

Australian
Centre to Counter
Child Exploitation

ACCCE Strategic Plan

2022 – 2026



AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE



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Introduction

The Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) was established by the Australian Government in March 2018 in response to the increasing number and severity of reports of child exploitation received by Australian law enforcement.

The ACCCE has driven a collaborative national response to online child sexual exploitation since that time in partnership with Australian Government agencies, private sector organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs), to counter the sexual exploitation of children in Australia and offshore.

In driving a national response, the ACCCE specifically focuses on countering the online sexual exploitation of children, this includes a range of criminal conduct and offences such as grooming and the creation and/or circulation of child abuse material (CAM).

While the ACCCE seeks to counter online child sexual exploitation, we recognise that within every image is a real world crime depicting a child being physically abused.

Working collaboratively with our operational partners, the ACCCE works to use this online evidence to identify the crime scene, its location, the offender and ultimately seek to remove the child from further harm.

The ACCCE is founded on a principle of partnership and engages through **five pillars** to free children from online exploitation. The ACCCE works to:

- > **Prepare** future capabilities, including technologies, to counter online child exploitation;
- > **Prevent** the online exploitation of children and intervene earlier in the abuse of victims;
- > **Protect** victims from further victimisation and protect the wellbeing of staff;
- > Support authorities to **Pursue**, disrupt and prosecute online child sex offenders, and remove victims from harm; and
- > **Promote** the ACCCE, its successes and the work of its partners in achieving collective objectives.

The **goals** of the ACCCE are to:

- reduce the incidence and impact of online child exploitation;
- reduce economic, social and individual rewards from child exploitation;
- reduce harm from complex, organised child exploitation networks;
- enhance capability and interoperability between the public and private sectors, and civil society; and
- enhance community confidence that authorities, civil society, and the private sector are combatting the issue of child exploitation.

The ACCCE strategic plan sets out the Vision, Mission, Values and Pillars to guide and steer the work of the ACCCE for the next four years. The Strategic Plan builds upon the work of the ACCCE Blueprint, providing additional guidance on the role and operation of the ACCCE.



Vision

Children free from exploitation



Mission

To be coordinated and connected with our partners to counter online child exploitation

Values



Advocacy & Influence

The ACCCE advocates for the protection of children from online exploitation.

Leadership & Innovation

As law enforcement leader, the ACCCE strives for global best practice in countering online child exploitation.

Coordination & Collaboration

The ACCCE is a hub for coordinating and engaging with all stakeholders working in the online child exploitation community.

Safety, Care & Wellbeing

The safety, care and wellbeing of children and ACCCE staff is the cornerstone of what we do.

Consultation & Guidance

The ACCCE provides consultation and guidance for organisations working hard to protect children from online exploitation.

Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse examined what makes an organisation child safe and highlighted the need to provide an environment in which children and young people are safe, protected and respected, and where staff have the skills, confidence and knowledge to safeguard children.

In response to the Royal Commission, the Australian Government introduced the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (the Framework), a whole-of-government policy that sets minimum standards for creating and embedding child safe cultures and practices in Commonwealth entities.

The AFP has implemented the Framework through the adoption of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is committed to ensuring all staff are aware of their obligations and responsibilities to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people.

Enhancing Partnerships

The ACCCE continues to build and enhance partnerships to deliver on its strategic objectives and its mission.

ACCCE partners include, but are not limited to, government and Commonwealth agencies, law enforcement and investigative authorities, NGOs, the private sector, and academia.

The ACCCE seeks to promote the work and successes of its partners and draw upon the collective expertise, knowledge and skillsets to counter online child sexual exploitation.

Through operational partnerships, domestically and internationally, the ACCCE, the AFP Child Protection Operations (CPO), Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams (JACET) and state and territory law enforcement agencies will continue to pursue, disrupt and prosecute child sex offenders and remove victims from harm.

The ACCCE will also leverage international partnerships to enhance capacity within the region.

