

The Commonwealth Treasury

2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission

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Glossary of Terms

AI – Artificial intelligence

CSA – Child sexual abuse

CSE – Child sexual exploitation

CSEA – Child sexual exploitation and abuse

CSAM – Child sexual abuse material

CSEM – Child sexual exploitation material

OCSEA – Online child sexual exploitation and abuse

OSEC* – Online sexual exploitation of children

* In recent years various abbreviations have been used to reflect the issue of child exploitation and abuse. This submission utilises the term OSEC – online sexual exploitation of children and CSEA – child sexual exploitation and abuse, but recognises all terms.

Overview

Destiny Rescue is a global non-governmental organisation (NGO) which has supported the rescue of more than 24,000 individuals from sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

Destiny Rescue collaborates with governments, law enforcement agencies, and NGO's across five global regions to support and advocate for survivors of trafficking, work towards systemic change and contribute to the disruption of criminal networks.

Our Pre-Budget Submission provides insights from Destiny Rescue's operations in the Asia Pacific Region under three key categories:



**Strengthen
the Region**



**Strengthen
Legislation**



**Strengthen
Awareness**

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1- Strengthen the Region: That the Australian Government provide funding to strengthen the Asia Pacific Region's capability to disrupt OSEC, maximise victim identification and rescue, and increase the detection of Australia-based offenders.

Recommendation 2 - Strengthen Legislation:

- (a) Digital Duty of Care: Destiny Rescue **endorses Childlight's recommendation** that all companies in the digital eco-system (from platforms and app creators to device and operating system developers) be required to deploy AI-powered detection tools at both the service and operating system levels to detect and disrupt child sexual abuse in real-time and that this requirement be imposed and enforced through a legislated Digital Duty of Care under amendments to the *Online Safety Act*.
- (b) That serious Commonwealth online child sexual abuse offences carry mandatory minimum sentences of 5 years, increasing to 6 years for repeat offenders. That OSEC victim and community impact statements be required to be considered in online child sexual abuse cases.
- (c) That the Australian Government legislate to enable CSAM victims, including those overseas, to pursue civil remedies, such as compensation and restitution, against Australia-based perpetrators.

Recommendation 3- Strengthen Awareness: Awareness campaigns on OSEC: That the Government design and deliver national awareness campaigns centred on victim and survivor harms to ensure the online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) is recognised as one of the fastest-growing and most harmful forms of global child exploitation.

BACKGROUND:

A Global Crisis Demanding Collective Action

Destiny Rescue acknowledges that OSEC is one of the fastest growing forms of child exploitation globally and one of the hardest to detect.

The incidence of OSEC has reached global crisis levels, with an estimated 300 million children having been affected in the past year alone. ¹ Research has found that a small minority of detected online sexual offenders will subsequently be detected for a contact sexual offence. ²



Destiny Rescue recognises that addressing the complex and evolving nature of child sexual exploitation requires sustained collaboration, and collective action.

Effective prevention and intervention cannot be achieved in isolation, and depend on sustained collaboration.

Destiny Rescue employs an **Enhance, Empower, Collaborate** model to combat [OSEC](#).

Survivor-centred Approach

Destiny Rescue's operations continue to be guided by a safety-led, survivor-centred approach that combines intelligence, community trust, and close collaboration with law enforcement authorities.

Destiny Rescue's work focuses on survivor dignity and recovery by equipping frontline practitioners, law enforcement, social workers, and community leaders to prevent child exploitation and provide trauma-informed, survivor-centred care.

In particular, our **Trauma-Informed Manuals** provide a clear trauma-centred response model nuanced to the victim typology of OSEC survivors.

These resources empower first responders to approach survivors with compassion, addressing their immediate emotional and psychological needs while preserving their dignity.

To date the model has been delivered in training sessions across 5 countries, equipping frontline practitioners with tools to combat child exploitation and provide trauma-informed first aid to survivors.



The Scientia Program

The Scientia Program is a dedicated counter-OSEC collaborative initiative co-founded and operated by Destiny Rescue and the Global Counter-Trafficking Group (GCG) and made up of other NGOs and law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

The initiative is focused on forging strong partnerships and enhancing collective capabilities through intelligence and resource sharing, advanced training, the implementation of innovative technologies and operational collaboration to protect children from exploitation.

Using cutting-edge technology and collaboration with law enforcement partners, the Program identifies traffickers, aids in the rescue of their victims and facilitates the arrest of perpetrators.



