

MEDIA RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

**Stop it Now! Australia is working to keep children safe:
Jesuit Social Services**

One year into delivering the child sexual abuse prevention service Stop it Now! Australia, an anonymous service for people worried about their own or someone else’s sexual thoughts and behaviours in relation to children, preliminary evaluation analysis by the University of Melbourne demonstrates the service is having its intended effect of working with individuals to reduce risk factors and increasing protective factors.

“Before Stop it Now! Australia was established in September 2022, there was no large-scale early intervention service in Australia for people worried about their sexual thoughts and behaviours in relation to children. This was a gap identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse,” says Georgia Naldrett, Manager of Stop it Now! Australia.

“This week is Child Protection Week - a valuable window to talk about the importance of individuals who are concerned about themselves or another adult to take responsibility to keep children safe. We know that these are challenging and confronting issues, but if we do not address them from a sound evidence base, we risk allowing a cycle of abuse to continue,” says Ms Naldrett.

“We know that one in three girls and one in five boys in Australia are victims of child sexual abuse, and Stop it Now! is underpinned by the principle that child abuse is preventable, not inevitable.”

Stop it Now! Australia’s key features include an anonymous phone helpline, live chat, and self-help materials for people who are worried about their sexual thoughts and behaviours in relation to children, as well as parents, family members, and professionals with concerns regarding child sexual abuse. The service is available to people across the country.

The service’s experienced practitioners work with callers to explore concerns, address any immediate child protection considerations, explore relevant psychoeducation, and link them with other resources. Callers agree on actions such as implementing child protection measures or accessing self-help modules, and ongoing engagement with Stop it Now! Australia is encouraged.

Stop it Now! Australia has received more than 200 calls and live chats and its website has been accessed by over 12,000 people since launching in September 2022. The service is based on similar Stop it Now! services which operate in the UK and Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium and the USA.

The service is currently being evaluated by the University of Melbourne, with preliminary analysis finding that it is making a positive difference to callers, including family and friends of potential perpetrators.

“At the moment, Stop it Now! Australia is philanthropically funded by a Westpac Safer Children, Safer Communities grant. We know that a model like this helps to keep children safe and supported, and look forward to this type of work being Federally funded in the future.”

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