

Friday 11 February 2022

National Office for Child Safety  
via email: [NationalOfficeForChildSafety@pmc.gov.au](mailto:NationalOfficeForChildSafety@pmc.gov.au)

**Submission : Advisory Group for National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed model for the Advisory Group for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse and complementary non-government consultation mechanisms.

***About the National Catholic Education Commission***

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) is the national representative body for Catholic Education in Australia. The NCEC complements and supports the work of the state and territory Catholic Education Commissions by developing national policy and strategy and advocating for Catholic Education to the Australian Government and other key national education bodies.

Catholic Education is the nation's largest provider of education outside government. Australia's 1,755 Catholic schools educate one in five, or almost 780,000, students and directly employ more than 100,000 Australians.

Catholic Education is committed to keeping children safe in our schools across Australia and upholds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Catholic Education, through a representative nominated by the NCEC, is a member of the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group convened by the National Office for Child Safety (NOCS).

***The National Strategy Advisory Group Model Consultation Paper***

The NCEC appreciates the commitment of NOCS to consulting with non-government stakeholders over the lifetime of the National Strategy, including development, implementation, and evaluation stages. The creation of the Advisory Group to provide advice and input on the implementation of the National Strategy's First National Action Plan and First Commonwealth Action Plan is strongly welcomed.

The model proposed for the Advisory Group and associated consultation processes as outlined in the Consultation Paper are appropriate and well targeted to facilitate effective and focused feedback.

The NCEC submits the following points in response to specific aspects of the proposed model for the Advisory Group:

1. The NCEC's view is that membership of the Advisory Group should comprise representatives with subject matter expertise and knowledge, and a wide-ranging outlook on issues in a range of contexts. In addition to being subject matter experts, these members may also be victims and survivors and/or representatives from other priority group communities.

The focus of the Advisory Group should be to ensure that the advice provided on the National Strategy's First National Action Plan and First Commonwealth Action Plan, and decisions taken are comprehensive, considered, and inclusive.

2. Given the broad, complex, and sensitive nature of the matters to be discussed, the NCEC agrees that time-limited working groups, and sub-groups dedicated to priority group members, should be established.

These sub-groups should be focused on the detail of practical and lived experiences and to specifically hear the voices, views, and experiences of victims and survivors and other priority groups. Advice and information provided through these consultations would then be able to be referred in a concise but substantive manner to the Advisory Group.

The role of the time-limited groups should be to inform and guide the considered and inclusive decisions and advice provided by the Advisory Group. The time-limited groups and sub-groups dedicated to priority group members could be facilitated by NOCS, with some representative members of the Advisory Group also present, in order to ensure that the Advisory Group itself has a manageable and focused meeting schedule and workplan.

3. In addition to being subject matter experts, members of the Advisory Group should be nominated representatives of significant sectors and/or service providers engaged in preventing and better responding to child sexual abuse.

As Catholic Education is Australia's largest provider of education outside government, the NCEC's view is that Catholic Education should be one of the sectors represented on the Advisory Group through an appropriately qualified and experienced expert nominated through the NCEC.

Catholic Education values the opportunity to be part of the Advisory Group to learn from others and share our knowledge in order to strengthen the prevention and response to child sexual abuse across the Australian community.

The NCEC is committed to keeping children safe in our schools and looks forward to continuing that commitment by supporting the work of NOCS.

The NCEC welcomes any further communication from NOCS regarding the Advisory Group or other non-government consultation mechanisms for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse.

Should you have any further questions in relation to this submission, please contact me via phone 02 8229 0808, or via email, [jacinta.collins@ncec.catholic.edu.au](mailto:jacinta.collins@ncec.catholic.edu.au).

Yours sincerely



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