



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

Final Evaluation Report – Appendix A
Case Studies

March 2026

Appendix A Case studies

This appendix outlines the case studies of eight individual activities¹ contained within the National Strategy First Action Plans (1AP). Three case studies were drawn from activities under the First National Action Plan (NAP), while five were drawn from the First Commonwealth Action Plan (CAP). For further information on the methodology for selecting the case studies featured in this evaluation, see Section 2.4.3 of the Final Report.

A.1. National Action Plan Activity 6 (NAP 6): Deliver a national awareness raising campaign on child sexual abuse

Activity Lead: National Office for Child Safety, Attorney-General's Department (AGD)

Background

Child sexual abuse is a stigmatised issue and is not well understood by many Australians. As a result, people may be ill-prepared to take any action to prevent child sexual abuse. In turn, victims and survivors do not feel supported or encouraged to disclose or report their experiences. Raising awareness about child sexual abuse is important in destigmatising the issue and fostering social and cultural change where children and young people are protected from sexual abuse, and victims and survivors feel comfortable speaking out about their experiences and seeking help.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) identified a need for a national awareness-raising campaign on child sexual abuse to increase understanding and promote behavioural and cultural change among the general population.²

NAP 6 directly responds to the following Royal Commission Final Report recommendations, which are outlined in Volume 6, *Making institutions child safe*:³

- Recommendation 6.2: 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.
- Recommendation 6.3: aligning with and linking to national strategies for preventing violence against adults and children, and strategies for addressing other forms of child maltreatment, and ensuring that priority population cohorts are targeted.

The National Office for Child Safety within the Attorney-General's Department (National Office), was tasked with delivering a national awareness-raising campaign on child sexual abuse that focused on promoting behaviour change among communities including parents, carers and other influencers in children and young people's lives.

Lines of inquiry

The evaluation considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of NAP 6:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of NAP 6 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.

¹ Following the release of the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in June 2024, the 62 measures in the National and Commonwealth Action Plans are referred to as 'activities' to avoid confusion with the use of the term 'measures', which in the context of evaluation refers to measuring whether a short-, medium- or long-term outcome has been achieved.

² Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/final-report>

³ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017 - Volume 6, *Making institutions child safe*, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/making-institutions-child-safe>

- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resources used to deliver NAP 6 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of NAP 6.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which NAP 6 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes, and is contributing to the achievement of indirect outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of NAP 6 to date with a view to supporting the design and implementation of future National Strategy activities.

Data sources

The data sources for this case study were:

- Publicly available documentation, such as the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports, and information about NAP 6 outputs available on ChildSafety.gov.au.
- Deloitte case study interview with AGD regarding NAP 6.
- The National Child Safety Campaign Exploratory and Developmental Research Report⁴ completed by Verian, Auditor-General's review of the One Talk at a Time campaign, and program documents on campaign engagement provided by the National Office.

Summary of insights

Design

The awareness-raising campaign – titled 'One Talk at a Time' – is the first national public communication effort to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse in Australia. The campaign targets Australian adults who play an active role in young people's lives and encourages adults to take an ongoing and proactive role in ensuring child safety. The objectives of the campaign are outlined in Figure A.1.

Figure A.1: 'One Talk at a Time' Campaign objectives



Source: National Office for Child Safety.

⁴ Verian, (2023), 'National Child Safety Campaign Exploratory and Developmental Research – Final Report', <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-child-safety-campaign-exploratory-and-developmental-research-final-report>.

The design of the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign was informed by a representative research report titled "National Child Safety Campaign Exploratory and Developmental Research" which was published on ChildSafety.gov.au in November 2023. The study aimed to understand attitudes and beliefs towards child sexual abuse.

The study adopted a multi-modal primary research approach and comprised both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study involved 91 sessions, including focus groups, online mini-groups and individual interviews with a representative sample of 8,500 participants. The study gathered feedback from different priority population groups, including parents, grandparents, siblings, culturally and linguistically diverse people, First Nations people, experts and those with lived experience and other experts. The study identified the following five key insights:

- Insight 1: Child safety is an important topic, but not necessarily one that is actively engaged with
- Insight 2: There is avoidance of thinking about child safety to protect 'emotional innocence'
- Insight 3: Conflicted morality impedes engagement
- Insight 4: A conversation can feel like 'unknown territory'
- Insight 5: There is a strong desire for leadership.

Advertising material underwent multiple rounds of testing and validation to ensure it was culturally safe, accessible, appropriate and effective. Aligned with Royal Commission Recommendation 6.3, the campaign's below-the-line approach also involved co-creation work with First Nations communities, and tailored communication initiatives for diverse cultural and language groups.

Efficiency

Funding

According to the Auditor-General's report, the 'One Talk at a Time' campaign, was completed within its intended budget.⁵ The campaign had a budget of \$20.3 million and recorded total campaign expenditure of \$19.9 million at the time of the report's publication (although it should be noted that expenditure occurred beyond this point to support other awareness raising activities). However, consultation with Activity Leads revealed that the activity did not initially have funding allocated to employ staffing resources to oversee the implementation of this activity.

The funding was intended to be evenly distributed across the four years of the action plan. In practice, this approach was not suitable as certain aspects of the campaign—such as advertising—demanded more financial resources than others. However, this challenge was largely resolved as the National Office subsequently undertook planning processes to ensure funding could be flexibly allocated across the different aspects as needed.

Timeliness and scope

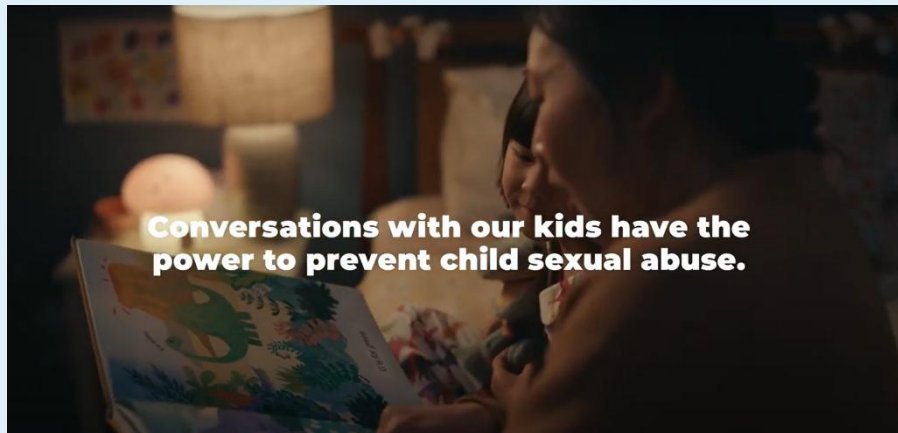
The 'One Talk at a Time' campaign was launched by the then-Attorney-General in October 2023, and advertising of the campaign ran on television, radio, in cinemas and online (Meta, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn) until 30 June 2024. In total, four video advertisements, two audio advertisements and 21 media partnership materials were published.⁶ The 21 media partnership materials were created in partnership with Southern Cross Austereo and Mamamia.

The advertising campaign was complemented with over 40 public relations materials which included educational tools and resources, webinars and videos. Resources can be accessed by the public on the ChildSafety.gov.au website. These resources and videos were developed in partnership with various leading organisations in the child safety space such as the Australian Childhood Foundation, the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) within the Australian Federal Police, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation and Raising Children Network.

⁵ The Auditor General – Australian National Audit Office, (2025), Australian Government Advertising: November 2021 to November 2024 No.29 2024-25 Performance Audit.

⁶ The Auditor General – Australian National Audit Office, (2025), Australian Government Advertising: November 2021 to November 2024 Report No.29 2024-25 Performance Audit.

Figure A.2: 'One Talk at a Time' video advertisement



Source: National Office for Child Safety – Childsafety.gov.au.

Examples of complementary resources and educational tools include:

- *My superhero voice* story book (Figure A.3)
- a suite of resources and activities created in collaboration with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation
- webinar in partnership with Australian Childhood Foundation.

Figure A.3: My superhero voice



Source: National Office for Child Safety – Childsafety.gov.au.

- Fact sheets and activities (Figure A.4) that adults can use to educate themselves about the topic or use with children and young people of all ages, including but not limited to conversation starters, body safety cards and rules, and fact sheets on warning signs.

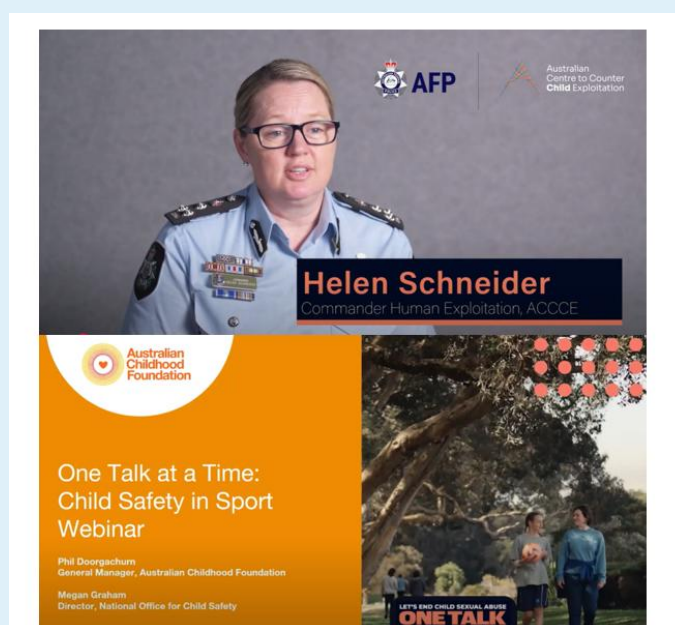
Figure A.4: One Talk at a Time fact sheets and activities



Source: National Office for Child Safety – Childsafety.gov.au.

- Webinars and videos published targeting adults with children and young people in their lives (Figure A.5). Notably, the National Office partnered with the Australian Childhood Foundation to host a webinar about child safety in sports, and published a video with Commander Helen Schneider from the ACCCE that explains how adults can safely educate themselves on child sexual abuse.

Figure A.5: One Talk at a Time example webinars and videos



Source: National Office for Child Safety – Childsafety.gov.au.

Overall, this activity was largely completed within the expected timeframes but faced some minor delays during the process of launching public relations and developing resources. The Auditor-General's Report however notes that two of five primer materials – public relations materials delivered as part of the primer strategy including fact sheets and

activities⁷ – were not delivered in the timeframe originally planned by the campaign’s public relations supplier. This limited the National Office’s ability to introduce the topic of child sexual abuse in advance of increased communications, reducing the effectiveness of the primer strategy for the campaign. The National Office noted that delays arose because of complexity of the issue and challenges in identifying and recruiting suitable campaign ambassadors.

Stakeholder consultation revealed that NAP 6 was regarded by the National Office as mostly complete as advertising, public relations and communications for culturally and linguistically diverse communities had concluded. The National Office notes that some activities, such as co-creating content with First Nations communities and developing content for people with disabilities, were still ongoing at the time of this evaluation.

Effectiveness

As part of the standard government advertising campaign evaluation process, the National Office contracted Hall & Partners to evaluate the campaign. The National Office advised that an integrated evaluation including advertisements, media partnerships and public relations activities is underway, and as such findings from this integrated evaluation are not available as of September 2025. However early findings indicate it was successful in raising awareness of the topic and contributing to positive attitudinal and behavioural changes related to having preventative conversations. Through paid media activity, the campaign amassed over 73 million views.

The National Office has collected social media engagement data, which shows that in addition to paid campaign advertising, the ‘One Talk at a Time’ campaign has been watched approximately 12,000 times on ChildSafety.gov.au online channels.^{8,9} When aggregated together, the published resources on ChildSafety.gov.au have been viewed over 42,000 times and downloaded 9,241 times. The most viewed resource is the ‘*Having conversations with children and young people*’, which has been viewed almost 10,000 times. The resource provides topics and conversation starters to help adults talk to preschool, primary school-age children and teenagers about child sexual abuse.

