

ANNUAL REPORT

2015–2016

Queensland **Family & Child** Commission



Queensland
Government

Communication objective

This Annual Report describes our progress during 2015 — 16 toward achieving the long term objectives of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) as published in our strategic plan. In particular, the report includes information regarding our performance in relation to our strategic objectives and performance indicators, some of the key challenges affecting Queensland children and families and how we are helping address these challenges, our financial position, our compliance with legislative requirements and our forward plans.

To contain production costs, only in-house resources have been used to develop the report. Limited hard copies of the annual report have been produced and recycled material has been used for report production.

An electronic copy of this Annual Report is available from the QFCC's website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/annual-report.

Contact for enquiries

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ISSN 2205-6939 (Print)

ISSN 2205-6947 (Online)

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Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

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Reference: OPC/D16/13485

19 September 2016

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszcuk MP
Premier and Minister for the Arts
Executive Building
100 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Premier

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2015-16 and financial statements for the Queensland Family and Child Commission for presentation to the Parliament.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*,
- section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is included in the appendices of this report.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

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We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country throughout Australia, and their connection to the land, the sea and the community.

We pay our respects to them and their culture, and to the Elders both past and present and the new generation of emerging leaders.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Principal Commissioner's report | 1 |
| About us | 5 |
| Our role | 5 |
| Our legislation | 5 |
| Our commitment | 5 |
| Our strategic plan | 6 |
| Our operating environment | 6 |
| Child protection reforms | 6 |
| Oversight | 10 |
| Oversight | 11 |
| Evaluation | 15 |
| Advocacy and policy | 16 |
| Research | 18 |
| Enable | 23 |
| Partnering and engagement | 24 |
| Partnering and engagement to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders . | 28 |
| Educate | 33 |
| Community education | 35 |
| Governance | 38 |
| Our organisation | 39 |
| Financial management | 44 |
| Our workforce | 46 |
| Information Management | 48 |
| Appendix A – Glossary of terms | 51 |
| Appendix B – Annual report compliance checklist | 52 |
| Appendix C - Financial Statements | 54 |
| Appendix D - Performance of the Queensland child protection system | 95 |



Principal Commissioner's report

As Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) it is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for 2015 — 16. This is the first Annual Report under my leadership.

The QFCC operates in a complex environment influenced by multiple reform agendas and industry initiatives at the state and national level. Since my appointment as Principal Commissioner in October 2015, I have focussed on building the new Commission, including leading the appointment process for the Commissioner's role. In April 2016, Ms Tammy Williams, a proud Murri woman, was appointed to the position.

In my first eight months, I have worked with the executive team to reshape the Commission's forward work program and priorities re-confirming children, young people and their families are at the centre of everything we do.

This work has involved restructuring the organisation into functional areas of responsibility led by dedicated Assistant Commissioners and building operational capabilities to support QFCC staff. In the coming year I will continue to build the QFCC's governance to drive effective management of the Commission and demonstrate the public value of our role.

Staff feedback on the QFCC's refocussed role has been positive. Results from the Working for Queensland employee opinion survey showed increased staff satisfaction across most metrics. We will continue to support staff and to hear their voice through feedback from the Staff Consultative Committee and other mechanisms to build upon these results.

One of my key priorities has been to build the QFCC's collaboration with our broad range of partners across the sector. In June the QFCC worked with senior leaders to develop a shared commitment statement and held the first sector leadership forum. We have partnered with:

- the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS)

to pilot initiatives in central Queensland

- the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service to develop a parent kit providing details on their rights and information on investigative, case management and court processes
- Griffith University, the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) and the Salvation Army for a trial of an innovative computer tool to measure children's wellbeing in family support services
- CREATE Foundation, Noffs Street University and Next Steps After Care on a broad range of topics and participated in ongoing engagement activities, such as the G-force working group, so we can better understand the issues and challenges affecting young people
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Health and Community Services Workforce Council, QCOSS, PeakCare and Bravehearts to support raising the voice of children and young people and the needs of their families.

The QFCC is committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Commissioner Williams and I have met with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mayors and councillors in northern Queensland and stakeholders across the state. As part of our work we are investigating how the Commission is able to establish a regional and remote presence to build sustainable and trusting relationships with these families and their communities. I believe the QFCC has a fundamental role in assisting to close the gap for our First Nations people and continue to support them to remain strong in spirit and connected to country.

The 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, identified ten recommendations for the QFCC to lead. I am pleased



to report three of these recommendations have now been delivered and the remaining recommendations are on track.

I am also proud to report some of our key achievements for 2015 —16 which include:

- establishing the Advisory Council in November 2015 to provide guidance on the work of the QFCC, insight into issues affecting children, families and the sector and help promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe
- establishing the Community Partnerships group in November 2015 to advise on our efforts to build a capable sector workforce
- launching the oneplace Community Services Directory. With more than 48,000 records, nearly 29,000 new and 11,000 returning visitors, oneplace is the go-to resource for families and children to find local community support services
- leading 14 roundtables across Queensland to engage local child and family support service providers and community members to inform the development of the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, scheduled for release in 2016 — 17
- hosting the first Research in the round event bringing together policy makers and practitioners to learn from three Queensland academics about their current research and what the findings might mean in practice
- leading an extensive review into Queensland's children missing from out-of-home care, which has involved collaboration across the sector to determine how we can better respond in these circumstances
- publishing the 11th *Annual Report: Deaths of Queensland Children 2014 — 15* and responding to 31 external requests for detailed data from the Child Death Register to help support child death and injury prevention initiatives.

Presented as a companion to this Annual Report, the QFCC has produced the *Performance of the Queensland child protection system* report which provides an overview of how the state is performing in relation to key service areas such as family support services, improving out-of-home-care and post care experiences for children and young people and a

range of wellbeing indicators.

The year ahead promises to bring both new challenges and new successes for the Commission. I am grateful for the support and encouragement of our partners and stakeholders in this past year and look forward to working with you on our future endeavours. I would like to recognise the dedication of QFCC staff. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Mr Steve Armitage, who was interim Principal Commissioner for the first three months of this reporting period.

The QFCC continues to forge new pathways and we will continue to strive to build a better child protection and family support system for Queensland. I look forward to working with children, young people and the community to influence change so Queensland is a safe place where children, young people and their families are supported and they can thrive and flourish.



Cheryl Vardon

**Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission**





Our role

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) was established on 1 July 2014 as a part of the Queensland Government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) – *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection 2013*.

Every day, we work to improve the child protection and family support system. Our vision during 2015 – 16 was 'Queensland children and young people are safe, cared for and protected by capable and resilient families and communities'. We are committed to achieving this vision and supporting the delivery of the child protection reform roadmap.

To achieve this we:

- **Provide oversight** by monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the performance of the system and ensuring reform initiatives are effectively evaluated.
- **Enable** sustainable improvements in services by working alongside our partners to strengthen the capacity and capability across the child protection workforce.
- **Educate** parents, families, communities and professionals about how they can keep children and young people safe and the services available to strengthen and support Queensland families.

Our purpose is a direct reflection of this mandate, with children, young people and their families at the heart of everything we do. It emphasises a strong focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the importance of partnering with government and non-government

organisations to improve child protection and family support services.

Our legislation

The *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (the Act) established the QFCC as a statutory body to:

- Promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people.
- Promote and advocate the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people.
- Improve the child protection system.

The Act also prescribes that two Commissioners are to be appointed by the Governor in Council, one as Principal Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer. At least one Commissioner must be an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander. Our Principal Commissioner, Ms Cheryl Vardon, and Commissioner, Ms Tammy Williams, commenced in October 2015 and April 2016 respectively.

Our commitment

We contribute to the Government's objectives for the community of *building safe, caring and connected communities* by promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of Queensland's children and young people and working with government and non-government agencies to improve the child protection system.

This includes a strong focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Our strategic plan

The QFCC's strategic plan remained unchanged during the period of this annual report.

