20 have utilised the triage tool at a search warrant. This demonstrates that training has resulted in practical application in investigations. A pilot refresher course is currently under development.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 20: SET UP A VICTIM LIAISON COORDINATION CAPABILITY – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 3 and 14 from the Criminal Justice Report

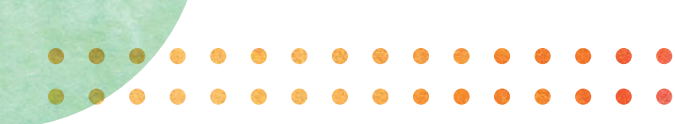
The AFP Victim Liaison Coordinator Officer (VLCO) is designed to support child exploitation and human trafficking teams nationally through the development and monitoring of best practice victim engagement.

The VLCO conducted a National Environmental Scan (environmental scan) of the victim liaison landscape to:

- identify current victim management, practices and procedures nationally
- identify gaps and opportunities for enhancing AFP capability, training and procedures
- inform AFP best practice for online child sexual abuse and human trafficking victim management and engagement.

The environmental scan was conducted in consultation with over 150 stakeholders nationally, including AFP Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team (JACETs), Child Protection Operations and Human Trafficking teams, State and Territory Police services, Government departments, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

The environmental scan report makes ten recommendations which will inform the VLCO role. This will go on to inform and contribute to strategies which enhance the AFP's ongoing support and empowerment of online child sexual abuse and human trafficking victimsurvivors, in alignment with the National Strategy and the *National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–2025*.



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 21: LAUNCH AN OFFENDING PREVENTION SERVICE FOR ADULTS WHO HAVE SEXUAL THOUGHTS ABOUT CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.2 g and h from the *Final Report*

The National Office will deliver a national child sexual abuse offending prevention service to protect children from sexual abuse by intervening before an individual offends or re-offends. The service will do this by providing advice and guidance to people who are worried about their own sexual thoughts and behaviours towards children or young people, or if they are concerned about another adult. Community members will be able to use this service anonymously and for free by using a helpline, website and other contact methods. Design of this service is based on the *Stop It Now! program model implemented in Ireland and the United Kingdom*.

Over the past year, the National Office published a request for tender (RFT), seeking a nongovernment service provider to deliver First National Action Plan Activity 21 – the Offending Prevention Service – under the National Strategy. The RFT opened in November 2023 closed in February 2024. An expert Tender Evaluation Committee evaluated a number of competitive responses and agreed on a preferred supplier. The National Office expects to finalise contract negotiations in late 2024, with an expected launch of the service in 2025.

In our commitment to transparency and accountability in implementing the National Strategy, the National Office has procured an evaluation provider to support the design and evaluation of both the National Action Plan Activity 10 Service, and the National Action Plan Activity 21.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 22: PROGRESS LEGISLATIVE REFORMS TO THE UNIFORM EVIDENCE LAW. EXPLORE OPERATIONAL REFORMS FOR SECURING DIGITAL EVIDENCE – ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 44 to 51 from the Criminal Justice Report.

The AGD is continuing to consider legislative reforms in relation to tendency and coincidence evidence and, in particular, the impact and effect of those reforms in the context of the *Evidence Act 1995* (Cth).

Looking forward, AGD will continue to work with the Law Enforcement National Strategy Working Group and other relevant stakeholders to consider appropriate legislative reforms.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 13: STRENGTHEN COMMONWEALTH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENCES – ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT¹⁵

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 85 from the Criminal Justice Report

The AGD is continuing to review existing Commonwealth child sexual abuse offences. This review is considering whether legislative reform is needed to make sure offences remain current and reflect emerging trends.

In undertaking the review, AGD will consider:

- statistics and data (including case studies) on investigations and prosecutions for Commonwealth child sexual abuse offences
- feedback from stakeholder discussions with law enforcement and prosecutors
- the Final Report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse
- reports from Commonwealth parliamentary inquiries on child sexual abuse
- research reports on child sexual abuse, including by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)
- international and regional instruments, including:
 - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
 - the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime
 - United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime
 - United Nations Cybercrime Convention (yet to formalised).

On 21 August 2024, the Attorney-General tabled the outcomes of the statutory review of the first three years of the operation of the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection Measures) Act 2020* (Cth) (SCAC Act) in Parliament.

AGD is also leading a concurrent legislative review of Commonwealth cybercrime offences, which will help inform advice to government; the cybercrime offence framework and the online child sexual abuse frameworks share common jurisdictional elements.

Further information can be found at ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-08/statutory-review-of-sentencing-for-commonwealth-child-sex-offenders.PDF

¹⁵ This work moved from the Department of Home Affairs to the Attorney-General's Department due to a Machinery of Government change in 2022.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.3 from the Final Report

The National Office is conducting a pilot service to prevent child sexual abuse reoffending. The pilot will implement a post-custodial community reintegration program model to promote accountability and prevent further harm by child sexual abuse offenders after they have been released from prison, with the aim of measuring the effectiveness of this model for potential future national work. It will be informed by models such as Circles of Support and Accountability and other post-custodial community reintegration programs.

This activity consists of three key phases:

1. The first stage involved a scoping study on the existing evidence base on post-custodial community interventions for child sexual abuse offenders. The study made recommendations for how to design a service in the Australian context, including different approaches for Australia's diverse population groups.
2. The second stage is developing and delivering a pilot service based on the findings from the scoping study.
3. The third and final stage is evaluating the pilot and reviewing the recidivism data.

The National Office engaged the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to conduct the scoping study (Phase 1), led by Professor Kelly Richards. Phase 1 was delivered in February 2024, following extensive consultations throughout 2022 and 2023 and a rigorous peer review process. The findings from the scoping study are being used to inform the design of the pilot program that will be presented to the open market, in order to identify a suitable pilot service provider.

The Phase 1 scoping study made recommendations on overall service design, service considerations specific for the Australian context, and considerations for how a postcustodial community reintegration program for child sexual abuse offenders can meet the needs of Australia's diverse population groups. These recommendations were informed by consultations with the following groups:

- victims, survivors, and their advocates
- national strategy priority groups
- people with experience delivering perpetrator support services
- police and correctional services
- people convicted of sexual offences.

Now that Phase 1 has been delivered, the National Office is working toward Phase 2: approaching the market to identify a suitable pilot service provider. The development process is underway to ensure the procurement process is undertaken with rigor and in compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 15: STOP CHILD ABUSE MATERIAL AND OFFENDERS AT THE AUSTRALIAN BORDER – AUSTRALIAN BORDER FORCE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report

The ABF is continuing to enhance its operational capability to respond to the growing amount of child abuse material (including child-like sex dolls) that is being detected at our Australian border.

With the rising number of objectionable images and goods that is being detected, the wellbeing of officers who view and handle this material is a priority for the ABF. A number of internal projects are currently underway to ensure officers received tailored support programs to enable them to conduct this work in a safe manner.

The ABF Child Exploitation Team (CET) is a small team of dedicated officers who are responsible for ensuring frontline officers remain updated on trends and themes of this crime type to allow them to best apply their range of legislative powers. This year the CET has:

- worked closely with the ABF International posts in Japan, the Philippines and China to support their efforts overseas and strengthen networks
- provided relevant information on the types of dolls that are coming across our borders to our front-line officers through virtual sessions, based on information on child-like sex dolls collected since 2019
- developed and delivered information sessions to our Border Force Officer Recruit Trainees nationally, to better inform them of transnational child sex offenders and child-like sex dolls and to manage their wellbeing when dealing with objectionable material
- delivered the Transnational Child Sex Offender (TCSO) awareness sessions to ABF officers in the Maritime environment (Queensland) that facilitates the clearance of passengers on small vessels, cruise ships and commercial vessels. This package is now being redesigned for national delivery
- worked closely with Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) in a multi-agency project to assess the vulnerabilities, identify targets and disrupt travelling child sex offenders who use cruise ships to facilitate the exploitation of children in the maritime domain
- worked with Queensland Police Service to deliver skills training to over 200 ABF frontline officers and investigators.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 16: IMPROVE WAYS TO FIND UNKNOWN CHILD SEX OFFENDERS AT THE BORDER – DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report

Ongoing refinement of border targeting activity has continued to increase the number, diversity and severity of child sexual abuse material and previously unknown offenders discovered at the border.

These increases are evidenced by content from the Department of Home Affairs and ABF 2022–2023 Annual Report. In a summary of performance relating to border and customs operations, the annual report noted:

- “[ABF have responded] to a 65% increase in the importation of objectionable material at Sydney International Airport. ABF investigations resulted in NSW Police arresting 10 persons of interest in relation to the alleged movement of child abuse material, of which five remain subject to current prosecution”

- “ongoing engagement with international law enforcement partners, resulting in the arrest of two alleged facilitators in the Philippines, accused of engaging in the production of child abuse material, and the rescue of 12 children at the risk of harm in the creation of this content”.

The ongoing engagement with international partners has continued in 2024 with eight referrals made to assist in the identification of child traffickers and information provided to partners leading to the rescue of 17 children.

Darknet-focused research has also resulted in border outcomes and referrals for investigation.

Further information can be found at [afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/man-charged-following-jacet-investigation-child-exploitation-program](https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/man-charged-following-jacet-investigation-child-exploitation-program)



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 17: STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS TO DISRUPT THE CASH FLOW BEHIND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – AUSTRALIAN TRANSACTION REPORTS AND ANALYSIS CENTRE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*

The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) Child Sexual Exploitation Response Team (CSERT) works in collaboration with the ACCCE, Joint Anti-Child Exploitation Task Force (JACET), and Australian and international law enforcement agencies to target the sexual exploitation of children, and related crimes. This team is increasing information sharing and data collection, and is also using and enhancing financial intelligence capabilities to counter child sexual abuse, by targeting the money that funds this crime.

In the past year, AUSTRAC achievements include:

- The CSERT driving a number of high-profile ongoing operations such as Operation Huntsman, a coordinated AUSTRAC/ACCCE initiated operation into the sextortion of minors; investigation of Role Play Games (RPGs); live-distance child abuse; travelling to offend; and child-like sex dolls.
- The CSERT presented to a number of Australian and international forums to promote the use of financial intelligence in assisting with the detection and disruption of this crime type.
- Efforts to target the increase in sextortion of minors, where the perpetrators are located either within Australia or internationally. AUSTRAC has used its relationships to collaborate on further opportunities to combat criminal networks behind this crime type.
 - With the support of industry, over 1,800 financial accounts linked to over 1,000 Australia-based entities have been closed due to being linked to sextorting minors.
 - AUSTRAC has sought to further disrupt the entities who enable this crime, through collaboration with Services Australia and the Australian Taxation Office.
- Submissions on the rising threat of child sexual exploitation RPGs have been disseminated, leading to the implementation of joint agency Operation Garuda with Queensland Police, ACCCE and AUSTRAC.
 - RPGs can be used to generate child sexual exploitation material and are often linked to live-distance child abuse. Financial intelligence provided the details of over 860 Australia-based buyers of RPGs, and the ACCCE is actively pursuing these referrals.
- Disseminated Intelligence and Methodology reports to ACCCE/JACETs and partners to advise on emerging trends such as RPGs, black market adoptions/illegal surrogacy with links to child sexual exploitation, and Artificial Intelligence developments.
- Initiated monthly financial intelligence reports to JACETs/law enforcement to highlight individuals and activity of interest, to allow for geolocation analysis which has resulted in successful arrests.

AUSTRAC is working to strengthen the ABF, the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's understanding of financial transactions, indicators and activity of individuals and businesses who produce, purchase and sell child sexual exploitation material including childlike sex dolls. This is to ensure our frontline detection officers remain well informed of changing financial purchase technology and methodologies, and travelling to offend activity. Ongoing provision of AUSTRAC financial intelligence continues to lead to the arrest of Australia-based offenders travelling to offend, by the ABF/Department of Home Affairs.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report

The National Office has maintained strong relationships with the United States (US) and is dedicated to continued engagement across the technology industry, civil society, academia, and other key decision-makers. Targeted bilateral engagement enhances support for law enforcement, including by improving cooperative law enforcement responses; supports advocacy for stronger protections for children in digital spaces; and supports the Australian Government response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Following increased engagement with US government agencies, the National Office led the establishment of the Australia-US Joint Council on Combating Online Child Sexual Exploitation (Joint Council). The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia, and the Honourable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States made a commitment to establish the Joint Council on 23 May 2023. The National Office continues to lead Australia's role in the Australia-US Joint Council to combat online child sexual exploitation, chaired by the Honourable Mark Dreyfus KC MP, the Australian Attorney-General and Alejandro Mayorkas, the US Secretary of Homeland Security,

Senior delegates from US and Australian agencies developed a trauma-informed, victim and survivor-centred multidisciplinary workplan. The US Secretary of Homeland Security and Australian Attorney-General endorsed the workplan on 6 May 2024.

In the past year, the Australia-US Joint Council has:

- Enabled Australia to build better relationships with US government agencies that work on combatting child sexual abuse.
- Supported exchanges and visits to Australia from US government representatives at the Customs and Border Protection's National Targeting Centre.
- Provided Australian Government officials with updates and analysis on relevant developments across the US. Including legislative and tech industry developments to assist Australian policy development.
- Enabled the Australian Government to deliver presentations with expert speakers on online child sexual exploitation and abuse at a number of events. These include hosting webinars and online presentations to raise awareness with policymakers in the US on sextortion and approaches to targeting live streamed child sexual abuse perpetrators.

Further information can be found in the '*Joint Statement from Australia and the United States on the Inaugural meeting of the Joint Council on Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation*' media release at ministers.ag.gov.au/media-centre

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report

The National Office drives implementation of the Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (Voluntary Principles) to promote accountability and transparency across digital industry and strengthen the global response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

The National Office drives domestic engagement with industry stakeholders including the telecommunications sector, via its active participation in a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements.

The National Office leverages bilateral and multilateral relationships and forums, such as the Five Eyes Ministerial, to develop initiatives aimed at engaging industry to uplift efforts to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes encouraging uptake of the Voluntary Principles and engaging with law enforcement to understand where information sharing and requests to industry can be improved for criminal investigations.

The National Office has continued to drive engagement with industry on online harms through:

- leading engagement with Five Country partners to inform domestic law enforcement responses to, and align global messaging on, online child sexual exploitation and abuse
- membership of the WeProtect Global Alliance, including the Government taskforce – an international body comprising of government, industry and civil society members – to promote the Voluntary Principles globally, and hold industry to account including through transparency and accountability measures
- building and sustaining positive working relationships with the domestic based technology sector company representatives.

In 2025, the National Office will continue to focus on multilateral engagement to promote best practice approaches and ensure Australia continues to engage in global approaches to combatting child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Further information about the Voluntary Principles can be found on weprotect.org.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The AFP have bolstered international capabilities through deploying a Child Protection Officer and Intelligence Analyst to the Philippines. These additional resources have seen the AFP continue close collaboration with Philippine domestic and foreign law enforcement partners to detect and disrupt those engaged in the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, remove victims from harm and address the growth of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children at the source. This includes continued support to the development and maturity of the Philippines Internet Crimes Against Children Centre (PICACC) jointly established in 2019 by the AFP in partnership with the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine National Police (PNP), International Justice Mission and United Kingdom National Crime Agency. The Netherlands Police (NP) joined as a PICACC Board of Management partner in 2021. Since the PICACCs inception, 753 victims have been rescued and 166 suspects charged. Of these, 61 of the arrests/charges and 253 of the rescued victims were a direct result of AFP International Command facilitating referrals from Australian-based investigations and intelligence referrals.

In April 2024, AFP Manila, together with NP, facilitated and funded a basic Interviewing Vulnerable Witnesses Workshop for PNP and NBI child exploitation investigators.

To further enhance the investigative capability of law enforcement agencies within Manila, Digital Forensics training was provided from 4–16 August 2024. Members from PNP, Women and Children Protection Centre and Anti Cybercrime Group, and the NBI Human Trafficking Division and Digital Forensics participated in the training. The Digital Field Triage Tool training has enhanced investigators' abilities to conduct an initial triage of electronic devices found at search warrants, establish best practice to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of investigations.

Further information can be found at [afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/man-jailed-ongoing-sexual-abuse-and-grooming-overseas-based-child](https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/man-jailed-ongoing-sexual-abuse-and-grooming-overseas-based-child)

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 21: STRENGTHEN LAW AND JUSTICE FRAMEWORKS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGIONS – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: N/A.