Since the launch of the ‘One Talk at a Time’ campaign, the ChildSafety.gov.au website has been visited 1.7 million times from 1.1 million unique users, 92.8% of whom are new users to the site since campaign launch.¹⁰ The National Office also noted that anecdotally, sector stakeholders have high awareness of and have expressed positive feedback regarding the campaign.

Recommendations

Stakeholders identified an opportunity for greater clarity in the National Strategy around the phased nature of the awareness campaign. Campaign advertising ran from 22 October 2023 to 30 June 2024, with supporting activities continuing to be delivered during this period.¹¹ The National Office suggested that future measures under a Second Action Plan could plan for multiple phases of the project to be in progress concurrently, so the subsequent phase can leverage momentum developed by the previous campaign phase.

Stakeholders also recommended the need for additional awareness-raising campaigns to ensure the issue remains front of mind among the general public. Activity Leads noted that the ‘One Talk at a Time’ campaign was designed as foundational while the community became more comfortable with public messaging on the subject. This presents scope for future awareness-raising campaigns to build on the initial phase and include more challenging behavioural asks of the viewer.

⁷ According to the Auditor-General’s Report, the primer strategy aimed to build the foundation of information, and resources for the target audience and media. It will give victims and survivors and their advocates time to adjust to increasing communication about child sexual abuse.

⁸ Correct as of 23 May 2025

⁹ Note: this represents views of the posts made on the ChildSafety.gov.au social media channels that featured the ads. It does not include paid advertising views on social media, which are part of the integrated evaluation.

¹⁰ Data shared by the National Office for Child Safety on 2 September 2025

¹¹ Below the line activities refer to promotional activities that target specific target group and involve non-mainstream channels.

Lessons learnt

There are several lessons learnt from implementing this activity, including:

1. The importance of allowing time to identify and recruit suitable campaign ambassadors, noting the sensitive nature of the issue and the reluctance of some organisations and individuals to act as ambassadors.
2. The 'One talk at a time' campaign has demonstrated how investing considerable time and resources in initial research activities to understand the current state (e.g. community attitudes and beliefs towards child sexual abuse) can be critical in the success of a public awareness campaign. These activities help ensure that the advertising materials and accompanying resources are accessible, appropriate and effective.
3. Partnerships with NGOs allow the Australian Government to have access to a wider audience and ensures that credibility is obtained through the engagement and partnership with expert child safeguarding organisations.
4. The value of collecting data to assess the effectiveness and impact of a National Strategy activity. The collection of social media engagement data and the campaign evaluation conducted by Hall & Partners enabled assessments on the effectiveness of completed campaigns.
5. The importance of not viewing advertising campaigns as "one-off" activities and instead considering how they can be embedded within a broader strategy of continuous communication strategies to improve community awareness and behaviours to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse.

A.2. National Action Plan Activity 14: Set up a national clinical framework for responding to children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours

Activity Lead: National Office for Child Safety, Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Background

Close to one in five child sexual abuse incidents are committed by children under the age of 18. According to the First wave of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study, which collected data during 2021, 18.2% of Australians aged 16-24 experienced sexual abuse by an adolescent before the age of 18 which is significantly higher compared to their experiences of child sexual abuse perpetrated by adults (11.7%).¹² The Australian Child Maltreatment Study also found that experiences of child sexual abuse carried out by adolescents have increased over the years.

However, the response to children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours is fragmented and inconsistent across jurisdictions.¹³ There is currently no consistent agreed-upon approach or best practice standards around how practitioners should respond to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

As part of the National Strategy, Australian state and territory governments are working together to develop a public health framework to prevent and respond to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. NAP 14 specifically aims to set up a National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework for responding to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. The Framework has been developed with a strong focus on the clinical skills and knowledge practitioners require, based on their role as specialist or generalist clinicians working with young people who have used harmful sexual behaviours. The Framework will be designed for services and practitioners across Australia that provide clinical and therapeutic responses to children who have displayed concerning and/or harmful sexual behaviours. Once completed, it will:

- Offer guidance to governments, policy makers, community organisations, and services that provide therapeutic responses to these children and young people.
- Assist service providers, regardless of location, in delivering best practice, evidence-based therapeutic responses.
- Enhance the quality of services to help children and young people in stopping concerning or harmful sexual behaviour.

NAP 14 importantly addresses key recommendations from the Royal Commission Final Report that relate to:

- Improving assessment and therapeutic intervention for children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours
- Strengthening the workforce to respond to harmful sexual behaviours
- Improving evaluation of harmful sexual behaviours
- Improving evaluation of harmful sexual behaviour services, and
- Supporting children in out of home care who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

This specifically includes recommendations outlined in Volume 10 and Volume 12 of the Royal Commission Final Report that are listed below:

- Recommendation 10.1 - the inclusion of the issue of children's harmful sexual behaviours included in the National Strategy;

¹² Haslam D, et al. (2023), The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report, Australian Child Maltreatment Study, Queensland University of Technology.

¹³ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017 – Volume 10, Children with harmful sexual behaviours, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/children-harmful-sexual-behaviours>.

- Recommendation 10.2 - the Australian Government and state and territory governments to ensure timely expert assessment is available for children with problematic and harmful sexual behaviours;
- Recommendation 10.3 - adequate funding of therapeutic interventions for children with harmful sexual behaviours;
- Recommendation 10.4 - clear referral pathways for children with harmful sexual behaviours to access expert assessment and therapeutic intervention;
- Recommendation 10.5 – identify a set of principles that therapeutic interventions for children with harmful and sexual behaviours should be based on;
- Recommendation 10.6 - all services funded to provide therapeutic intervention for children with harmful sexual behaviour should provide professional training and clinical supervision for their staff;
- Recommendation 10.7 - The Australian Government and state and territory governments should fund and support the evaluation of services providing therapeutic interventions for problematic and harmful sexual behaviour by children, and
- Recommendation 12.12 – Develop a set of measures that should be taken by care service providers when placing a child with harmful sexual behaviours in out-of-home care.¹⁴

Lines of inquiry

This case study considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of NAP 14:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of NAP 14 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the resources used to deliver NAP 14 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of NAP 14
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which NAP 14 has achieved its intended intermediate objectives and is contributing to the achievement of intended outcomes stemming from the development of the framework.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of NAP 14 to date with a view to supporting future implementation of activities under the National Strategy.

Data sources

This case study was informed by the following data sources:

- Publicly available documentation such as the information on the Child Safety website regarding the activities undertaken in support of NAP 14, and the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports.
- Deloitte case study interview with the National Office for Child Safety within the Attorney-General's Department (National Office) on NAP 14.

Summary of insights

Design

While the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework is currently in advanced design, it has not been finalised at this stage. As such, it is not possible to assess the appropriateness of the Framework's design. However, available evidence indicates that the process in designing the Framework has been collaborative and involved extensive engagement with the broader sector. Specifically, the design of the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework is informed by consultation from individuals, government, non-government and private sector services, and agencies who respond to children, young people, who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours and their families. In total, the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) held 19 consultation-focused workshops with the broader sector in 2024 to inform the development of the Framework. In total 282 attendees across advisory groups and service sector representatives provided structured feedback and recommendations across six streams, including service system design, principles of

¹⁴ Ibid.

practice, therapeutic assessment, therapeutic responses and intervention, workforce skills and capability, and culturally responsive practice.

Efficiency

NAP 14 has faced several implementation challenges. In accordance with the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Office had the responsibility for leading the development of the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework. To initiate this work, the National Office sought the advice of the National Clinical Reference Group to define the scope and direction of the Framework, with the intention of drafting it based on their expert input and guidance. However, due to the complexity of the task and the need for broader sector engagement, the National Office responded by commissioning the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) to lead the design and development of the Framework. This decision aimed to ensure that the final Framework would be informed by contemporary clinical expertise and grounded in a robust, evidence-based approach.

There were delays in completing this activity due to a range of challenges. While there were no specific timeframes associated with the Framework's implementation, stakeholders indicated that the Framework design process had not progressed as expected and faced initial delays. This was mainly due to non-consensus among NCRG members and the requirement for subject matter expertise that sits outside the National Office. However, program documentation shared by the National Office indicates that NAP 14's implementation process is in progress. As of June 2025, the National Office is testing a first draft of the framework developed by ACCP with the Children who have displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviours interjurisdictional government working group, the NCRG and the broader sector.

The National Office accessed additional funding for this activity through a reprioritisation of unused funding from other 1AP measures to commission ACCP to lead the implementation of this activity.

In the initial stages of the Framework's design process (i.e. prior to ACCP's involvement), the National Office stated that it was challenging to engage victims and survivors, especially children who were harmed by other children displaying harmful sexual behaviours and stakeholders from priority groups (i.e. First Nations, LGBTQIA+, CALD) due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Capacity constraints prevented appropriate and meaningful engagement with key sector stakeholders. Consultation with victims and survivors, however, remains a challenge due to time constraints regarding ethics approval processes. Capacity constraints also limited the exploration of emerging issues, which may inform the design of the Framework, such as the role of technology (which has increased access to pornography) in influencing harmful sexual behaviours. Some of these challenges have since been resolved by the involvement of the ACCP. The ACCP has conducted consultations with priority groups and key sector stakeholders, and also completed specific cultural consultations for First Nations sector stakeholders.

Effectiveness

As the National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework has not yet been finalised and published, it is unclear at this stage if the development of the Framework will contribute to its desired outcomes. However, consultation with Advisory groups and service sector representatives conducted by ACCP to inform the development of the First Draft of the Framework

highlighted several challenges and opportunities that the Framework could potentially provide advice on, such as addressing workforce capability, improve effectiveness of responses and enhance national consistency, for example:

- strengths-based, age-appropriate, flexible and culturally responsive approaches to address the diverse needs of children and young people such as neurodiverse and culturally diverse populations;
- workforce capacity building through targeted training, integrated service, legislative reforms;
- national accreditation frameworks and collaborative models to address challenges related to gaps in wellbeing support to address workforce burnout.¹⁵

The National Office also noted the challenge of creating a nationally consistent framework when there is significant variation in service system response and integration across jurisdictions. Jurisdictions also have particular local contexts that will require a tailored response. The Framework was intended to inform best practice standards; however, some jurisdictions may not yet have the capacity to implement this Framework.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the National Office begin to consider how the Framework can be implemented and rolled out nationally. Stakeholders noted the implementation of the Framework may be inevitably complex due to jurisdictional variations in funding, workforce capabilities and workforce availability. Within this context, collaboration with state/territory government and non-government stakeholders (e.g. peak bodies, service providers) will be crucial to ensure the Framework can be practically and consistently applied across different types of services. Once the Framework is finalised, it would be important for the National Office to conduct evaluations in the future to assess the degree to which the Framework has contributed to more consistent national approaches towards supporting children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviour. According to stakeholders, it is likely that there will be an evaluation of the Framework in the future. This evaluation will be an important mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the Framework's implementation, including the jurisdictions' progress in supporting the implementation of the Framework.

Lessons learnt

The experience to date in designing and implementing NAP 14 has generated several lessons including:

1. The importance of assessing sector readiness across jurisdictions prior to the development of a nationally consistent framework. While national consistency in approaches to support children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours remains critical and desirable, there should be consideration of mechanisms to support jurisdictions with lower levels of sector maturity to achieve consistency.
2. The need to ensure there is sufficient time, expertise and appropriate mechanisms to conduct detailed consultation with key stakeholders – including children and young people, and victims and survivors in safe and ethical ways.
3. The need for data collection and reporting mechanisms to facilitate future evaluations on the uptake and effectiveness of the designed Framework in enabling the achievement of relevant National Strategy outcomes.

