

IMPACT REPORT

2025-26

The connections that protect children

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IS CHANGING. **FAST.** SO ARE WE.



Technology changes, offenders adapt, and new platforms emerge faster than most systems built to track them. Money moves differently. Evidence crosses borders. And the people working to protect children must keep moving too.

ICMEC Australia exists to help them do exactly that. We strengthen the professionals and systems responsible for detecting, disrupting and preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse.

But there is something else we do: **we connect them.** Because the answer to this crime does not sit inside one organisation, it sits between many.



A bank



A police station



A university



A courtroom



Parliament House



A hotel



A database

Different places. One system of protection.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

At ICMEC Australia, we're focused on how we can shift the dial of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA). Whether it's a financial crime team sharpening its detection process, an investigator picking up a new capability, or a case moving forward. Our work is anchored in producing tangible outcomes. We see the impact in many ways: a child is identified, a police officer feels more confident stepping in when a family reaches out for help, new legislative safeguards come into effect, or a piece of Australian research changes what evidence decision-makers have in front of them.

This year gave us many of those moments. But what stays with me isn't any single achievement; it's how connected they all are.

CSEA doesn't sit neatly within one organisation, one profession, or one sector. Technology, financial systems, global networks and constantly shifting offender behaviour make that plainer every year. A problem this multi-faceted needs a response that is just as connected.

Over the past year, ICMEC Australia has worked alongside financial institutions and regulators to build financial crime capability, supported police and justice professionals here and internationally, invested in research that gives Australia a stronger evidence base, brought experts and national decision-makers together, and kept building the data capability that will carry our next stage of work.

None of this happens because we work alone – it happens because people choose to work together. Our role at ICMEC Australia is often about making those connections possible, spotting the gap, bringing the right people to the table, and helping turn knowledge into practical action.

We're still a relatively small team. This year has shown what's possible when a small team works through systems rather than around them. Our next phase is about scale, taking the approaches that are already showing value and extending their reach further.

Child protection has never been a one-off solution. It is an enduring responsibility that demands continuous vigilance, innovation and collaboration. We are looking forward to what we can next achieve together.



COLM GANNON
Chief Executive Officer
ICMEC Australia

WE SET OUT TO CLOSE A GAP

ICMEC Australia was established in late 2021 on a simple idea: the organisations capable of disrupting child sexual exploitation and abuse already held critical pieces of the solution.

With foundational support from Westpac's Safer Children, Safer Communities initiative, we began building an Australian model designed not to duplicate existing services, but to strengthen the organisations already positioned to intervene.

What began as work on financial crime and data has grown into a multi-faceted program spanning law-enforcement capability, research, government and AI policy, international training capability and next-generation data.

Financial institutions hold data.

Police hold investigative expertise.

Technology companies understand digital systems.

Researchers help us decipher emerging risks.

Governments could shape policy.

Not-for-profits bring a child-centred perspective.

But those capabilities did not always connect.



The question underneath it all never really changed. **What needs to connect for children to be safer?**

What comes next?

Better data

More capability

Stronger connections

Greater scale

OUR MODEL

We connect the dots.

We work across financial intelligence, law enforcement, technology and data, research, government and policy, industry, and international capability.

Turn financial signals into stronger detection capability.

Build frontline and specialist law-enforcement confidence and skills.

Create and connect data that can support detection and disruption.

Close evidence gaps and translate research into action.

Put credible child-safety evidence in front of decision-makers.

Help industries understand where their operations intersect with child protection.

Bring together people who would not normally sit at the same table.

Our contribution can be a program, a tool, or a piece of evidence. Sometimes it is simply getting the right people into the same room.

We are not the system.

We make the system stronger.

We are not a bank, a police agency, a regulator, or a technology company, and that independence is what makes the rest of this work possible.

It allows us to navigate between sectors, bring competitors into the same conversation, connect researchers with practitioners, and identify problems that sit between traditional organisational boundaries.

Different approaches, same goal: **Make it harder to exploit children.**



MEET US

The Board

It takes a lot of different expertise to solve one very difficult problem. **Meet the people helping guide the work.**

ICMEC Australia's Board brings experience across governance, financial crime, law enforcement, technology, regulation, business and human rights.



