



Australian Centre for Child Protection
ANNUAL
REPORT
2025



Australian
Centre for
Child Protection

Acknowledgment of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Kurna and Whadjuk Noongar Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their Elders past and present, who are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners of the lands that are now home to the Australian Centre for Child Protection's offices in Adelaide and Perth.

We are honoured to recognise our connection to the Kurna and Whadjuk Noongar lands, and Aboriginal Peoples' history, culture and spirituality through these locations, and we strive to ensure that we operate in a manner which respects their Elders and ancestors.

We also acknowledge the other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of lands across Australia where we undertake our work, their Elders, ancestors, cultures and heritage.



From the Director

As 2025 Australian of the Year for South Australia, I used my platform to raise awareness of the need for a fundamentally different approach to preventing and responding to abuse and neglect. In 2026, we continue to progress this agenda as we seek to develop and refine the evidence-based solutions to drive change.

Staff again displayed their professionalism and adaptability, taking on many new projects across the year. The ACCP practice team, led by Deputy Director, Practice Amanda Paton, were chosen to develop the new mandatory National Child Safety Training for more than 300,000 staff in the early education and care sector.

Our Deputy Director, Research, Professor Melissa O'Donnell, provided outstanding leadership in the development and shaping of the new Adelaide University's inaugural signature research themes. On the international stage, Assoc Prof James Herbert leads the million-dollar European Barnahus Evaluation Framework Project. Dr Jacynta Krakouer, Aboriginal Enterprise Fellow and ACCP Aboriginal Strategy and Engagement Lead, was recognised with a highly competitive UniSA Unstoppable Early-Career Researcher Award.

Part of the privilege of being named 2025 Australian of the Year for South Australia was the opportunity to highlight the issues and needs in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect among new audiences; I engaged with the media broadly and proactively, and spoke at events such as the South Australian Business Chamber's International Women's Day Lunch. We hosted *Protecting Children: The Need for Change* symposium during National Child Protection Week (September 7-13) along with NAPCAN and the Australia Day Council of SA, and my meeting with Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, led to her accepting a role as the Centre's new Patron.

A portrait of Professor Leah Bromfield, a woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a blue blazer and a pearl necklace. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

**Professor Leah Bromfield,
Director and Chair of Child Protection**

“

We formed a National Child Protection Transformation Leadership Group, co-led by myself and National Children's Commissioner Deb Tsorbaris, which is working to develop a Blueprint for Transforming our approach to preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect.

Child Protection Strategic Framework

Across 2025, the ACCP's Strategic Framework 2022-2027 continued to lead the Centre's priorities, ambitions and commitments in taking on critical challenges impacting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families.

Excellence

We strive for excellence across our programs of work and provide opportunities to do the same for all of our team and those with whom we work with. Excellence is important to us, because we wholeheartedly believe that is what children, families and front-line practitioners require and expect of us. We are striving to build a culture of excellence that is embedded in every staff member and each individual student and extends throughout our work with the entire sector.

Integrity

We act with integrity, knowing the sector needs our strong truth telling paired with our genuine understanding to help drive both the necessary change and the mobilisation for this change. We recognise the importance of our partners' trust in us and for us to be diligent and responsible. We also recognise the high standards of ethics and care required when working in a field that responds to such significant harm. Part of our integrity is recognising our responsibility to support and maintain the wellbeing of our people and partners and for this care to be a central priority in how we work.

Collaboration

Collaboration is central to everything we do at the ACCP and to how we work. From collaborative and supportive ways of working within our team that values their knowledge and experience; to partnering across the sector to deliver change; to how we engage with and are informed by lived experience - collaborative relationships are a fundamental part of the ACCP. We value each and every collaborative relationship - within our team and externally, and what they bring to the ACCP and our work.

Decolonising

We recognise decolonisation is a responsibility that is shared by everyone. Decolonising means taking action as individuals and as a Centre to challenge continuing colonising structures, beliefs and practices that obscure the true history of colonisation, oppress, devalue and stigmatise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, failing to acknowledge the richness and benefits that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledges provide; and the perpetuation of inequity. Decolonising practices centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, ways of knowing, working and being.

