

AUSTRALIAN  
CENTRE TO COUNTER  
CHILD EXPLOITATION

# BLUEPRINT 2019-2021



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# THE ACCCE

Introduction

Strategic framework

Why was the ACCCE established?



## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) was announced by the Australian Government in March 2018 in response to the increasing number and severity of reports of child exploitation received by Australian law enforcement. A total of \$68.6 million was provided to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) to establish the ACCCE.

The AFP-led ACCCE, as part of the Department of Home Affairs, will bring together capabilities from across the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, to drive a collaborative national response to counter the exploitation of children in Australia. The AFP, as Australia's national law enforcement agency, and a conduit to foreign law enforcement agencies, plays a critical role in leading and driving the success of the ACCCE.

In driving a national response, the ACCCE specifically focuses on countering online child sexual exploitation, and as such, organised child exploitation networks operating in the online environment. Recognising the global and borderless nature of online child exploitation, the ACCCE is founded on a principle of partnership. In partnership, the ACCCE will work to free children from exploitation through its four pillars, Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue:

- ▲ **prepare** future capabilities and technologies to counter child exploitation
- ▲ **prevent** the exploitation of children, and intervene earlier in the abuse of victims
- ▲ **protect** victims from further victimisation, and protect the wellbeing of members
- ▲ support authorities to **pursue**, disrupt and prosecute child sex offenders, and remove victims from harm.

A range of activities are aligned to these four pillars, and along with its goals, form the ACCCE strategic framework.

The goals of the ACCCE are to:

1. **Reduce economic, social and individual rewards** from child exploitation.
2. **Reduce harm** from complex, organised child exploitation networks.
3. **Enhance capability and interoperability** between the public and private sectors, and civil society.
4. **Enhance community confidence** that authorities, civil society, and the private sector are addressing the issue of child exploitation.

The ACCCE will provide a national capability not held by any single federal or state agency in Australia. While largely based in Brisbane, Queensland, the ACCCE will be supported by the AFP and the Department of Home Affairs in Canberra, and will work closely with its partners within the public and private sectors, and civil society.

The ACCCE further leverages the capabilities of, and complements, the Department of Home Affairs' Transnational Serious and Organised Crime (TSOC) National Strategy, with the exploitation of children identified as a threat to national security.

The *ACCCE Blueprint 2019-2021* is the culmination of substantial design work undertaken by the AFP with partner agencies in the first year of its operation. It sets out the role of the ACCCE and how it will operate.

# THE ACCCE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## VISION: Children are free from exploitation

**MISSION:** To drive a collaborative national response to counter the exploitation of children

**PRINCIPLE:** Partnership

PILLARS	<b>PREPARE</b> Prepare future capabilities and technologies to counter child exploitation.	<b>PREVENT</b> Prevent the exploitation of children, and intervene earlier in the abuse of victims.	<b>PROTECT</b> Protect victims from further victimisation, and protect the wellbeing of members.	<b>PURSUE</b> Support authorities to pursue, disrupt and prosecute child sex offenders, and remove victims from harm.
	Reduce economic, social and individual rewards from child exploitation.		Reduce harm from complex, organised child exploitation networks.	
OUTCOMES	Enhance capability and interoperability between the public and private sectors, and civil society.		Enhance community confidence that the public and private sectors, and civil society, are addressing the issue of child exploitation.	
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The ACCCE will champion and coordinate research and academia.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will coordinate working groups across a range of subjects to bring together practitioners and specialists.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will drive innovation and evolve new capabilities to develop a future ready posture.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will harness technology and coordinate technology solutions.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will coordinate national intelligence and establish a national threat picture.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will develop national standards and training courses for members working in child protection.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will develop capabilities and strategies to infiltrate, disrupt, and dismantle organised child exploitation networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The ACCCE will provide a location for partners to collaborate and coordinate prevention initiatives.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will educate the public to 'target harden' potential victims.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will target child sex offenders through online and offline deterrence strategies.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will create and garner opportunities to engage the private sector and the community to prevent future child exploitation.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will facilitate early intervention of child exploitation through increased intelligence collection and sharing, and targeted disruption strategies.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will lead national prevention strategies to counter the exploitation of children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The ACCCE will work with partners to protect children from exploitation, and through its prevention and victim identification efforts, protect victims from further exploitation.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will develop and implement a national mental health plan to protect members working to counter child exploitation.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will actively promote and provide information about support services for victims and their families.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will lead contributions to policy and legislative reform to better respond to child exploitation.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will assist national efforts to disrupt child exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The ACCCE will house experts in specialist fields to infiltrate, disrupt, and dismantle organised child exploitation networks.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will coordinate reports of child exploitation and provide intelligence packages to investigative authorities to prosecute offenders.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will establish and deliver world-leading victim identification and coordination efforts to identify victims and remove them from harm.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will coordinate specialist capabilities nationally and internationally to disrupt organised child exploitation networks.</li> <li>▲ The ACCCE will actively pursue child sex offenders and networks, and coordinate referrals to investigative authorities.</li> </ul>

