



**The development and evaluation of an education
program for service providers about culturally and
linguistically diverse (CALD) client victims/survivors
of child sexual abuse**

TESTIMONIALS

Pooja Sawrikar

April 2020

Acknowledgments

I wish to sincerely thank the panel of over 10 invited national and international experts for making time to read this Report and provide testimonials. Lending your thoughts, based on long-standing experience and knowledge in the field, are received with gratitude. (Due to COVID-19, testimonials will be added and updated to this document as they become available).

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| Professor Ilan Katz | Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales |
| Associate Professor Philip Mendes | Department of Social Work, Monash University |
| Professor Patrick O’Leary | School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University |
| Professor Clare Tilbury | School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University |

Testimonials

This is an important report which is sorely needed in Australia. CALD children are vulnerable to child sexual abuse, and there is little research or practice guidance in Australia to help practitioners and managers support this vulnerable populations. Working with CALD populations requires organisations and individuals to re-examine their own assumptions and ideas about the nature of child sexual abuse and the appropriate response to instances of abuse. CALD groups are of course very diverse, and it is not possible to generalise across all these populations. However, an understanding of collectivist cultures, how they are structured and how they react to community members in distress is fundamental to responding in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. This report provides not only a theoretical basis but also a practical way forward to improve practice in this key area. It is a must-read for any agency or individual who works with CALD young people.

– **Professor Ilan Katz**

Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales

April 2020

Dr Sawrikar’s seminal study on the cultural factors impacting attitudes and responses to child sexual abuse within ethnic and religious minority communities has significantly informed our current research project examining the response of Jewish communities globally to manifestations of institutional child sexual abuse.

– **Associate Professor Philip Mendes**

Director Social Inclusion and Social Policy Research Unit

Department of Social Work, Monash University

March 2020

The timing of this research report is very important as Australia responds to the recommendations and findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. One cannot separate Australia’s own history of racism and colonialism from the barriers that have silenced CALD survivors from disclosing sexual violence against children. This legacy has implications for how CALD communities experience safety when engaging service providers regarding child sexual abuse. In turn, service providers’ own cultural blindness to issues may hinder their ability to listen and respond to CALD victim/survivors and their families who are experiencing child sexual abuse. The need for cultural competency is strongly illuminated in this important work so that collectivist and patriarchal norms are overcome to prioritise the well-being of survivors and prevention of child sexual abuse. Dr Sawrikar’s work

goes to the heart of improving responses to CALD communities by educating and engaging professionals to be inspired to change their practice and build their knowledge base.

– **Professor Patrick O’Leary**

Director of Violence Research and Prevention, Griffith Criminology Institute

Co-Chief Editor, International Social Work (SAGE)

School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University

February 2020

This innovative project involves the development and evaluation of an education program for service providers about culturally and linguistically diverse victims or survivors of child sexual abuse. It meets a critical need for more evidence-based resources tailored to working effectively with Australia’s diverse populations. The project is designed to improve the cultural competency of practitioners within health and human services, educating service providers about the psychosocial experience of child sexual abuse in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It highlights two factors – lack of understanding about cultural differences and racism – that pose barriers to disclosing abuse and seeking professional help. There are major gaps in empirical knowledge about how best to respond in this field, and robust research such as this is essential to informing practice. Dr Sawrikar has engaged with practitioners, service providers, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the program to ensure it is applicable in the busy world of frontline practice.

– **Professor Clare Tilbury**

Leneen Forde Chair of Child and Family Research

School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University

February 2020