Jodie Arthur
Non-Executive Director

Senior financial-crime leader across banking, compliance and international markets.



Jeremy Moller
Board Chair

Risk advisory lawyer with deep expertise in anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, sanctions, regulation and governance.



John Fogarty
Non-Executive Director

Former police detective and senior financial-crime and regulatory-compliance executive.



Doug Boudry
APM
Non-Executive Director

Former Australian Federal Police officer with more than 25 years of law-enforcement experience.



Melissa Stewart
Non-Executive Director

Lawyer and international specialist in modern slavery, human trafficking and human rights.

Serious work needs serious expertise. **Luckily, we have quite a bit of it.**

MEET US

The Team

Meet the people behind the work.

We're a small team, so we spend a lot of time on things that don't always fit neatly into job descriptions: building partnerships, reading research, talking to police, financial institutions and government, developing technology, running events, asking questions, and occasionally going for a much-needed coffee run!

Systems don't connect themselves; people do. Our team brings together expertise across technology, law enforcement, government, media, partnerships, research, operations and finance. Different jobs working toward the same purpose: making the systems around children stronger.

Emerging Technology

Aravind · Janis · Praniha

Data-led and purpose-built, our technology team builds the tools, data capability, and infrastructure that help trusted partners find the signals that matter.

Government Affairs, Law Enforcement Outreach and Communications

Mikaela · Ashley · Danni · Ash · Cherise · Charlotte

From police stations and Parliament House to research, advocacy and media, this team helps evidence move into action, strengthens professional capability and keeps child safety in the national conversation.

Corporate Engagement

Skylor · Rosie · Jacqueline

Working across financial crime, regulators and industry, this team brings the right people together to share intelligence, strengthen capability and help disrupt financial activity linked to child sexual exploitation and abuse

Operations

Charlotte · Abi · Griselda

The people making sure everything else can happen: meetings organised, finances managed, reporting accurate, and people supported, because strong external impact starts with a strong organisational base.

Small team. Big range.

Different expertise. Different roles. One shared reason for being here: protecting children.



Colm Gannon

Chief Executive Officer

Digital safety, technology, cybercrime and international child protection.



Dr Janis Dalins

Head of Emerging Technology

Technology, data, digital forensics and responsible AI.



Dannielle Kelly

Head of Government Affairs, Law Enforcement Outreach and Communications

Law enforcement, advocacy, government engagement, partnerships and capacity building.



Rosie Campo

Head of Corporate Engagement

Financial institutions, corporate partnerships, cross-sector collaboration and information sharing.

A Year In Numbers

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

So, what happened?

5+

children identified and rescued through cases connected with the Malaysian mentoring program

3

university research partnerships

520

law enforcement and justice professionals trained nationally and internationally during FY2025-26

50M+

historical records available within our data products

720

people attended Brown Bag learning sessions

1,894

young Australians represented in AI prevalence research in partnership with Adelaide University

60M+

media impressions from major 2025 Parliament House AI advocacy activity

Numbers matter, but they aren't the whole story

Turn the page

Case Study 1

CONNECT

It started with a signal.

Financial intelligence and the financial crime sector.

Money leaves clues.

A transaction can look ordinary, until it doesn't.

A small payment. A pattern. A destination.
A known indicator. A link to something or
someone else.

Financial institutions do not investigate child
sexual exploitation and abuse. But they may
see financial activity associated with it. That
puts financial-crime professionals in a unique
position: they may hold one piece of a much
bigger picture.

**So, our question was
simple: What could financial
institutions see if the right
intelligence was connected?**

“

What makes the CWG so valuable is
that it brings together organisations
of all sizes from across industries,
all working towards the same goal
of protecting children from harm.
By sharing knowledge, ideas and
resources, we strengthen our collective
ability to detect, disrupt and prevent
child sexual exploitation and abuse.”

- Ainslea Milthorpe, Financial Crime
Compliance Lead, Hume Bank

Information is useful.

**Connected information is
even more powerful.**



Not just another networking group.

Financial crime professionals don't need
another meeting. They need information
they can use.