The ACCCE is uniquely placed to partner with the AFP’s International Network and foreign law enforcement community to take the fight against online child sexual exploitation to the world, recognising the global and borderless nature of online child exploitation. Alongside our international counterparts, the ACCCE targets organised child exploitation networks operating in the online environment.

Through collaboration and engagement with partner agencies, victim survivors, NGOs, academia, industry and peak bodies, the ACCCE remains committed to delivering best practice prevention and education campaigns and initiatives.

The ACCCE works closely with the eSafety Commissioner who is also a key partner in matters relating to online safety and cyber abuse.

Over the course of this plan, the ACCCE will continue to partner with the National Office for Child Safety in implementing the AFP-led measures under the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030*. These measures will enhance and bolster law enforcement capabilities and operational efforts, including expanding the critical work of the ACCCE and AFP to counter online child sexual abuse.

We partner with...

Public sector	 <p>Government, Commonwealth agencies</p>	 <p>Law enforcement investigative authorities</p>
Civil society	 <p>Non-government organisations</p> <p>People, enterprises, businesses</p>	 <p>Academia</p>
Private sector	 <p>Private sector, industry</p>	

Our Operating Model

The ACCCE has a range of capabilities within its structure to help deliver on its mission.

The ACCCE receives reports of child exploitation from a range of sources, including investigative authorities, Commonwealth agencies (including eSafety), victims of crime, members of the public, NGOs and private sector organisations. CyberTipline reports via the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) contribute to a significant proportion of total reports.

In response, reports and related material are assessed to determine the most appropriate course of action (24/7 triage). This may include an immediate referral to the relevant investigative authority or requirement for intelligence input, victim identification support or covert online engagement.

The intelligence function provides intelligence direction and support to all functions of the ACCCE. The Intelligence Fusion Centre (IFC) works with national and international partners to deliver strategic and operational intelligence to counter child exploitation.

The covert online engagement capability conducts proactive long term covert operations targeting online child abuse syndicates. Their mission is to covertly identify, disrupt and dismantle services or targets that are actively procuring, producing or disseminating child abuse material online. They work collaboratively with international and national partners in a global effort to combat online child exploitation.

The victim identification capability leads the national coordination and de-confliction of victim identification efforts, operating as the conduit between Australian law enforcement and the INTERPOL International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database. It is also responsible for developing capability across Australia, through the development and delivery of training, and through facilitation of victim identification taskforces, where investigators can collaborate to identify victims and children at risk.

The ACCCE continues to develop and enhance technical solutions to support complex digital forensics, victim identification and streamline information and intelligence sharing and is working towards progressing a national technology solution, fostering increased collaboration and coordination across the various state, territory and federal law enforcement agencies.

The ACCCE coordinates Australia's law enforcement response to national child protection operations. By enhancing collaboration between law enforcement partners the ACCCE supports and enhances the investigations of the AFP, State and Territory police and international partners for large scale multi-jurisdictional child protection operations. Investigations that exceed the investigational capabilities of a single jurisdiction may be submitted to Operation Griffin for consideration to be declared a nationally coordinated operation. Operation Griffin is supported by several working level groups comprising of members from State and Territory police jurisdictions and Commonwealth agencies investigating the exploitation and abuse of children nationally and internationally with a direct impact on Australia and New Zealand.

In close partnership with NGOs, victims of crime, government and industry stakeholders, the ACCCE continues to lead the development of national child exploitation prevention, education, awareness and support strategies and campaigns; and contributes to policy and legislative reform and whole of government initiatives through our well established stakeholder partnerships, networks working groups.

The ACCCE is further supported by a range of AFP corporate and specialist enabling functions which are critical to its overall success.

All functions of the ACCCE work together to drive a national response to counter online child exploitation, and complement the capabilities, knowledge and expertise of our partners to counter child exploitation.