Following the finalisation and delivery of the Framework, future evaluations will need to consider the degree to which the Framework has contributed to the following medium-term outcomes in the overarching National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework:

1. Building knowledge to improve understanding and recognition of developmentally expected, concerning and harmful sexual behaviours.
2. Improved quality of assessment and proportionate therapeutic responses and support to children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours.
3. Provision of supports to families, communities and workforces to meet the needs of children and young people who have displayed, and those impacted by harmful sexual behaviours.

A.3. National Action Plan Activity 29: Develop a scoping study for and establish an Australian Child Wellbeing Data Asset

Activity Lead: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Background

Child maltreatment may be experienced or inadequately addressed as children and young people move through government services over time. Children with previous experience in the out-of-home care system are significantly more likely to experience maltreatment.¹⁶ The negative implications on future mental health are significant, with children with an out-of-home care experience more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder, such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, later on in life.¹⁷ Understanding the extent of maltreatment is critical for evaluating the effectiveness of policies and programs designed to support children and young people's wellbeing. However, Australia lacks an integrated, holistic data asset that tracks how children and young people move in and out of multiple government services, making it difficult to understand the cumulative impact of these services on their wellbeing. The Royal Commission recommended that the Australian Government use research and evaluation to guide the development and refinement of interventions for children and young people.¹⁸

National Action Plan Activity 29 (NAP 29, 'develop a scoping study for and establish an Australian Child Wellbeing Data Asset (CWDA)') aims to address the Royal Commission Final Report recommendations 2.1 (Volume 2 - Nature and cause) and 6.3 (Volume 6 - Making Institutions Child Safe). Recommendation 2.1 called for a nationally representative prevalence study on child abuse and maltreatment.¹⁹ The CWDA is being developed to provide independent data reporting on child maltreatment in Australia and may also inform future research areas. Similar to NAP 6, the design of the CWDA incorporates a tailored approach to priority population cohorts (6.3b), and also addresses recommendations 6.3di & 6.3dii as it will strengthen the current evidence base and inform future interventions to address CSA.²⁰

Following a scoping study completed in 2022-23, the AIHW has been developing the CWDA which launched four approved pilot programs in June 2025. The CWDA is a linked, longitudinal data asset to support evidence-informed decision making.

Lines of enquiry

The evaluation considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of NAP 29:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of NAP 29 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resources used to deliver NAP 29 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of NAP 29.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which NAP 29 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes and is contributing to the achievement of indirect outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of NAP 29 to date with a view to supporting future implementation of activities under the National Strategy.

¹⁵ Australian Centre for Child Protection, (2025), The National Clinical and Therapeutic Framework for children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviour: Consultation Summary.

¹⁶ Harris et al. (2025), The prevalence and patterns of maltreatment, childhood adversity, and mental health disorders in an Australian out-of-home care sample, *Child maltreatment*, 30(1), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595241246534>

¹⁷ Harris et al. (2025), The prevalence and patterns of maltreatment, childhood adversity, and mental health disorders in an Australian out-of-home care sample, *Child maltreatment*, 30(1), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595241246534>

¹⁸ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/recommendations>.

¹⁹ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017, Volume 2 - Nature and cause, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/nature-and-cause>

²⁰ Attorney-General's Department, (2017), Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report, volume 6- Making institutions child safe, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/making-institutions-child-safe>

Data sources

The data sources for this case study were:

- Publicly available documentation such as the Child Wellbeing Data Asset Development Framework,²¹ and the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports.
- Deloitte case study interview with AIHW representatives responsible for delivering NAP 29.

Summary of insights

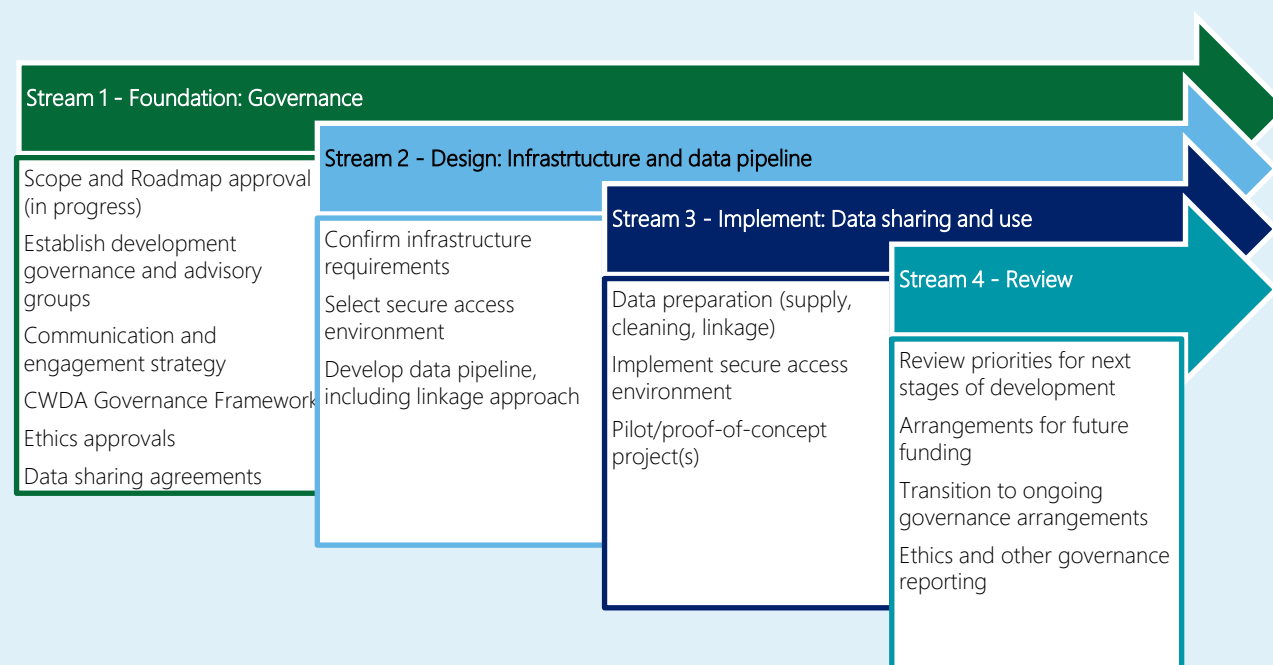
Design

The design of the CWDA was informed by several research and governance phases. In 2022, AIHW engaged the Social Research Centre (SRC) to conduct a scoping study to identify policy priorities the CWDA could support. This project involved consultation with over 54 stakeholder agencies to identify data needs related to the National Strategy, as well as a literature and a desktop review of child wellbeing frameworks. Agencies consulted with, included government agencies, academics, nongovernment organisations and peak bodies. Through this process, AIHW identified 8 policy priority areas – child safety, youth justice, mental health, early years, families, student wellbeing, priority populations and Closing the Gap.

The scoping study produced two outputs which have been used to guide the development of the CWDA:

- The CWDA Development Framework – identifying key principles to guide the CWDA process
- The CWDA Development Roadmap – identifying critical work needed to establish the CWDA (Figure A.6).

Figure A.6: The CWDA Development Roadmap



Source: AIHW (2023).

Following the initial scoping study, AIHW created a shortlist of 50 data collections and assessed each source based on policy fit (relevance to policy priorities identified in SRC's project), and technical fit. The criteria for technical fit were:

- Linkability – whether the data source can be linked to other data sources at the person-level.
- Frequency – how frequently the data source is updated.
- Representativeness – how representative the data source is of the target population.

The development of the CWDA has been guided by two National Strategy governance groups, set up in 2022-23. The Development Working Group, and the Advisory Group have been providing advice on the design and development of the CWDA.

Efficiency

Note: Information on the level of funding and actual expenditure associated with this activity was not provided to Deloitte. As such, findings in this sub-section mainly focus on the key outputs delivered through this activity.

AIHW identified 15 data collections suitable for potential inclusion in the CWDA, and selected six for the initial data asset which were the most fit-for-purpose. The initial CWDA links together six data collections:

1. Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)
2. Child Protection National Minimum Data Set (CP NMDS)
3. Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)
4. National Community Mental Health Care Database (NCMHCD)
5. Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)
6. Youth Justice National Minimum Data Set (YJ NMDS).

AIHW has been delivering the project within its agreed scope and budget. AIHW is taking a coordinated approach to establish data sharing across multiple national integration initiatives. However, there have been delays against original timelines due to the complex data landscape AIHW operates in. According to AIHW, the delays resulting from the complex legal issues on the sharing of information for the National Disability Data Asset has impacted the timeframes for the development of data sharing agreements for the CWDA. As a result, the soft launch in June 2025 had a narrower scope than initially planned.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement has been critical to the implementation of CWDA, supported by planning documents such as the CWDA Development Roadmap, which have helped communicate expectations.

Effectiveness

AIHW launched the CWDA in June 2025, and will run initial pilot projects to test the technical implementation of the data set. As the CWDA is not yet accessible to the general public, the effectiveness of the data asset cannot be assessed. Further, the CWDA is designed to support long-term outcomes and its full impact is likely to become evident over an extended timeframe once research projects are underway.

Recommendations

It is recommended that AIHW continue to progress the CWDA. However, AIHW can consider undertaking additional research and consultation to understand how to manage data related to priority groups sensitively, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. AIHW identified that possible actions include embedding Indigenous data governance principles into the CWDA, and including Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander

²¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2023), The Child Wellbeing Data Asset Development Framework and Roadmap, https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/717e86da-e9f1-434b-bc1b-811cb1288b44/aihw-scoping-report-for-child-wellbeing-data-asset_v2.pdf.

representatives in the committee to help guide the process. AIHW also noted that expanding the CWDA will also allow the organisation to create a richer data asset to support more research efforts.

Lessons learnt

There have been several lessons learnt from the experience of implementing NAP 29. They include:

1. The importance of undertaking initial research activities to develop an evidence-based approach to improve interventions for children and young people through research and data collection. In this instance, the scoping study conducted helped AIHW identify policy priorities.
2. The importance of strong stakeholder buy-in and effective project management in facilitating the implementation of the CWDA. AIHW has been coordinating with agencies to manage the risk of duplication with other child and wellbeing datasets such as the Life Course Data initiative which is managed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

A.4. Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 4: Prevent online harms and promote safe online practices for children and young people

Activity Lead: eSafety Commissioner

Background

As children and young people use the internet, there is a risk that they become exposed to potentially harmful online actors or content. The Royal Commission identified the need for parents and carers to understand these risks as well as effective strategies to protect children and young people from harm online.²²

Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 4 (CAP 4, 'prevent online harms and promote safe online practices for children and young people') was designed to address two Royal Commission Final Report recommendations outlined in Volume 6 – making institutions child safe: 6.2, which called for online safety education for children, parents and community members; and 6.20, which recommended that the eSafety Commissioner oversee the delivery of national online safety education aimed at parents and community members.²³ Under CAP 4, eSafety is tasked with developing 'targeted online safety education that helps parents and families to recognise and prevent harmful behaviours online. This will focus on issues related to online child sexual abuse and child safety'. eSafety established a project entitled Family Capacity Building (FCB) to implement this action.²⁴

Lines of inquiry

The evaluation considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of the FCB project:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of CAP 4 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the resources used to deliver CAP 4 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of CAP 4
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which CAP 4 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes (as identified in the FCB Program Logic) and is contributing to the achievement of indirect outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of CAP 4 to date with a view to supporting future implementation of activities under the National Strategy.

Data sources

This case study was informed by the following data sources:

- Publicly available documentation such as the parents and carers resources developed under CAP 4, and the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports.
- Deloitte case study interview with eSafety Commissioner on CAP 4.
- Additional research, monitoring and evaluation documents provided by eSafety.