Our Collaboration Working Group brings together more
than 40 organisations across financial institutions, law
enforcement and regulation, including major banks,
smaller institutions, fintechs, remitters and card providers.
Facilitated by ICMEC Australia and chaired by Sal
Gunawardena, Head of Intelligence Information at NAB, the
group meets every six weeks.

The conversations are practical: What are we seeing?
What has changed? What information can be shared?
What could another institution learn from it? What could
we test together?

The group brings in experts, shares resources and explores
data projects designed to strengthen detection across the
wider financial crime ecosystem. Connections built through
the group have helped institutions access information and
resources they might not otherwise have had.

Case Study 1

CONNECT

The big banks can't be the only ones looking.

Customer-owned banks and smaller financial organisations sit inside the same financial ecosystem and may encounter the same indicators of exploitation, often with fewer dedicated financial-crime resources.

So, in March 2026, we worked with AUSTRAC to bring financial-crime professionals from customer-owned and small-to-mid-sized institutions together for a practical session on emerging typologies, red flags, suspicious matter reporting and human-trafficking indicators.



Not a broad awareness session. A practical conversation.

What to look for. What to escalate. What useful reporting looks like. And how to apply that knowledge inside organisations with very different levels of resourcing.

Then we made the room bigger.

In November 2025, our annual ICMEC Australia Symposium brought together 177 people from 81 organisations across financial crime, law enforcement, technology, risk, product design, corporate responsibility and government.

177

People

81

Organisations

1

Shared
problem

We called it Convergence. The point was not to make everyone an expert in everything. It was to help people see how their part of the system connected to everyone else's.

The room reflected this idea, with speakers from a variety of industries:

- **Brendan Thomas** – Chief Executive Officer, AUSTRAC
- **David Palmer** – Detective Acting Superintendent, Western Australia Police Force
- **David Pegley** – Managing Director, Australian Financial Crimes Exchange
- **Paul Jevtovic APM OAM** – Chief Financial Crime Risk Officer & Group MLRO, National Australia Bank
- **Madeline Shepherd** – Digital Safety, Trust and Privacy Lead, Asia Pacific, Microsoft
- **Gerrard Ivins** – Manager, Public Safety Liaison, Uber

A regulator, a police force, a financial crime exchange, a bank, a technology company, and a travel platform (just to name a few). Different sectors who came together to discuss how to work as a collective, keep children as the central focus, and invest in not only the response, but proactive prevention as well.

Case Study 1

CONNECT



“

This was one of the best, if not the best, symposiums in the crime theme I have been to. The mission is so clear, the speakers and professionals in the room so pertinent and passionate – and the possibilities feel endless after days like today. Thanks, ICMEC Australia, do not underestimate the ripple effect of your work on other days.”

- Symposium Attendee



And we kept the conversation going.

Across FY2025-26, our Brown Bag learning series drew 1,385 registrations and 720 live participants. Financial institutions were the largest single industry sector represented. Researchers, financial crime professionals, technology specialists, government, law enforcement, travel and not-for-profits came together around the same idea: share what you know so somebody else can do something useful with it.

“Fantastic work — love seeing and being part of this collaboration.” - Brown Bag attendee

“Love these sessions as they give insight from other FI’s and industries through guest speakers variety.” - Brown Bag attendee

“Great to have practical techniques and considerations discussed.” - Brown Bag attendee



Our next steps

An Industry Alliance. Greater engagement with crypto. Stronger data and information-sharing solutions. More practical capability for organisations of every size. A sustainable funding model capable of reaching more of the sector.

More institutions looking means better intelligence moving – and fewer places for child exploitation to hide.

Case Study 2

BUILD

A report comes in.
What happens next matters.

Australian policing

Online child sexual exploitation has changed fast: sadistic online exploitation, rapid grooming, AI-generated material, harmful sexual behaviour and new platforms.

But the first police officer to encounter a report will not always be a specialist investigator. They may work in General Duties, Domestic Violence, Youth Command or a local investigation unit.

Their role is not to replace a specialist. It is to recognise what may be happening, ask useful questions, know where the matter needs to go and respond appropriately to the child or family in front of them.

