

# **A comparative review of strategies to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse**

Prepared by the  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We acknowledge the palawa/pakana of lutruwita, the traditional owners of the land upon which we live and work. We pay respects to Elders past and present as the knowledge holders and sharers. We honour their strong culture and knowledge as vital to the self-determination, wellbeing and resilience of their communities. We stand for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history.

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Any mistakes are those of the authors.

## HELP AND SUPPORT

This report discusses sensitive topics related to child sexual abuse, which may bring up strong feelings or cause distress for some readers. Please prioritise your emotional well-being and seek support – from family and friends, a counsellor, or a doctor – if needed.

The following services can also give you help and support:

Crisis and Suicide Prevention	If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call Triple Zero: 000  Lifeline: 13 11 14, <a href="https://www.lifeline.org.au/">https://www.lifeline.org.au/</a>
Mental health support	Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800, <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au/">https://kidshelpline.com.au/</a>  Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636, <a href="https://www.beyondblue.org.au/">https://www.beyondblue.org.au/</a>
Child sexual abuse support and advice	Blue Knot Foundation: 1300 657 380, <a href="https://blueknot.org.au/">https://blueknot.org.au/</a>  Bravehearts: 1800 272 831, <a href="https://bravehearts.org.au/">https://bravehearts.org.au/</a>  National Redress Scheme: 1800 737 377, <a href="https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/">https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/</a>  Survivors & Mates Support Network: 1800 472 676, <a href="https://www.samsn.org.au/">https://www.samsn.org.au/</a>  National Office for Child Safety: <a href="https://www.childsafety.gov.au/">https://www.childsafety.gov.au/</a>

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In early 2024, the Tasmanian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) commissioned the Tasmanian Policy Exchange (TPE) to conduct an international comparative review of strategies for child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention and response. This report provides the findings of our comparative review. It is intended to support the Tasmanian Government's development of its own strategy to prevent and respond to CSA.

## 1.1 Scope and methodology

The comparative review was conducted via desktop research. It covered six strategies – four by countries and two by international organisations (see Table 1) – and also involved comprehensive analysis of the academic and grey literature. The goals were to identify important elements that the forthcoming Tasmanian strategy could include, put forward some principles that could be used to underpin the design of Tasmania's strategy,

and explain how the strategy could draw on systems change and whole-of-government approaches.

## 1.2 Structure

Following this introduction, the report is divided into six main sections:+

- **Section 2** – a summary of the reasons why Tasmania is developing a CSA strategy.
- **Section 3** – an overview of the Australian state and territory responses to the Royal Commission
- **Section 4** – an overview of relevant national and international strategies and approaches
- **Section 5** – an overview of the systems change lens
- **Section 6** – a description of the elements that CSA strategies typically include.

**Table 1:** *Strategies analysed for this report*

<b>Australia</b>	<a href="#">National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030</a> (2021)
<b>New Zealand</b>	<a href="#">To Aorerekura: The National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence</a> (2021)
<b>United Kingdom (UK)</b>	<a href="#">Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021</a> (2021)
<b>Wales</b>	<a href="#">National Action Plan: Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse</a> (2019)
<b>European Union (EU)</b>	<a href="#">EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse</a> (n.d.)
<b>United Nations Children's Fund</b>	<a href="#">Action to end child sexual abuse and exploitation</a>

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1 Why Tasmania is developing a child sexual abuse strategy

Community concern over CSA in Tasmanian government institutions, as well as the scale and intensity of offending, led to the establishment of the independent 'Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings' (the Col) on 15 March 2021. The Col's final report was released on 31 August 2023, and featured 191 recommendations. Recommendation 19.1 was that:

*The Tasmanian Government should develop a whole of government child sexual abuse reform strategy for preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse in institutions and harmful sexual behaviours.<sup>1</sup>*

The Col stated that a strategy specifically for Tasmania 'is not only justified but warranted' due to the State's unique combination of demographic and cultural factors.<sup>2</sup>

In December 2023, the Tasmanian Government released its response to the Col, *Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust*. The Tasmanian Government accepted all the Col recommendations, including the development of a Tasmania-specific strategy.

The response stated that the Tasmanian strategy 'will be outcomes-focused: it will describe the system that Tasmania seeks to achieve and how we will work to achieve those outcomes'.<sup>3</sup> It also noted that the strategy will:

*Take into account broader work by the Tasmanian Government to improve systems and processes for responding to child sexual abuse, including outstanding recommendations of the Royal Commission, the Independent Inquiry into the Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Department of Health's Child Safe Governance Review and the Keeping Children Safe Actions.<sup>4</sup>*

Currently, no other Australian state or territory has its own standalone strategy for preventing, identifying, and responding to CSA. According to the Col, a Tasmanian strategy 'would model a best practice whole of government response to child sexual abuse for other states and territories in Australia'.<sup>5</sup>

Other jurisdictions have opted to design and implement broader strategies, for example on preventing and responding to child maltreatment or sexual violence, which address CSA amongst a wider remit (see Section 3 and Section 4.2).

<sup>1</sup> Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (2023), *Final Report*, August 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Commission of Inquiry, *Final Report*, vol. 8, 102; vol. 2, 68-9, 72-76.

<sup>3</sup> Tasmanian Government (n.d.) *Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust: Government Response to the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings*, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Tasmanian Government, *Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust*, 38-39.

<sup>5</sup> Commission of Inquiry, *Final Report*, vol. 8, 102.

The Tasmanian strategy to tackle CSA will need to be cognisant of and work together with other related strategies and policies already in place in Tasmania (as articulated in the Col's recommendation 19.1 – see next page). These include:

- [Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022- 2027](#)
- [Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Tasmanian Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2023-27](#)

With so many specific approaches to different but often inter-related challenges, there is a danger that problems may not be dealt with holistically, with the potential of duplication of effort and confusion over who takes responsibility in certain circumstances.

The Government has committed to releasing its Child Sexual Abuse Reform Strategy and accompanying Action Plan in July 2024.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2 Commission of Inquiry goals for the strategy

The Commission of Inquiry stated that the goals of the strategy should be to:

- *Provide information and guidance to victim-survivors and their families, the community and government funded agencies and statutory bodies on what is being done to address and respond to child sexual abuse, child sexual abuse in institutions and harmful sexual behaviours in Tasmania.*

- *Ensure these agencies and statutory bodies meet their obligations.*
- *Ensure the different drivers associated with child sexual abuse (including in institutional settings) and harmful sexual behaviours are being appropriately addressed.*
- *Act as a safety net for the Government to be self-assured it has a coordinated whole of government approach to creating, monitoring and improving its response to child sexual abuse.*

Reflecting this Col recommendation, the Strategy will need to clearly indicate that it is a tool for preventing and addressing CSA wherever it occurs, whether inside or outside institutional settings.

The recommendation also stated that the Tasmanian strategy should align with Australia's *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030* (the National Strategy) and existing Tasmanian strategies and frameworks relating to children and young people.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Tasmanian Government, *Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust*, 88-90.

<sup>7</sup> Commission of Inquiry, *Final Report*, vol. 8, 102.



## 3. AUSTRALIAN STATE AND TERRITORY RESPONSES TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION

Repeated calls for governments in Australia to respond to the problem of CSA led to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013-17). The Royal Commission led to the establishment of the National Strategy in 2021. All state and territory governments were required to respond to the Royal Commission using a three-stage method for measuring, monitoring and reporting:

- **Stage 1:** all Australian governments to formally respond to outline their responsibility for implementation (Recommendation 17.1)
- **Stage 2:** 5 years of annual reporting to show how all Australian governments are making progress implementing the recommendations (Recommendation 17.2) as well as 5 years of annual reporting for relevant non-government institutions (Recommendation 17.3)
- **Stage 3:** a review of how the recommendations have been implemented 10 years after the Final Report was released. This 10-year review is intended to show the extent of implementation and the effectiveness of the measures used. It should also advise on what further steps need to be taken (Recommendation 17.4).<sup>8</sup>

All state and territories have (mostly) issued the required annual reports, but their responses have otherwise varied. Each state and territory's response is summarised below.

### 3.1 Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Government published a response to the Royal Commission in 2018 and has since published five annual progress report updates. There is no specific strategy or framework that has been developed for the implementation of recommendations by government.<sup>9</sup> Rather, recommendations have been implemented across four themes that had been identified by the Government from the Final Report. The ACT *Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-2025*<sup>10</sup> has been used to help guide the government's response and take a human rights approach to addressing child sexual abuse. This reflects the ACT Government's commitment to 'protecting the rights of child and young people, including their right to special protection, because of their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse'.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 New South Wales

The NSW Government published its response to the Royal Commission in 2018 and announced a \$127.2 million implementation package. It has since published five Annual

<sup>8</sup> Australian Government (2022) Annual Progress Report 2022, *Implementation of recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2023-11/annual-progress-report-2022.PDF>, 194.

<sup>9</sup> Australian Capital Territory Government (n.d.) *ACT Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.act.gov.au/childabuseroyalcommission/home>.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Capital Territory Government (n.d.) *ACT Children and Young People Commitment 2015-2025* <https://www.act.gov.au/open/act-children-and-young-people-commitment-2015-2025>.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Capital Territory Government (2018) *ACT Government Response Snapshot Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, June 2018 [https://www.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1210759/Response-Snapshot.pdf](https://www.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1210759/Response-Snapshot.pdf).

Reports on its progress,<sup>12</sup> but has not developed a specific strategy or framework for the implementation of the recommendations. The *NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027* states that

*while children are a priority group [...] child sexual abuse is also addressed through other initiatives, such as the NSW Government's response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, Safe and Supported: the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2024, and its related action plans.*<sup>13</sup>

### 3.3 Northern Territory

The NT Government has only published one annual progress report, in 2019. The report states that it is progressing responses to the

Royal Commission through the 'Safe Thriving and Connected reform agenda' (developed in response to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory) and its early childhood development plan, *Starting Early for a Better Future*.<sup>14</sup> The NT Government also has a *Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework 2020-2028*,<sup>15</sup> which does not specifically target CSA but includes actions that are delivering on several recommendations arising from the Royal Commission.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.4 South Australia

The SA Government released its response to the Royal Commission in 2018.<sup>17</sup> It reports annually on its progress towards implementing the recommendations, and does not appear to have set an end date for this reporting – in contrast, other states have typically committed to publishing only the mandated five annual reports.<sup>18</sup> The SA Government has developed a strategy called

<sup>12</sup> New South Wales Government (n.d.) *NSW Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/engage-us/response-to-royal-commission>.

<sup>13</sup> New South Wales Government, Department of Communities and Justice (2022) *NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027*, December 2022 <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/service-providers/domestic-and-family-violence-services/NSW-Sexual-Violence-Plan-2022-2027.pdf>; see also Commonwealth of Australia (2017) *Final Report. Our inquiry: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* [https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_volume\\_1\\_our\\_inquiry.pdf](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_1_our_inquiry.pdf); Commonwealth of Australia (2022) *Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031* [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01\\_2023/final-first-action-plan.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2023/final-first-action-plan.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Northern Territory Government (n.d.) *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – First Progress Report* [https://rmo.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/675314/RCIRCSA-First-Annual-Progress-Report.pdf](https://rmo.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/675314/RCIRCSA-First-Annual-Progress-Report.pdf); see also Northern Territory Government (2018) *Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families 2018-2023*, April 2018 [https://rmo.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/498173/Safe,-Thriving-and-Connected-Implementation-Plan-Web.pdf](https://rmo.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/498173/Safe,-Thriving-and-Connected-Implementation-Plan-Web.pdf); and Northern Territory Government (n.d.) *Starting Early for a Better Future – Early Childhood Development in the Northern Territory 2018-2028* [https://cmc.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/815386/starting-early-for-a-better-future.pdf](https://cmc.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/815386/starting-early-for-a-better-future.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Northern Territory Government (n.d.) *The Northern Territory's Sexual Violence Prevention and response Framework 2020-2028* [https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/816961/sexual-violence-response-framework-2020-2028.pdf](https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/816961/sexual-violence-response-framework-2020-2028.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> NT Government, *NT's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework*.

<sup>17</sup> Government of South Australia (n.d.) *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/child-protection-initiatives/system-reform/royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>18</sup> Government of SA, *Royal Commission*.

*Safe and well: Supporting families, protecting children*, which brings together the findings from the national Royal Commission and those from the SA Child Protection Systems Royal Commission (completed in 2016).<sup>19</sup> The Strategy does not specifically focus on CSA, but rather aims to support families to keep their children safe and to give better support to children in state care.

### 3.5 Western Australia

The WA Government published a response to the Royal Commission in 2018.<sup>20</sup> It committed to five years of annual progress reports to track the implementation of the recommendations, but as of March 2024 it had only published four (2018 through to 2021).<sup>21</sup> The key WA Government initiative has been the establishment of the Australian Centre for Child Protection Western Australia (ACCP-WA).<sup>22</sup> The Government has also established 'Safer WA for Children and Young People', an online hub which offers advice and information including resources to help if someone has concerns for the safety of a child or young person, support for victim-survivors of CSA and information for victim-survivors on redress.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.6 Victoria

The Victorian Government published its response to Royal Commission in 2018.<sup>24</sup> It has since published five annual reports, as required by the Royal Commission.<sup>25</sup> The Victorian Government has not developed an overarching strategy or framework to address CSA. Instead, it relied on the five annual reports to track progress against the Royal Commission's recommendations. Specific reforms have included:

- Sharing information with other jurisdictions, and across government and non-government institutions, to protect children from sexual abuse.
- Updating the State's Child Safe Standards to create 11 new standards, including a national first standard on Aboriginal cultural safety. These Child Safe Standards require organisations involving children and young people to implement policies, procedures, and practices to keep children and young people in their care safe. An estimated 50,000 organisations in Victoria must comply.

