

Consultation in Adelaide 28 August 2019

On behalf of the National Coalition on Child Safety and Wellbeing, Families Australia led this consultation on the successor plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (National Framework). The session was attended by around 50 participants including Senior Officials from State and Federal governments as well as executives and representatives from the non-government sector.

This was the second consultation on the successor plan. The first was held in Hobart in March 2019.

Some key, high level outcomes from the Adelaide consultation include a strong preference for:

- A long-term plan with clear objectives for child, family and community wellbeing whilst maintaining a focus on priority groups that need more targeted or intensive investment or protection. It must:
 - Build on the current National Framework and keep those aspects still very relevant to child, family and community wellbeing.
 - Re-frame with a stronger focus on wellbeing, prevention and early intervention.
 - Continue to leverage investments that are achieving or show promise for positive outcomes, for example First 1000 days, transition to independent adulthood; and
 - Include a clear, agreed definition of wellbeing.
 - Be underpinned by clear governance structures supporting a tripartite approach.
 - Have a single and sustained focus on a small number of key priorities where we can achieve the greatest impact on outcomes across portfolios and wellbeing domains.
 - Link with and complement, other plans and strategies that also have a focus on the wellbeing of children and families such as the National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020-2030; the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy currently under development; the work of the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner; the National Mental Health Plan; National Centre for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse; National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children; Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative.
 - Have an architecture that allows for adaptation and fine tuning along the way.
- Have a strong and sustained focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families that works in tandem with other strategies such as the Family Matters Campaign and Closing the Gap.
- Greater clarity about the roles and funding priorities of Commonwealth and State and Territory governments linked to the successor plan to improve coherence and integration.
- Use of a narrative that an investment in children, families and communities is seen as an investment Australia's economic and social prosperity, now and into the future.
- Incorporate co-design with children, young people and families as experts in their own lives as a vital element.

The attached table synthesises the outcomes against all discussions questions. It identifies the key elements participants put forward as most likely to produce the best outcomes and that balanced child and family wellbeing with the need to protect children. Key elements have been grouped by Families Australia under some possible, broad areas of policy focus.

Adelaide consultation on the successor plan for the National Framework – Synthesis of key outcomes

Policy focus	Key elements most likely to produce the best outcomes and balance child and family wellbeing with safety	What will success look like?
1. Systems	<p>A cross-sectoral wellbeing agenda to frame policies and programs that span the continuum of care (from universal to tertiary) and that enables collaboration nationally. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Clear, achievable, measurable objectives/outcomes • Underlying principles • Clear roles/responsibilities • Small number of actions to achieve maximum impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A successor national plan will be developed that reflects an ecological model and aligns and builds on existing investments, priorities, plans and strategies across sectors including the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. ▪ More effective collaboration and coordination both between and within governments and across sectors – health, housing, education, community services.
	<p>Single and sustained focus on a small number (8-10) key priorities agreed to and upheld by all jurisdictions including the Commonwealth 10+ years most likely to have the greatest impact on driving real change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sign up by all jurisdictions with monitoring and reporting through appropriate governance mechanisms such as Ministerial Councils. ▪ No reduction in investment /commitment /governance to the plan with changes in government across the life of the plan. ▪ Agreed outcome measures / clear measurable objectives.
	<p>Prevention and early intervention approach that addresses risk factors to wellbeing for children, young people, families and communities while also protecting children. Including poverty and disadvantage, drug and alcohol dependence/misuse, mental health, domestic and family violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed system specific definitions with a program logic mapping to overall wellbeing. ▪ Prevention and early intervention approaches are embedded in policy, program and practice – recognise evidence, are place-based, evaluation is supported, scale up what works. ▪ More ‘connected’ responses for families and children with complex needs and a move away from ‘silo’ responses. ▪ Collect dynamic data at all levels including regional and local to help evaluate progress. ▪ Improvement in child development outcomes for priority groups/those experiencing vulnerability.
	<p>The system embeds a public health approach. Invert the pyramid as a series of safety nets to prevent children and families falling through to the tertiary child protection system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The approach is clearly described and understood across sectors. ▪ Action and investments map to the public health approach. ▪ Increased supply and more timely uptake of universal, targeted and intensive services with fewer entries into tertiary services. ▪ Decrease in all indicators of child maltreatment including out-of-home care.
	<p>Facilitate a broader public narrative about the importance of child and family wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian community values families and children as fundamental to the wellbeing and prosperity of society. ▪ Supporting children and families moves away from a problem-oriented approach to an ‘investment’ approach.