The post-raid press conference

Operation Discord Disconnected

Destiny Rescue investigators contributed intelligence as part of the Scientia Program.

A large-scale online child exploitation network in Thailand – **comprising 16,000 members** – was **dismantled** following an extensive investigation.

As a result

- The network leader was arrested;
- The online community was shut down; and
- Two children were rescued, and many others were safeguarded from further harm.

The Australian International Counter-Slavery Alliance (AICSA) (the Alliance)

Destiny Rescue is a founding member of the [The Australian International Counter-Slavery Alliance \(AICSA\) \(the Alliance\)](#).*

The Alliance comprises Australia-based international NGOs working on the ground in the Asia Pacific region to counter slavery and support survivors. Collectively, the Alliance's shared conviction is that freedom from slavery is the birthright of every human being.

A key focus of the Alliance is to **support survivor leaders** from the Asia and Pacific region who have the expertise to inform and strengthen Australia's international counter-slavery policy and programs.





Recommendation 1:

ASIA PACIFIC REGION - Capacity Building

The Asia Pacific Region (the region) accounts for over half of global forced labour victims, including commercial sexual exploitation.³

Australia's engagement with the region is critical, and Australia has particular responsibilities to the region due to the specific power dynamics between the neighbouring nations:

*"Australia has an obligation to ensure that Australian child sex offenders do not predate on children overseas. ..."*⁴

– Dr Michael Salter

Destiny Rescue considers that priority should be given to **capacity-building initiatives** identified through multi-stakeholder forums, ensuring targeted and sustainable impact.

The Joint Parliamentary Law Enforcement Committee expressed support for the

continuation of collaboration by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) with foreign law enforcement agencies, " ... including capacity building in our region".⁵

Destiny Rescue recommends that the Australian government provide funding resources to enable Asia Pacific law enforcement agencies to further strengthen their counter-OSEC capabilities.

New funding sources could support international collaboration, knowledge sharing, and coordination among NGOs and agencies to reduce duplication, overcome sector silos, and enhance prevention, victim identification, and rescue efforts.

Capacity building in action

Project VISTA

The Scientia team developed the VISTA (*Victim Identification and Safety Through Analysis*) Hub to improve the efficiency and wellbeing of investigators working with child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

VISTA uses AI-enabled tools alongside open-source intelligence to minimise direct human exposure to CSAM while accelerating the identification of victims and sources.

The program generates actionable intelligence to support law enforcement in locating and safeguarding affected children and is currently analysing over 300,000 CSAM files related to Thai victims.



Our team helped investigators pore through a monk's devices, revealing that he'd used his position as a religious leader to abuse children.

Case Study

Technology stops abuse!

In the US, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) found disturbing images online: children between 6 and 8 years old had been recorded being abused. NCMEC traced the images to Thailand and referred the investigation to the local authorities.

Those authorities invited the **Counter-OSEC Scientia team** to assist in investigating the case.

Scientia Partnership Helps Stop Abusive Primary School Teacher

Kevin, a 32-year-old English teacher, exploited young boys over a seven-year career by grooming them to create **child sexual abuse material (CSAM)**. The abuse might have continued unchecked if not for his CSAM being discovered online.

The Scientia Program, a collaborative counter-OSEC initiative co-led by Destiny Rescue, worked alongside local law enforcement to build a case. More than 20,000 CSAM files were found on his devices, and prosecution efforts are underway.

One survivor is now safe and receiving care through our trusted caseworkers. Efforts continue to identify and rescue more victims.

[Read more ->](#)



Kevin is arrested



An investigator collects evidence



A survivor during his interview

Recommendation 1:

That the Australian Government provide funding to strengthen the Asia Pacific Region's capability to counter OSEC, maximise victim identification and rescue, and increase the detection of Australia-based offenders.



Recommendation 2(a):

DIGITAL DUTY OF CARE

Background

As digital platforms become increasingly integral to our daily lives, protecting children online has become more critical. It is essential that legislation keeps pace with technological advancements, ensuring those who exploit these platforms for harmful purposes are held accountable. Europol identifies livestreaming as the primary method of commercial exploitation of children.⁶

Destiny Rescue's increasing focus on disrupting OSEC is in response to the following:

- There is a growing threat of OSEC due to the borderless nature of these crimes. This is acknowledged by Australian and international law enforcement, and is a "key priority" for the AFP;
- Although OSEC is not a traditional "supply chain" issue, it intersects with digital platforms, payment systems, and service providers. It involves transmission of illegal material, use of financial services to facilitate payments, and exploitation occurring through web-based and/or AI-enabled platforms.