Impact

As a mission driven and applied Centre, the potential real-world impact of our work is critical to what we do and how we do it. As an enabler and facilitator of improved systems, services and practice (without direct accountability for policy or practice). The ACCP recognises the pivotal role of a partnered approach to our work in achieving real-world impact.

ACCP Awards & Recognition

The ACCP were recognised for a number of notable achievements in 2025, and continued to provide leadership to the sector through key appointments; these are some highlights.

★ **Australian of the Year for South Australia**
Professor Leah Bromfield

★ **Publication Award**
Fernando Lima, Dr Olivia Octoman and Prof Melissa O'Donnell were awarded the Bruce Lord Award for Excellence in Research Methodology for their article, "*Aboriginal Children Placed in Out-of-Home Care: Pathways Through the Child Protection System*," published in the October 2024 issue of *Australian Social Work*.

★ **Appointments**
Prof Leah Bromfield appointed Chair of the Uplifting Care Independent Expert Advisory Group, Department of Education. Tasmanian Government
Prof Melissa O'Donnell appointed to the Homestretch SA Advisory Group through the Child and Family Sector SA

★ **Recognition Award**
Prof Leah Bromfield was awarded the 2025 Healthy Development Adelaide Award in recognition of her significant contribution to the field of child abuse and neglect

★ **Appreciation Award**
A Certificate of Appreciation was received from the Western Australian Police Force in recognition of the "outstanding contribution" in developing Child Abuse Trauma-Informed Response Training, accepted by Deputy Director, Practice, **Amanda Paton** (below, left).

★ **UniSA Unstoppable Finalists**
Prof Leah Bromfield for UniSA Top Media Performer 2025 Category
Amanda Paton for Enterprising Engagement & Partnering Category
Prof Melissa O'Donnell for Research & Enterprise Excellence Category, Senior-Career Researcher.

★ **UniSA Unstoppable Award**
Dr Jacynta Krakouer: Early-Career Researcher Award Winner



2025 New Initiatives



New Patron of ACCP

We are honoured to welcome **Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC**, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, as the Centre's new Patron.



Communicating the Case for Change

Prof Bromfield being awarded *Australian of the Year 2025 for South Australia*, provided a platform for the ACCP to magnify the Case for Change - a call for transformation of the child protection system - via the media, a range of speaking events with audiences both inside and outside of the sector, as well as sector keynotes, conference presentations and symposiums.



Webinar Information Sharing

The ACCP ran several webinars to share research insights at a national scale, including a webinar aimed at empowering young people through their transition from out-of-home-care.