Summary of insights

Design

The implementation of CAP 4 was preceded by research activities to develop the necessary evidence base on which to develop its resources for parents and families. The activities had a particular focus on supporting CALD communities, as there are a range of diverse social influences on parenting that need to be considered in developing resources to

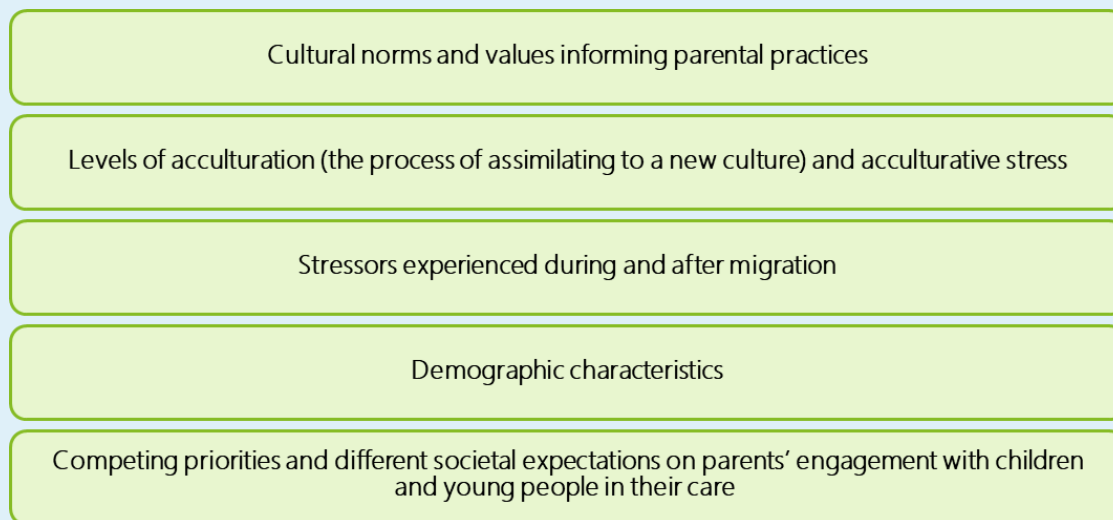
²² Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017), Final Report 2017, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/preface-and-executive-summary>.

²³ National Office for Child Safety, (2021), First Commonwealth Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2024, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/first-commonwealth-action-plan-prevent-and-respond-child-sexual-abuse-2021-2024>

²⁴ National Office for Child Safety, (2021), First Commonwealth Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2024, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/first-commonwealth-action-plan-prevent-and-respond-child-sexual-abuse-2021-2024>.

support them. However, the ways in which these factors inform parental behaviours relating to online child sexual abuse were not clear.

To address this knowledge gap, eSafety engaged Orima Research to undertake a literature review relating to CALD parents and carers and the prevention of online child sexual abuse. The literature review was completed in May 2022, and identified the following influences on parental behaviours relating to online child sexual abuse:²⁵



The literature review concluded that there was a need for communications and interventions specifically for each individual CALD community to support parents to prevent and respond to online child sexual abuse.²⁶ It also analysed the understanding and behaviours regarding online child sexual abuse, and some best practice examples of communications and interventions for CALD communities.

eSafety engaged Whereto Research to conduct a total of 16 peer group discussions and 2 surveys with parents born overseas. Its final report was released in February 2023 and found that while many of the challenges raised by overseas-born parents were common with Australian-born parents, there were also diverse acculturation factors such as different cultures, languages and parenting approaches that introduce community-specific dynamics and challenges to supporting their children's online safety.²⁷ This meant that while the pre-existing resources from eSafety on child safety online may support these communities, there was a need for community-specific resources and engagement approaches to optimise understanding and uptake of the resources.

Efficiency

Note: Information on the level of funding and actual expenditure associated with this activity was not provided to Deloitte. As such, findings in this sub-section mainly focus on the key outputs delivered through this activity.

In response to the findings from the literature review and stakeholder consultation process, eSafety generated a range of resources for parents and carers to support children and young people to remain safe from child sexual abuse online. In 2023, eSafety released on its website a series of family online safety resources including videos, easy-to-read advice sheets and conversation starters to support parents and carers talk to children and young people about online

²⁵ eSafety Commissioner and Orima Research, (2022), A review of the literature pertaining to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse parents / carers and the prevention of online child sexual abuse.

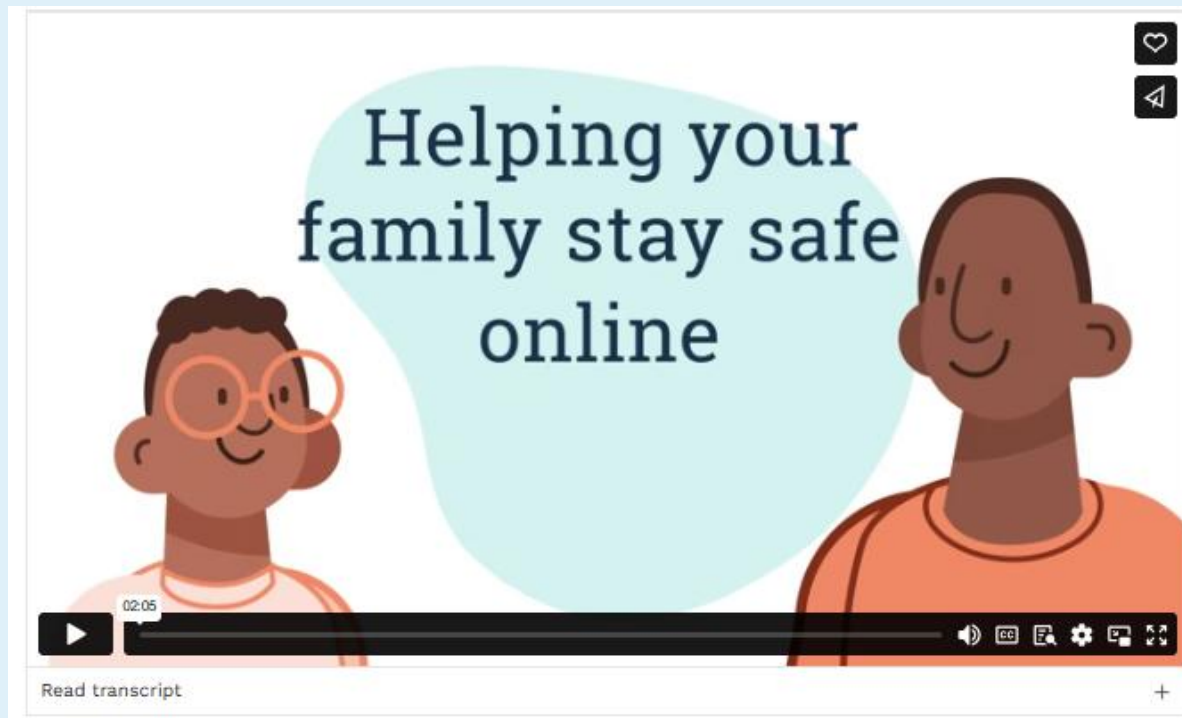
²⁶ eSafety Commissioner and Orima Research, (2022), A review of the literature pertaining to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse parents / carers and the prevention of online child sexual abuse.

²⁷ Whereto Research, (2023), Digital parenting experiences of refugee and migrant groups in Australia.

safety.²⁸ There are four videos (each available in English and 13 other languages) relating to different aspects of online child safety:

- Helping your family stay safe online (see Figure A.7)
- Getting started with social media
- Safer online gaming
- Getting help when your child is being bullied online

Figure A.7: Example of an eSafety video for parents and carers.



Source: eSafety Commissioner.

The videos are supplemented by the 'Every online safety conversation matters' conversation cards and advice sheet, developed in collaboration with the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, which is available in English, Arabic, Simplified Chinese and Punjabi.

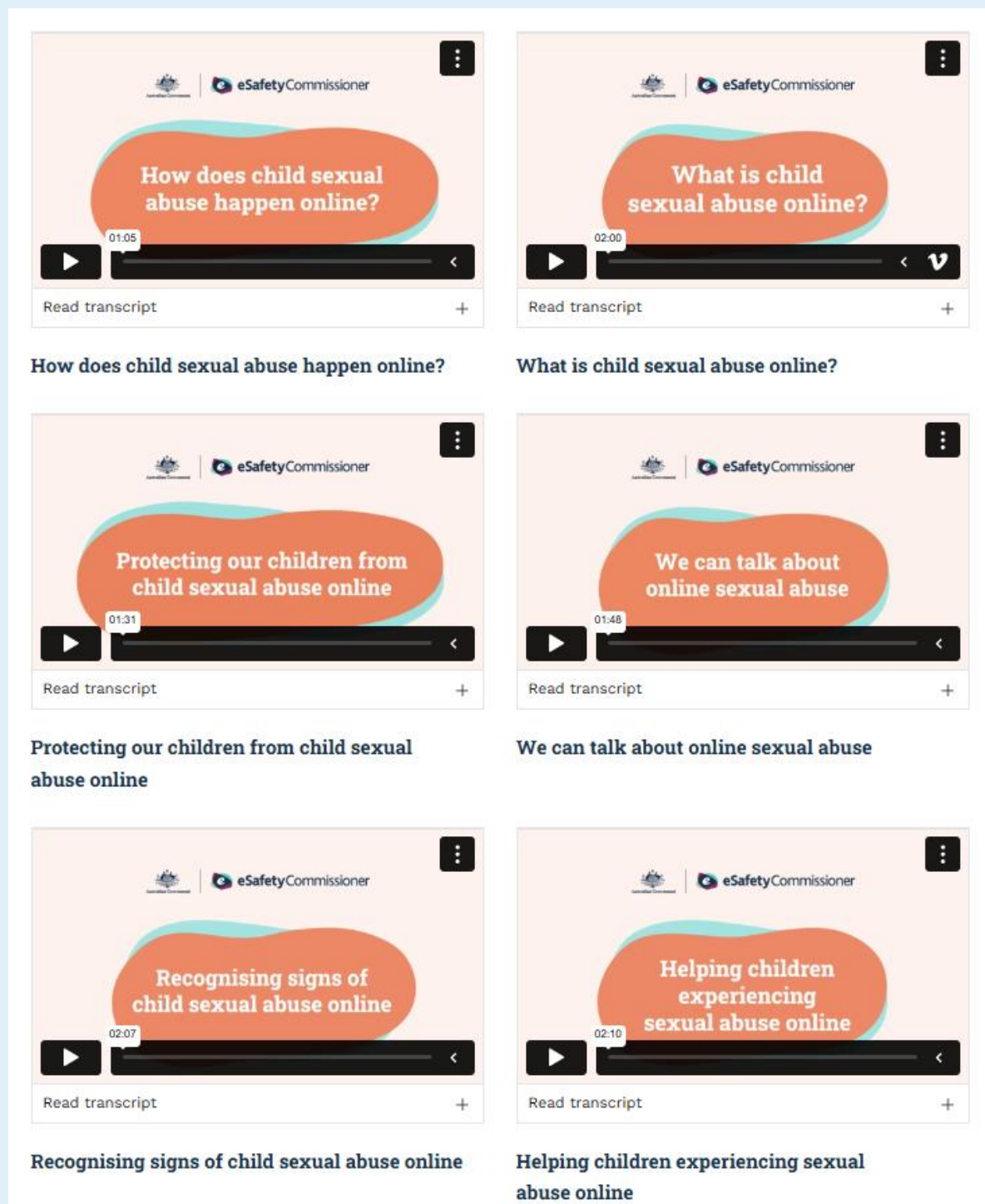
In 2024, eSafety developed the 'Protecting children from sexual abuse online' resources for parents to support conversations with children and young people in their care about online child sexual abuse.²⁹ These resources include six short videos of approximately 1-2 minutes, with each addressing one of the following key questions and topics:

- How does child sexual abuse happen online?
- What is child sexual abuse online?
- Protecting our children from child sexual abuse online
- We can talk about online sexual abuse
- Recognising signs of child sexual abuse online
- Helping children experiencing sexual abuse online (see Figure A.8).