A recent report on *Preventing Livestreamed Abuse of Children* (the Childlight Report)⁷ presented disturbing evidence of the increase in OSEC undertaken by Australians. Effectively, 1 in 15 survey respondents were found to have "... either webcammed sexually with a child or (having) a desire to do so." (Pg 6).

The *Childlight Report* cited several cases of Australian men convicted of OSEC offences where tech companies had failed to utilise available screening technology to block offensive video footage of the abuse on the platforms used by the men (pg 7).

The eSafety Commissioner's *Basic Online Safety Expectations (BOSE) Report* (August 2025) found that while technology is available to detect live child sexual abuse, tech companies are only selectively using it on public portions of their platforms, to the clear detriment of children globally (pg. 13). Destiny Rescue commends the Government for agreeing to develop a Digital Duty of Care for inclusion in the *Online Safety Act*, as recommended by the *Rickard Review*.⁸



The OECD confirms that OSEC is widely propagated on the most well-known and accessible online services on the open web and that there are no legal requirements for online services to proactively detect OSEC, only to report incidences where services become aware of its existence.⁹



According to a recent OECD benchmarking study, half of the 50 largest online content-sharing platform services globally do not issue OSEC-specific transparency reports (which document their efforts to prevent and mitigate the abuse of their services for OSEC).¹⁰

Recommendation 2(a):

Destiny Rescue **endorse Childlight's recommendation** that all companies in the digital ecosystem (from platforms and app creators to device and operating system developers) be required to deploy AI-powered detection tools at both the service and operating system levels to detect and disrupt child sexual abuse in real-time, and that this requirement be imposed and enforced through a legislated Digital Duty of Care under amendments to the *Online Safety Act*.

Recommendation 2(b):

STRENGTHEN SENTENCING LAWS FOR OSEC

Background

The AFP-led ACCCE saw a staggering 41 per cent increase in reports of online child sexual exploitation in 2024–25. These statistics expose the grim and accelerating trend that the online space is increasingly being weaponised to harm children.

Destiny Rescue has long advocated for strengthened sentencing laws in Australia, in particular in cases of OSEC, which has reached crisis levels globally.

Commonwealth legislation referred to as the *Sexual Crimes Against Children Act* (the SCAC Act)¹¹ was enacted in 2020 to strengthen Commonwealth laws against (contact) child sexual abuse and introduce mandatory minimum sentences for the most serious Commonwealth contact child sex offences and repeat offenders.

There is currently a Bill in the Parliament under which serious Commonwealth online child sexual abuse offences would carry mandatory minimum sentences of five years' imprisonment, increasing to six years for repeat offenders.¹² This would harmonise mandatory minimum sentencing provisions already in place for contact offences (under the SCAC Act) with online sexual offences against children.

The introduction of this Bill follows a *7 News Spotlight Special Report* (September 2025) which exposed the confronting truth that Australia-based perpetrators are not only actively contributing to this online global abuse but are often receiving disproportionately light sentences under our current judicial system. The Special Report highlights the case of a serious offender who was found guilty of OSEC but received only a six-month suspended sentence. As a result, the convicted offender is currently free and continues to pose a risk to children both in the community and online.



To view the 7 Spotlight special report [Click Here](#)

Destiny Rescue's Global Counter-OSEC Director Matthew Valentine stated:

"Implementing stronger penalties for online offenders marks an essential step in both deterring abuse and acknowledging the profound and enduring trauma experienced by victims, trauma equal to that inflicted through physical contact offences."

Destiny Rescue recommends that OSEC victim and community impact statements be required to be heard in online child sexual abuse cases, ensuring that the far-reaching social harm of these crimes is fully recognised in sentencing.

Recommendation 2(b):

That serious Commonwealth online child sexual abuse offences carry mandatory minimum sentences of 5 years, increasing to 6 years for repeat offenders. That OSEC victim and community impact statements be required to be considered in online child sexual abuse cases.



Recommendation 2(c):

SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS-BASED CSAM VICTIMS OF AUSTRALIA-BASED PERPETRATORS



Background

Destiny Rescue has embedded child/victim advocates on the ground, who ensure adherence to a child-focused trauma-informed care policy. This dimension to our programmatic work ensures that we are sensitive to the needs of victim-survivors of OSEC, as well as victim-survivors of human trafficking.