The Australia's Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program (the Program) aims to strengthen the Pacific and South-East Asian law and justice frameworks for combatting child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) in the region, including online.

The Program comprises three forms of support: capacity building, technical assistance and partnerships. The National Office ensured there were a vast array of opportunities provided across the region to support law and justice teams to expand capabilities and adapt approaches in combating CSEA. This Program supports Australia's wider international efforts to combat online CSEA.



In the past year, the National Office:

- partnered with International Justice Mission (IJM) to deliver a series of workshops to judges and trainers from the Philippine Judicial Academy on child protective strategies during OCSEA trials. The workshop aims to embed a deep understanding of what it means to facilitate the best interests of a child during proceedings and the importance and impact of institutionalising concepts such as plea bargaining, digital evidence, videotaped in-depth disclosure interviews, and financial evidence in online CSEA cases
- completed an environmental scan of CSEA, including online, in the Pacific. The final report of the environmental scan provides a detailed picture of available information and data on the nature, extent and responses to CSEA in the Pacific. The findings in the report will help address information gaps, inform program planning, and identify further opportunities for regional initiatives and capacity building in the Pacific in the final IPCPP year and beyond. The final report is available on ChildSafety.gov.au website.
- funded translation and printing of 2000 copies of the Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN to be provided to the Laos National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC). These printed copies were provided to government officials who had responsibility for delivering measures under the Laos National Plan of Action to Strengthen Child Protection Systems

The National Office continues to prioritise projects that align with Australian Government priorities including to: enhance law enforcement and intelligence resources and activities to identify victims and offenders; work with international counterparts to improve global responses to child sexual abuse, particularly online abuse; work with communities on programs to raise awareness around offending and strengthen the Australian Government's ability to prosecute offenders.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 22: CREATE A NETWORK OF HUMAN EXPLOITATION COMMUNITY OFFICERS – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

This new capability has seen the AFP develop a network of Human Exploitation Community Officers (HECOs) embedded across Australia, targeting outreach and education relating to human exploitation. The roles have been conceptualised to focus on engagement with at-risk and vulnerable communities based on operational and intelligence data. HECOs also work with existing organisations and services to intervene and prevent victimisation across the online child sexual exploitation and human trafficking crime types. The recruitment for six of the seven positions have been filled across Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra with the remaining position in Sydney currently undergoing shortlisting. The six HECOs were inducted into their roles and received an overview of the ACCCE and Human Exploitation crime type with an induction day involving briefings from teams such as Child Protection Operations, Human Trafficking, Child Protection National Strategy and Victim Liaison areas.

This capability has seen the HECOs develop, deliver, and manage targeted and bespoke presentations and resources regarding human exploitation.

As of June 2024, collectively the HECOs have completed 100 stakeholder engagements and conducted 36 presentations. As the HECO capability operationalises, the AFP will see the development, delivery and management of more targeted and bespoke presentations and resources through state and territory police, education, community, and industry partners.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 23: ENHANCE CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The AFP has increased online investigation capabilities and child exploitation prevention and outreach through the recruitment of added resources including investigators in the Northern Territory (NT) Joint Anti-Child Exploitation Team (JACET), a Child Protection Intelligence Resource that and a Senior Prevention Officer (SPO) who has commenced work.

The SPO contributes to the development and delivery of prevention and education initiatives for remote communities within the NT, including First Nations communities. The SPO has met with internal and external ThinkUKnow, AFP and NT stakeholders, with a focus on developing and fostering relationships with remote community stakeholders. The role works closely with the Online Child Safety Team based in Brisbane, whilst being regionally based in the NT.

A project plan is currently under development to expand on the existing collaboration and consultation with communities to develop resource packs for awareness and educational purposes that are specifically tailored to the communities within the NT. There is significant work required to plan, consult, build relationships and develop resources, which will continue to include consultation with key stakeholders.

The NT JACET/Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation and Criminal Assets Confiscation Taskforce forfeited the Northern Territory home of an online child abuse offender, following the conviction of a 34-year-old man in December 2023 who was arrested after a NT JACET investigation.

Further information can be found at [afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/afp-led-cact-confiscates-home-nt-man-jailed-online-child-abuse-offences](https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/afp-led-cact-confiscates-home-nt-man-jailed-online-child-abuse-offences).

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 24: DEVELOP A TECHNOLOGY DETECTION DOG PROGRAM – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The Technology Detection Dog (TDD) program has continued to develop through ongoing collaboration with International, Australian, and state and territory law enforcement to improve the impact of frontline operations and assist in victim identification. TDDs target concealed technical devices containing illicit content such as child abuse material when executing online child sexual abuse-related search warrants.

TDDs have proven successful in locating hidden devices that would have gone undetected. Since the inception of the TDD program in 2021, a total of 220 searches have been conducted and 531 items located. Of those numbers a total of 88 searches and the location of 207 items have been completed in 2024.

Further information can be found at ia.acs.org.au/article/2024/australias-technology-detection-dogs-revolutionise-policing.html

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 25: STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERPOL AND UNITED STATES HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS. PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION DATABASE – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The AFP continues to work with international policing organisations to enhance operational collaboration. As part of these networks, Australia works closely with United States Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and in May 2023 both countries committed to establish the Australia-United States Joint Council on Combatting Online Child Sexual Exploitation (Joint Council) (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 18 for more information).

The Joint Council bolsters efforts to respond to online child sexual exploitation in a sustainable and coordinated manner, with a focus on driving trauma-informed and victim and survivor-centric outcomes. The AFP, along with HSI and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), will work together as the lead agencies under the Operational Opportunities workstream to entrench inter-agency lines of communication, and increase operational collaboration including triaging of reports, intelligence sharing, victim identification, investigative practices, technological capabilities, and investigations. In particular, the inter-agency sharing of intelligence continues to lead to the arrest of child abuse offenders and children being removed from harm.

The AFP partnership with INTERPOL to support the upgrade of the International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database highlights the commitment of law enforcement in protecting children around the world, while bringing offenders to justice. The AFP grant to INTERPOL aimed to support the ICSE Database, which is a ground-breaking tool to advance child exploitation investigations through strengthened global information sharing.

Further information can be found at afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/major-upgrade-database-game-changer-tracking-down-online-predators

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 First Action Plans*, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the *Annual Report*.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 26: IMPROVE NATIONAL ABILITY TO TRIAGE ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE TO COUNTER CHILD EXPLOITATION – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

This initiative is focused on enhancing ACCCE frontline capabilities across the triage, intelligence, covert online, victim identification and coordination of national child protection operations, to boost Australia's response to the increasing number of child sexual abuse reports.

The AFP has recruited and inducted four additional resources within the ACCCE Child Protection Triage Unit (CPTU). These additional resources continue to enable a higher delivery of reports for investigations nationally resulting in the better targeting of offenders and removing victims from harm.

A referral package has been developed that is used consistently across all jurisdictions which has streamlined the referral process. This has also been expanded to include eSafety with a one-month trial being initiated to review the referral process regarding eSafety referrals to the ACCCE CPTU, which will include standardised documents and automated workflows and the review of technology solutions that can enhance the triage process.

The CPTU team have also implemented a new roster and inbox management system to increase capacity during periods where there is an increase of referrals requiring triage and have also had a demonstration of an open-source intelligence platform that may further enhance triage and intelligence gathering.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 27: LOOK AT OPTIONS FOR AN AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE LAW ENFORCEMENT DATABASE OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENDERS – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The AFP is scoping a law enforcement database to collate data relating to online child sexual exploitation and abuse offenders. The database would utilise AFP data to identify and better understand offender typologies and trends to provide intelligence and information regarding Australian offenders to inform policing deterrence strategies. The AFP held internal workshops with relevant stakeholders and consulted with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission to discuss database requirements and understand what current databases exist.

The AFP will consider options and scope the merits and technological solutions required for a Commonwealth database to help identify typologies and trends.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 28: SET UP DEDICATED STRIKE SURGE TEAMS – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

The AFP has established dedicated Strike Surge capability to target the parts of organised crime that profit from online child sexual abuse. These teams enhance investigation capability around Australia including assisting Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team (JACETs) on major operations. The Strike Surge capability will also deliver a dedicated live online child sexual abuse disruption team capability, increasing target identification and account takeovers within the AFP, enhancing Australia's national capability to disrupt live online child sexual abuse.

Recruitment to fill vacant Covert Online Account Takeover Team (COATT) positions has been delayed; however, a process is now under way with interviews expected to take place in October 2024.

The Operations Development and Disruption Unit (ODDU) provide strike surge capacity on warrants led by JACETs and state and territory police on child sexual abuse matters/operations.

The ODDU work with industry partners to target organised crime that profits from online child sexual exploitation such as Australians committing offences such as live online child sexual abuse. The ODDU acquisitioned Digital Field triaging kits to enhance tech capabilities.

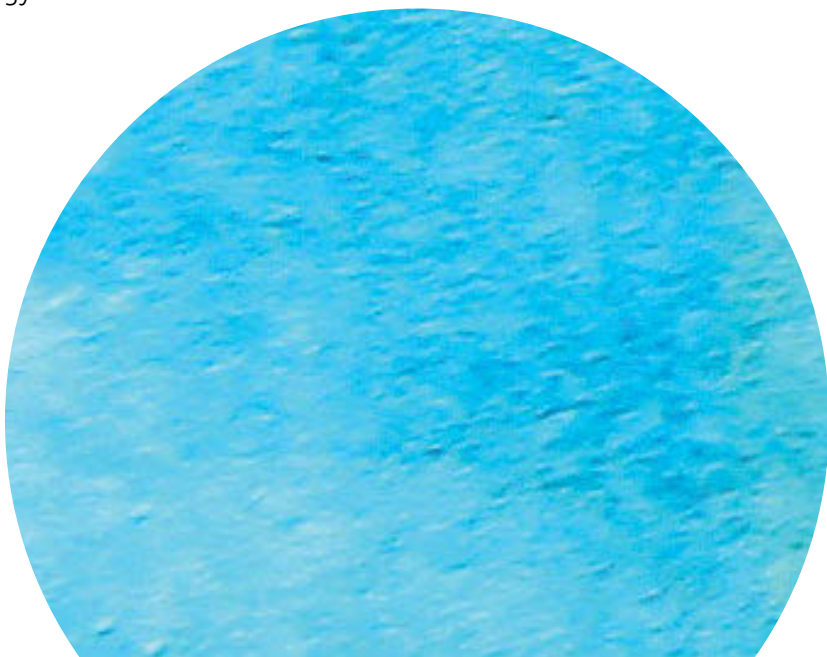
COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 29: ENHANCE THE NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES CONCERNING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report*.

Enhancing technological support capability has ensured technology is fit for purpose for frontline police and specialist users. The ACCCE Technological Enhancement Roadmap has been created to assist in efforts to meet advances in technology, resulting in identifying more offenders and removing Australian victims from harm.

The Senior Technical Advisor attended nationally accredited training which will enhance technology capability and provide increased assurance regarding the security of the ACCCE's covert infrastructure. Meeting the advances in technology continues to result in identifying more offenders and removing Australian victims from harm, especially with end-to-end encryption and the dark web challenges.

Technology workshops were held with several internal stakeholders to seek ideas relating to technology enhancements that would result in an increase and uplift. Common themes included AI intelligence to assist with reducing time for manual tasks such as triaging. Funding will be sought in the next phase National Strategy funding to increase technology capabilities and reduce manual timing in an ever-growing crime type.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 30: ENHANCE THE COMMONWEALTH'S CAPACITY TO PROSECUTE PERPETRATORS – OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (COMMONWEALTH) AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.24 from the *Final Report* and Recommendation 72 from the Criminal Justice Report

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Commonwealth) (CDPP) continues to enhance its capacity to prosecute perpetrators of child abuse committed online and overseas in accordance with the Prosecution Policy of the Commonwealth.

In the past year, the CDPP provided the AGD with a significant amount of data concerning Commonwealth child sex offence sentence outcomes before and after the commencement of the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Crimes against Children and Community Protection Measures) Act 2020* (Cth) (SCAC Act) on 23 June 2020.

The SCAC Act introduced a suite of amendments including mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment, new offences, increased maximum penalties and factors to be considered on sentence. This data was provided as part of the AGD's review of the first three years of operation of the SCAC Act's amendments (that is, the period 23 June 2020 to 22 June 2023).

In that three-year period, the CDPP prosecuted 740 offenders who were proven to have committed Commonwealth child sex offences. In total, those prosecutions involved 2,526 offences.

On 13 March 2024, the High Court of Australia delivered the judgment *Hurt v The King; Delzotto v The King*. This judgment affirmed the CDPP's interpretation of the mandatory minimum scheme for Commonwealth child sex offences. Principally, that the minimum term of imprisonment serves as a "yardstick" "for the appropriate term of imprisonment for the offence in the least serious circumstances"¹⁶.

The number of referrals for Commonwealth child sex offences remains high but consistent with previous years.

The CDPP continues to run training sessions internally for its prosecutors and externally for partner agencies that refer Commonwealth child sex offence prosecutions, including the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force and state and territory Police. The CDPP is also prioritising wellbeing programs for its prosecutors who deal with Commonwealth child sex offence matters.

The CDPP's Witness Assistance Service (WAS) is staffed by qualified social workers who provide information and support to the most vulnerable victims of crime and their families. All identifiable child complainants must be referred early in the prosecution and are consulted throughout the prosecution process.

Further information can be found at cdpp.gov.au.

¹⁶ *Hurt v The King; Delzotto v The King* [2024] HCA 8, [54].

CASE STUDY: CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN WORKSHOP - UNDERSTANDING AND PRESENTING DIGITAL EVIDENCE FOR PROSECUTORS WITH RESPECT TO ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

From 9 to 11 October 2024, the Attorney-General's Department's Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program delivered the "Crimes Against Children Workshop" to 50 Cambodian prosecutors and judges in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, alongside the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) Australia.

Australia's Deputy Head of Mission for Cambodia, Bridget Collier, the Cambodian Secretary of State, His Excellency Keng Somarith, the Cambodian Under Secretary of State, Her Excellency Song Chorvoin, and the Director General of General Department of Prosecution and Criminal Affairs, Her Excellency Son Sokhalida, attended the opening of the training.

