

# Consultation report on the Draft Five-Year Strategy

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## The National Centre reached out for feedback to finalise its Five-Year Strategy

A symbol of hope and an essential vehicle for action for many victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, the National Centre was born out of critical recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Its existence recognises decades of tireless advocacy for victims and survivors.

To deliver on its goals, the National Centre developed a Strategy to guide its action over the coming five-year period. As part of this process, it reached out to stakeholders to seek their feedback on the Strategy and how it can be improved.

This document summarises what we have heard and how we have responded to it.

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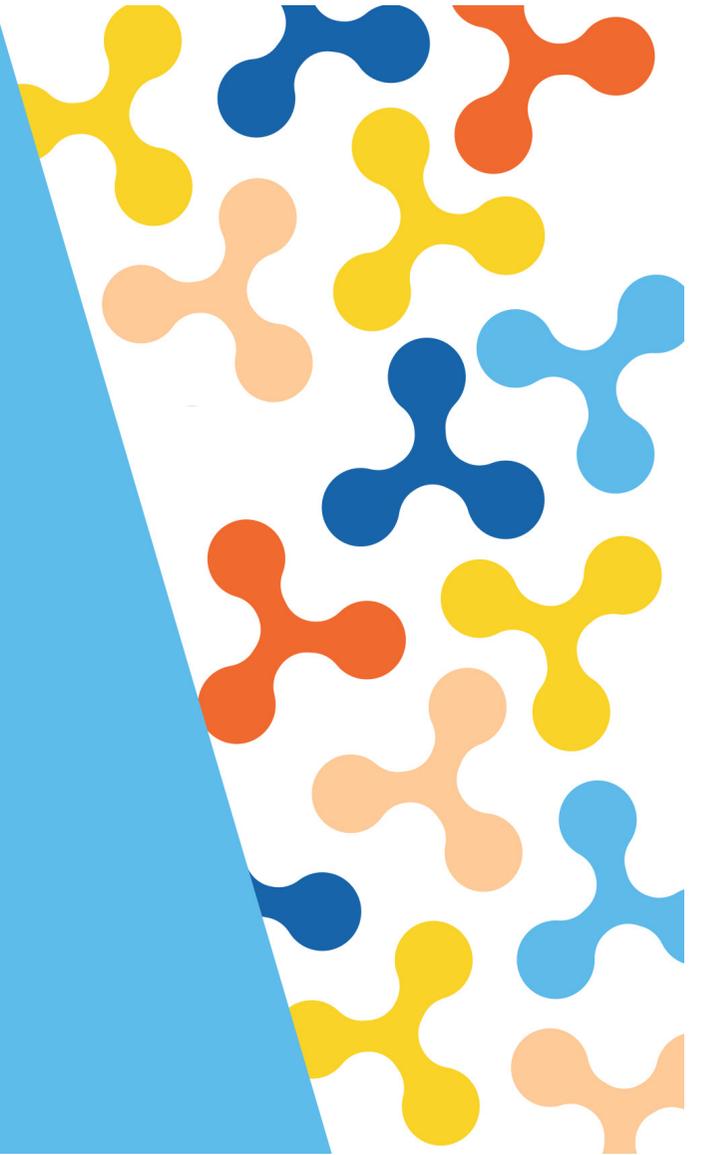
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# Summary of key takeaways from feedback



## Themes and insights from feedback

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**Priority cohorts and partnerships** – Stakeholders are advocating for greater prioritisation of a range of cohorts and partnerships.



**Defining roles, responsibilities and relationships** – Stakeholders are excited to partner with the National Centre and want clarity on what its roles and responsibilities are.



**Integrating stakeholder voices** – Stakeholders are eager to share their suggestions for service improvement and advocacy.



**Prevention and perpetrator focus** – Stakeholders think the Strategy could better address prevention and perpetrators.



**Gendered lens** – Stakeholders want the Strategy to foreground the gendered nature of child sexual abuse and its intersection with domestic and family violence.



**Other insights** – Stakeholders have a range of other feedback, e.g., online focus, language suggestions, expand construct of harmful sexual behaviour, judicial system, schools partnerships.