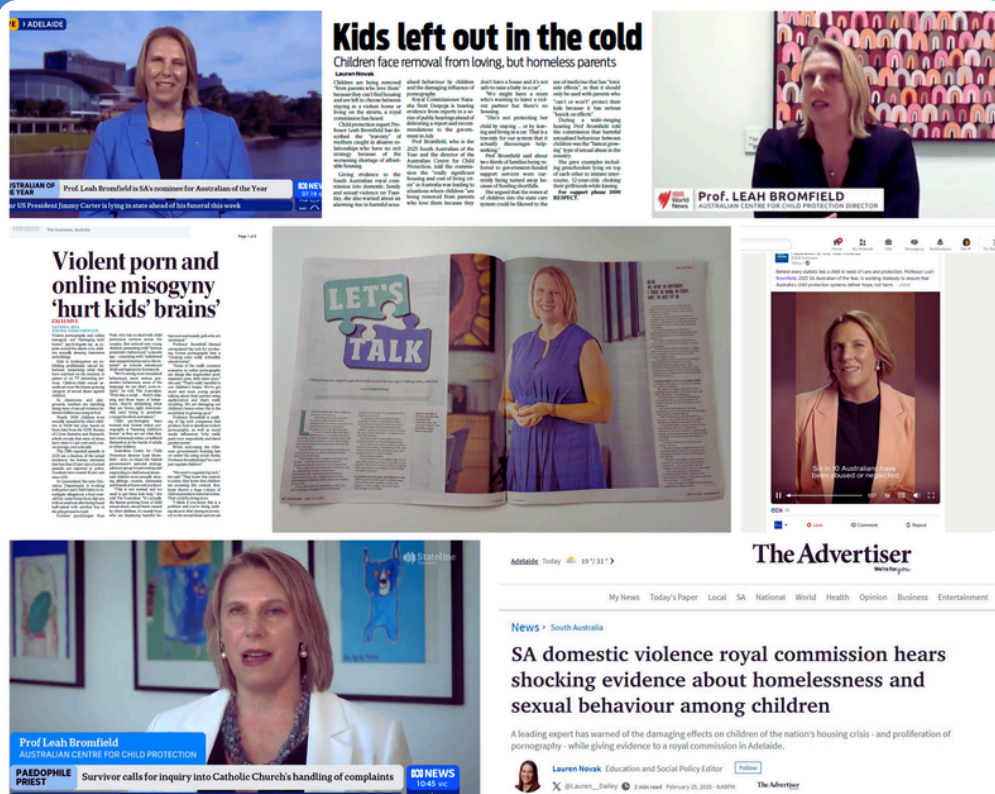


ACCP Director Prof Leah Bromfield led the establishment of the National Child Protection Transformation Leadership Group, co-led by herself and National Children's Commissioner Deb Tsorbaris. The group is leading the development of a Blueprint for Child Protection Transformation.

M MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Prof Leah Bromfield was the fifth top media performer across UniSA in 2025, with over 300 mentions, representing a potential audience reach of 8 million.

"Being the 2025 SA Australian of the Year has been more than recognition – it's turbo-charged our mission to improve the lives of vulnerable children."



N IN THE NEWS - SPOTLIGHT

7 Aug 2025: **Prof Leah Bromfield** was interviewed by Lana Lam from *BBC Worldwide News* for the article 'It's scary': Childcare abuse cases panic Australian parents.'

"Perhaps one of the things that will happen is there will be greater political will to prioritise safety for children. The big lesson is that we can never rest on our laurels when it comes to children's safety. We can't forget the lessons of the past... and we can't assume that this is a problem that's gone away."

IN ACCP LINKEDIN HIGHLIGHTS

Followers increase
33%

Reactions
2,928

Comments
72

Reposts
44

ACCP in the Media: a snapshot

1 Dec 2025: A story on Developing mandatory child safety training for the Early Childhood Education and Care sector nationally, featuring the **Australian Centre for Child Protection**, ran on outlets including *10News* nationally, *The Advertiser*, *Herald Sun*, *NT News* and seven other News Corp titles, as well as *2SM Sydney*, *The Sector* and *Women's Agenda*.

ACCP Projects

Our current project partners are based nationally and internationally, and in 2025 included jurisdictional and commonwealth governments, not for profit organisations, philanthropic foundations, and other research institutions.

Feature projects include:

National Child Safety Training for the early childhood education and care sector

In September 2025, the ACCP began developing a suite of nationally-consistent training courses to strengthen safeguarding practices and promote a shared culture of child safety among workers and volunteers across the early childhood sector. The National Child Safety Training Project is a landmark national initiative designed to strengthen child safety across Australia's education and care sector.

European Barnahus Evaluation Framework Project

The ACCP was awarded an Oak Foundation grant to lead the evaluation of the impact of the Barnahus response to child abuse across Europe.

Assoc Prof James Herbert leads the research project with core partners in the UK and Germany, as well as other partners across Europe to better understand the variations in how countries implement Barnahus, as well as how to measure the impact of these different models for children.



ARL Renewal Project

The Advice and Referral Line (ARL) Renewal Project launched early in 2025 with the ACCP engaged to support the development of evidence-based advice to refine the role, scope, and assumptions underpinning Tasmania's single point of contact for child safety and wellbeing advice and reporting.