QFCC strategic plan 2015 — 19

| Objectives | Support a high quality, evidence-based Queensland child protection and family support system. | Strengthen partnerships and collaboration between government and non-government organisations to achieve better outcomes for children and families. | Educate Queensland families and communities on their role in keeping children and young people safe in the home and inform them about the resources available to assist them. | Building our capability. |
|------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor, review and report on the performance of the child protection and family support systems in line with national standards. Influence and guide the sector on practice improvement through investment in best-practice research and access to child death data. Support the sector to develop consistent evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of reforms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capability of the child protection and family support system workforce in collaboration with government, non-government and academic sectors. Partner with non-government organisations to strengthen non-government organisations capacity and governance. Co-lead the development of sector-wide cultural change management with the Child Protection Reform Leaders Group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote public education to encourage help-seeking behaviours among at-risk families and a shared responsibility for protecting children and young people. Enhance understanding of the child protection and family support systems in Queensland. Improve access to and awareness of services that meet the needs of vulnerable Queensland children and families. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen organisational capability. Optimise internal processes and tools. |
| Performance indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice on the performance of the child protection system and impacts of the reform agenda is used to inform improvements to the system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity and capability of child protection and family support services. | <p>Queensland families and communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are aware of their role in protecting and caring for children and young people. access the information and resources to better understand the child protection and family support systems. access the services and support they require. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Commissioner's satisfaction with workforce, technology and governance advice. Workforce, information technology and governance frameworks meet legislative objectives and corporate requirements. |
| Strategic risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and / or findings are not translated into practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection and family support services won't have the capacity to deliver sustainable outcomes for Queensland children and families. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland families don't seek and accept help when needed. Families and communities don't have confidence in the available services. Queensland children, young people and families are not willing or able to access available information and services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission has insufficient organisational capacity and capability to deliver on its strategic objectives. |

Our operating environment

The QFCC operates in a complex environment influenced by multiple reform agendas and industry initiatives at the state and national level. We are actively involved in a number of these initiatives. We partner with agencies responsible for leading these initiatives and participate in oversight, governance and advisory groups to maximise investment across the sector.

Child protection reforms

The 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection* identified ten recommendations for the QFCC to lead, three of which have now been delivered. A summary of these recommendations is provided in the table on the next page.

QFCC accountabilities for QCPCOI recommendations¹

| Recommendation / Status | Details of the QCPCOI recommendation |
|---|--|
| 'Talking Families' social marketing campaign (Rec. 1.1) – On track | The Queensland Government promote and advocate to families and communities their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children. |
| Community Services Directory (Rec. 6.1) – Delivered | The QFCC ensure the establishment and maintenance of an online state-wide information source of community services available to families and children to enable easy access to services and to provide an overview of services for referral and planning purposes. |
| Advisory Council (Rec. 6.3) – Delivered | The QFCC support the development of collaborative partnerships across government and non-government service sectors, and regularly monitor the effectiveness and practical value of these partnerships. |
| Capacity Building and Governance Strategy (Rec. 6.6) – On track | The QFCC lead the development of a capacity-building and governance strategy for non-government agencies, especially those with limited resources. |
| Workforce Planning and Development Strategy (Rec. 10.7) – On track | The QFCC lead the development of a workforce planning and development strategy as a collaboration between government, the non-government sectors and the vocational education and training sector and universities. |
| Establishment of the QFCC (Rec. 12.3) – Delivered | Establishment of the QFCC to monitor, review and report on the performance of the child protection system, provide cross-sectoral leadership and advice for the protection and care of children and young people, provide an authoritative view and advice on current research and child protection practice and build the capacity of the non-government sector and the child protection workforce. |
| 3-year rolling research program (Rec. 12.13) – On track | The QFCC develop a rolling three-year research schedule with research institutions and practitioners to build the evidence base for child protection practice. |
| Evaluation Framework (Rec. 12.14) – On track | Each agency with child protection responsibilities develop an evaluation framework in the initial stages of program design, and undertake and source research to inform policy and service delivery. |
| Cultural Change (Rec. 12.15) – On track | The QFCC co-lead a change process to develop a positive culture in the practice of child protection in government and the community, including setting benchmarks and targets for improvement of organisational culture, staff satisfaction and stakeholder engagement, and report this in the Child Protection Partnership report. |
| Resources and information (Rec 13.26) – On track | The QFCC develop key resource material and information for children and families to better assist them in understanding their rights, how the child protection system works including court and tribunal processes and complaints and review options in response to child protection interventions. |

¹ Recommendations 6.6, 10.7 and 12.5 have been brought together to form a single *Strengthening our Sector* strategy

Supporting Families Changing Futures

In April 2016, the government reaffirmed its commitment to the family and child support sector reform (which is now in the third year of a ten year roadmap) through the release of *Supporting Families Changing Futures – Advancing Queensland’s child protection and family support reforms*.

An implementation schedule outlining the key priorities for the next two years has a number of actions assigned to the QFCC:

- Roll out stage two of a community education campaign, focusing on driving behaviour change among parents and the community to see a better take up of early intervention and support services and a normalising of help-seeking behaviours.
- Embed oneplace, a new community services directory, creating easy access for struggling families to helpful information and resources.
- Finalise and implement the Strengthening our Sector Strategy (developed by the QFCC in collaboration with sector stakeholders). The strategy will harness the existing strengths of the sector and provide a comprehensive, integrated approach that brings together people, organisations and professional culture to deliver high quality, responsive services that better support children, families and communities.
- Collaborate with stakeholders and research institutions to develop and implement a three-year rolling research schedule to build the evidence base for family support and child protection.
- Review progress against reform goals and consider the establishment of targets for reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system.
- Regularly review governance and oversight arrangements to continue to ensure a high level of accountability, transparency and effectiveness in service delivery.
- Undertake a formal evaluation in 2017 of the effectiveness of the reform program to date.

Supporting Families Changing Futures also commits to the development and delivery of an action plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The QFCC will play a key role in community engagement, evaluation and oversight of the action plan.

Domestic and family violence prevention

The QFCC is strongly committed to supporting the domestic and family violence agenda. The Principal Commissioner is a member of the Child Protection Reform and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Inter-Departmental Committee. The Commissioner is a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic Violence Committee.

During the year, the QFCC provided advice and submissions to support the review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* and the *Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015*. A submission was also provided to the National Children’s Commission to support the examination of children affected by domestic and family violence.

The QFCC commissioned research to understand more about help seeking behaviours in the context of domestic violence, with a particular emphasis on risk and protective factors in Indigenous families.

We are also committed to supporting our own employees who are experiencing domestic and family violence. An internal policy was released during the year and all QFCC employees have completed or are enrolled in the ‘recognise, respond, refer: domestic violence’ course.

Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

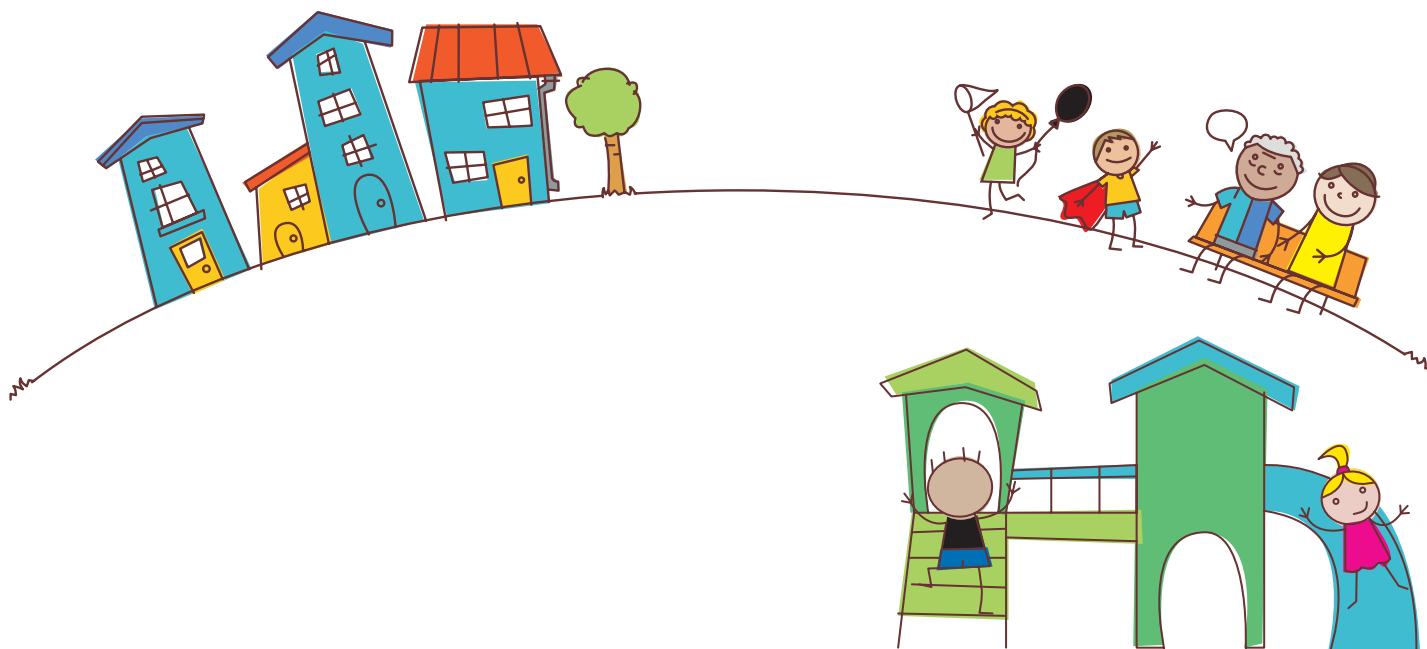
The QFCC has three actions in the *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019* and subsequent actions plans:

- Trial the practical application of Rumble’s Quest as a wellbeing measure for children in primary school and those in families receiving family support services.
- Implement the ‘Talking Families’ (public education)

campaign to encourage parents and families to talk about the pressures of parenting and to seek help when they need it.

