





MEDIA REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN AUSTRALIA

E EA C EN

Australian Children's

Commission and Department of Family Services, Canberra. [B. D. and G. E. \(2022\) Media reporting of child sexual abuse in Australia: 2020-22: Research Report](#). Canberra: ACCB.

Family Services

Department of Family Services, Canberra. [C. \(2022\) Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission](#). Canberra: ACCB.

Department of Family Services

Canberra

 [G. \(2022\) Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission](#). Canberra: ACCB.

Family Services

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MEDIA ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS

Episodic and thematic framing

Media reporting of child sexual abuse in Australia is often episodic and thematic. Episodic framing focuses on individual cases, while thematic framing focuses on broader issues. Thematic framing is more common in print and online news, while episodic framing is more common in television news. Thematic framing is more likely to include information about support services and the impact of child sexual abuse on victims.

Analysis of media reporting shows that episodic framing is more common in television news, while thematic framing is more common in print and online news. Thematic framing is more likely to include information about support services and the impact of child sexual abuse on victims. This suggests that print and online news are more likely to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of child sexual abuse.

Best practice reporting is thematic, victim-centred and trauma-informed

Best practice reporting on child sexual abuse is thematic, victim-centred and trauma-informed. Thematic reporting focuses on broader issues, while victim-centred reporting focuses on the experiences of victims. Trauma-informed reporting is sensitive to the impact of child sexual abuse on victims. Best practice reporting is more likely to include information about support services and the impact of child sexual abuse on victims.

Courts the dominant source of news

Courts are the dominant source of news about child sexual abuse in Australia. This is because courts provide a clear and authoritative source of information about the legal process. Courts are also more likely to provide information about the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and the effectiveness of support services.

News focuses on the perpetrator

News reporting on child sexual abuse in Australia often focuses on the perpetrator. This is because the perpetrator is the central figure in the story. News reporting often focuses on the perpetrator's identity, background, and criminal history. This focus on the perpetrator can be problematic as it can lead to a lack of focus on the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and the effectiveness of support services.

Celebrities the focus of news stories

Celebrities are often the focus of news stories about child sexual abuse in Australia. This is because celebrities are more likely to be in the public eye and their stories are more likely to attract attention. News reporting often focuses on the celebrity's identity, background, and the details of the case. This focus on celebrities can be problematic as it can lead to a lack of focus on the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and the effectiveness of support services.

Online/digital the most common location of abuse in media stories

Online and digital platforms are the most common locations of abuse in media stories. This is because online and digital platforms are more accessible and more likely to be shared. Online and digital platforms are also more likely to provide information about support services and the impact of child sexual abuse on victims.

Overshadowing of priority groups

Priority groups are often overshadowed in media reporting on child sexual abuse in Australia. This is because media reporting often focuses on high-profile cases and celebrities. Priority groups, such as children with disabilities and children from low-income backgrounds, are less likely to be the focus of news stories. This can lead to a lack of focus on the impact of child sexual abuse on these groups and the effectiveness of support services.

Limited information about support services

Media reporting on child sexual abuse in Australia often provides limited information about support services. This is because media reporting often focuses on the legal process and the impact of child sexual abuse on victims. Information about support services is often limited to a brief mention of the existence of support services. This can be problematic as it can lead to a lack of awareness of support services among the public.

Problematic language

Media reporting on child sexual abuse in Australia often uses problematic language. This is because media reporting often uses terms that are stigmatizing and dehumanizing. For example, the use of terms like "perpetrator" and "victim" can be problematic as they can lead to a lack of focus on the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and the effectiveness of support services. Media reporting often uses terms that are insensitive to the impact of child sexual abuse on victims.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to explore the extent and nature of child sexual abuse (CSA) in Australia, with a focus on the impact of media reporting. The project will investigate the following:

- The prevalence and incidence of CSA in Australia, including the types of abuse and the characteristics of victims and perpetrators.
- The impact of CSA on the mental health and well-being of victims, including the role of media reporting in this process.
- The role of media reporting in the identification and prosecution of CSA, including the impact of sensationalist reporting and the use of social media.
- The effectiveness of current support services for victims of CSA, including the role of police, health services, and community organizations.
- The development of strategies to improve the support and protection of victims of CSA, including the role of media reporting in this process.

A. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022.

Qualitative media analysis

B. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022. The research team identified 10,000 articles in the Australian print and online news media from 2020 to 2022.

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GUIDE TO THE FIGURES

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Reporting on Child Sexual Abuse: Guidance for Media, Engaging with Media about

A MEDIA STUDIES APPROACH

Media studies approach involves a critical analysis of media content to understand its social and cultural context. This approach is used to examine the representation of child sexual abuse in the media, focusing on the ways in which the media shapes public perceptions and discourses around this issue.

The media studies approach is a critical analysis of media content. It involves examining the ways in which the media represents child sexual abuse, and how this representation shapes public perceptions and discourses around this issue. This approach is used to understand the social and cultural context of media content, and to identify the ways in which the media influences public opinion and policy.

EVIDENCE

Age date - The age of the child at the time of the abuse is a key factor in determining the severity of the crime and the impact on the victim. Media reporting often focuses on the age of the child, and this can influence public perceptions of the crime.

Neighbourhood - The location of the abuse, particularly in relation to the victim's home, can be a significant factor in media reporting. Media often reports on the location of the abuse, and this can influence public perceptions of the crime.

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Problematic language, headlines and imagery

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Victims and survivors engaging with media

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Qualitative textual analysis

Following the analysis of the data, the following themes were identified:

- 1. **Victimisation**: This theme encompasses the experiences of children and young people who have been sexually abused. It includes the impact of the abuse, the role of family and community, and the need for support and protection.
- 2. **Perpetration**: This theme focuses on the individuals and organisations responsible for the abuse. It examines the motives, methods, and consequences of the actions.
- 3. **Reporting and Investigation**: This theme explores the processes of reporting the abuse to authorities and the subsequent investigation and legal proceedings.
- 4. **Media Coverage**: This theme analyses the role of the media in reporting on child sexual abuse, including the accuracy, tone, and potential impact of the coverage.
- 5. **Prevention and Support**: This theme discusses strategies to prevent child sexual abuse and the importance of providing support and resources for victims and their families.

Notes

1. The data for this report is based on a sample of 1,000 articles from the Australian Press Photo Bank (APPB) database. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure that the data is representative of the population of articles in the APPB database. The sample was selected from the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Appendix A

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ABC

B

The Today Show Studio 1Q ABC Drive

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Quantitative results

Qualitative results

Story type

Story type

Quantitative results

Qualitative results

Quantitative results

Qualitative results

... The first priority group in news reporting ...

'Priority' groups in news reporting

... The second priority group ... CA D ... A ... E ... GB ... A ... ABC ...

... The third priority group ... C ... A ...

... The fourth priority group ... A ... A ... D ... D ... D ...

What sources of support are included in media reports?

... The fifth priority group ... E ... ABC ... I ... G ... F ...

... The sixth priority group ... G ... C ... G ... G ... E ... EC ... ABC ... N ...

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MAN CHARGED OVER ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE (Newcastle Herald, 22/12/2021)

Tasmanian school staff member charged with dozens of child exploitation offences (ABC News Online, 21/09/21)

Rugby Australia executive charged with four child abuse picture offences amid AFP investigation (news.com.au, 19/09/21)

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THE POWER OF LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY

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... Daily Mail ...

“They face a string of charges involving *child rape* and the possession and sharing of images.”

The Canberra Times

“A 26-year-old man was charged with two counts of *raping a child under the age of 10 years* and a 21-year-old man was charged with six counts of *raping a child under the age of 10 years* in the NSW towns of Kendall and Old Bar.”

