



The Hon Christian Porter MP
Minister for Social Services

Search

[HOME](#) [MEDIA RELEASES](#) [SPEECHES](#) [TRANSCRIPTS](#) [NEWSLETTERS](#) [EDITORIALS](#)
[BIOGRAPHY](#) [CONTACT](#)

Media Releases

[Home](#) » [Media Releases](#) » [Community Services Ministers' Meeting Communiqué](#)

Community Services Ministers' Meeting Communiqué [Listen](#)

11 November 2016

National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Ministers agreed to the development of *National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations* to be endorsed by Council of Australian Governments. This commitment will drive implementation of a child safe culture across all sectors to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across Australia.

A *National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations* will be used as a benchmark for cross-sectoral jurisdictional child safety policy making, funding and investment decisions, and legislation and compliance regimes. A *National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations* will draw from the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to support the findings on Working with Children Checks and actions on creating and maintaining safe environments for children.

Inter-jurisdictional child protection information sharing

Ministers discussed work underway through the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* to identify and address legislative, policy, and practice barriers to sharing child protection information across jurisdictions. This work recognises the impact of these barriers on the quality of child protection services provided to vulnerable children and young people. Ministers noted that the Commonwealth's Business Research and Innovation Initiative is encouraging small and medium enterprises to develop innovative technology to support the sharing of information nationally to ensure child safety.

Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

Ministers discussed tangible actions to support their ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families and reducing the over-representation in out-of-home care and child protection systems. Ministers thanked the non-government organisations who are working with government officials to implement the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle*. Ministers support its implementation, both in their jurisdictional roles and in their cross-government efforts under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*. Ministers agreed that out-of-home care systems and early intervention approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families should be on the COAG agenda to be addressed by First Ministers.

Third Action Plan under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

Together with discussion of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, child safe organisations and information sharing, Ministers noted progress made to date in implementing other actions included in the Third Action Plan of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*. Ministers expressed their interest in the activities planned over the next 12 months, including initiatives to build awareness of the importance of the first 1000 days from pregnancy to age two and to provide personal advisers to young people as they transition from formal out-of-home care arrangements.

Permanency planning reforms

Ministers agreed the Commonwealth, state and territory governments would work collaboratively to develop a set of guiding principles to drive improvement in the achievement of permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home care. As part of this collaborative work, Ministers agreed to a focus on: permanency and stability; the timeliness of permanent care decisions; post placement support and payments by all jurisdictions, including for children in care or adopted through to adulthood; and building the evidence base and improved data collection, including uniform measures of stability and measures of success in relation to reunification and permanency. Ministers also agreed that reform effort should be directed towards enhancing consistency in permanent care arrangements across jurisdictions. Ministers also agreed to investigate possible schemes for the mutual recognition of the suitability assessments of carers.

Ministers also agreed to give priority to continuing work on prevention and early intervention, with a view to improving levels of family preservation and reunification and reducing the number of children entering out-of-home care, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Related national reforms

Ministers discussed a range of other national reforms that affect the wellbeing of vulnerable children and families. This included the reform opportunities associated with the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare, the interfaces between the National Disability Insurance Scheme and child protection systems, the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children and the current review of the *Commonwealth-State Agreement for the Continued Operation of Australia's Intercountry Adoption Program*. Ministers also agreed that underage forced marriage is an issue of national significance and that the potential for a collaborative and evidence based approach between jurisdictions would be progressed.

All jurisdictions undertook to review practices and procedures relevant to children in out-of-home care with a view to identifying efficiencies and improvements that can be achieved administratively. Ministers agreed that they would hold six-monthly meetings.

[Accessibility](#) | [Privacy statement](#)

© Commonwealth of Australia 2017