- Maintain the Child Death Register, which includes details of all child deaths, including suicides, since 2004 and report on data and trends annually.

The QFCC provides regular updates to the Queensland Mental Health Commission on how these initiatives are progressing. As of 30 June 2016, each of the actions were on track.





Oversight

Objective 1

Support a high quality, evidence based Queensland child protection and family support system.

Strategies

Monitor, review and report on the performance of the child protection and family support systems in line with national standards.

Influence and guide the sector on practice improvement through investment in best-practice research and access to child death data.

Support the sector to develop consistent evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of reforms.

Oversight

The QFCC's oversight role, as prescribed in the Act, is focused on monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the child protection system from a systemic perspective. The QFCC's oversight function contributes to creating a Queensland where families feel supported, children and young people are less likely to be harmed and where children in out-of-home care get a chance for a safe and stable childhood where achievement is celebrated.

The QFCC uses reviews, research and the findings from listening to children, families, communities and the people who work within the sector to find out what is working well, what needs more investigation, how the system is performing and what needs to change.

The QFCC undertakes this oversight role through the following core functions:

- monitoring the performance of the Queensland child protection system by:
 - reviewing and analysing systemic data
 - monitoring the progress of key initiatives and reforms
 - undertaking proactive system scans
- reviewing the performance of the Queensland child protection system by:
 - conducting or commissioning systemic-level reviews
 - tracking implementation of review recommendations
- publishing data on the performance of the Queensland child protection system by:
 - reporting on Queensland's performance as per s40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
 - publishing reports to increase awareness and understanding of the child protection system and the progress of associated reform programs

- publishing reports to advocate for system improvements or to showcase successful initiatives.

Review of the performance of the Queensland child protection system

The Act requires the QFCC to include in its annual report information on Queensland's:

- performance in relation to achieving state and national goals in relation to the child protection system
- performance over time in comparison with other jurisdictions
- progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and young people in the child protection system.

The report *Performance of the Queensland child protection system*, which is published as a companion to this annual report, provides an overview of how Queensland is performing in relation to the following key service areas:

- family support services
- working better with families in contact with the child protection system
- improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people
- health, social, emotional and economic indicators of wellbeing
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Key statistics, trends and achievements are outlined by analysing:

- the indicators of the Second Action Plan of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 — 2020
- the Report on Government Services (ROGS) key performance child protection effectiveness output measures

- information in relation to the implementation of the child protection reforms
- key Queensland child protection performance indicators
- supporting data and information from a range of surveys and reports, including those that provide the views of children and families and other contextual information.

Key findings

As at 31 March 2016 there were 8,671² children and young people living in out-of-home care. A key objective of our sector and community is to reduce the rate at which children enter out-of-home care.

In response, the child protection and family support system in Queensland is in a state of transition. It is currently in year three of a ten year reform program aimed at improving tertiary services while also supporting parents, families and communities to take responsibility for protecting and caring for their children.

It is expected the reform program and progression towards achieving both the National and State goals will result in improved outcomes for Queensland children and young people. While a sustained effort is still required to reduce pressure on the tertiary child protection system, there are some encouraging signs that the implementation of reforms relating to the reporting and referral of alleged harm is reducing the number of intakes received by the DCCSDS where matters do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention.

There has also been a noted increase in referrals of families to secondary support services. Almost 7,000 referrals to new Family and Child Connect (FaCC) services occurred in 2015, and more than 20,000 families accessed free Triple P Parenting Program services between August 2015 and June 2016.

A QFCC survey of over 2000 Queensland parents in late 2015 revealed that 17% had accessed formal parenting or educational support services in the previous year. Encouragingly, 93% of these said it had made a positive difference for them.

In very simple terms, there is clear evidence that these supports work and the challenge now exists in fully establishing support system capacity and normalising the experience of seeking help.

For those children who enter out-of-home care, encouragingly, a national survey (from 2015) revealed that 91% feel both safe and settled in their current placement. In the same period, only a small proportion (1.7%) of Queensland children in out-of-home care were subject to a substantiated breach of the standards of care.

Sadly, children typically enter out-of-home care after experiencing significant abuse and neglect. This can have major impacts on their life course trajectory, including health outcomes, educational attainment and vocation. As such, a key challenge of the sector, into the future, is to make these children and young people more than safe.

Of significant concern is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families continue to be over-represented in all aspects of the child protection system. Concerted effort will continue to be applied by all government and non-government stakeholders and service providers to address the factors driving over-representation and enhance the service response. As a sector we are at our best when we work together on such challenges.

Review of professional reporting behaviours

In August 2015, at the request of the Child Protection Reform Leaders Group (RLG), the QFCC commenced a health check of system level professional reporting behaviours. The review considered if the intent of legislative changes to the *Child Protection Act 1999*, which commenced in January 2015, had brought about the desired system changes. The health check also considered:

- if there were any unintended consequences from the rollout of legislative changes
- the adequacy of training, resources and guides
- whether further training, resources or guides were required
- the effectiveness of organisational approaches to change.

² Source - Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

The methodology included reviewing:

- administrative change management processes from QCPCOI findings through to formation of legislative changes
- cross sector and agency specific change management processes regarding development of policies, procedures, guides and training provided to professionals
- intake data held by DCCSDS
- referral operational data to FaCC and Intensive Family Support (IFS) services
- the process of the legislation amendments
- cross sector development of training, guides and communications materials.

Additional evidence was gathered and analysed from:

- quantitative surveys of professionals across the sector responsible for making reports to Child Safety and police and referrals to family support services (including the Non-State Schools sector)
- quantitative and qualitative surveys in Townsville and Logan catchments
- targeted interviews with agency level change agents across the sector
- identification of themes of success, unintended consequences resulting from the reform and other cross sector impacts.

The Healthcheck Report – Review of Professional Reporting Behaviours (the Healthcheck report), finalised in December 2015, provided the RLG with an overview of the systemic drivers for the legislative change. It also provided early insights into the ways professionals made reports and referrals since the implementation of the child protection reforms.

A core finding of the Healthcheck report was that the overall impact of the reforms on professional reporters was underestimated. Despite this, a significant reduction in the number of intakes

received by Child Safety was noted, which aligns with the intentions of the reform.

Five recommendations were provided aimed at: reducing reporting complexity; improving strategies for joint-training and consistent messaging; and improving change management approaches.

Importantly, it remains the responsibility of stakeholder agencies to act and monitor the reporting and referral patterns of their workforce.

When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh – A report into Queensland's children missing from out-of-home care

In the days following the devastating death of Tiahleigh Palmer the Premier requested the QFCC undertake a broad whole of government systems review.

The Premier asked two questions when calling for this review - could more have been done at the time and how can systems be improved so all children are regarded equal when they are reported missing, no matter their family circumstance. The Premier wanted to make sure the child safety, education, health and police service systems worked effectively and 'everything possible was done when concerns were first raised about Tiahleigh's disappearance'.

The QFCC worked closely with key government and non-government agencies throughout the review. The QFCC visited various government agencies, meeting with Directors-General and senior officers from the DCCSDS, the Queensland Police Service (QPS), the DET, Queensland Health (QHealth) and the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

The QFCC sought their views and cooperation in understanding the impact of legislation and policy when responding to children living in out-of-home care who are missing and to develop evidence-based, appropriate responses to the key findings in the report. The QFCC also considered:

- data from key agencies
- government responses in other Australian and international jurisdictions for comparison to the arrangements in Queensland
- Australian and international research to better understand children who go missing and the

impacts of system responses aimed to increase safety for these vulnerable children

- input from non-government organisations, specifically Bravehearts, the CREATE Foundation, Foster Care Queensland, the Family Inclusion Network and the QATSI CPP.

The review identified a number of system inadequacies and makes 29 recommendations to achieve whole-of-government system improvements in responding to children missing from out-of-home care. Work is required to improve consistency in guidance for agencies and carers, state-wide practice consistency and data collection and sharing. The development of media protocols would also benefit the timeliness of actions and decisions in relation to releasing information publically. A cultural shift away from considering children who are absent from their placement as ‘absconders’ was identified as key to achieving sustainable change. The need to build and maintain a focus on missing children issues and keep these children on the whole-of-government agenda was also a critical finding.