## WHY WAS THE ACCCE ESTABLISHED?

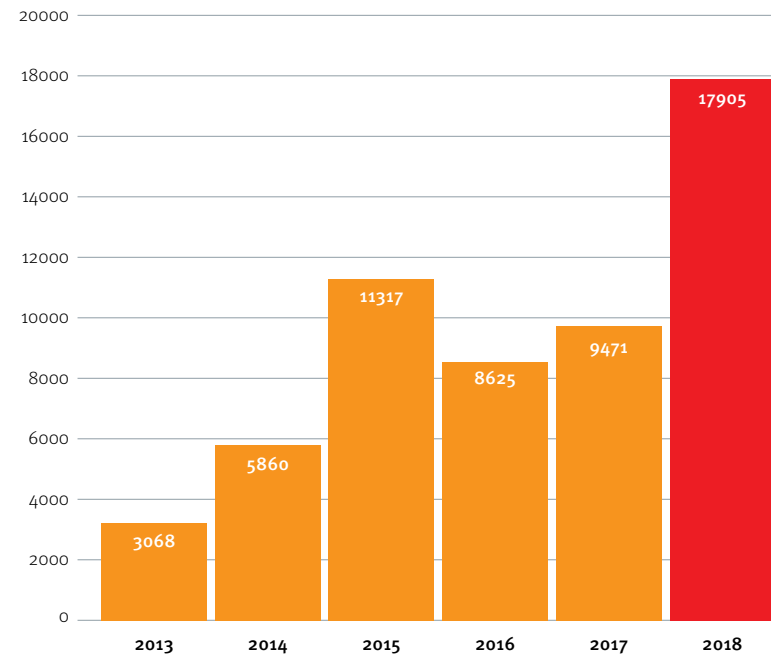
Australian law enforcement is experiencing an ongoing, exponential increase of reports relating to online child sexual exploitation in Australia. Research shows that every seven minutes a webpage shows a child being sexually abused.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the United States received more than 18.4 million reports of child exploitation.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, the AFP received almost 18,000 reports of child exploitation involving Australian children and/or child sex offenders. The number of reports had almost doubled from the previous year. Each report can contain hundreds or thousands of images and videos of children being sexually exploited or tortured for the sexual gratification or financial profit of child sex offenders.

In the early and mid-2000s in Australia, the average number of images seized when an offender was arrested was around 1,000 images of child sexual abuse; megabytes of child exploitation material. Today, the average seizure is between 10,000 to 80,000 images and videos. Some seizures have contained more than one million multi-media files; terabytes of child exploitation material.

Along with the increase in reports and the relative size of seizures, Australian law enforcement is witnessing an increase in the severity of exploitation, and a trend towards younger children, including babies. In 2016, of the victims of child exploitation rescued by the International Justice Mission, 54 per cent were under 12 years of age, the youngest just two months old.<sup>3</sup> Further, the AFP is now receiving more and more reports of children aged as young as four engaging with online child sex offenders from around the world. Self-producing sexually explicit material and uploading this material to social media platforms is also becoming more prevalent.<sup>4</sup>

Number of reports received by the AFP 2013–2018



# ACCCE FUNCTIONS

What is the role of the ACCCE?

