

# Costs of online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Australia: An initial review

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## Cost categories

73 different kinds of costs were identified that are likely related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA).

### 22 costs identified

#### Justice, child protection, and allied professionals

- Investigation.
- Intelligence.
- Legal prosecution.
- Legal defence.
- Court preparation programs (specifically for victims and families).
- Trial or trials (e.g., if there are multiple, if there are appeals).
- Victim's time (during legal proceedings).
- Jury and witness time (during legal proceedings; distinct from other trial costs as not all trials will have juries, and will have variable numbers of witnesses).
- Compensation for victims of crime.
- Victim re-victimisation through the judicial process (e.g., during trial).
- Prison and incarceration.
- Probation and community sentences.
- Sexual offender registration and monitoring.
- Offender treatment (in prison or in the community).
- Child protection services.
- Out-of-home care, emergency housing, or foster care.
- Victim advocates/ombudspople.
- NGO/charity/non-profit services.
- Potential for reoffending (some or all the above over again).
- Staffing for all the above.
- Equipment, resources, and infrastructure for all the above.
- Expertise, education, and training for all the above.

Costs were grouped thematically to help the Australian professional response community in identifying where they are more or less likely to be involved.

### 12 costs identified

#### Technical, legal, business, regulatory, and enforcement costs unique to OCSEA

- Detection/disruption of offending by technology companies.
- Detection/disruption of offending by social media companies.
- Detection/disruption of offending by ISPs.
- Detection/disruption of offending by financial institutions.
- Takedown of illegal material by technology, social media, and ISP companies.
- Content moderation by technology, social media, and ISP companies.
- Technology, social media, ISP, and financial companies complying with subpoenas and directives (e.g., from eSafety Commissioner or police).
- Regulatory costs or penalties when subpoenas and directives are not followed (i.e., saved money otherwise).
- Dedicated public sector departments for OCSEA and related online harms (e.g., eSafety Commissioner, Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, Queensland Police Service Task Force Argos).
- Staffing for all the above.
- Equipment, resources, and infrastructure for all the above.
- Expertise, education, and training for all the above.

“Cost” is defined as something that has or is likely to have a monetary, financial, economic, or expenditure impact in some way.



# Cost categories

## 16 costs identified

### Medium- to long-term health and wellbeing and associated losses

- Future mental health problems (victim).
- Future physical health problems (victim).
- Future addiction/substance abuse (victim).
- Future housing stress or homelessness (victim).
- Future relationship impairment (victim).
- Future criminality (victim).
- Special education (victim).
- Cost of living increases (e.g., single parenthood if offender is removed long-term, costs of divorce).
- Potential intergenerational abuse (victim).
- Potential future re-victimisation (victim).
- Damage to non-offending parent's family and friend relationships.
- Lost economic productivity and employment (e.g., victim being unable to work, offender being unable to work, parent being unable to work, knock-on consequences of impacted schooling/education).
- Needing to engage social services (e.g., welfare or other government benefits for victim or family).
- Early mortality (victim).
- Tax revenue losses for government.
- Potential for reoffending (some or all the above over again).

## 16 costs identified

### Prevention, education, and research

- Population-level prevention programs and resources (victimisation).
- Population-level education programs and resources (victimisation).
- School-based prevention and education programs and resources (victimisation).
- Population-level prevention programs and resources (offending).
- Population-level education programs and resources (offending).
- Community hotlines.
- Training programs and resources for professionals outside the OCSEA/CSE/CSA field (victimisation and offending).
- Media reporting.
- Academic research.
- Private sector research.
- NGO/charity/non-profit research.
- Government research.
- Development of specific laws/policies to prevent/combat OCSEA.
- Staffing for all the above.
- Equipment, resources, and infrastructure for all the above.
- Expertise, education, and training for all the above.

## 1 cost identified

### Payment of blackmail or ransom

- Payment of blackmail or ransom (e.g., financial sextortion).

## 6 costs identified

### Immediate to short-term health and wellbeing of victims and families

- Medical examinations, procedures, and expenses (victim).
- Counselling or therapy (victim, victim's family, offender's family).
- Immediate educational impacts (victim, offender's family; e.g., missing school).
- Immediate employment impacts (victim, victim's family, offender, offender's family; e.g., losing a job or missing work).
- Change of residence (victim, offender, victim's family, offender's family).
- Potential reoffending (some or all the above over again).