## Our response

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**The National Centre has undertaken a significant process** to ensure that stakeholder feedback was considered and, where possible, integrated into the Strategy and future actions and programs:

Phase 1

Collated and distilled feedback into key themes and insights

Phase 2

Undertook internal consultation to settle key strategic and organisational decisions

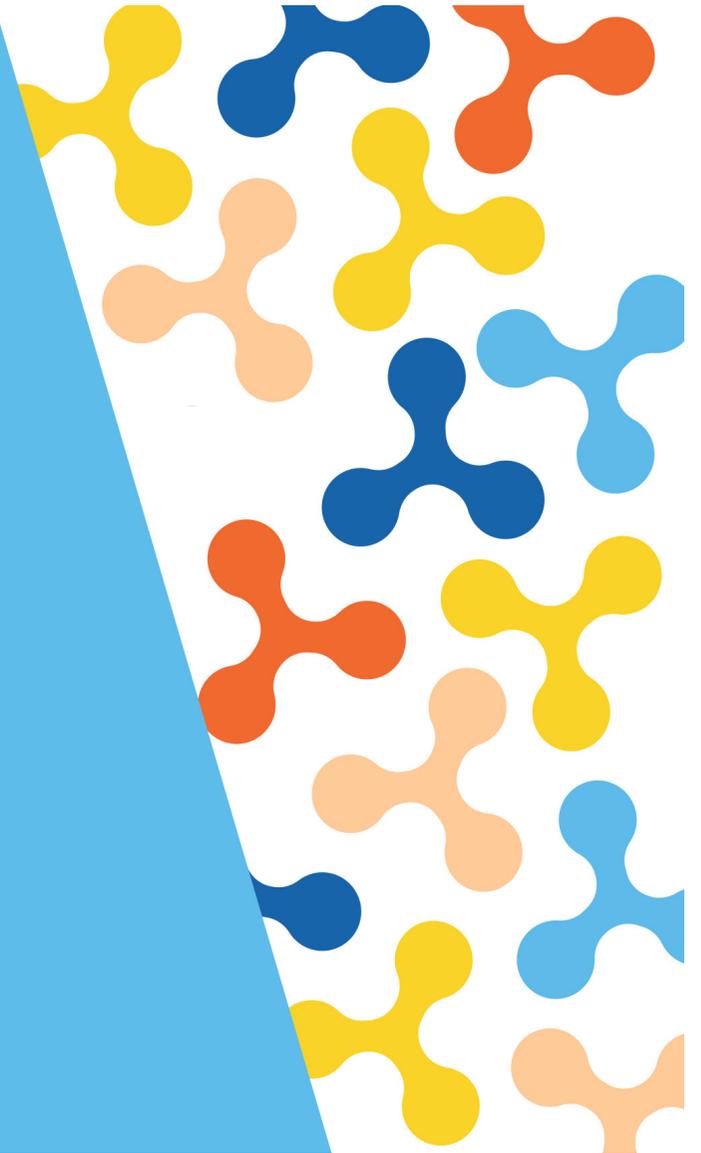
Phase 3

Refined the Strategy to reflect stakeholder feedback

Phase 4

Pivoted to implementation of the Strategy through the National Centre's future actions

# Themes and insights from stakeholder feedback





Stakeholders were extremely positive about the Strategy, sending strong signals that the National Centre is on the right track

**90%+**

felt each challenge was very or extremely important

**87%**

support the directions set out in the draft Strategy

**72%**

think the Strategy will improve support for victims and survivors

Source: National Centre Five Year Strategy Survey

## Theme 1: Priority cohorts and partnerships

### **Different stakeholders have different core areas of concern and are advocating strongly for their inclusion as priority cohorts, areas and partnerships**

The National Centre received a large body of feedback, with stakeholders highlighting particular cohorts and partnerships they believe the National Centre should prioritise.

In relation to cohorts, stakeholders variously suggested that the Strategy should focus on different priority groups that face intersecting challenges, including:

- First Nations peoples
- LGBTQIA+ people
- people with disability.

In relation to partnerships, stakeholders raised priority areas or organisations which the National Centre should seek as active partners, including in health care and education.

