



Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child

Response to National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20, Proposed focus and scope of the Fourth Action Plan 2018-2020

About the Initiative

The Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child Initiative has been established to advocate for the recordkeeping rights of those who experience childhood out of home care.

It has been formed in partnership with key community advocacy organisations – Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN), the Child Migrants Trust, Connecting Home, and the CREATE Foundation – and allied research units – Federation University Australia's Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History (CRAH), Monash University's Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics (COSI) and the University of Melbourne's eScholarship Research Centre (ESRC).

It brings community advocates together with recordkeeping researchers and practitioners to explore how to transform recordkeeping and archiving to better respect, represent and enact multiple rights in records.

The Initiative convened a National Summit at Federation Square in Melbourne on the 8-9 May 2017 to build a collaborative community and develop a ten year strategy for overcoming the systemic and enduring problems with recordkeeping and archiving that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse once again highlighted.

See <http://rights-records.it.monash.edu.au> for more information.

Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the discussion paper for the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*.

Our comments relate to the discussion questions:

Focus of the Fourth Action Plan (p.4)

- How can we best reflect the recommendations of the Royal Commissions and the possible government responses in the Fourth Action Plan?



- How can we best utilize the expertise of the non-government and research sectors to work under the National Framework and how could this be facilitated through the National Forum?

Priority Area 4: Improving organisations' and governments' ability to keep children and young people safe from abuse (p. 14)

- Do you have suggestions on how the National Principles, including the tools and resources developed, should be promoted to increase awareness within the sector?
- Do you have suggestions on how the outcomes of the Inter-jurisdictional Child Protection Information Sharing Project can be built upon to continue to facilitate better information sharing between jurisdictions?
- What are the key challenges to delivering these actions?

They also relate to *Priority Area 3: Improving outcomes for all children in out-of-home care by enhancing placement stability and ensuring lifelong relationships and a sense of belonging, identity and connection to culture and community* in general, rather than being a response to the specific proposed key actions.

Recordkeeping for Child Safe Organisations

'Good recordkeeping is an important part of making and supporting institutions to be child safe'

The Final Report from the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* has a lot to say about records and recordkeeping, not just in *Volume 8 Recordkeeping and Information Sharing*, but throughout the volumes. It has delivered a set of Records and Recordkeeping Principles for child safety and wellbeing to supplement the Standards for Child Safe Organisations, and charged state and territory governments to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance.

Recordkeeping professionals thus have an important role to play in developing, implementing and monitoring organisational policy, processes and systems that foster the creating and keeping of full and accurate records for child safety and wellbeing. Those who experience out-of-home care, as part of child protection interventions, additionally rely on organisational recordkeeping systems to create and keep records that help to develop and nurture their sense of identity and connectedness to family and community. In these contexts, as well as being child safe, there is also a need to collectively ensure that they are childhood safe, supporting social and emotional wellbeing and meeting longer term obligations for ongoing access to records, once a child or young person has left care. A child-safe ethos involves an obligation to implement recordkeeping regimes that meet the corporate parenting responsibilities of the child protection sector.

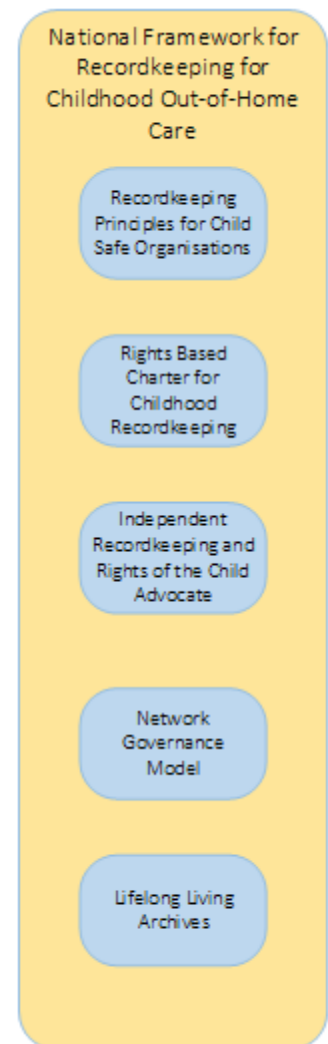
We have provided feedback to the Australian Human Rights Commission on the draft National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and indicated where recordkeeping requirements should be incorporated into the principles, action areas and indicators, see <https://rights-records.it.monash.edu/2017/12/01/submission-on-principles-for-child-safe-organisations/>

We believe that socio-technical transformation is needed that goes beyond automating existing recordkeeping and archiving processes and systems and their incremental improvements, for full implementation of the recordkeeping principles. Reimagining the way that people, processes and

technological systems work together is required, along with configuring processes and systems to represent and enact multiple rights in records and recordkeeping. The goal is to design and develop child/person-centred, participatory, interoperable, networked infrastructure able to support lifelong identity, memory and accountability needs.

We believe that a **National Framework for Recordkeeping Childhood Out of Home Care** is needed to complement the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children, particularly in its post 2020 incarnation. It enlarges on the RCIRCSA’s recordkeeping principles to address the full gamut of identity, memory and accountability needs for all those who experience childhood out of home care – past, present and future. It incorporates:

- **Recordkeeping Principles for Child Safe Organisations**, together with the tools, systems, education and training programs to implement and adequately monitor them.
- A unifying **Rights Based Charter for Childhood Recordkeeping**, to recognise the agency of children in relation to recordkeeping, in alignment with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the active participation of children in decision making that impacts on their lives in the National Standards for Out-of-Home Care 2011.
- An **Independent Recordkeeping and Rights of the Child Advocate** with development, auditing and oversight responsibilities, and to oversee the design and implementation of a national cross-jurisdictional, cross-sectoral legislative and policy framework to promote efficient and accountable recordkeeping and archiving by all agencies involved in child protection and out of home care services.
- Independent **Lifelong Living Archives** as safe, secure and accessible keeping places for childhood records, populated by children and young people themselves and by their care givers, case workers, teachers, health professionals, and others involved in their parenting. It would support a child’s identity, memory and time in out-of-home care and be accessible throughout his or her life.
- A **Network Governance Model** to define the ways in which the different components integrate to form an interoperable and accountable infrastructure.



We are progressing this vision through the Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child Initiative and associated action and advocacy and research and development agendas (see <https://rights-records.it.monash.edu/about-the-initiative/>).

Fourth Action Plan Recommendations

We would like to see the fourth action plan point to the need for better recordkeeping frameworks, processes and systems in order to implement and monitor the recordkeeping principles for child safe organisations.

We would also like to see national co-ordinated action taken to address recordkeeping challenges and would welcome the opportunity to be part of a working group affiliated with the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, so as to bring together a mix of government, non-government, community advocates, recordkeeping and research voices and progress the development of a national recordkeeping framework.

At the moment recordkeeping is not playing the role it should in protecting Australia's children. It should be a quality, reliable, consistent, coherent infrastructure that supports those working to protect and care for children in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Like any good infrastructure it should be something that is taken for granted rather than being an administrative roadblock. This will only be possible if the current shortcomings are acknowledged and adequately addressed through imagining new participatory and rights based frameworks, processes and systems.

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