So, we built training around that moment.

Between February and June 2026, ICMEC Australia delivered our Child Abuse Response Training for Frontline Police to NSW Police. Nine 90-minute sessions were delivered to 183 participants across Sydney, Greater Sydney, the Central Coast, South Coast and Riverina. The program was scenario-based, operationally grounded and developed with policing expertise.



94%

of FY2025-26 survey respondents reported feeling more confident responding to reports of online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

96%

said the training content was directly relevant to their work.

“

I feel I'm better equipped to respond and act on reports of this nature.”

- Training Attendee



**Good training gets remembered.
Great training changes what
happens next.**

Case Study 2

BUILD

So, what changed afterwards?

The feedback did not stop at satisfaction with the session.

Better-quality referrals, with more detailed information reaching specialist teams. More targeted questions being asked of victims, parents and carers during initial reporting. A stronger baseline understanding reflected in questions coming back from commands.

“

[the program] addresses a significant capability gap for frontline police. Building awareness and confidence at the first point of contact is critical to improving outcomes for child victims and ensuring investigative opportunities are not missed.”

- NSW Detective Sergeant, Natali Stojceski

Knowledge moved.
Practice moved with it.

Collaboration underpins our approach.

A partnership-first mindset runs through everything we deliver.

Our work with the Australian Border Force (ABF) demonstrates this in practice. Training is developed in consultation with the agency and tailored to officers' operational roles, responsibilities, and identified needs. ICMEC Australia has delivered training to more than 100 ABF officers, covering investigator wellbeing, case management, and online investigative techniques.

And sometimes you don't have to wait to see the impact.

In November 2025, through ICMEC Australia's sponsorship and partnership with OSINT Industries, open-source intelligence training was delivered to almost 50 NSW and Tasmania Police officers. This training focused on tracking offenders across platforms and supporting victim and offender identification.

Live investigative problems were brought into the training environment. During one course, two unsolved cases progressed using the new approaches, leading to multiple arrests.

Better tools

Skilled investigators

Real cases moving



Sometimes the impact happens in the room.

Case Study 3

ACT

Our mission to protect children isn't defined by borders. Neither are our training programs.

Between October 2025 and June 2026, ICMEC Australia facilitated six online mentoring sessions with the Malaysian Internet Crimes Against Children Unit. Approximately 30 to 70 officers joined each session from across Malaysia.

This was not classroom training built around hypothetical scenarios. Investigators brought active cases, real operational challenges and decisions they were working through.

Experienced practitioners helped them examine different investigative approaches, share lessons and return to previously discussed investigations.



Six mentoring sessions. **Then the numbers changed.**

5+

children identified and rescued: three Malaysian children and at least two Australian children not previously identified as victims by Australian law enforcement.

Two offenders connected with the cases discussed during mentoring sessions were successfully prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment.



This is our why. Capacity building is not about the attendance number or the certificate. It is about what someone can do with the knowledge afterwards.

Case Study 3

ACT

But an arrest isn't the end of the story.

A case still has to move.

Evidence needs to be understood.
Prosecutors need to present it.

Courts need to interpret increasingly complex digital material. Children need to remain at the centre of the process.

In February 2026, ICMEC Australia coordinated a week-long specialist program for judges and prosecutors from across Malaysia, focused on strengthening responses to online child sexual exploitation and the presentation and understanding of digital evidence.



Build the whole response.

A strong investigation cannot operate in isolation. Neither can a prosecutor. Neither can a judge. Neither can a safeguarding organisation.

If online child sexual exploitation crosses borders and systems, the response needs to connect across them too: investigation, victim identification, prosecution, judicial capability, safeguarding, mentoring and follow-up.



Sustainable capability means knowledge stays after we leave.

