

Launch of National Child Protection Week 2026



NCPW 2026
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EVERY CONVERSATION MATTERS
SHIFTING CONVERSATION TO ACTION

National Child Protection Week Launch

Presenters:

- **Darian Brooker**, Youth Advocate & Founder of We, Future Leaders - MC
- **Eliza Tate**, Member, NAPCAN Youth Speak Out - MC
- **Lil Gordon**, First Assistant Secretary (First Nations Partnerships, for the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts)
- **The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP**, Minister for Social Services
- **Alice Dolin**, Researcher NAPCAN - moderator
- **Commander Joanne Cameron**, AustCentre to Counter Child Exploitation
- **Kathryn King**, Acting e-Safety Commissioner
- **Imogen Gerraty**, Co-CEO YLab
- **Liz Jackson**, Media and Communications Strategist NAPCAN Board - moderator
- **Jess Hill**, Journalist and academic YLab
- **Bryce Corbett**, Journalist & host of Squiz Kids
- **Professor Tanya Notley**, Western Sydney University
- **Clare Walker**, Fair Youth Coverage NAPCAN

In this launch on **Friday 4 September 2026** the speakers discussed:

- **Listening to children and young people** - Meeting them where they are and creating safe, meaningful ways for them to communicate and influence decisions.
- **Young people's online experiences** - Understanding how algorithms, AI, harmful content and misinformation are shaping what young people see and experience online.
- **Building digital literacy** - Helping young people recognise risk, question what they see and understand how online systems can influence them.
- **Shared responsibility for online safety** - Recognising the role of government, tech companies, educators, parents and communities in creating safer digital environments.
- **Media, misinformation and representation** - Exploring how media framing, AI-generated content and stereotypes can shape the way young people understand the world and how they are understood by others.

- **Including young people in the stories told about them** - Supporting responsible journalism and ensuring children and young people have a genuine voice in media and conversations that affect them.

Overview

The 2026 National Child Protection Week Launch brought together young people, government, advocates and sector leaders to explore this year's theme, Every Conversation Matters: Shifting Conversation to Action.

Across the event, a clear message emerged: listening to children and young people means more than giving them a voice. It means creating safe spaces for them to communicate, taking their experiences seriously and ensuring they influence the decisions that affect them.

The launch explored digital literacy, online safety, misinformation and media representation, with speakers highlighting the shared responsibility of governments, industry, educators, families and communities to create safer environments for children and young people. At the heart of the conversation was a simple challenge: rather than always inviting young people to our table, what does it look like for adults to take a seat at theirs?

Speaker quotes

- "Communication looks different for every child. Children communicate through words, signs, pictures, sounds, behaviour, and sometimes even silence. Child protection isn't just about listening when a child tells us something is wrong. It's about making sure every child has a way to tell us." - **Eliza Tate**
- "When we think about language and we say every conversation matters, I ask people to think about those particular words. How we talk with families is incredibly important." - **Lil Gordon**
- "A crucial part of this work has been to hear from children across the country directly, because if we're serious about protecting them, we have to give them a seat at the table. And we have to listen when they tell us what will protect them and what will help them heal." - **The Hon Tanya Pilbersek MP**
- "For us, it means having young people be at the table with the solutions because young people's digital worlds look very, very different to adult digital worlds... It's algorithms, it's AI slop and misinformation and hallucination that young people are grappling with at the moment." - **Imogen Garrity**
- "Those two spaces have completely and utterly merged... We're still very siloed - you do the online, we do the physical. We have to start approaching this through a lens of safety overall." - **Commander Joanne Cameron**
- "We started to paint a picture of stories of young people that had a trusted adult that changed their life, young people that had a service that they had access to and that changed their life... If you tell those human stories and actually tell the stories around

how they were able to improve their lives, I think that that's really meaningful and it is a function of prevention." - **Clare Walker**

- "Your cup of ambition isn't going to be meaningful unless you fill it with action... Perhaps it's a conversation with a colleague, perhaps it's a conversation with a young person, perhaps it's a commitment to making stronger safeguarding in your organisation, perhaps it's challenging a comment or a behaviour that you might previously let pass, or perhaps it's taking time to actually sit at the kids' table." - **Leesa Waters**

Questions from the audience

Q: Do you agree that children & young people's advocacy should occur in consultation and with care of their safe parent?

A: Consultation with parents or carers is valuable and, wherever appropriate, informed parent or carer consent should be sought when engaging children and young people in advocacy.

At the same time, it is important that this does not become a barrier to children and young people being heard. Not every young person has a parent or guardian who is safe, available, willing or able to advocate for them, and some may have views or experiences they do not feel safe sharing with a parent or carer present.

The key safeguard is that participation is voluntary, age-appropriate and supported by a trusted adult who is suitably trained to work with children and young people. Organisations leading consultations should have strong child-safe policies and practices, appropriate risk assessment and safeguarding processes, and ensure all relevant staff and facilitators hold the necessary child-related screening and compliance checks, such as Working with Children Checks.

Ultimately, children and young people should be supported to participate in ways that are safe, informed and meaningful. Their ability to speak up should not depend solely on whether a parent or guardian is able to champion their voice.

Q: Is it possible that a trusted organisation such as NAPCAN could co-design advocacy and media training courses for children & young people?

A: NAPCAN has developed media guides to support fair, accurate and ethical reporting on children and young people. These resources are available for journalists, media professionals and content creators who want to strengthen their practice and ensure children and young people are represented respectfully and responsibly.

While NAPCAN does not currently offer a dedicated media training course, the Foundation for Young Australians has undertaken valuable work in this area. We look forward to exploring further collaboration with FYA and other organisations to build on this work,

support high-quality reporting, and develop practical resources that centre the rights, safety and voices of children and young people.

Resources and links:

- Karina Jeffrey - [the story behind the artwork Video](#)
- Governor General 2026 launch [video](#)
- Fair Youth Coverage [video](#)
- NAPCAN [Gen Z video](#)
- National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse [resource](#)
- NAPCAN [Media Guide](#)
- Foundation for Young Australians [Media Centre](#)

Social media tiles from the webinar are available on our [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#)

Theme

The theme for National Child Protection Week (6 - 12 September 2026) is

Every Conversation Matters: Shifting Conversation to Action



Recordings & Resource Sheets for the National Child Protection Week 2026 webinars will all be available on the [NAPCAN website](#).

For more information, contact:

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Thank you for your commitment to ensuring every child in every community has a fair go.

Child Protection Week 2026, 6-12 September

National Child Protection Week is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services