²⁸ eSafety Commissioner, (2023), Family online safety in more languages, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/resources/online-safety-for-every-family>.

²⁹ eSafety Commissioner (2024, Resources to help protect children from sexual abuse online, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/protecting-children-from-sexual-abuse-online/resources>.

Figure A.8: The 'Protecting children from sexual abuse online' videos.



Source: eSafety Commissioner.

The video scripts and storyboards were tested extensively during development with stakeholders and parents and carers from diverse backgrounds to ensure they were fit for purpose. The videos were supplemented by several posters and other collateral for family support services to display on their premises. The videos and collateral have been translated into Simplified Chinese, Arabic and Punjabi. Parents and carers can also access free live webinars on the eSafety website. These webinars:

- provide parents and carers with the knowledge, skills and tools to support their children to have safe online experiences.³⁰
- are designed for parents and carers of children and young people at various points of primary and secondary school, and focus on topics ranging from using parental controls to navigating the threat of deepfakes.

There was limited evidence regarding funding for CAP 4: \$3 million over four years was allocated to eSafety to implement the activity, however it is unclear how these funds were allocated to deliver its supporting tasks.

Effectiveness

While an evaluation is currently underway into CAP 4, anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been demand for the developed resources. eSafety reported that it regularly distributes the hard-copy resources to stakeholders at sector presentations and conferences, and have observed high demand for hard copies of its resources. Parents and carers have also relayed feedback to eSafety that the resources were age-appropriate and contained appropriate language to support conversations with the children and young people in their care.

Future assessments of effectiveness will be informed by the Program Logic for the FCB project, which was developed in 2023. The Program Logic identifies the expected conversion of inputs and activities into outcomes and long-term impacts of CAP 4 and is expected to guide future evaluative activities.

Recommendations

eSafety Commissioner highlighted an opportunity to build on previous engagement with parents and carers by identifying community-level champions to promote awareness of and usage of developed resources. This was considered important due to eSafety's federal remit and resource constraints, which present challenges in broader direct engagements with different communities. Furthermore, having a network of community-level champions would strengthen eSafety's understanding of the extent to which their resources were reaching target communities of parents and carers. This would in turn support parents and carers to provide feedback on the resources' effectiveness and opportunities to refine them.

Lessons learnt

There are several lessons learnt from the experience of implementing this activity. They include:

1. The potential benefits of embedding flexibility in the design of National Strategy activities. eSafety reflected that the broad description of CAP 4 allowed it to adapt its delivery of resources according to the findings of its research and consultation activities. The broad scope of the activity afforded eSafety the necessary flexibility to deliver CAP 4 in a way that meets target communities' needs. Notwithstanding these benefits, it is critical to ensure that the scope and intent of activities directly contribute to the outcomes identified in the National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and directly address the relevant Royal Commission recommendations where appropriate.
2. The importance of undertaking initial research to identify the service gap that the activity seeks to address, and the factors informing how the activity should be delivered for priority groups. This ensures that the design and implementation of activities considers cultural contexts – as reflected in the research activities undertaken for CAP 4, which identified the need for individual resources to be developed for each community.
3. The need to test the ideas and concepts underpinning resources with target cohorts through extensive initial consultation prior to developing and disseminating resources. Validating these underpinning ideas and concepts enables the development of fit-for-purpose resources, which in turn increases the likelihood of their uptake and ultimately their effectiveness.
4. The importance of monitoring and evaluation to enable assessments on the usage, uptake and assessment on how developed resources contributed to parents and carers' ability to recognise, respond to, and report harmful

³⁰ eSafety Commissioner, Webinars for parents and carers, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/webinars>.

behaviours online. While there is currently limited systematic data to assess effectiveness, eSafety has commissioned an evaluation which will enable future assessments in this area.

A.5. Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 6: Raise public awareness of the important role of the digital industry in combatting online harms

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

Background

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse has become more prevalent, organised and extreme. Children and young people's increasing access to the internet has allowed offenders to groom, coerce, exploit and abuse them at scale.³¹ The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission)'s Criminal Justice Report was developed to identify what institutions and governments should do to better protect children against sexual abuse, including online.³²

Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 6 (CAP 6 'raise public awareness of the important role of the digital industry in combatting online harms') was designed to support addressing Recommendation 6.24 of the Royal Commission's Final Report (Volume 6 – making institutions child safe) and the overall intent of the Criminal Justice Report. Under CAP 6, the National Office for Child Safety (the National Office) within the Attorney-General's Department (the Department) was tasked with '[working] to raise public awareness of the digital industry's role in addressing criminal activity on their platforms.' The National Office partnered with Blackfish to deliver the documentary '*The Shadows of the Web: Protecting Our Child in the Digital World*' (*The Shadows of the Web*) to implement this activity.

Lines of inquiry

This case study considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the implementation of CAP 6:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of CAP 6 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resources used to deliver CAP 6 and the fidelity of CAP 6's implementation.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which CAP 6 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes and is contributing to the achievement of medium- and long-term outcomes.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of CAP 6 to date with a view to support the design and implementation of future National Strategy activities.

Data sources

This case study was informed by the following data sources:

- Publicly available documentation such as the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports.
- Deloitte case study interview with the National Office on CAP 6.
- Additional stakeholder engagement documents provided by the National Office and Blackfish, the producer of the documentary (including access to the documentary produced).

Summary of insights

Design

CAP 6 was designed to creatively amplify growing global efforts to hold digital industry to account by increasing public scrutiny around digital industry's role in protecting children and young people from online sexual exploitation and abuse. The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) reported in 2023 that some of the largest global digital companies were 'simply not doing enough' to address this issue. Specifically, eSafety noted:

- inconsistencies in the use of available tools and technologies to detect child sexual exploitation and abuse material,

³¹ Attorney-General's Department 2024, *The Shadows of the Web* | Documentary stakeholder engagement kit.

³² Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Criminal Justice Report,(2017), <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/child-abuse/criminal-justice>.

- significant variations in the time taken to address reports of illegal activity, and
- very low detection of livestreamed abuse of children.³³

Noting that CAP 6 was intended to be an innovative measure, the Department procured the services of content producer Blackfish to produce a short documentary,³⁴ the messaging of which was to be nuanced to appeal to a broad range of consumers, many with limited prior knowledge of the crime type.

The National Office oversaw pre-production activities to ensure the delivery activities undertaken for CAP 6 were appropriately informed and supported by contemporary evidence on the crime type and public communications. The National Office also established a cross-government reference group with membership from the Department, the Australian Federal Police (AFP)-led Australian Centre to Combat Child Exploitation (ACCCE), eSafety, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts to support the development of the documentary, including ensuring that it captured whole-of-government messaging.³⁵

There is a common misconception that online child sexual exploitation and abuse - in particular the consumption of child sexual abuse material - does not harm children. The documentary sought to raise awareness of the profound, long-term impacts that online child sexual abuse can have across all aspects of a person's life. To do this it included the voices of victims and survivors, their families and advocates. The documentary prominently featured interviews with parents of victims of child sexual abuse initially perpetrated online. These parents shared their experiences of the abuse itself, how it informed their subsequent work to address this crime type, and the need for stronger action from digital industry to support law enforcement efforts. The documentary included footage of interviews with the then-Attorney-General, the Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC, MP, as well as representatives from the ACCCE, New South Wales Police, Australian Institute of Criminology, Bravehearts, Not My Kid, Carly Ryan Foundation, University of New South Wales, eSafety Commissioner, and the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children. .

Efficiency

Blackfish produced *The Shadows of the Web*, a 45-minute documentary. Blackfish was selected following a limited tender procurement that was run in 2023 using a Whole-of-Government panel arrangement.

³³ Inman Grant, Julie, (2023), Tech companies must do more and do better if we are to stem the tide of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, eSafety Commissioner, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/tech-companies-must-do-more-and-do-better-if-we-are-to-stem-the-tide-of-online-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>, accessed 20 June 2025.

³⁴ The decision to produce a documentary was made while in the Department of Home Affairs, prior to the 2022 Machinery of Government changes.

³⁵ Attorney-General's Department, (2023), First Annual Report 2023 | National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-strategy-first-annual-report-2023>.

Launched in August 2024, the documentary includes:³⁶

An overview of the crime type, including recent trends

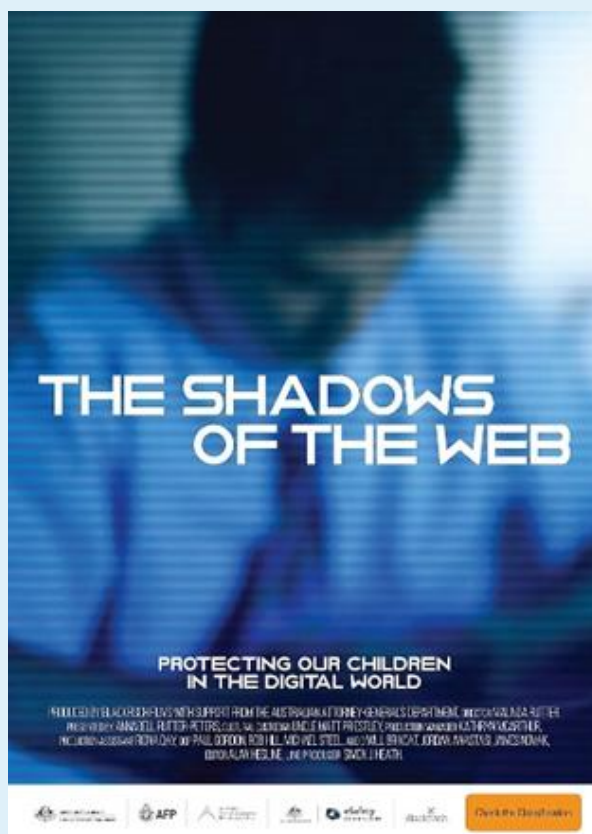
Australia's whole-of-government approach to combatting online child sexual abuse

Victim and survivor stories

The role the 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

Figure A.9: 'The Shadows of the Web' Documentary Poster



Source: IMDB.

The National Office and Blackfish agreed to expand the documentary's focus to raise critical awareness of sextortion as an extremely concerning harm vector linked to instances of self-harm and impacting teen boys in particular. This decision was made as it became evident that this prominent issue required further investigation in the documentary and led to additional interviews being conducted with state and territory police representatives.

Blackfish developed a stakeholder engagement kit to support the documentary's launch, which provides suggestions on how to share the documentary and its key messages across popular social media platforms. The engagement kit also contained quotes for social media from key stakeholders and information on support resources. The National Office reflected that cast members played a prominent role in promoting the documentary via their social media platforms.

The documentary, which launched on 29 August 2024, was initially available on the National Office's Child Safety website and YouTube. Since December 2024, it has been hosted on the streaming service Stan. National Office project officers noted that while there were benefits to making the documentary available via a host service, it would have been preferable to make it available on a free service with a wide viewer base such as ABC iView. National Office project officers noted that Blackfish had experienced challenges in getting buy in from free national services at the time of the documentary's release.

The documentary was delivered within its intended budget with the contract with Blackfish. The total activity cost includes a variation obtained for Blackfish to conduct additional interviews with key stakeholders as the need for them arose but not costs spent on screening events (i.e. the premiere event in Brisbane). CAP 6 funding also included an allocation for related activities. For example, in Financial Year (FY) 2021-22, while the *Shadows of the Web* was still in the concept phase, the department facilitated screenings of 'The Children in the Pictures', another Australian documentary charting the 10-year work of Taskforce Argos, Queensland Police's response to combatting online child sexual abuse. Screenings were held domestically and internationally and attracted over 145 attendees from government, law enforcement, civil society, industry, academia, and healthcare.

