

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2015-16 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ16-000163

Topic: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

Hansard page: Written

Senator Carol Brown asked:

1. Did the Commonwealth and state and territory Minister's meet at all (either face to face or via teleconference) during the development of the third action plan under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children?
2. Can you provide a timeline on when each of the jurisdictions agreed/ signed onto the Third Action Plan?
3. Please outline in detail the governance arrangements for the implementation of the third action plan, including any sub groups or working groups involved in the governance arrangements, terms of reference or work plans for every group, meeting schedules and membership?
4. Minister's Media Release on the launch of the Third Action Plan said that the Minister was launching "\$2.6 million per year of Commonwealth funding for projects under the plan." The Department previously provided a breakdown of committed funding for projects in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to support the National Framework in SQ15-000708 from Budget Estimates last year. Can you please provide an update of the funding committed for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17?
5. The Minister Media Release also states that:
A number of projects will be funded in local communities, such as:
 - Providing additional information to parents about early child development and the support available where take up of services is low;
 - Working with the Indigenous community to determine the best way of helping families get the information they need to support their children; and
 - Intensive case management support for young people leaving foster care and other forms of out of home care as they move to adulthood.
 - i. Will these projects be funded from the \$2.6 million?
 - ii. How are they being funded? Is this new funding or were they existing measures committed outside of the Action Plan?

Answer:

1. No.
2. The list below outlines the timeline when each of the jurisdictions endorsed the Third Action Plan.
 - Tasmania – 20 October 2015
 - Northern Territory – 20 October 2015
 - Victoria – 21 October 2015
 - Australian Capital Territory – 21 October 2015
 - South Australia – 28 October 2015

- Queensland – 29 October 2015
- New South Wales – 30 October 2015
- Western Australia – 26 November 2015

3. The governance arrangements for the implementation of the Third Action Plan, including working groups, are outlined on pages 14 and 15 of the Third Action Plan and are included at Attachment A.

The terms of reference for the National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children are at Attachment B. It is anticipated that the National Forum will meet four times in 2016, with the first meeting on 21 March 2016 with other dates to be confirmed. The membership of the National Forum is outlined at Attachment C

The terms of reference for the Strategy 1, 2 and 3 Working Groups is at Attachment D. As outlined in the terms of reference, the working groups will meet as necessary to progress matters and prepare for reporting milestones. Membership of the Strategy Working Groups is at Attachment E. Work plans for each group are under development.

Terms of reference and membership for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group and the Research Advisory Committee are to be finalised by the National Forum.

4. The tables below outline the already committed funding for projects in 2015-16 and 2016-17 to support the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*.

Funded organisation	Project Title	2015-16 (\$)	2016-17 (\$)
Families Australia	Support NGO Coalition Secretariat	100,000	100,000
	Child Aware Approaches Conference 2016	120,000	
National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)	National Child Protection Week 2015-2017 and promote the Third Action Plan of the National Framework	400,000	400,000
Bravehearts	Dittos Keep Safe Adventures Program	232,000	
CREATE Foundation	Youth for Change Conference 2015	20,000	

Various (includes meeting venue, facilitators, equipment hire and catering.)	<p>This funding is being used to support a number of activities under the National Framework including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional expenses to support Evaluation and Annual Reporting activities. • National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children - Expenses. • Third Action Plan expenses including consultations and working group meeting support. 	53,750	43,750
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5. The following three projects, referenced in the Minister's Media Release, are all new projects listed as Actions in the Third Action Plan 2015-18:

- Under Action 1.1 the Commonwealth will initiate community awareness raising activities focused on effective parenting practices and strategies to enhance safe and supportive environments in the early years, at both national and local levels.
 - Under Action 1.2 the Commonwealth will develop and trial an effective model of services and support focused on the first 1000 days to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
 - Under Action 2.1 the Commonwealth will trial ways of improving support to young people by better utilising available data, and delivering intensive case management including wrap-around services linking to education, health and housing, working with jurisdictions. All parties to use findings to guide future interventions for young people.
- i. These three projects will be funded from the \$2.6 million per annum of National Initiatives Activity funding.
 - ii. National Initiatives Activity funding of \$7,256,250 over the three years of the Plan will be used to fund these projects (noting this amount also reflects already committed funding for 2016-17). Scoping for these projects is currently underway through the Third Action Plan's Strategy Working Groups. Funding mechanisms consistent with Commonwealth funding rules will be applied.

Extract from the Third Action Plan 2015-2018 (pg 14)

Governance

The Third Action Plan has cooperative and flexible governance arrangements that cut across government and non-government boundaries to achieve the aims of the National Framework.

- **Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers** for portfolios such as family, community, disability, children and young people, child protection and social welfare are responsible for agreeing to the national strategies and actions and will oversee the progress and overall direction of the National Framework.
- **The Children and Families Secretaries group (CAFS)** consists of senior officials from relevant government departments and will support Ministers to implement the Third Action Plan. It will ensure whole of government involvement with the National Framework by engaging and partnering with departmental colleagues within jurisdictions and at a national level. CAFS is responsible for the policy directions of the Third Action Plan, including:
 - approving the research agenda linked to the Third Action Plan (including a limited number of strategic research priorities linked to strategy areas under the Plan, and any proposals in relation to progress indicators and targets).
 - considering biannual reports on implementation.
- **The Commonwealth, State and Territory officials** working group is made up of officials from relevant departments, and is responsible for monitoring and reporting progress to CAFS on the implementation of the Third Action Plan.
- **The National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children (the National Forum)** comprises representatives from the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments, key non-government organisations and the National Children's Commissioner. Non-government organisations and researchers are represented by the National Coalition of Organisations Committed to the Safety and Wellbeing of Australia's Children. This group is responsible for leading the implementation of the Third Action Plan and for achieving the agreed outcomes, with biannual reports to be provided to CAFS for consideration.

