



AFP

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

AFP CHILD PROTECTION PLAN 2020 – 2022



Our mandate

AFP Child Protection is committed to reducing the **incidence** and **impact** of crimes against children and holding those responsible for such crimes accountable.

Our focus

- Australians engaged in the sexual abuse of children offshore
- Australians involved in the production and supply of child abuse material (CAM)



Our role

AFP Child Protection works collaboratively with domestic and international partners to prevent, detect, investigate and disrupt online child sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of children offshore. This includes child sexual abuse and exploitation committed by travelling Australians or Australians engaged in 'live online child sexual abuse' (LOCSA).¹

Activities include:

- **investigating and prosecuting** Australians who use a carriage service (namely the internet) to facilitate online child sexual exploitation, with a focus on Australians who transmit, produce and supply CAM
- **working** with international partners to share and exchange information and disrupt travelling child sex offenders
- **undertaking** joint investigations with state and territory police and foreign law enforcement agencies in relation to online child sexual exploitation and organised child exploitation syndicates, LOCSA and Australians travelling offshore to sexually exploit children
- **identifying, locating and removing** children from harm.



Our people

AFP Child Protection Operations

AFP CPO coordinates and provides operational input into statistical reporting, policy and legislative reform. AFP CPO continually examines ways to reduce red tape and support the frontline by identifying opportunities for standardised and specialist training, and implementing best-practice welfare initiatives for CPO investigators. Representing the AFP's operational arm of Child Protection, AFP CPO also engage and act as a conduit for AFP's international network by building and strengthening relationships with our international partners. AFP CPO oversee the JACETs, AFP Victim Identification Team and the Child Exploitation Media Management System Team to deliver a coordinated response to counter child exploitation.

Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams (JACETs)

The JACETs are joint AFP and state or territory police child protection teams located across Australia, working together to investigate child exploitation matters. JACETs are committed to sharing intelligence, risk and de-conflicting operationally to effectively identify and prosecute offenders and remove children from harm. This commitment allows JACETs to prioritise and respond to reports in a timely manner and leverage each agency's investigative powers and resources.

The Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE)

In March 2018, the Australian Government announced the establishment of the ACCCE. Led by the AFP, the ACCCE brings together the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, to drive a collaborative national response to counter the exploitation of children.²

The ACCCE is committed to supporting the AFP, state and territory police by providing specialist capability disciplines such as innovative technology solutions, covert investigations, and leading intelligence collection and delivery in support of investigations. The ACCCE provides a central point for receiving, triaging, value-adding and referring reports of online child sexual exploitation to the JACETs and relevant domestic and international law enforcement agencies.

Northern Territory Child Abuse Taskforce (NT CAT)

The NT CAT comprises of members from the AFP, NT Police and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), who are committed to identifying and responding to reports of sexual abuse and serious harm against children in remote and isolated communities. The NT CAT is committed to formulating prevention initiatives and increasing community engagement to raise awareness and resilience in vulnerable groups.

Our partners

Law enforcement partnerships – domestically and internationally – are a critical component and are central to coordinated efforts to combat child exploitation and sexual abuse.

Where priorities impact on partnership arrangements domestically, the established Serious and Organised Crime Coordination Committee (SOCCC),³ and Operation Griffin⁴ will be engaged to contribute to, provide oversight of, and commit to initiatives and operations.

As child exploitation is a 'borderless crime', AFP Child Protection will continue to establish and strengthen relationships with international partners to make an effective difference in curbing the rate of offending. The AFP will continue to invest in critical ventures aimed at combatting child exploitation, such as the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT)⁵ and the Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Centre (PICACC).⁶

The effective protection of children requires a coordinated and collaborative effort across the whole community, including industry, Non-Government Organisations and academia.



Our strategy

The *AFP Child Protection Plan 2020–2022* will be achieved through five strategies: prevent, pursue, disrupt, investigate and prosecute.

Prevent

Prevention initiatives aim to stop the exploitation of children. The ACCCE will lead best practice initiatives to identify and reduce vulnerabilities for children at risk of online sexual exploitation, as well as support operational efforts to disrupt and deter child sex offenders through evidence and intelligence-based prevention strategies.

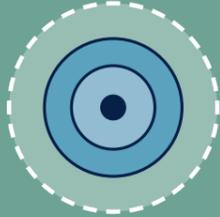
Recognising the importance of partnerships, the ACCCE will continue to drive a collaborative national response to deliver a range of evidence-based education, information, and outreach activities with the aim of identifying and protecting potential victims.



Pursue

AFP Child Protection will actively pursue child sex offenders and syndicates by developing National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reports, collaborating with foreign law enforcement and actioning reports from members of the public.

In addition to these efforts, AFP Child Protection will continue to employ evidence-based and intelligence-informed target development strategies, and use overt and covert methodologies to pursue child sex offenders, domestically and internationally.