Effectiveness

CAP 6 falls under Theme 1 of the National Strategy – Awareness Raising, Education and Building Child Safe Cultures. The enabling medium-term outcomes relevant to this activity as set by the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are:

- increased awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse across a broader sub-section of Australian society
- child sexual abuse is discussed openly, respectfully and without shame or stigma, and
- greater awareness and uptake regarding digital technologies and settings to promote child safety and respond to child sexual abuse.

The long-term outcomes are:

- improved recognition across a broader sub-section of Australian society regarding systemic and direct risks to child safety and how to seek assistance or report it,
- children and young people are safer from child sexual abuse, and
- tech industry remains engaged as a key contributor to solutions to address online CSEA.

There is limited evidence to assess the extent to which the activities under CAP 6 have achieved their intended outcomes. However, in the three months that it was available online, the documentary was viewed a combined total of 6,063 times between the National Office's website and YouTube. The documentary is estimated to have received approximately 500,000 views from Australian audiences in the first six months that it was available to stream on Stan. In the three months between the launch of the documentary and its release on Stan, posts about the documentary on the ChildSafety.gov.au social media channels received 6,464 views on Instagram and made 15,795 impressions on LinkedIn.

The National Office has hosted specific screenings for contributing stakeholders such as the ACCCE and the wider Department. Some external private screenings have also been facilitated, for example as a side event at the AiLECS Labs Symposium (Melbourne, September 2024), the Social Media Summit (Sydney, October 2024) and at World Congress (Cambridge, July 2025). Limited monitoring and evaluation activities have been undertaken to assess the effectiveness

³⁶ Attorney-General's Department, (2023), First Annual Report 2023 | National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-strategy-first-annual-report-2023>.

of CAP 6 during 1AP's lifetime, noting the difficulty of identifying persons who have viewed the documentary to gauge whether the documentary has raised their awareness of the role of digital industry in combatting online CSEA. Consequently, viewership figures and social media engagement statistics are the key form of indicators that can be used to evaluate this measure.

Recommendations

The National Office noted that awareness raising content on addressing child sexual abuse, particularly online, can become outdated quickly due to the development of new technologies and perpetrators' tendency to leverage new technologies to commit child sexual abuse.

For these reasons, the National Office posed that it would not recommend that an equivalent measure be pursued in future under the National Strategy, although it will continue to have longevity in terms of the key issues it raises. However, it reflected that there are opportunities to undertake activities to support the existing documentary's viewership and impacts. These include:

- pursuing additional screening events for the documentary, particularly among education-based organisations and institutions (similar to the screening events in support of *The Children in the Pictures* documentary)
- emphasising monitoring and evaluation activities to develop a stronger understanding of the documentary's impacts over time (acknowledging that viewers may watch it several years after its production, meaning some of its impacts may arise well into the future).

The National Office also suggested there may be an opportunity to explore translating the documentary to increase engagement with CALD communities. Such activities would need to account for how the documentary can be accessed at the time such translations would be published, noting that Stan has the rights to the documentary until December 2026.

Lessons learnt

There are several lessons learnt from the experience of implementing this activity. They include:

1. The importance of establishing data collection processes to monitor the impact of awareness raising activities on community awareness and behaviour. This is particularly important given the challenges associated with measuring achievement of outcomes for a complex and multifactorial issue like online child sexual abuse.
2. The importance of incorporating flexibility into activities to allow for them to adapt according to emerging needs. This was particularly useful as it afforded the necessary flexibility for the documentary to expand its focus during production to include a breaking news story related to an escalating crime type vector (sextortion).
3. Consideration of appropriate mechanisms to ensure the target cohort (e.g. the general public) has appropriate access to resources produced to raise community awareness of social issues such as child sexual abuse. This includes making best efforts to ensure that future documentaries are made available on platforms that can be accessed by the general public (e.g. ABC iView, YouTube).
4. The need to ensure adequate specificity of evaluation activities in contracts with external providers. The National Office reflected that it would have benefited from Blackfish undertaking specific evaluation activities (e.g., organise the establishment of an evaluation framework), however those tasks were not included in sufficient detail within the contract to provide certainty and ensure this was a required deliverable.

A.6. Case Study 6: Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 7: Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches

Activity Lead: National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

Background

First Nations people affected by child sexual abuse require specialised and culturally appropriate healing services. The Royal Commission (recommendation 9.2) recognised that healing approaches are a vital part of services for First Nations people and identified a service gap for culturally led healing services.³⁷

Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 7 (CAP 7, 'Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches') was designed to address Royal Commission Final Report (Volume 9 - Advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services) recommendation 9.2, which called for the funding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches as an ongoing, integral part of advocacy and support and therapeutic treatment service system response for victims and survivors. Under CAP 7, the NIAA - a government agency that works in partnership to enable the self-determination and aspirations of First Nations communities- is selected to lead the implementation of this activity. NIAA will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts to develop healing approaches that are co-designed, place-based and complement the specialist support service system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. The implementation of CAP 7 also supports the objectives of other national strategies including:

- Closing the Gap
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan (2021 -2031)
- National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2021
- National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

Lines of inquiry

This case study considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of CAP 7:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of CAP 7 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resource allocation to deliver CAP 7 and the fidelity of CAP 7's implementation.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which CAP 7 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes, and is contributing to the achievement of longer-term outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the implementation of CAP 7 to date with a view to support the implementation of future National Strategy activities.

Data sources

This case study was informed by the following data sources:

- Publicly available documentation such as the [National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports](#).
- Deloitte case study interview with NIAA regarding CAP 7.

Summary of insights

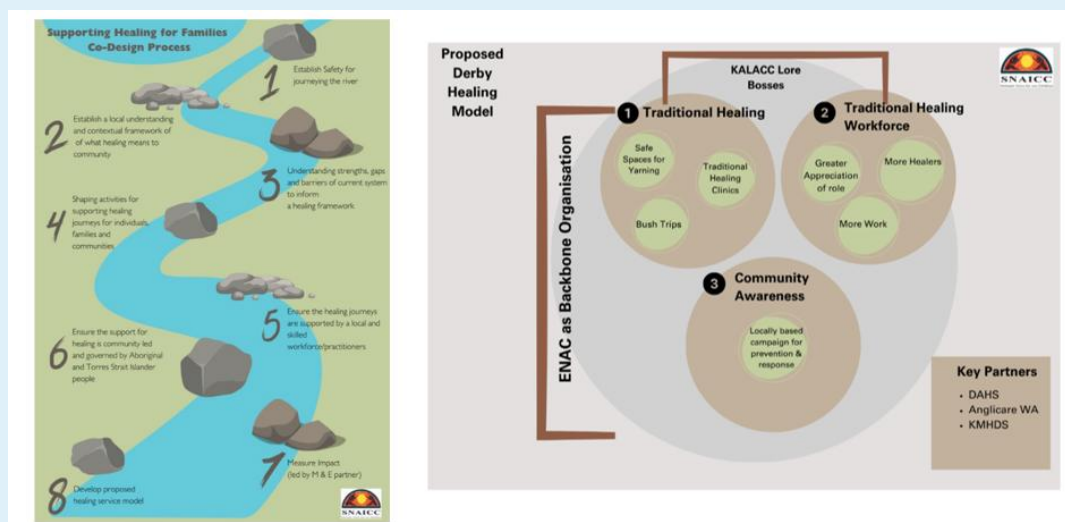
³⁷ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, (2017), Final Report 2017, Volume 9: Advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services, <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/advocacy-support-and-therapeutic-treatment-services>.

Design

Available evidence indicates that NIAA adopted appropriate initiative design processes that was evidence based, trauma informed and contextualised to target communities. The NIAA established an Indigenous Expert Group to provide advice and expertise to ensure the program is trauma-aware and healing-informed and centred on Indigenous values and priorities. The Indigenous Expert Group members include SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, The Healing Foundation, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia. The NIAA partnered closely with the Indigenous Expert Group to deliver the co-design framework, which will guide the design and implementation of the healing services (see Figure A.10 for an example of a proposed healing model). The healing initiatives are designed to provide culturally appropriate service system options for First Nations individuals and families impacted by child sexual abuse. In doing so, these initiatives will help address the absence of a trauma-aware and healing-informed culturally safe and accessible service systems for First Nations peoples.

Additionally, the NIAA, in partnership with the Indigenous Expert Group, undertook data analysis of suicide rates, domestic violence incidences, and infrastructure and service readiness of locations across Australia to identify the most appropriate service sites to deliver the healing service. Sites were selected based on criteria that considered each site's level of need and service readiness. At the end of this process, five sites were selected – Alice Springs (NT), Derby (WA), Inner Gippsland (VIC), Western Adelaide (SA), and Townsville (QLD).

Figure A.10: Proposed Derby Co-design process and healing model



Source: SNAICC National Voice for our Children.

The NIAA procured place-based co-design facilitators across the sites to design and deliver bespoke healing models tailored to the needs of each community. The NIAA also provides on-the-ground grant management support that works collaboratively with service providers to support the establishment and delivery of the service.

Efficiency

Note: Information on the level of funding and actual expenditure associated with this activity was not provided to Deloitte. As such, findings in this sub-section mainly focus on the key outputs delivered through this activity.

According to NIAA, the implementation of CAP 7 is behind schedule by approximately 1.5 years due to several challenges related to First Nations community engagement. As child sexual abuse is a sensitive and stigmatised topic, First Nations community members were initially reluctant and felt uncomfortable speaking on the issue. To resolve this, NIAA identified appropriate community-based organisations to partner with. NIAA also invested time and effort to build

trusting relationships with First Nations communities before community members were willing to participate in consultation.

As of June 2025, the NIAA has funded 5 community providers through a grant opportunity to deliver the healing service and model. The community providers are in the process of establishing the healing service. The healing services are expected to be operational by the end of 2025. However, NIAA noted that community providers continue to face challenges in recruiting staffing with the appropriate skills to manage the program.

Effectiveness

Given that the services are not operational yet, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of services across different locations. However, it is acknowledged that NIAA has established robust data collection and evaluation processes. This includes the procurement of a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning partner during the initiative design stage to establish evaluation processes (e.g. the development of a program logic model, data collection mechanisms).

Recommendations

The NIAA emphasised the importance of allowing for sufficient time to meaningfully engage First Nations communities. Future initiatives should allocate adequate time and resources to build trust and ensure consultation with First Nations communities is completed in an inclusive and participatory manner.

NIAA also noted there is an opportunity for improved coordination with other ongoing work across strategies, frameworks and plans, to leverage existing resources, funding and learnings. This is especially important due to the intersectional nature of healing approaches and to mitigate over-consultation and stakeholder consultation fatigue.

Lessons learnt

The key lessons learnt from the implementation of this activity include:

1. Ensuring the co-design approach to healing is community-led and strengths-based, ensuring healing models reflect the priorities and needs of First Nations peoples and communities. The co-design approach should consider mechanisms to:
 - prioritise the views and needs of local First Nations peoples and communities
 - ensure that the processes and outcomes are culturally appropriate and safe and meet local community priorities
 - recognise that healing is holistic and encompasses individuals, their families and communities across generations.
2. The selection of appropriate community-based providers is critical in the design and rollout of place-based services as these providers would likely have existing relationships with local communities. This would reduce the time and effort required to build partnerships and trust with local First Nations communities. Additionally, community-based providers have a nuanced understanding of the needs of individual communities.
3. An evidence-based approach in identifying appropriate sites is important as it ensures that the services are delivered to target communities with the most significant unmet need for supports. In this instance, NIAA leveraged both secondary data sources and community perspectives to identify 5 appropriate locations across Australia.
4. The value of establishing evaluation processes during the activity design phase. This would enable the agency to collect relevant data and undertake robust evaluation processes in the future on the effectiveness of the service.