What is the role of investigative authorities?

How will the ACCCE operate?

Core functions of the ACCCE

Child rights organisation, ECPAT International (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking), claims research in the United Kingdom demonstrates an increase in the number of prosecutions of 18 to 24 year olds for child exploitation material-related offences, showing more children and young people are becoming 'perpetrators'.<sup>5</sup> The 'cultivation' of children to 'stay relevant' in paedophile networks is also becoming more common.

In the US in 2017, more than 78,000 URLs were confirmed as containing child sexual abuse imagery, having links to imagery, or advertising it.<sup>6</sup> According to a 2018 Global Threat Assessment Report, there are hidden sites on the darknet with over one million persistent profiles, where children are re-victimised hundreds of times a day.<sup>7</sup> The US Department of Justice says there are more than 1.9 million users registered across nine sites dedicated to child sexual abuse material. Of a sample of 1.1 million child exploitation images and videos analysed by INTERPOL, 615,150 files depicted unidentified children.<sup>8</sup>

The recurrent, psychologically-driven nature of this crime, together with its borderless nature, advances in technology and evolving methodologies, means that despite decades of effort, the exploitation of children has expanded across the globe and out-paced every attempt to respond at the Australian and international level. This issue cannot be contained to any one jurisdiction or country. It requires a national, collaborative and coordinated approach where all agencies working to counter the exploitation of children can share information in a networked environment in order to build the required capability and response model.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ACCCE?

In driving a national response to counter the exploitation of children, the role of the ACCCE is to:

- ▲ Enhance collaboration and create and leverage new synergies by bringing together and combining the resources of government and Commonwealth agencies, law enforcement (specifically the AFP and State and Territory police), non-government organisations, and other partners.
- ▲ Coordinate Australia's law enforcement efforts to prevent and disrupt online child sexual exploitation.
- ▲ Support the investigative role of the AFP and State and Territory police. This includes driving consistent and targeted efforts involving intelligence gathering, research, and the development of deterrence and prevention strategies.
- ▲ Receive incoming requests for information and reports of child exploitation, triage and value-add to the information contained in the reports, and refer them for investigation to the relevant investigative authority. This includes the AFP, Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams (JACETs), or the relevant State and Territory police depending on the nature of the referral. In some instances, specifically in respect to victim identification and online covert engagement, referrals will be made to foreign law enforcement agencies.
- ▲ Through its online covert engagement and victim identification functions, proactively target organised child exploitation networks and identify victims in support of investigative authorities.
- ▲ Develop national standards and capabilities for specialist and investigative practices, and the training and wellbeing of members.

- ▲ Coordinate and develop targeted technology solutions to enable the most effective real-time sharing of information and victim identification capabilities.
- ▲ Be a hub of knowledge, expertise, intelligence, resources and tools to support Australian law enforcement and partner efforts in the prevention and disruption of child exploitation. This includes hosting and sharing research, intelligence, and information to understand the nature and extent of child exploitation in Australia, and to get ahead of criminal innovations and trends.

The ACCCE in itself does not perform a traditional investigative function in that it does not directly arrest or charge offenders or compile briefs of evidence, but rather supports the investigative role and remit of the AFP and State and Territory police.

The ACCCE will be evidence-based and intelligence-informed, and will develop a future-ready posture to drive national responses. Its multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach will provide opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INVESTIGATIVE AUTHORITIES?

### The role of the Australian Federal Police

In line with its Commonwealth mandate, and the *AFP Child Protection Strategic Plan 2019-2022*, the AFP and its members of Child Protection Operations investigate and proactively target Australians involved in online child sexual exploitation; and using its extra-territorial powers under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*, prosecuting Australians travelling offshore for the purposes of sexually exploiting children.

This includes:

- ▲ investigating and prosecuting Australians who use a carriage service (namely the internet) to facilitate online child sexual exploitation, with a focus on Australians who produce and supply child exploitation material
- ▲ providing information about travelling registered child sex offenders to destination countries
- ▲ undertaking joint investigations with foreign law enforcement agencies in relation to online child sexual exploitation and organised child exploitation networks, live online child sexual abuse, and Australians travelling offshore to sexually exploit children.

