

Developing a Child and Youth Engagement Framework for the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse

Participant Information Sheet- parents/guardians

Introduction

My name is **Lynne McPherson** and I am an Associate Professor at Southern Cross University, NSW. Together with my colleagues Adjunct Associate Professor **Janise Mitchell** and **Lauren Thomas** from the Australian Childhood Foundation and **Fiona Cornforth** from the Healing Foundation we are conducting a research project which is entitled: Developing a Child and Youth Engagement Framework for the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse.

The National Centre funds research, raises community awareness, reduces stigma, and provides training to support improved responses to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse – and prevent it from occurring in the first place. This research will help to shape the way that the Centre engages and consults with children and young people.

What is this research about?

The aim of this study is to explore how adults can effectively create conditions, facilitate having a voice, and provide an audience for children and young people to enable their participation in the development of the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (NCACSA).

The research will examine the views held by children and young people about how they may wish to participate, and in what ways they want to be consulted and offered opportunities to contribute and be involved in the work of the National Centre.

The findings will be used to inform the development of a framework for the participation of children and young people in the development of the National Centre. Once the framework has been developed, there will be an ongoing, continuous cycle of planning, engagement, action and reflection to ensure that it becomes meaningfully embedded so as to create an important focus for all the NCACSA work.

What does this research involve?

Participants are children and young people aged 12-25 years (divided into two groups: 12-15 years and 16-25 years) who will be invited to participate in online focus group sessions across four phases summarised below. These sessions will offer children and young people to an opportunity to learn about participation and their rights, and to hear their views and ideas about participation.

Phase One. Focus Group: Participation and Your Rights, Exploring the Need, Identifying the Challenges, Developing Solutions (2 hours)

The first two online sessions will be held one week apart. These groups are designed for the two age groups: 12-15 years and 16-25 years. In this first session participants will learn about their rights to participate and begin to develop their ideas about participation.

The focus groups will be conducted using child-centred data collection techniques and as such would not rely primarily on a question-and-answer format. A range of creative art and play-based techniques offered as individual and group activities would be used to elicit responses to the research questions. The focus group session will involve researchers continuously checking in with children and young people about the views and ideas that they were expressing. A support person may accompany the child or young person in the group.

Phase Two. Focus Group– Time to Design, selecting solutions- (2 hours).

In this session children and young people will have an opportunity to review the ideas from the previous group and to begin to choose the approaches and solutions that they prefer. This will include developing preferences for the platforms, environments and ways of being engaged to support participation.

With your (and your child's) permission, the focus groups will be audio-recorded but they can ask for the recording to be paused at any time if they wish to say something "off the record".

In **phase three**, an online feedback session will take place (1 hour). This meeting would present the initial findings of the focus groups with children and young people to the NCACSA advisory group of adult experts in the field. A small group of young participants, who volunteer from focus groups will help to present the happened in the groups.

In **phase four**, all children and young people who have been involved will be invited to attend a final, online feedback session (1 hour). The purpose of the final session would be for the adult Advisory Group to present back to the children and young person participants, showing that they had heard and understood their views and that the views were being taken into account and had been acted upon.

Participants will not be paid to be in the study, however a gift voucher to thank them for their time will be offered.

What are the risks associated with this research?

Your child/young person will not be asked to disclose personal or confidential information about themselves. Rather they are providing advice about helpful and useful ways in which they would like to be consulted about a range of topics. There is, however, the potential for embarrassment or distress if confidential information is revealed to other focus group participants, especially if it occurs in an unplanned way.

There is a possible risk that a child or young person may spontaneously disclose their experience of abuse. This is unlikely given that group facilitators will make it clear that they are not asking participants to discuss their personal information.

In the unlikely event that your child/young person does disclose abuse and/or feels embarrassment or distress, we will respond immediately to attend to their needs. Research team members have professional social work backgrounds and experience in the area of trauma. They will be available for immediate support. If the need should arise, an experienced and qualified counsellor will be available.

My responsibilities to you.

Your child/young person's privacy and confidentiality will be protected and all data will be de-identified at the time of analysis and only group data will be reported.

The likelihood and form of dissemination of the research results, including publication.

We intend for this research to be published as a report to the National Centre for Action against Child Sexual Abuse. We will also publish our findings in academic journals and may disseminate key information via podcasts and webinars. No participating individual will be identifiable in any information published.

Data Storage. All data collected in this project will be stored safely and securely at Southern Cross University for a minimum of 5 years after publication.

Informed Consent

Please read this information sheet carefully and discuss with your child/young person the potential benefits and possible risks of their involvement in the focus groups. If you and your child/young person consent to them taking part in the research they will be asked to confirm their consent on an ongoing basis.

You and your child need to read, complete and sign the attached Consent Forms and either upload these via the Engage project website at www.ncacsa.org.au/engage or return them to Ms Lauren Thomas, The Australian Childhood Foundation, P.O BOX 3335, Richmond VIC 3121.

Inquiries

You can contact me at lynne.mcpherson@scu.edu.au if you have any questions about this research.

Feedback to Participants

Findings will be made available in a report and a summary to all participants. We will send you these by email if you choose to include your email address at the bottom of the consent form.

Ethics Approval

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Southern Cross University. The approval number is 2022/091.

Complaints

If you have concerns about the **ethical conduct** of this research or the researchers, write to the following:

*The Ethics Complaints Officer
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au*

All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.

CONSENT FORM- parent + guardian

Title of research project **Developing a Child and Youth
Engagement Framework for the National Centre for Action on
Child Sexual Abuse**

Name of researcher: A/ Professor Lynne McPherson

At the end of each statement, tick the box that applies, sign and date the form and return it to the researcher at the address provided.

	YES	NO
I agree to allow my child/young person to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above.		
I understand the information about their participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researchers.		
I agree to allow my child/young person to attend focus groups offered by the researcher		
I agree to the session being audio-recorded		
I understand that my child/young person can ask for the recording to be paused if they wish to say something 'off the record'.		
I understand that my child/young person's participation is voluntary and I understand that they can cease their participation at any time.		
I understand that my child/young person's participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality and that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data.		
I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published.		
I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept safely and securely at Southern Cross University for a minimum of 5 years after publication.		
I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries. Their contact details have been provided to me.		
I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee		

Participant's name: _____

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive a summary of the research when it is finished.

Email: lthomas@childhood.org.au