Sydney Morning Herald
Adelaide Advertiser
Daily Telegraph
Courier Mail
Herald Sun

Geelong Advertiser

Ensign

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“The shame sits at the feet of perpetrators of child sexual abuse,” she says. “We have to eradicate these cultures of victim-blaming and denial and dismissal, because there are so many structures in our society, both in terms of social attitudes and institutions, that enable predatory behaviour. I’m really determined to encourage and normalise the ace shar it

Historical abuse in orphanages and Out of Home Care settings

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ABC B
B

The memo that erased a scandal (ABC Background Briefing, 24/4/2021)

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Sports coaches and institutions

B

My pseudo father, my coach, my abuser (OZ)

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The Australian

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My sister was abused. So was I. She's dead. I'm speaking up (19/9/20)

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“Please say her name. I need to tell this story, in all its shocking ugliness, to elicit a reaction. I want people to say my dead sister's name and to openly reject the whole spectrum of predatory sexual behaviours. [...]

In doing this, we destigmatise the victim and cultivate a culture where talking openly about sexual abuse becomes acceptable.”

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INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

• The research shows that media reporting of child sexual abuse in Australia is often limited to sensationalist headlines and brief news items, which can lead to a lack of understanding of the complexity of the issue.

• The research also shows that media reporting often fails to provide the context and background information needed to understand the full extent of the problem and the impact on victims.

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B *Becoming Trauma Informed – Services* B, F F B

B *Crisis* -7 1. 11.

B *Betrayal: The crisis in the Catholic Church: the findings of the investigation that inspired the major motion picture Spotlight* C

B *Proceedings of The World Wide Web Conference San Francisco, CA* 1 7 7 3 1

C *Australian Journal of Law and Society*

C *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being* 1

C *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Final Report*

C *Child Abuse & Neglect* 1

C *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030* 1 11

. *Feminist Media Studies* 7 1 1, 11 7 7

. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*

D *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 1

D *Iconography of child sexual abuse in the news (justice and crime reporting)*

D *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1

E *Journal of Communication* 7

F *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 1 3

F. C. *Hell on the way to heaven* B.

G. *fixed it.*

G. F. A. *Journal of Australian Studies*

G. F. *Journal of Australian Studies*

G. D. *Luxembourg Guidelines: Terminology guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.*

G. *Journal of Australian Studies*

11 G Child Sexual Abuse and the Media Z. +

F. 1 Dark secrets of childhood: Media power child abuse and public scandals

F. 1 Child Research Net

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PROJECT TEAM

Project Lead

Pfeiffer, Katherine
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Manager

Dunne, Katherine
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

Pfeiffer, Deborah
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

McCauley, Eileen
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

Geegan, Aca
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

Deane, David
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

Wabara, Babar
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

Project Co-Lead

Deane, David
Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University
Co-Editor of *Breaking Silences: Media and the Child Abuse Royal Commission*
Co-Editor of *The Dynamics of News and Indigenous Policy in Australia*

APPENDIX 9 : CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING FRAME

TABLE 2: Metadata (iSentia)

