



Evaluation of the First Action Plans for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030

National Office for Child Safety, Attorney-General's Department

Plain Language Resource

March 2026

Acknowledgment to Country

Deloitte, together with the National Office for Child Safety thank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the first caretakers of the land. We respect their cultures, past and present, and thank those who helped with the Evaluation of the First Action Plans.

Acknowledgement to victims and survivors

Deloitte and the National Office for Child Safety (National Office) recognise people who have experienced child sexual abuse and their supporters for sharing their wisdom and experiences to help make children safer.

If you have questions about this document, you can contact the National Office for Child Safety by email at NationalOfficeforChildSafety@ag.gov.au or Deloitte at 1APEvaluation@deloitte.com.au.

Help and support

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

Crisis and suicide prevention

For crisis and suicide support you can call Lifeline: **13 11 14** or you can visit their website at lifeline.org.au

If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and need support, you can call 13YARN: **13 92 76** or visit their website at 13yarn.org.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 do something and report it.

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

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

If you want to report a crime without sharing your details, you can visit Crime Stoppers at crimestoppers.com.au or call their free number on **1800 333 000**.

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

If you want to report illegal content, you can contact the eSafety Commissioner at esafety.gov.au/report.

Glossary and Abbreviations

Activity: work being done to progress the National Strategy First Action Plans. There are 62 activities across the two First Action Plans.

Children and young people: people under the age of 18

Child sexual abuse: when an adult or child involves a child in any kind of sexual activity. Child sexual abuse can include inappropriate or wrong actions such as:

- sexual or inappropriate touching
- showing private parts or genitals
- making a child pose, undress or do sexual or inappropriate acts
- talking to a child in a sexual or inappropriate way
- making a child look at sexual or inappropriate images or videos.¹

Evaluation: a careful process of figuring out if something works by collecting and analysing information to see if it met its goals, how well it worked, and where it can be improved

Organisation: a group of people with a particular purpose such as a business or government department.

Royal Commission: a way of looking into a big problem to work out what went wrong and how things can improve

Services: a person, business or organisation who carries out actions or work that help people experiencing child sexual abuse, their supporters and communities

Strategy: a plan for how to make things better.

¹ © Commonwealth of Australia, © Australian Human Rights Commission, A Guide for Children and Young People to the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030: First Annual Report 2023

Introduction

Plain language summary

This plain language summary is designed to inform the reader about the evaluation of the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (2021-2030)* (National Strategy)'s First Action Plans (1AP Evaluation). In this document, we call it the National Strategy, and the evaluation is called the 1AP Evaluation.

What is child sexual abuse?



Child sexual abuse is when an adult or child involves a child in any kind of sexual activity.

Child sexual abuse can include inappropriate or wrong actions such as:

- sexual or inappropriate touching
- showing private parts or genitals
- making a child pose, undress or do sexual or inappropriate acts
- talking to a child in a sexual or inappropriate way
- making a child look at sexual or inappropriate images or videos.²

² © Commonwealth of Australia, © Australian Human Rights Commission, A Guide for Children and Young People to the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030: First Annual Report 2023

Why do we need a National Strategy?



In 2013, there was a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that looked into child sexual abuse in Australia. In this document, we call it the Royal Commission. At the Royal Commission, people told their stories of child sexual abuse and how it affected their lives.

The Royal Commission said we should write a National Strategy to prevent child sexual abuse and help people who have been abused. The Royal Commission also said we need to do a better job at making sure the ways we stop and respond to child sexual abuse are the same across the whole country. All Australian governments have written the National Strategy to keep children and young people safe.

The National Strategy is the first one we have had in Australia. It will last from 2021 to 2030 and is not just for children, but also for their families, communities and the organisations around them. The Government of the day is in charge of work under the National Strategy.

Two action plans – a First National Action Plan and a First Commonwealth Action Plan – have supported the National Strategy. These will be followed by further Action Plans that will help stop child sexual abuse and will continue to help people who have been sexually abused as children. ³

³ © Commonwealth of Australia © Australian Human Rights Commission, A Guide for Children and Young People to the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (2021-2030) and its Action Plans.

The National Strategy First Action Plan Evaluation (1AP Evaluation)

About the 1AP Evaluation



- The National Strategy is a plan made by the governments in Australia to stop and respond to child sexual abuse in all places.
- The National Strategy has created actions to help keep children safe. The First Action Plans run from 2021 to 2026 and include many activities led by different governments.
- The activities in the First Action Plans are grouped into five main themes:
 1. Educate and build understanding about child safety.
 2. Help victims of child sexual abuse.
 3. Support children who show sexual behaviours that themselves and other children.
 4. Stop child sexual abuse from happening.
 5. Understand information and data on child safety.
- Deloitte was asked by the National Office to check how well the National Strategy's First Action Plans are working. This is called an evaluation.
- The most important evaluation questions include:
 - Were the National Strategy's First Action Plans designed well?
 - How were the National Strategy's First Action Plans put into action? What worked well and what could have been better?