Destiny Rescue acknowledges the work of the *National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery* (the Roundtable) in advocating for a Federal compensation scheme for victims and survivors of modern slavery.¹³

Overseas-based CSAM victims of Australia-based perpetrators do not currently have clear legal pathways to seek civil remedies (including compensation and restitution) from a perpetrator in Australia.

However, in Norway, perpetrators found guilty of live-streaming sexual abuse of children can be ordered by the court to personally pay compensation for damages to their victims.¹⁴

Overseas-based CSAM victims of Australia-based perpetrators should not be prevented from seeking civil remedies where either prosecutors have chosen not to prosecute the perpetrator, or perpetrators have been acquitted due to a lack of the evidence necessary to establish the offence ‘*beyond reasonable doubt*’.

Destiny Rescue notes that the JSCFADT Committee final inquiry report “*Pursuit of Equality*”, also recommended “... the provision of legal pathways to enable victims (including those in overseas jurisdictions) to seek civil penalties from the perpetrator, including compensation and restitution”.¹⁵

Recommendation 2(c):

That the Australian Government legislate to enable CSAM victims, including those overseas, to pursue civil remedies, such as compensation and restitution, against Australia-based perpetrators.

“

I have witnessed the harrowing impact of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC). Our mission to rescue, restore, and reintegrate these young victims is more critical than ever.

*– **Matt Valentine** - Destiny Rescue
Global Counter-OSEC Director.*



Recommendation 3:

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON OSEC

Destiny Rescue's insights re raising OSEC awareness

In Australia, Destiny Rescue strives to educate the public about OSEC, with part of our mission being to help Australians make a united stand against the abuse of children and prevent this crime from occurring.



The *7 News Spotlight Special Report* highlighted instances of online child exploitation in the Asia Pacific region and the confronting truth that Australians are among the largest groups fueling this global abuse.

Destiny Rescue recognise the profound and lasting trauma experienced by victims overseas.

Mr. Valentine stated: *"The Spotlight program confirmed what we see every day, Australians are fueling demand for child abuse material overseas. We must step up. This is a national shame that demands stronger accountability, resourcing, and action."*

Destiny Rescue also notes a recent leading global study into Detecting, Disrupting and Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation¹⁶ prepared by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) which specifically recommended that: *"... jurisdictions should take a preventative approach in considering public messaging and awareness raising campaigns to sensitise children and their families to the risks of OSEC and to what support is available."*¹⁷

It is expected that increased community awareness that OSEC is recognised as one of the fastest growing areas of child exploitation may mitigate the risks of that exploitation occurring and its harmful effects being experienced by children.

Recommendation 3:

That the Government design and deliver national awareness campaigns centred on victim and survivor harms to ensure the online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) is recognised as one of the fastest-growing and most harmful forms of global child exploitation.