ACCP Online Courses

In 2025 the ACCP has continued to bring excellence in research and practice to course offerings supporting the sector workforce. ACCP courses include the **Professional Certificate in Understanding Childhood Trauma** and **Graduate Certificate in Childhood Trauma**.

Both have been designed by experienced practitioners and are informed by contemporary research from the ACCP. They support professionals currently working with children and young people impacted by abuse and neglect to develop a trauma-informed understanding of child abuse and neglect.



“

It was a very succinct and informative introduction to trauma in children and families

“

I really like that I could do the course in my own time working it around work and family commitments

201% increase

from 2024 in students enrolled across four intakes of the Professional Certificate in Understanding Childhood Trauma in 2025 (114 ► 344)

Dissemination of our Work

Dissemination of our work and findings continued to be a key focus. Below is a snapshot of staff and student dissemination contributions in 2025.

International Presentations

- [2025 International Childhood Trauma Conference](#) (pictured), Melbourne. Keynote speakers **Dr Jacynta Krakouer** and **Amanda Paton**.
- [2025 ISPCAN Congress](#) in Vilnius, Lithuania. Presenter, **Assoc Prof James Herbert** discussed the social and economic benefits of more integrated responses to child abuse.



National Presentations

- [Families Australia National Policy Forum](#). Keynote speaker **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [March Strategy to Action, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Conference](#), Sydney. Presenter **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [Bright Futures National Symposium, Daniel Morcombe Foundation](#), Sunshine Coast. Keynote speakers **Amanda Paton & Dr Jacynta Krakouer**
- [Lead the Way Conference 2025](#), McKillop Family Services, Melbourne. Keynote speaker **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [SNAICC '25 Conference](#) (pictured), Brisbane/Meanjin. Presenter **Dr Jacynta Krakouer**



Other Notable Presentations

- [Courageous Conversations, Igniting Change, Shifting Culture](#), Laurel House. Guest speaker **Rachel Lever**, ACCP PhD Student
- [SAMSN Roundtable](#), Canberra. Presenter **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [Australian of The Year Luncheon](#), Australia Day Council SA. Presenter **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [21st Annual Healthy Development Adelaide Oration](#), University of Adelaide. Presenter **Prof Leah Bromfield**
- [Preventing and responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviours in children and young people: Promising practice](#), presentation **Prof Leah Bromfield** and **Amanda Paton**
- [SA Child Protection Expert Group - 20 year vision](#), MC **Prof Leah Bromfield**

Resources & Influence



Prof Leah Bromfield: 2025 Australian of the Year for South Australia



National Child Protection Week (September 7-13)

The ACCP led the symposium *Protecting Children: The Need for Change*, along with NAPCAN and the Australia Day Council of South Australia.

Prof **Leah Bromfield** shared the stage with SA Senior Australian of the Year 2025 **Charlie Jackson** OAM, SA Young Australian of the Year 2025 **Amber Brock-Fabel**, and members of the **SA Youth Forum**.



The Bradley Building on North Terrace lit up for National Child Protection Week.

New ACCP Resources

[Training for Understanding Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

[Response Mapping Tools for Understanding, Identifying and Enhancing Safety for Children and Young People living in Out of Home Care who have displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

[Empowering Young People's Lives Beyond Out-of-Home Care Webinar](#)

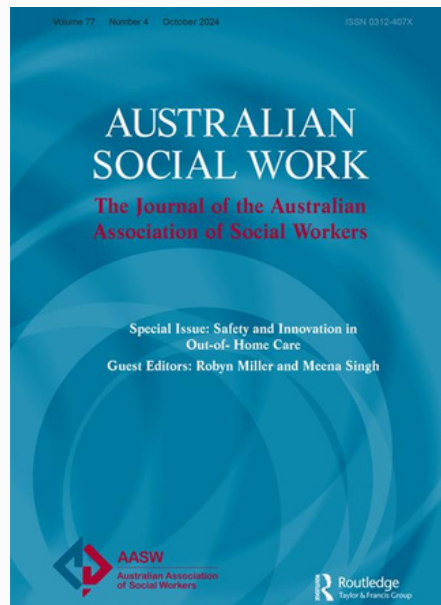
Publications

The ACCP team contributed to more than 20 reports and publications in 2025, including the following examples.