A.7. 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)

Activity Lead: Attorney-General's Department

Background

Exposure to harm during childhood, including child sexual abuse, can cause negative long-term physical and mental wellbeing outcomes for the child. The impact of trauma can be mitigated through early intervention supporting healthier developmental outcomes. The Royal Commission identified a lack of age-appropriate services to support victims and survivors and recommended that an accessible service tailored to children and young people be set up to provide legal advice and information on child sexual abuse (recommendation 9.4).³⁸ Specifically, recommendation 9.4 called for the establishment and funding of a legal advice and referral service for victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. Support should include advice, referrals to other legal services for representation and general assistance for people to navigate the legal service system. The service should be trauma-informed, and be collaborative, available, accessible, acceptable and high quality.³⁹

Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 9 (CAP 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)') was designed to address recommendation 9.4 of the Royal Commission Final Report (Volume 9 - Advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services). Royal Commission recommendation 9.4 states that the Australian government should establish and fund a legal advice and referral service for victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

The Enhance and Expand Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (the Program) was established to implement CAP 9. The Program provides \$16 million in Australian Government funding to the service providers operating under the Program.

Youth Law Australia (YLA) was engaged by the Attorney-General's Department (the Department) to deliver the activities under CAP 9. YLA is a national community legal centre that provides free, technology-enabled legal services to children and young people (anyone under the age of 25). YLA has significant reach, operating in eight different jurisdictions across Australia. Children, young people and their supporters can access most of YLA's services via e-mail, web form, live chat, online chat, and phone.

In December 2021, YLA launched the Harm Practice under CAP 9 – an anonymous online chat service, to connect young people at risk of harm or who have experienced harm with legal assistance in real time. The service was fully operational by May 2022. In their annual report, YLA reported that 20% of their clients were at risk of harm, and that the most common matters in the Harm Practice included age of consent, sexual assault, domestic and family violence, and bullying.⁴⁰

Based on the designed program logic model as part of the 2023 Urbis evaluation, the key outcomes of the online chat service are:⁴¹

- providing legal information and advice available online to children and youth experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, harm, including sexual abuse
- ensuring that children and youth can safely and discreetly access legal information and advice through a platform they are comfortable with and can easily access

³⁸ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, (2017), Final Report, https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Youth Law Australia (YLA), (2022), Annual Report 2021 – 22, <https://yla.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Annual-Report-2021-22FY.pdf>.

⁴¹ Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by the Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

- ensuring that children and youth experiencing or at risk of harm are empowered and supported through access to trauma-informed and culturally-sensitive legal assistance
- providing support for children and youth at risk of harm to avoid or address harm or sexual abuse, thereby reducing the instances of, or preventing, child harm and child sexual abuse
- ensuring that children and young people's views, experiences and participation inform the tailoring and support offered by the service, and the services provided reflect their needs

Lines of enquiry

This case study considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of CAP 9:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of CAP 9 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resources used to deliver CAP 9 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of CAP 9.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which CAP 9 has fulfilled its intended short-term outcomes and is contributing to the achievement of medium-term outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on the lessons learnt from the implementation of CAP 9 to date to inform the design and implementation of future National Strategy activities.

Data sources

The data sources for this case study were:

- Publicly available documentation such as the YLA Annual Report, and the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports
- Deloitte case study interview with the Department representatives responsible for delivering CAP 9
- Additional governance, monitoring and evaluation documents provided by the Department, including the 2023 Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Summary of insights

Design

YLA began developing the chat service in July 2021. As part of the design process, YLA conducted market research on other chat services in October 2021 to identify current gaps in the market.⁴² Research identified that existing services only provided guided pathways or require long wait times. YLA additionally consulted with external organisations, such as Kids Helpline and Legal Aid, to assist with the design and implementation of their service. As such, the distinctive feature of YLA's online chat service compared with other support services is that clients can connect with a staff member and receive real time information for their issue.

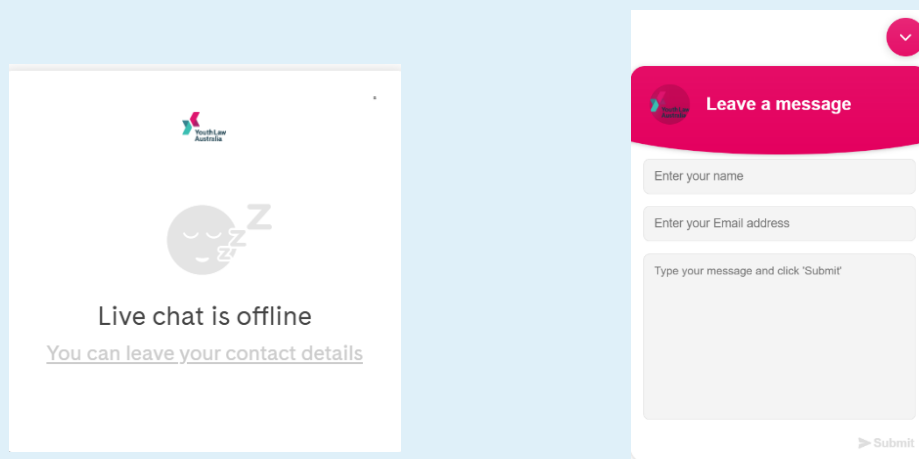
Efficiency

Note: Information on the level of funding and actual expenditure associated with this activity was not provided to Deloitte. As such, findings in this sub-section mainly focus on the key outputs delivered through this activity.

⁴²Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

The live chat is available between 10am and 4pm AEST Monday to Friday and will pop up when a client accesses certain website pages. Where the live chat is unavailable, a client may either enter their question and leave their contact details (offline chat, outside of chat hours) or is responded to by a bot and fills in contact details (during chat hours but no staff are available). The client then receives follow-up assistance from YLA. Clients can also click on 'Get help now' to access a webform (see Figure A.11).

Figure A.11: Examples of offline chat box



Source: YLA.

Availability and accessibility

Resourcing challenges limit YLA's ability to service all children and young people who access their service. In June 2023, YLA had 8.75 FTE staff assigned to the chat service, as well as assistance from a volunteer workforce.⁴³ YLA have reported that the current funding structure does not support staff expansion and the service is currently operating beyond capacity.⁴⁴

As a result of staff capacity constraints, YLA's live chat service is intermittently unavailable, requiring clients to use offline chat and to wait for further contact. Staff may also refer clients to other legal services in order to manage their current workload. YLA have also ceased receiving referrals from other service providers, such as the Workplace Advisory Service.⁴⁵

The Department indicated that YLA refers approximately 1,500 children and young people to other legal services each year due to resourcing constraints. YLA also reported that in 2022-23, 462 clients were unable to access staff through live chat due to staff capacity constraints, and there were 584 attempts to contact outside of office hours (via the offline chat).⁴⁶ There have also been concerns about the accessibility of the service to children and young people. The Activity Lead noted that the online chat service currently operates during school hours, and schoolchildren may be unable to access the live chat feature during staffed hours. Additionally, the online chat service may not be accessible to children and young people in juvenile justice or out-of-home care.

Effectiveness

⁴³

Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

⁴⁴ Youth Law Australia (YLA), (2023), Submission to the NLAP Review, <https://yla.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/YLA-NLAP-Final-Submission-20231027.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Attorney-General's Department, (2024), Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership, <https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/independent-review-national-legal-assistance-partnership-2020-25>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Based on an independent evaluation, the online chat service has improved access to legal assistance for children and young people, with a steady number of clients using the platform to seek help since its inception. YLA assisted more than 2,800 clients through its online chat service, from December 2021 to January 2025. Data from YLA on client demographics additionally shows that the service has been used by priority population cohorts. This is evidenced by the following usage statistics:⁴⁷

- 42% of YLA clients are at risk of harm
- 2.4% are people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 3.1% of users are people with a disability
- 4.1% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The online chat service has broadly received positive feedback from clients, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the implementation of the service. In its 2021-22 annual report, YLA reported that all clients who provided feedback at the close of their matter found the assistance useful or very useful, and found response times to be quick enough.⁴⁸ All clients reported that they were treated well or very well, and found it easy to use the chat service. While this feedback was from 2021-22, consultation with the Department in 2025 indicated that the online chat service continued to receive positive feedback. However, a potential limitation of measuring outcomes is that clients are not re-interviewed at the conclusion of their service provision to support their long-term welfare and mitigate risk of re-traumatisation.⁴⁹

YLA stakeholders have anecdotally reported that the chat service is effective in creating a safe and trusted environment for children and young people that may otherwise face barriers to report harm.⁵⁰ When clients initially access the service, staff highlight the confidentiality of the service and emphasise that any steps taken after the disclosure would be entirely the client's choice. Staff find that clients often engage with the chat service multiple times before feeling safe and comfortable to progress their case and note that in the absence of the chat service, a young person would likely take much longer to disclose harm.

To enable the delivery of high-quality supports, the online chat service also aimed to improve staff capacity in delivering rights-based, trauma-informed and culturally safe services. There is evidence that this outcome has been achieved. YLA developed a trauma-informed framework centred around five principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Feedback from YLA stakeholders indicates that they are actively working towards achieving this outcome. Examples of YLA resources and strengths which help ensure a safe and empowering chat service include:

- all staff are required to complete formal trauma-informed training, and have access to a professional, external debriefer and the Employee Assistance Program as a part of self-care protocols
- staff are required to undertake cultural safety training to help navigate the intersection between trauma-informed and culturally-safe principles⁵¹
- YLA staff specialise in youth communication, and are able to respond and adapt to client preferences
- YLA additionally partners with other stakeholders, such as Headspace's First Nations program, to address the lack of internal experience related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

⁴⁷ Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

⁴⁸ YLA, (2022), Annual Report 2021 – 22, <https://yla.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Annual-Report-2021-22FY.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Urbis, (2023), Evaluation of the Enhancement and Expansion of Legal Assistance Services for Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse (report commissioned by Attorney-General's Department, 20 December 2023).

Furthermore the independent evaluation found some evidence that the service design and delivery align with the principles.⁵² For example, the safety of the client is promoted through the accessibility of the platform, and the anonymity of the chat service. The live chat service does not require identifiable information from clients to begin using it. YLA has observed that the majority of clients choose to remain anonymous and are able to receive the legal information and referrals they require. However, clients must provide identifying details if they would like to receive specific legal advice or if live chat is unavailable, and they wish to receive follow-up assistance.

However, it was not possible to assess the achievement of a number of longer-term outcomes due to a lack of longitudinal data. Examples of outcomes in this category include:

- children and young people have increased access to justice
- children and young people experience improved life outcomes
- children and young people have increased confidence and ability to navigate the legal system
- staff with the right expertise are retained in the longer term.

Recommendations

The independent evaluation outlined 4 key recommendations for the Department to strengthen the YLA service⁵³:

- Providing continued funding for YLA. The online services address a clear gap by providing discreet, timely and specialised legal assistance to children and young people who might otherwise be unable to access help.
- Consider expanding service delivery to include additional hours. There is value for the Australian Government to consider extending the funding to ensure there are enough resources for out-of-school hours. This would help improve the accessibility of this service.
- Consider expanding YLA's service scope to include enquiries related to harm received by phone. A small proportion of all intakes met harm classification were via phone. As phone intake on matters related to harm is out of scope, there is value for the Australian Government to expand the service to include all enquiries relating to harm, regardless of entry point.
- Consider undertaking an internal service review to ensure the service is culturally safe. The low rates of reported access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and limited evidence on culturally safe service delivery may warrant a closer investigation of the service with this lens.