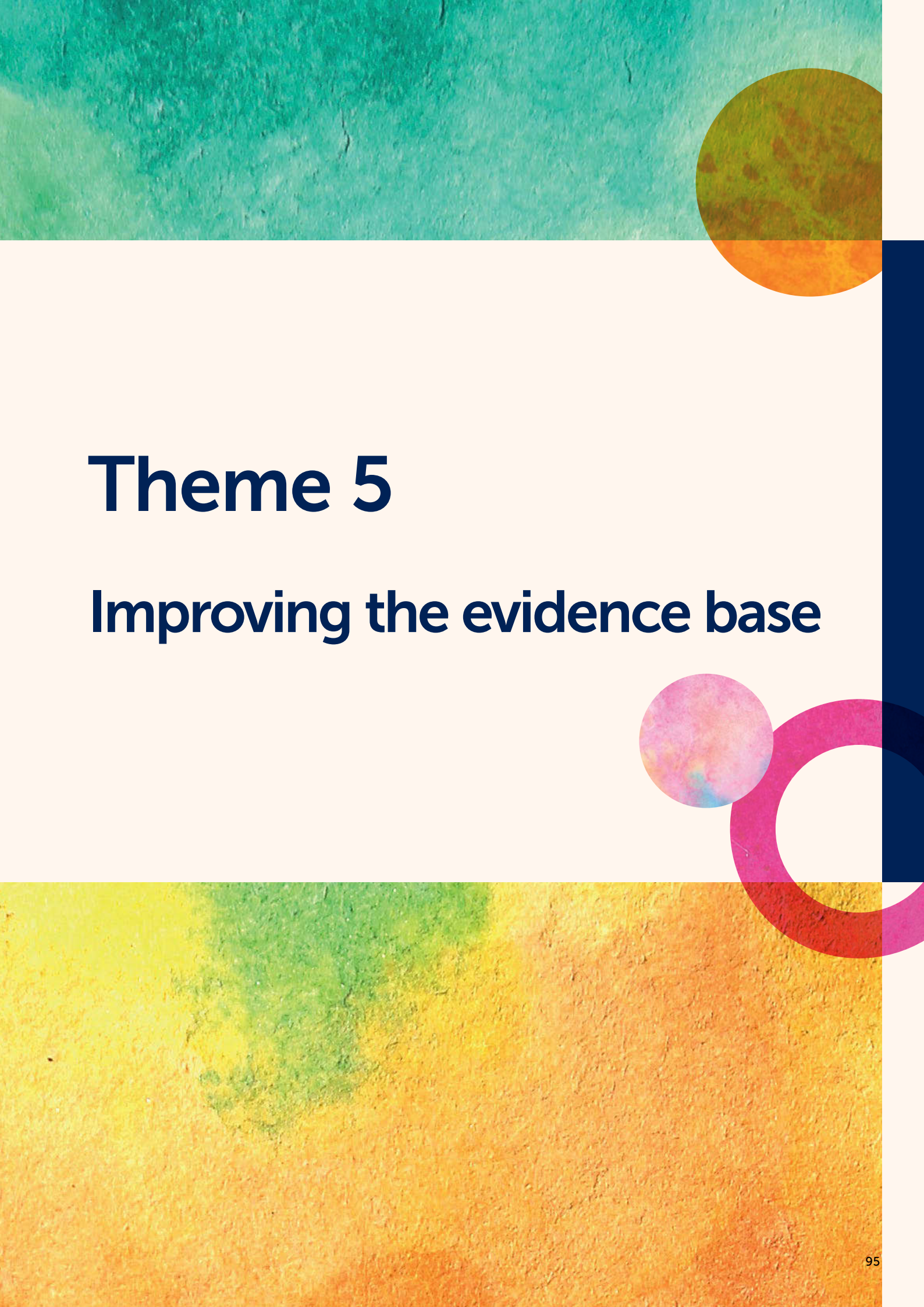
The two-and-a-half-day training focused on investigative methods, digital evidence analysis, digital forensics, court preparation and presentation, victim identification, financial investigations and building global collaboration, relating to child abuse investigations and prosecutions.

A representative from the Cambodian NGO Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE) presented on avoiding burnout and vicarious trauma, and prevention and education for prosecutors and judges, and a representative from A21 Cambodia presented on best practice for providing victim support.

The training was funded by the National Strategy, under Activity 21 of the Commonwealth Action Plan – Strengthen law and justice frameworks in the Indo-Pacific and South-East Asia regions. The program enabled Australia to build capacity by providing peer-to-peer support to Cambodia's prosecution and judicial officers, and sharing best practice for evidence gathering quality and validity.



Cambodian government officials, Australian officials and training participants – October 2024.



Theme 5

Improving the evidence base

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

What is needed? The Royal Commission found significant gaps in the evidence base on the prevalence, risk factors and impacts of child sexual abuse in Australia. A strong data, research and evaluation agenda is needed to guide the design and ongoing improvement of our policy response to child sexual abuse. It will also ensure the National Strategy is culturally safe, age and developmentally appropriate, trauma informed and meeting people's different needs and circumstances.

What are we doing? Australian, state and territory governments will identify where there are gaps in the evidence base and work together to develop and implement solutions. This will include:

- conducting future waves of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study to identify how many Australians have experienced child maltreatment and whether this is changing over time
- establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess how well the National Strategy's activities have been implemented, whether the National Strategy meets or achieves its vision, objectives and values
- working together to develop and implement a nationally coordinated research agenda
- improving law enforcement, intelligence and research agencies' ability to disrupt the monetary profit from online abuse including livestreamed child sexual abuse
- delivering surveys and initiating statistical collections to better understand child sexual abuse in Australia, including victim and offender characteristics.

What are we aiming to achieve?

1. Make high-quality evidence and knowledge available on the prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse.
2. Make high-quality evidence and knowledge available on effective and best practice early interventions and holistic responses to child sexual abuse.

Relevant National Strategy Activities:

- National Action Plan Activities 23–29
- Commonwealth Action Plan Activities 31–33

The design, implementation and evaluation of Theme 5 activities is informed and guided by consultation with stakeholders from the National Strategy's priority groups. This consultation includes:

- non-government advisory groups listed on [page 18](#)
- project specific working groups such as the Child Wellbeing Data Asset Working Group and Advisory Group (see National Action Plan Activity 29)
- researchers and subject matter experts, including those with live experience
- key stakeholders within the sector.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Key achievements over the past year include:

- The National Office released and progressed implementation of the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (see National Action Plan Activity 25).
- The National Office and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) finalised a monitoring and evaluation data feasibility assessment study for the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which will inform future National Strategy data development priorities (see National Action Plan Activity 26).
- The National Office engaged the Australian Institute of Criminology and the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse to undertake rapid evidence reviews on a range of topics related to child sexual abuse victimisation and offending, as part of the National Child Safety Research Agenda (see National Action Plan Activity 23).
- The National Office and the AIHW grew our understanding of the feasibility of developing a nationally consistent minimum data collection of specialist and community support services responding to child sexual abuse (see National Action Plan Activity 24).
- The National Office commenced work on the development of the National Principles Evaluation Framework (see National Action Plan Activity 27).
- The AIHW established the Child Wellbeing Data Asset (CWDA) Working Group and Advisory Group to guide and provide advice on the development of the CWDA including priority data collections, a stakeholder communication strategy and pilot projects (see National Action Plan Activity 29).
- The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) published the first results from the Australian Sexual Offence Statistical collection in the *Sexual offending in Australia 2021–2022 report* (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 31).
- The AIC administered the Survey of Adult Sexual Offenders to inform child sexual abuse prevention initiatives, programs and policies by collecting information directly from offenders convicted of child sexual offences (see Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 32).

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 23: DEVELOP AND DELIVER A CHILD SAFETY RESEARCH AGENDA – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The National Office is developing the *Child Safety Research Agenda* (CSRA) in partnership with Commonwealth agencies, state and territory governments, the National Centre and non-government research organisations.

Activity 23 aims to deliver a world-leading research agenda that nationally coordinates research on child sexual abuse victimisation and offending in Australia. The CSRA will identify research gaps and provide guidance for industry, academia, and policy makers on key research priorities and focus areas. The development of the CSRA has been guided by existing literature and public consultation and will position Australia as an international leader at the forefront of research into child sexual abuse.

In the past year, the National Office:

- engaged the AIC to undertake a rapid evidence review on Artificial Intelligence and child sexual abuse. This will inform an understanding of some of the core emerging trends in the online child sexual abuse material production space, enabling the research community and law enforcement to use best practice to counter these trends
- engaged the National Centre to undertake rapid evidence reviews on Understanding Child Sexual Abuse: Determinants, Risk Factors, and Life Course Impacts for Victims and Survivors. This will assist to address knowledge gaps about the impacts that disclosure has on victims and survivors and help increase understanding on better practices in this field.

Both the National Centre and AIC continue to provide direct support to and engage with the National Office on the delivery of this measure.

These rapid evidence reviews will feed into the delivery and gap analysis of the final CSRA, which will be delivered in 2025.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 24: COMPLETE A BASELINE ANALYSIS OF SPECIALIST AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendation 9.2, 9.3 and 9.6 from the *Final Report*.

The baseline assessment of specialist and community support services responding to child sexual abuse¹⁷ includes:

- developing Minimum Practice Standards: Specialist and Community Support Services Responding to Child Sexual Abuse (Minimum Practice Standards)
- undertaking a stocktake of in-scope services that exist across Australia, and identifying gaps in the system
- making recommendations for expanding or developing new support services
- making feasibility recommendations for developing a nationally consistent minimum data collection for relevant services (undertaken by the AIHW).

Most activities under Activity 24, including the development of Minimum Practice Standards, are complete. A stocktake and sector analysis have been completed. The Minimum Practice Standards and complementary resources can be accessed at ChildSafety.gov.au.

AIHW has completed a final report providing recommendations on the feasibility of developing a nationally consistent minimum data collection of specialist and community support services responding to child sexual abuse. This is the final component of Activity 24.

As part of the development of a broader suite of resources to support the sector, the National Office has engaged Nous Group (Nous) to develop resources and tools to support small organisations to meet and implement the Minimum Practice Standards.

The project is using a human-centered design approach to validate the critical challenges that service providers face implementing and complying with the Minimum Practice Standards. It will co-develop solutions with key stakeholders across the sector, including peak and advocacy bodies, experts and, critically, service providers themselves. All engagements will be conducted in a safe and trauma-informed manner to gather meaningful insight into organisations' needs and create tailored solutions.

The resources are anticipated to be completed in December 2024.

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030* First Action Plans, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the Annual Report.



¹⁷ Please note this language has changed from the initial terminology in the National Strategy – *Complete a baseline analysis of specialist and community support services for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse*.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 25: SET UP A MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK UNDER THE NATIONAL STRATEGY – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.3 and 17.4 from the *Final Report*.

On 13 June 2024, the National Office released the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Framework) on ChildSafety.gov.au. The Framework was developed in partnership with a Co-design Working Group, comprising of individuals, peak bodies and NGO representing the National Strategy's priority cohorts through the National Strategy Advisory Group, as well as Commonwealth, state and territory government representatives. The National Office further refined and finalised the Framework through consultation with state and territory governments and non-government advisory groups.

Accountability and transparency when responding to child sexual abuse was a key theme of the Royal Commission. This Framework will assess implementation progress towards the National Strategy's objective and outcomes. It will track progress against short-, medium- and long-term outcomes by embedding monitoring and evaluation into all policies and programs. Effective monitoring and evaluation of National Strategy activities will help determine 'what works' for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.

The National Office has commenced implementation of the Framework, which includes:

- producing National Strategy Annual Reports, which highlight implementation progress for all National Strategy activities
- developing the National Strategy Data Dashboard, an online product set for release in 2025, which will report on the data behind the Framework's indicators and measures
- the Evaluation of the First National Action Plan and First Commonwealth Action Plan – the National Office anticipates publishing the Evaluation in mid-2025.

The Framework will be in place for the lifetime of the National Strategy, 2021–2030. While it is currently mapped against the First National Action Plan and the First Commonwealth Action Plan, it will be reviewed and updated at the beginning of each new National Strategy Action Plan to reflect new data and changes to performance indicators and measures in response to new policies.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 26: COMPLETING A MONITORING AND EVALUATION DATA FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT STUDY – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY AND AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The National Office and the AIHW have conducted a monitoring and evaluation data feasibility assessment study for the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (National Action Plan Activity 25). This work aims to enhance national data on child sexual abuse victimisation and children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. The findings from this study will support the development and implementation of the Framework and the National Strategy more broadly.

The objective of this project was to review existing data sources against the Framework to identify national data gaps. Additionally, it provides recommendations on opportunities to improve national child safety data sets and address key reporting gaps under the Framework.

In the past 12 months:

- the National Office has worked in consultation with the AIHW to finalise the feasibility assessment study
- the report directly informed the data sources published in the National Strategy Framework
- the data feasibility assessment study was approved by the Research, Evaluation and Data Working Group (REDWG) in October 2024.

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 First Action Plans*, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the Annual Report.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 27: DEVELOP AN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

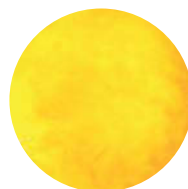
Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.14 from the *Final Report*.

The National Principles Evaluation Framework will establish a nationally consistent set of indicators and data sources to assess how organisations are implementing the National Principles as well as the effectiveness of the National Principles.

In August 2024, the National Office engaged ARTD Consultants (ARTD Pty Ltd) to develop the National Principles Evaluation Framework. It will be a nationally consistent tool for all state and territory governments, and all organisations that interact and work with children and young people, regardless of size or National Principle implementation maturity.

The National Office will engage and consult with the National Strategy's stakeholder and priority groups in the development of the Framework, including children and young people and victims and survivors.

The final National Principles Evaluation Framework is anticipated for release in 2025.





NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 28: CONDUCT A SECOND WAVE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHILD MALTREATMENT STUDY – NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 2.1 from the *Final Report*.

The second Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) aims to:

- produce nationally representative prevalence estimates for National Strategy priority groups, including: First Nations people, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- address key data gaps identified in the first ACMS which were released in April 2023
- collect data to measure implementation progress under the National Strategy
- detect and measure changes in the national prevalence of child maltreatment over time.

In 2023, the National Office engaged Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to conduct a scoping study to identify a gold standard methodology for the second ACMS. The scoping work included:

- conducting a gap analysis on new or improved content for the second ACMS
- consulting with stakeholders to identify what new or improved information could be collected in the second ACMS
- conducting focus groups and cognitive interviews to test the child maltreatment questions with people with disability and people from CALD backgrounds.

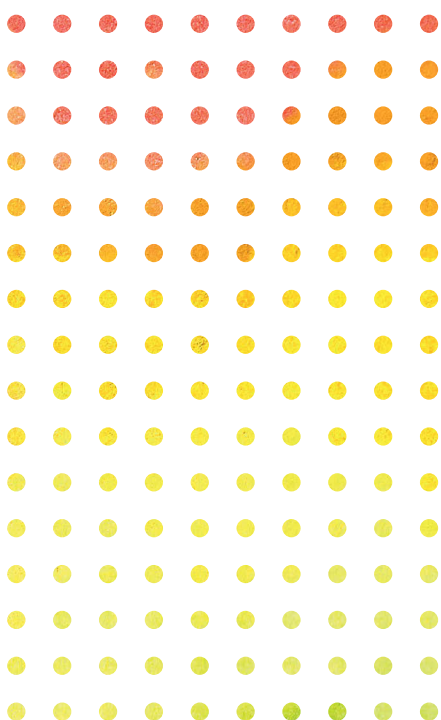
The National Office received the scoping study in early 2024. A procurement process is underway in line with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. The National Office will announce the next steps for this activity in 2025.

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 2.1 and 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The AIHW is developing the Child Wellbeing Data Asset (CWDA). The CWDA aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families by improving the evidence to support policy. It will enable researchers to safely, securely and ethically access enduring, integrated data across sectors to analyse children and young people's wellbeing and pathways through government services over time.

The CWDA will provide secure access to data collections that can be linked to measure various wellbeing outcomes, provide insights on the elements of wellbeing and the conditions children and young people need to thrive. Through linked data, the CWDA will provide information to answer persistent questions on how children and young people transition through major development stages, interact with services and move through different systems. This evidence will support the ability of Australian, state and territory governments to measure the impact and success of initiatives, implement evidence-based policies and practices, and inform investment in better services.

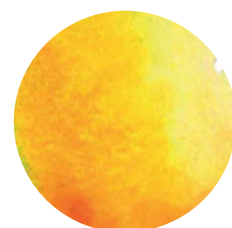
AIHW's approach to the development of the CWDA is informed by learnings from its scoping study, which included extensive consultations with government and non-government stakeholders across sectors.



In the past 12 months:

- AIHW have established:
 - the CWDA Development Working Group (DWG), including Australian, state and territory government representatives, to guide development of the CWDA
 - the CWDA Advisory Group (CWDA AG), including academic, priority group and non-government organisation subject matter expert representatives, to provide advice to DWG.
- DWG and CWDA AG have provided critical input on key development activities, including priority data collections, a stakeholder communication strategy, pilot projects to be conducted once the CWDA is established and the draft CWDA Governance Framework.
- Discussions have commenced with data owners to establish agreements for inclusion of data in the CWDA.
- AIHW have started exploring partnership options with peak bodies and research centres to deliver CWDA pilot projects.
- AIHW have continued to keep the National Strategy Advisory Group informed on the CWDA's development, including through a presentation and regular updates.
- AIHW is also engaging with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children directly and through the CWDA AG with regards to use of the CWDA for First Nations-focused research.
- The CWDA website has been established, which provides the most up to date information on the CWDA and how researchers can apply to use it.

Further information can be found at aihw.gov.au/reports-data/child-wellbeing-data-asset.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 31: USE STATISTICS TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE AND SCALE OF AUSTRALIANS COMMITTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENCES – AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The AIC set up the Australian Sexual Offence Statistical (ASOS) collection in 2022. The ASOS collection brings together data on sexual offences, alleged offenders and victims and survivors to support operational agencies and policy makers respond to and prevent sexual offences.

The ASOS collection will deliver support to operational agencies and policy makers in the justice, women's safety and social service sectors by providing an objective statistical basis for early intervention programs, law enforcement operations, and desistance and recidivism programs.