The year ahead

In 2016 – 17 the QFCC will:

- release the *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh – A report into Queensland’s children missing from out-of-home care* report and oversight the implementation of the report’s recommendations
- commence a supplementary review into information sharing arrangements relating to people working with children. This review will assess information sharing arrangements between all government and non-government agencies, particularly in home-based regulated service environments
- deliver the QFCC’s recommendations and oversight the implementation of all recommendations from the *Healthcheck Report – Review of Professional Reporting Behaviours*, and conduct a subsequent Healthcheck (no sooner than six months after state-wide implementation of FaCC and IFS services)

- establish an oversight agencies group to bring together the groups responsible for external oversight of the child protection system to enable coordinated activities, identify areas where oversight agencies can work in partnership, reduce duplication, and enable information sharing (within the scope of any confidentiality and privacy limits)
- continue to monitor, review and report on the performance of the Queensland child protection system, including providing a report into the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the system.

Evaluation

The QFCC has responsibility for analysing and evaluating, at a systemic level, policies and practices relevant to the child protection system and the performance of relevant agencies in delivering services. We also have lead responsibility for evaluating the child protection reform program and assisting relevant agencies to evaluate the efficacy of their programs.

Evaluating the child protection reform program

In 2015, the QFCC developed an evaluation strategy for the child protection reform program. The strategy outlines the high-level activities, principles and responsibilities of all parties in evaluating the reform program, in line with the Queensland Government Program Evaluation Guidelines.

The QFCC is responsible for:

- setting standards, guidelines and procedures for evaluation of the reform program
- providing guidance and support on evaluation principles and practices relating to child protection and the reform program
- assisting agencies and project leaders identify opportunities for coordinated evaluations
- developing a single consolidated program-level report at the end of the fifth and tenth years of implementation of the reforms.

Implementation agencies are responsible for:

- planning for, conducting or commissioning evaluations of their work packages, ensuring that deliverables are fit for purpose and enable the program to achieve the desired outcomes and benefits
- ensuring their agency has an appropriate agency evaluation framework in place in the initial stages of program design, including ensuring that relevant data is collected by their agency and shared with work package leaders, the QFCC and other relevant stakeholders.

In June 2016, the Principal Commissioner wrote to all relevant Directors-General requesting copies of agency-level evaluation frameworks. This will assist the QFCC in prioritising and undertaking its system and program-level evaluation responsibilities in the year ahead.

Review of progress towards reform goals

In June 2016, the QFCC commenced a review of progress towards the child protection reform goals, focusing on the strategic objectives of the reform program. In addition to developing a high-level indication of progress, the review sought to identify information gaps in existing data and reporting mechanisms to inform the formal three and five year program reviews.

The review included an analysis of data and documents, and 20 consultation sessions with key stakeholders (representatives of organisations on the child protection RLG).

The *Performance of the Queensland child protection system* report, which is published as a companion to this annual report, provides further detail on progress of the reform program.

Family and child evaluation community of practice

The QFCC established the family and child evaluation community of practice (COP) to build evaluation capacity and capability in the child protection and family support sector.

The COP encourages, supports and facilitates:

- identification, promotion and application of best practice in evaluation
- sharing of knowledge, expertise, experiences and resources
- collaboration and coordination of evaluation activities
- alignment of agency project evaluations with program-level frameworks
- improving evaluation skills and providing support and advice

- development of a sound evidence base for child protection, family support and domestic and family violence programs, policies and practices.

The COP provides an opportunity for evaluation specialists and program staff to engage in discussion, meet periodically to reflect on their practice, share their experience with others, and explore new approaches to evaluation.

While open to all those with an interest in evaluation of the child protection and family support sector, the core membership is comprised of government agency staff who are responsible for implementing and evaluating the child protection and domestic and family violence reform programs.

In November 2015, the QFCC and the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) co-facilitated an evaluation COP workshop to examine the causal links between the nine projects within the reform program that are intended to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the overall reform objectives.

In June 2016, the QFCC released a resource to provide general guidance to COP members for planning, commissioning and managing evaluation projects. The resource was shaped by the shared knowledge and experiences of members, and outlines key steps, with a focus on 'tips and traps' concerned with each step.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will:

- complete the review of progress towards child protection reform goals
- establish frameworks for evaluating the child protection reform program and the child protection system
- publish the Family and Child Evaluation Program Toolkit – a guide to the key principles of evaluating child and family programs and service models
- publish the Workplace Self-Assessment Toolkit – a resource for agencies to examine their workplace practices to enable the cultural change recommended by the QCPCOI
- commence the three year formal evaluation of the

child protection reform program.

Advocacy and policy

The QFCC uses evidence and networks to influence legislation and policy concerning the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children, young people and their families. We collect data, undertake research and engage with various stakeholders, children and families to form positions and make recommendations about laws, policies, practices and services.

We do this to improve the child protection, family support and youth justice systems to make sure they are the best they can possibly be to protect vulnerable children and families. We have influenced policy and legislation by making submissions to parliamentary committees, taking part in hearings, giving feedback to government agencies and taking part in information sharing across the sector.

We have established ongoing relationships with state-wide advocacy agencies including the CREATE Foundation, QATSICPP, Health and Community Services Workforce Council, QCOS, PeakCare and Bravehearts to support raising the voice of children and young people and the needs of their families.

We support the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) policy officers' network and have established key partnerships with the OPG and other government stakeholders to inform our advocacy and policy work.

During the year the QFCC provided advice through 14 submissions including six submissions to Parliamentary Committees and government agencies making specific recommendations on improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Four key advocacy and policy submissions are summarised below.

Child Protection (Mandatory reporting-Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016

The QFCC supported the amendments to introduce mandatory reporting obligations to the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. The QFCC recommended:

- mandatory reporting obligations to the DCCSDS be expanded to include ECEC sector staff

- ECEC sector staff trained and educated to identify and respond to suspicions of child abuse.

Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC)

The QFCC acknowledged extensive research and consultation undertaken by the Royal Commission and many other agencies across Australia in relation to sexual abuse in OOHC.

The QFCC submission focused on providing the Royal Commission with information on initiatives currently underway in Queensland, recent research or consultation outcomes related to specific key suggestions and considerations raised within the consultation paper.

The QFCC recommended the Royal Commission:

- establish a link with the newly appointed specialist steering committee, Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Committee, and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP)
- note the findings and suggested interventions included in the, *Preventing Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse in West Cairns and Aurukun* report
- note the review being undertaken by the QFCC in relation to children missing from out-of-home care.

Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

The QFCC supported a number of policy objectives in the *Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* and provided four recommendations to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. The QFCC:

- supported the policy objective to remove boot camp (vehicle offences) orders and boot camp orders from the range of sentencing options
- supported the policy objective to remove breach of bail as an offence
- supported the policy objective to reinstate

the principle that a detention order should be imposed only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period

- supported the policy objective to reinstate the jurisdiction of the Children's Court in reviewing sentences and the expansion of this jurisdiction to include Magistrates' decisions on breaches of community based orders
- recommended a comprehensive review of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* and the youth justice policy settings in Queensland
- recommended the Queensland Government adopt a holistic approach for legislative and policy change in relation to the youth justice system
- recommended the Queensland Government remove 17 year olds from the adult criminal justice system and transition them into the youth justice system
- recommended a regulation be made to fix a day after which a person will be a child for the purposes of this Act if the person has not turned 18 years, in accordance with section 6(1) of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

Child Protection Act 1999

The QFCC supported a contemporary legislative framework for Queensland's child and family support system. We provided a submission to the DCCSDS outlining our research, feedback and recommendations relating to the, *Supporting families and protecting children in Queensland: a new legislative Framework – Public Consultation for the review of the Child Protection Act 1999*. Our submission provided a total of 36 recommendations to the 22 questions posed by the DCCSDS.

Online child exploitation

The QFCC is partnering with key government and non-government agencies to advocate for and raise awareness of the risks of online activities for children and young people. A steering committee has been established to bring together organisations committed to reducing online child sexual offending and child exploitation. We commenced consultation with information technology graduates and young people to hear their voices relating to strategies for

keeping children safe online.

We will be sharing research and experiences to increase awareness on the prevalence and impacts of online child exploitation and child sexual offending with target groups in the community. We will also drive action with key target groups and develop approaches for a community education campaign to promote key messages to the broader community.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will:

- progress advocacy by actively seeking out opportunities to hear and share the voices and experiences of children, young people and families across four vulnerable groups:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
 - children and young people with mental health issues
 - young people transitioning from out-of-home care
 - young people in the youth justice system
- develop a community education program to promote and advocate a shared responsibility for improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in relation to online child exploitation
- develop an information paper on youth justice, highlighting arguments in favour of raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

Research

Research agenda

The QFCC has responsibility for developing a rolling three-year research schedule, to build the evidence base for improved child protection practice. During the year we consulted with 47 sector representatives, including peak bodies, academics and government agencies, to identify research gaps and sector priorities. A draft research agenda 2016 —19 has been developed, with a number of priority projects identified. This will be presented to the QFCC's Advisory Council for its input and advice and then made available on the QFCC's website.