Publication Award & Recognition

Fernando Lima, Dr Olivia Octoman and Prof Melissa O'Donnell were awarded the Bruce Lord Award for Excellence in Research Methodology for their article, *Aboriginal Children Placed in Out-of-Home Care: Pathways Through the Child Protection System*, published in the October 2024 issue of Australian Social Work.

It was judged to demonstrate strength, innovation and excellence in research methodology and design, making a significant contribution to the advancement of social work knowledge and/or professional practice.



Notable publications

Bryant, C., Bayliss, D., **O'Donnell, M., Usher, R., & Maclean, M.** (2025) *Young mothers with experience of out-of-home care and intergenerational risk of child removal*. Child Abuse & Neglect.

Cox, S., Bromfield, L., Parkinson, S., Herbert, J., Tucker, E., & Octoman, O. (2025) *Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for young children who have experienced abuse and neglect: A review of the evidence*. Children and Youth Services Review.

Lukmanjaya, W., Butler, T., Cox, S., Perez-Concha, O., Bromfield, L., & Karystianis, G. (2025) *Leveraging AI to Investigate Child Maltreatment Text Narratives: Promising Benefits and Addressable Risks*. JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting.

Tucker, E., O'Donnell, M., Krakouer, J., & Octoman, O. (2025) *Reinvolvement after returning home: A systematic review of the factors associated with post-reunification child protection involvement*. Child Abuse & Neglect.

A French translation of '*Contemporary and Innovative Practices in Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Models*' was released in 2025 at a major Quebec conference on child maltreatment. **Assoc Prof James Herbert** was a contributing editor for the book, originally released in 2023, and he says the French translation reaches an important audience.

"The book considers Child Advocacy Centre practices around the world – including Canada – drawing attention to successes but also honestly addressing challenges, barriers and potential pitfalls. It was an important step towards my current work evaluating the impact of the Barnahus response to child abuse in Europe." - Assoc Prof James Herbert

ACCP Staff

The ACCP has a nationally leading team of expertise across research, policy and practice, which is supported by a professional staff team. In December 2025, ACCP had a national team of 40 staff members.

Prof Leah Bromfield

Director & Chair of
Child Protection



Prof Melissa O'Donnell

Deputy Director,
Research



Amanda Paton

Deputy Director,
Practice



Dr Jacynta Krakouer

Aboriginal Strategy &
Engagement Lead



Lisa McDonald

Senior Project
Manager



Tricia Ryan

Acting Centre Manager



Research



A/Prof James Herbert



Dr Sarah Cox



Dr Olivia Octoman



Fernando Lima



Renée Usher



Dr Miriam Maclean



Lynn Krakouer



Ebony Tucker



Dr Eden Thain



Danielle Perfect



Dr Fadzai Chikwava

Teaching and Practice



Sian Burgess



Kate Minosora



Emily Russell



Phobe Edgeworth



Holly Pearce



Amber Alexander



Sarah Shihata



Emma Cole-Henley



Jacquiliene Le Mesurier

Project, Contract and Admin Management



Sarah Dodd



Jenny Macpherson



Ann Lilley



Liz Palmer



Victoria Matthews

1 EBONY TUCKER



Thesis: Improving the process and long-term outcomes of reunification for families: Exploring the barriers and facilitators for successful and safe reunification.

2 HELEN ALLPORT



Thesis: Aboriginal Parenting: Challenging misconceptions and strengthening practice.

3 RENÉE USHER



Thesis: Perinatal child protection responses in the context of domestic and family violence: A critical exploration of policy, practice and lived experience

4 KELLY WINSLADE



Thesis: Families with multiple and complex needs: refocusing on early intervention.

