



GULU NGAYANG BULMBA

*The views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
children and young people on
growing up in Queensland 2018*



Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) pays its respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, seas and waterways.

We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging whose ongoing effort to protect and promote their cultures leaves a legacy for future generations.

The QFCC recognises the unique and diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and notes, throughout this document, the term Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has been used to collectively describe two distinct groups of people.

The QFCC thanks the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who participated in the *Growing up in Queensland* project. Your stories, opinions and insights are helping to make Queensland a better place for all children and young people.

We also thank the parents, carers and families who gave consent for their children and young people to take part in the project.

We warmly thank Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for welcoming the QFCC into their communities and supporting this important work.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are warned that there is information contained in this document which may be confronting.



Gulu Ngayang Bulmba is Djabugay Language for 'This is my home'. Djabugay is the name of the languages spoken in the Cairns region extending along the hinterland and ranges from Mt Molloy towards Atherton and along the Upper Barron River.¹ The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) acknowledges and thanks the Djabugay Aboriginal Corporations (on behalf of the Djabugay Traditional Owners) for their approval to use their language in the title of our report. The QFCC recognises that Djabugay language is one of many Aboriginal languages across Queensland. We also acknowledge that language heritage and knowledge remains with the Traditional Owners, language custodians and community members of the respective language nation.

¹ State Library of Queensland. (2019). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language Wordlists Djabugay Everyday Words*. Retrieved from www.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/Djabugay%20Everyday%20Words.pdf

TABLE OF CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	2	HOPES AND DREAMS	9
INTRODUCTION	4	Education	11
Profile of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth population	5	Family and healthy relationships	12
Profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey and focus group participants	5	Travel	12
MY COMMUNITY	6	Caring for others	13
Relationships and connection	7	The future workforce	14
How they spend their time	8	THE BIG PICTURE	15
		Discrimination	16
		Conflict	17
		Physical health	18
		Mental health	18
		WHERE TO FROM HERE?	19

Notes to the reader

The *Growing Up in Queensland* survey results have been reported as whole numbers. Figures with decimal points of 0.5 and above have been rounded up to the next whole number, and figures with decimal points below 0.5 have been rounded down.

The *Growing Up in Queensland* results have been analysed for five regional areas – South East Queensland, Central Queensland, South West Queensland, North Queensland and Far North Queensland. While there were some differences on certain topics, findings were generally consistent across regions.

Children and young people participated in this project voluntarily, including choosing whether to provide demographic information. Therefore, the number of children and young people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander may be higher than reported.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the thoughts, views and opinions of approximately 480 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people² on what it is like growing up in Queensland.

In 2018, the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) delivered the *Growing up in Queensland* project to capture the opinions of Queensland children and young people on the things that matter the most to them.

The following high-level themes were explored:

- **My community** – how children and young people experience life in their community, including relationships with friends, family, safety, support and the places they spend their time
- **Hopes and dreams** – the hopes and dreams, career aspirations, supports and potential barriers affecting children and young people
- **The big picture** – issues that worry children and young people and their ideas for solutions

We collected data from children and young people, aged between 4 and 18 years, using the following qualitative and quantitative methods:

- an online survey (13–18 years)
- school-based focus groups (7–18 years)
- youth group focus groups (13–18 years)
- written postcard responses to individual questions (7–18 years)
- a teacher and librarian led artwork activity (4–6 years).

The findings in this report capture the views of children and young people who participated in the online survey and focus groups. When participating in the written postcard responses and artwork activities children and young people were not asked to identify their culture and therefore caution should be taken when reading postcard responses or viewing artwork images in this report as assumptions have been made.

The overall findings of the consultations highlighted two key messages:

1. Children and young people are passionate about participating in conversations that affect on their lives; and
2. Children and young people value face-to-face connections with people.

