

Innovative resource for safeguarding children

Australian Catholic University (ACU) on Friday 15 December will launch an innovative web-portal that provides safeguarding initiatives and preventative approaches to child sexual abuse within organisations.

The [Safeguarding Children and Young People Portal](#) is a dedicated website to link external organisations and partners to accessible resources, programs and modules.

The portal will provide:

- Up-to-date relevant research, journals and other literature
- Networking opportunities for professionals to collaborate on knowledge and expertise
- Training programs and modules
- Evidence-informed templates and practice tools for organisations

ACU has established expertise in the area of protecting children, including a dedicated research unit, the ACU Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS). ICPS has worked closely with the research program of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, forging partnerships with other academic institutions to deliver valuable insights about children's safety in institutions.

Practitioners, policy makers and organisations will benefit most from the resources on the website. This includes educational institutions, faith-based organisations, sporting bodies, and any professional that deals with children.

ICPS Director Professor Daryl Higgins said there was a strong need for leaders of organisations to create an environment of transparency and accountability to stamp out an institutional culture of abuse.

“Leaders play a vital role in keeping children safe in their organisations. Our research consistently shows the importance of setting clear guidelines and policies that prevent offending behaviour and to address it if it does occur.

“This work demonstrates ACU's continuing commitment to taking a leadership role in the community to take action to keep children safe and protected from harm,” he said.

Child Safety and Governance Executive Manager at YMCA Australia Olivia Brown said organisations working with children and young people welcomed the new resources and contemporary research through the launch of the portal.

“We are so fortunate to have world-leading information available to us in Australia, and with the credibility and integrity of the Institute of Child Protection Studies' work, organisations can be confident they have access to leading practice resources.

“It comes at the perfect time with pending recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations,” she said.

The portal will continue to expand and develop, with additional features introduced in 2018. These include a community of practice and organisational self-assessment program, to assist organisational leaders to assess the safety climate of their programs and services.

Visit the portal: <https://safeguardingchildren.acu.edu.au>

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Safeguarding Children and Young People

Australian Catholic University (ACU): ACU is a publicly funded university, open to students of all beliefs, and teaches within the Catholic intellectual tradition. ACU students learn to think critically and be guided by social justice principles. They are inspired to create an impact through empathy: bringing about change in their community, profession and industry.

ACU has established expertise in the area of protecting children, including a dedicated research unit, the [ACU Institute of Child Protection Studies](#) (ICPS). ACU also has an established record in development and delivery of safeguarding programs and courses to support institutions to create safer cultures for children and young people.

Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS): ICPS was established in 2005, to generate and promote knowledge to improve the wellbeing of children, young people, families and communities. A nationally recognised centre of research excellence in the field of child, youth and family welfare, it is undertaking ground-breaking research into the safety of children in institutions, the involvement of children in social research on sensitive issues, and trialling a model of contact between children in out-of-home care and their parents.

ICPS has contributed ground-breaking research to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, examining children and young people's views and experiences of safety in institutions.

Professor Daryl Higgins: Professor Higgins is a registered psychologist with a research focus on public health approaches to protecting children, and child-safe organisational strategies. He has been researching child abuse impacts and prevention, family violence, and family functioning for more than 25 years.

Among his studies, Professor Higgins has examined statutory child protection systems across Australia, and the intersections and gaps with the family law system.

Professor Higgins has been Director of ICPS since February 2017 and was most recently Deputy Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Safeguarding Children and Young People:

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Portal is for organisational leaders, policy makers, practitioners, and professionals who work or volunteer in institutions that support children and young people.

It includes a range of research publications and resources, tools, and professional development opportunities to increase institutions' capacity to protect the children and young people in their care.

New features will be introduced in 2018, such as a community of practice and organisational self-assessment program to assist in the assessment of the safety climate of programs and services.