In conducting child protection investigations, the AFP works closely with its State and Territory police counterparts, Commonwealth agencies, and foreign law enforcement agencies including INTERPOL and Europol.

As Australia's national law enforcement agency, the AFP is also Australia's representative on the Virtual Global Taskforce (the VGT is an alliance of international law enforcement agencies and private sector partners working together to combat online child sexual exploitation).

### The role of State and Territory police

State and Territory police play a critical role in the protection of children and are the frontline for preventing, investigating, and prosecuting cases of child abuse and exploitation. They are the first responders to saving children from imminent harm and physical offending. Relevant provisions in each State and Territory criminalise the full spectrum of child exploitation including sexual abuse, grooming, procuring, possessing, and the production of child exploitation material.

Specialist Child Protection Investigation Units across Australia provide a policing response to children: assisting in the provision of victim support and the protection of children; investigating child exploitation; and managing juvenile offenders.

State and Territory police are also responsible for the management of reportable (registered) child sex offenders within their jurisdiction, as part of the Australian Child Protection Offender Reporting scheme.

### Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams

The JACETs are joint AFP Child Protection Operations and State and Territory police child protection teams located in all capital cities across Australia, working together to investigate child exploitation matters. The JACET model was introduced in 2014 in response to the high volume of child exploitation reports received by the AFP, and in recognition of the need to share intelligence and information to best identify offenders and remove children from harm.

The JACETs operate under joint arrangements outlined in Memorandums of Understanding with each partner agency. Joint arrangements allow the AFP and State and Territory police to deconflict child exploitation matters, and to prioritise and respond to such matters in a timely manner, leveraging each agency's investigative powers.



## HOW WILL THE ACCCE OPERATE?

The ACCCE has within its structure, or has immediate access to, a range of capabilities required to deliver on its mission. Central to the ACCCE are the following core functions:

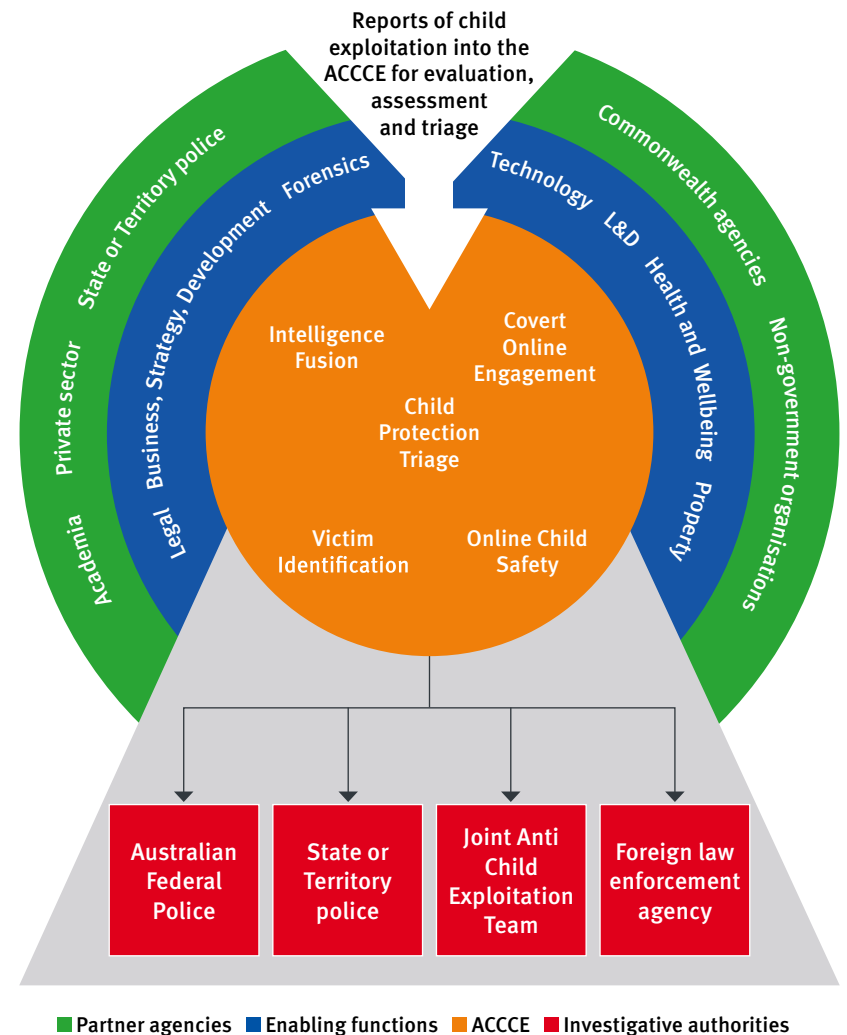
- ▲ Triage of reports of child exploitation (the Child Protection Triage Unit)
- ▲ Intelligence inputs (the Intelligence Fusion Cell)
- ▲ Specialist capabilities (Covert Online Engagement Team, and Victim Identification Unit)
- ▲ Prevention and online safety (the Online Child Safety Team).