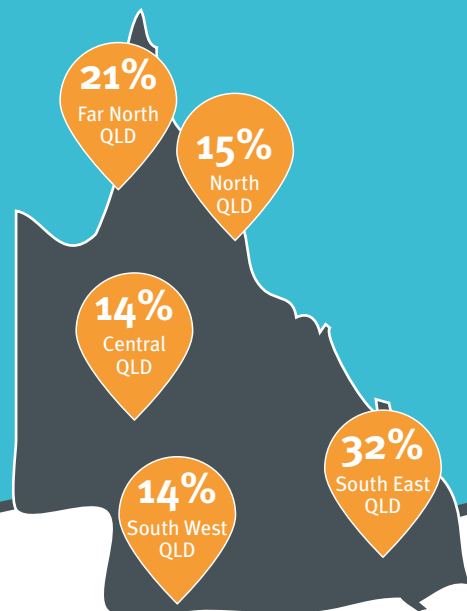


² The online survey was completed by 189 children and young people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This report also presents focus group data from 295 children and young people, where at least 69 per cent of participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, however Indigeneity was not a mandatory question and is likely to be underrepresented.

Profile of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth population

According to the 2016 *Census of Population and Housing data*, 81,957 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 0–18 years live in Queensland. This represents seven per cent of Queensland's youth population.³

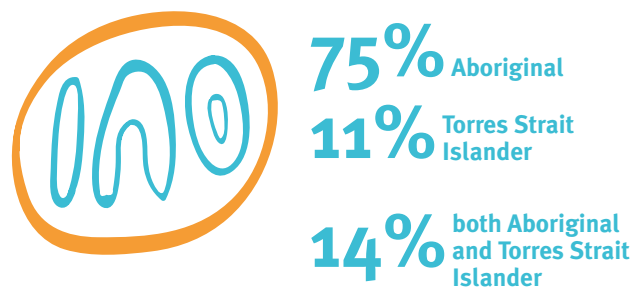
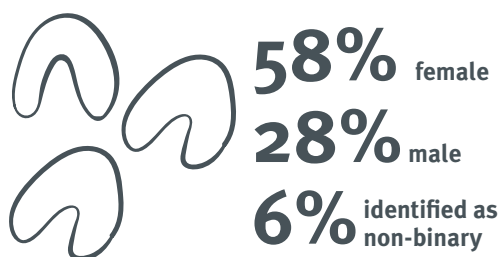
In 2016, 51 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Queensland were male and 49 per cent were female. The map (right) breaks down where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland live.⁴



Profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey and focus group participants

Online survey

Over 4900 children and young people across Queensland participated in an online survey through the Queensland Government's Youth eHub.

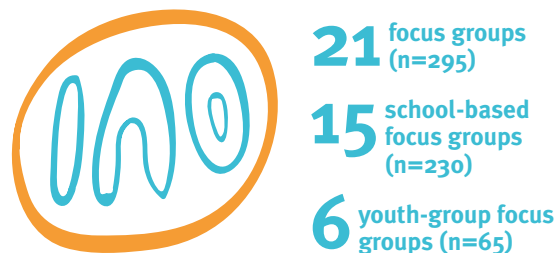
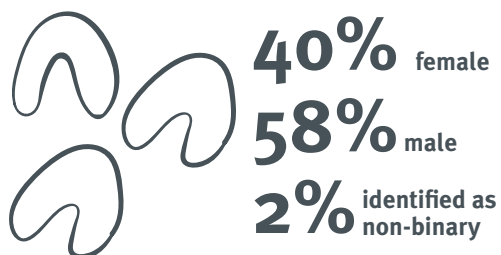


School-based and youth group focus groups

Across Queensland 102 focus groups, involving 1541 children and young people, were conducted to gain insights into how they experience their communities and what they want to help them realise their hopes and dreams. All comments by children and young people in focus groups were made anonymously and therefore it is not possible to attribute individual responses to a participants' cultural identification.