<sup>19</sup> Government of South Australia (n.d.) *Safe and Well: Supporting families, protecting children - The Government of South Australia's strategy for keeping families and children safe and well* [https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/126497/19-070-Safe-and-Well-State-Reform\\_Final.pdf](https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/126497/19-070-Safe-and-Well-State-Reform_Final.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Government of Western Australia (2022) *How the WA Government is implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/how-the-wa-government-implementing-the-recommendations-the-royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>21</sup> Government of WA, *Implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission*.

<sup>22</sup> Government of WA, *Implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission*.

<sup>23</sup> Government of Western Australia (2024) *Safer WA for Children and Young People*, Last updated 24 April 2024 <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/government-initiatives-and-projects/safer-wa-children-and-young-people>.

<sup>24</sup> Victorian Government (2018) *Victorian Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, July 2018, <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-response-royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>25</sup> Victorian Government (n.d.) *Victorian Government Annual Report 2022 – Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Introduction* <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-annual-report-2022-royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse-0>.

- The expansion of the powers of the Victorian Institute of Teaching to request and disclose information about registered teachers and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to include, for example, early childhood and after-hours care.
- The inclusion in the Victorian curriculum of education on consent, relationships and sexuality at primary and secondary school.
- Expanded specialist sexual assault services as well as interventions for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of 2022, the Victorian Government stated that it had acquitted 85% of the relevant recommendations, and that work to implement the outstanding recommendations was continuing.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.7 Queensland

The Queensland Government published a response to the Royal Commission and has since produced five annual reports on the implementation of the recommendations.<sup>28</sup>

The Government has produced an overarching framework – *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence* – which aims to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual violence in the State, including CSA.<sup>29</sup> The framework explicitly states that part of its purpose is to enact recommendations from the Royal Commission.

### 3.8 Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government published a response to the Royal Commission in 2018,<sup>30</sup> and has since published five annual progress reports. The first outlined an implementation action plan. Reforms that have already been implemented include:<sup>31</sup>

- Amending legislation, including: introducing a new offence of ‘failing to protect’ a child or young person to ensure those in organisational leadership positions take responsibility; creating a presumption that children and young people are unable to consent to sexual intercourse with those in a position of power within an organisation.

<sup>26</sup> Victorian Government, *Annual Report 2022*.

<sup>27</sup> Victorian Government, *Annual Report 2022*.

<sup>28</sup> Queensland Government (2023) *Queensland Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Last reviewed April 2021 and Last modified August 2023 <https://www.dcssds.qld.gov.au/about-us/reviews-inquiries/queensland-government-response-royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse>.

<sup>29</sup> The State of Queensland, Department of Justice and Attorney-General (n.d.) *Queensland's Framework to Address Sexual Violence Action Plan 2021-22* <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/2a3e1674-b3ee-406a-97f4-17c7b71cf81a/sexual-violence-action-plan-2021-22.pdf?ETag=add79e034e0d3fb9711203ac6943e38b>.

<sup>30</sup> Tasmanian Government, Department of Justice (2018) *Tasmanian Response: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, June 2018 <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1382488533/view>.

<sup>31</sup> Tasmanian Government, Department of Justice (2022) *Tasmanian Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/tasmanian-response-to-the-royal-commission>; Tasmanian Government, Department of Justice (2018); *Protecting our Children – Implementing the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – First Year Action Plan 2018-2019*, October 2018 [https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/453264/First-Year-Progress-Report\\_Royal-Commission-Final-Report.pdf](https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/453264/First-Year-Progress-Report_Royal-Commission-Final-Report.pdf).

- A witness intermediary scheme pilot that supported adults and children with communication needs who were victim-survivors or witnesses to sexual crimes and/or homicide matters. The pilot ran from March 2021 to 2024, and is now being reviewed.
- The development and implementation of the Child and Youth Organisations Framework. This includes the Child and Youth Safe Standards, which are 'designed to create a cultural foundation within organisations and minimise risk by establishing safe and child-centred

processes and environments';<sup>32</sup> and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which requires leaders of organisations to notify the Independent Regulator when there is any inappropriate action by workers against or in the presence of children and young people.<sup>33</sup>

In its final report, the Col commended the Tasmanian Government's 'efforts to implement many of the National Royal Commission recommendations,' but noted that 'other recommendations are outstanding or remain in progress'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Tasmanian Government, Department of Police, Fire, and Emergency Management (n.d.) *Child and Youth Safe Organisation* [https://www.dpfem.tas.gov.au/childsafef/#:~:text=The%20Reportable%20Conduct%20Scheme%20\(the,they%20may%20engage%20an%20investigator\)](https://www.dpfem.tas.gov.au/childsafef/#:~:text=The%20Reportable%20Conduct%20Scheme%20(the,they%20may%20engage%20an%20investigator);); Tasmanian Government, Department of Justice (n.d.) *The Royal Commission Response Unit – Child and Youth Safe Standards* <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/child-and-youth-safe-organisations-framework/child-and-youth-safe-standards>.

<sup>33</sup> Tasmanian Government DPFEM, *Child and youth safe organisation*.

<sup>34</sup> Commission of Inquiry, *Final Report*, vol 1, 5.

## 4. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

This section provides an overview of the six strategies analysed for the study. Further detail on other strategies, plans and agreements related to each strategy is provided in the Appendix.

### 4.1 Australia – National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030

Australia’s National Strategy was released in 2021, as part of the Commonwealth Government’s response to the Royal Commission. It is a brief document that focuses on vision, objective, values, and stakeholder roles:

- **Vision:** All children and young people are protected and safe from sexual abuse. Victim-survivors are supported and empowered.<sup>35</sup>
- **Objective:** The National Strategy will reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia.<sup>36</sup>
- **Values:** The National Strategy defines five underlying values (see Figure 1).<sup>37</sup>
- **Stakeholders:** The National Strategy defines roles for the Commonwealth (e.g. national leadership on child safety policy, aligning Commonwealth and state/territory criminal codes, and oversight of other relevant national strategies), state and territory governments (e.g. service

*Figure 1: Guiding values for the National Strategy'*

Child safety is everyone’s responsibility. Australian, state and territory governments, organisations, industry, communities, families, kin, carers and individuals all have a role to play.
The views and experiences of victim-survivors are a priority, and their needs shape our efforts.
Children and young people’s voices and views, experiences and participation are central to the decisions we make.
We hear and value the diverse views and experiences of all Australians. The work we do to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culturally safe</li> <li>• developmentally and age appropriate</li> <li>• trauma-informed</li> <li>• accessible and meets diverse needs and circumstances.</li> </ul>
Evidence, data, research and evaluation informs our policies, programs and reforms.

<sup>35</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2021) *National Strategy to Prevent and Response to Child Sexual Abuse*, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-strategy-prevent-and-respond-child-sexual-abuse-2021-2030>, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy* 21.



provision and criminal enforcement), local governments (e.g. service and information provision), organisations (e.g. research, awareness raising), and the community at large (e.g. identifying risks and directing young people to appropriate support).<sup>38</sup>

It also makes the case for why a National Strategy is needed, highlighting the findings of the Royal Commission and the increased prevalence of CSA and online child abuse material.<sup>39</sup>

The National Strategy is underpinned by a public health approach involving ‘primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary measures to better identify, prevent and respond to child sexual abuse’ (see box below).<sup>40</sup> This is encouraging given that academics and practitioners have been arguing that CSA should be treated as a public health issue since the 1980s.<sup>41</sup> The public health approach entails policy initiatives focused on those at risk of abuse, those who have been abused,

and the broader community. As the Australian National Strategy notes, the public health approach requires four levels of response:

- **Primary prevention** to address the underlying causes of CSA, e.g. through sexuality education, respectful relationships education.
- **Secondary prevention** to target those at risk, e.g. through early intervention for people exhibiting problematic sexual behaviours.
- **Tertiary intervention**, which focuses on victim-survivors and perpetrators, e.g. support for victim-survivors, offender treatment programs, criminal justice.
- **Quaternary prevention**, which involves evaluating of tertiary responses.

The implementation of this evidence-based approach to CSA has been hampered by the complexity and “emotionality” associated with the issue (see box below).

### Complexity and Emotionality

“Complexity” in this context refers to the ever-expanding sub-categories of CSA that are still being identified and researched, and the multiple interlinked risk factors and underlying causes of CSA.

“Emotionality” describes the way that CSA:

... engenders emotional and defensive responses, contributing to the issue of policy resistance. In Australia... this emotionality manifests through media coverage, reactive legislation, and unhelpful binary oppositions (McKibbin and Humphreys, 2).

It is important to note that emotionality is not used in reference to victim-survivors – rather, it is framed as a critique of political, media, and community figures that promote headline-grabbing reactive and punitive measures at the expense of long-term, grassroots preventative work.

<sup>38</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 28-29.

<sup>39</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 25.

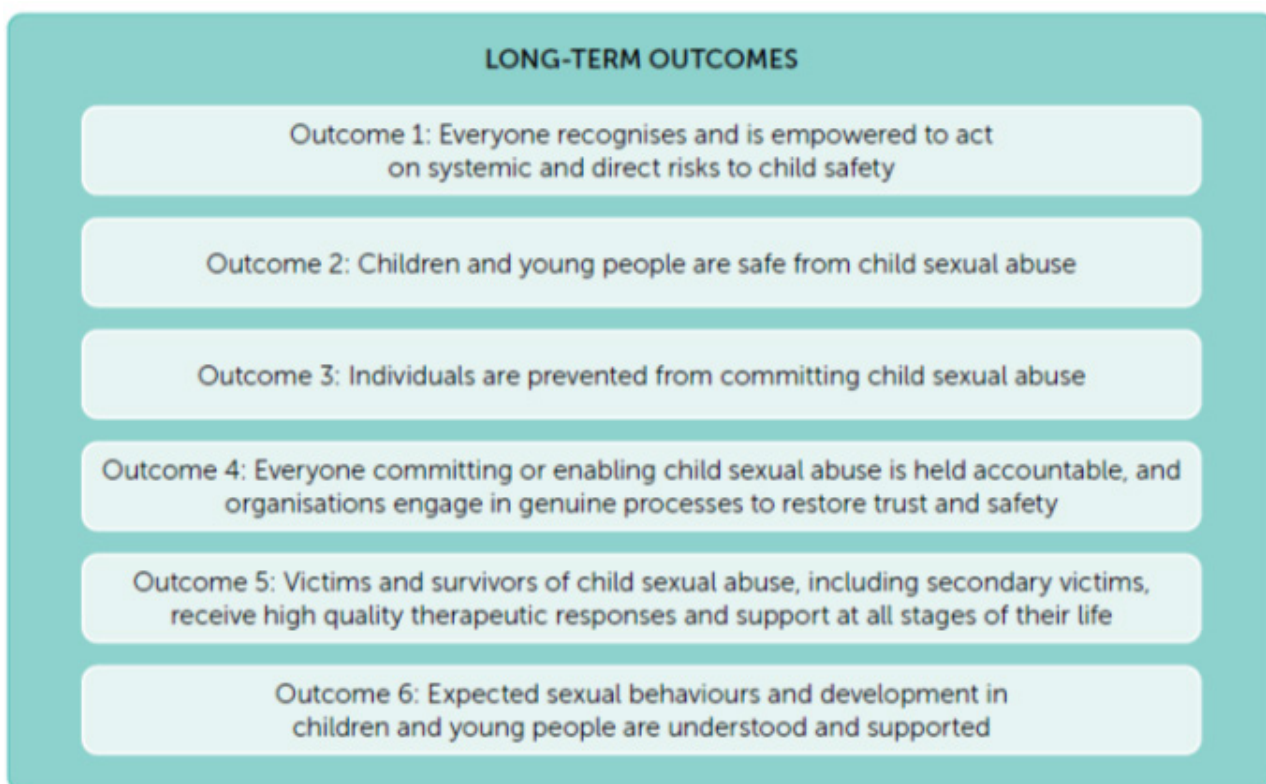
<sup>40</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> G. McKibbin & C. Humphreys (2020) Future directions in child sexual abuse prevention: An Australian perspective, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 105.

