



**BEYOND 2020:
TOWARDS A SUCCESSOR PLAN FOR THE
NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR
PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S CHILDREN
2009-2020**

A PROGRESS REPORT ON CONSULTATIONS
BY FAMILIES AUSTRALIA

NOVEMBER 2019

FamiliesAustralia

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We thank all participants in the consultations undertaken to date during 2019 and the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments for their support.

Beyond 2020 consultation team

Dr Brian Babington, CEO
Stella Conroy, Deputy CEO
Margaret Fisher, Senior Policy Officer
Jennifer Horsfield, Office Manager
Elizabeth Hunter, Events and Communications Manager

Report authorised by Dr Brian Babington, CEO, Families Australia (0417 550 149)

Families Australia
Level 4, 24 Brisbane Ave
Barton ACT 2600

© Families Australia 2019

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Background	4
Method	5
Key findings	7
Next steps	7

Beyond 2020: Update on progress towards a successor plan for the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

Background

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (National Framework), Australia's first ever COAG endorsed plan to improve the safety and wellbeing of children, comes to an end next year.

Families Australia has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) to lead national consultations on a successor plan on behalf of the National Coalition for Child Safety and Wellbeing (National Coalition). Families Australia is working closely with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children and the Family Matters Campaign, DSS and State and Territory governments on the successor plan to the National Framework. National consultations are expected to be completed in early March 2020. Families Australia will then provide a final report to DSS.

The National Framework has achieved some significant outcomes including the National Standards for Out-of-Home Care, the appointment of the inaugural National Children's Commissioner, the development of the Child Protection National Minimum Data Set and improved information sharing protocols across jurisdictions to better protect children and families who move across borders.



Above: Beyond 2020 Adelaide consultation August 2019

However, the goal to strengthen the focus on prevention and early support as key elements of the public health approach adopted under the Framework has not been achieved to the extent anticipated and child protection statistics have continued to track higher nationally. In addition, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in child protection and justice systems remains stubbornly high. These issues are being explored as part of the national consultations.

There are also a number of other policy developments and initiatives occurring across governments and in the community relevant to discussions on the successor plan. These include:

- the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;

- trials for new ways of working through place-based, collective impact approaches and coordinated commissioning;
- the work of the Productivity Commission including its consultation paper on Systems for Protecting Children and Draft Report on Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory;
- national strategies and frameworks that also support the wellbeing of children such as the National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020-2030 and the Children’s Mental Health Strategy;
- significant investments by State and Territory governments to reduce siloed approaches to service design and delivery to better meet the needs of families and children experiencing vulnerability;
- the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* and calls from the sector for a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Strategy;
- the evaluation of the National Framework currently being undertaken by PwC and due to report to Government in early 2020;
- recognition of the importance of including the voices of children and young people in policy and program design and implementation.



Above: Beyond 2020 Brisbane consultation October 2019

Method

Families Australia will host over 20 national consultations with outcomes to inform a final report due to DSS by the end of March 2020. The consultation program includes broad, public consultations and focused, invitation-only leadership group discussions with up to 20 key thinkers. Participants for the leadership group discussions are identified in consultation with Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and the National Coalition.

To date, Families Australia has hosted nine workshops and six leadership group discussions with over 400 registered participants:

1. Hobart 16 March 2019 – public consultation.
2. Child Aware Conference – workshop 17 May 2019 that also included young people from the Conference’s Young People’s Plenary Panel.
3. Adelaide August 2019 – public consultation and leadership group discussion.
4. Brisbane 9 October 2019 - public consultation and leadership group discussion.
5. Townsville 10-11 October 2019 – one public consultation with strong representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community representatives, one targeted consultation with parents from the Family Inclusion Network Townsville and representatives from Act for Kids Townsville, and one leadership group discussion.
6. Northern Rivers 15 October 2019 – one public consultation with good representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, young people and community representatives.
7. Sydney 1 November 2019 – one public consultation and one leadership group discussion.
8. Perth 7 November 2019 – one public consultation including some young people identified through the Valuing Children Initiative and one leadership group discussion.