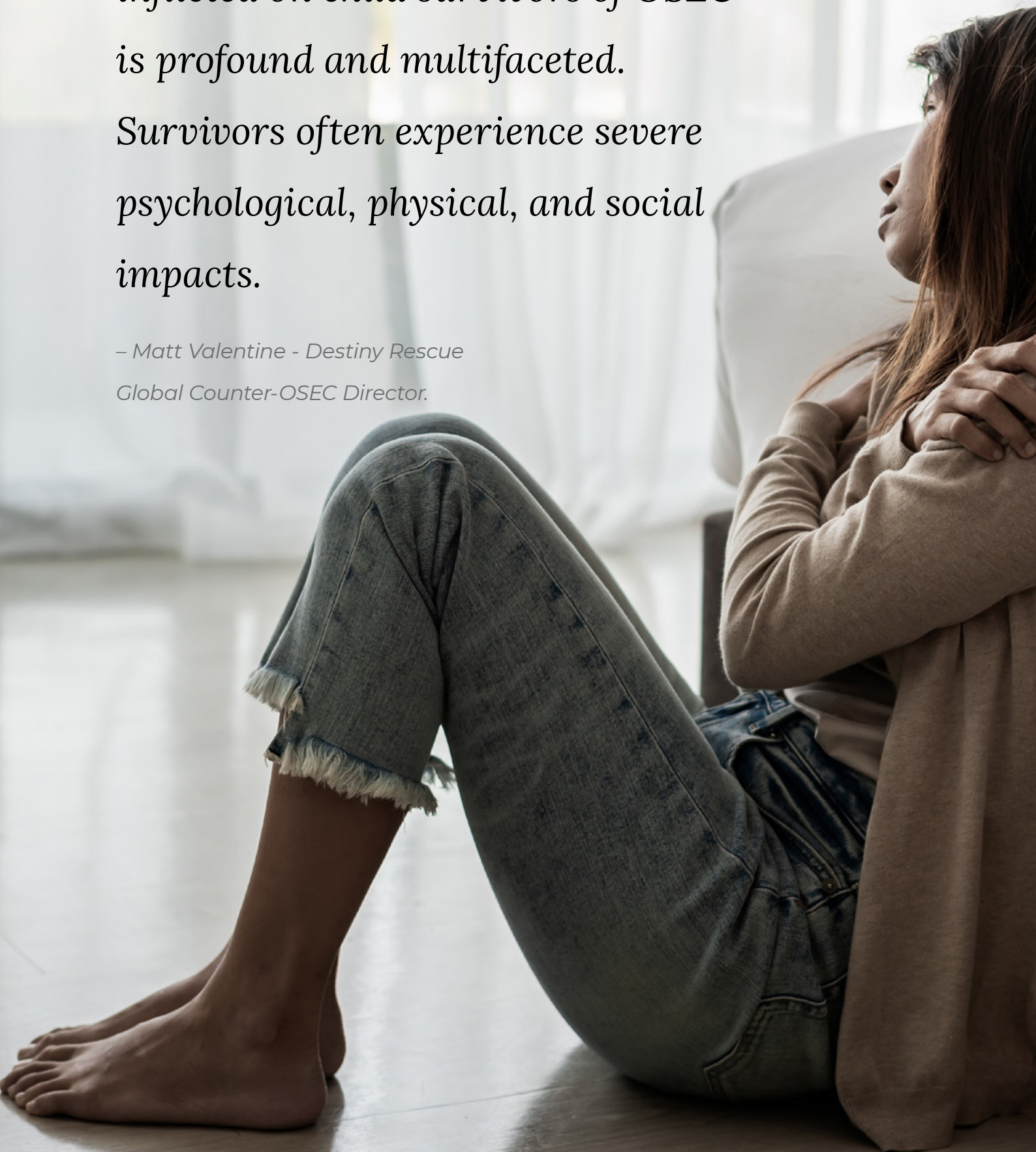
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The physical and emotional trauma inflicted on child survivors of OSEC is profound and multifaceted.

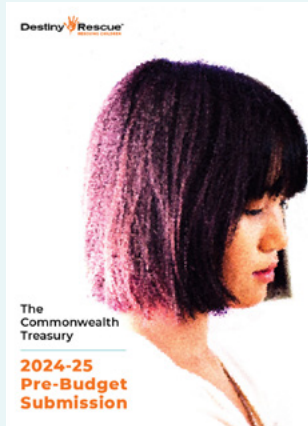
Survivors often experience severe psychological, physical, and social impacts.

– Matt Valentine - Destiny Rescue

Global Counter-OSEC Director.



SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL



2024-25 PBS

[View Here](#)



2025-26 PBS

[View Here](#)

**Our work and Policy Contributions
in Australia - [View Here](#)**



2024 Annual Report

[View Here](#)



