

MEDIA RELEASE – 13 APRIL 2026

## **Stop It Now! Australia works to keep children free from harm: Jesuit Social Services**

A major milestone has been reached with the launch of Stop It Now! Australia, the nation's first federally funded and nationally available child sexual abuse offending prevention service, operated by Jesuit Social Services. This initiative delivers on a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and forms part of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse. The new service builds on the learnings and outcomes of the pilot program operated by Jesuit Social Services since 2022.

The service comprises a free and anonymous phone helpline, website and online self-help resources for adults concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours towards children.

"Child sexual abuse is one of the most significant issues facing Australia, with one in three girls and one in five boys having been the victims of child sexual abuse. The prevalence of online offending has only intensified this issue and the need for evidence-based approaches to prevention," says Georgia Naldrett, General Manager of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention at Jesuit Social Services.

"Child sexual abuse is a confronting topic, but it is something we cannot shy away from if we want to prevent harm from occurring. We know that it's really important to work with people offending or at risk of offending, so we can intervene earlier, and ultimately keep children safe. Our experience delivering the pilot program since 2022, supported by independent evaluation, shows that this approach helps callers take meaningful action to reduce harm and keep children safe," says Ms Naldrett.

Over almost a decade of work to establish Stop It Now! in Australia (pilot program), Jesuit Social Services has collaborated with victim-survivor advocates, law enforcement, academics and technology companies to strengthen child sexual abuse prevention efforts nationally.

Ms Naldrett says the pilot program, which was made possible by philanthropic grants including from Westpac, demonstrated the need for evidence-based support for people concerned about their own or someone's else behaviour towards children.

"The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for a Stop It Now!-style service in its final report nine years ago. We are thrilled to see this recommendation realised through dedicated Federal Government investment, and Jesuit Social Services is proud to have been selected as the preferred provider to deliver this vital national service," she says.

"The need could not be clearer: in the first three years of the pilot program, we received more than 750 calls and live chats despite operating with limited hours and missed many more. The new national service, with expanded hours, will be able to support more people to identify risks, provide

advice to help them implement positive changes and explore potential referrals out to other services.

“The phone line provides anonymous support, which we know reduces barriers to people accessing help and creates an environment where people concerned about their behaviours can get the support need to aid in the prevention of child sexual abuse.”

Alison Geale, CEO of Bravehearts, expressed support for the program, saying: “As CEO of Bravehearts, I am proud to express our strong support for the Stop it Now initiative. This groundbreaking program represents a crucial shift towards prevention-focused child protection by providing confidential support and resources for adults experiencing sexual thoughts about children. Protecting children from sexual harm requires comprehensive approaches, including addressing risks before harm occurs.”

“Stop it Now fills a critical gap in our protection landscape by offering a safe pathway for individuals to seek help voluntarily, ultimately reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in our communities. By supporting those who recognise their concerning thoughts and are motivated to seek help, we are taking proactive steps to protect children. Bravehearts firmly believes that every child deserves a childhood free from sexual harm. Stop it Now can be an essential tool in creating safer communities for all Australian children.”

Ms Naldrett adds: “This program is an important piece in the puzzle of how to prevent child sexual abuse, and we will collaborate with other services working with those who offend, non-offending family members and victim-survivors, as well as law enforcement, technology companies, and child protection.”

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