



The National Office for Child Safety

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Child Sexual Abuse

- **1.4 million Australian** adults have experienced child sexual abuse before the age of 15.
- A lifetime prevalence rate of **1 in 10 women** and **1 in 20 men**.
- In 2017, almost **1 in 3 sexual assaults** reported to the police were **child victims aged 0 to 14 years**.
- In 2018, the AFP received **17,905 reports of online child exploitation materials**
 - Each report could contain **hundreds and thousands** of images and videos.



Royal Commission

- Established in 2013.
- Five year inquiry, with over **8,000 private sessions, 57 public hearings** and over **1000 written accounts**.
- Handed down its final report in December 2017.
- **409** recommendations.
- **33** recommendations are the responsibility of the National Office for Child Safety.



National Office for Child Safety

- The National Office for Child Safety was **established 1 July 2018**.
- The National Office is located within the **Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet** and reports to the Prime Minister who is assisted by Assistant Minister, the Hon Ben Morton MP.
- The National Office for Child Safety has a national leadership role, working across governments and sectors, in the development and implementation of policies and strategies to **enhance children's safety and reduce future harm to children**.



Key Initiatives and Priorities

- Leading national coordination and implementation of the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**.
- Supporting the implementation of the **Commonwealth Child Safe Framework** to ensure the safety of children in Commonwealth care.
- Overseeing the design and implementation of a **National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse**, focusing on awareness raising and education.
- Partnering with researchers to **improve measures and understanding of the prevalence of child sexual abuse and child maltreatment in Australia**.



Key Initiatives and Priorities

- Supporting collaboration across jurisdictions to **identify and remove barriers to the sharing of information** relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Facilitating **public reporting** by non-government institutions and peak bodies involved in child-related work to report on their progress in implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations.
- Assisting with the establishment of a **national centre for the prevention of child sexual abuse**.
- Working with the Department of Social Services to develop a Post 2020 **National Framework for Children's Safety**.



National Principles

- Incorporate the **child safe standards** recommended by the Royal Commission (recommendations 6.4 - 6.6).
- Provide a **nationally consistent approach** to cultivating organisational cultures and practices that foster child safety and wellbeing.
- Endorsed by the **Council of Australian Governments** in February 2019.
- State and territory governments are responsible for implementing the National Principles within their jurisdictions and for establishing monitoring and oversight bodies.



National Principles Resources

- Introductory Self-Assessment Tool for Organisations
- Guide for Parents and Carers
- Example Code of Conduct
- Charter of Commitment
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template
- Checklist for Online Safety
- 11 Online Training Modules
- Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People



Child Safe Cultures

- Many institutions did not have a culture of child safety – where the best interests of children were a priority and were championed by leaders.
- A child safe organisation is one that **creates a culture, adopts strategies, and takes action** to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.
- **National Principle 1:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.



Leadership

- Leaders should maintain a culture where **concerns are treated seriously and acted on**, and the **reporting** of instances of abuse **is not obstructed or prevented**.
- Leaders should promote a positive child safe culture by **conveying the values, beliefs and practices** that they adhere to.



Children's Rights

- **Principle 2:** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- **Encourage** children and young people to have a part in building culture.
- **Respect** children and young people's background and culture.
- **Principle 4:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.



Complaint Handling

- The Royal Commission identified **serious flaws** in how some institutions responded to complaints of child sexual abuse.
- **National Principle 6:** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- Supporting resource – **Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people.**
- Developed by the Office of the NSW Ombudsman.



Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people

- Provides practical advice to organisations about complaint handling systems that prioritise child safety and promote the rights of children and young people.
- Consultation process involved children's commissioners, guardians and advocates and ombudsman offices from around Australia.
- Incorporates learnings from Volume 7 of the Royal Commission Final Report.
- Available at <https://pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/domestic-policy/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people>.





Challenges to changing culture

- Reptile brain
 - Fight, flight or fright
- Attachment





- It's not your fault
- I believe you
- You are courageous
- I will support you





Thank you and questions

National Office for Child Safety

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