2024 Impact Report

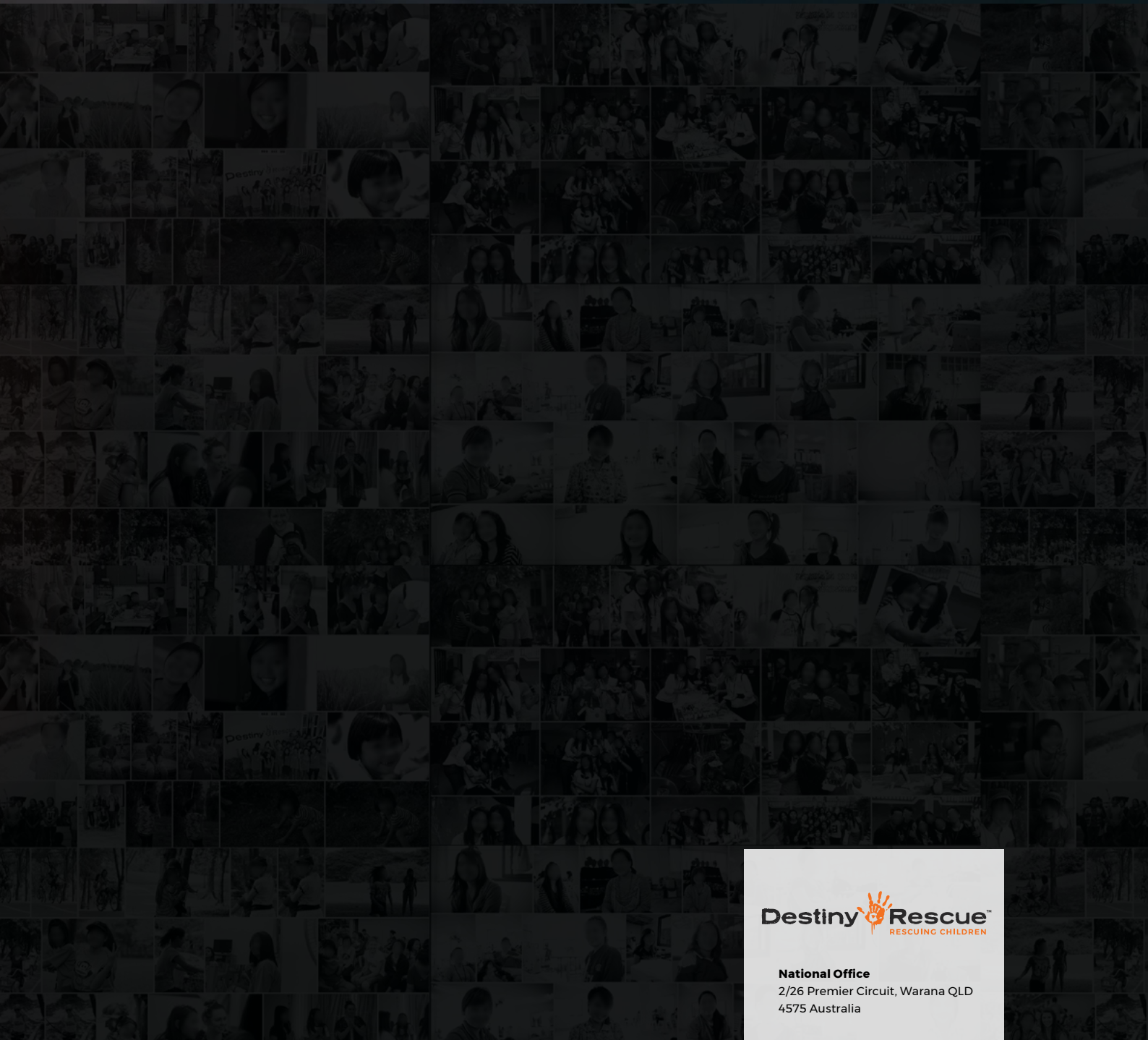
[View Here](#)

Endnotes:

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2. Teunissen C and Napier S, The overlap between child sexual abuse live streaming, contact abuse and other forms of child exploitation, Australian Institute of Criminology, Paper 671, pg 2
3. WalkFree Global Slavery Index
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5. Joint Parliamentary Committee on Law Enforcement, Inquiry into law enforcement capabilities in relation to child exploitation, Final Report, para 7.78
6. Europol (2024), Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) 2024, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/internet-organised-crime-threat-assessment-iocta-2024> p. 24
7. Preventing Livestreamed Abuse of Children, International Justice Mission (IJM), Childlight East Asia and Pacific Hub and the University of New South Wales (Sydney), 2025.
8. Minister for Communications Media Release, Consultation on a 'Digital Duty of Care', 15 November 2025
9. OECD Transparency Reporting on Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Online 2025, Technical Paper -https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/06/transparency-reporting-on-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-online-2025_49a11bd9/a89e3f08-en
10. Ibid pg. 8-9.
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12. Crimes Amendment (Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Child Sexual Abuse) Bill 2025
13. Attorney-General the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, 2024 National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery media release, 3 December 2024,
14. Detecting, Disrupting and Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation, Using financial intelligence to protect children from harm – Financial Action Task Force (FATF), 2025, pg 26.
15. Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, The pursuit of equality: Inquiry into the rights of women and children, Recommendation 6, para 3.110 www.aph.gov.au
16. Detecting, Disrupting and Investigating Online Child Sexual Exploitation, Using financial intelligence to protect children from harm – Financial Action Task Force (FATF), 2025.
17. Ibid, pg 41.

*Participating AICSA Agencies include:

- A21 Australia
- Bloom Asia
- Blue Dragon Children's Foundation
- Destiny Rescue Australia
- Eden Australia
- Global Counter-Trafficking Group
- Hagar Australia
- IJM Australia



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