The National Strategy was published alongside the *First National Action Plan*, which sets out a range of initiatives to tackle CSA across five themes: awareness raising, education and building child safe cultures; supporting and empowering victim-survivors; enhancing national approaches to children with harmful sexual behaviours; offender prevention and intervention; and improving the evidence base. A lead Commonwealth Government department or agency is allocated to each initiative.<sup>42</sup>

The National Strategy (and Action Plan) has been developed by the Commonwealth Government, and will be overseen by three groups: Australia, state, and territory governments; non-government organisations; and people from the National Strategy's priority groups (see section 6.7). Additionally, reporting will take place under the recently released Monitoring and Evaluation Framework<sup>43</sup> which maps out the long- and medium-term outcomes (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

**Figure 2:** Long-term outcomes, National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework<sup>4</sup>



<sup>42</sup> Commonwealth of Australia (2021) *National Strategy to Prevent and Response to Child Sexual Abuse*, <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-strategy-prevent-and-respond-child-sexual-abuse-2021-2030>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2024-06/national-strategy-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework.PDF>



Figure 3: Medium-term outcomes, National Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

NATIONAL STRATEGY THEMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
<p><b>Theme 1:</b> Awareness raising, education and building child safe cultures</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Everyone has increased awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse</li> <li>2. Communities, organisations and governments implement child safety policies and practices and have a culture where the best interests of children and young people, and victims and survivors, are a priority</li> <li>3. Child sexual abuse is discussed openly, respectfully and without shame or stigma</li> <li>4. Digital technologies are used to promote child safety and respond to child sexual abuse</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 2:</b> Supporting and empowering victims and survivors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Victims and survivors are better recognised and believed at all stages of disclosure and complaint</li> <li>6. Victims and survivors, including secondary victims, are supported and empowered to manage the impacts of child sexual abuse</li> <li>7. Organisations responsible for harm restore trust from victims and survivors</li> <li>8. Victims and survivors, including secondary victims, have access to high-quality services</li> <li>9. The workforce and organisations are resourced to recognise and respond to child sexual abuse with high-quality care</li> <li>10. Service system responses (criminal, legal, statutory, educational, health and mental health sector) to child sexual abuse are coordinated to support victims and survivors</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 3:</b> Enhancing national approaches to children who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Building knowledge so everyone can understand and recognise developmentally expected, concerning and harmful sexual behaviours</li> <li>12. Children and young people who have displayed concerning or harmful sexual behaviours receive access to high-quality assessment and proportionate therapeutic responses and support</li> <li>13. Families, communities and workforces receive support and are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people who have displayed, and those impacted by harmful sexual behaviours</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 4:</b> Offending prevention and intervention</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. People and organisations are aware and comply with their responsibilities regarding child safety</li> <li>15. Justice and service providers are better connected to identify and respond to offenders, perpetrators and people at risk of perpetrating child sexual abuse</li> <li>16. Statutory frameworks and justice responses are focused on stopping child sexual abuse including preventing further abuse</li> <li>17. High-quality referral pathways for offenders, perpetrators and people at risk of perpetrating are available, used and have appropriate referral pathways in and out</li> </ol>
<p><b>Theme 5:</b> Improving the evidence base</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. High-quality evidence and knowledge is available on the prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse</li> <li>19. High-quality evidence and knowledge is available on effective and best practice early interventions and holistic responses to child sexual abuse</li> </ol>

## 4.2 New Zealand – Te Aorerekura / The Enduring Spirit of Affection: A strategy to eliminate family violence and sexual violence

New Zealand's *Te Aorerekura / The Enduring Spirit of Affection: A Strategy to eliminate family violence and sexual violence* (*Te Aorerekura*) was released in December 2021. As the title indicates, its focus is broader than CSA alone, but it includes several initiatives relevant to this topic and one that is specifically focused on preventing CSA. Overall, *Te Aorerekura* takes a strengths-based and *whānau-centred* (community-led) approach, using the *Tokoturu* ('unbreakable three') model as the framework. The *Tokoturu* model features three interconnected dimensions – strengthening, responding and healing – and is intended to change the social conditions, structures and norms that perpetuate harm.<sup>44</sup>

The New Zealand Government developed the Strategy and is directly accountable for the actions outlined in New Zealand's *Te Aorerekura / The Enduring Spirit of Affection: Action Plan for the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence*. The action plan also provides activities and actions that are to be led by other Boards and partners. The oversight and monitoring of the Strategy will occur annually through a *hui*.

Like the Australian National Strategy, *Te Aorerekura* defines a vision, outcomes, and a set of guiding principles:

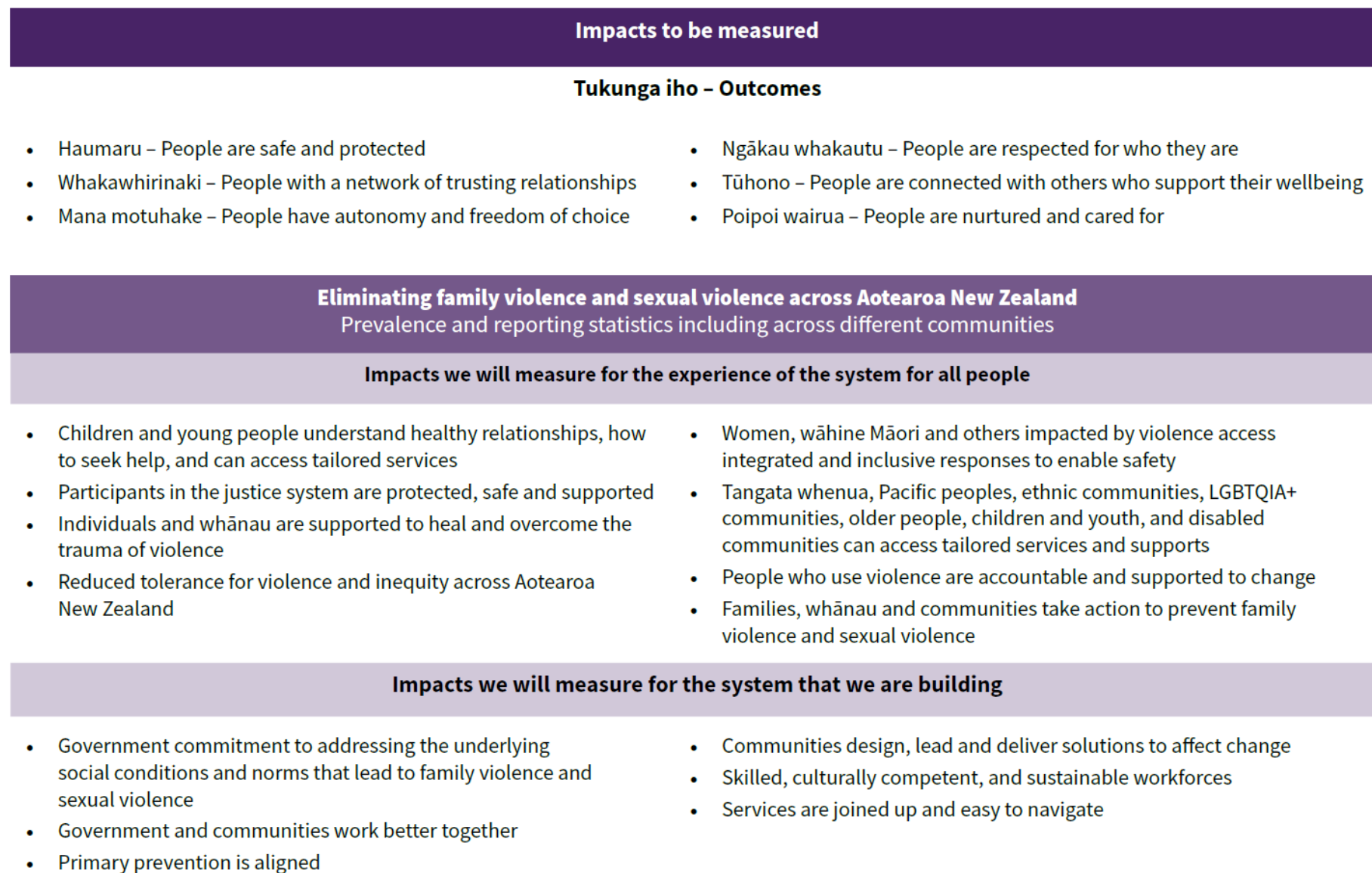
- *Moemoeā – Dream and Vision*: All people in *Aotearoa* New Zealand are thriving; their wellbeing is enhanced and sustained because they are safe and supported to live their lives free from family violence and sexual violence.
- *Tukunga iho – Outcomes*: *Te Aorerekura* defines six outcomes: *haumarū* – people are safe and protected; *whakawhirinaki* – people with a network of trusting relationships; *mana motuhake* – people have autonomy and freedom of choice; *tūhono* – people are connected with others who support their wellbeing; *ngākau whakautu* – people are respected for who they are; and *poipoi wairua* – people are nurtured and cared for.
- *Whanonga pono – Guiding principles*: *Te Aorerekura* defines five guiding principles: prioritising equity and inclusion in all spaces; acting with *aroha* (love/empathy); acting with *tika* and *pono* (fairness and integrity); people work together in an integrated way, reflecting *kotahitanga* (unity/solidarity); *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship/stewardship), in which is all people understand their roles and responsibilities.

The core of *Te Aorerekura* is a set of five 'shifts': towards strength-based wellbeing;<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> New Zealand Government (2021) *Te Aorerekura The Enduring Spirit of Affection: The National Strategy to Eliminate Family and Sexual Violence* <https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/assets/National-strategy/Finals-translations-alt-formats/Te-Aorerekura-National-Strategy-final.pdf>, 35.

<sup>45</sup> Strengths-based approaches see interventions refocus away from need and deficits and towards 'strengths' and resources, which may include factors such as relationships, collaboration, self-determination, hope, curiosity, building resilience, positive risk taking. See, for example, James Caiels, Alisoun Milne, and Julie Beadle-Brown (2021), "Strengths-Based Approaches in Social Work and Social Care: Review the Evidence", *Journal of Long-Term Care* 0: 401-422. 401-422. <https://doi.org/10.31389/jltc.102>

*Figure 2: Draft Te Aorerekura measurement framework*



towards mobilising communities; towards skilled, culturally competent and sustainable workforces; towards investment in primary prevention; towards safe, accessible, and integrated responses; and towards increased capacity for healing. For each shift, the strategy identifies the goal, relevant activities already happening, and what will change. Most shifts include call-out boxes that identify specific changes for relevant cohorts, such as children and young people, LGBTQIA+ people, and disabled people. There are 32 actions divided across the five shifts (see Appendix), with one of these ('Strengthen community-led solutions to prevent child sexual abuse') explicitly focused on CSA. More specific, short-term actions are defined in the accompanying Action Plan.

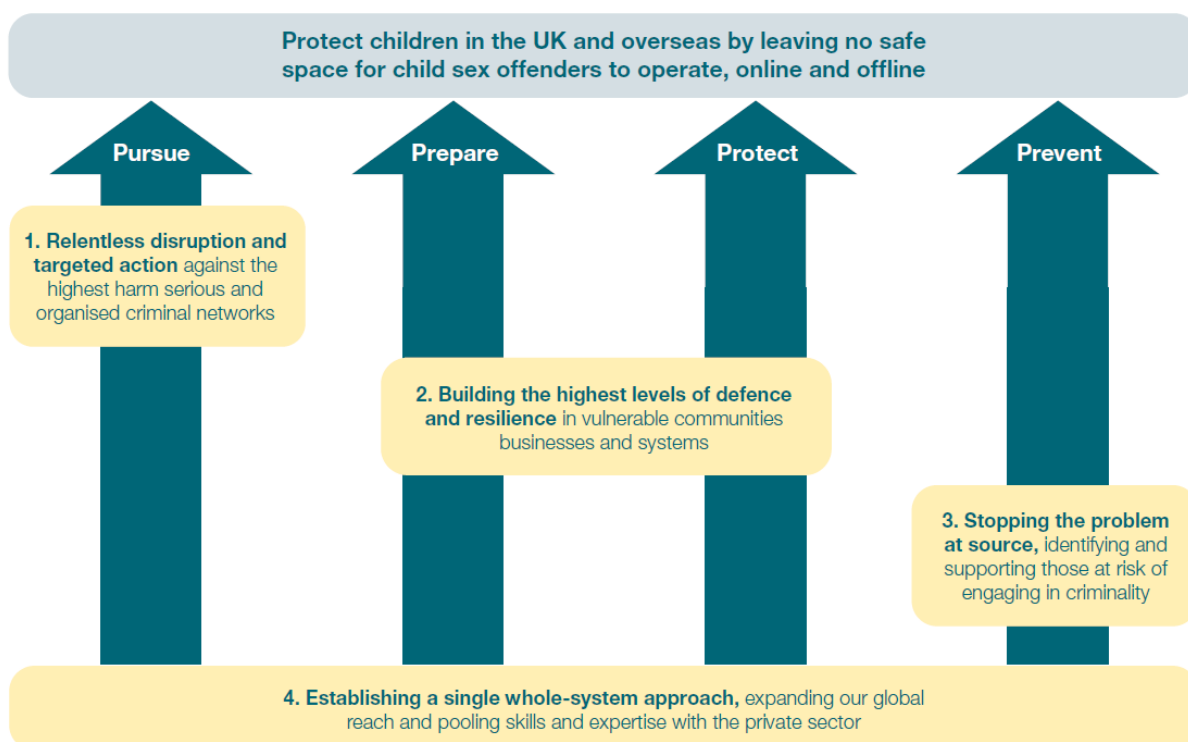
*Te Aorerekura* also sets out the draft high-level approach to learning and monitoring progress (see Figure 2), and notes that measures will be collaboratively developed with the community and sector specialists.<sup>46</sup>

### 4.3 United Kingdom – Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

The UK's *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy* (the UK Strategy) was published in 2021, and covers England and Wales. It was partially informed by interim reports from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), which ran from 2015 to 2022.

The Strategy was developed by the UK Government. The Strategy will be 'driven' through the National Strategic

Figure 3: The 4Ps



<sup>46</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 69; For more information on these processes see New Zealand Government (2021) *Te Aorerekura The Enduring Spirit of Affection: Action Plan for the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, December 2021 – December 2023* <https://tepunaonui.govt.nz/assets/National-strategy/Finals-translations-alt-formats/Te-Aorerekura-Action-plan.pdf>, 48-9.

Implementation Group as part of the SOC Strategy. It will be overseen by the National Security Council, and the Domestic Affairs and Union Committee. Additionally, the Home Office will provide some oversight of relevant government departments (including the Department for Education, and the Department for Health and Social Care).<sup>47</sup>

The UK strategy does not provide a headline vision but includes a diagram depicting a more complex 'vision for a whole-system response' (see Figure 4). The strategy's conceptual framework is aligned with the 'delivery framework' for the UK's broader *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy* (2018), which is known as the '4Ps': Pursue, Prepare, Protect and Prevent (see Figure 3). The conceptual framework is underpinned by four principles:<sup>48</sup>

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone has a role in preventing child sexual abuse.
2. We need to work across agencies and systems to uncover and respond to child sexual abuse.
3. We need a collaborative response which empowers local partners to respond to local issues.
4. Tackling child sexual abuse is a global issue.

At the operational level, actions and 'measures for improvement' are organised under three objectives:

1. Tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice.
2. Preventing offending and re-offending.
3. Protecting and safeguarding children and young people, and supporting all victim-survivors.

The UK Strategy heavily emphasises a strong law and order approach to CSA. For example, across the three objectives it includes actions to increase criminal justice system capacity, enhance the tools and powers available to law enforcement, use technology to catch perpetrators, and improve offender management. This approach is unsurprising given that the UK Strategy is framed as a sub-set of the *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*, and is therefore implemented by the 'National Strategic Implementation Group on Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)' and overseen by the National Security Council and the Domestic Affairs and the Union Committee.<sup>49</sup> Some measures to address the underlying causes of CSA are outlined in Objective 3.1 ('Giving children the best start in life, and raising awareness amongst parents, carers and families'), but primary prevention is not a focus.