Policy focus	Key elements most likely to produce the best outcomes and balance child and family wellbeing with safety	What will success look like?
	Collaborative commissioning across governments/ sectors to support sustained/long-term, integrated, place-based approaches to service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grants and tender processes leverage the agreed vision, goals and principles. ▪ More coherence around funding decisions between Commonwealth and state governments to provide greater clarity for NGOs. ▪ Programs/commissioning actively promote integrated, place-based approaches. ▪ More service 'hubs' with different sectors co-located and working together around the child/family (eg. National Community Hubs Program).
	Embed principle of 'subsidiarity' across systems to support localised decision-making in communities, particularly those with greatest need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service system design is community led, and funding supports tailored and flexible approaches that can adjust to changing needs/priorities. ▪ Local organisations work collaboratively and holistically – provide a service 'package' to meet the needs of the child/young person/family (wrap-around support). ▪ Priority groups are identified and supported. ▪ Greater levels of social cohesion.
2. Cultural responsiveness – cross cutting theme	Prioritise efforts to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in systems including child protection, justice, family violence, disengaged youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive shift in indicators at state and national levels. ▪ Implementation of all five elements of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle by all jurisdictions. ▪ Closing the Gap (Refresh) targets.
	Culturally safe policies, programs and practice that are responsive and address impacts of intergenerational and complex trauma and promote healing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, communities, organisations and leaders are partners in co-design. ▪ Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families accessing NACCHO/ACCO services when they need them. ▪ Evaluation and scaling up of what works.
	A stronger role for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The role of ACCOs is enhanced and their expertise is recognised and utilised.
	Establish a strong evidence base and a common language in relation to trauma, its impacts on children, young people, families and communities, and identify solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy, program, practice are informed by evidence relevant to the Australian context. ▪ Evaluation is embedded in system/ service design and outcomes are shared. ▪ We have a common language around complex trauma.
3. Practice/ workforce	Promotion and implementation of strengths-based approaches that value and prioritise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ moving away from risk averse practices ▪ creating safe service access and ▪ family-led approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communities of practice are established to support practitioners. ▪ Scaling up of approaches that are evidence based/ informed. ▪ Practitioners are empowered and supported to be brave in decision making about what does and doesn't work.

Policy focus	Key elements most likely to produce the best outcomes and balance child and family wellbeing with safety	What will success look like?
	Support for professional development, practice leadership, supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workers have the required skills and supervision to shift organisational cultures and practices to meet the national vision. ▪ Professional development is supported through the successor plan eg. Child Aware Conferences under the National Framework.
4. Participation	Embed co-design as a principle in policy, program and service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children, young people, families and communities are at the centre of policy and program design. ▪ Children, young people, families and communities are consulted in the development of the successor plan and as part of its ongoing monitoring and evaluation. ▪ Participation reflects diversity.
5. Child/young people focus	Bring children and families to the front of public policy making. Leeds exemplar where investing in children is seen as an investment strategy, not just pathologised in to the child abuse and neglect space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement in child development outcomes for those in priority groups and experiencing vulnerability.
	Greater focus on the needs and development of children in all services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies, programs and practice have children at the centre. ▪ Data shows that the health, education, and social outcomes have improved.
	Build on learnings from the National Framework and continue effort in areas of ongoing concern/ priority/ promise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stronger investment in the early years including First 1000 days. ▪ Support for young people transitioning to adulthood. ▪ Stronger investment in strategies supporting family reunification for children in out-of-home care. ▪ Clear linkages with the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children to strengthen the focus on the needs of children. ▪ Priority focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.