

# NATIONAL FORUM FOR PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S CHILDREN

## Terms of Reference

### Preamble

The National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children (the Forum) is a group of representatives from Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, and the non-government sector represented by members of the Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children (NGO Coalition).

The Forum has a strategic focus on prevention and early intervention approaches under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* (National Framework), and an emphasis on strengthening the engagement of civil society organisations to prevent child abuse and neglect.

### Role

The role of the Forum includes, but is not limited to:

- Progressing the implementation and delivery of selected actions under the National Framework, with a particular focus on national priorities requiring collaboration between jurisdictions and the non-government sector;
- Lead relevant consultations with key stakeholders to engage the broader community and civil society organisations in the National Framework;
- Oversee the implementation of a communications strategy for the National Framework and its action plans;
- Provide a forum for discussion on priority areas requiring tripartite collaboration, including opportunities to fill the research gaps, expanding the evidence base to support the National Framework's objectives; and
- Provide input into National Framework reporting and evaluation activities.

Identify issues and priorities relevant to the objectives of the National Framework to be raised to the Children and Families Secretaries Group (CAFS) for consideration

### Governance

The Forum is chaired through a tripartite arrangement by a representative of state and territory governments, the Australian Government and the convenor of the NGO Coalition.

The Forum is overseen by CAFS which is responsible for decisions requiring action, or a commitment, by jurisdictions.

The Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services (DSS), provides secretariat support to the Forum.

### Membership

Each government jurisdiction, including the Commonwealth, nominates a representative to participate in the Forum.

The NGO Coalition has eight representatives from the non-government sector, including academics, practitioners, service providers and advocates for families, children and carers. NGO Coalition membership is agreed by Families Australia as the Coalition Secretariat, in consultation with jurisdictions.

Additionally, the National Children's Commissioner will hold a membership position.

Observer status and guest attendance may be granted to interested parties at the discretion of the Forum. AIHW will hold observer status on the National Forum

### **Meetings**

The National Forum will meet formally up to three times per year as necessary to progress matters requiring collaboration by jurisdictions and civil society organisations.

Agenda items will be agreed by the co-chairs who have discretion to refer issues to be resolved out-of-session as needed.

Agenda papers will be developed by the sponsoring jurisdiction or NGO Coalition member and circulated in advance of a scheduled meeting.

Actions and outcomes from meetings and teleconferences will be circulated in draft form to all jurisdictions and final minutes and outcomes will be circulated for endorsement.

### **Terms of appointment**

The Forum will operate under these Terms of Reference until such time as CAFS or the Forum deems a review is necessary.

### **Secretariat**

The Australian Government, through DSS, will provide Secretariat support. The Secretariat supports and facilitates the business of the Forum.

### **Other Sub-groups and Workshops**

From time to time, the Forum may elect to establish time-limited or subject specific working groups to deliver agreed actions. Nominations will be sought from jurisdictions and through the Secretariat for the NGO Coalition.

### **Papers**

Members may agree at meetings to circulate out-of-session papers for information or endorsement. Members may also agree with the Secretariat to circulate out-of-session papers, especially those requiring jurisdiction input to proposed recommendation(s).

### **Reporting Requirements**

Issues may be escalated to CAFS with the agreement of members, as needed.