



MEDIA RELEASE

CAPS calls on banks: Do more to stop payments for child abuse

The Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS) is appalled by the recent Westpac scandal involving the alleged concealment of customer payments for child sexual abuse material and is reconsidering its position as a long-time customer.

As Australia's oldest child abuse prevention organisation, CAPS is disappointed at the revelations this week and is now looking at alternatives for the management of its financial affairs.

CAPS commends Austrac for its work to expose the alleged breaches of the law at Westpac. While the resignation of Chief Executive Brian Hartzler is appreciated, we call on Westpac and all other banks to be more vigilant in reporting transactions that could relate to child sexual abuse material and the sexual trafficking of children.

CAPS CEO, Tracy McLeod Howe, said "the exposure of transactions that may relate to the sexual abuse of children should not be the sole responsibility of the authorities. Banks need to self-report as soon as they become aware of any suspicious behaviour."

"Every day approximately 100,000 images and videos of child sexual abuse are flagged online. Banks need to be more pro-active in their efforts to stop the growth of this abhorrent industry. We therefore ask all financial institutions to establish a national code of conduct that clearly sets out the steps that each organisation is taking to stop the funding of child sexual abuse", Ms McLeod Howe said.

CAPS will soon launch a Child Safe Banks campaign to encourage Australian financial institutions to do everything they can to keep our most vulnerable safe from harm and promote child rights.

About CAPS

Founded in 1973, the Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS) is the oldest child abuse prevention organisation in Australia. We are a non-government, non-religious charitable organisation that works with vulnerable people across NSW to prevent child maltreatment in all its forms, including emotional, physical and sexual abuse. We provide evidence-based educational programs, bespoke child safe organisation solutions and child rights consulting to help create the environments needed to ensure that children are safe, supported, and loved. Our staff includes policy experts, counsellors and psychologists that are well-equipped to deliver innovative programs designed to increase protective behaviours in children and forever break the cycle of abuse.

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