Along with these existing governance arrangements, the following groups will be established:

- **Strategy working groups** responsible for each of the three strategies under the Third Action Plan will provide oversight and drive implementation. The working groups will comprise representatives from the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments, and key non-government organisations, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives. Each working group will be responsible for scoping work on their strategy for consideration by the Commonwealth, State and Territory officials working group. Biannual updates will also be provided to the National Forum to inform that group on progress. In addition, the Strategy working groups will engage with different groups of stakeholders, such as people and organisations representing families with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to discuss key issues, and implementation and impact of strategies and actions.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working group** is responsible for ensuring the Third Action Plan remains focused on achieving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This working group will provide advice to the National Forum about the best way of implementing strategies and actions to ensure positive outcomes for this cohort, and report on progress. The working group will be responsible for developing a health check report for the National Forum on actions. It is not intended to be a representative forum, but rather to comprise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with expertise and skills required to ensure the delivery of the Third Action Plan achieves the outcomes sought.
- **Consultation with Children and Young People** will occur on issues identified by the National Forum. The National Children's Commissioner, in collaboration with State and Territory Children's Commissioners and Guardians, will provide advice about the best way to do this, building on existing structures in jurisdictions.

All jurisdictions will also consider mechanisms to ensure relevant government agencies and community sector organisations have a good understanding of, as well as the opportunity to be involved with the implementation of, the strategies and actions of the Third Action Plan.

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.

National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children

Membership

- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Australian Institute Health and Welfare
- The Australian Institute of Family Studies
- SA Department for Education and Child Development
- ACT Department of Community Services
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- NT Department of Children and Families
- QLD Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- SA Department for Education and Child Development
- VIC Department of Health and Human Services
- TAS Department of Health and Human Services
- WA Department of Child Protection
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- National Children's Commissioner
- Families Australia
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)
- Association of Children's Welfare Agencies
- Australian Foster Care Association
- Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
- Create Foundation
- Australian Centre for Child Protection University of South Australia
- Berry Street
- Uniting Communities
- Centrecare Inc

Terms of Reference – Strategy Working Groups

Chair	<p><u>Strategy One:</u> Early intervention with a focus on the early years, particularly the first 1000 days for a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NGO Coalition <p><u>Strategy Two:</u> Helping young people in out-of-home care to thrive in adulthood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Commonwealth <p><u>Strategy Three:</u> Organisations responding better to children and young people to keep them safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> state and territory governments
Purpose	Oversee and drive implementation for each of the Strategies for which they are responsible under the Third Action Plan 2015-2018, with a focus on championing early intervention and prevention, and an emphasis on strengthening the engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Scope	The work plan priorities set by National Forum and Community and Family Services Secretaires Group.
Role	<p>Strategy Working Groups will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> drive and monitor the implementation of actions under the strategy for which they have responsibility, with biannual reports to the National Forum; actively champion National Forum agreed messaging of the Third Action Plan and the strategy with community, non-government and business groups (as appropriate); engage with stakeholders (as required), such as people and organisations representing families with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, to discuss key issues; take account of the views of children and young people through the process advised by the National Children's Commissioner; explore new opportunities linked to the strategy and associated actions; and ensure all five of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles (ATSICPP) are applied to the implementation of all actions in each strategy.
Governance	<p>Lead partners would Chair meetings and arrange for secretariat support to coordinate the Working Group. Participants would cover their own costs.</p> <p>The Strategy Working Groups will work with, seek advice from and report to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group on the implementation of their respective strategies.</p> <p>The National Forum will have oversight of the Working Groups and monitor implementation through the reporting requirements outlined below.</p>

Membership	<p>Membership will be discussed and agreed by the National Forum.</p> <p>Expert advice can be engaged as required. Observer status and guest attendance may be granted to interested parties.</p> <p>Focus groups can also be convened, at the discretion of the Strategy Working Group on specific issues as required. For example, to discuss issues affecting families with disability, or families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>
Reporting	<p>Strategy Working Groups are required to report on the progress of implementation of strategies to the National Forum as outline below. These reporting requirements include:</p> <p>Implementation Work Plan Development of an implementation Work Plan by 14 March 2016 for agreement by the National Forum. The work plan is to include an outline each strategy's objectives, actions and timeline for delivery.</p> <p>Strategy Implementation Progress report The progress report is to contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress against the strategy implementation work plan; • overview of how strategy actions are applying the ATSICPP; and • any issues which require input and/or discussion with the National Forum. <p>Strategy Implementation progress reports are to be circulated to National Forum members and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group ahead of National Forum meetings as per the attached schedule (Attachment A).</p>
Meetings	<p>Strategy Working Groups would meet as necessary to progress matters and prepare for reporting milestones (Attachment A).</p> <p>The Working Group would determine the format of the meetings (i.e. face to face or teleconference).</p>
Decision Making	<p>Decisions are reached on the basis of consensus only. Issues can be elevated to the National Forum if required.</p>
Terms of appointment	<p>The Working Group will operate under these Terms of Reference until December 2018 after full implementation of the Third Action Plan or until such time as the National Forum deems a review is necessary.</p>

Strategy Working Groups Membership

Strategy 1

Chair: Families Australia

Uniting Communities

SNAICC

Western Australia

NAPCAN

Victoria

Commonwealth

ACT

AIFS

Strategy 2

Chair: Commonwealth

Create Foundation

Berry Street

SNAICC

Victoria

Western Australia

ACT

AIHW

Strategy 3

Chair: NSW

CentreCare Inc.

ACWA

AIFS

South Australia

Commonwealth

Victoria

Queensland