Research in the round

The QFCC has a lead role in the translation of research for the benefit of child protection practitioners. In June 2016, we presented our inaugural Research in the round, an interactive discussion to explore the implications of current research evidence for policy makers and practitioners. More than 80 people from across the family and child support sector attended the event.

Facilitated by Associate Professor Daryl Higgins; Deputy Director of Research, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), Research in the round showcased the work of three Queensland researchers focusing on vulnerable children and families within Queensland. The presentation was followed by a networking session.

Baseline research of parents and non-parents

In November 2015, the QFCC commissioned a large scale baseline survey of 4,261 Queensland parents and non-parents, including over 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait parents and non-parents. The results of this research are currently being analysed and will assist us to develop community education programs designed to reduce stigma, build trust, and increase knowledge of the early intervention services available to support Queensland families.

Help seeking, domestic violence and Indigenous families' research

A help seeking, domestic violence and Indigenous families research project was conducted in partnership with the Domestic Violence and Family Research Centre, Central Queensland University, and researcher Dr Silke Meyer. The project utilised the data obtained from the baseline research of parents and non-parents survey, to specifically explore issues surrounding help seeking in the context of domestic violence, particularly focussing on risk and protective factors for Indigenous parents.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will:

- publish and promote the three-year rolling research program and the QFCC's contribution to the research agenda
- continue to consult on research gaps identified by the sector for the three-year rolling research agenda
- work with AIFS to identify current research to answer areas of interest identified by the sector and distribute this research via our online research hub
- conduct further Research in the round events, responding to sector priorities
- partner with non-government organisations to understand why young people go missing.

Child death prevention

The QFCC is responsible for maintaining a register of child deaths in Queensland, identifying patterns or trends, conducting research and reporting annually.

Supporting child death prevention efforts

The QFCC's key strategy for child death and injury prevention is to make data about more than 5700³ deaths held in the register available for research, public education, policy development and program design. Since the Register was established, over 300 tailored responses to data requests have been actioned and in most cases data is put in the hands of those who can use it to most effect within 72 hours.

In 2011 the International Journal of Injury Prevention described this approach as a “pioneering effort by a government agency in database management.”

In 2015 — 16, the QFCC responded to 31 external requests for detailed data from the Register to help support child death and injury prevention initiatives. These included:

- Drowning deaths of children aged under five years for the Department of Housing and Public Works. The information has been used in the development of the pool safety requirements for Queensland as well as consideration of safety in relation to rural water hazards.
- Bicycle deaths for research by the Centre for Children's Burns and Trauma Research at the University of Queensland.
- Drowning deaths for national reporting and prevention strategies by the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia.
- Pedestrian deaths to support development of prevention initiatives by Kidsafe and the Centre for Children's Burns and Trauma Research.
- Suicide deaths provided to DET to inform postvention support processes.

- Suicide deaths to Mission Australia to inform development of early intervention programs.
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sudden unexpected deaths in infancy for SIDS prevention research at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Data request by type of data requested 2015 — 16

| Type of data requested | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Drowning | 7 |
| Transport | 5 |
| Suicide | 4 |
| All deaths | 4 |
| Known to child safety system | 3 |
| Sudden unexpected death in infancy | 2 |
| Interstate resident deaths | 2 |
| Accidental causes | 1 |
| Diseases and morbid conditions | 1 |
| Domestic and family violence history | 1 |
| All external causes | 1 |
| Total | 31 |

Data source: Queensland Family and Child Commission (2015 — 16)

Access to comprehensive child death data is available at no cost to organisations or individuals conducting genuine research, prevention or public education activities.

The QFCC also provided a submission: *Smoke Alarms Inquiries – Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016* to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. The submission provided pertinent facts and advice in relation to deaths of 32 children in 20 separate house fires in the 12 years from 2004 to 2015, in order to support the Committee's consideration of the *Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Bill 2016*.

Our child death prevention staff participated on a number of advisory bodies including:

Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group which aims to identify, address and potentially decrease the number of infant, child and youth deaths by sharing information on issues in the review and reporting of child deaths. The group is also working together towards achieving national

standardised reporting.

Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group who provide an evidence base to support product safety policy decisions which may include: recommending new mandatory standards or Australian Standards be developed; recommending certain unsafe products be banned; developing consumer or business education campaigns, and supporting research opportunities. This group also provides advice to relevant government/private/community agencies, media and the larger community on product safety issues either proactively or as requested.

Queensland Suicide Prevention Reference Group which supports the implementation of the Queensland Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2015 — 17 and provides leadership, oversight and coordination of suicide prevention and risk reduction activities undertaken across the State.

Queensland Advisory Group on Suicide Information and Data who are an expert group on systemic issues, data and other relevant evidence.

Queensland Government Births and Deaths Working Group which is a forum for discussing statistical and other issues around Queensland births and deaths registrations and assists in improving the quality and reliability of Queensland population statistics.

During the year child death prevention team members undertook a five day specialised mortality coding training course provided by the National Centre for Health Information Research and Training at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Clinical coding of health data is a key activity in order to correctly classify causes of child deaths. Coded data can be used for statistical, administrative, research and clinical purposes to describe major causes of death and to identify potential prevention and public health strategies. Following this training, the QFCC partnered with the National Centre for Health Information Research and Training to develop an additional tool to supplement the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases and Morbid Conditions, Volume 10 (ICD-10). The workflow diagram developed is designed to assist mortality coders in identifying the underlying cause of death from the conditions listed on cause of death certificates. This has been submitted by QUT

for discussion at the next World Health Organisation Mortality Reference Group meeting in October 2016.

Annual Report on Child Deaths in Queensland

During the year the QFCC published the *Annual Report: Deaths of Queensland Children 2014 – 15*. This is the 11th annual report to be produced on child deaths in Queensland.

The table below shows the number and rate of child deaths in Queensland each reporting period since 2004 – 05. In this period there have been some year to year fluctuations in child death rates, however, there has been a general reduction in the rates in the most recent years.

Number and rate of child deaths by reporting period 2004 – 15

| Year | Number of deaths | Rate per 100,000 |
|---------|------------------|------------------|
| 2004–05 | 481 | 49.6 |
| 2005–06 | 425 | 43.0 |
| 2006–07 | 509 | 51.6 |
| 2007–08 | 487 | 48.3 |
| 2008–09 | 520 | 50.5 |
| 2009–10 | 488 | 46.5 |
| 2010–11 | 465 | 43.8 |
| 2011–12 | 487 | 45.4 |
| 2012–13 | 448 | 41.1 |
| 2013–14 | 446 | 40.3 |
| 2014–15 | 445 | 40.2 |

Data source: Queensland Child Death Register (2004 – 15)

For the 445 children and young people whose deaths were registered in 2014 – 15, the following observations were made:

- 53.0% of the deaths were male and 46.5% were female⁴
- diseases and morbid conditions accounted for the majority of deaths (69.4%)
- 20.2% of deaths were due to external (non-natural) causes – suicide, transport, drowning, fatal assault and neglect, or other non-intentional

injury

- suicide (28 deaths) replaced transport (25 deaths) as the leading external cause of death for the first time in the 11 years of the register, with suicide deaths in 2014 – 15 recorded as an 11 year high while transport had a record low
- 15 of the young people who died as a result of suicide were known to the child protection system
- 16 children drowned, of whom ten were aged 1–4 years and, of these, five drowned in private pools and five drowned in rural water hazards
- 14 children died of fatal assault and neglect, an 11 year high. This number is due, in part, to a single incident involving multiple fatalities. Nine children were victims of domestic homicide, 4 deaths were fatal child abuse and one death was due to neonaticide
- Three children who died due to fatal assault or neglect were known to the child protection system
- 64.0% of deaths were of infants under 1 year of age
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children accounted for 16.4% of deaths and died at around twice the rate of non-Indigenous children in Queensland
- children known to the child protection system died at a rate of 53.7 deaths per 100,000, compared with 40.2 deaths per 100,000 for all Queensland children.

These findings are generally similar to those found in previous reporting periods.

⁴ Percentages will not sum correctly due to the death of two infants, whose sex was indeterminate at the time of registration.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will:

- publish information and data fact sheets about current issues impacting children and young people and practical measures for prevention
- publish the Annual Report: Deaths of Queensland Children 2015 — 16
- continue to respond to data requests and support government and non-government agencies to develop responses to reduce the number of children and young people who die in Queensland each year.

Enable

Objective 2

Strengthen partnerships and collaboration between government and non-government organisations to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

Strategies

Build the capability of the child protection and family support system workforce in collaboration with government, non-government and academic sectors.

Partner with non-government organisations to strengthen their capacity and governance.

Co-lead the development of sector-wide cultural change management.

Partnering and engagement

The QFCC recognises developing and maintaining sustainable partnerships across the child protection and family support sector is crucial to achieving outcomes to improve the wellbeing of children and families.