## OPERATIONS



*First Nations peoples are included as part of the diverse/vulnerable groups for the most part. Strongly identifying them as a priority cohort with specific activities related to addressing the challenges for them is suggested.*

State/territory government department

*Should allocate specific funding for the health and wellbeing of trans, gender diverse and nonbinary child sexual abuse victims and survivors, including funding for Rainbow Tick accreditation for mainstream recovery and wellbeing services, as well as funding specialist child sexual abuse recovery services for LGBTIQ+ community.*

Survey respondent



*Quotes have been edited for clarity.*

## Theme 2: Defining roles, responsibilities and relationships

**Stakeholders are excited to partner in areas of mutual interest and opportunity; they also want clarity on the National Centre's roles and responsibilities**

In their feedback, key stakeholders expressed strong support for the National Centre and the draft Strategy. Nonetheless, these stakeholders also raised a desire to better understand where exactly both the National Centre and the draft Strategy fit within the broader stakeholder and strategic landscape.

Feedback raised concerns that without a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the National Centre:

- Stakeholders are at risk of duplicating effort.
- Potential opportunities for collaboration may be missed.
- People may not know how they can engage and participate across the range of programs and actions that the National Centre is involved in.

Stakeholders also noted that the draft Strategy contains a significant and ambitious suite of actions and areas of focus, which may benefit from consolidation.

## OPERATIONS



*Will there be alignment to the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework NOCS have developed for the National Strategy? This will be important to ensure the evidence base is moving in a coherent direction and to reduce duplication for those delivering interventions.*

Independent regulator

*There appears to be less emphasis on measures to prevent child sexual abuse. Such lack of focus may be because other government agencies, such as NOCS, the eSafety Commissioner and ACCE, are picking up these measures.*

Survey respondent

*The Strategy is ambitious. With lots to do, how will the National Centre prioritise and make choices that will have the most impact?*

Advisory group



## Theme 3: Integrating stakeholder voices

### Stakeholders were eager to share their suggestions and insights into how to improve services and advocacy for victims and survivors across the board

Much of the feedback on the draft Strategy related to stakeholders insights and suggestions for improving services for victims and survivors. This reflects the draft Strategy, which positions the National Centre as 'an essential vehicle for action for many victims and survivors of child sexual abuse' (Draft Strategy, p. 4).

Stakeholders made suggestions on service and advocacy issues including:

- options to improve victim and survivor support
- ways to improve knowledge of child sexual abuse within the judiciary.

While the eagerness of respondents suggests success in effectively connecting with the National Centre's stakeholders, it also highlights the high expectations that stakeholders are placing on the National Centre.

Given the breadth of feedback on service design, advocacy and program design, to deliver on these expectations the National Centre must find effective ways to integrate stakeholder voices into the policy discussion across research, service provision and advocacy landscape.

## OPERATIONS



*Establish a national tertiary qualification in children's development and the impact of trauma. Make this a requirement for professionals and volunteers working with children. Current safeguarding provisions such as police checks need enhancement.*

Not-for-profit organisation

*Is a role of the National Centre to be an advocate for issues arising out of the actions they are undertaking ... for example, advocating for increases in specialist services to meet the needs of victims and survivors where there are identified gaps particularly for cohorts with increased risk of experiencing child sexual abuse.*

State/territory government



## Theme 4: Prevention and perpetrator focus

**Stakeholders raised that the Strategy lacks perpetrator-focused content, outcomes or actions, which they suggest undermines its ability to effectively address the prevention of child sexual abuse before it occurs**

A key content theme arising from stakeholder feedback related to the need for the National Centre to provide greater reference to and engage with perpetrators and perpetrator-focussed prevention materials.

Stakeholders raised that:

- The perpetrator lens was less prominent than expected.
- Engaging with perpetrators is strongly linked with prevention.
- It was unclear how perpetrators who were also victims and survivors could engage with the National Centre.

While stakeholders were cognisant of the tension between recognising perpetrators as key to prevention, and privileging the voices and experiences of victims and survivors, they highlighted that the lack of perpetrator-focused material may hinder the National Centre's goal to stop child sexual abuse before it occurs.