The AIC piloted the ASOS collection in 2022–23. To support its development, the AIC received *Proceeds of Crime Act* funding over two years to develop the collection and it was successful in extending the collection beyond 2023 as a part of a new policy proposal. The project is approved by the AIC's Human Research Ethics Committee.

In the past year, the AIC:

- published the first results from the ASOS collection in its Sexual offending in Australia 2021–22 statistical report, data tables and online sexual offending statistical dashboard
- received 2022–23 sexual offence data from data custodians.

The ASOS collection responds to the needs of the National Strategy's priority groups by collecting information about victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, children and young people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. The ASOS collection also includes data on offences that occurred in remote and regional communities, in addition to those that occurred in major cities.

The AIC engaged with various subject matter experts during the design and implementation of the ASOS collection, including the National Office, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Child and Families and Child Welfare units and Australian Bureau of Statistics – National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics. In the past year, the AIC:

- presented ASOS collection results to the National Strategy Advisory Group's June 2024 meeting
- presented ASOS collection results to the National Strategy's Research, Evaluation and Data Working Group October 2024 meeting.

Beyond 2024, the AIC will prepare the *Sexual offending in Australia 2022–23* statistical report and in 2025 will publish the report on its [website and update the online dashboard](#). It will also use the data to develop discrete research projects to inform national policy on sexual violence and related offending.

Further information can be found at aic.gov.au/statistics/sexual-offending-australia.

COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 32: COMPLETE A SURVEY OF ADULT OFFENDERS – AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The AIC has conducted the Survey of Adult Sexual Offenders to inform the design and evaluation of child sexual abuse prevention interventions, programs and policies.

In the past year, the AIC:

- worked with police services to recruit survey participants (adults convicted of child sexual abuse offences) from offender registers in Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and New South Wales
- conducted voluntary interviews with 50 adult offenders via video conference or telephone.

The AIC engaged with subject matter experts, police and institutions during the design of the survey, including:

- researchers with experience in interviewing sexual offenders
- the National Office
- the National Child Protection Registry Advisory Group

- Operation GRIFFIN – a national coordination group for matters relating to child protection
- the child protection units of:
 - New South Wales Police Force
 - Western Australia Police Force
 - South Australia Police
 - Australian Capital Territory Policing.

The questionnaire collected quantitative and qualitative data about participants' demographics, offending behaviour, life course trajectories, thoughts, opinions and the strategies or modus operandi. The project received approval from the AIC's Human Research Ethics Committee.

In 2025, the AIC will plan research outputs, code and analyse the survey data and produce research reports.

This activity is now considered complete under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 First Action Plans*, and will not be reported upon in future renditions of the Annual Report.



COMMONWEALTH ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY 33: LINK DATA TO HELP PREVENT AND DISRUPT LIVESTREAMED CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE – AUSTRALIAN CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE COMMISSION

Relevant Royal Commission recommendations: Recommendations 6.3 from the *Final Report*.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) Child Exploitation Intelligence Team (CEIT) has utilised its unique coercive powers to prevent and disrupt live-streamed child sexual abuse by:

- discovering threats: identify and mitigate potential child sex offending threats
- identifying victims: locate victims (and offenders) of CSEA
- generating intelligence: develop comprehensive intelligence to understand and identify offenders, facilitators, networks, offending methodologies, emerging trends, countries of supply and vulnerabilities
- uncovering new targets: produce actionable leads for investigations conducted by partner agencies both in Australia (Operation GRIFFIN) and internationally – Five Eyes Law Enforcement Group Agencies (FELEG).

The ACIC is also producing unique intelligence to support understanding and inform government policy through:

- intelligence reports, which provide detailed analyses on current threats, methodologies and emerging trends
- data-driven insights, which utilise advanced analytics to process large data sets to analyse clusters or multiple indicators that identify previous patterns and continuums of offending. These activities provided ACIC partners and stakeholders with intelligence to prioritise and focus their operational activities on the higher threat child sex offenders.



CASE STUDY: NATIONAL CENTRE IMPROVING THE CHILD SAFETY EVIDENCE BASE

The National Centre is a vehicle for action for many victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. Its formation recognises the decades of advocacy by victims and survivors to be listened to, believed, validated, protected and ultimately supported to heal from the trauma they carry with them.

During 2024, the National Centre managed its commissioned research program consisting of 18 **external research projects** and launched a **register of active research**, which houses research and quality improvement projects currently underway across Australia that investigate a range of topics associated with child sexual abuse.

The National Centre has also undertaken a range of in-house research projects and released the ***Australian child sexual abuse attitudes, knowledge and response study*** (Community Attitudes Study) in October 2024. The study provides new evidence under the National Strategy's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (refer [page 100](#)).

The Community Attitudes Study demonstrates that there is strong community awareness of the prevalence of child sexual abuse, with 89% of respondents believing there are many more victims and survivors in the community than people realise. However, misconceptions regarding child sexual abuse remain an issue, with more than half (56%) of respondents believing child sexual abuse does not occur in the area they live, 31% believing child sexual abuse doesn't directly impact them, and 40% believing older children have a responsibility to actively resist sexual advances by an adult.

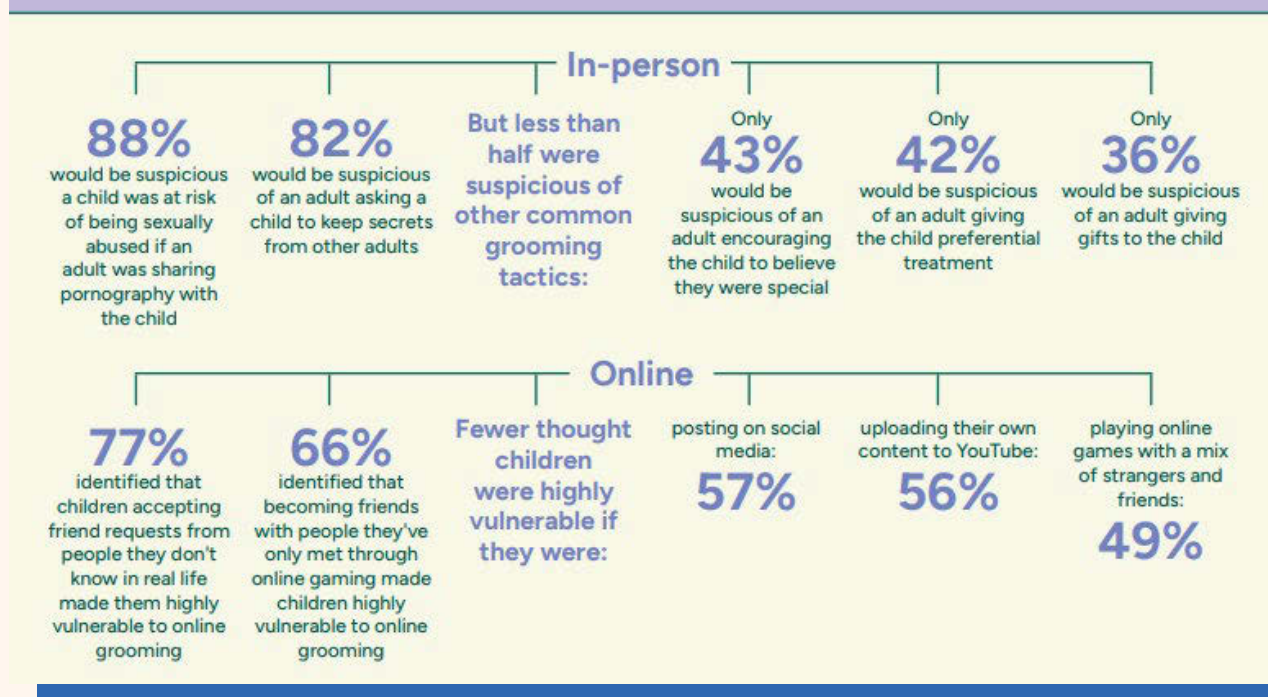


CASE STUDY: NATIONAL CENTRE IMPROVING THE CHILD SAFETY EVIDENCE BASE

Prevention: Keeping children safe from sexual abuse



Not everyone would be suspicious of common grooming tactics or see the risks, leaving some children to fend for themselves



Key findings from survey of 4,055 adults, Dec 2023 (Note: not all respondents answered all questions).

Source: The Australian child sexual abuse attitudes, knowledge and response study - <https://nationalcentre.org.au/research/australian-child-sexual-abuse-attitudes-knowledge-and-response-study/>



Glossary

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first inhabitants of Australia. Aboriginal peoples comprise diverse Aboriginal nations, each with their own languages and traditions, and have historically lived on mainland Australia, Tasmania and many of the continent's offshore islands. Torres Strait Islander peoples come from the islands of the Torres Strait, between the tip of Cape York in Queensland and Papua New Guinea. See also **First Nations**, which is the term preferred by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and groups.¹⁸

CHILD ABUSE MATERIAL

Section 473.1 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) defines 'child abuse material' as: 'material that depicts or describes a child, or a representation of a child, who is or appears to be under the age of 18, and who is or appears to be in a sexual pose or sexual activity, or that shows or describes the person's sexual organs or breasts as a dominant characteristic'. This definition also includes material that depicts or describes a child, or a representation of a child, as a victim of torture, cruelty or physical abuse.

The term 'child pornography', and others like it, are not used. They are inaccurate and harmful. The word 'pornography' is usually used to describe content depicting consenting adults engaging in lawful activity. In most cases, children and young people cannot lawfully consent to these activities, and child abuse material depicts criminal activities. Child abuse material may be used to normalise abuse with children and young people. Framing child sexual abuse materials as 'pornography' may also make it easier for perpetrators to disconnect from the child or young person. This can mean

adults see children and young people as willing participants or actors in pieces of acceptable media content, rather than as victims.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

any act that exposes a child or young person to, or involves a child or young person in, sexual activities that:

- they do not understand
- they do not or cannot consent to
- are not accepted by the community or
- are unlawful.

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT

A term commonly used to describe forms of child sexual abuse where a person has engaged in sexual activity with a child or young person, where there has been physical contact or intent of contact. In most jurisdictions in Australia, a child or young person cannot consent to sex if they are under 16 years of age (in South Australia and Tasmania, the age of consent is 17 years).¹⁹

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) defines a child as a human being who is below the age of 18 years. Children and young people are also defined in Australian legislation and the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030 as being under the age of 18. The age of consent varies across Australia, but is most often 16 years. Consistent with these definitions, this publication uses 'children and young people' to refer to people under 18 years of age.

¹⁸ National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence, Standards of practice manual for services against sexual violence, 3rd edn, Mildura, 2021.

¹⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Sexual assault in Australia, AIHW, Canberra, August 2020.

CONTACT SEXUAL ABUSE

Contact child sexual abuse is when a person physically sexually abuses a child or young person. There are criminal offences for different types of contact child sexual abuse. These are sometimes called 'contact offences'.

CULTURAL SAFETY

Cultural safety refers to an environment 'where there is no assault, challenge or denial of [a person's] identity, of who they are and what they need'.²⁰ It refers specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' own assessment of their safety and capacity to engage meaningfully and on their own terms with a non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or organisation. This requires a non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or organisation to listen, enable and support these environments, with accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues or service users.²¹

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Australia's population includes many people who were born overseas, have a parent born overseas or speak a variety of languages. Together, these groups of people are known as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations or communities. However, some commentators view the term as increasingly problematic; for example, the Diversity Council of Australia suggests the term prioritises cultural and linguistic explanations of difference and is therefore insufficient for any meaningful discussion or understanding of race and racism.^{22,23}

GROOMING

Grooming describes behaviours that manipulate and control a child, their family, kin and carers or other support networks, or organisations. The intent of manipulation is to:

- gain access to the child
- obtain the child's compliance
- maintain the child's silence
- avoid discovery of sexual abuse.

Grooming can be done by people already well known to the child, including by a child's family member, kin or carer. Grooming can take place in person and online, and is often difficult to identify. Behaviours related to grooming are not necessarily explicitly sexual, directly abusive or criminal. They may only be recognised in hindsight. Some grooming behaviours are consistent with behaviours or activities in non-abusive relationships. In these cases, the main difference between acceptable behaviours and grooming behaviours is the motivation behind them. Online child grooming refers to the process of establishing and building a relationship with a child through the use of the internet or other technologies to facilitate sexual contact with that child, either physically or online. Online grooming may include perpetrators encouraging victims to engage in sexual activity or to send the perpetrator sexually explicit material. It may lead to perpetrators meeting the victim in person or blackmailing the victim to self-produce explicit materials. To evade detection in the grooming phase, perpetrators may also convince the victim to migrate to and from multiple online platforms, including those using encrypted technologies.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking and slavery come in many forms, but every form violates human rights and involves the exploitation of people. Human trafficking comprises 2 key elements – movement and control. Human trafficking is illegal under Divisions 207 and 271 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth).

People who have been trafficked have been moved from their locations, sometimes internationally. The control their abusers have over them takes many forms and can be difficult to identify. It could look like:

- abduction
- deception
- abuse of power or a position of leadership
- paying other people to gain 'consent'
- taking advantage of vulnerability.

20 R Williams, 'Cultural safety: what does it mean for our work practice?' Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 2008, 23(2):213–214.

21 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, Final Report: Our Inquiry – Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Volume 1, page 322.

22 P Sawrikar and I Katz, How useful is the term 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' (CALD) in Australian research, practice and policy discourse? 2009, Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, Australia.

23 P Mousaferiadis, Beyond CALD (Part 1): Why 'culturally and linguistically diverse' has had its day, n.d., accessed 25 February 2022.



This control means ongoing exploitation, which could look like:

- slavery
- servitude
- forced labour
- forced marriage
- domestic child trafficking
- trafficking of persons between countries and within Australia.²⁴

INCIDENCE

The number of new cases of child sexual abuse each year.

OFFENDER

A person who is found by a court to have done something unlawful.

ORGANISATION

Organisation means an incorporated or unincorporated group, body, entity or institution. For example, a sports club, school, religious organisation, or government body. We use the term 'organisation' to describe any entity that provides, or has at any time provided, activities, facilities, programs or services of any kind that facilitates access to children by adults, including through their families. Where information relates to findings of the Royal Commission, we use the term 'institution'.

OUTCOMES

A desired condition that is specific enough to be measured. They are clear, unambiguous and high-level statements that allow measurement of success (for example: children and young people are free from abuse and neglect).

Long-term outcomes refer to the sustained changes required to reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia.

Medium-term or 'enabling' outcomes refer to the specific and measurable changes that are expected as a result of activities being implemented. Outcomes will be focused on the impact of activities for children and young people, victims and survivors, families, kin and carers, communities, and organisations and governments (though individual activities may not result in material changes for all of these groups).

PERPETRATOR

An adult who has sexually abused a child or young person, but who may or may not have been convicted of this crime.

PREVALENCE

The proportion of people in the population who have experienced child sexual abuse.

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary prevention responses are aimed at the whole community and address the underlying causes of child sexual abuse. Primary prevention looks at the social conditions that excuse, justify or enable child sexual abuse. Primary prevention measures can include public education, such as awareness raising campaigns, and programs to create child safe cultures and environments. This may be done through changing or creating new laws.

RESPONSE

Any support provided to a service user by an organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, therapeutic/clinical interventions, cultural healing approaches, case management, legal advice/redress support, advocacy, peer support, and referral.

SECONDARY PREVENTION

Secondary prevention aims to change the end result for people who are at risk of experiencing or perpetrating child sexual abuse. Also called early intervention, secondary responses address the early warning signs of child sexual abuse. This includes responding early to harmful sexual behaviours to prevent them from going further or from allowing ongoing harm. Secondary prevention measures can include therapeutic services for people who have sexual thoughts about children or young people.

SECONDARY VICTIMS

People who are affected by child sexual abuse but are not the primary (the 'abused') victim. The secondary victim's exposure to the abuse may be because of their connection to the primary victim or their connection to the perpetrator. Secondary victims can include perpetrators' or victim and survivors' partners and children, parents and carers of abused children, and people who witnessed abuse.²⁵

24 Australian Federal Police, [Human trafficking and slavery](#), 2024, accessed 8 November 2024

25 Commonwealth of Australia, [National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, 2021-2030, 2021](#), Barton.