During 2015 – 16, we have strengthened existing relationships and established new alliances with a broad range of peak bodies, industry partners, communities, advisory groups, academics, government and non-government organisations to achieve meaningful system wide change.

Advisory Council

The QFCC is able to establish statutory Advisory Councils to advise on matters relating to its functions.

In November 2015, the QFCC's inaugural Advisory Council was established. Members come from a broad range of disciplines including two Indigenous sector experts and a young consultant from out-of-home care. The members provide a diverse range of views about how to improve the lives of Queensland's children.

The Advisory Council provides guidance on the work of the QFCC, insight into the issues affecting children, families and the sector, and helps promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe.

During the year the Advisory Council assisted the QFCC to progress its community education program, review systemic issues and build cross sector networks.

The Advisory Council membership comprises:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Cheryl Vardon | Principal Commissioner QFCC |
| Tammy Williams | Commissioner QFCC |
| Professor Lesley Chenoweth AO | Pro Vice Chancellor and Head of Logan Campus, Griffith University, Professor of Social Work, School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University |
| Kay Ganley | CEO, Charlton Brown |
| Cameron Harsley APM | Executive Director, Operations Support, Crime and Corruption Commission |
| Anne Hollonds | Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies |
| Hetty Johnston AM | Founder and Chair, Bravehearts |
| Ben Pearce | CREATE Foundation, Youth Representative |
| Zoe Rathus AO | Senior Lecturer in Law, Griffith Law School |
| Professor Cindy Shannon | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Education), University of Queensland |
| Dr James Scott | Associate Professor, Conjoint Associate Professor, SOM Central – Psychiatry – Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences |
| Professor Clare Tilbury | Carol Peltola Research Chair, Life Without Barriers, School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University |
| Heather Watson | Director, McCullough Robertson |
| Ron Weatherall | Deputy Director-General, Community Participation, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships |

Community Partnerships Group

A Community Partnerships Group has been established with peak body organisations to strengthen partnerships and advise the QFCC on specific initiatives, particularly our efforts to build a capable sector workforce.

Established in November 2015, and meeting quarterly, the Community Partnerships Group membership comprises:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Cheryl Vardon | Principal Commissioner QFCC |
| Tammy Williams | Commissioner QFCC |
| Belinda Drew | CEO, Community Services Industry Alliance |
| Mark Henley | CEO, Queensland Council of Social Services |
| Natalie Lewis | CEO, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak |
| Lindsay Wegener | CEO, PeakCare |
| Paul Stephens | CEO, Health and Community Services Workforce Council |



First meeting of the QFCC Advisory Council with the Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dance Troupe

Partnering and engagement with the sector

The QFCC released the draft *Strengthening our Sector* strategy in early 2016. The strategy brings together three recommendations from the QCPCOL. Having a capable and effective sector means better services and support for children and families, and ultimately better outcomes for Queensland. In developing the strategy, the QFCC worked with peak bodies and industry partners from across the sector to formulate priorities and discuss sharing implementation responsibilities.

The QFCC undertook a broad range of consultations on the draft strategy including hosting 14 roundtables across Queensland, attended by 212 people, to engage local child and family service providers and community members about regional priorities designed to build capability, capacity and professional practice culture. Additionally, feedback was sought from government agencies, and one on one discussions occurred with sector organisations in targeted locations and via online feedback.

Strategy priorities widely endorsed by the sector included:

- Responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and organisations including pathways for employment entry and building capacity of community controlled organisations.
- Place based community and service provider engagement projects to identify local initiatives in response to local community and service system needs.

A number of initiatives under the strategy are already underway including:

- *Your Workforce, Your Future* – a baseline workforce survey developed and administered in collaboration with the Health and Community Services Workforce Council. Data from the online survey will provide a snapshot of the Queensland workforce by identifying key characteristics and trends. This will be crucial in planning and prioritising future investment.
- Facilitated a sector concept group to plan for the inaugural job family forum and the development of a career and capability framework for the child and family workforce.

- A Partnership with QCOSS to plan the first placed based regional community and service engagement process to identify local priorities and pilot initiatives in central Queensland.

The QFCC also worked closely with DCCSDS to align this work with the Governments' additional election commitment to develop a job, skills and industry strategy for the community services sector.

Recognising the child protection system is complex and can be difficult to navigate, we partnered with the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service to develop an information kit for parents. The information kit provides parents with information about rights, investigation and case management processes, what to expect during court, how to make a complaint and where to find support. The voices of young people were included through collaboration with the CREATE Foundation and the Noffs Street University⁵.

Partnering and engagement to improve sector culture

The *Strengthening our Sector* strategy sets a path for building a proactive and positive culture in child protection practice.

As part of the strategy, in June 2016, we brought together executives across Government and non-government services to develop a commitment statement for how services will approach their work and collaborate to support children and families.

The executive leadership forum was followed by the first sector learning forum, where Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott, presented a research model and implementation findings on cross agency collaboration.

Partnering and engagement with government

The QFCC works collaboratively with a number of state and national government agencies to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The QFCC is a member of the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) network. The

⁵ A Logan based youth development project created by the Ted Noffs Foundation which provides various community based services and interactive spaces for people aged 12 – 25

ACCG brings together all national, state and territory children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates. The group was established to promote and protect the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people in Australia. We collectively strive to make sure the best interests of children and young people are considered in public policy and program development across Australia.

Queensland was pleased to host the first ACCG meeting for 2016 on 25 and 26 May. Key issues discussed at the meeting included child safe organisations and youth justice. The ACCG also received a briefing from the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) regarding the *Family Matters - kids safe in culture, not in care* campaign.

Partnering and engagement with academics

The OFCC partners with a number of academic institutions to progress its research agenda.

Measuring child wellbeing has long been an aim of the child protection system. The QFCC, in partnership with the DCCSDS, the DET, Griffith University and the Salvation Army (as the facilitating partner in the Communities for Children project in Logan) has completed preparation for a trial of a computer game measuring child wellbeing in family support services and schools.

The game, Rumble's Quest, has been developed by Griffith University and provides an immediate measure of a child's wellbeing. The QFCC trial is to identify the value and challenges of implementing Rumble's Quest in schools and family support services. Rumble's Quest has the potential to provide a genuine outcome measure of service effectiveness.

The trial will commence in term three of 2016 in the Logan area. Three primary schools and three agencies providing family support services will participate in the trial.

As previously mentioned, the QFCC also partnered with the Central Queensland University on a help seeking, domestic violence and Indigenous families research project and AIFS in relation to the inaugural Research in the round event.

Partnering and engagement with young people

Children, young people and their families have important roles to play as active participants in design, delivery and evaluation of the QFCC's work. The QFCC engagement approach highlights the value we place on hearing the voices of children and their families and the organisations who work with them.

Children and youth engagement strategy

During the year, the QFCC developed the *Children and youth engagement strategy* to guide meaningful engagement with children, young people and their families. The strategy is built on three core principles:

- **Share** through hearing and sharing the successes and challenges of children, families and communities to inform system improvements.
- **Connect** and interact with young people and families to help solve the biggest issues.
- **Engage** with young people and families through meaningful activities across the areas of academic, social, emotional, vocational and cultural wellbeing, giving them a voice and enabling them to actively participate in positive change.

As part of *Children and youth engagement strategy*, we have actively engaged through:

- having a young consultant as a member of our advisory council
- establishing partnerships with CREATE Foundation, Noffs Street University and Next Steps After Care
- expanding our role in the G-force⁶ working group, chaired by CREATE Foundation, through sharing the stories of young people to improve outcomes for other children in out-of-home care in the G-force newsletter
- providing short-term mentoring to a young person from Next Steps After Care to build their social media skills
- regularly meeting with young consultants from the

⁶ G-force focusses on practical activities that support children and young people in care or transitioning from care

CREATE Foundation to understand the issues and challenges affecting young people.

During the year, the QFCC, as a member of the G-force working group, supported the development of two resources made by, and for young people. The first was a story written by a young consultant, Ben, on his educational experience as a young person in care. The story generated interest from the DET and informed how teachers support children with a child protection background. Short audio clips from four young consultants were also developed and are now being used as part of the department's teacher training.

The second resource captured the story of a young consultant's mental health experience as a young person in care. Caitlin suggested improvements to services offering mental health supports for young people in care. Capturing and sharing these stories help to inform and influence decision makers and assist support services to target supports in the areas most needed.

During the year, the QFCC commenced development of a resource development guide to encourage and inform the sector on how to develop engaging and useful resources for children and young people. We undertook broad consultation with young people and workers in developing the resource. Young people from Noffs Street University provided valuable insights on what works well, and why, to inform the guide. It is anticipated that the resource will be available in late 2016.