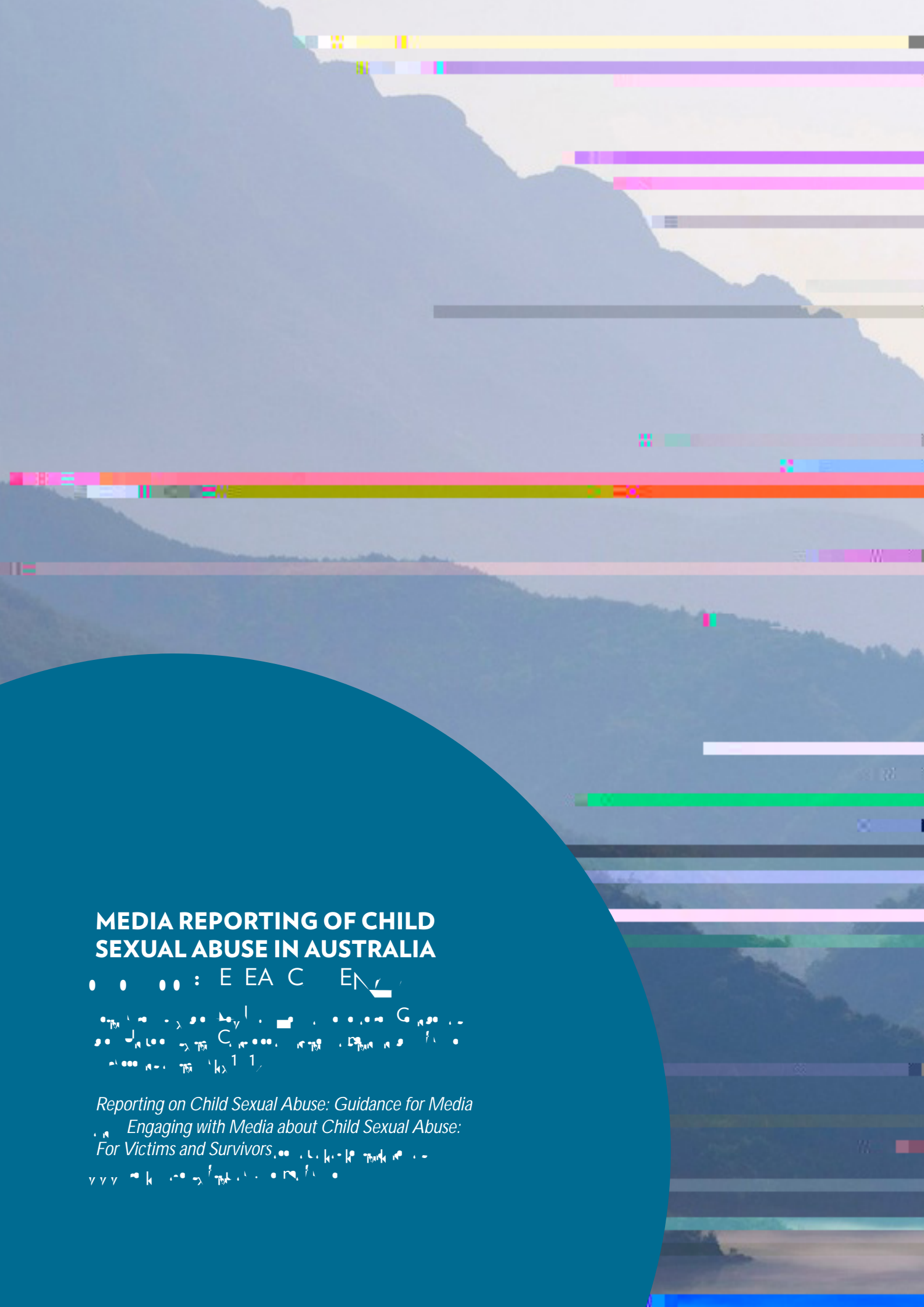
CODE	DESCRIPTOR
D. s. [unreadable]	D. s. [unreadable]
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[unreadable]	[unreadable]
[unreadable]	[unreadable]
. k e	[unreadable]
A s. [unreadable]	[unreadable]
D. s. [unreadable]	D. s. [unreadable]

TABLE 3: Content specific data

CODE				

CODE	DESCRIPTOR	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	MENU TYPE	DROP DOWN MENU CATEGORIES
N		A	F	
	L	V	D	L F G C N
A	A CA D GB	A F N	D	A C CA D GB
		C	D	
C	C	G	D	C G G N

CODE	DESCRIPTOR	DEFINITION/ EXPLANATION	MENU TYPE	DROP DOWN MENU CATEGORIES
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*Reporting on Child Sexual Abuse: Guidance for Media
& Engaging with Media about Child Sexual Abuse:
For Victims and Survivors*

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