The UK Strategy is more concerned with outlining the challenge than the other strategies discussed in this report. It dedicates several pages to topics including CSA's scale and prevalence, hidden nature, risk factors, impacts, perpetrator characteristics, and evolving nature.

<sup>47</sup> HM Government (2021), *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605c82328fa8f545dca2c643/Tackling\\_Child\\_Sexual\\_Abuse\\_Strategy\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/605c82328fa8f545dca2c643/Tackling_Child_Sexual_Abuse_Strategy_2021.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> HM Government (2018) *Serious and Organised Crime Strategy* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-and-organised-crime-strategy-2023-to-2028>.

<sup>49</sup> HM Government, *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*, 10.



**Figure 4:** The UK Strategy vision for a whole-system response to CSA

<b>Safeguarding children and young people</b>		<b>Tackling offending and managing offenders</b>	
Safeguarding partnerships drive better multi-agency working, with practitioners able to identify and intervene effectively in child sexual abuse cases		Intelligence is enhanced, ensuring resources are prioritised most effectively	Sex offender management in prison and the community is strengthened
Institutions that work with children prevent offenders from accessing children, and identify and support those at-risk	Law enforcement have an understanding of safeguarding and vulnerability in order to support victims and survivors appropriately	Law enforcement and intelligence services have the capability to disrupt offending at scale, leaving no safe spaces for offenders	
<b>Supporting victims and survivors</b>		<b>Bringing offenders to justice</b>	
Child and adult victims and survivors have access to the support services they need	Child and adult victims and survivors are better supported throughout the criminal justice system	The criminal justice system responds more effectively and efficiently to all forms of sexual offending	
<b>All agencies share information effectively to safeguard children and tackle offending</b>			
<b>Targeted support for those at-risk</b>		<b>Deterring offending</b>	
National and local actors are able to identify and effectively support children, young people and families who are at-risk, including those facing greater risk due to COVID-19	Our evidence base for preventative measures, including for harmful sexual behaviour and peer-on-peer abuse, is more robust	Our understanding of offender pathways and motivations is developed and drives interventions to deter offending in the first place	
<b>Giving children the best start in life, raising awareness amongst parents, carers and families, and protecting children and young people in their communities</b>			
Offenders are less able to take advantage of children and young people through raising awareness amongst parents, carers and families, and giving children and young people access to safe spaces and trusted adults		Children are given the best start in life, including access to information and education around healthy and abusive behaviours	
<b>Working with industry to build resilience to abuse online</b>			
Online services are safe by design and all users know where to report concerns		Online platforms prevent, uncover and stop grooming, livestreaming and sharing of child sexual abuse material	
<b>Working internationally to raise global awareness and standards</b>			
The global profile of child sexual abuse is raised, helping to prevent abuse in key at-risk countries and international sectors, and disrupt cross-border offending both on and off line			

## 4.4 Wales – The National Action Plan: Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

The Welsh *National Action Plan: Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse* (the Welsh Action Plan) was released in 2019, fulfilling a commitment made under the Welsh Government’s *National Strategy on Violence against Woman, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Cross Government Delivery Framework 2018-2021*.<sup>50</sup> This strategy did not include measures specific to CSA beyond making a commitment to develop the *National Action Plan: Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse*.

The Welsh Government developed and holds responsibility for the National Action Plan, with the Safeguarding Children’s Board (and partners) holding responsibility for some actions. Both the Government and the Safeguarding Children’s Board will review progress on implementing the actions outlined within the plan (with monitoring from the Government) on an annual basis with a review published following the final reporting period.

As its title indicates, the National Action Plan is more of an operational document than a strategy. It does not provide a conceptual framework, vision for the future, or set guiding principles or values. It features three main themes – Prevention, Protection and Support – which are used to organise 10 key objectives

and 33 actions (see Figure 5). Importantly, the first four objectives are focused on addressing the underlying causes of CSA, which is aligned with the public health approach to CSA. It also provides clear definitions of key terms, and a comprehensive monitoring plan.<sup>51</sup>

*We need to help people understand how the ways in which we talk – or don’t talk about – CSA is an important part of changing attitudes and preventing abuse.*

– Welsh Action Plan, 7

Surprisingly, the Welsh Action Plan does not mention the UK National Strategy. However, it is important to note the Welsh Action Plan is very focused on what it can affect in education and community settings, rather than on law enforcement and judicial approaches. This is because policing and justice in relation to CSA in Wales are governed by the UK Strategy, whereas actions relating to health, social care and education have been devolved to the Welsh Government.

## 4.5 European Union – The EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse

The EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse (the EU Strategy) runs from 2021 to 2025. As a supra-national body, the EU Strategy is focused on: putting in place the right legislation and funding

<sup>50</sup> Welsh Government (2018) *National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Cross Government Delivery Framework 2018-2021*, July 2018, <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld11671/gen-ld11671-e.pdf>, 21.

<sup>51</sup> Welsh Government (2019) *National Action Plan Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse*, July 2019, <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/national-action-plan-preventing-and-responding-to-child-sexual-abuse.pdf>, 4-5.

*Figure 5: Overview of the Welsh National Action Plan*

#### Arrangements for the **Prevention** of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

**Objective 1:** Challenge public attitudes towards CSA and support a culture where talking about CSA is not seen as a taboo subject in a way that can be exploited by perpetrators.

**Objective 2:** Increased awareness in children of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.

**Objective 3:** Increased awareness of how help to keep children safe from CSA for parent/carers, practitioners and the public.

**Objective 4:** Increased awareness of how corporate safeguarding can contribute to the prevention of CSA.

#### Arrangements for the **Protection** of children at risk of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

**Objective 5:** Increased awareness in children of safe ways to disclose sexual abuse or risk of sexual abuse and of what should happen when they tell.

**Objective 6:** Increased awareness in non-abusing parent/carers of what should happen if a child is sexually abused, of how to support children and of how to access support for themselves.

**Objective 7:** Practitioners have access to resources and training to equip them to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to children at risk of or abused through CSA.

#### Arrangements for the **Support** of children who are sexually abused

**Objective 8:** Evidence on the prevalence of CSA is collected to inform the planning of services for children who have been sexually abused.

**Objective 9:** Children, who have been sexually abused, sexually abused through CSE ,HSB and online sexual abuse have access to trauma-informed services and appropriate therapeutic support based on their individual care and support needs to improve well-being and prevent repeat abuse

**Objective 10:** Children who have been sexually abused are given information about and appropriately referred into adult support services as they approach 18 years of age.



frameworks to support member states to combat CSA; strengthening law enforcement; and increasing cooperation among EU stakeholders.

According to the document,

*The aim of this strategy is to provide an effective response, at EU level, to the fight against child sexual abuse. It provides a framework for developing a strong and comprehensive response to these crimes, both in their online and offline form.*<sup>52</sup>

The European Commission developed and holds responsibility for the operationalising of the Strategy, but will implement it collaboratively with stakeholders including practitioners, researchers, companies, law enforcement and the European Parliament.

*The fight against child sexual abuse needs to be fought on many fronts, including by society at large. Real progress can only be made when work is stepped up in relation to prevention, reporting, referral, investigation, protection and identification, treatment and follow-up of each and every case. Social services, health-care professionals, academics, researchers, educators, the judiciary, law enforcement, children, families, NGOs, media and broader society each have a role to play, in a true multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary approach.*

– EU Strategy, 7

The Strategy itself will be the reference framework for EU action on CSA and will inform other Commission initiatives.

**Figure 6:** EU Strategy initiatives

<p><b>Implement and develop the right legal framework to protect children</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure complete implementation of current legislation (Directive 2011/93/EU)</li> <li>2. Ensure that EU legislation enables an effective response</li> <li>3. Identify legislative gaps, best practices and priority actions</li> </ol>
<p><b>Strengthen the law enforcement response and enhance cooperation among all stakeholders</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Strengthen law enforcement efforts at national and EU level</li> <li>5. Enable Member States to better protect children through prevention</li> <li>6. A European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse</li> <li>7. Galvanise industry efforts to ensure the protection of children in their products</li> <li>8. Improve protection of children globally through multi-stakeholder cooperation</li> </ol>

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2020) *EU Strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse*, July 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0607, 2>.

The EU Strategy outlines eight initiatives, organised under two themes (see Figure 6). Although it does not explicitly state its conceptual approach to CSA, it acknowledges the importance of a ‘multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary approach’, and that ‘the fight against child sexual abuse needs to be fought on many fronts, including by society at large’.<sup>53</sup> Importantly, under Initiative 5, the EU strategy notes the importance of a ‘virtuous cycle of practice to research and research to practice’<sup>54</sup> that enables member states to develop evidence-based interventions. Although there are one or more actions associated with each initiative, implementation dates are not generally specified.

## 4.6 UNICEF – Action to end child sexual abuse and exploitation

In 2020, UNICEF released *Action to end child sexual abuse and exploitation* (the UNICEF Report), which presents the results of an evidence review covering 168 research studies. The UNICEF report is not itself a strategy to prevent and/or respond to CSA as such, but it provides policymakers with evidence on ‘the extent, nature, and consequences of child sexual abuse and exploitation for children in different contexts’ and ‘evidence on effective interventions and strategies to prevent and respond’.<sup>55</sup> As such, the UNICEF Report provides a useful scaffolding for strategy development.

The UNICEF Report proposes a Theory of Change (ToC) based on the child rights perspective defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ToC sets out a range of common barriers to effectively addressing CSA and defines three main action areas for addressing these challenges: enabling environments; service delivery; and social and behavioural change. The actions within the action areas are associated with a series of outputs and outcomes, which in turn result in the overarching desired impact – equivalent in this context to the vision – which is that:

*Girls and boys of all ages grow up with a freedom from sexual abuse and exploitation; and those who do experience sexual abuse or exploitation, in all the settings and contexts in which it occurs, benefit from greater access to care, support, justice and other services needed to ensure physical, mental and social wellbeing.*<sup>56</sup>

Based on the evidence review, the UNICEF Report identifies a set of actions across the three areas identified above (see Figure 7). The actions provide a useful checklist for policymakers.

Finally, the UNICEF Report identifies a range of gaps in current research and challenges that practice needs to address:

<sup>53</sup> European Commission, *EU Strategy*, 7.

<sup>54</sup> European Commission, *EU Strategy*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> United National Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2020) *Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*, December 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/media/89206/file/CSAE-Brief-v3.pdf>, 4.

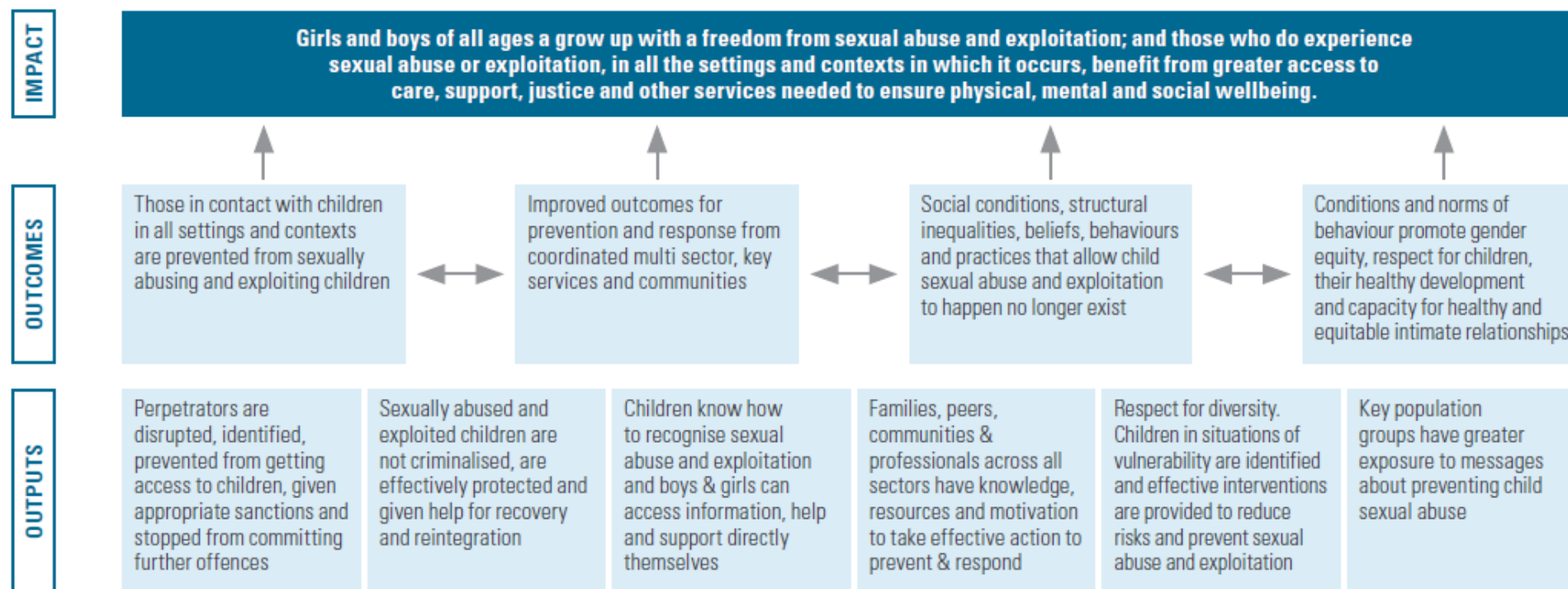
<sup>56</sup> UNICEF, *Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*, 14.