Report

Response & Support

Referral

Investigative Authorities

- AFP
- Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams
- State or Territory Police
- Foreign Law Enforcement Agencies including INTERPOL & EUROPOL

Community & Partners

- Victims of crime
- Members of the public
- Commonwealth agencies including eSafety
- Non-government organisations including NCMEC
- Private sector



Referral for investigation

- AFP
- Joint Anti Child Exploitation Teams
- State or Territory Police
- Foreign Law Enforcement Agencies
- Referral for victim support

Strategic Pillars



Prepare

Prepare future capabilities, including technologies, to counter online child exploitation

Prevent

Prevent the online exploitation of children, and intervene earlier in the abuse of victims



Protect

Protect victims from further victimisation, and protect the wellbeing of staff

Pursue

Provide specialist support (national intelligence and operational coordination) to authorities to pursue, disrupt and prosecute child sex offenders, and remove victims from harm



Promote

Promote the ACCCE, its successes and the work of its partners in achieving collective objectives



Prepare

Prepare future capabilities, including technologies, to counter online child exploitation

Objectives

Strategies

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>01 Drive innovation and evolve new capabilities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish new and foster existing partnerships, domestically and internationally > Utilise the knowledge base of existing offender prevention campaigns to inform best practice > Identify new technologies |
| <p>02 Greater collaboration with academia</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Targeted academic institutions for engagement > Evidence-based approach to policing online child exploitation |
| <p>03 Coordinate working groups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Engage subject matter experts to deep dive on specific topics > Streamline communications and engagement strategies across all partners |
| <p>04 Upskill the broader community</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Upskill the community on preventing and reporting online child exploitation |

Measurement and evaluation

- > Enhanced capability across a range of stakeholders including JACETs and state & territory police
- > Training and capacity building of JACETs and state & territories and other stakeholders
- > Increased engagement with academia and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)



Prevent

Prevent the online exploitation of children, and intervene earlier in the abuse of victims

Objectives

Strategies

01

Support improved community education

- > Engage the community as a key player in prevention and education communication
- > Identify and develop targeted education strategies
- > Deliver prevention and education material at a national level in consultation with partners

02

Emphasise the role of the ACCCE in coordinating a response

- > Ensure active working groups achieve outcomes
- > Proactively collaborate with NGOs to share best practice and harm minimisation strategies
- > A nationally consistent message
- > Ensure NGO partners promote the information from the ACCCE

03

Provide a unified and coordinated voice for stakeholders

- > Collaborate with the Australian Government, NGOs, academia, industry and peak bodies to deliver consistent messaging about online child exploitation

04

Support improved research and analysis

- > Ensure best practice in prevention and education initiatives through targeted research and evaluation
- > Ensure research is fit for purpose throughout the life of the strategy
- > Deliver research with consistent language
- > Continue to re-evaluate campaigns and messaging

Measurement and evaluation

- > Reducing stigma and building awareness
- > Empower victim survivors to seek support and report
- > Community reach
- > Build and continue to engage existing partners with ACCCE Research Working Group and other academia
- > Evaluate community sentiment around the outcomes of work conducted by the ACCCE



Protect

Protect victims from further victimisation, and protect the wellbeing of staff

Objectives	Strategies
<p>01 Protect children online</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Remain up-to-date on new and emerging technologies > Develop relationships with industry > Build international connections > Use of technology and victim identification capabilities
<p>02 Protect victim survivors and secondary victims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Recognise the scope of vicarious trauma > Streamline processes and procedures to assist families > Engagement with National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse
<p>03 Protect ACCCE staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure wellbeing of staff countering online child exploitation > Recognise the scope of vicarious trauma > Lead the national Health and Wellbeing Dialogue > Maintain a proactive approach to staff welfare in line with the ACCCE Mental Health Plan > Monitor welfare of staff post-employment > Review terms of best practice relating to the mental health of staff
<p>04 Knowledge sharing with other government stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Deliver best practice and support other organisations
<p>05 Streamline the report processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Work in collaboration with partners including eSafety Commissioner > Build information sharing capabilities across agencies