SEXTORTION (SEXUAL EXTORTION)

Sexual extortion, also referred to as sextortion, is a form of online blackmail where a perpetrator threatens to share a person's personal sexual images or videos, unless they give into the perpetrator's demands. These demands can be for money, more graphic content, or sexual favours in exchange for not sharing the personal sexual images or videos of the person.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS DISPLAYED BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Developmentally typical sexual behaviours** are behaviours that are expected for a child or young person, according to their stage of development, are socially appropriate, and that occur within an appropriate context. Where they involve another child or young person, they are mutual, reciprocal, and include shared decision making. Most sexual behaviour in children and young people is developmentally typical and can occur in any setting, including in person and online. Developmentally typical sexual behaviours include heterosexual, lesbian, gay, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning and asexual sexualities and behaviours. It also includes exploration of gender and body parts.
- **Concerning sexual behaviours** are sexual behaviours that fall outside the range of expected/typical or developmentally appropriate activity for a child or young person's stage of development. Concerning [problematic] behaviours may not include overt intent to harm and/or may be developmentally appropriate but expressed in an inappropriate context²⁶. Concerning sexual behaviours may indicate a child has been harmed or may signal they are at risk of being harmed. Concerning sexual behaviours can occur in any setting, including in person and online, and may or may not be directed towards a child or another individual.
- **Harmful sexual behaviours** fall outside what may be considered developmentally typical or socially appropriate, cause harm to themselves or others, and occur either in person or online. When these behaviours involve others, they may include a lack of consent, reciprocity, mutuality, and may involve the use of coercion, shame, force or a misuse of power. Harmful sexual behaviours evoke worry about the development and wellbeing of the child, young person, or others involved, and where they involve

other children or young people, the behaviours may cause significant harm and may be experienced as abusive by other children and young people involved. Harmful sexual behaviours may include illegal behaviours that require a criminal justice response. Harmful sexual behaviours can occur in any setting, including in person and online.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 Personal Safety Survey, sexual violence is defined as the occurrence, attempt or threat of sexual assault since the age of 15.²⁷ However, many researchers and clinicians in the field conceptualise sexual violence more broadly to encompass child sexual assault, sexual harassment, street-based sexual harassment and image-based abuse.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

Trauma-informed approaches ensure practices, policies and culture recognise and respond to the effects of trauma on a person's wellbeing and behaviour. A trauma-informed approach is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or therapeutic treatments. These interventions are part of, but not the same as, a system-wide trauma-informed approach. A trauma-informed approach does not require a service to provide therapeutic treatment addressing the symptoms of trauma.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

The term 'victims and survivors' refers to people who have been sexually abused as children or young people. We use both terms in an attempt to capture victims and survivors' preferences for terminology, and to capture current and historical abuse. In some contexts, the term 'victim' has a defined legal meaning. We recognise that some people prefer the term 'survivor' because of its association with resilience and empowerment. We also recognise many have lost their lives as a direct result of abuse, or do not feel they have 'survived' the abuse and its impacts. In these cases, the term 'victim' may be more appropriate. We recognise that some people do not identify with either of these terms.

26 NSW Government, *Children First 2022-2031: our shared framework for preventing and responding to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children and young people*, 2022.

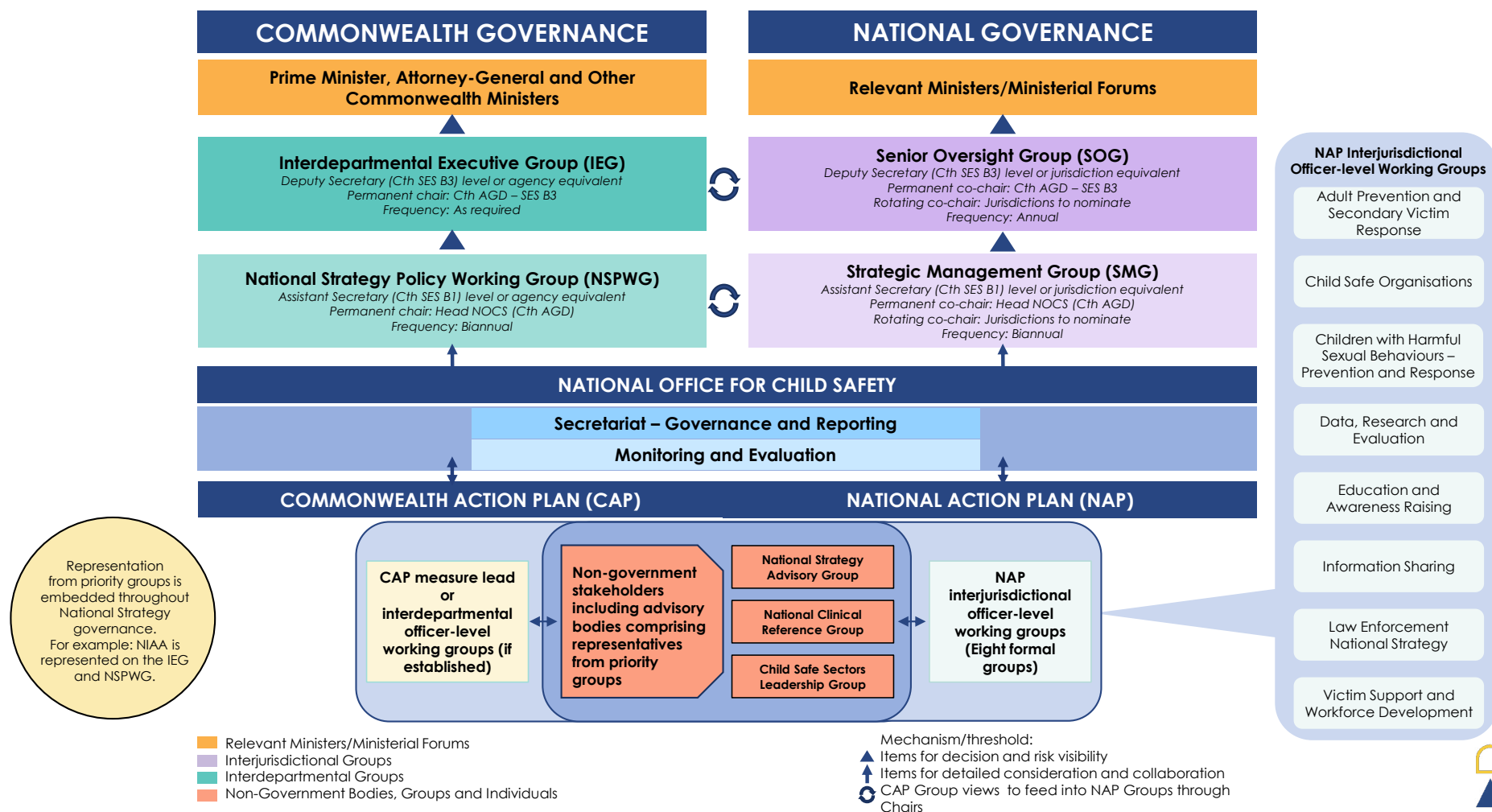
27 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Personal Safety, Australia*, 2017, ABS Canberra.

Appendix A: National Strategy governance



National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030

First Commonwealth Action Plan 2021-2024 (CAP) and First National Action Plan 2021-2024 (NAP)



Appendix B:

Implementation Status of the Royal Commission Recommendations

This attachment outlines the implementation status of the 122 Royal Commission recommendations either partially or wholly directed at the Australian Government. It also includes an additional 10 Royal Commission recommendations that were directed at state and territory governments – however, all Australian governments have agreed to facilitate a nationally consistent and coordinated implementation approach under the National Strategy.

The Australian Government considers recommendations as ‘**implemented**’, to the extent that they apply to the Australian Government, if any of the following situations apply:

- **Implemented:**

- the Australian Government has delivered the core requirements of the recommendation and there is no further action required
- the Australian Government has funded it as ongoing work.

- **Implemented under the National Strategy:**

- the Australian Government is progressing the development and implementation of national work under the National Strategy. Progress will continue to be reported in the National Strategy’s Annual Reports under the relevant activity update.

A number of these Royal Commission recommendations are jointly addressed to state and territory governments. The Australian Government acknowledges that state and territory governments are at different stages of implementing these recommendations – some jurisdictions may have already completed these recommendations, to the extent that they apply to the jurisdiction’s response to the Royal Commission and/or are progressing these recommendations independent of the National Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE *FINAL REPORT*²⁸

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
2.1	The Australian Government should conduct and publish a nationally representative prevalence study on a regular basis to establish the extent of child maltreatment in institutional and non-institutional contexts in Australia.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 28, NAP 29
6.1	The Australian Government should establish a mechanism to oversee the development and implementation of a national strategy to prevent child sexual abuse. This work should be undertaken by the proposed National Office for Child Safety (see Recommendations 6.12 & 6.17) and be included in the National Framework for Child Safety (see Recommendations 6.15).	Implemented	N/A

²⁸ NAP – National Action Plan Activity, CAP – Commonwealth Action Plan Activity, N/A – Not applicable

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.2	The national strategy to prevent child sexual abuse should encompass the following complementary initiatives: a. social marketing campaigns to raise general community awareness and increase knowledge of child sexual abuse, to change problematic attitudes and behaviour relating to such abuse, and to promote and direct people to related prevention initiatives, information and help-seeking services b. prevention education delivered through preschool, school and other community institutional settings that aims to increase children's knowledge of child sexual abuse and build practical skills to assist in strengthening self-protective skills and strategies. The education should be integrated into existing school curricula and link with related areas such as respectful relationships education and sexuality education. It should be mandatory for all preschools and schools c. prevention education for parents delivered through day care, preschool, school, sport and recreational settings, and other institutional and community settings. The education should aim to increase knowledge of child sexual abuse and its impacts, and build skills to help reduce the risks of child sexual abuse d. online safety education for children, delivered via schools. Ministers for education, through the Council of Australian Governments, should establish a nationally consistent curriculum for online safety education in schools. The eSafety Commissioner should be consulted on the design of the curriculum and contribute to the development of course content and approaches to delivery (see Recommendation 6.19) e. online safety education for parents and other community members to better support children's safety online. Building on their current work, the eSafety Commissioner should oversee the delivery of this education nationally (see Recommendation 6.20) f. prevention education for tertiary students studying at university, technical and further education, and vocational education and training courses before entering child-related occupations. This should aim to increase awareness and understanding of the prevention of child sexual abuse and potentially harmful sexual behaviours in children g. information and help-seeking services to support people who are concerned they may be at risk of sexually abusing children. The design of these services should be informed by the Stop It Now! model implemented in Ireland and the United Kingdom h. information and help seeking services for parents and other members of the community concerned that: i. an adult they know may be at risk of perpetrating child sexual abuse ii. a child or young person they know may be at risk of sexual abuse or harm iii. a child they know may be displaying harmful sexual behaviours.	Implemented	NAP 4, NAP 5, NAP 6, NAP 21, CAP 4

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.3	The design and implementation of these initiatives should consider: a. aligning with and linking to national strategies for preventing violence against adults and children, and strategies for addressing other forms of child maltreatment b. tailoring and targeting initiatives to reach, engage and provide access to all communities, including children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, and regional and remote communities c. involving children and young people in the strategic development, design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives d. using research and evaluation to: i. build the evidence base for using the best practices to prevent child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours in children ii. guide the development and refinement of interventions, including the piloting and testing of initiatives before they are implemented.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 6, NAP 23, NAP 25, NAP 26, NAP 29, CAP 14, CAP 31, CAP 32
6.4	All institutions should uphold the rights of the child. Consistent with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all institutions should act with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. In order to achieve this, institutions should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3
6.5	The Child Safe Standards are: a. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture b. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously c. Families and communities are informed and involved d. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account e. People working with children are suitable and supported f. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused g. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training h. Physical and online environments minimise opportunity for abuse to occur i. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved j. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.6	Institutions should be guided by the following core components when implementing the Child Safe Standards: Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture a. The institution publicly commits to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture. b. Child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the institution. c. Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children. d. Staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct that sets clear behavioural standards towards children. e. Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping. Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously a. Children are able to express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. b. The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and be less isolated. c. Children can access sexual abuse prevention programs and information. d. Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns. Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved a. Families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting their child. b. The institution engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible. c. Families and communities have a say in the institution's policies and practices. d. Families and communities are informed about the institution's operations and governance. Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account a. The institution actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities. b. All children have access to information, support and complaints processes. c. The institution pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.6	Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported a. Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety. b. Relevant staff and volunteers have Working With Children Checks. c. All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations. d. Supervision and people management have a child safety focus. Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused a. The institution has a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families. b. The institution has an effective complaint handling policy and procedure which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report. c. Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met. Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training a. Relevant staff and volunteers receive training on the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly institutional child sexual abuse. b. Staff and volunteers receive training on the institution's child safe practices and child protection. c. Relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures. Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur a. Risks in the online and physical environments are identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development. b. The online environment is used in accordance with the institution's code of conduct and relevant policies. Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved a. The institution regularly reviews and improves child safe practices. b. The institution analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.6	Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe a. Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards. b. Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand. c. Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures. d. Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures. e. Staff understand and implement the policies and procedures.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3
6.7	The national Child Safe Standards developed by the Royal Commission and listed at Recommendation 6.5 should be adopted as part of the new National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations described by the Community Services Ministers' Meeting in November 2016. The National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations should be endorsed by the Council of Australian governments.	Implemented	N/A
6.9	Legislative requirements to comply with the Child Safe Standards should cover institutions that provide: a. accommodation and residential services for children, including overnight excursions or stays b. activities or services of any kind, under the auspices of a particular religious denomination or faith, through which adults have contact with children c. childcare or child-minding services d. child protection services, including out-of-home care e. activities or services where clubs and associations have a significant membership of, or involvement by, children f. coaching or tuition services for children g. commercial services for children, including entertainment or party services, gym or play facilities, photography services, and talent or beauty competitions h. services for children with disability i. education services for children j. health services for children k. justice and detention services for children, including immigration detention facilities l. transport services for children, including school crossing services.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
6.11	Each independent state and territory oversight body should have the following additional functions: a. provide advice and information on the Child Safe Standards to institutions and the community b. collect, analyse and publish data on the child safe approach in that jurisdiction and provide that data to the proposed National Office for Child Safety c. partner with peak bodies, professional standards bodies and/or sector leaders to work with institutions to enhance the safety of children d. provide, promote or support education and training on the Child Safe Standards to build the capacity of institutions to be child safe e. coordinate ongoing information exchange between oversight bodies relating to institutions' compliance with the Child Safe Standards.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 5