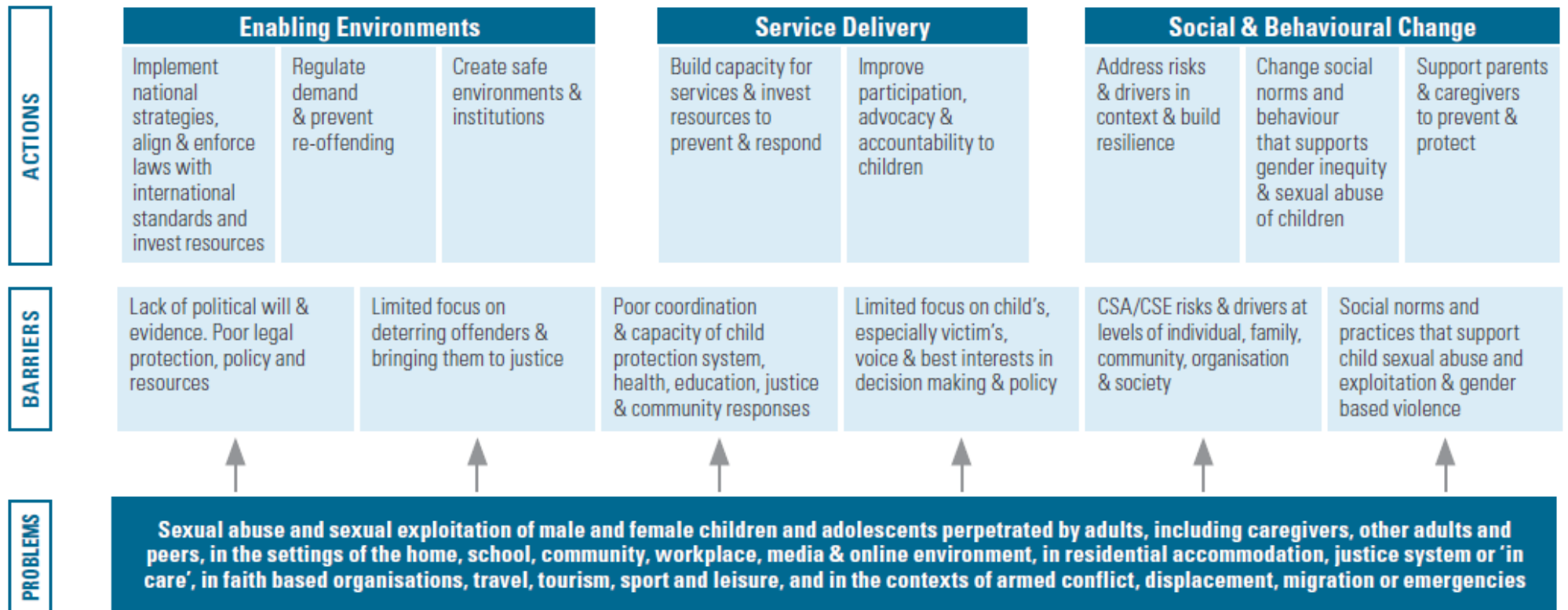
- **Broadening the focus on perpetrators** to reduce the demand for child sexual abuse and exploitation, including online facilitated abuse and the production of child sexual abuse materials. Recent research on social norms and sexual violence and ongoing cross regional work in Africa on creating baselines to measure and track changes in social norms is welcome. Too little is known about the social norms that fuel demand for different types of child sexual abuse and exploitation in different contexts and relationships. Too little is known about policies that may regulate demand.
  - **Prevention for young people with harmful behaviour.** Research and practice on the prevention, primary and secondary, of harmful sexual behaviour among children and adolescents living in the community is very limited especially in the global south.
  - **Effective responses to online abuse** where programmes exist but research on their effectiveness is still limited.
  - **Reaching all children** including groups of children who have been neglected in research, policy and practice such as boys, children with physical disabilities and learning difficulties and children in marginalised groups.
  - **Building on strengths in the informal sector.** Informal and community support from peers, family and community groups, including faith groups, are often the first or main source of help but too little is known about what this involves.<sup>57</sup>
- These could be used to inform future research projects in the Tasmanian context, and provide an important reminder of sometimes overlooked practice areas.

**Figure 7:** Actions for each area

<b>Enabling national environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing and enforcing laws and policies</li> <li>• Regulating demand and preventing offending</li> <li>• Creating safe environments and institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing resources and building the capacity of services to prevent and respond</li> <li>• Improving the participation of, advocacy for and accountability towards children</li> </ul>
<b>Creating social and behavioural change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the risks and drivers and enhancing protective factors for child sexual abuse and exploitation in context, some of which differ from those associated with other forms of violence</li> <li>• Changing social norms and behaviour that support gender inequality and discrimination and the sexual abuse of children and adolescents</li> <li>• Supporting parents and caregivers to keep their children safe from child sexual abuse and exploitation.</li> </ul>

Figure 8: UNICEF Theory of Change for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation





## 5. THE SYSTEMS CHANGE LENS

This section provides an overview of the systems change approach to policy reform and reflects on the extent to which the strategies described in Section 4 engage with this concept. In this context, a “system” comprises the relevant actors, ‘the relationships among these actors, the distribution of power, the institutional norms and constraints within which they operate, and the attitudes and assumptions that influence decisions’.<sup>58</sup>

### 5.1 What is systems change?

Systems change is both an outcome and an approach. In terms of outcomes, systems change can be defined as

the reconfiguration of a system, including its component parts and the interactions between these parts, such that it leads to the formation of a new system that behaves in a qualitatively different way.<sup>59</sup>

As an approach, systems change aims to shift ‘the conditions that are holding the problems in place’ to better enable successful outcomes to policy reforms that tackle complex problems.<sup>60</sup> This involves moving from a focus on different parts of the system and instead taking a holistic view.

*... systems change, as a way of making real and equitable progress on critical social and environmental problems, requires exceptional attention to the detailed and often mundane work of noticing and acting on much that is implicit and invisible to many.*

– Kania et al, 18

There are many systems change approaches available (see Appendix C for a summary of three prominent models). Each approach uses its own framing and terminology, but there are a few common themes across them:

- **Understand the system and its relationship to the problem.** The first step in changing a system is to understand it. This means identifying the system’s purpose, where power lies within it, the relationships among actors (e.g. government agencies, NGOs, businesses), and how these things affect resource flows. It then becomes possible to identify how the system reproduces the problem, and how this process can be disrupted.
- **Identify the ideal state.** It is important to have a clear idea of what success looks like – as noted above, this is usually expressed via a strategy vision.
- **Sustainable change requires multiple levers.** Developing and funding improved practices and policies is important, but the change that this creates will not be sustainable unless action is taken to: reconfigure the system’s power dynamics; increase collaboration among actors within the system; and shift individual, organisational and community “mental models” (norms, values and attitudes).
- **Systems change is a dynamic process.** Systems are constantly evolving. This offers opportunities for those seeking to create change, but also means that progress can be lost if changes are not deeply embedded. This is why it is vital to shift the underlying mental models, relationships and power dynamics.

<sup>58</sup> John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge (2018) *The Water of Systems Change*, June 2018, [https://www.fsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Water-of-Systems-Change\\_rc.pdf](https://www.fsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Water-of-Systems-Change_rc.pdf), 2.

<sup>59</sup> Systems Change Lab (n.d.) *What is Systems Change?* <https://systemschangelab.org/what-is-systems-change>.

<sup>60</sup> Kania et al, *The Water of Systems Change*, 3.



## 5.2 Systems change and child sexual abuse strategies

Systems change approaches are well-suited to addressing CSA for two main reasons. First, they encourage a focus on primary prevention by shifting individual, organisational and community mental models – the norms, beliefs and practices that shape peoples’ actions. Second, they demand a whole-of-society effort in which all public, private and community actors work together – not in siloes – to address the problem.

It is important to note that in the context of CSA, the focus of systems change is broader than what is sometimes called the “child safety system” – the organisations, services, and processes intended to keep children and young people safe. The systems change lens requires an understanding of these elements, but also of other factors such as: individual, organisational and community norms, beliefs, attitudes and values; and the distribution of power and resources.

A systems change approach is not apparent in most of the strategies analysed for this report. The notable exception is *Te Aorerekura*. The strategy sets out six characteristics of the system it aims to create:

- *Government commitment to addressing the underlying social conditions and norm.*

- *Communities design, lead and deliver solutions to affect change*
- *Government and communities work better together*
- *Primary prevention is aligned*
- *Workforces are skilled, culturally competent, and sustainable*
- *Services are joined up, timely and easy to navigate.*<sup>61</sup>

Under Shift One (‘Towards strength-based wellbeing’), it also explicitly acknowledges that:

*All actions to deliver on Te Aorerekura are part of an interconnected ecosystem. Actions to prevent, respond and heal are required at all levels (individual, family, community, organisational and societal).*<sup>62</sup>

Most strategies focus on new policies and practices, with some attention paid to reconfiguring working relationships among government agencies and other actors within the system. They typically do not fully engage with the highly important but less tangible aspects of systems change, beyond some references to the need to address the underlying causes of CSA.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 24.

<sup>62</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 32.

<sup>63</sup> For example, in the Australian National Strategy.

## 6. BUILDING A STRATEGY

Based on our analysis of strategies and approaches in other jurisdictions, this chapter identifies the components commonly included in CSA prevention and response strategies. We discuss the purpose of each component, provide examples of good practice, and identify ways of incorporating the systems change lens.

For context, we first provide an overview of good practice for the strategy design process, which underpins the development of the components and ensures that they form a cohesive whole.

### 6.1 Strategy Design Process

It is good practice for the strategy design process to be conducted according to a set of clear guiding principles and goals. This ensures that all stakeholders understand the parameters of the process and the intended outcomes. We have combined information on the development of the strategies outlined above (where available) with analysis of the broader literature to define five guiding principles that could be used to inform the Tasmanian strategy design process:

**1. Prioritise co-design and meaningful, inclusive consultation.**<sup>64</sup> These processes

are crucial because they help to ensure that the strategy: puts people with lived experience at its centre; incorporates diverse perspectives; and is owned by the public.<sup>65</sup> Involving those with lived experience in co-design is important for ‘understanding the impacts the trauma of child sexual abuse on individuals’ health, daily life, on society and innovating potential solutions’.<sup>66</sup> The consultation process should deliberately seek out the voices of those with lived experience by carefully engaging with the most affected cohorts, including children and young people, LGBTQIA+ people, and the Indigenous community (see box below). Ideally, the strategy steering group would include victim-survivors and frontline sector workers.

**2. Ensure alignment with other relevant strategies, legislation, and agreements.**<sup>67</sup>

Throughout the design process it is vital to bear in mind how the strategy will complement and interact with other relevant materials, such as the National Strategy, the Tasmanian Criminal Code, and Tasmania’s *Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027*.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*; and New Zealand Government, *Te Aorere Kura Strategy*.

<sup>65</sup> Armstrong et al (2023), “Healthy, regenerative and just: Guiding the development of a national strategy on climate, health and well-being for Australia”, *The Journal of Climate Change and Health* 10, no. 2 (March-April 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocl.2023.100205>.

<sup>66</sup> National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (2023), *Co-design methodology*, June 2023 [https://nationalcentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Co-design\\_methodology\\_June\\_23\\_FINAL\\_Revised\\_Nov\\_23.pdf](https://nationalcentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Co-design_methodology_June_23_FINAL_Revised_Nov_23.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> See for example World Health Organisation (WHO) (2018), *Handbook on Developing National Action Plans to Prevent Child Maltreatment*, August 2018 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326838090\\_Handbook\\_on\\_developing\\_national\\_action\\_plans\\_to\\_prevent\\_child\\_maltreatment](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326838090_Handbook_on_developing_national_action_plans_to_prevent_child_maltreatment), 16, 19; Climate and Health Alliance (2017) *National Consultation regarding a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia – Final Consultation Report*, May 2017 [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/caha/pages/419/attachments/original/1496971704/CAHA\\_Final\\_Consultation\\_Report\\_May\\_2017\\_FINAL.pdf?1496971704](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/caha/pages/419/attachments/original/1496971704/CAHA_Final_Consultation_Report_May_2017_FINAL.pdf?1496971704), 3.

<sup>68</sup> See, Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*; *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas); Tasmanian Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet (2022) *Tasmania’s Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027*, November 2022 [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0029/254738/Family-and-Sexual-Violence-Action-Plan-2022-27\\_wcag.pdf](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/254738/Family-and-Sexual-Violence-Action-Plan-2022-27_wcag.pdf).



### 3. Maintain accountability and transparency throughout the process.

Keeping key stakeholders and the broader community informed about how the design process is progressing and why specific design choices have been made is vital for building public confidence in the robustness of the design process.

### 4. Use the best available evidence.<sup>69</sup>

Stakeholders and policymakers involved in the design process need to be provided with the best available research and data on the most effective ways of preventing and responding to CSA. This includes adequate consideration of recognised conceptual models for CSA prevention and response.<sup>70</sup>

### 5. Put in place strong leadership.

Dedicated high-level leadership will be vital to guide the development of the Tasmania strategy. The leaders of the strategy development process will need

Experience in other areas – such as climate change – demonstrates that effectively addressing complex challenges requires ‘coordination of demands and needs across scales and sectors’ (see Armstrong et al, 2). This needs strong leadership from those able to exert influence horizontally (e.g. across government departments, the private sector, and community organisations) and vertically (e.g. spanning political leaders and frontline sector workers).

to have the political standing to secure engagement from government, business, and community sector stakeholders, as well as the general public. They will also need to build a shared vision for the strategy, inspire widespread trust in the design process and resulting strategy, and champion a consultative approach that centres the voices of those with lived experience. Leadership is also crucial for effective implementation (see Section 6.12).<sup>71</sup>

**6. Use a systems change lens to create sustainable improvements.** As noted above, there are various specific methods for applying the systems change lens that could be used to structure the Tasmanian strategy design process. However, these methods are often complex and prescriptive. At its heart, using the systems change lens will require three things: 1) understanding the Tasmanian system in all its complexity; 2) developing a holistic vision for what the ideal future system looks like; and 3) designing and funding interventions that support progress towards the vision by improving relevant policies and practices, changing power dynamics, and shifting individual, organisational, and community mental models. As noted in Section 5.2, in this context the term “system” refers to a broader range of factors than the “child protection system”.