- How closely did the actions taken match the values of the National Strategy?
- What has been achieved under the National Strategy's First Action Plans?
- Deloitte looked at reports and asked people for their feedback to see how the Action Plans are helping keep children safe.

1AP Evaluation findings

Were the National Strategy's First Action Plans designed well?

- The First Action Plans work to stop child sexual abuse through work in different places. This work is called an activity. The activities in the First Action Plans were good as they followed the recommendations from the Royal Commission.
- People that Deloitte spoke to liked that different groups such as children and young people and their supporters could share their ideas when the activities were being planned.
- Some people Deloitte spoke to thought the First Action Plans were very big which meant that some activities needed more money and people working on them to be done well. It was also hard to know which activities to do first.

How were the National Strategy's First Action Plans put into action?

- Deloitte found that even with some challenges, the government had finished more than half of the First Action Plans' activities.

- Some activities are meant to be finished in 2026, and extra money has been given to help finish them.
- Examples of finished activities include setting minimum standards for people who work with children (National Action Plan Activity 1) and running advertisements on the TV, radio and at the cinema for people to learn more about child sexual abuse (National Action Plan Activity 6) and collecting important data on people who abuse children (Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 32).

What worked well under the National Strategy's First Action Plans?

- The First Action Plans mostly followed the National Strategy's values, like keeping children safe, listening to people who have experienced child sexual abuse, respecting everyone's views, and using research to make decisions.
- Some important things helped the activities work well, such as:
 - Choosing the right local groups to run services.
 - Talking to the right people from different backgrounds when planning and running activities.
 - Being flexible and allowing activity plans to be changed if needed.
 - Finding out what communities needed before starting an activity.

What could be better under the National Strategy's First Action Plans?

- Some activities took a longer time to finish because they needed extra planning, help, or money.

- The work under the National Strategy follows five important values. Some of these values say that people doing the work of the National Strategy must talk to children and people who have experienced child sexual abuse. It was sometimes hard to do this because the topic can be upsetting and people talking to them need to have the right training to make them feel safe.
- Everyone worked together to do the work of the National Strategy but how people work together can be done better. Teamwork and clear partnership between governments could help make sure this happens.
- People working on the National Strategy need to use evaluation to make sure they can check that what they are doing works and what can be improved. The way they check this could be done better by using the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which provided instructions for checking progress. This could be a focus for future National Strategy action plans.

What has been achieved under the National Strategy's First Action Plans?



- Some First Action Plans' activities have helped to:
 - Make more people aware of and talk more about child sexual abuse.
 - Create supports for those who have experienced child sexual abuse.
 - Create instructions to help people who work with children and people who support those who have experienced child sexual abuse.
 - Collect new data and information, including Australia's first study on the prevalence of child abuse.

- There is still more work to do, so the next action plan will build on the progress made in the First Action Plans.

1AP Evaluation Lessons Learnt

What are the lessons learnt?



The lessons learnt from Deloitte's work include:

1. Activities would be better if they have clear steps and time needed to finish them.
2. Sharing progress with everyone helps people stay up to date and trust the work happening under National Strategy.
3. At the start of doing an activity, it is important to spend time learning what the community needs, and doing initial research to understand those needs.
4. Support from governments is important to make sure everyone works together on the National Strategy.
5. The culture and safety of everyone is very important when talking about child sexual abuse. This needs to be done carefully when doing all work under the National Strategy.
6. It is best to work with local communities when creating new services for their children.
7. Child sexual abuse can happen in different places and in different ways, like in families, online or in institutions children visit often like a school,

church or sports club. Future National Strategy action plans need to continue to think about these differences.

8. More information should be collected to see how well current and future National Strategy action plans are helping stop child sexual abuse. This can include information on who is experiencing child sexual abuse, who is working to help them and what can be done to stop it.

1AP Evaluation Recommendations

What does the 1AP Evaluation recommend?

Recommendations are what the results of the 1AP Evaluation say governments need to be doing to make the work of the National Strategy better.

There are five recommendations to help improve future National Strategy action plans:

Recommendation 1. Create clear lists of activities, including activities that can be done quickly and activities that take longer. All activities should have goals that are clear and easy to track.

Recommendation 2. Before starting an activity, make sure to do research, talk with the community and plan carefully. Make sure there is enough time and resources (money, people, tools) allocated to do this properly.

Recommendation 3. Keep sharing progress and celebrating the National Strategy's achievements so everyone knows what is being done.

Recommendation 4. Make governments work together better and have clear ways to make sure everyone does their part. We can achieve this by involving states and territories early in activity design, create partnership agreements and finding ways to work together to avoid overlap.

Recommendation 5. Set up clear ways to check and report on how future activities are being finished so we can see how they help reach the National Strategy's goals.

Deloitte Access Economics.

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