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.12	With support from governments at the national, state and territory levels, local governments should designate child safety officer positions from existing staff profiles to carry out the following functions: a. developing child safe messages in local government venues, grounds and facilities b. assisting local institutions to access online child safe resources c. providing child safety information and support to local institutions on a needs basis d. supporting local institutions to work collaboratively with key services to ensure child safe approaches are culturally safe, disability aware and appropriate for children from diverse backgrounds.	Implemented	N/A
6.13	The Australian Government should require all institutions that engage in child-related work for the Australian Government, including Commonwealth agencies, to meet the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission at Recommendation 6.5.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 2
6.14	The Australian Government should be responsible for the following functions: a. evaluate, publicly report on, and drive the continuous improvement of the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and their outcomes b. coordinate the direct input of children and young people into the evaluation and continuous improvement of the Child Safe Standards c. coordinate national capacity building and support initiatives and opportunities for collaboration between jurisdictions and institutions d. develop and promote national strategies to raise awareness and drive cultural change in institutions and the community to support child safety.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, NAP 2, NAP 27
6.15	The Australian Government should develop a new National Framework for Child Safety in collaboration with state and territory governments. The Framework should: a. commit governments to improving the safety of all children by implementing long-term child safety initiatives, with appropriate resources, and holding them to account b. be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and overseen by a joint ministerial body c. commence after the expiration of the current National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, no later than 2020 d. cover broader child safety issues, as well as specific initiatives to better prevent and respond to institutional child sexual abuse including initiatives recommended by the Royal Commission e. include links to other related policy frameworks.	Implemented	N/A
6.16	The Australian Government should establish a National Office for Child Safety in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to provide a response to the implementation of the Child Safe Standards nationally, and to develop and lead the proposed National Framework for Child Safety. The Australian Government should transition the National Office for Child Safety into an Australian Government statutory body within 18 months of this Royal Commission's Final Report being tabled in the Australian Parliament.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.17	The National Office for Child Safety should report to Parliament and have the following functions: f. develop and lead the coordination of the proposed National Framework for Child Safety, including national coordination of the Child Safe Standards g. collaborate with state and territory governments to lead capacity building and continuous improvement of child safe initiatives through resource development, best practice material and evaluation h. promote the participation and empowerment of children and young people in the National Framework and child safe initiatives i. perform the Australian Government's Child Safe Standards functions as set out at Recommendation 6.15 j. lead the community prevention initiatives as set out in Recommendation 6.2	Implemented	NAP 1
6.18	The Australian Government should create a ministerial portfolio with responsibility for children's policy issues, including the National Framework for Child Safety.	Implemented	N/A
6.19	Ministers for education, through the Council of Australian Governments, should establish a nationally consistent curriculum for online safety education in schools. The eSafety Commissioner should be consulted on the design of the curriculum and contribute to the development of course content and approaches to delivery. The curriculum should: a. be appropriately staged from Foundation year to Year 12 and be linked with related content areas to build behavioural skills as well as technical knowledge to support a positive and safe online culture b. involve children and young people in the design, delivery and piloting of new online safety education, and update content annually to reflect evolving technologies, online behaviours and evidence of international best practice approaches c. be tailored and delivered in ways that allow all Australian children and young people to reach, access and engage with online safety education, including vulnerable groups that may not access or engage with the school system.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 4
6.20	Building on its current work, the eSafety Commissioner should oversee the delivery of national online safety education aimed at parents and other community members to better support children's safety online. These communications should aim to: a. keep the community up to date on emerging risks and opportunities for safeguarding children online b. build community understanding of responsibilities, legalities and the ethics of children's interactions online c. encourage proactive responses from the community to make it 'everybody's business' to intervene early, provide support or report issues when concerns for children's safety online are raised d. increase public awareness of how to access advice and support when online incidents occur.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 4

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
6.21	Pre-service education and in-service staff training should be provided to support child-related institutions in creating safe online environments. The eSafety Commissioner should advise on and contribute to program design and content. These programs should be aimed at: a. tertiary students studying university, technical and further education, and vocational education and training courses, before entering child-related occupations; and could be provided as a component of a broader program of child sexual abuse prevention education (see Recommendation 6.2) b. staff and volunteers in schools and other child-related organisations, and could build on the existing web-based learning programs of the eSafety Commissioner.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 5
6.22	In partnership with the proposed National Office for Child Safety (see Recommendations 6.16 and 6.17), the eSafety Commissioner should oversee the development of an online safety framework and resources to support all schools in creating child safe online environments. This work should build on existing school-based eSafety frameworks and guidelines, drawing on Australian and international models. The school-based online safety framework and resources should be designed to: a. support schools in developing, implementing and reviewing their online codes of conduct, policies and procedures to help create an online culture that is safe for children b. guide schools in their response to specific online incidents, in coordination with other agencies. This should include guidance in complaint handling, understanding reporting requirements, supporting victims to minimise further harm, and preserving digital evidence to support criminal justice processes.	Implemented	N/A
6.24	In consultation with the eSafety Commissioner, police commissioners from states and territories and the Australian Federal Police should continue to ensure national capability for coordinated, best practice responses by law enforcement agencies to online child sexual abuse. This could include through: a. establishing regular meetings of the heads of cyber safety units in all Australian police departments to ensure a consistent capacity to respond to emerging incidents and share best practice approaches, tools and resources b. convening regular forums and conferences to bring together law enforcement, government, the technology industry, the community sector and other relevant stakeholders to discuss emerging issues, set agendas and identify solutions to online child sexual abuse and exploitation c. building capability across police departments, through in-service training for: i. frontline police officers to respond to public complaints relating to issues of online child sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviours ii. police officers who liaise with young people in school and community settings.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 17, NAP 18, NAP 19, CAP 5, CAP 6, CAP 16, CAP 17, CAP 18, CAP 19, CAP 20, CAP 22, CAP 23, CAP 24, CAP 25, CAP 26, CAP 27, CAP 28, CAP 29, CAP 30, CAP 33

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
7.3	State and territory governments should amend laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities to achieve national consistency in reporter groups. At a minimum, state and territory governments should also include the following groups of individuals as mandatory reporters in every jurisdiction: a. out-of-home care workers (excluding foster and kinship/relative carers) b. youth justice workers c. early childhood workers d. registered psychologists and school counsellors e. people in religious ministry.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3
7.5	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should ensure that legislation provides comprehensive protection for individuals who make reports in good faith about child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Such individuals should be protected from civil and criminal liability and from reprisals or other detrimental action as a result of making a complaint or report, including in relation to: a. mandatory and voluntary reports to child protection authorities under child protection legislation b. notifications concerning child abuse under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.	Implemented	N/A
7.7	Consistent with Child Safe Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused, institutions should have a clear, accessible and child-focused complaint handling policy and procedure that sets out how the institution should respond to complaints of child sexual abuse. The complaint handling policy and procedure should cover: a. making a complaint b. responding to a complaint c. investigating a complaint d. providing support and assistance e. achieving systemic improvements following a complaint.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
7.8	Consistent with Child Safe Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture, institutions should have a clear code of conduct that: a. outlines behaviours towards children that the institution considers unacceptable, including concerning conduct, misconduct or criminal conduct b. includes a specific requirement to report any concerns, breaches or suspected breaches of the code to a person responsible for handling complaints in the institution or to an external authority when required by law and/or the institution's complaint handling policy c. outlines the protections available to individuals who make complaints or reports in good faith to any institution engaging in child-related work (see Recommendation 7.6 on reporter protections).	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
8.1	To allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse, institutions that engage in child-related work should retain, for at least 45 years, records relating to child sexual abuse that occurred or is alleged to have occurred.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
8.2	The National Archives of Australia and state and territory public records authorities should ensure that records disposal schedules require that records relating to child sexual abuse that has occurred or is alleged to have occurred be retained for at least 45 years.	Implemented	N/A
8.3	The National Archives of Australia and state and territory public records authorities should provide guidance to government and non-government institutions on identifying records which, it is reasonable to expect, may become relevant to an actual or alleged incident of child sexual abuse; and on the retention and disposal of such records.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
8.4	All institutions that engage in child-related work should implement the following principles for records and recordkeeping, to a level that responds to the risk of child sexual abuse occurring within the institution. Principle 1: Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, is in the best interests of children and should be an integral part of institutional leadership, governance and culture. Institutions that care for or provide services to children must keep the best interests of the child uppermost in all aspects of their conduct, including recordkeeping. It is in the best interest of children that institutions foster a culture in which the creation and management of accurate records are integral parts of the institution's operations and governance. Principle 2: Full and accurate records should be created about all incidents, responses and decisions affecting child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse. Institutions should ensure that records are created to document any identified incidents of grooming, inappropriate behaviour (including breaches of institutional codes of conduct) or child sexual abuse and all responses to such incidents. Records created by institutions should be clear, objective and thorough. They should be created at, or as close as possible to, the time the incidents occurred, and clearly show the author (whether individual or institutional) and the date created. Principle 3: Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained appropriately. Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained in an indexed, logical and secure manner. Associated records should be collocated or cross-referenced to ensure that people using those records are aware of all relevant information. Principle 4: Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should only be disposed of in accordance with law or policy. Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, must only be destroyed in accordance with records disposal schedules or published institutional policies. Records relevant to child sexual abuse should be subject to minimum retention periods that allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims, and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse. Principle 5: Individuals' existing rights to access, amend or annotate records about themselves should be recognised to the fullest extent. Individuals whose childhoods are documented in institutional records should have a right to access records made about them. Full access should be given unless contrary to law. Specific, not generic, explanations should be provided in any case where a record, or part of a record, is withheld or redacted. Individuals should be made aware of, and assisted to assert, their existing rights to request that records containing their personal information be amended or annotated, and to seek review or appeal of decisions refusing access, amendment or annotation.	Implemented	N/A
8.6	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should make nationally consistent legislative and administrative arrangements, in each jurisdiction, for a specified range of bodies (prescribed bodies) to share information related to the safety and wellbeing of children, including information relevant to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts (relevant information). These arrangements should be made to establish an information exchange scheme to operate in and across Australian jurisdictions.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
8.7	In establishing the information exchange scheme, the Australian Government and state and territory governments should develop a minimum of nationally consistent provisions to: a. enable direct exchange of relevant information between a range of prescribed bodies, including service providers, government and non-government agencies, law enforcement agencies, a regulatory and oversight bodies, which have responsibilities related to children's safety and wellbeing b. permit prescribed bodies to provide relevant information to other prescribed bodies without a request, for purposes related to preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts c. require prescribed bodies to share relevant information on request from other prescribed bodies, for purposes related to preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, subject to limited exceptions d. explicitly prioritise children's safety and wellbeing and override laws that might otherwise prohibit or restrict disclosure of information to prevent, identify and respond to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts e. provide safeguards and other measures for oversight and accountability to prevent unauthorised sharing and improper use of information obtained under the information exchange scheme f. require prescribed bodies to provide adversely affected persons with an opportunity to respond to untested or unsubstantiated allegations, where such information is received under the information exchange scheme, prior to taking adverse action against such persons, except where to do so could place another person at risk of harm.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3
8.8	The Australian Government, state and territory governments and prescribed bodies should work together to ensure that the implementation of our recommended information exchange scheme is supported with education, training and guidelines. Education, training and guidelines should promote understanding of, and confidence in, appropriate information sharing to better prevent, identify and respond to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, including by addressing: a. impediments to information sharing due to limited understanding of applicable laws b. unauthorised sharing and improper use of information.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
8.9	The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Education Council should consider the need for nationally consistent state and territory legislative requirements about the types of information recorded on teacher registers. Types of information that the council should consider, with respect to a person's registration and employment as a teacher, include: a. the person's former names and aliases b. the details of former and current employers c. where relating to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse: i. current and past disciplinary actions, such as conditions on, suspension of, and cancellation of registration ii. grounds for current and past disciplinary actions iii. pending investigations iv. findings or outcomes of investigations where allegations have been substantiated v. resignation or dismissal from employment.	In progress	N/A
8.10	The COAG Education Council should consider the need for nationally consistent provisions in state and territory teacher registration laws providing that teacher registration authorities may, and/or must on request, make information on teacher registers available to: a. teacher registration authorities in other states and territories b. teachers' employers.	In progress	N/A
8.11	The COAG Education Council should consider the need for nationally consistent provisions: a. in state and territory teacher registration laws or b. in administrative arrangements, based on legislative authorisation for information sharing under our recommended information exchange scheme Providing that teacher registration authorities may or must notify teacher registration authorities in other states and territories and teachers' employers of information they hold or receive about the following matters where they relate to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse: a. disciplinary actions, such as conditions or restrictions on, suspension of, and cancellation of registration, including with notification of grounds b. investigations into conduct, or into allegations or complaints c. findings or outcomes of investigations d. resignation or dismissal from employment.	In progress	N/A
8.12	In considering improvements to teacher registers and information sharing by registration authorities, the COAG Education Council should also consider what safeguards are necessary to protect teachers' personal information.	In progress	N/A
8.16	The COAG Education Council should review the Interstate Student Data Transfer Note and Protocol in the context of the implementation of our recommended information exchange scheme (Recommendations 8.6 to 8.8).	In progress	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
8.19	State and territory governments should consider the need for carers registers to include, at a minimum, the following information (register information) about, or related to, applicant or authorised carers, and persons residing on the same property as applicant/ authorised home-based carers (household members): a. lodgement or grant of applications for authorisation b. status of the minimum checks set out in Recommendation 12.6 as requirements for authorisation, indicating their outcomes as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory c. withdrawal or refusal of applications for authorisation in circumstances of concern (including in relation to child sexual abuse) d. cancellation or surrender of authorisation in circumstances of concern (including in relation to child sexual abuse) e. previous or current association with an out-of-home care agency, whether by application for authorisation, assessment, grant of authorisation, or supervision f. the date of reportable conduct allegations, and their status as either current, finalised with ongoing risk-related concerns, and/ or requiring contact with the reportable conduct oversight body.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3
8.23	In considering the legislative and administrative arrangements required for carers registers in their jurisdiction, state and territory governments should consider the need for guidelines and training to promote the proper use of carers registers for the protection of children in out-of-home care. Consideration should also be given to the need for specific safeguards to prevent inappropriate use of register information.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 3
9.1	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should fund dedicated community support services for victims and survivors in each jurisdiction, to provide an integrated model of advocacy and support and counselling to children and adults who experienced childhood sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Funding and related agreements should require and enable these services to: a. be trauma-informed and have an understanding of institutional child sexual abuse b. be collaborative, available, accessible, acceptable and high quality c. use case management and brokerage to coordinate and meet service needs d. support and supervise peer-led support models.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 7, NAP 10
9.2	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches as an ongoing, integral part of advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment service system responses for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. These approaches should be evaluated in accordance with culturally appropriate methodologies, to contribute to evidence of best practice.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 8, NAP 24, CAP 7
9.3	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should fund support services for people with disability who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood as an ongoing, integral part of advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment service system responses for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 24

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
9.4	The Australian Government should establish and fund a legal advice and referral service for victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. The service should provide advice about accessing, amending and annotating records from institutions, and options for initiating police, civil litigation or redress procedures as required. Support should include advice, referrals to other legal services for representation and general assistance for people to navigate the legal service system. Funding and related agreements should require and enable these services to be: a. trauma-informed and have an understanding of institutional child sexual abuse b. collaborative, available, accessible, acceptable and high quality.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 8, CAP 9
9.5	The Australian Government should fund a national website and helpline as a gateway to accessible advice and information on childhood sexual abuse. This should provide information for victims and survivors, particularly victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, the general public and practitioners about supporting children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse in childhood and available services. The gateway may be operated by an existing service with appropriate experience and should: a. be trauma-informed and have an understanding of institutional child sexual abuse b. be collaborative, available, accessible, acceptable and high quality c. provide telephone and online information and initial support for victims and survivors, including independent legal information and information about reporting to police d. provide assisted referrals to advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment services.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 7
9.6	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should address existing specialist sexual assault service gaps by increasing funding for adult and child sexual assault services in each jurisdiction, to provide advocacy and support and specialist therapeutic treatment for victims and survivors, particularly victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. Funding agreements should require and enable services to: a. be trauma-informed and have an understanding of institutional child sexual abuse b. be collaborative, available, accessible, acceptable and high quality c. use collaborative community development approaches d. provide staff with supervision and professional development.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 24
9.7	Primary Health Networks, within their role to commission joined up local primary care services, should support sexual assault services to work collaboratively with key services such as disability-specific services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, culturally and linguistically diverse services, youth justice, aged care and child and youth services to better meet the needs of victims and survivors.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 11
9.8	The Australian Government and state and territory government agencies responsible for the delivery of human services should ensure relevant policy frameworks and strategies recognise the needs of victims and survivors and the benefits of implementing trauma-informed approaches.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
9.9	The Australian Government, in conjunction with state and territory governments, should establish and fund a national centre to raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of child sexual abuse, support help-seeking and guide best practice advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment. The national centre's functions should be to: a. raise community awareness and promote destigmatising messages about the impacts of child sexual abuse b. increase practitioners' knowledge and competence in responding to child and adult victims and survivors by translating knowledge about the impacts of child sexual abuse and the evidence on effective responses into practice and policy. This should include activities to: i. identify, translate and promote research in easily available and accessible formats for advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment practitioners ii. produce national training materials and best practice clinical resources iii. partner with training organisations to conduct training and workforce development programs iv. influence national tertiary curricula to incorporate child sexual abuse and trauma-informed care v. inform government policy making. c. lead the development of better service models and interventions through coordinating a national research agenda and conducting high-quality program evaluation. The national centre should partner with survivors in all its work, valuing their knowledge and experience.	Implemented	N/A
10.1	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should ensure the issue of children's harmful sexual behaviours is included in the national strategy to prevent child sexual abuse that we have recommended (see Recommendations 6.1 to 6.3). Harmful sexual behaviours by children should be addressed through each of the following: a. primary prevention strategies to educate family, community members, carers and professionals (including mandatory reporters) about preventing harmful sexual behaviours b. secondary prevention strategies to ensure early intervention when harmful sexual behaviours are developing c. tertiary intervention strategies to address harmful sexual behaviours.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 12, NAP 13, NAP 14, NAP 15, NAP 16
10.2	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should ensure timely expert assessment is available for individual children with problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, so they receive appropriate responses, including therapeutic interventions, which match their particular circumstances.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 12, NAP 13, NAP 14
10.3	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should adequately fund therapeutic interventions to meet the needs of all children with harmful sexual behaviours. These should be delivered through a network of specialist and generalist therapeutic services. Specialist services should also be adequately resourced to provide expert support to generalist services.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 14