<sup>69</sup> See for example WHO, *Handbook on Developing National Action Plans*, 16.

<sup>70</sup> See for example Rayment-McHugh, S., McKillop, N., Adams, D., Higgins, D. J., Russell, D. H. (2024). Context matters: Conceptualising and operationalising the contextual prevention of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse Review*, 33(1), 1-13.

<sup>71</sup> See for example, United Nations (2012), *E-Government Survey 2012: E-Government for the People*, <https://desapublications.un.org/file/692/download>; Emily Miles and William Trott (2011), *Collaborative working: How publicly funded services can take a whole systems approach*, October 2011 <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/report/collaborative-working>.

### Consultation examples

Australia: To develop the National Strategy, the National Office for Child Safety conducted 14 non-government workshops; a range of forums and discussions with peak bodies, groups and individuals; a written submission process that over 600 non-government stakeholders were invited to participate in; and extensive discussions with national, state and territory governments.

New Zealand: The development of Te Aorerekura involved a two-month, nationwide engagement process to build consensus about the “vision, goals and actions needed to reduce and eliminate family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand”. The government then produced a series of 10 analysis papers outlining the key themes from consultation with important cohorts, including LGBTQIA+ people, children and young people, and those working in the sector.

## 6.2 Vision

A vision statement is a tool to inspire readers or users and build consensus around why a particular course of action is necessary.

Incorporating a vision statement at the beginning of a strategy sets the tone for what is to come and clearly articulates the strategy’s overarching aims. In other words, it functions for readers and users as a ‘billboard image of what you are working towards’.<sup>72</sup> A properly designed and communicated vision statement can improve organisational performance by helping to unite all relevant parties behind a common objective. In particular, research suggests that effective vision statements are:

- clear and brief
- abstract (conveying a generalised ideal state rather than a highly specific outcome or achievement)
- challenging and ambitious

- future-focused
- inspirational
- aligned to the organisation’s success measures.<sup>73</sup>

At a stakeholder level, a vision statement can help to engender trust and commitment by clearly communicating a strategy’s intentions.<sup>74</sup>

The Australian National Strategy vision statement focuses squarely on children and young people and victims-survivors, emphasising CSA prevention and support:

*All children and young people are protected and safe from sexual abuse. Victims and survivors are supported and empowered.*

In comparison, *Te Aorerekura’s* vision is more universal, which makes sense given that its focus is broader than CSA. It begins by stating the desire that all New Zealanders are able

<sup>72</sup> Community Tool Box (n.d.) *Developing and Communicating a Vision*, Centre for Community Health and Development, Kansas University <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-functions/develop-and-communicate-vision/main>.

<sup>73</sup> Robert J. Baum, Edwin A. Locke, and Shelley A. Kirkpatrick (1998), “A longitudinal study of the relation of vision and vision communication to venture growth in entrepreneurial firms.” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 83, no. 1, 43-54 <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.83.1.43>.

<sup>74</sup> Baum, *Relation of vision and vision communication*.

to thrive, then specifically emphasises that everyone should be free to live their lives without family and sexual violence:

*All people in Aotearoa New Zealand are thriving; their wellbeing is enhanced and sustained because they are safe and supported to live their lives free from family violence and sexual violence.*

Both vision statements exhibit the features listed above for effective vision statements and could be used to inform a vision statement for the Tasmanian strategy. The other strategies analysed for this report do not contain a vision statement or equivalent.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- The vision statement should succinctly articulate the ideal circumstances for which the strategy is aiming. Ideally it would be no more than one or two sentences, and be inspirational, future-focused and ambitious.
- The vision should be co-designed with the Tasmanian community.
- Reflecting the Col's direction in recommendation 19.1 that the strategy prevent and address CSA inside and outside of institutional settings, the vision could include explicit reference to a future where children will be free from CSA in all settings: for example, at home, in the community, online and in institutional settings.

## 6.3 Objectives

Strategy objectives are typically a set of intended outcomes that, if achieved, will bring about the strategy's vision. Most of the CSA strategies analysed provide a set of objectives or intended outcomes, but these are used in different ways. Some strategies use objectives to organise their lists of actions. For example, the UK Strategy's three headline objectives are used to categorise different initiatives and programs (see Section 4.3), while the Welsh Plan has 10 detailed key objectives (see Figure 5), with actions listed underneath.

Other strategies set out high-level objectives that describe the overall change that successful strategy implementation will create. This serves to break the vision down into its component parts. For example, *Te Aorerekura* includes six overarching outcomes that the Strategy as a whole aims to achieve (see Section 4.2), while each of the 'shifts' has its own more specific goal (see Figure 9). The Australian National Strategy provides a single objective – 'reduce the risk, extent and impact of child sexual abuse and related harms in Australia' – as a practical but general statement of intent that complements the vision (see Section 4.1).

**Figure 9:** Example of a 'shift' and associated goal in *Te Aorerekura*

**Shift Three:**

**Towards skilled, culturally competent and sustainable workforces**

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Ensure the specialist, general and informal workforces are resourced and equipped to safely respond, heal and prevent, and enable wellbeing.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- Defining high-level objectives that describe overall change is more aligned with the systems change lens.
- The objectives should be derived from the themes that emerge from stakeholder consultation.
- More detailed objectives could reflect the ways in which the current system for preventing and responding to CSA in Tasmania needs to be leveraged and changed to achieve the vision.
- The objectives can be used to show clear alignment between the strategy and its accompanying action plan.
- More detailed objectives could reflect a comprehensive public health approach to addressing CSA, with prevention (including a focus on perpetrators and those at risk of perpetrating), responding to CSA where it does happen, and a commitment to developing a Tasmanian baseline dataset with ongoing data collection to track progress as its key pillars.

## 6.4 Values

Values (or guiding principles) are generally presented as the foundation that guides strategy implementation. The Australian National Strategy includes five 'values' (see Figure 1) that are used to 'guide the work we are doing to achieve the National Strategy's

<sup>75</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 21.

<sup>76</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 30.

vision and objective', including the design and implementation of outcome measures.<sup>75</sup> *Te Aorerekura* presents five *whanonga pono* (guiding principles) that informed the development of the strategy and guide its implementation.<sup>76</sup> The UK Strategy, the EU Strategy and the Welsh Plan do not include values or equivalent principles.

Working with the community to define a clear set of values to guide strategy implementation will be an important part of consultation process. The values outlined in Australia's National Strategy could be taken as a starting point, but it will be important to ensure that the values reflect the Tasmanian community's unique characteristics.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- Including a set of values helps readers and users to understand the thinking underpinning the strategy and should be used to help guide implementation.
- Values are used to help guide the approach of all actors involved in implementing the strategy.
- Values should be co-designed to ensure they are reflective of the Tasmanian community. The Australian National Strategy's values provide a useful starting point.
- The Tasmanian strategy could include a value that embeds the emphasis on systems change, for example: 'We recognise that long-term, effective prevention and response to child sexual abuse requires changing individual, organisational and community norms, beliefs and values'.

## 6.5 Key Definitions

For analysis and discussion of relevant definitions of ‘child sexual abuse’, ‘institutional child sexual abuse’ and ‘harmful sexual behaviours’ for use in the Tasmanian strategy, please see the TPE report *A comparative review of child sexual abuse definitions*.<sup>77</sup>

## 6.6 Providing Context

Most strategies provide a context section that provides information about CSA in the jurisdiction, and sometimes globally. Context sections typically cover CSA prevalence, causes and risk factors for perpetration, trends relevant to CSA (such as the increased availability of online CSA material), and why CSA is often unreported or under-reported. This information helps to ‘set the scene’ for a strategy, justifying its particular emphases and the types of initiatives it includes. For example, the EU Strategy notes the prevalence of online CSA, then links this to the inclusion of initiatives to update legislation and best practice where these have not kept up with technological advancements, as well as strategies for more effective law enforcement responses to online CSA.

The context section only needs to be brief. For example, the Australian National Strategy includes two pages on context under the title ‘Why we need a national strategy’. This provides background information including the number of submissions received during the strategy design process as well as key statistics on perpetrators and victim-survivors, the prevalence of reports of CSA and the increase in online CSA material.

Although the Col recommendation did not specify that the strategy should include a section on the scope and scale of the challenge in Tasmania, this contextual information is vital (see Section 6.13), because it will help stakeholders to better understand the need for a Tasmania-specific strategy and the importance of a systems change approach.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- Providing information on the prevalence, scope and nature of CSA in Tasmania would provide important context, support the argument that Tasmania needs its own unique strategy, and help stakeholders to understand why a systems change approach to preventing and responding to CSA in Tasmania is vital.

## 6.7 Considerations for specific cohorts

The national strategies and action plans considered here all recognise that some cohorts of children and young people are at greater risk of CSA, or are harder to reach with information and support services. This recognition typically manifests in two main ways. First, all strategies targeted a wide range of cohorts in their consultation processes to ensure adequate representation, inclusion and diversity (as noted in Section 5.1). In some cases, this was done as part of a broader, pre-strategy development process, such as the

<sup>77</sup> Hortle, R., Hyslop, S., Langridge, M., and Brockman, K. (2024) *A comparative review of child sexual abuse definitions*, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, April 2024.

UK's IICSA. Others – notably Australia and New Zealand – also consulted with various cohorts of children and young people as part of the development of the strategies themselves.

Second, all strategies note that because some cohorts are at greater risk or require more effort to reach, they may require tailored services and programs adapted to their distinctive needs. For example, the Australian National Strategy identifies seven priority groups who 'deserve and need measures to be implemented in a way that is specific to them':<sup>78</sup>

- Victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and their advocates
- children and young people and their support networks
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- people with disability
- LGBTQIA+ people
- people living in regional and remote communities.

It also specifies how it will work with these priority groups (see text box below). Similarly, *Te Aorerekura*, the UK Strategy, the EU Strategy, and the UNICEF Report all recognise

the need for services tailored to, and accessible for, children and young people with specific vulnerabilities. The cohorts that each strategy focuses on are summarised in Table 2.

### How the Australian National Strategy will work with its priority groups

The Australian National Strategy states that its team will work with priority group to design measures, and will:

- *hear and prioritise their experiences*
- *act in meaningful ways to meet their needs*
- *communicate in a way that is accessible and appropriate, including developing resources for different audiences – such as creating a children and young people's guide to the National Strategy*
- *recognise the effects that intergenerational trauma has, including the impact of colonisation and dispossession, and disconnection from culture and Country*
- *honour all parts of a person's identity and experience.*

– Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 23

<sup>78</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 23.



**Table 2:** *Vulnerable cohorts identified in Te Aorerekura, the UK Strategy and the EU Strategy*

<p><b>Te Aorerekura</b></p>	<p>Notes that family and sexual violence disproportionately impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· women</li> <li>· children and young people</li> <li>· tangata whenua</li> <li>· Pacific peoples</li> <li>· disabled people</li> <li>· older people</li> <li>· LGBTQIA+ communities</li> <li>· ethnic communities</li> <li>· people experiencing compounding forms of disadvantage and discrimination.<sup>79</sup></li> </ul> <p>Highlights the need for services to be accessible to children and young people regardless of their developmental needs, socio-economic and family circumstances, and where they live.</p>
<p><b>UK Strategy</b><sup>80</sup></p>	<p>Notes that the following groups of children are more likely to be abused than others due to their additional vulnerability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· those with disability or long-term health conditions</li> <li>· those who are socially isolated</li> <li>· those exploring their sexuality online (particularly LGBTQ+ young people)</li> <li>· those who do not have stability or a place to call home.</li> </ul> <p>Notes that these vulnerabilities should not be used to stereotype victims and perpetrators. The considerations for these groups are not outlined in depth, but the strategy does note that specific services that pay attention to the additional needs of children with these vulnerabilities are helpful.</p>

<sup>79</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 10.

<sup>80</sup> Importantly, it clarifies that abuse does not occur because of a child's vulnerability, but rather because of the offender's inclination and ability to take advantage of this vulnerability.

<b>EU Strategy</b>	<p>Identifies cohorts that 'are particularly exposed' to the risks of CSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children with disabilities</li> <li>• children in migration (in particular unaccompanied minors)</li> <li>• child victims of trafficking (the majority of whom are girls).</li> </ul>
<b>UNICEF Report</b>	<p>Considers that all children are vulnerable, but also notes specific risk factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gender</li> <li>• being in out-of-home care or separated from family</li> <li>• being from low-income regions and in conditions of insecurity.</li> </ul>

In addition to victim-survivor cohorts, successful CSA prevention requires a strong focus on understanding perpetrator cohorts (see Table 2) and reaching those who may be at risk of perpetrating (see Table 4). For example, *Te Aorerekura* states that its strategy to address underlying social conditions and norms that lead to family violence and sexual violence will have a direct impact on

all people including those who use violence, making them 'accountable and supported to change'.<sup>81</sup> The UK Strategy identifies 'Prevent' as one of its four pillars, which is explained as 'Stopping the problem at source, identifying and supporting those at risk of engaging in criminality'. The focus on perpetrators is vital for ensuring that the burden of preventing CSA is not placed on potential victims.

**Table 3:** *The classes of CSA perpetrator developed and used by the Australian Child Maltreatment Study*<sup>82</sup>

Perpetrator classes	Perpetrator types
<b>Class 1: Parents/caregivers in the home</b>	Includes the person's biological or adoptive father; step-father or mother's live-in boyfriend; parent's boyfriend or former boyfriend who did not live in the home; adult male relative who lived in the home; adult male relative who did not live in the home; and the female counterparts to these categories.
<b>Class 2: Institutional caregivers</b>	Includes clergy, schoolteachers, and sports coaches.

<sup>81</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 8.

