

NCCA Statement

4 July 2025

NCCA Calls for urgent implementation of national Working with Children Check system

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) is supporting the call of Federal Education Minister, Jason Clare, for the urgent implementation of a robust national Working with Children Check system for all sectors engaged with children and young people.

A national Working with Children Checks system was a key recommendation of the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in December 2017.

“We have been calling for a national Working with Children Check system to strengthen child safety standards and greater protect children and young people in all activities in which they are engaged across the country”, says NCCA General Secretary, Elizabeth Stone.

“The present State and Territory-based Working with Children Check system has lacked national consistency in key areas relating to mobility of workers and employees between states and territories and lacked national consistency with exchange of data between jurisdictions on criminal and non-criminal offending history”, Stone points out.

“Our national church agencies run schools and early childhood education centres, health care, hospitals, disability and community services and other services of Christian ministry. So, it is critically important to us that our children and vulnerable people are safe and protected by a safeguarding system that includes nationally Working with Children Checks, careful recruitment, clear standards of behaviour, workplace and professional supervision and responsive and effective complaints and investigation processes.” said General Secretary Stone.

“We also note that the need for a national Working with Vulnerable People Check system is also a recommendation of both the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

“We cannot wait any longer when children and vulnerable people are at risk. We also support the calls for a national registration system for children’s service workers and a greater investment in training and supervision for these workers.”

National churches have had to navigate the challenges associated with the absence of a national Working With Children Check system with their own systems. One example is the Australian Catholic Ministry Register or ACMR which is a system used by the Australian Catholic Church.

Since the Australian Government with the agreement of State and Territory Governments established the [National Office for Child Safety](#) in 2018, the NCCA has been represented on the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group by the General Secretary, Elizabeth Stone. This national group meets three times a year and a standing item on the meeting agenda is an update from the National Office for Child Safety on the actions being taken with States and Territories towards the goal of achieving a harmonized and nationally consistent Working with Children Check system. “It has taken too long as recent and shocking incidents of alleged abuse of children in childcare centres in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria have shown,” says Stone.

Australia’s churches are committed to creating and maintaining spaces that are safe and welcoming for all people. Since the Royal Commission ended in 2017, leaders, pastors, employees and volunteers

have worked diligently to develop, improve, and implement safeguarding training and strategies within churches that meet the Government's national child safety standards and State and Territory regulations. "Much progress has been made and more lies ahead for us to do" says General Secretary Stone.

"At this time we pray for all people affected by child sexual abuse and their families and communities. *May the Lord bless you and keep you and may the Grace of the Lord be upon you and give you peace. (cf Numbers 6:24-26)*" says the NCCA General Secretary.

END

Contact: NCCA Secretariat | 02 9299 2215 | secretariat@ncca.org.au

If you are or anyone you know is affected by the issues discussed in this NCCA Statement, please call:

Police – phone 000 if you're worried about your safety or a child's safety at any time.

[13YARN](#)

13YARN is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line offering confidential yarning with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellor. Phone **139 276**, 7 days, 24 hours.

[Beyond Blue](#)

Beyond Blue has an online youth mental health service. It has online chat, forums and phone counselling. Phone **1300 224 636**, 7 days, 24 hours.

[Blue Knot](#)

This is a support service for adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, parents, partners, family and friends. Phone **1300 657 380**, 7 days, 9 am-5 pm.

[Kids Helpline](#)

Kids Helpline is a free, confidential counselling service for young people aged 5-25 years. You can contact Kids Helpline by phoning **1800 551 800**, 7 days, 24 hours. You can also use the [Kids Helpline webchat counselling service](#).

Kids Helpline also runs [My Circle](#). This is a confidential social media platform where young people aged 12-25 years can talk to each other, supported by clinical moderators.

[Lifeline](#)

Lifeline is a crisis support and suicide prevention service for people experiencing emotional distress. It offers counselling by phone, online chat and text message. Phone **131 114**, 7 days, 24 hours.

[National Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Counselling Service](#)

1800RESPECT is a counselling, information and referral service for anyone who has been affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse. Phone **1800RESPECT or 1800 737 732**, 7 days, 24 hours.

[Full Stop Australia](#)

Full Stop Australia is a support, advocacy and education service. It offers counselling to anyone who has been affected by sexual, domestic or family violence. Phone **1800 385 578**, 7 days, 24 hours.

We thank the [Raising Children Network](#), the Australian parenting website, for preparing the above [list of child sexual abuse helplines and services](#) for kids and families.