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
10.4	State and territory governments should ensure that there are clear referral pathways for children with harmful sexual behaviours to access expert assessment and therapeutic intervention, regardless of whether the child is engaging voluntarily, on the advice of an institution or through their involvement with the child protection or criminal justice systems.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 14
10.5	Therapeutic intervention for children with harmful sexual behaviours should be based on the following principles: a. a contextual and systemic approach should be used b. family and carers should be involved c. safety should be established d. there should be accountability and responsibility for the harmful sexual behaviours e. there should be a focus on behaviour change f. developmentally and cognitively appropriate interventions should be used g. the care provided should be trauma-informed h. therapeutic services and interventions should be culturally safe i. therapeutic interventions should be accessible to all children with harmful sexual behaviours.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 13 NAP 14
10.6	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should ensure that all services funded to provide therapeutic intervention for children with harmful sexual behaviours provide professional training and clinical supervision for their staff.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 14, NAP 15
10.7	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should fund and support evaluation of services providing therapeutic interventions for problematic and harmful sexual behaviours by children.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 14
12.1	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should develop nationally agreed key terms and definitions in relation to child sexual abuse for the purpose of data collection and reporting by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Productivity Commission.	Implemented	N/A
12.2	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should prioritise enhancements to the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set to include: a. data identifying children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children b. the number of children who were the subject of a substantiated report of sexual abuse while in out-of-home care c. the demographics of those children d. the type of out-of-home care placement in which the abuse occurred e. information about when the abuse occurred f. information about who perpetrated the abuse, including their age and their relationship to the victim, if known.	In progress	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
12.12	When placing a child in out-of-home care, state and territory governments and out-of-home care service providers should take the following measures to support children with harmful sexual behaviours: a. undertake professional assessments of the child with harmful sexual behaviours, including identifying their needs and appropriate supports and interventions to ensure their safety b. establish case management and a package of support services c. undertake careful placement matching that includes: d. providing sufficient relevant information to the potential carer/s and residential care staff to ensure they are equipped to support the child, and additional training as necessary e. rigorously assessing potential threats to the safety of other children, including the child's siblings, in the placement.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 14
12.13	State and territory governments and out-of-home care service providers should provide advice, guidelines and ongoing professional development for all foster and kinship/relative carers and residential care staff about preventing and responding to the harmful sexual behaviours of some children in out-of-home care.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 15
13.1	All schools should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
13.4	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should ensure that needs-based funding arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students are sufficient for schools and hostels to create child safe environments.	Implemented	N/A
13.6	Consistent with the Child Safe Standards, complaint handling policies for schools (see Recommendation 7.7) should include effective policies and procedures for managing complaints about children with harmful sexual behaviours.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 13
13.7	State and territory governments should provide nationally consistent and easily accessible guidance to teachers and principals on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in all government and non-government schools.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 4
13.8	The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) should consider strengthening teacher registration requirements to better protect children from sexual abuse in schools. In particular, COAG should review minimum national requirements for assessing the suitability of teachers, and conducting disciplinary investigations.	Implemented	N/A
14.1	All sport and recreation institutions, including arts, culture, community and hobby groups, that engage with or provide services to children should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 3 NAP 1
14.2	The National Office for Child Safety should establish a child safety advisory committee for the sport and recreation sector with membership from government and non-government peak bodies to advise the National Office on sector-specific child safety issues.	Implemented	N/A
14.3	The education and information website known as Play by the Rules should be expanded and funded to develop resources - in partnership with the National Office for Child Safety - that are relevant to the broader sport and recreation sector.	In progress	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
15.1	All institutions engaged in child-related work, including detention institutions and those involving detention and detention-like practices, should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
15.2	Given the Australian Government's commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the National Preventive Mechanism(s) should be provided with the expertise to consider and make recommendations relating to preventing and responding to child sexual abuse as part of regularly examining the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in places of detention.	In progress	N/A
15.6	All staff should receive appropriate training on the needs and experiences of children with disability, mental health problems, and alcohol or other drug problems, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that highlights the barriers these children may face in disclosing sexual abuse.	Implemented	N/A
15.11	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should publicly report within 12 months on how it has implemented the Child Protection Panel's recommendations.	Implemented	N/A
15.12	a. The Australian Government should establish a mechanism to regularly audit the implementation of the Child Safe Standards in immigration detention by staff, contractors and agents of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The outcomes of each audit should be publicly reported. b. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should contractually require its service providers to comply with the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission, as applied to immigration detention.	Implemented	N/A
15.13	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should identify the scope and nature of the need for support services for victims in immigration detention. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should ensure that appropriate therapeutic and other specialist and support services are funded to meet the identified needs of victims in immigration detention and ensure they are linked to ongoing treatment when they leave detention.	Implemented under the National Strategy	CAP 12
15.14	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should designate appropriately qualified child safety officers for each place in which children are detained. These officers should assist and build the capacity of staff and service providers at the local level to implement the Child Safe Standards.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1
15.15	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should implement an independent visitors program in immigration detention.	Implemented	N/A
17.1	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should each issue a formal response to this Final Report within six months of it being tabled, indicating whether our recommendations are accepted, accepted in principle, rejected or subject to further consideration.	Implemented	N/A
17.2	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should, beginning 12 months after this Final Report is tabled, report on their implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations made in this final report and its earlier <i>Working with Children Checks, Redress, and civil litigation and Criminal justice</i> reports, through five consecutive annual reports tabled before their respective parliaments.	Implemented	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy activities
17.3	Major institutions and peak bodies of institutions that engage in child-related work should, beginning 12 months after this Final Report is tabled, report on their implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations to the National Office for Child Safety through five consecutive annual reports. The National Office for Child Safety should make these reports publicly available. At a minimum, the institutions reporting should include those that were the subject of the Royal Commission's institutional review hearings held from 5 December 2016 to 10 March 2017.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 2
17.4	The Australian Government should initiate a review to be conducted 10 years after the tabling of this Final Report. This review should: a. establish the extent to which the Royal Commission's recommendations have been implemented 10 years after the tabling of the final report b. examine the extent to which the measures taken in response to this Royal Commission have been effective in preventing child sexual abuse, improving the response of institutions to child sexual abuse, and ensuring that victims and survivors of child sexual abuse obtain justice, treatment and support c. advise on what further steps should be taken by governments and institutions to ensure continued improvement in policy and service delivery in relation to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts.	In progress	N/A
17.5	The Australian Government should host and maintain the Royal Commission website for the duration of that national redress scheme for victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.	In progress	N/A
17.6	A national memorial should be commissioned by the Australian Government for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Victims and survivors should be consulted on the memorial design and it should be located in Canberra.	In progress	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS (WWCC) REPORT

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
3a	The Commonwealth Government should, within 12 months of the publication of this report: a. Facilitate a national model for WWCCs by: i. establishing a centralised database, operated by CrimTrac, that is readily accessible to all jurisdictions to record WWCC decisions ii. together with state and territory governments, identifying consistent terminology to capture key WWCC decisions (for example, refusal, cancellation, suspension and grant) for recording into the centralised database iii. enhancing CrimTrac's capacity to continuously monitor WWCC cardholders' national criminal history records	In progress	NAP 3	26
3b	explore avenues to make international records more accessible for the purposes of WWCCs	In progress	NAP 3	26
3c	identify and require all Commonwealth Government personnel, including contractors, undertaking child-related work, as defined by the child-related work standards set out in this report, to obtain WWCCs.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
4a-4b	The Commonwealth, state and territory governments should, within 12 months of the publication of this report: a. agree on a set of standards or guidelines to enhance the accurate and timely recording of information by state and territory police into CrimTrac's system b. review the information they have agreed to exchange under the National Exchange of Criminal History Information for People Working with Children (ECHIPWC), and establish a set of definitions for the key terms used to describe the different types of criminal history records so they are consistent across the jurisdictions (these key terms include pending charges, non-conviction charges and information about the circumstances of an offence)	Implemented	N/A	N/A
4c-4d	c. take immediate action to record into CrimTrac's system historical criminal records that are in paper form or on microfilm and which are not currently identified by CrimTrac's initial database search d. once these historical criminal history records are entered into CrimTrac's system by all jurisdictions, check all WWCC cardholders against them through the expanded continuous monitoring process.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
22	The Commonwealth Government, through COAG, or a relevant ministerial council, should take a lead role in identifying the specific criminal offences that fall within the categories specified in Recommendations 20(b) and 21.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
34	The Commonwealth, state and territory governments should: a. through the Council of Australian Governments, or a relevant ministerial council, adopt the standards and set a timeframe within which all jurisdictions must report back to the Council of Australian Governments, or a relevant ministerial council, on implementation b. establish a process whereby changes to the standards or to state and territory schemes need to be agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments, or a relevant ministerial council, and must be adopted across all jurisdictions.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
35	The Commonwealth, state and territory governments should provide an annual report to COAG, or a relevant ministerial council, for three years following the publication of this report, to be tabled in the parliaments of all nine jurisdictions, detailing their progress in implementing the recommendations in this report and achieving a nationally consistent approach to WWCCs.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
36	COAG, or a relevant ministerial council, should ensure a review is made after three years of the publication of this report, of the state and territory governments' progress in achieving consistency across the WWCC schemes, with a view to assessing whether they have implemented the Royal Commission's recommendations.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKING WITH REDRESS AND CIVIL LITIGATION REPORT

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2023)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
95	The Australian Government and state and territory governments should consider whether there are any unincorporated bodies that they fund directly or indirectly to provide children's services. If there are, they should consider requiring them to maintain insurance that covers their liability in respect of institutional child sexual abuse claims.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE REPORT

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
1	In relation to child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, the criminal justice system should be reformed to ensure that the following objectives are met: a. the criminal justice system operates in the interests of seeking justice for society, b. including the complainant and the accused criminal justice responses are available for victims and survivors c. victims and survivors are supported in seeking criminal justice responses.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
2	Australian governments should refer to the Steering Committee for the Report on Government Services for review the issues of: a. how the reporting framework for police services in the Report on Government Services could be extended to include reporting on child sexual abuse offences b. whether any outcome measures that would be appropriate for police investigations of child sexual abuse offences could be developed and reported on.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
3	Each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency: a. recognises that a victim or survivor's initial contact with police will be important in determining their satisfaction with the entire criminal justice response and in influencing their willingness to proceed with a report and to participate in a prosecution b. ensures that all police who may come into contact with victims or survivors of institutional child sexual abuse are trained to: i. have a basic understanding of complex trauma and how it can affect people who report to police, including those who may have difficulties dealing with institutions or persons in positions of authority (such as the police) treat anyone who approaches the police to report child sexual abuse with consideration and respect, taking account of any relevant cultural safety issues c. establishes arrangements to ensure that, on initial contact from a victim or survivor, police refer victims and survivors to appropriate support services.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 20	59

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
4	To encourage reporting of allegations of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency: a. takes steps to communicate to victims (and their families or support people where the victims are children or are particularly vulnerable) that their decision whether to participate in a police investigation will be respected – that is, victims retain the right to withdraw at any stage in the process and to decline to proceed further with police and/or any prosecution b. provides information on the different ways in which victims and survivors can report to police or seek advice from police on their options for reporting or not reporting abuse – this should be in a format that allows institutions and survivor advocacy and support groups and support services to provide it to victims and survivors c. makes available a range of channels to encourage reporting, including specialist telephone numbers and online reporting forms, and provides information about what to expect from each channel of reporting d. works with survivor advocacy and support groups and support services, including those working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disability, to facilitate reporting by victims and survivors e. allows victims and survivors to benefit from the presence of a support person of their choice if they so wish throughout their dealings with police, provided that this will not interfere with the police investigation or risk contaminating evidence f. is willing to take statements from victims and survivors in circumstances where the alleged perpetrator is dead or is otherwise unlikely to be able to be tried.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
5	To encourage reporting of allegations of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and survivors, each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency: a. takes the lead in developing good relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities b. provides channels for reporting outside of the community (such as telephone numbers and online reporting forms).	Implemented	N/A	N/A
6	To encourage prisoners and former prisoners to report allegations of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency: a. provides channels for reporting that can be used from prison and that allow reports to be made confidentially b. does not require former prisoners to report at a police station.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
7	Each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency conducts investigations of reports of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, in accordance with the following principles: a. While recognising the complexity of police rosters, staffing and transfers, police should recognise the benefit to victims and their families and survivors of continuity in police staffing and should take steps to facilitate, to the extent possible, continuity in police staffing on an investigation of a complaint b. Police should recognise the importance to victims and their families and survivors of police maintaining regular communication with them to keep them informed of the status of their report and any investigation unless they have asked not to be kept informed c. Particularly in relation to historical allegations of institutional child sexual abuse, police who assess or provide an investigative response to allegations should be trained to: i. be non-judgmental and recognise that many victims of child sexual abuse will go on to develop substance abuse and mental health problems, and some may have a criminal record ii. focus on the credibility of the complaint or allegation rather than focusing only on the credibility of the complainant.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
9	Each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency conducts investigative interviewing in relation to reports of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, in accordance with the following principles: - All police who provide an investigative response (whether specialist or generalist) to child sexual abuse should receive at least basic training in understanding sexual offending, including the nature of child sexual abuse and institutional child sexual abuse offending - All police who provide an investigative response (whether specialist or generalist) to child sexual abuse should be trained to interview the complainant in accordance with current research and learning about how memory works in order to obtain the complainant's memory of the events - The importance of video recorded interviews for children and other vulnerable witnesses should be recognised, as these interviews usually form all, or most, of the complainant's and other relevant witnesses' evidence in chief in any prosecution - Investigative interviewing of children and other vulnerable witnesses should be undertaken by police with specialist training. The specialist training should focus on: - a specialist understanding of child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, and the developmental and communication needs of children and other vulnerable witnesses - skill development in planning and conducting interviews, including use of appropriate questioning techniques. - Specialist police should undergo refresher training on a periodical basis to ensure that their specialist understanding and skills remain up to date and accord with current research - From time to time, experts should review a sample of video recorded interviews with children and other vulnerable witnesses conducted by specialist police for quality assurance and training purposes and to reinforce best-practice interviewing techniques - State and territory governments should introduce legislation to remove any impediments, including in relation to privacy concerns, to the use of video recorded interviews so that the relevant police officer, his or her supervisor and any persons engaged by police in quality assurance and training can review video recorded interviews for quality assurance and training purposes. This should not authorise the use of video recorded interviews for general training in a manner that would raise privacy concerns - Police should recognise the importance of interpreters, including for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, survivors and other witnesses - Intermediaries should be available to assist in police investigative interviews of children and other vulnerable witnesses - Intermediaries should be available to assist in police investigative interviews of children and other vulnerable witnesses.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 11	40

