



Select Committee on the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Victoria

Hearing Date: 10 March 2026

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: National Association for Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect

Received date: 30 March 2026

1. **Melina BATH, p. 68**

Question Asked:

I have been in contact with an ACCO from the north of the state in Victoria, and they have provided some context around where they have co-located an integrated maternal health centre with the ECEC. So you have got that very small, nurturing maternal health, childcare health – I am reflecting my age now – and then into the centre. And there is quite a seamless transition, and there is a trust I think; that is my experience from this anecdotal evidence here. But one of the things that they say is that in funding there is a shift away from the per head model to a more expanded model or block funding within the ACCO, so that there are these other services that can be integrated, that are not just sitting on top of the child, if that makes sense. Is that something that you have seen – take it on notice if you need to – in, say, Queensland? Is there any other development around that?

Merrin SULOVSKI: I think that is probably something I would need to take on notice.

Response: Not being an ACCO ourselves, NAPCAN cannot comment in great detail on the experiences of ACCOs and their funding requirements. From what we have seen, it can vary greatly depending on the particular services and its location. Some ACCOs are well supported and resourced, while others particularly in rural and regional areas need more cross-sector support. We have additionally seen an increasing shift in government funding models for non-profits. Tender applications increasingly incentivise organisations to partner with ACCOs, such as by offering more funding, preferencing applications with these partnerships, or requiring such a partnership. NAPCAN partners with ACCOs where possible due to the clear benefits in the quality of work that is produced, and we believe this incentivisation to partner with ACCOs should continue to be encouraged.

2. **Michael GALEA, p. 69**

Question Asked:

On that note – and you probably think that we are all honing in on this – the independent early childhood safety commissioner, I was also going to

ask on that. Given the interplay between federal and state, is that a role that you think is best placed at the federal level to oversee the entire nation or to be done state by state? I am happy to hear from all three of you.

Alice DOLIN: I think there is potentially merit to both options. We have only discussed it here in the context of this inquiry and in the context of Victoria. I do not know – we could take that on notice, unless you have an opinion here.

Merrin SULOVSKI: I do not have a strong opinion. Again, I see the benefits of both. I guess the challenge that I foresee with national is the different funding models, different regulations for the states and territories, so having state based I guess is going to be more targeted and specific to the needs and the way things are done in Victoria. That might be an on-notice.

Response: NAPCAN recommends an Early Childhood Safety Commissioner at both the federal and state level. Both options provide more oversight and strengthen child safeguarding. We see the Early Childhood Safety Commissioner as strengthening the work of the Children’s Commissioners, who have a wide range of funding and responsibilities across jurisdictions. For example, the Queensland Children’s Commissioner has 64 full time employees, while the NT Children’s Commissioner has only 4. We encourage the Victorian government to establish a well resourced Early Childhood Safety Commissioner.

3. Additional question: Melina BATH, p. 67

Question asked: Thank you. I sense the need and then the frustration with CCYP over a long period of time. Can I go to the Safer Communities for Children protective behaviours. And then I just wrote down ‘bush animal stories’ – that sounds really positive. These are very delicate subjects. They need to be age specific. They need to support children where children are and not place a burden unnecessarily. I will say you are recouping your funds to provide that service, but is there some way that you could provide a snapshot for us? Is there a little intro PowerPoint or something that you could provide to the committee?

Merrin SULOVSKI: Yes, absolutely.

Response: Please see the NAPCAN Safer Communities for Children webpage: <https://www.napcan.org.au/programs/safer-communities-national/>

The webpage contains information about the resources and training, community feedback, informational videos, an overview of the storybooks, a sample of one of the stories, and information explaining the approach and curriculum alignment.