<sup>82</sup> B. Mathews, D. Finkelhor, R. Pacella, J. G. Scott, D. J. Higgins, F. Meinck, H. E. Erskine, H. J. Thomas, D. Lawrence, E. Malacova, D. M. Haslam & D. Collin-Vézina, (2024). Child sexual abuse by different classes and types of perpetrator: Prevalence and trends from an Australian national survey, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Volume 147, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106562>



Perpetrator classes	Perpetrator types
<b>Class 3: Other known adults</b>	All other known male and female adults.
<b>Class 4: Unknown adults</b>	All other unknown male and female adults
<b>Class 5: Siblings</b>	Comprises a brother or other male child who lived in the home, and a sister or other female child who lived in the home.
<b>Class 6: Adolescents – current or former romantic partner</b>	Comprises boyfriend at the time; former boyfriend; girlfriend at the time; and former girlfriend.
<b>Class 7: Other known adolescents – non-romantic</b>	Comprises male or female adolescents aged under 18 who the child knew.
<b>Class 8: Unknown adolescents</b>	Comprises male or female adolescents aged under 18 who the child did not know.

**Table 4:** The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention risk factors for perpetration of childhood abuse and neglect<sup>82</sup>

Level	Risk Factors
<b>Individual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregivers with drug or alcohol issues</li> <li>• Caregivers with mental health issues, including depression</li> <li>• Caregivers who don't understand children's needs or development</li> <li>• Caregivers who were abused or neglected as children</li> <li>• Caregivers who are young or single parents or parents with many children</li> <li>• Caregivers with low education or income</li> <li>• Caregivers experiencing high levels of parenting stress or economic stress</li> <li>• Caregivers who use spanking / other forms of corporal punishment for discipline</li> <li>• Caregivers in the home who are not a biological parent</li> <li>• Caregivers with attitudes accepting of or justifying violence or aggression</li> </ul>

<sup>82</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2022) *Risk and Protective Factors* <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html>

Level	Risk Factors
<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families that have household members in jail or prison</li> <li>• Families that are isolated from and not connected to other people (extended family, friends, neighbours)</li> <li>• Families experiencing other types of violence, including relationship violence</li> <li>• Families with high conflict and negative communication styles</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities with high rates of violence and crime</li> <li>• Communities with high rates of poverty and limited educational and economic opportunities</li> <li>• Communities with high unemployment rates</li> <li>• Communities with easy access to drugs and alcohol</li> <li>• Communities where neighbours don't know or look out for each other and there is low community involvement among residents</li> <li>• Communities with few activities for young people</li> <li>• Communities with unstable housing and where residents move frequently</li> <li>• Communities where families frequently experience food insecurity</li> </ul>

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- It will be important for the Tasmanian strategy to recognise vulnerable cohorts and specify that its initiatives will be tailored to the needs of vulnerable cohorts. Key groups to consider will include: Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples; CALD communities; people with disability; LGBTQIA+ people; people living in regional and remote communities; and children in out-of-home care. This list should be refined in consultation with the Tasmanian community.
- The Tasmanian strategy should also identify risk factors for perpetration, and specify that mitigating these is vital for preventing CSA.

## 6.8 Key agencies

Only the Australian National Strategy and the UK Strategy provide lists of key agencies involved in preventing, identifying and responding to CSA. The UK Strategy does this relatively briefly at the departmental level. The Australian National Strategy provides a more comprehensive description of the roles of the relevant Commonwealth agencies as well as state and territory governments, local governments, non-government organisations, and the broader Australian community.

Rather than assigning specific roles to individual agencies, departments, or organisations, *Te Aorerekura* emphasises the importance of a whole-of-government, or whole-of-system, approach. Indeed, *Te Aorerekura* is more concerned with joining up services and even devolving decision-making down to as close to the community level as possible:

Te Aorerekura aims to build collective ownership for solutions, and support

and resource integrated, community-led responses. This shift is about stronger relationships that enable better design, delivery and learning. This requires government to devolve some decisions and funding to communities while retaining clear responsibility for improving what government is accountable for delivering. It will require new ways of working together to identify problems, develop solutions and commission services.<sup>83</sup>

The identification of lead agencies or departments for specific actions is generally included in action plans, not strategies. For example, the Welsh Action Plan lists the ‘owner’ of each action, albeit with no more detail than either the ‘Welsh Government’ or the ‘Safeguarding Board Partners’. Australia’s First National Action Plan is more specific, identifying the Commonwealth department for each proposed measure, while the *Te Aorerekura* Action Plan lists the lead agency as well as other involved agencies.

<sup>83</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 38.

## Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

Tasmania's whole-of-government, public-health approach to preventing, identifying and responding to CSA will require action at the individual, family, community and societal levels. To support this, the strategy could provide a comprehensive list of key government agencies and other key actors. This could include:

- Department of Education, Children and Young People – including the following services:
  - Child and Family Learning Centres
  - Tasmanian Government Schools
  - Child Safety and Out of Home Care
  - Youth Justice Services
  - Libraries and the Tasmanian Archives
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – including the Child and Youth Wellbeing team
- Department of Justice – including:
  - Child Abuse Royal Commission Response Unit
  - Safe at Home (range of services to improve safety and security of adult and child victims of family violence)
  - Working with Vulnerable People Registration Team
- Department of Health and the Tasmanian Health Service
- Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management
- Homes Tasmania
- Children's Commissioner
- Children's Advocate
- NGOs contracted by the Tasmanian Government to provide services to children and young people
- Other NGOs, including religious, social care and sporting organisations and non-government schools
- Independent Schools Tasmania
- Local governments

This list should be further refined through community consultation.

## 6.9 Consultation and collaboration processes

The systems change lens emphasises that the ways in which key actors within a system work together is vital. In the context of CSA, this means that the various government and non-government actors identified in Section 6.8 need to work closely with each other: the UNICEF Report notes that its findings ‘endorse recommendations for further collaboration and coordination of efforts to address violence against children...’. Ensuring a high level of cooperation requires clear processes for sharing information and collaborating to design and implement initiatives for preventing and responding to CSA.

Some strategies provide information on how they plan to support increased consultation and collaboration. *Te Aorerekura* emphasises the need for greater coordination of public services, and states that government ‘agencies will develop a shared infrastructure that supports continuous learning, coordinating a research and evaluation plan for family violence and sexual violence’.<sup>83</sup> It also puts forward ‘Government and communities work better together’ as one of its areas for impact measurement.<sup>84</sup> As a supra-national body, the EU’s strategy is focused on supporting EU

member states to work together. For example, one of its key initiatives is the establishment of a European Centre to prevent and counter CSA, which is intended to ensure ‘coordination to maximise the efficient use of resources and avoiding duplication of efforts’<sup>85</sup> among member states. The UK Strategy states that ‘Government will drive co-ordinated activity that maximises our whole-system response to child sexual abuse, agreeing clear roles and responsibilities for operational partners who together are positioned to deliver a rapid, proactive and comprehensive response.’<sup>86</sup> This focus is very much a law-enforcement approach, with an emphasis on “intelligence” that can be effectively generated and shared between government, intelligence agencies, NGOs and policing.

On the other hand, some strategies do not emphasise increased consultation and collaboration. For example, the Australian National Strategy does not specify processes for organisations to work and consult together, although the First National Action Plan contains a measure under Theme 1 to ‘enhance national arrangements for sharing child safety and wellbeing information’.<sup>87</sup> The Welsh Plan does not contain any specific processes for consultation between organisations or regarding working together.

<sup>83</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 40.

<sup>84</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 70.

<sup>85</sup> European Commission, *EU Strategy*, 12.

<sup>86</sup> HM Government, *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*, 38.

<sup>87</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy*, 34.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- Combatting CSA requires a coordinated, holistic approach, where all public, private and community actors work closely together. This will require work to break down ‘siloes’ within and between government departments and agencies and across the system including with non-government organisations.
- While the Tasmanian strategy may not be the ideal place to outline specific initiatives, it should emphasise increased collaboration and cooperation across and within the public, private and community sectors as a goal.
- This would provide the opportunity for the associated action plan to clearly specify formal processes for relevant actors to share information and collaborate, such as cross-department taskforce meetings, regular roundtables involving government departments and community organisations, and shared data systems.
- The action plan could also seek to put in place arrangements that support informal collaboration and information sharing, such as co-locating CSA-focused teams from different departments in flexible working spaces and secondments from government departments to NGOs and vice versa.

## 6.10 Key initiatives, reforms and recommendations for achieving outcomes

These are the “what” of the systems change process and describe how the jurisdiction intends to achieve its vision and objectives. Initiatives, reforms and recommendations are typically grouped according to theme, with further details such as lead organisations and indicators of success also provided.

Specific initiatives are generally presented in an action plan rather than in a strategy. For example, *the Australian National Strategy* does not discuss initiatives; these are contained in the *First National Action Plan*, where five themes are presented, each with actions, measures and the lead Australian Government Department responsible for delivering change. Each action also identifies the Royal Commission recommendation(s)

to which it is responding. The Welsh Plan sets out 33 actions against 10 key objectives that the Welsh Government expected to be implemented by the end of 2021. The ‘owners’ of each action and the period for delivery are also specified.

In some cases, strategies do include high-level actions. The UK Strategy presents three overarching objectives, with ‘sub-objectives’ listed under these (see Section 4.3). Information is provided under of each of these in an unstructured way on the nature of the problem, what the Government is doing and what it intends to do. Under each of *Te Aorerekura’s* six “shifts”, the document identifies existing programs and work already taking place, what will change and the high-level actions to achieve this change. For example, under ‘Shift One: Towards strength-based wellbeing’ there are four high-level actions:

1. *Te Aorerekura* is supported by a clear investment plan
2. Agencies integrate community-led responses
3. Strengthen *wāhine* [female] Māori leadership
4. *Wāhine* Māori leadership succession

In the *Te Aorerekura* Action Plan there is more information on each action, including its component activities, the timing of the activities and who will lead and be involved in them.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- There is a diversity of practice regarding the inclusion of key initiatives, reforms and recommendations across the strategies and plans. The Tasmanian strategy could take one of the following approaches:
  - Outline key initiatives at a high level, preferably arranged under themes, then include more detailed information in the Action Plan.
  - Leave all detail on key initiatives to the Action Plan (as is the case in the Australian National Strategy).
- Either way, it will be important to carefully consider how this information is presented. *Te Aorerekura* (Strategy) and the UK Strategy make it difficult to gain a systematic understanding of the role of initiatives, reforms and recommendations, whereas the approach in the Australian First National Action Plan is well organised and provides a complete picture of all the actions the Government is taking.
- The Tasmanian strategy should be cautious about linking initiatives to CoI recommendations. This is because the CoI was specifically focused on CSA in institutions, whereas the strategy will need to focus more broadly on preventing and responding to all forms of CSA.
- To create sustainable systems change, the initiatives that Tasmania develops will need to include: the development of new and improved practices and policies; actions that aim to reconfigure the system's power dynamics; provisions for increased collaboration among actors within the system; and actions focused on shifting individual, organisational and community "mental models".

## 6.11 Funding for key initiatives and reforms

The effectiveness of government efforts to prevent and respond to CSA is highly dependent on the allocation of sufficient resources to effective approaches. The strategies analysed in this review demonstrate varying approaches to disclosing the amount of funding secured for their key programs and policies. This is often related to the degree to which the strategy is an overarching conceptual tool, or more of a practical plan of action. For example, The EU Strategy provides no funding amounts against specific programs but does flag several times that it will continue to fund security and policing initiatives across Europe plus will use assessments and research to determine future funding needs. Similarly, the Australian National Strategy does not mention funding. However, the First National Action Plan does state that the Australian Government has committed \$307.5 million to support the National Strategy's implementation, which includes support for the First National Action Plan and the First Commonwealth Action Plan.

*Te Aorerekura* takes a slightly different approach. It broadly discusses the importance of increased funding in 'building the necessary capability across communities'.<sup>88</sup> It also notes 'equity' of resourcing will be important and discusses devolving of both decisions and funding to communities to build stronger relationships that enable 'better design, delivery and learning'.<sup>89</sup> It also lists funding amounts provided for some programs but not others.

<sup>88</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 54.

<sup>89</sup> New Zealand Government, *Te Aorerekura Strategy*, 38.

<sup>90</sup> HM Government, *Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy*, 10.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- There is a variety of approaches employed regarding the disclosure of funding for key initiatives and reforms in the strategies and plans studied. This includes the Australian First National Action Plan declaring its total budget for the implementation of the Strategy through to providing some amounts for individual initiatives and reforms (UK and Te Aorerekura), or even no mention of any investment amount (Wales and EU).
- As recommended by the Commission of Inquiry (19.1), in the interests of transparency and accountability, it will be important for the Tasmanian Government to clearly communicate how much initial funding has been allocated to the implementation of the Tasmanian strategy and action plan.
- The headline funding figure could be provided in the strategy to demonstrate the strength of commitment to the program, with specific amounts for each initiative listed in the action plan.

## 6.12 Governance

Setting out governance details in strategies is good practice because it provides transparency for all stakeholders, which in turn supports accountability. Of the strategies described above, the Australian National Strategy has the clearest approach. It states to three groups that will provide oversight of the



Strategy and the First National Action Plan: Australian, state and territory governments; NGOs; and people from the priority groups it identified in Section 6.7. It also provides a useful diagram overview of the governance structure (see Figure 10).

Other strategies do not contain detailed information on their governance. For example,

Te Aorerekura does not specifically address governance, but somewhat vaguely explains that oversight and monitoring of the strategy will occur through ongoing engagement (via an annual hui [meeting/consultation]). The UK Strategy states that ‘the Home Office will provide robust governance to support implementation of this Strategy and hold all partners to account for progress’.<sup>91</sup>

Figure 10: Australian National Strategy governance



<sup>91</sup> See: New Zealand Government (2023) *Te Aorerekura: The National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence – Outcomes and Measurement Framework*, September 2023 <https://tepunaaonui.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Outcomes-and-Measurement-Framework.pdf>.

### Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy

- In the interests of transparency and accountability, the Tasmanian strategy should clearly set out the governance arrangements for the implementation of the strategy.
- Aligned with the principles set out in Section 6.1, strategy governance should incorporate diverse stakeholders, including people with lived experience.
- Any comprehensive description of key initiatives undertaken to prevent and better respond to CSA should include the designated lead departments, agencies and/or organisations.

## 6.13 Research, monitoring, and evaluation

The strategies reviewed for this report differ in the comprehensiveness and transparency of their approaches to monitoring, evaluation and review. The Australian National Strategy states the Australian Government will implement a monitoring and evaluation framework that will assess whether the Strategy achieves its vision, objective and values, and whether its measures have been implemented. The First National Action Plan expands on this, stating that the framework will track progress against short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. However, the framework is not yet available. *Te Aorerekura* states that there be an annual *hui* for government, *tangata whenua*, communities, and the specialist sectors to assess progress and determine where changes need to be made. However, it also has a comprehensive associated monitoring and evaluation framework.<sup>91</sup> The UK Strategy, the EU strategy and the Welsh Action Plan do not provide detailed information on how progress will be assessed and key learnings captured.

The first step in addressing CSA in Tasmania must be to understand the scale and scope of the problem. This will require extensive mixed methods research that produces robust qualitative and quantitative data on topics such as: the risk factors that lead to perpetrating and experiencing CSA; the geographic spread of CSA in the state; and the cultural norms, attitudes and values that permit CSA to occur. This information should be used in conjunction with data from other sources – such as the Australian Child Maltreatment Study and any data collected under the Tasmanian Child Wellbeing Framework – to inform the design and delivery of effective, evidence-based interventions and services, and to define measurable, timebound performance indicators. This approach would also facilitate inter-jurisdictional benchmarking.

The baseline data should be regularly updated through regular, ongoing data collection to support progress measurement against the performance indicators and the evaluation of the impact that Action Plan initiatives are having.

### **Key takeaways for the Tasmanian strategy**

- • Research should be undertaken to better understand how, where and why CSA occurs in Tasmania. Initial findings can be used as baseline data, then ongoing, regular data collection will enable progress monitoring and evaluation.
- • The Tasmanian strategy should be accompanied by a standalone monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework that is co-designed with key stakeholders and informed by research. The framework should include short- medium- and long-term targets that are timebound and measurable. This will enable annual reports to clearly show progress.
- • The MEL framework should be set up to capture progress towards the systems change outcomes that the strategy and action plan seek to generate. Because systems change can be difficult to identify and attribute, this will require deep thinking regarding data collection and analysis.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Related strategies, plans and agreements

<b>Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children</a> and <a href="#">First Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Agreement on Closing the Gap</a></li> </ul>
<b>NZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Te Aorerekura: Action Plan for the National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence (December 2021 – December 2023)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2022 Annual Hui</a> (takes place before the annual refresh of the action plan)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Te Puna Aonui</a> (Joint Venture to improve the whole-of-government approach to family violence and sexual violence)</li> </ul>
<b>UK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">UK Strategy: Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment within the Aid Sector</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tackling child sexual exploitation: action plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Victims Strategy</a> and the <a href="#">Strategic Direction on Sexual Assault Abuse Services</a></li> </ul>
<b>Wales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Online safety action plan for children and young people in Wales</a></li> </ul>
<b>EU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee</a></li> </ul>
<b>WHO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Preventing Child Maltreatment: a guide to taking action and generating evidence</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health 2020 ('A European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being')</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Investing in Children: The European Child and Adolescent Health Strategy 2015-2020</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">INSPIRE Handbook: Action for implementing the seven strategies for ending violence against children</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Handbook on developing national action plans to prevent child maltreatment</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Responding to child maltreatment: a clinical handbook for health professionals</a></li> </ul>
<b>United Nations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</a> and <a href="#">General Comment No. 13</a></li> </ul>

## B. Te Aorerekura shifts and actions

Shift	Actions
<b>Towards strength-based wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Te Aorerekura</i> is supported by a clear investment plan</li> <li>• Agencies integrate community-led responses</li> <li>• Strengthen <i>wāhine</i> Māori leadership</li> <li>• <i>Wāhine</i> Māori leadership succession</li> </ul>
<b>Towards mobilising communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage and value communities in collective monitoring, sharing and learning</li> <li>• Relational approach to commissioning to better support community decision-making and needs</li> <li>• Enable <i>Te Aorerekura</i> implementation in the regions</li> <li>• Establish a Ministerial <i>Tangata Whenua</i> Advisory Group</li> <li>• Establish an annual <i>Te Aorerekura Hui</i></li> </ul>
<b>Towards skilled, culturally competent and sustainable workforces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement trauma-informed family violence and sexual violence capability frameworks for specialist workforces</li> <li>• Agencies implement capability frameworks for generalist workforces</li> <li>• Build tools for communities and informal helpers</li> <li>• Invest in upskilling community primary prevention</li> <li>• Build the specialist workforces for children</li> <li>• Build court workforce capability</li> </ul>



<p><b>Towards investment in primary prevention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt the Primary Prevention System Model</li> <li>• Develop tools to support healthy, consensual relationships for young people</li> <li>• Refresh the health and physical education curricula</li> <li>• Develop the <i>Oranga Whakapapa</i> programme</li> <li>• Develop community mobilisation infrastructure to lead sexual violence primary prevention</li> <li>• Deliver prevention initiatives: Campaign for Action on Family Violence, <i>E Tū Whānau</i> and Pasefika Proud – as well as for other population groups including older people</li> <li>• Develop and deliver a sexual violence primary prevention campaign for Māori and Tauīwi</li> <li>• Develop prevention programmes for ethnic communities</li> <li>• Holistic support for safe early years</li> <li>• Develop social and emotional learning for children</li> <li>• Strengthen community-led solutions to prevent child sexual abuse</li> </ul>
<p><b>Towards safe, accessible, and integrated responses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new practice guidelines for participants in court proceedings</li> <li>• Implement safeguarding responses for disabled and vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Develop a plan to fill the service gaps for family violence</li> <li>• Develop a plan to fill the service gaps for sexual violence</li> <li>• Develop a case management system for family violence responders</li> <li>• Improve the Family Start service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Towards increased capacity for healing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an analysis of healing services and responses to determine gaps and opportunities</li> <li>• Develop training and resources for parents, caregivers and <i>whānau</i></li> <li>• Design local Māori services for sexual violence healing and restoration</li> <li>• Extend and expand <i>whānau</i>-centred initiatives</li> <li>• Extend and expand <i>whānau</i>-centred early intervention</li> </ul>

## C. Three prominent systems change frameworks

### Water of Systems Change

The Water of Systems Change is an approach developed by Kania, Kramer and Senge.<sup>92</sup> They identify six independent but intertwined “conditions” that interact with one another across three levels to perpetuate a given problem (see Figure 11). The conditions and levels have different measures of visibility:

- **Structural change** has the highest level of visibility (explicit). There are three conditions at this level: policies, practices and resource flows.
- **Relational change** has some visibility (semi-explicit). There are two conditions at this level: relationships and connections, and power dynamics.
- **Transformative change** is typically not visible (implicit). There is only one condition at this level: mental models. These are defined as “Habits of thought—

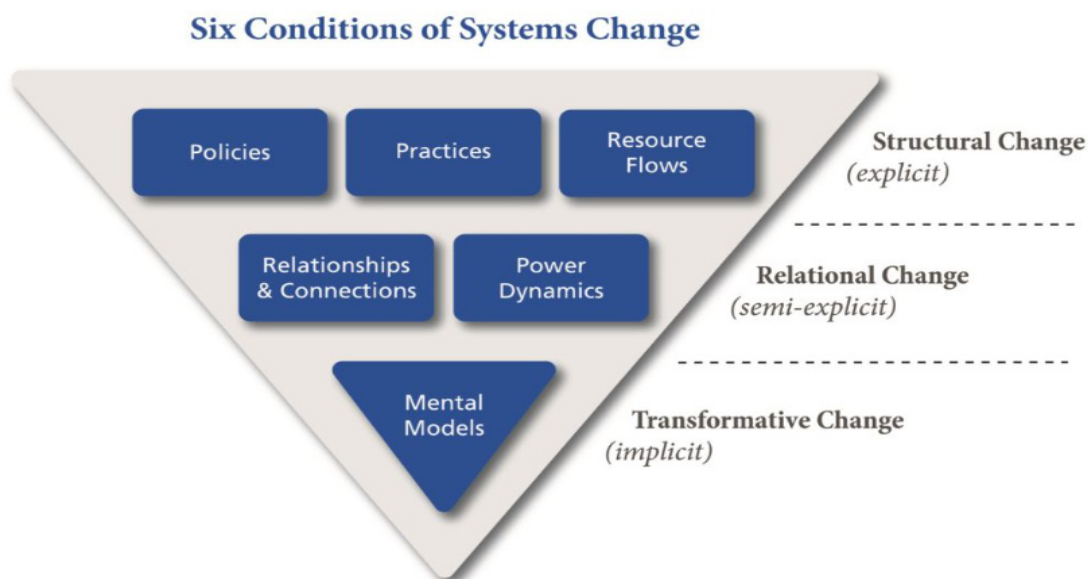
deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk”.<sup>93</sup> These include things such as racism and gender biases.

Although Kania, Kramer and Senge argue that systems change requires a concerted effort to shift all the conditions, they emphasise that the most effective and sustainable systemic change comes from transforming the less explicit conditions – especially mental models – which is more challenging. The Water of Systems Change approach has been successfully used by the Victorian Government and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

### Building Better Systems

The Building Better Systems approach was developed by Jennie Winhall and Charles Leadbeater, building on Professor Frank Geels’ work on large-scale system transition.<sup>94</sup> This

**Figure 11:** Six Conditions of Systems Change (Kania, Kramer and Senge 2018)



<sup>92</sup> Kania, *Water of Systems Change*.

<sup>93</sup> Kania, *Water of Systems Change*, 4.

approach proposes three levels of systems change:

- The **micro level**, which involves individuals developing ‘radical new solutions, habits and ways of life’ in their own niches.
- The **meso level**, which is the location of the “regime” – the ‘combination of institutions, technologies, markets and organisations that give a system its structure’.
- The **macro level**, which is the “landscape” of societal values and political ideologies, demographic trends and economic patterns which shape the context in which a system operates’.

Systems change occurs when alterations at the micro and macro levels create a ‘window of opportunity’ for a new regime to take hold at the meso level. Generating this change requires the use of four “keys”: purpose, power, resource flows, and relationships. According to Winhall and Leadbeater:

*Systems are often hard to change because power, relationships, and resources are locked together in a reinforcing pattern according to the current purpose. Systems start to change when this pattern is disrupted and opened up. Then a new configuration can emerge.<sup>95</sup>*

The authors also identify 12 key roles that are critical to the process of systems change.

## The Above and Below the Line Change Framework

The Above and Below the Line (ABLE) Change Framework was designed by Professor Pennie Foster-Fishman and Dr Erin R. Watson. It draws on research from around the world on community change and provides a ‘toolbox’ of strategies for organisations, communities and government agencies seeking to address significant social issues. It has also influenced further frameworks, including that developed by the Australian Prevention Partnership Centre.<sup>96</sup> “Above the line” refers to the policy design process, and “below the line” refers to policy implementation. The authors stress that attention should be focused equally on both.

Above the line essentially comprises the following:

1. Understanding the problem – this involves engaging diverse stakeholders
2. Articulating the ideal state – this involves the co-development of a theory of change (ToC)
3. Identification of current system attributes that have generated and sustained the problem. These can include:
  - I. System components – for example, the range, character, quality, and location of existing programs and supports
  - II. System Connections—the relationships and connections that exist across different system actors;

<sup>94</sup> Charles Leadbeater and Jennie Winhall (2020) *Building Better Systems*, October 2020 <https://www.systeminnovation.org/article-building-better-systems/#intro-4>.

<sup>95</sup> Leadbeater, *Building Better Systems*.

<sup>96</sup> See The Australian Prevention and Partnership Centre (2021) *A prevention systems change framework*, November 2021 <https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/A-Prevention-Systems-Change-Framework.pdf>.

- III. System Power Dynamics—how decisions are made within the system and who participates;
- IV. System Regulations—policies, practices and procedures that regulate system behaviour
- V. System Norms—underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs that direct current behaviour and practices;
- VI. System Interdependencies – current feedback mechanisms and how the above system parts reinforce and interact with each other.

4. Identify where and how the current system is incompatible with and supportive of the desired changes and identify potential levers for shifting system components. These leverage points are then incorporated into the TOC.

Once the above the line work has been undertaken, the below the line work can begin. The ABL framework recognises that four factors are critical for successful implementation:

- 1. Readiness – stakeholders and actors are aware of the problems and agree on the need for change; leaders and actors are able to implement the changes and new behaviours;
- 2. Contingent capabilities – there is knowledge of the system and the causes within it of the problems; the skills and

knowledge sets of systems actors are adequate; there are strong formal and informal ties between organisations within the system; there are available resources to support change; the system will have the capacity to conduct thorough ongoing engagement;

- 3. Diffusion – This sees promotion and encouragement of adoption of change across the system; ensuring the actual and appropriate use of the new innovation;
- 4. Sustainability – This will involve institutionalising new mindsets or values; sustaining capacities and supports needed to ensure new innovations are kept into the future.

There are interdependencies among these four factors – for example, sustainability is more likely to occur where actors are ready to support the change as they clearly perceive the benefits of the innovation. The authors note that the process of implementation is ongoing as ‘new discoveries about the targeted system continually emerge as the system responds to prior actions and stakeholders gain deeper understandings about system operations’.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> For more information see: Pennie G. Foster-Fishman and Erin R. Watson (2011) “The ABL Change Framework: A Conceptual and Methodological Tool for Promoting Systems Change”, *American Journal of Community Psychology* 49, no.3-4, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-011-9454-x>; The Australian Prevention Partnership (n.d.), *A framework for systems change in communities*, <https://preventioncentre.org.au/resources/a-framework-for-systems-change-in-communities/>.