<p>Measurement and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Contribute to the safeguarding of children > Maintain and enhance member wellbeing efforts > Disruption actions > Effectiveness of information sharing > Ensure adherence to the ACCCE Mental Health Plan > Measuring impact of ongoing disruptive programs > Best practice engagement between law enforcement and victim survivors > Staff wellbeing
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Pursue

Provide national intelligence and operational coordination with specialist support capabilities to pursue, disrupt and prosecute child sex offenders, and remove victims from harm

Objectives

Strategies

01

Provide specialist investigational capabilities

- > Maintain specialist covert capabilities
- > Provide high level intelligence assessments
- > Provide national priority operational coordination
- > Provide national child protection triage capabilities
- > Use of technology and victim identification capabilities
- > Utilise developments in terms of best practice relating to the mental health of staff

02

Maintain strong relationship with domestic counterparts

- > Improve national victim identification capability
- > Share new technology and investigative techniques
- > Share intelligence with states and territories, and relevant commonwealth agencies
- > Provide leadership in countering online child sexual exploitation
- > Leverage information provided by NGOs

03

Maintain strong relationships with international counterparts

- > Collaborate with international partners to disrupt networks
- > Share new technology and investigative techniques
- > Allocated resources to improve international engagement
- > Participate in international fora, such as INTERPOL and victim identification taskforces (VIDTF) (including leading Australian VIDTFs)

04

Establish clear and appropriate operational reporting pathways

- > Look to leaders such as NCMEC
- > Ensure two-way communication throughout joint operations
- > Streamline reporting pathways to coordinate responses

05

Uplift partners in the technology space

- > Stay ahead of developing online child sexual exploitation trends
- > Share knowledge of trends in the technology space
- > Strive for subject matter expertise in relation to online child sexual exploitation

Measurement and evaluation

- > Prosecution and disruption success
- > Development of case studies
- > Align prevention strategies to operational requirements



Promote

Promote the ACCCE, its successes and the work of its partners in achieving collective objectives

Objectives

Strategies

01

Increase awareness of the ACCCE

- > Continue to develop and define the ACCCE brand as an innovative, collaborative, research-driven, voice of authority
- > Collaborate with the media to enhance messaging
- > Promote operational successes

02

Promote the work of ACCCE partners

- > Leverage the ACCCE and AFP brands to promote the work of ACCCE partners from a communication perspective
- > Promote and support the successes of government and non-government partners and stakeholders via communication channels