The results presented in this report are from 21 focus groups, conducted in schools and youth groups, involving 295 children and young people, where most participants (69 per cent) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. These focus groups were conducted in rural and remote locations including Badu Island, Cairns, Cooktown, Hope Vale, Horn Island, Mossman, Mt Isa, Thursday Island, Townsville, Wondai, Woree and Wooraibinda.

Focus groups



³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Census of Population and Housing*. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/2016>

⁴ Regional breakdown is based on the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships regions, with South East Queensland north and south combined. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. (2017). *Regional centres*. Retrieved from <https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/resources/datsima/people-communities/regional-contacts/qld-regional-map.pdf>

MY COMMUNITY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people told us what life is like growing up in their communities.

The best things about our community are:

- connection to people, community, country and culture
- connectedness of family to country
- spending time with family
- being a tribe
- being known by others and making friends easily.

We think our community is:

- a place which creates a sense of togetherness and belonging
- important to our cultural identity
- a place where you can learn your language
- where everyone can live in safety
- people who care for you and keep you safe
- where you have a good life.

We would like our community to have:

- better healthcare facilities
- a local high school
- more employment opportunities
- more recreational facilities.

We want adults to:

- recognise the impact that violence has on children and young people
- not make assumptions about us based on our cultural identity
- listen to our voices
- provide safe environments for children and young people to grow up in.

MY COMMUNITY

During focus groups in Badu Island and Cooktown, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people expressed what it is like growing up in their communities and what the concept of ‘community’ means to them.

They spoke about their community being a place where people support each other and are connected:

“Everyone together. One mob.”

Focus group, Woorabinda

“Walking around with our friends and family.”

Focus group, Badu Island

“Supporting and getting to know each other.”

Focus group, Cooktown

“Connection with culture.”

Focus group, Badu Island

“Learning languages.”

Focus group, Hope Vale

“A place where you can learn your culture.”

Focus group, Badu Island



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people emphasised the close connections within their communities:

“A town where people stick together and help each other.”

Focus group, Cooktown

“If one person has something happening, people will be there to support him no matter.”

Focus group, Cooktown

Relationships and connection

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus group participants spoke about the importance of their friendship, family, and community groups. They noted that their communities were an important source of knowledge and where they learn about culture, that this contributed to their sense of wellbeing and purpose.

When asked what is good about living in their community, children and young people spoke affectionately about the value of being known by others in their greater community and their ability to make friends easily. Focus group participants had positive descriptions of their communities as places that create a sense of togetherness and belonging:

“Coming together as a family.”

Focus group, Badu Island

“You can just walk down the street and say ‘hi’ and be recognised.”

Focus group, Cooktown

“It’s a small community and everyone just knows each other.”

Focus group, Cooktown

How they spend their time

We know that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, connections to family, community and culture are critical to their wellbeing and positive self-identity.⁵

The family structure is linked to the broader community, and with this knowledge comes a complex system of roles and obligations within the community. Aboriginal children and young people learn at an early age the kinship ties that exist within their community and subsequently their place in the community.⁶

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey participants described the importance of their connection to family.

When asked if they 'are able to spend enough time with parents, carers or family',

66% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people agreed or strongly agreed.

When asked if they 'enjoy spending time with family',

80% agreed or strongly agreed.

In addition to spending time with family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people enjoy participating in cultural celebrations, visiting Elders, and spending time on country. Focus group participants reflected on the importance of culture to their identity and sense of belonging.



Spending time in the natural environment including fishing, crabbing, bushwalking, swimming and visiting other islands is inherent to this process, as is its connection to identity. When focus group participants were asked to reflect on what was good about their community, many spoke about the ability to connect to their culture:

"We are literally about 10 metres from the reef. We are 40 kilometres from the Daintree (rainforest). We have the outback right on our doorstep and then we have a river which is just over there."