With this in mind, stakeholders are keen to understand whether or not the National Centre intends to engage with perpetrators or perpetrator-focused actions and programs, and if so, how.

## CONTENT



*More focus on perpetrators (stronger stance), how this Strategy interacts with other initiatives/ documents that inform the treatment of perpetrators within the legal, correctional, forensic and rehabilitation systems... We also want some focus on how the Strategy can support perpetrators who are victims and survivors themselves.*

Advocacy organisation

*Working with perpetrators is critical to prevention. Perpetrators lens is not strong here. Understandable given we are privileging voices of victims and survivors, however we need to keep this work in view.*

State/territory government



## Theme 5: Gendered lens

**Feedback suggests that the gendered nature of child sexual abuse should be foregrounded and that the intersection with domestic and family violence be more explicitly developed**

Several stakeholders, particularly those operating in social policy and human services, raised a concern that the gendered nature of child sexual abuse is not highlighted strongly enough in the Strategy.

They noted that:

- Many of the drivers for child sexual abuse and domestic and family violence are linked.
- The perpetrator group is similar and sometimes the same.
- A higher number of young women and girls report experiencing abuse.
- A lack of recognition may compound difficulties in finding opportunities to address the intersecting facets of the problem.

Stakeholders raised potential changes both in the way that the Strategy presents the intersection between child sexual abuse and domestic and family violence, as well as how they might address it through research or in programs partnered with other organisations.

In this sense, stakeholders are keen to see the National Centre further clarify how they see this intersection of issues and how they intend to work with or partner with organisations that specifically address these challenges.

## CONTENT



*The gendered nature of child sexual abuse offending could be clarified/included in the 'our purpose and vision' section... The connection between child sexual abuse and family violence could be strengthened.*

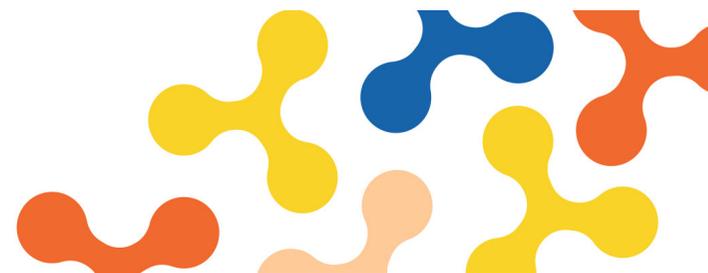
Survey respondent

*Make clear the connection between child sexual abuse and domestic and family violence: gendered nature, perpetration group is similar (same often). There is an opportunity for partnership with the DFV sector and bring together large amount of work already happening.*

State/territory government



Themes and insights were identified across a range of other areas



### LANGUAGE SUGGESTIONS

Many stakeholders have feedback on language, ranging from minor wording changes to questioning foundational social frameworks. This shows the National Centre is on the right track in developing a shared language.

### ONLINE FOCUS

Stakeholders want the Strategy to address online child sexual abuse in more detail. They have provided specific examples for the National Centre to consider.

### JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Some stakeholders want there to be work on reforming judicial processes and legal frameworks.

LOTS OF FEEDBACK

LESS FEEDBACK

### EXPAND CONSTRUCT OF HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Stakeholders agreed that the construct of harmful sexual behaviour should be expanded to contexts outside of the home, particularly within schools.

### SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIPS

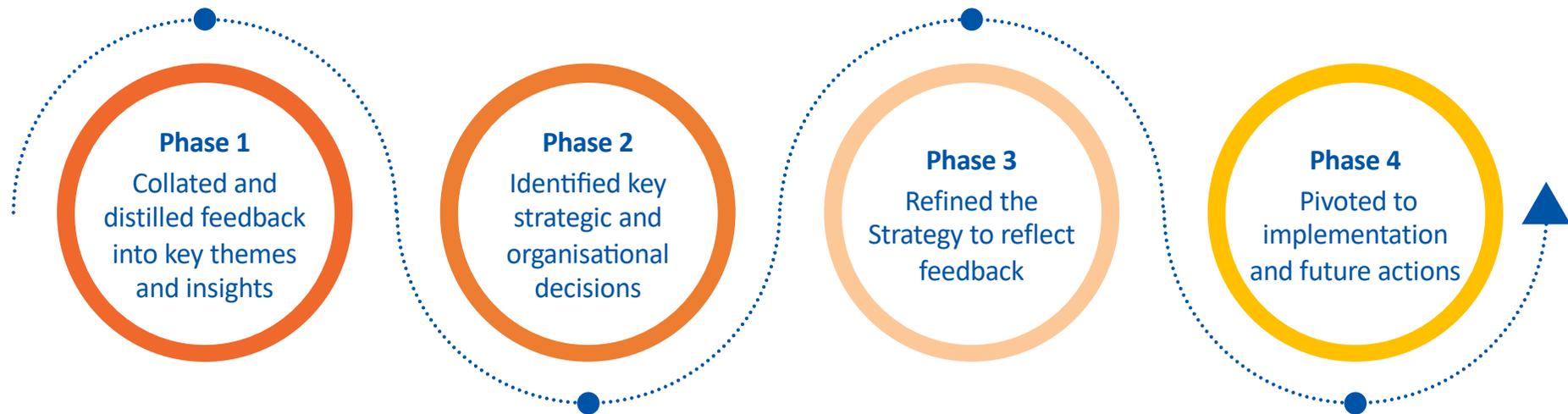
The feedback calls for further information for child-facing education and suggests partnering with schools.

Our response to the feedback





The National Centre undertook a comprehensive process to ensure that stakeholder feedback was considered and integrated into its final strategy



The National Centre received a significant bulk of feedback on the Strategy and worked hard to distil this into key themes and actions to be considered

Much of the stakeholder feedback related to the overarching focus and positioning of the National Centre. The National Centre worked internally to clarify these key strategic and operational decisions.

From incorporating language changes to developing new actions and programs, the National Centre then took stakeholder feedback and used it to inform and refine the final Strategy, its actions and its focus.

Having finalised the Strategy, the National Centre has shifted its focus toward action, with work already underway to implement key actions and program from year one of the Strategy.



As part of this process, the National Centre made significant changes to address stakeholder feedback

1

### DEFINING THE NATIONAL CENTRE'S PLACE

Stakeholders applauded the Strategy's ambition but were conscious of overpromising and underdelivering. In response, the National Centre has further defined its role and sharpened its focus to uniting its diverse group of stakeholders behind the common purpose of addressing child sexual abuse.

2

### SHARPENING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The National Centre understands that stakeholders want to avoid duplicating effort and resources. Through the Strategy, the National Centre has developed actions that will help stakeholders across the landscape understand where the National Centre and Strategy sit, helping everyone collaborate and work together better.

3

### INTEGRATING STAKEHOLDER VOICES

Feedback on the Strategy revealed a wealth of stakeholder knowledge and suggestions on ways to improve services and advocacy. To deliver for victims and survivors, allies and other stakeholders, the Strategy has adopted actions and programs that will ensure the voices of victims and survivors are amplified in policy, services and research.

Together, these actions will focus effort and enable the National Centre and the Strategy to make a greater impact



## The National Centre also considered and integrated stakeholders' line-by-line feedback

In addition to thematic feedback, stakeholders submitted 193 suggestions for change that referenced specific sentences or aspects of the Strategy. The National Centre considered each of these carefully and has integrated them where possible. Examples of this type of feedback related to multiple aspects of the Strategy, including:

### CONTENT

e.g., "(Challenge 4 should be) reworded to include all forms of harmful sexual behaviour, rather than only harmful sexual behaviour towards siblings".

### STRUCTURE

e.g., "Add a table of contents to assist usability and accessibility".

### LANGUAGE

e.g., "Amend 'people living with disability' to 'people with disability'".

### VISUAL DESIGN

e.g., "The 5 rings seem to imply that the National Centre is also a government agency. Consider a visual way of distinguishing?".

### OTHER ASPECTS

e.g., "Reference the Australian Child Maltreatment Study rather than national framework (as this is the most up-to-date naming)".

Next steps





The National Centre will release the final Five-Year Strategy soon along with an accompanying Implementation Plan.



# **The National Centre** for Action on Child Sexual Abuse