19

judges trained

35

prosecutors trained

100%

of respondents said the training was helpful and applicable to their work

Case Study 4

INFLUENCE

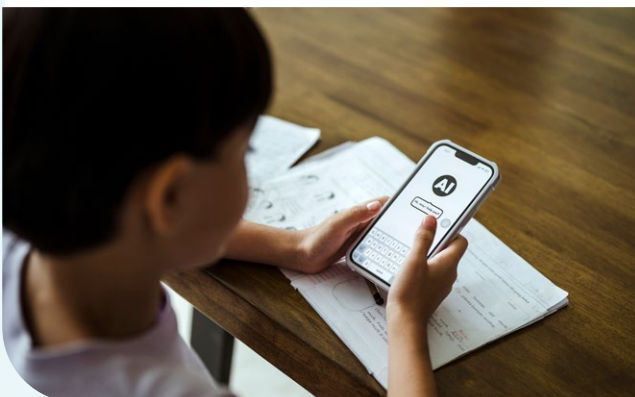
Then the threat changed. **Fast.**
AI, evidence, advocacy and national influence.
First, we needed evidence.

Artificial intelligence (AI) changed the child-protection conversation quickly: synthetic sexual imagery, nudify applications, AI-facilitated grooming and new opportunities for offenders to create, manipulate and distribute harmful material.

Research undertaken with the University of Queensland surveyed more than 250 university students about awareness and attitudes towards nudify applications - forty-two per cent had never heard of them.

Rapid technological change requires an ongoing understanding of community awareness, experiences and perspectives.

Alongside it, research with Macquarie University produced Australia's first national mapping of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) deterrence initiatives. The research identified gaps in services for adults who have offended or may be at risk of offending and noted that 38 countries had no publicly available national deterrence program or participation in an international deterrence initiative.



Then, in March and April 2026, research through our Adelaide University partnership examined AI and non-AI online sexual victimisation among 1,894 Australians aged 16 to 18.

1,894

young Australians represented in the study¹

The repository records that AI was involved in more than one in four cases of non-consensual sexual image sharing captured by the study, and that at least one in 25 respondents had experienced, or had a close friend who had experienced, AI-involved online sexual victimisation before turning 18.



We weren't relying only on overseas evidence. **We had our own.** Australian data changes the conversation.

1. Cubitt, T.I.C., Logos, K., Brewer, R. & Mathews, B. (2026). AI and non-AI facilitated online child sexual victimisation: A national study of Australian Adolescents. Adelaide University. <https://doi.org/10.25909/32902481>

Case Study 4

INFLUENCE

Evidence needs somewhere to go.
So, we brought people together.

ICMEC Australia established and convenes the SaferAI for Children Coalition: a network of 25+ organisations and experts spanning AI safety, child protection, research, the public sector, industry and law enforcement.

The Coalition exists because expertise was already there; it was just sitting in different places. The job was to connect it around a shared goal: make child safety a core AI-safety issue, not an afterthought.

Coalition expansion became one of two flagship proposals in ICMEC Australia's 2026-27 Federal Pre-Budget Submission. In July 2026, members met in person for the first time, with pro bono support from PwC, and the Coalition began bringing youth voices more directly into its work.



Australian expertise.
International conversation.



25+

organisations.

1

rapidly changing problem.

The conversation didn't stop at Australia.

In May 2026, ICMEC Australia co-hosted a closed-door roundtable in Sydney with the UK Minister for AI and Online Safety, bringing Australian child-online-safety experts together under Chatham House Rule to inform the United Kingdom's national conversation on technology-facilitated harms and protections.



Case Study 4

INFLUENCE

Then we took it to Canberra.



17 July 2025

ICMEC Australia convened Child Safety in the Age of AI at Parliament House, bringing parliamentarians, law enforcement, child-safety advocates and experts together around nudity applications, deepfakes and AI-facilitated grooming.

2 September 2025

We returned for a National Leaders' Conversation. Three practical priorities were put to government: baseline police capability relating to AI-enabled child harm, consideration of victim-identification technology, and stronger national prevention and awareness for families and schools.

Following the first roundtable and the resulting public and political attention, the Minister for Communications attended the September discussion and announced an intention to move against nudity applications.



We made some noise. **On purpose.**

364

online articles

15

print articles

1,125

radio segments

188

television segments

60M+

estimated combined audience reach

The media wasn't the outcome. **Attention was our tool for influence.**

Case Study 5

SCALE

Meanwhile... while all of that was happening, we were building.