The QFCC continues to have a strong connection with the Noffs Street University. Young people from the service have been involved in the development of graffiti art for the QFCC's office. The opportunity for young people to work on a project from start to finish and gain real world experience was invaluable.

Graffiti art in the QFCC's office



We are also committed to supporting young people to have a voice on the big issues and influence government policy. In May 2016, the QFCC supported a number of young people from Noffs Street University to attend the child aware conference. The event benefited from their insights and thought provoking questions to the speakers.

Three young people also joined children's commissioners from Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT for an expert panel discussion at the conference. The main focus was to explore inherent power imbalances and the impact it has on the lives of children and young people, including those in care. The discussion highlighted how listening to and respecting the words and ideas of children and young people helps to foster a sense of individual 'agency' and being in control of your own life was key to successfully flourishing into adulthood.

Young people from Noffs Street University have also been consulted on youth justice issues and contributed to the QFCC's project to increase awareness of online child exploitation.

Engagement with schools

Education is a critical part of a child's development. The Principal Commissioner and Commissioner attended several schools as part of their role in advocating on behalf of all Queensland children.

Schools visited included the Acacia Ridge Murri school, Woodridge state school, Eagle Heights state school and St Brendan's Catholic primary school. These visits have informed the Commissioners of the issues affecting students at school.

Partnering and engagement to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Promoting the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service providers is an important part of the QFCC's functions.

Implementation of the strategies outlined in the QFCC Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2015 — 17 is critical to improving the QFCC's cultural capability and the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we are working towards. The RAP provides a commitment to work towards reconciliation together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and building and strengthening existing partnerships

through a framework with the themes of respect, relationships and opportunities.

Our RAP facilitated the development and implementation of our *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy* to:

- enable respectful and meaningful engagement between QFCC staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service providers
- raise awareness of the shared responsibility for keeping children safe and well
- champion the needs of all children, families and communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The strategy is built on three core principles:

- **Prepare** through commitment to the ongoing development of our staff's cultural capability.
- **Connect** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders agencies, communities and young people through establishing and maintaining positive and respectful relationships and across the state.
- **Engage** by forming partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies, continuing involvement with communities and participation in community events.

As part of this strategy the QFCC has actively engaged through a number of activities, some of which are detailed below.

Engaging with remote communities

Establishing ongoing and sustainable strategic partnerships is critical to achieving successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. As part of the QFCC commitment to value the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service providers, staff from the QFCC including the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner visited a number of regional and discrete communities.

Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon met with 15 Torres Strait Regional Shire Councillors and Mayor Fred Gela in Cairns in November 2015. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Principal Commissioner to introduce herself and the breadth

of work being undertaken by the QFCC across the child protection system and family support services area. The invitation to meet was made to the QFCC following the receipt of Yumplatok, Talking Families merchandise earlier in the year. The community advised they appreciated the receipt of the information and were happy to distribute. Given the importance of child protection issues and over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the system, it was important for the QFCC to visit community and put context around our work to secure Torres Strait Islander engagement in the reform process.

Whilst in Cairns, the Principal Commissioner also took the opportunity to meet with Remote Area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Child Care (RAATSIC) Chief Executive Officer Emma Schuh. The aim of this meeting was to hear firsthand some of the issues unique to Far North Queensland in the areas of child protection and domestic violence.

In December 2015, the QFCC contracted QATSICPP together with SNAICC, to deliver pre-procurement partnership information seminars in targeted locations. The seminars were aimed specifically at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations in Mt Isa, Cairns and Mackay where the FaCC and IFS Services were to be established in 2016.

The seminars presented key elements of the partnering process highlighting the unique qualities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and assisted services to maximise benefits from partnering with their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counterparts.

Under the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, we held targeted sector engagements via a series of round tables, attended by a number of community controlled organisations as well as individual consultation with community controlled organisations in Mt Isa, Cairns and Rockhampton.

As input into the *Your Workforce, Your Future* baseline workforce survey component of the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, we also contracted QATSICPP to develop a community controlled organisations workforce profile. The workforce profile project comprised four stages: a literature review and development of quantitative survey tools; in-field testing of survey tools; delivery of surveys and qualitative group discussions (knowledge circles); and data aggregation and final

write-up.

The QFCC is a gold sponsor of *Family Matters: kids safe in culture not in care*, a national campaign to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. This initiative aims to turn the tide on the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from family and community.

In May 2016, the QFCC engaged Price Waterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting to develop proposed models for the establishment of a QFCC regional and remote presence and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Framework which includes the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group.

Both initiatives will focus on valuing the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through increased engagement across the state and placing a cultural lens over the work undertaken by the QFCC to make sure it is relevant to assisting and advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In May 2016, Commissioner Tammy Williams was part of a special delegation to visit Aurukun for a series of community consultations. This was in response to significant unrest which led to the temporary closure of the school campus and evacuation of school staff.

As an outcome from this initial visit, on 28 June 2016, the Commissioner along with representatives from Blue Card Services, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) and the DATSIP took part in a follow-up workshop in Aurukun to explain Blue Card and QCAT process. Learnings from the workshop are anticipated to assist further work to identify local solutions to Blue Card application processes. Alongside other agencies, we will continue to work together to progress this strategy in Aurukun and other communities.

NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week

Staff from the QFCC partnered with QATSICPP and the Healing Foundation to spread the word about strong culture and strong families at the Musgrave Park family fun day in July 2015.

The event provided an opportunity for the QFCC to meet with community and spread the work about the Talking Families campaign and the work of the QFCC. Activities on the day included boomerang

painting, a photo booth for families and friends to capture the fun of the day, and community members being interviewed by QATSICPP staff. It was a great opportunity to promote the QFCC.

QFCC staff also hosted an internal photo competition and morning tea to celebrate National Reconciliation Week 2015. The theme for the photo competition was “what does culture and reconciliation mean to you” and was a strategy of the RAP.

Engagement with future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island leaders

Both the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner embraced a chance to meet with future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders as part of the Indigenous Youth Leadership Parliament. The six day residential program brought together 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, aged 18 – 25 years, from across Queensland to learn from Elders, government, community and business leaders and to participate in a mock parliament to give precipitants a voice to issues currently affecting their communities.



Commissioner Tammy Williams with
Miranda Fisher (Cherbourg)



Indigenous Youth Leadership Parliament

Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon with Alexia Mow from Mornington Island and Bernice Yeatman from Yarrabah



The year ahead

In 2016 — 17, we will:

- establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee and a Youth Advisory Committee
- work with DCCSDS and DATSIP to deliver projects contributing to the Queensland action plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- release of the final *Strengthening our Sector* strategy and first implementation action plan
- progress a number of key cultural change initiatives under the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy including:
 - translating the leadership commitment statement into practical change through local level action planning
 - developing shared principles, language and benchmarks for cultural change
 - identifying opportunities to reward positive change and showcase successful change initiatives
 - developing resources and joint training initiatives to support professional behaviour change
- engage with children, young people, families and the sector to deliver commitments in the engagement strategies, including:
 - undertaking a state-wide listening tour by the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner
 - helping young people to participate in a QFCC Child Protection Week project
 - mentoring young people to work on research projects
 - inviting young people to attend QFCC education sessions involving a number of agencies and topics
 - supporting 'pop up exhibitions' in the community for projects completed by young people
- rolling out a child protection resource portal hosting stories, resources and engagement projects.

Educate

Objective 3

Educate Queensland families and communities on their role in keeping children and young people safe in the home and inform them about the resources available to assist them.

Strategies

Promote public education to encourage help-seeking behaviours among at-risk families and a shared responsibility for protecting children and young people.

Enhance understanding of the child protection and family support systems in Queensland.

Improve access to and awareness of services that meet the needs of Queensland families.

I ORAIT PO GIBI AN

Si wis wei yu ken gibi an po nadha pipoe! wen yu luk dha presa blo perenting i go get tu dhempla. Wan taim yan lo dhempla i ken meke prapa big diproens.

PAINDAUT MO

WANEM TOK LO PAMLE OL ABOUT?

Yumi olgedha sabe dhis kain, laip i prapa bizi, an presa lo ol pamle i kam ap. Stil plenty yumipa i no kamtaboel lo askem po elp wen yumi wande elp, o kasa no sabe wea po go. Bat yu no bai yoselp az yu mait think.

I orait po tok about an yu pil. O po aske ol pamle o ol pren po elp yu wanem yu wandem. Tok lo dhempla ken meke diproens.

Dhis wan i niu samthing blo Queensland Family and Child Commission.

Talking Families website in Torres Strait Yumplatok language

Community education

The QFCC has a key responsibility to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them.

Talking Families community education campaign

The Talking Families community education program is a key mechanism for the QFCC to deliver on the QCPCOI recommendation to promote and advocate to families their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children. Driven primarily through social marketing, the program aims to:

- educate the public about the child protection system
- promote and advocate the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people
- encourage uptake of early intervention support services.