Lessons learnt

There have been several lessons learned from implementing CAP 9. They include:

1. The importance of ensuring that services are accessible for the target cohort. The service would benefit from extended operating hours and more staff to ensure that clients are receiving assistance in a timely manner. Expanding the operating hours of the online chat service may ensure that quality supports are provided to all children and young people who access this service, including those who access it after hours. This is important as access to personalised legal supports will reduce barriers for clients that may potentially be disclosing harm.
2. The importance of ongoing data collection and reporting to strengthen the evidence base (e.g. collection of longitudinal data) and enable robust assessments on the contribution of the chat service towards longer term outcomes.
3. The benefits of sustainable, continued funding to assist with managing demand. YLA has reported that many of the lessons learnt are difficult to action without additional funding for staffing and operational resources to scale services.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

A.8. Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 21: strengthen law and justice frameworks in the Indo-Pacific Region

Activity Lead: National Office for Child Safety

Background

The prevalence of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is reported to have increased significantly in recent years. While it is difficult to specify the exact nature and extent of the demand for CSAM,⁵⁴ there are known 'hot spots' of CSAM production particularly in South-East Asia.⁵⁵ Survey data of Pacific countries indicate that between 4% and 37% of children had experienced child sexual abuse.⁵⁶ There is a need to strengthen the Pacific and South-East Asian law and justice frameworks for combatting child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) in the region. In Australia, the *Criminal Code Act 1995* criminalises child sexual abuse and dealings with child abuse material committed via carriage services, postal services, and by Australian citizens and residents while overseas.⁵⁷

Commonwealth Action Plan Activity 21 (CAP 21, 'strengthen law and justice frameworks in the Indo-Pacific and South-East Asia regions') was designed to leverage the knowledge and efforts of existing subject matter stakeholders to build capacity among regional partners through three main forms of assistance:

- Capacity building (i.e. training and information sharing);
- Technical and peer-to-peer assistance (i.e. review policies and legislation); and
- Partnerships (i.e. funding and collaborating with international organisations and experts).

The National Office within the Attorney-General's Department (the National Office) delivers CAP 21.

Lines of inquiry

This case study considered the following key lines of inquiry in analysing the progress of CAP 21:

- **Design of activities:** the degree to which the design of CAP 21 was appropriate to support the achievement of its intended outcomes.
- **Efficiency:** identifying the efficiency of resources used to deliver CAP 21 and the fidelity of implementation to the design of CAP 21.
- **Effectiveness:** the degree to which CAP 21 has fulfilled its intended intermediate objectives, and is contributing to the achievement of medium-term outcomes and impacts.
- **Lessons learnt:** reflections on lessons learnt from the implementation of CAP 21 to inform the design and implementation of future National Strategy activities.

Data sources

This case study was informed by the following data sources:

- Publicly available documentation such as the information on the National Office website regarding the activities undertaken in support of CAP 21, and the National Strategy First and Second Annual Reports.
- Deloitte case study interview with the National Office on CAP 21.
- Additional monitoring and evaluation documents provided by the National Office.

⁵⁴ Brown, R (2023), 'Prevalence of viewing online child sexual abuse material among Australian adults', *Australian Institute of Criminology*, 2023: 1-17.

⁵⁵ Attorney-General's Department, (2024), *Pacific Environmental Scan Report | 2024*, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/pacific-environmental-scan-report-2024>, accessed 15 June 2025.

⁵⁶ Attorney-General's Department, (2024), *Pacific Environmental Scan Report | 2024*, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/pacific-environmental-scan-report-2024>, accessed 15 June 2025.

⁵⁷ Department of Home Affairs, (2025), *Child Sexual Abuse*, <<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/access-and-accountability/our-commitments/child-safeguarding/child-sexual-abuse>>, accessed 14 July 2025.

Summary of insights

Design

CAP 21 was delivered through the Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program (IPCPP), a 'capacity-building program that seeks to support Indo-Pacific partners with regional policy, legislative and operational responses to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse'.⁵⁸ IPCPP was established in 2021 to implement CAP 21.

The objective of IPCPP aligns with identified child sexual abuse response issues in the Indo-Pacific, including:

- Legislative gaps for some types of offending.
 - Limited law enforcement capacity and capabilities to investigate online crimes.⁵⁹
- IPCPP's design was informed by the design of the then-sunsetting Indo-Pacific Justice and Security Program (IP-JuSP). The Department developed IP-JuSP in 2017-18 to strengthen legal systems and support effective governance and stability in the Indo-Pacific region more broadly, through key legal issues including people-smuggling, counter-terrorism, and human trafficking. Design elements informed by the IP-JuSP included:

- Early consultation with governments and non-government actors in the region to ascertain the relevant criminal and legal system issues.
- Flexibility of capacity-building activities, allowing for diverse activities tailored to the needs of the region.

Efficiency

Through the program, the National Office has delivered and facilitated a broad range of bilateral and multilateral activities to support enhancing capacity and collaboration on law and justice issues in the Indo-Pacific region. Where appropriate, the National Office worked with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), including the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as non-government and not-for-profit organisations with appropriate subject matter expertise to deliver activities. The activities have primarily been delivered in-person in the country of focus, to support effective tailored peer-to-peer technical assistance and to manage sensitivities regarding the activities' content.

A selection of key capacity building activities conducted in the region are included in Figure A.12.

⁵⁸ National Office for Child Safety, (2021), First Commonwealth Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2024, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/first-commonwealth-action-plan-prevent-and-respond-child-sexual-abuse-2021-2024>.

⁵⁹ Attorney-General's Department, (2024), Pacific Environmental Scan Report | 2024, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/pacific-environmental-scan-report-2024>.

Figure A.12: Key capacity-building activities undertaken as part of CAP 21



Source: National Office for Child Safety.

The program includes a mix of one-off activities as well as a number of ongoing activities to support capacity-building in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, the National Office partnered with the International Justice Mission (IJM) Philippines to deliver a series of workshops to legislators on child protective strategies in child sexual abuse cases and workshops to judges and trainers from the Philippine Judicial Academy on child protective strategies during online child sexual exploitation and abuse trials.

IPCPP has prioritised harnessing relationships with Australian government agencies, Indo-Pacific partners, and other international partners active in the Indo-Pacific to ensure collaboration as well as deconfliction of efforts. Examples of these stakeholders are captured in Figure A.13.

Figure A.13: Categories of partnerships in focus of IPCPP's relationship building activities



Source: National Office for Child Safety.

Several contextual factors impacted delivery of IPCPP. Enabling activities included in-person attendance at key fora or in-person engagement with recipient countries, noting the often-sensitive nature of working with foreign governments

on addressing child sexual exploitation and abuse due to respective cultural and societal norms and taboos. While the allocation of resources was less of an issue in the early years of the program due to travel limitations associated with COVID-19, this has had a more notable impact in the later years of the program. In addition to COVID-19, machinery of government changes (2022) that resulted in the activity lead transferring from the Department of Home Affairs to the Attorney-General's Department initially disrupted core activity development and implementation.⁶⁰

Further resource allocation disruptions to the program occurred in its third year, resulting in a scaling back of the number and breadth of activities delivered in that financial year. However, funding was able to be reallocated to CAP 21 outside of its original funding envelope.

The program was initially envisioned to focus on peer-to-peer delivery by the officers who administered the program. While that has remained a focus of the activities, there has been a strong demand for support by Indo-Pacific countries which has outpaced the annual allocation of funding for activities. It is challenging to accurately estimate the total actual expenditure of activities under the original four year span of the program due to the reduced allocation of funding in some years, the reallocation of funding in later years and the impacts from the machinery of government change in 2022, and noting that some activities required expertise and may not have incurred an actual expense (particularly during the years heavily affected by COVID-19 when many activities were delivered in a virtual format only).

CAP 21 activities have largely been undertaken through international rather than domestic procurements. There are a limited number of reputable providers with appropriate expertise (including an understanding of local contexts in respective Indo-Pacific countries) or capabilities (including in-country presence where relevant) to support delivery of activities (Division 2, paragraph 10.3.d of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules). CAP 21 activities are also exempt from Official Development Assistance requirements. For these reasons, CAP 21 procurement and reporting activities impose significantly less administrative and technical burden to complete compared to other comparable programs. Activity Leads reflected that this allows for greater flexibility and adaptability making the program more responsive to the emerging and shifting needs of recipient countries. Due to the often non-standard nature of the international procurements that needed to be undertaken to deliver activities, procurement approaches fit for the purpose of each individual activity requiring bespoke advice to ensure they align with government procurement and expenditure frameworks.

Effectiveness

The National Office developed a program logic for CAP 21 which identifies the link between inputs and activities to intermediate outcomes. The three intermediate outcomes in the program logic are:

- Improved capacity to develop policy and laws informed by international standards and best practice.
- Increased regional advocacy for better practice and increased regional information sharing.
- Increased capacity to implement legislation effectively.⁶¹

Due to the international nature of CAP 21, there are several legal and institutional factors which inform the extent to which these outcomes can be achieved, including varying:

- Systems of government
- Judicial systems
- Capacity and capability of law enforcement agencies.

While it is not possible to directly attribute the achievement of these outcomes to CAP 21 specifically, program officers provided several examples of activities that had positively contributed to a recipient's ability to address online child sexual exploitation and abuse. These include:

⁶⁰ National Office for Child Safety, (2024), Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program | Program Review July 2024.

⁶¹ National Office for Child Safety, (n.d.), Indo-Pacific Child Protection Program (IPCPP) Program Logic.

- **Supporting Indo-Pacific law enforcement agencies to interpret reports of child abuse and exploitation from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC, based in the United States).** Following training and support activities delivered to law enforcement agencies on ways to respond to NCMEC's reports, the National Office reported instances of operations being delivered that led to children being removed from harm.
- **Supporting Indo-Pacific justice and law enforcement officials to adopt good practices in the prosecution of online child sexual exploitation and abuse cases** including collecting, understanding, preparing and presenting digital evidence in courts.
- **Supporting legislative reform in the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen responses to child sexual abuse.** One Indo-Pacific country specifically included child grooming behaviour as a criminal offence, which in turn provided its law enforcement agency with the explicit authority to investigate and prosecute these cases where it previously did not exist.
- **Strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders.** Outreach activities as part of the IPCPP increased regional stakeholders' awareness of the National Office and its expertise. As a result, there were anecdotal instances of these stakeholders approaching the National Office to seek support on improving their law enforcement agencies' capacity and capability to respond to child sexual abuse, and policy actions to address child sexual abuse.

Recommendations

IPCPP was initially established as a four-year program (FY 21/22-24/25) and has since been extended (with commensurate funding for one additional financial year). It is currently set to terminate at the end of FY 25/26. The National Office recommended that IPCPP be continued as a measure under 2AP to enable it to build on successes under 1AP and undertake longer term activities using a phased approach and harnessing relationships with relevant government stakeholders and NGOs established under the first four years of the program. This would allow IPCPP to design and deliver activities more strategically; leverage increased interest in the region to improve capacity to address CSEA (particularly amongst countries where sustained longer-term approaches are required to succeed); and harness greater monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess their effectiveness.

Future opportunities exist to improve the funding arrangements for CAP 21 by shifting from receiving only departmental funding and instead seeking a mix of departmental and administered funding. This would allow for greater flexibility in the types of mechanisms that could then be used to support capacity building activities. Additionally, the scope of IPCPP may be widened to enable it to deliver activities that address child sexual exploitation and abuse more broadly such as the design and delivery of victim-centric approaches (which prioritise the needs and wellbeing of victims and survivors) and prevention activities.

Lessons learnt

There are several lessons learnt from the experience of implementing this activity. They include:

1. The importance of embedding flexibility in the design of activities. The National Office reflected that the broad description of CAP 21 allowed it to tailor delivery of activities to the needs of regional partners.
2. The benefit of imposing flexible oversight arrangements for delivery activities. Proportionate reporting requirements on the allocation of CAP 21's funding envelope was considered imperative to ensuring the National Office's resources were primarily geared towards delivering core activities (while still meeting reporting and governance obligations and expectations).
3. The need to undertake preliminary relationship-building activities with regional partners prior to delivering capacity-building activities. This was considered valuable as it allowed the National Office to appreciate the specific influences on, and priority areas for, each individual country while also developing trust through open communication.

Limitation of our work

General use restriction

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