5 KRYSTAL LANAIS



Thesis: Children with substantiated child maltreatment – What is the effect of removal to alternate (out-of-home) care during early childhood on child development and well-being.

6 MIRANDA WILLET



Thesis: Understanding Regulation Needs to Facilitate Therapeutic Management of Externalising Behaviours in Residential Care.

7 TRACEY CORCORAN



Thesis: Development of a well-being measurement tool for 0- to 3-year-olds in Out of Home Care.

8 RACHEL LEVER



Thesis: Children's Problematic Sexual Behaviour: Identifying and addressing South Australia Police and Justice System responses and attitudes to incidents; a collaborative approach.

9 TIMOTHY WONG



Thesis: Evidence based interventions delivered in schools for students who display HSB and students who experience HSB.

10 WILSON LUKMANJAYA



Thesis: Text mining child protection narratives: a proof of concept study exploring the feasibility of text mining the South Australian Department for Child Protection intake reports data.

11 JANNEEN WANGANEEN



Thesis: First Contact: How Child Protection Systems Contribute to Ongoing First Nations Overrepresentation in Australia

ACCP PhD Students

We are proud to welcome students across a range of study levels and disciplines. Our students are core members of the ACCP and contribute significantly to the Centre, our work and our culture.

ACCP National Advisory Board

The ACCP National Advisory Board continued to provide expert advice and guidance across the year - on the ACCP's strategic direction and opportunities for partnership, growth and impact. It comprised the following members:

Prof Jill Dorrian

(Chair) Dean of Research, UniSA | Justice & Society

Prof Leah Bromfield

Director and Chair of Child Protection | Australian Centre for Child Protection
UniSA | Justice & Society

Prof Paula Geldens

Executive Dean, UniSA | Justice & Society

Prof Deirdre Tedmanson

Dean: Work Integrated Learning, UniSA | Business

Matt Galotta/ Carol Brewitt

General Manager, UniSA | Justice & Society

Michael Watkins

Lecturer, UniSA | Allied Health & Human Performance

Dr Olivia Octoman

Research Fellow, UniSA | Justice & Society
ACCP elected staff representative

Rachel Lever

PhD Student, UniSA | Justice & Society
ACCP elected student representative

External Members

Anne Hollonds

National Children's Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission

Sarah Gun

Director and Founder, Gogo Foundation and Gogo Events

Tim Crosier

Branch Manager | National Policy
Australian Government Department of Social Services



ACCP Lived Expertise Advisory Panel

The Centre is proud to continue to embed the voices of our [Lived Expertise Advisory Panel](#) (LEAP), across ACCP programs, approaches and activities. Our LEAP members are highlighted below.

★ Craig Hughes-Cashmore (Chair)



★ Caroline Carroll OAM



★ Chrissie Foster AM



★ Joan Isaacs



★ Brenda Lin



★ Rebecca Moran



★ Adam Washbourne





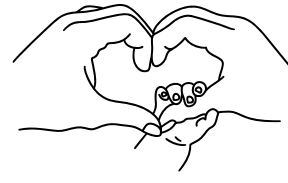
Our Vision

**Children thrive in
safe and supportive
families and
communities**



Our Mission

**Improving the lives of
vulnerable children by
creating and applying
knowledge to shape a
better future**



Our Values

**Excellence
Integrity
Collaboration
Decolonising
Impact**

OUR CORE OPERATIONAL AREAS

**The ACCP has three core functional areas of operation
through which it delivers its vision**

Research & Dissemination

Supporting research excellence in the field by undertaking research and dissemination, while supporting and developing existing and future researchers to specialise in preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect.

Policy and Practice Solutions

Supporting the development and implementation of fit for purpose policy and practice solutions through consultation and collaboration - working with or on behalf of our partners.

Teaching & Workforce Development

Supporting the development of new knowledge and practice skills to undergraduates, graduates and existing practitioners through effective models which are innovative, engaging and accessible.



ACCP



Australian
Centre for
Child Protection

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**Improving the lives of
vulnerable children**