

Australian Children's Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates call for Immediate Action and Transformational Reform

Australian Children's Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates (ACCGA) acknowledge the release of *In Plain Sight*, the final report of the Queensland Child Death Review Board's inquiry into system responses to child sexual abuse. While focused on Queensland, the report's findings highlight longstanding national issues, including fragmented accountability, barriers to information-sharing, and the persistent minimisation of child sexual abuse across systems intended to keep children safe.

Children have a right to be safe and to feel safe. Child sexual abuse is a profound national concern with long-term consequences for children, families, and communities – undermining wellbeing, social cohesion, and future prosperity. Notably, child sexual abuse traverses state/territory and international borders and, given the intersection between online and contact offending, this creates additional layers of risk that must be part of any preventative reform measures.

ACCGA members express unified support for transformational reform that strengthens safeguarding architecture across Australia and embeds sustained systemic and cultural change. The report's central finding – that perpetrators often operate openly across multiple systems without identification or intervention – demonstrates systemic failures that demand coordinated national leadership, stronger organisational accountability for child safety, improved mechanisms for proactive risk identification, and sustained, trauma-informed supports for victim-survivors and their families.

ACCGA members therefore urge Commonwealth, state, and territory governments to make child rights, safety, and wellbeing a National Cabinet priority including by strengthening and harmonising child safeguarding laws, pursuing integrated cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional reform, and establishing a legislated governance framework centred on Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Safeguarding children requires sustained, courageous, and collective action. Building on the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the findings of *In Plain Sight*, together with other recent inquiries such as Tasmania's Commission of Inquiry and Victoria's Rapid Child Safety Review, provide a critical opportunity to advance national reform premised on a zero-tolerance stance toward child sexual abuse.

Because Australia's children are counting on all of us to do better!

This statement has been endorsed by all Australian Children's Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates, as follows:

National

- *Deb Tsorbaris, National Children's Commissioner*
- *Sue-Anne Hunter, National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (and ANZCCGA Co-Chair)*
- *Julie Inman-Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner*

Australian Capital Territory

- *Jodie Griffiths-Cook, Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (and ANZCCGA Co-Chair)*
- *Barb Causon, Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner*

New South Wales

- *Katherine McKernan, Advocate for Children and Young People*
- *Rachael Ward, Children's Guardian*
- *Bianca Dufty, Deputy Children's Guardian*

Northern Territory

- *Shahleena Musk, Children's Commissioner*

Queensland

- *Shayna Smith, Public Guardian*
- *Luke Twyford, QFCC Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner*
- *Natalie Lewis, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner*

South Australia

- *Shona Reid, Guardian for Children and Young People*
- *Dale Agius, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People*
- *Kylie Heneker, Commissioner for Children and Young People*

Tasmania

- *Isabelle Crompton, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People*

Victoria

- *Tracy Beaton, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People*

Western Australia

- *Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People*

For further enquiries about the *In Plain Sight* report, please contact the Queensland Family and Child Commission media team at media@qfcc.qld.gov.au or 0423 565 108.