Focus group, Cooktown

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people described the beauty of their natural environment and appreciation for open space, free from the pollution experienced in urban areas. These children and young people also reflected on the impact of mining and the destruction of sacred land:

"I am worried about my country because of mining. The next generation won't see what I've seen, like sacred sites and dreaming."

Focus Group, Cooktown

5 Queensland Government. Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. (2017). *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*. Retrieved from <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/supporting-families/our-way.pdf>

6 NSW Department of Community Services (2009). *Working with Aboriginal people and communities: A practice resource*. Retrieved from <http://carersaustralia.com.au/storage/2011Working%20with%20Aboriginal%20People%20and%20Communities.pdf>

HOPE AND DREAMS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people told us about their plans for the future and the things helping or hindering them from achieving their goals.

These people will help us achieve our hopes and dreams:

- parents and carers
- friends
- teachers
- family members
- coaches.

In the future we want to:

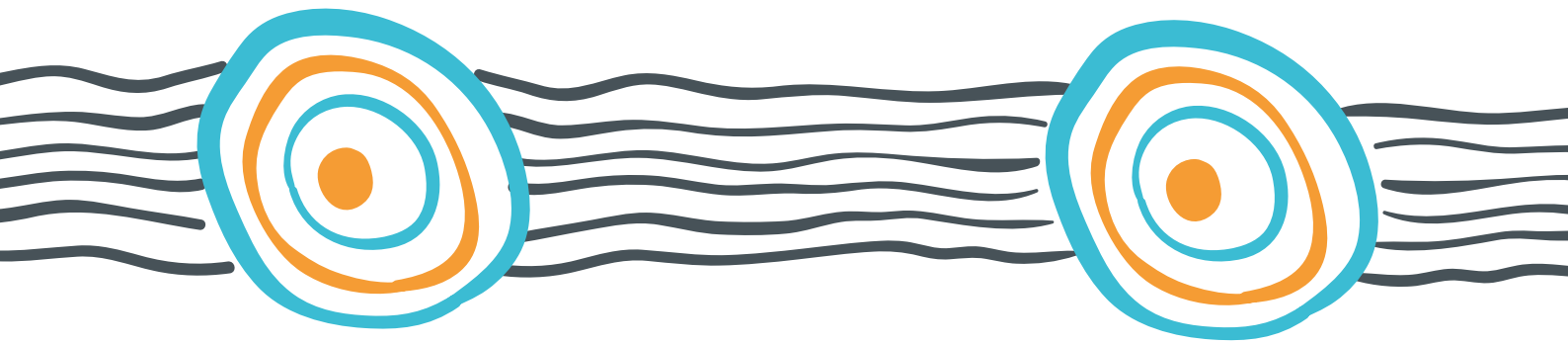
- work
- travel
- have a family
- do further study or training
- positively contribute to the wider community
- be a leader.

Some of the things that might stop us achieving our goals:

- financial difficulties
- a lack of jobs
- family responsibilities
- academic ability
- physical or mental health.

These are some of the things that will help us achieve our goals:

- money
- skills
- talent
- intelligence
- further education and training
- opportunities in our community.



HOPES AND DREAMS

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland have the right to a bright, healthy and powerful future — a future shaped by their own aspirations and unquestionable potential.⁷

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people spoke of big dreams that went beyond their current life experiences. This is consistent with the general views of children and young people who participated in the larger project. They know what they want to achieve and what they must do in order to be successful.

The survey found that 54 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people felt “positive” or “very positive” about their future, compared with 60 per cent of all children and young people surveyed.

Key aspirations raised by survey participants included continuing education or training to pursue a career, having their own families, strong relationships, and travel. These aspirations were shared by all Queensland children and young people.

The survey results revealed that their dreams not only focused on their own success and comfort, but also incorporated interest and concern for others in their community.

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants had many ideas about how they could positively contribute to and shape their community by providing strong leadership and influencing on others.

“Make a difference to this generation and younger to better them continuously with either it’s getting certificates and degrees I want to show the younger generation they can succeed.”