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
10	Each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency makes decisions in relation to whether to lay charges for child sexual abuse offences in accordance with the following principles: a. Recognising that it is important to complainants that the correct charges be laid as early as possible so that charges are not significantly downgraded at or close to trial, police should ensure that care is taken, and that early prosecution advice is sought, where appropriate, in laying charges b. In making decisions about whether to charge, police should not: i. expect or require corroboration where the victim or survivor's account does not suggest that there should be any corroboration available ii. rely on the absence of corroboration as a determinative factor in deciding not to charge, where the victim or survivor's account does not suggest that there should be any corroboration available, unless the prosecution service advises otherwise.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
12	Each Australian government should ensure that, if its policing agency does not provide a specialist response to victims and survivors reporting historical child sexual abuse, its policing agency develops and implements a document in the nature of a 'guarantee of service' which sets out for the benefit of victims and survivors – and as a reminder to the police involved – what victims and survivors are entitled to expect in the police response to their report of child sexual abuse. The document should include information to the effect that victims and survivors are entitled to: a. be treated by police with consideration and respect, taking account of any relevant cultural safety issues b. have their views about whether they wish to participate in the police investigation respected c. be referred to appropriate support services d. contact police through a support person or organisation rather than contacting police directly if they prefer e. have the assistance of a support person of their choice throughout their dealings with police unless this will interfere with the police investigation or risk contaminating evidence f. have their statement taken by police even if the alleged perpetrator is dead g. be provided with the details of a nominated person within the police service for them to contact h. be kept informed of the status of their report and any investigation unless they do not wish to be kept informed i. have the police focus on the credibility of the complaint or allegations rather than focusing only on the credibility of the complainant, recognising that many victims of child sexual abuse will go on to develop substance abuse and mental health problems, and some may have a criminal record.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
13	Each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency responds to victims and survivors with disability, or their representatives, who report or seek to report child sexual abuse, including institutional child sexual abuse, to police in accordance with the following principles: a. Police who have initial contact with the victim or survivor should be non-judgmental and should not make any adverse assessment of the victim or survivor's credibility, reliability or ability to make a report or participate in a police investigation or prosecution because of their disability b. Police who assess or provide an investigative response to allegations made by victims and survivors with disability should focus on the credibility of the complaint or allegation rather than focusing only on the credibility of the complainant, and they should not make any adverse assessment of the victim or survivor's credibility or reliability because of their disability c. Police who conduct investigative interviewing should make all appropriate use of any available intermediary scheme, and communication supports, to ensure that the victim or survivor is able to give their best evidence in the investigative interview d. Decisions in relation to whether to lay charges for child sexual abuse offences should take full account of the ability of any available intermediary scheme, and communication supports, to assist the victim or survivor to give their best evidence when required in the prosecution process.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
14	In order to assist in the investigation of current allegations of institutional child sexual abuse, each Australian government should ensure that its policing agency: a. develops and keeps under review procedures and protocols to guide police and institutions about the information and assistance police can provide to institutions where a current allegation of institutional child sexual abuse is made b. develops and keeps under review procedures and protocols to guide the police, other agencies, institutions and the broader community on the information and assistance police can provide to children and parents and the broader community where a current allegation of institutional child sexual abuse is made.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 20	59
16	In relation to blind reporting, institutions and survivor advocacy and support groups should: a. be clear that, where the law requires reporting to police, child protection or another agency, the institution or group or its relevant staff member or official will report as required b. develop and adopt clear guidelines to inform staff and volunteers, victims and their families and survivors, and police, child protection and other agencies as to the approach the institution or group will take in relation to allegations, reports or disclosures it receives that it is not required by law to report to police, child protection or another agency.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3	25, 31
17	If a relevant institution or survivor advocacy and support group adopts a policy of reporting survivors' details to police without survivors' consent – that is, if it will not make blind reports – it should seek to provide information about alternative avenues for a survivor to seek support if this aspect of the institution or group's guidelines is not acceptable to the survivor.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3	25, 31

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
18	Institutions and survivor advocacy and support groups that adopt a policy that they will not report the survivor's details without the survivor's consent should make a blind report to police in preference to making no report at all.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3	25, 31
19	Regardless of an institution or survivor advocacy and support group's policy in relation to blind reporting, the institution or group should provide survivors with: a. information to inform them about options for reporting to police b. support to report to police if the survivor is willing to do so.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3	25, 31
20	Police should ensure that they review any blind reports they receive and that they are available as intelligence in relation to any current or subsequent police investigations. If it appears that talking to the survivor might assist with a police investigation, police should contact the relevant institution or survivor advocacy and support group, and police and the institution or group should cooperate to try to find a way in which the survivor will be sufficiently supported so that they are willing to speak to police.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
32	Any person associated with an institution who knows or suspects that a child is being or has been sexually abused in an institutional context should report the abuse to police (and, if relevant, in accordance with any guidelines the institution adopts in relation to blind reporting under Recommendation 16).	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 1, CAP 3	25, 31
35	Each state and territory government should ensure that the legislation it introduces to create the criminal offence of failure to report recommended in Recommendation 33 addresses religious confessions as follows: a. the criminal offence of failure to report should apply in relation to knowledge gained or suspicions that are or should have been formed, in whole or in part, on the basis of information disclosed in or in connection with a religious confession b. the legislation should exclude any existing excuse, protection or privilege in relation to religious confessions to the extent necessary to achieve this objective c. religious confession should be defined to include a confession about the conduct of a person associated with the institution made by a person to a second person who is in religious ministry in that second person's professional capacity according to the ritual of the church or religious denomination concerned.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
37	All Australian Directors of Public Prosecutions, with assistance from the relevant government in relation to funding, should ensure that prosecution responses to child sexual abuse are guided by the following principles: a. All prosecution staff who may have professional contact with victims of institutional child sexual abuse should be trained to have a basic understanding of the nature and impact of child sexual abuse – and institutional child sexual abuse in particular – and how it can affect people who are involved in a prosecution process, including those who may have difficulties dealing with institutions or person in positions of authority b. While recognising the complexity of prosecution staffing and court timetables, prosecution agencies should recognise the benefit to victims and their families and survivors of continuity in prosecution team staffing and should take steps to facilitate, to the extent possible, continuity in staffing of the prosecution team involved in a prosecution c. Prosecution agencies should continue to recognise the importance to victims and their families and survivors of the prosecution agency maintaining regular communication with them to keep them informed of the status of the prosecution unless they have asked not to be kept informed d. Witness Assistance Services should be funded and staffed to ensure that they can perform their task of keeping victims and their families and survivors informed and ensuring that they are put in contact with relevant support services, including staff trained to provide a culturally appropriate service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and survivors. Specialist services for children should also be considered e. Particularly in relation to historical allegations of institutional child sexual abuse, prosecution staff who are involved in giving early charge advice or in prosecuting child sexual abuse matters should be trained to: i. be non-judgmental and recognise that many victims of child sexual abuse will go on to develop substance abuse and mental health problems, and some may have a criminal record ii. focus on the credibility of the complaint or allegation rather than focusing only on the credibility of the complainant Prosecution agencies should recognise that children with disability are at a significantly increased risk of abuse, including child sexual abuse. Prosecutors should take this increased risk into account in any decisions they make in relation to prosecuting child sexual abuse offences.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
39	All Australian Directors of Public Prosecutions should ensure that prosecution charging and plea decisions in prosecutions for child sexual abuse offences are guided by the following principles: a. Prosecutors should recognise the importance to complainants of the correct charges being laid as early as possible so that charges are not significantly downgraded or withdrawn at or close to trial. Prosecutors should provide early advice to police on appropriate charges to lay when such advice is sought. b. Regardless of whether such advice has been sought, prosecutors should confirm the appropriateness of the charges as early as possible once they are allocated the prosecution to ensure that the correct charges have been laid and to minimise the risk that charges will have to be downgraded or withdrawn closer to the trial date. c. While recognising the benefit of securing guilty pleas, prosecution agencies should also recognise that it is important to complainants – and to the criminal justice system – that the charges for which a guilty plea is accepted reasonably reflect the true criminality of the abuse they suffered. d. Prosecutors must endeavour to ensure that they allow adequate time to consult the complainant and the police in relation to any proposal to downgrade or withdraw charges or to accept a negotiated plea and that the complainant is given the opportunity to obtain assistance from relevant witness assistance officers or other advocacy and support services before they give their opinion on the proposal. If the complainant is a child, prosecutors must endeavour to ensure that they give the child the opportunity to consult their carer or parents unless the child does not wish to do so.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
40	Each Australian Director of Public Prosecutions should: a. have comprehensive written policies for decision-making and consultation with victims and police b. publish all policies online and ensure that they are publicly available c. provide a right for complainants to seek written reasons for key decisions, without detracting from an opportunity to discuss reasons in person before written reasons are provided.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
41	Each Australian Director of Public Prosecutions should establish a robust and effective formalised complaints mechanism to allow victims to seek internal merits review of key decisions.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
42	Each Australian Director of Public Prosecutions should establish robust and effective internal audit processes to audit their compliance with policies for decision-making and consultation with victims and police.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
43	Each Australian Director of Public Prosecutions should publish the existence of their complaints mechanism and internal audit processes and data on their use and outcomes online and in their annual reports.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
44	In order to ensure justice for complainants and the community, the laws governing the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence in prosecutions for child sexual abuse offences should be reformed to facilitate greater admissibility and cross-admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence and joint trials.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
45	Tendency or coincidence evidence about the defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution should be admissible: a. if the court thinks that the evidence will, either by itself or having regard to the other evidence, be 'relevant to an important evidentiary issue' in the proceeding, with each of the following kinds of evidence defined to be 'relevant to an important evidentiary issue' in a child sexual offence proceeding: i. evidence that shows a propensity of the defendant to commit particular kinds of offences if the commission of an offence of the same or a similar kind is in issue in the proceeding ii. evidence that is relevant to any matter in issue in the proceeding if the matter concerns an act or state of mind of the defendant and is important in the context of the proceeding as a whole b. unless, on the application of the defendant, the court thinks, having regard to the particular circumstances of the proceeding, that both: i. admission of the evidence is more likely than not to result in the proceeding being unfair to the defendant ii. if there is a jury, the giving of appropriate directions to the jury about the relevance and use of the evidence will not remove the risk.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
46	Common law principles or rules that restrict the admission of propensity or similar fact evidence should be explicitly abolished or excluded in relation to the admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence about the defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
47	Issues of concoction, collusion or contamination should not affect the admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence about the defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution. The court should determine admissibility on the assumption that the evidence will be accepted as credible and reliable, and the impact of any evidence of concoction, collusion or contamination should be left to the jury or other fact-finder.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
48	Tendency or coincidence evidence about a defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution should not be required to be proved beyond reasonable doubt.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
49	Evidence of: a. the defendant's prior convictions b. acts for which the defendant has been charged but not convicted (other than acts for which the defendant has been acquitted) should be admissible as tendency or coincidence evidence if it otherwise satisfies the test for admissibility of tendency or coincidence evidence about a defendant in a child sexual offence prosecution.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
50	Australian governments should introduce legislation to make the reforms we recommend to the rules governing the admissibility of tendency and coincidence evidence.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60
51	The draft provisions in Appendix N provide for the recommended reforms for Uniform Evidence Act jurisdictions. Legislation to the effect of the draft provisions should be introduced for Uniform Evidence Act jurisdictions and non-Uniform Evidence Act jurisdictions.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 22	60

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
53	Full prerecording should be made available for: a. all complainants in child sexual abuse prosecutions b. any other witnesses who are children or vulnerable adults c. any other prosecution witness that the prosecution considers necessary.	Implemented	N/A	60
54	Where the prerecording of cross-examination is used, it should be accompanied by ground rules hearings to maximise the benefits of such a procedure.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 9	39
58	If it is not practical to record evidence given live in court in a way that is suitable for use in any subsequent trial or retrial, prosecution guidelines should require that the fact that a witness may be required to give evidence again in the event of a retrial be discussed with witnesses when they make any choice as to whether to give evidence via prerecording, closed circuit television or in person.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
59	State and territory governments should establish intermediary schemes similar to the Registered Intermediary Scheme in England and Wales which are available to any prosecution witness with a communication difficulty in a child sexual abuse prosecution. Governments should ensure that the scheme: a. requires intermediaries to have relevant professional qualifications to assist in communicating with vulnerable witnesses b. provides intermediaries with training on their role and in understanding that their duty is to assist the court to communicate with the witness and to be impartial c. makes intermediaries available at both the police interview stage and trial stage d. enables intermediaries to provide recommendations to police and the court on how best to communicate with the witness and to intervene in an interview or examination where they observe a communication breakdown.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
60	State and territory governments should work with their courts administration to ensure that ground rules hearings are able to be held – and are in fact held – in child sexual abuse prosecutions to discuss the questioning of prosecution witnesses with specific communication needs, whether the questioning is to take place via a pre-recorded hearing or during the trial. This should be essential where a witness intermediary scheme is in place and should allow, at a minimum, a report from an intermediary to be considered.	Implemented under the National Strategy	NAP 9	39

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
61	The special measures should be available in child sexual abuse prosecutions for complainants, vulnerable witnesses and other prosecution witnesses where the prosecution considers it necessary: - giving evidence via closed circuit television or audio-visual link so that the witness is able to give evidence from a room away from the courtroom - allowing the witness to be supported when giving evidence, whether in the courtroom or remotely, including, for example, through the presence of a support person or a support animal or by otherwise creating a more child-friendly environment - if the witness is giving evidence in court, using screens, partitions or one-way glass so that the witness cannot see the accused while giving evidence - clearing the public gallery of a courtroom during the witness's evidence - the judge and counsel removing their wigs and gowns.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
68	Relevant Australian governments should ensure that bodies such as: - the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration - the National Judicial College of Australia - the Judicial Commission of New South Wales - the Judicial College of Victoria are adequately funded to provide leadership in making relevant information and training available in the most effective forms to the judiciary and, where relevant, the broader legal profession so that they understand and keep up to date with current social science research that is relevant to understanding child sexual abuse.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
72	Each state and territory government should work with its courts, prosecution, legal aid and policing agencies to ensure that delays are reduced and kept to a minimum in prosecutions for child sexual abuse offences, including through measures to encourage: - the early allocation of prosecutors and defence counsel - the Crown – including subsequently allocated Crown prosecutors– to be bound by early prosecution decisions - appropriate early guilty pleas - case management and the determination of preliminary issues before trial.	Already compliant	CAP 30	72
77	State and territory governments, in consultation with their respective Directors of Public Prosecutions, should improve the information provided to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse offences to: - give them a better understanding of the role of the victim impact statement in the sentencing process - better prepare them for making a victim impact statement, including in relation to understanding the sort of content that may result in objection being taken to the statement or parts of it.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Rec. #	Description	Implementation status (December 2024)	Relevant National Strategy measures	Page #
79	State and territory governments should introduce legislation, where necessary, to expand the Director of Public Prosecution's right to bring an interlocutory appeal in prosecutions involving child sexual abuse offences so that the appeal right: a. applies to pre-trial judgments or orders and decisions or rulings on the admissibility of evidence, but only if the decision or ruling eliminates or substantially weakens the prosecution's case b. is not subject to a requirement for leave c. extends to 'no case' rulings at trial.	In progress	N/A	N/A
81	Directors of Public Prosecutions should amend their prosecution guidelines, where necessary, in relation to the decision as to whether there should be a retrial following a successful conviction appeal in child sexual abuse prosecutions. The guidelines should require that the prosecution consult the complainant and relevant police officer before the Director of Public Prosecutions decides whether to retry a matter.	Implemented	N/A	N/A
82	State and territory governments should ensure that a relevant government agency, such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, is monitoring the number, type and success rate of appeals in child sexual abuse prosecutions and the issues raised to: a. identify areas of the law in need of reform b. ensure any reforms – including reforms arising from the Royal Commission's recommendations in relation to criminal justice, if implemented – are working as intended.	Implemented	N/A	N/A

Endnotes

- 1 Mathews B, Pacella RE, Scott JG, Finkelhor D, Meinck F, Higgins DJ, Erskine HE, Thomas HJ, Lawrence D, Haslam DM, Malacova E, Dunne MP. The prevalence of child maltreatment in Australia: findings from a national survey. *Med J Aust* 2023; 218 (6 Suppl): S13-S18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51873>
- 2 Scott JG, Malacova E, Mathews B, Haslam DM, Pacella R, Higgins DJ, Meinck F, Dunne MP, Finkelhor D, Erskine HE, Lawrence DM, Thomas HJ. The association between child maltreatment and mental disorders in the Australian Child Maltreatment Study. *Med J Aust* 2023; 218 (6 Suppl): S26-S33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51870>
- 3 Lawrence DM, Hunt A, Mathews B, Haslam DM, Malacova E, Dunne MP, Erskine HE, Higgins DJ, Finkelhor D, Pacella RE, Meinck F, Thomas HJ, Scott JG. Association between child maltreatment and health risk behaviours and conditions throughout life: The Australian Child Maltreatment Study. *Med J Aust* 2023; 218 (6 Suppl): S34-S39. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51877W>