Families Australia has received very strong support from State and Territory governments who have been highly engaged in the process. Officials have assisted with invitation lists and promoting the consultations - both internally and across their networks. Attendance has been very pleasing.

Workshops in Brisbane and Sydney were also supported by Ernst and Young who provided the venue and catering. The Perth workshop was supported by Deloitte as a key partner of the Valuing Children Initiative. Deloitte provided the venue and catering.

DSS has also assisted with invitation lists and promotion. Representatives from the Department also attended and spoke at all public consultations and leadership group discussions. Advisor to the Hon Michelle Landry MP, Assistant Minister for Children and Families, attended the public consultations in Brisbane and Townsville.

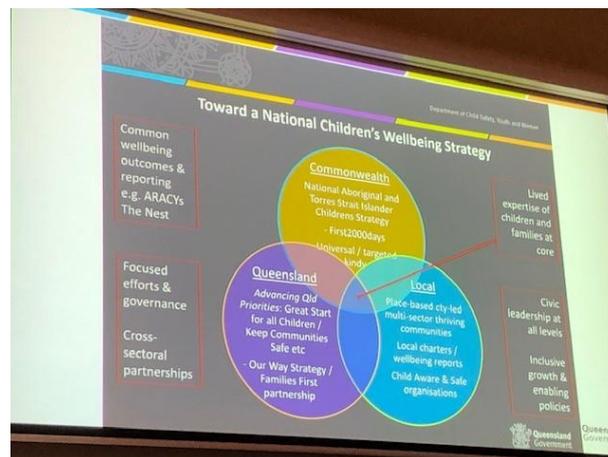


Above: Beyond 2020 Sydney consultation November 2019

Key findings

Major themes identified from the consultations to date are:

1. Because many children and families still face major challenges, it is imperative that COAG agree to an ambitious, long-term national child and family wellbeing plan when the National Framework ends next year.
2. The new plan must give far greater weight to prevention approaches and be underpinned by substantial ongoing funding, especially to support families with multiple and complex needs.
3. A major priority is to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities, especially to tackle over-representation in out-of-home/alternative care.
4. Broader wellbeing approaches are being increasingly enshrined in policy thinking in Australia and overseas – Australia should do the same, though not lose focus on the safety of children.
5. Greater collaboration and accountability is needed both within governments and across all levels of government to meaningfully integrate efforts and reap synergies.
6. Leverage and strengthen the tripartite approach to governance established under the National Framework acknowledging the important role of the NGO and research sectors in supporting effective implementation.
7. The voices and perspectives of children and young people need to be enshrined in the next plan.



Above: Beyond 2020 Brisbane consultation at Child Aware Conference, May 2019

Next steps

A public consultation, leadership group discussion and targeted consultation with the Northern Territory Young People's Advisory Group are scheduled for Darwin 21-22 November 2019.

A public consultation and leadership group discussion will also be held in Canberra on 28 November 2019 at the DSS National Office. This consultation is shaping up to be one of the largest yet with well over 125 participants expected to attend.

Under the banner of Child Aware, there will be two consultations in Melbourne on 10 March 2020. Families Australia is working with the Victorian State Government to finalise a workshop and leadership discussion on the successor plan. There will also be an annual meeting of the National Coalition to further test propositions for key elements of the successor plan identified from all Beyond 2020 consultations, to help inform advice to Government. This meeting would normally include government representatives including members of the National Forum and other key stakeholders.

Based on the key themes arising from the consultations, the option of one or more additional, targeted consultations with a broader stakeholder group including health, education and early childhood education and care may seem appropriate. These consultations could occur soon after the current round of national consultations has been completed. Targeted consultations with relevant experts and stakeholders could help to further develop proposals for consideration by Government on a range of important issues including scope and length, engaging children and young people in the vision statement; principles underlying the successor plan; objectives, outcomes and measures; governance and accountability mechanisms.



Above: Beyond 2020 Perth consultation November 2019



Above: Natalie Lewis, CEO, QATSICPP addressing Beyond 2020 Perth consultation November 2019