Disrupt

AFP Child Protection commits to disrupting and dismantling criminals and organised criminal syndicates by targeting the production, supply and distribution of CAM.

In respect to Australian child sex offenders travelling abroad, the AFP will continue to notify foreign authorities of intended overseas travel by Registered Child Sex Offenders (RCSOs), which may result in RCSOs being denied entry into the foreign country.

AFP Child Protection will continue efforts to build intelligence exchange arrangements with domestic and international partners and industry to create a hostile and difficult environment for offenders to operate in.



Investigate

AFP Child Protection will continue to undertake investigations within regional JACET models into child exploitation matters and ensure instances of child exploitation are accurately reported with the support of innovative technology, a highly trained workforce and good governance.

AFP Child Protection continues to commit to established protocols for timely information sharing and joint investigative activity, contribute to international and domestic operations and proactively target obfuscated activity relating to child sexual exploitation.



Prosecute

The commitment to a strong criminal justice approach to combatting child sexual exploitation underpins the role and function of the JACET model and the AFP's role in prosecuting travelling child sex offenders.

Prosecution strategies remain a primary tool in combatting and dismantling criminal syndicates producing and supplying CAM. During the life of this plan, AFP Child Protection will work to establish consistent national and international standards for categorising CAM and towards defining what is deemed serious (in terms of the extent and compilation of offender image libraries).

AFP Child Protection will continue to work in partnership with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions to reduce red tape and support front line officers by streamlining briefs of evidence for possession, supply and transmission offences.




Our foundations

Underpinning the five strategies are our foundations, which are essential to the successful implementation of the plan: workforce wellbeing, technology, legislation and international instruments.

These capabilities require ongoing investment to ensure a capable and future ready posture, with the right people, processes, technology and infrastructure to maximise operational impact.

Workforce wellbeing

Recognising the challenging and inherently distressing nature of child sexual exploitation, the AFP is committed to supporting the frontline by providing best-practice wellbeing support.

AFP Child Protection will commit to develop consistent and interoperable specialist capabilities and technical expertise which reduces staff exposure to CAM, as well as providing training to support our workforce.



Technology

To address the growing concerns of complex, protracted investigations and the organised nature of child exploitation networks, it is imperative that AFP Child Protection is equipped with leading technological solutions to prevent, disrupt, pursue and investigate offenders.

AFP Child Protection will support initiatives to enhance technical capabilities including creating fit-for-purpose information and communications technology user environments and equipment.



Legislation

AFP Child Protection will continue to use domestic legislation to ensure all types of illegal conduct are captured.

Child sexual exploitation is comprehensively criminalised under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth):

- Division 474 creates offences relating to the use of a carriage service to transmit, access, produce, procure, groom etc.
- Division 272 expressly criminalises the procuring of a child under 16 by an Australian overseas for sexual exploitation in Australia
- Division 271 creates an offence of child trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation encompassing both domestic trafficking and the trafficking of children into Australia for an exploitative purpose
- The AFP can also use its extra-territorial powers (under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth)) to prosecute Australian child sex offenders who offend outside our borders.

AFP Child Protection will consult with state and territory partners to ensure the most appropriate

offences are being applied in accordance with state and territory legislation.

AFP Child Protection will continue to provide input and feedback for legislative reform and policy to ensure legislative frameworks remain relevant and fit-for-purpose.

The AFP is committed to adhering to the *Commonwealth Child Safe Framework* by undertaking annual risk assessments to evaluate the risk of harm to children, ensuring training and compliance regimes are in place and monitored to comply with child safety requirements. Under the Framework, the AFP also complies with legislation in relation to working with children and vulnerable people and mandatory reporting requirements. The AFP has adopted and is implementing the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* as part of the Framework requirements.



International instruments

Australia is an international signatory to the:

- *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and its optional protocols on: the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography
- *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*
- WePROTECT Global Alliance
- *Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*



Endnotes

- 1 The use of the internet by a person to view, pay to view, or to provide instructions and view in real time, child sexual exploitation.
- 2 ACCCE Blueprint 2019-2021
- 3 The SOCCC is a national coordination group with representation at the Assistant Commissioner or equivalent level. Individual jurisdictions retain autonomy of decision-making in relation to all matters that are relevant to that jurisdiction. Parties will participate in joint taskforces and investigations voluntarily.
- 4 Operation Griffin is a national coordination group with representation at the Superintendent level. The purpose of Operation Griffin is to be a primary source of advice to the SOCCC on all matters relating to child protection.
- 5 The VGT is an alliance of international law enforcement agencies and private sector partners working together to combat online child sexual abuse.
- 6 The PICACC is a collective law enforcement effort to combat child exploitation across the Philippines. It involves the Philippine National Police Women and Children's Protection Center, National Bureau of Investigation Anti-Human Trafficking Division, the Australian Federal Police, the United Kingdom National Crime Agency, and International Justice Mission.

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