Online survey

“Be a positive influence on my community and a world changer.”

Online survey

“Write incredible books that change the way young people think about themselves and others and be recognised and respected for it.”

Online survey

“Be a police officer and help children when in need of help. Be a strong leader in my family.”

Online survey

“Help my community.”

Online survey

Through the survey, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people identified barriers to achieving these aspirations:

48%

said financial difficulties were a barrier to achieving their dreams

32%

said the lack of jobs were a barrier to achieving their dreams

24%

said that family responsibilities were a barrier to achieving their dreams.

⁷ Queensland Government. Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. (2017). *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*. Retrieved from <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/campaign/supporting-families/our-way.pdf>



Education

Although only half (52 per cent) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people surveyed were enrolled in full-time education at the time of the consultations,⁸ nearly three quarters (73 per cent) reported plans for more training or education at a TAFE or university in the future.

In postcard responses and focus groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students highly valued teachers who reflected their cultural heritage. They often spoke about how having more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers would improve their education so they could be taught in first languages and build their knowledge of culture and traditions.

“More Indigenous teachers would help me achieve my future career goals because I grew up in the Torres Strait and English is a second language. I would be able to understand a bit more in school.”

Postcard response, Far North Queensland

“We need more black teachers. There are only white teachers in our school.”

Postcard response, Central Queensland

“We need to teach traditional languages and culture backgrounds in schools.”

Postcard response, South West Queensland

“Life would be better for children and young people if we learnt more about Aboriginal history in school time and learned how Indigenous people lived.”

Postcard response, South East Queensland

“Aboriginal culture in school curriculum. Make it a subject.”

Focus group, Cooktown

“Knowing your history and culture keeps you strong and proud of who you are.”

Focus group, Townsville

In some remote communities, the only option for secondary education is to move away from family and attend boarding school. For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, this would involve leaving their communities for the first time.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who planned to attend boarding school expressed excitement about learning and making new friends, however they also described feelings of shame or embarrassment, worry about separation and fear of being bullied:

“Flights to boarding school are expensive so my family can’t visit often.”

Focus group, Horn Island

“I’ll be scared to come back because my family will think that I’ve become white on the inside.”

Focus group, Horn Island

These responses indicate an understanding of the struggle they may encounter to reconcile their culture, identity and outlook with their roles in broader society.

Government and non-government organisations must consider this challenge and ensure that culturally appropriate support services are available to children and young people in these circumstances to help them transition to adulthood and independence, without the daily physical support of their families.

⁸ A further 20 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were enrolled in part-time education. A proportion of young people in this sample were recruited through youth groups attended by young people who are disengaged from education, remove from this point and replace with and 28 per cent reported not being enrolled in education. It should be noted that a proportion of young people in the sample group were recruited from youth groups attended by people who were disengaged from education.

Family and healthy relationships

Survey participants also emphasised the value of having a life partner and a healthy, stable family life. This was characterised by having support, love and financial stability.

“Be a Special Forces member of the SASR but also be a man who protects, supports and helps his family.”

Online survey

“Have a Bachelor’s Degree and a steady job with a healthy relationship, planning our future.”

Online survey

“Get a well-paid job that I enjoy waking up to go to and be able to raise a family well with a devoted partner that can stand on their own two feet.”

Online survey

“Find someone who loves and accepts me the way I am, who I can trust, who trusts me and will support me and my decisions.”

Online survey

“Grow up with my own family and have a great job to provide well for my family.”

Online survey



Travel

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey participants described ambitious plans for their future incorporating travel to distant locations, often as part of their chosen career path.

Three quarters (76 per cent, compared with 79 per cent of the total population) mentioned plans to travel in the future and a third (35 per cent, compared with 28 per cent of the total population) planned to have a gap year after finishing their education, before starting further education or vocation training or pursuing a career.

“Become a pilot living in California.”