These core functions are supported by enabling functions which are critical to the overall success of the ACCCE:

- ▲ Technology
- ▲ Business Strategy and Development
- ▲ Legal
- ▲ Forensics
- ▲ Health and wellbeing
- ▲ Learning and Development
- ▲ Property (the ACCCE building premises).

All functions of the ACCCE work together to drive a national response to counter child exploitation, and complement the capabilities of partner agencies. In respect to technology, the ACCCE does not supersede the remit of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), responsible for providing national policing information systems and services.

The ACCCE operating model



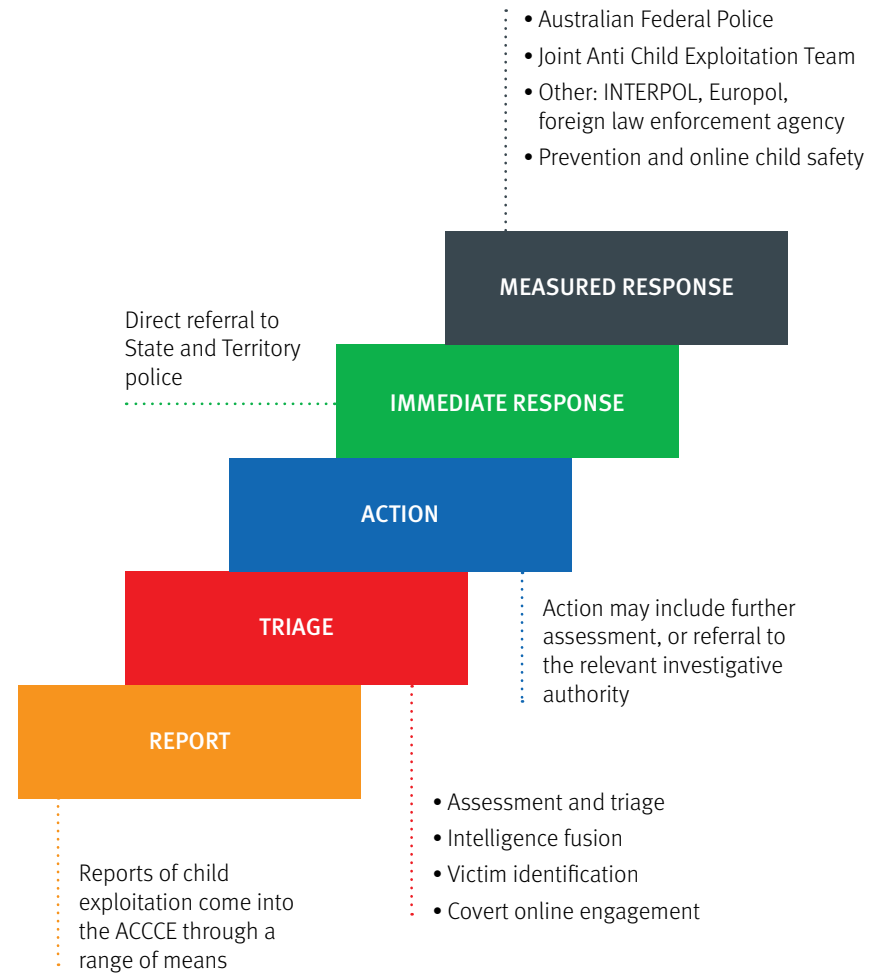
## CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE ACCCE

### Triage of reports of child exploitation

The **Child Protection Triage Unit (CPTU)** plays an integral role within the ACCCE as a conduit between the AFP, JACETs, State and Territory police, and international partners.