03

Increase awareness and understanding of online child exploitation

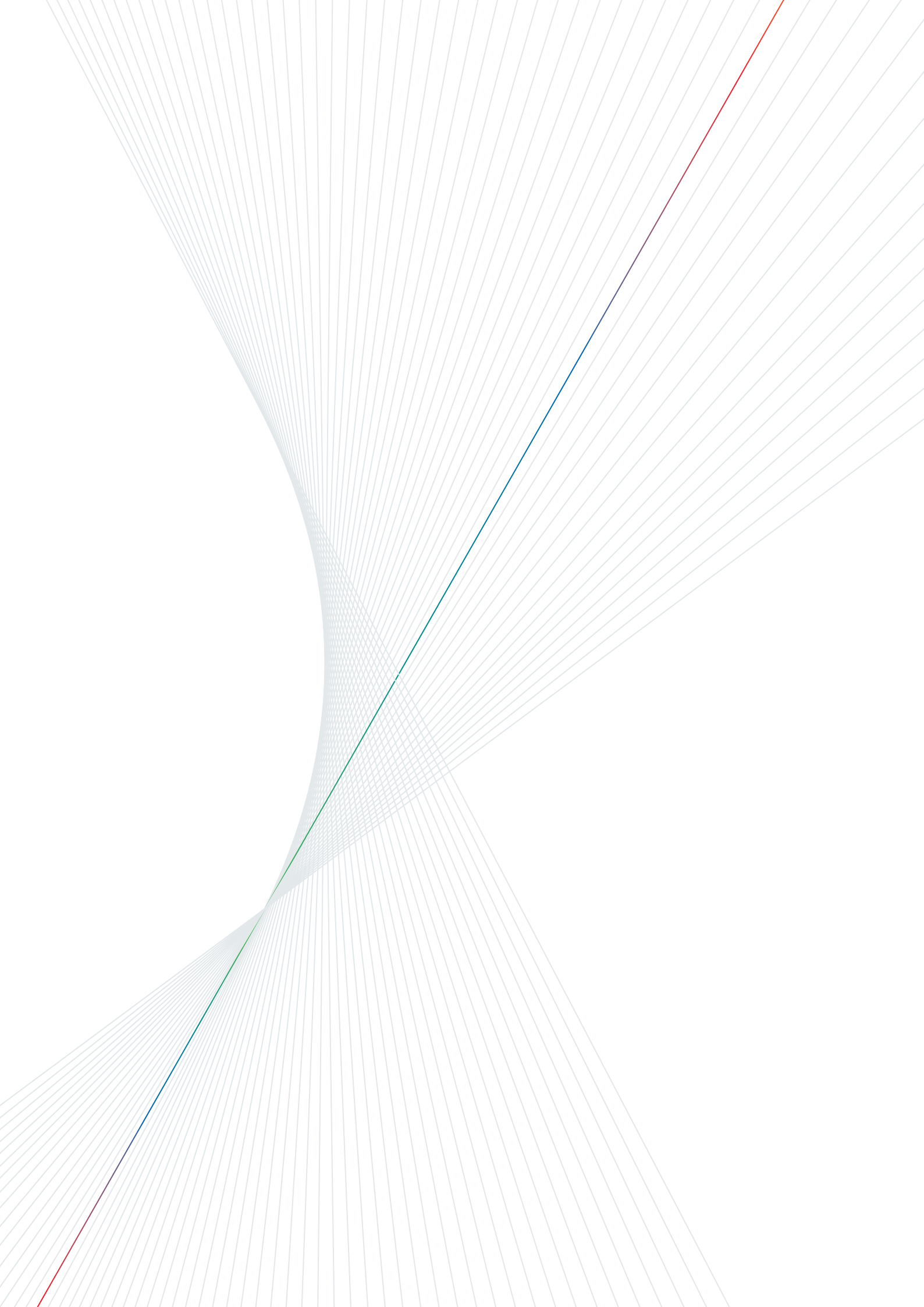
- > Focus on the influencers of children to impart messaging around online child exploitation
- > Develop campaigns in conjunction with partners
- > Educate the community to counter online child exploitation through communication tools
- > Promote peer-to-peer learning (i.e. parents sharing with other parents)
- > Encourage parents and carers to discuss online child exploitation with children

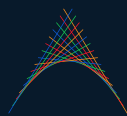
Measurement and evaluation

- > Increase reach and engagement of communication channels
- > Increase engagement with partner agencies in communication activities
- > Understand community sentiment around the outcomes of our work
- > Attendance and engagement at ACCCE stakeholder events
- > Market research on awareness and perceptions of ACCCE and online child sexual exploitation
- > Regular measurement and analysis of the ACCCE digital channels
- > Increase traffic to the ACCCE website and specific resources

Acronyms

ACCCE	Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation
AFP	Australian Federal Police
CAM	Child abuse material
COEU	Covert Online Engagement Unit
CPO	Child Protection Operations
CPTU	Child Protection Triage Unit
ICSE	International Child Sexual Exploitation Database
IFC	Intelligence Fusion Centre
JACET	Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team
NCMEC	National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (US)
NGO	Non-government organisation
VIU	Victim Identification Unit
VIDTF	Victim Identification Taskforce





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