Online survey

“Afford to support my family and become a theatrical/cinematic costume designer in London.”

Online survey

“Either be a singer or dancer in Paris.”

Online survey

“Move to New York and have a good job.”

Online survey

Participants said they may leave their communities to continue their education, or to obtain employment, and pursue and achieve their dreams.

Although they conveyed a hopeful message about their futures, they were also keenly aware this would separate them from their families, communities, and country which ultimately would have broader implications for important cultural connections.

These responses indicate of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are aware of and understand the interconnectedness of physical, social-emotional and cultural elements of their health and the integral role their connections to family and community play.⁹

9 Priest, N., Thompson, L., Mackean, T., Baker, A., & Waters, E. (2016) Yarning up with Koori kids – hearing the voices of Australian urban Indigenous children about their health and well-being. *Ethnicity & Health*, 22, 631-647.

Caring for others

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, caring for one another is the essence of being a family. Caregiving responsibilities are a way of empowering children and young people with trust, support and confidence.¹⁰

The online survey offered young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people an opportunity to voice their experiences and share insights into their cultural and family obligations. Many children and young people said the work they regularly do to care for others is a fundamental part of their role in their communities and their cultural or daily lives.

For some children and young people, this meant facing competing time demands and priorities to balance their cultural and social obligations with their education or training.

While cultural and family obligations are inherent to their daily life, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people can be supported to build further cultural and social connections.

Further exploration of this issue could help identify ways for the Queensland community to properly understand and value family and community obligations from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



*of all 189 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey participants

**of all children and young people surveyed, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people



¹⁰ Lohar, S., Butera, N., & Kennedy, E. (2014). Strengths of Australian Aboriginal cultural practices in family life and child rearing. *Australian Institute of Family Studies*. Retrieved from <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/sites/default/files/publication-documents/cfca25.pdf>

The future workforce

91% The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people responding to the online survey were planning to look for work.

65% However, almost two thirds said opportunities in their community were important to achieving their hopes and dreams.

Community was also identified as playing an important role in providing for future opportunities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people expressed concerns about a perceived lack of opportunities within their local community to support them to continue their education, obtain apprenticeships or jobs, or to access critical services and activities.

Young people living in Mt Isa who participated in focus groups discussed the following barriers:

“Better healthcare. I have medical issues and I have to go to Cairns or Brisbane which is expensive.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“We need a TAFE centre that offers all courses and pathways.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Better education. Our education is ok for primary school but more choices for high school. More teachers to teach us a wider range of subjects.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Sometimes apprentices have to go away to the big smoke for training or apprenticeships. You kind of expect that for university study but not for apprentices.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“A high school. No high school here. Will need to travel south to boarding school.”

Focus group, Mt Isa



THE BIG PICTURE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people discussed the issues of most importance to them and gave advice to adults.

We need the adults in our lives to:

- be good role models
- make healthy choices
- recognise the impact that witnessing violence has on children and young people.

Our advice to adults:

- recognise that we need balance between school and family obligations
- understand the impact of family obligations on our personal health needs.

We worry about:

- us and our community forgetting our ancestors and losing our culture
- balancing our time to care for others with other responsibilities such as school
- meeting cultural and social obligations
- drugs and alcohol
- racism
- violence
- mental health.





THE BIG PICTURE

Queensland should be a place where all children and young people can be safe and thrive.

We asked Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to share the issues that worry them and their possible solutions. The top issues they identified were discrimination, violence, physical health and mental health.

Discrimination

The survey results identified discrimination as an important issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

35% A third of online survey participants reported some form of discrimination as one of the top ten issues.

Focus group participants also described a lack of respect towards other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by members of their community, and directly experienced a lack of respect themselves, as a result of their cultural identity.