The CPTU receives reports of child exploitation from a range of sources, including government and Commonwealth agencies (Australian Border Force, AUSTRAC, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner); State and Territory police; members of the public; and CyberTip reports via NCMEC.

The reports and related material are assessed and triaged to determine if there is enough information to establish that an offence has occurred, and to determine the most appropriate course of action. This may include the requirement for further intelligence input, referral for victim identification, or packages developed for referral to the AFP, JACETs, or State and Territory police for investigation. The latter usually applies to reports where a high risk of immediate or continued harm of a child has been identified, or where either the offender or the victim has been identified.



## Intelligence inputs

The **Intelligence Fusion Cell (IFC)** will support the triage and evaluation of reports of child exploitation, and disseminate intelligence products to domestic and international partners.

The intelligence function within the ACCCE will coordinate and develop a national threat picture in relation to the drivers and extent of child exploitation in Australia, and will develop and support national information and intelligence sharing.

The IFC will also lead the identification of trends and methodologies in the exploitation of children, and will assist in the development and targeting of a National Priority Target List.

## Specialist investigative capability

The victim identification function within the ACCCE will lead the national and international coordination of victim identification efforts, and taskforce responses to major operations.

The **Victim Identification Unit (VIU)** promotes interoperable capability which can be focused on national priorities and deployed as a taskforce to emerging threats. The VIU will develop a national victim identification framework, and as part of its remit, will coordinate training and professional development of members working within this specialised field.

The VIU will drive nationally consistent practices and standards. It will further act as the conduit between Australian law enforcement and the INTERPOL ICSE (International Child Sexual Exploitation) database of victims.

Operationally the VIU will support investigative authorities that do not have a victim identification capability. It will further provide proactive support to the **Covert Online Engagement Team (COET)** and the CPTU.

The covert online engagement function within the ACCCE will develop a national covert online strategy, and will drive the development of capability to support long-term disruption of organised child exploitation networks. The COET will coordinate and support high priority online child exploitation operations, and the development of nationally consistent practices and standards.

The COET will also identify and develop a National Covert Online Persona Library and, with the support of partners and other core functions of the ACCCE, will contribute to a National Priority Target List.

## Prevention and online child safety

The prevention and online child safety function of the ACCCE will coordinate and design the implementation of targeted prevention and deterrence strategies, both offline and online.

The **Online Child Safety Team (OCST)** will work closely with the IFC and CPTU to understand the trends and nature of reports, and develop initiatives to counter new methodologies. In partnership, the OCST will deliver a range of education, information, and outreach activities targeting the Australian community, and to divert offenders from exploiting children.

The OCST will further work with partner agencies to drive and promote support services available to victims and their families.

“The Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation will deliver a capability not held by any single agency in Australia.”

Minister for Home Affairs  
the Honourable Peter Dutton

# ACCCE GOVERNANCE

How is the ACCCE governed?

ACCCE partners

## HOW IS THE ACCCE GOVERNED?

Being AFP-led, the ACCCE is subject to the AFP's legal and governance provisions. The ACCCE is established under a multi-agency Memorandum of Understanding between partner agencies, including the Department of Home Affairs.

A Board of Management (BoM), co-chaired by the Deputy Commissioners of the AFP and the Department of Home Affairs TSOC, is made up of executive members from key partner agencies. The BoM provides strategic direction, and is responsible for ensuring the ACCCE is operating in line with its purpose and all relevant legal, financial, and ethical considerations. The BoM meets quarterly.

A Program Reference Group (PRG), chaired by an AFP Assistant Commissioner, provides program delivery oversight and the approval of ACCCE projects. The PRG meets every two months.