Leveraging technology and data is central to our mission.

Our next-generation data product is being built in-house to ingest broader datasets, integrate more closely with systems used by security-focused organisations and get relevant intelligence to trusted users more efficiently.

Its development is also changing the way our technology team works. The product is being developed within a secure environment with continuous quality checks, rigorous audit standards and increasing alignment with Australia's Essential Eight maturity framework.



50M+

historical online anonymisation service
address records available

69M

historical IP geolocation records
available

Millions of records do not protect children by themselves. **They matter when someone can find the right signal inside them.**



THE NEXT CONNECTION

The next connection wasn't obvious.



Hotels



Booking platforms



Transport



Tourism



Borders

None of them are traditionally described as child-protection organisations.

Maybe they should be part of the conversation anyway.



Travel businesses can encounter indicators of exploitation.

They can build safeguarding into corporate systems, train people, report concerns and make it harder for offenders to use travel infrastructure unnoticed.

During 2025–26, ICMEC Australia worked with organisations including Marriott International, Booking.com, Uber, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and the Australian Border Force to connect child protection with responsible tourism, human rights, modern slavery, ESG and sustainability.

That work included a Brown Bag webinar with Booking.com and Marriott International, a dedicated travel panel at the 2025 Symposium and a webinar with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, A Call to Action: Protecting Children in Travel and Tourism.

Child safety is everyone's business.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

We're not done. We know more about what works now.

The next question is how far we can take it.



More police.



More states.



More data.



More financial institutions.



More evidence.



More young people shaping the decisions that affect them.

Our next chapter is about taking approaches that are already demonstrating value and extending their reach: continuing Child Abuse Response Training for Frontline Police beyond New South Wales; deepening state-level government relationships; strengthening SaferAI as a sustained policy and expertise mechanism; launching and expanding our data product; developing an Industry Alliance and engaging emerging financial ecosystems including crypto; and continuing research into the economic and societal costs of child sexual exploitation and abuse.



What could more support make possible?

More support does not simply allow ICMEC Australia to do more activities. It allows approaches that are already showing value to reach further: national law enforcement capability, more sovereign data capability, more institutions, more research, more jurisdictions and more opportunities to get useful intelligence into the hands of people who can act.

The system can be stronger. **Help us build it.**



THANK YOU

This work is shared.

Every outcome in this report has people behind it.



A financial-crime professional who shares what they are seeing.



A police officer who brings a live problem into a training room.



A researcher who helps answer a question we could not answer before.



A company that contributes expertise, funding or technology.



A policymaker who listens.



A partner who opens a door.

ICMEC Australia is built on collaboration.

We extend our sincere thanks to every organisation and individual who contributed expertise, time, resources, funding, data, ideas and trust to our work during 2025-26.

Financial institutions, industry and corporate partners

NAB

AUSTRAC

Norton Rose Fulbright

Event sponsors

Westpac

TikTok

Platinum AML

Grant Thornton

KordaMentha

CoinSpot

Woods Consulting

Snap

Our Collaboration Working Group, AUSTRAC Roundtable and annual Symposium drew on significant contributions from financial institutions, regulators, sponsors and other corporate partners.

And to everyone else who stepped into the room...

To the members of the SaferAI for Children Coalition and Collaboration Working Group, Brown Bag speakers and participants, police officers, researchers, advocates, parliamentarians, public servants, corporate partners and child-safety professionals who shared their knowledge with us this year. **Thank you for being part of the connection.**

The impact in these pages belongs to more than one organisation. That is exactly the point.

CLOSING



A financial institution.



A police station.



A university.



A courtroom.



Parliament House.



A hotel.



A database.

At first glance, they have very little in common. **Look closer.**

Different places. Different organisations. Different expertise. But they are all part of the same story.

Child sexual exploitation and abuse crosses platforms, borders, industries and institutions.

So must the response. This year, we helped connect more of it.



The threat is moving fast.
So are we.

**Creating a world where technology
cannot be used to harm children.**



ICMEC AUSTRALIA
Detect. Disrupt. Prevent.

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ISBN: 978-1-7638997-2-8