They spoke strongly about the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are perceived and treated unfairly by adults due to their indigeneity and cultural identification:

“The basketball court is way out of town. When we are there we are harassed by police.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Lack of recognition of traditional owners (always being accused of trespassing).”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Police have no patience in working with Indigenous children.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“I asked for something in a shop and the lady that was serving me assumed I had no money because I am Aboriginal.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Targeting black fellas. Police search us for no reason.”

Focus group Mt Isa

These concerns were also raised by young people facing disadvantage because of their experiences with youth justice:

“I don’t want to be targeted by police... It’s like I have a target on my back. Anytime anything happens they come to me. I want a chance to prove I’ve changed.”

Focus group, Cairns

“Police treatment of youth when in detention.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

Conflict

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey participants listed violence and family conflict as a key issue concerning them.

This was echoed in focus groups where participants talked openly of the violence they had witnessed in their community or their homes.



When asked about their worries, children and young people spoke frankly about their experiences and perspectives on domestic and family violence:

“Adults are fighting and so are little kids.”

Focus group, Woorabinda

“Fighting with each other, then kids have to look after themselves.”

Focus group, Mt Isa

“Less domestic violence, it affects our learning.”

Focus group, Thursday Island

“When people get drunk bad things happen and children get hurt. You need to address this.”

Focus group, Badu Island

“When your parents drink alcohol and they fight.”

Focus group, Badu Island





Physical health

Survey responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants indicated an awareness of the need for strong physical and mental health to achieve their dreams. They also recognised the connection between of physical, social-emotional and cultural elements of their health and the integral role their connections to family and community played.¹¹

Nearly half (43 per cent) of survey participants reported they had a long-term disability or health condition lasting six months or more. However, most did not perceive their health issues as interfering with completing schoolwork or socialising with friends, indicating resilience and adaptability in the face of health challenges.

Focus group and survey participants also shared powerful observations of how drug and alcohol use in their homes and communities created health and behavioural problems. They indicated it is devastating and expressed a strong desire for alcohol and drug use to stop.

Mental health

Mental health was listed by more than half (57 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people as one of the most important issues children and young people in Queensland.

Topics such as stress, depression and suicide were among the top issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who participated in the online survey.

While there is significant work occurring across the sector, opportunities to strengthen the availability of and access to mental health services in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities needs to be considered.

66% two thirds of survey participants said they knew where to go for support.

50% only half said there was enough support for people their age where they live.

“You break down when you are drinking. People get hurt when drinking.”

Online survey

“When my parents drink alcohol and they fight.”

Online survey

“Break down the pub because people are loud, fight, get drunk and break glass.”

Focus group, Badu Island

“Less smoking because it affects our brains.”

Focus group, Thursday Island

“Kids are sniffing petrol and taking drugs.”

Focus group, Woorabinda



¹¹ Priest, N., Thompson, L., Mackean, T., Baker, A., & Waters, E. (2016) Yarning up with Koori kids – hearing the voices of Australian urban Indigenous children about their health and well-being. *Ethnicity & Health*, 22, 631-647.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The perspectives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people shared through the *Growing Up in Queensland* project highlight the strong goals they hold for their world, culture and country. These children and young people shared their dreams of future successes, which do not differ significantly from the views of non-Indigenous children and young people in Queensland.

The views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people reflected optimism about the future and passion for making Queensland an even better place to grow up. Participants provided valuable insights into how adults can better support children and young people to achieve their goals and overcome adversities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people's perspectives are unique as they must balance the complex world around them with important cultural responsibilities, such as caring for others. Concerns were expressed about discrimination, conflict, physical and mental health but participants also spoke positively about their communities and futures. Their perspectives revealed a strong sense of pride, optimism, tenacity and resilience.

We encourage decision-makers and leaders across government agencies, non-government organisations and the broader community to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland, and to use their feedback to influence meaningful and sustained change.

By understanding the aspirations, needs, ideas and concerns of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, leaders can influence stronger health and wellbeing outcomes and make Queensland an even better place for all children and young people.





qfcc.qld.gov.au



Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