A National Board of Advisors on Prevention brings together specialists from non-government organisations and the private sector to provide specific advice to the BoM in respect to prevention, awareness, and education initiatives that support the ACCCE's overall mission.

Working groups across primary functions of the ACCCE are led by a Superintendent or EL2 equivalent. Working groups are attended by practitioners and subject matter experts from an array of stakeholders to ensure national solutions are identified, considered, designed, and delivered.

ACCCE Board of Management (BoM)	
<b>Co-chaired by:</b>	Deputy Commissioner Operations, AFP Deputy Commissioner Transnational Serious and Organised Crime, Department of Home Affairs
<b>Membership:</b>	AFP, the Department of Home Affairs, the National Office for Child Safety, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, State and Territory police representation
<b>Frequency:</b>	Quarterly

Program Reference Group (PRG)		National Board of Advisors on Prevention
<b>Chair:</b>	AFP Assistant Commissioner Crime Operations	
<b>Membership:</b>	AFP, Department of Home Affairs, State and Territory police representation	
<b>Frequency:</b>	Every two months	

Working Groups		
<b>Operational capability</b>	<b>Enabling</b>	<b>Prevention</b>
Covert Online Victim Identification* Evaluation, Triage and Referral	Research Intelligence Legal Technology Wellbeing	Awareness Education

\*Working group was pre-existing under the auspices of Operation Griffin of the Serious and Organised Crime Coordination Committee.

## ACCCE PARTNERS

The ACCCE collaborates with partners to deliver on its four pillars and its mission. ACCCE partners include, but are not limited to, government and Commonwealth agencies, law enforcement and investigative authorities, non-government organisations, the private sector, and academia.

### PUBLIC SECTOR

Government, Commonwealth agencies	Law enforcement, investigative authorities
Department of Home Affairs	AFP
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	State and Territory police
AUSTRAC	INTERPOL
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission	Europol
Australian Border Force	Foreign law enforcement agencies
National Office for Child Safety	
Office of the eSafety Commissioner	
Departments of Education, Communication and the Arts, and Social Services	

### CIVIL SOCIETY

Non-government organisations	Academia
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (US)	Australian Institute of Criminology
Alannah and Madeline Foundation	National Security College, Australian National University
Carly Ryan Foundation	Universities
Daniel Morcombe Foundation	Cooperative research centres
Bravehearts	Social market research companies
	Academics

### PRIVATE SECTOR

Private sector, industry
Social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
Google
Microsoft
Apple
Telecommunication providers including Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and Foxtel

# REFERENCES

Abbreviations

Endnotes



## ABBREVIATIONS

ACCCE	Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation
ACIC	Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AUSTRAC	Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking International
CPTU	Child Protection Triage Unit
COET	Covert Online Engagement Team
IFC	Intelligence Fusion Centre
JACET	Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (US)
OCST	Online Child Safety Team
TSOC	Transnational Serious and Organised Crime
VIU	Victim Identification Unit
VGT	Virtual Global Taskforce

## ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://annualreport.iwf.org.uk/>
- 2 <http://www.missingkids.com/ourwork/ncmecdata>
- 3 <https://www.ijm.ca/campaigns/not-on-my-screen-canada>
- 4 <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/national-speeches/world-congress-speech-global-realities-child-exploitation>
- 5 <https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Technical-Report-TOWARDS-A-GLOBAL-INDICATOR-ON-UNIDENTIFIED-VICTIMS-IN-CHILD-SEXUAL-EXPLOITATION-MATERIAL.pdf>
- 6 [https://annualreport.iwf.org.uk/#awards\\_and\\_highlights](https://annualreport.iwf.org.uk/#awards_and_highlights)
- 7 [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5630f48de4b00a75476ecfoa/t/5a83272c8165f5d2a348426d/1518544686414/6.4159\\_WeProtect+GA+report.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5630f48de4b00a75476ecfoa/t/5a83272c8165f5d2a348426d/1518544686414/6.4159_WeProtect+GA+report.pdf)
- 8 Technical report: Towards a Global Indicator on Unidentified Victims in Child Sexual Exploitation Material - February 2018





[www.accce.gov.au](http://www.accce.gov.au)