The initial Talking Families campaign focussed on help-seeking, help-offering and help-accepting behaviours among parents and the broader community.

In 2015, the QFCC commissioned market research of more than 4,000 Queensland adults (including over 1,000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander adults) to better understand what drives help-seeking, help-offering and help-accepting behaviours. The research found:

- parents are stressed, worried and in need of help and support
- Queenslanders are more comfortable offering and accepting help than asking for it
- only 11% of parents surveyed have used a parenting program, however 93% of those who did said it made a positive difference.

These results will be used to support and inform the development of the next phase of the Talking Families campaign, which is expected to be released towards the end of 2016.

Talking Families online presence

The QFCC Talking Families website (<https://www.talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au>) recognises that although life is getting busier and pressure on families is growing, many Queenslanders are uncomfortable with asking for help when they need it, or just don't know where to turn. It offers real stories by real parents, offers advice on where to start the conversation, who and how to ask for help and where else help is available. In 2015 – 16, more than 6,000 new visitors accessed the Talking Families website.

Significant sustained effort is required to help build community capacity to support families under pressure.

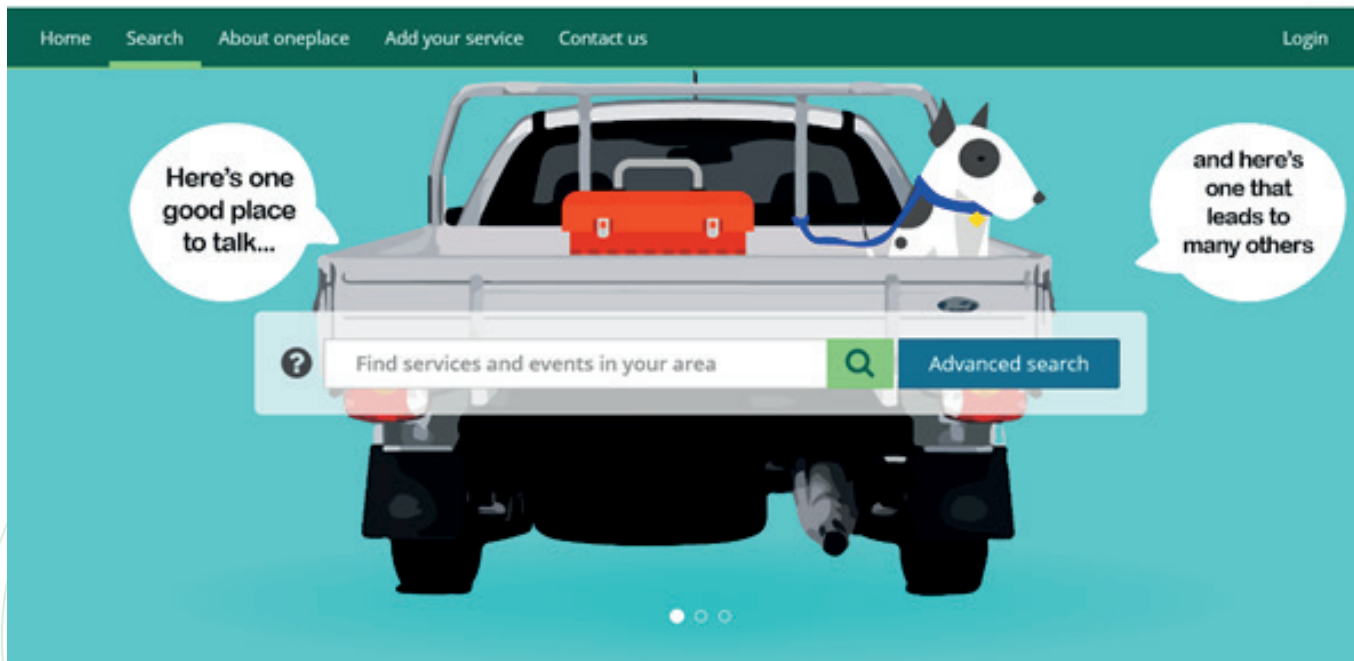
The QFCC Talking Families facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/talkingfamiliesqld>) promotes and encourages discussions about parenting and the pressures faced by families. It was created to help start conversations. The page has approximately 16,000 followers and reaches 2.3 million people.

oneplace Community Services Directory

The QFCC released the oneplace Community Services Directory (oneplace) on 16 November 2015. oneplace is an online state-wide information source of community support services to assist children, families and professionals find the right service. With more than 48,000 records listed, nearly 29,000 new and 11,000 returning visitors, oneplace is the go-to resource to find local community support services.

The QFCC worked closely with a number of stakeholders including young people and families in designing the key features, look and name for oneplace. The QFCC partnered with the DCCSDS to contract Infoxchange, a not-for-profit social enterprise, to deliver the directory. Additional functionality was added to oneplace in February 2016 to record specific support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

In April 2016, a promotional campaign for oneplace was launched which comprised direct e-mail marketing and a state-wide radio and digital advertising campaign. Early data indicated a significant increase in the use of oneplace which was directly attributed to the campaign.



oneplace is here to...

oneplace Community Services Directory is an easily accessible directory of community services to help Queensland families to get to the right service at the right time.

From parenting groups and classes to domestic and family violence support services, **oneplace** is the go-to resource for children, families, community members and professionals looking to find local support in Queensland.

If you provide a community support service, you can easily [get listed in oneplace!](#)

Announcements

oneplace

oneplace Community Services Directory was launched on 16 November 2015. There are more than 48,000 records listed in **oneplace** and this is growing every day!

[Read more](#)

Strengthening our sector

The Strengthening our sector strategy and first action plan are now available.

QFCC website redesign

In early 2016, the QFCC commenced a project to enhance its website and content management system. The website will be launched in July 2016 and will enhance our ability to:

- support children, families, the community and professionals to access resources and services
- showcase and highlight key bodies of work
- increase engagement and interactivity
- highlight contemporary research and translate it into practical guides
- effectively communicate the role, purpose and key activities of the QFCC
- manage and maintain content.

Resources and information to support children and families

The QFCC partnered with the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service to develop an information kit on child protection for parents. Available on both organisation's websites, the information kit provides information about rights, investigation and case management processes, what to expect during court, how to make a complaint, and where to find support.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will:

- release new functionality to further enhance oneplace
- progress the next phase of Talking Families campaign
- make further enhancements to the website including a searchable resources library for professionals and families and a collaboration area
- enhance the presence of the QFCC on social media
- continue to develop resources to assist children and families to understand the child protection system and courts processes
- progress an online child exploitation awareness project
- promote practical child death and injury prevention advice and messaging.



Governance

Objective 4

Building our capability.

Strategies

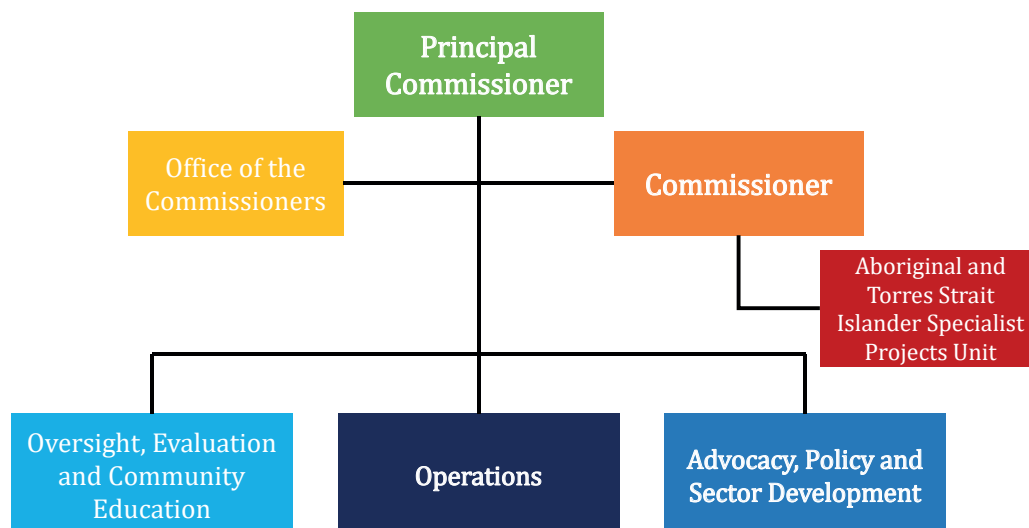
Strengthen organisational capability.

Optimise internal processes and tools.

Our organisation

On 12 October 2015, Cheryl Vardon commenced as Principal Commissioner, replacing Steve Armitage who had been interim Principal Commissioner since the QFCC's inception on 1 July 2014. Tammy Williams was appointed as the inaugural Commissioner and commenced on 18 April 2016.

QFCC Organisation Structure at 30 June 2016

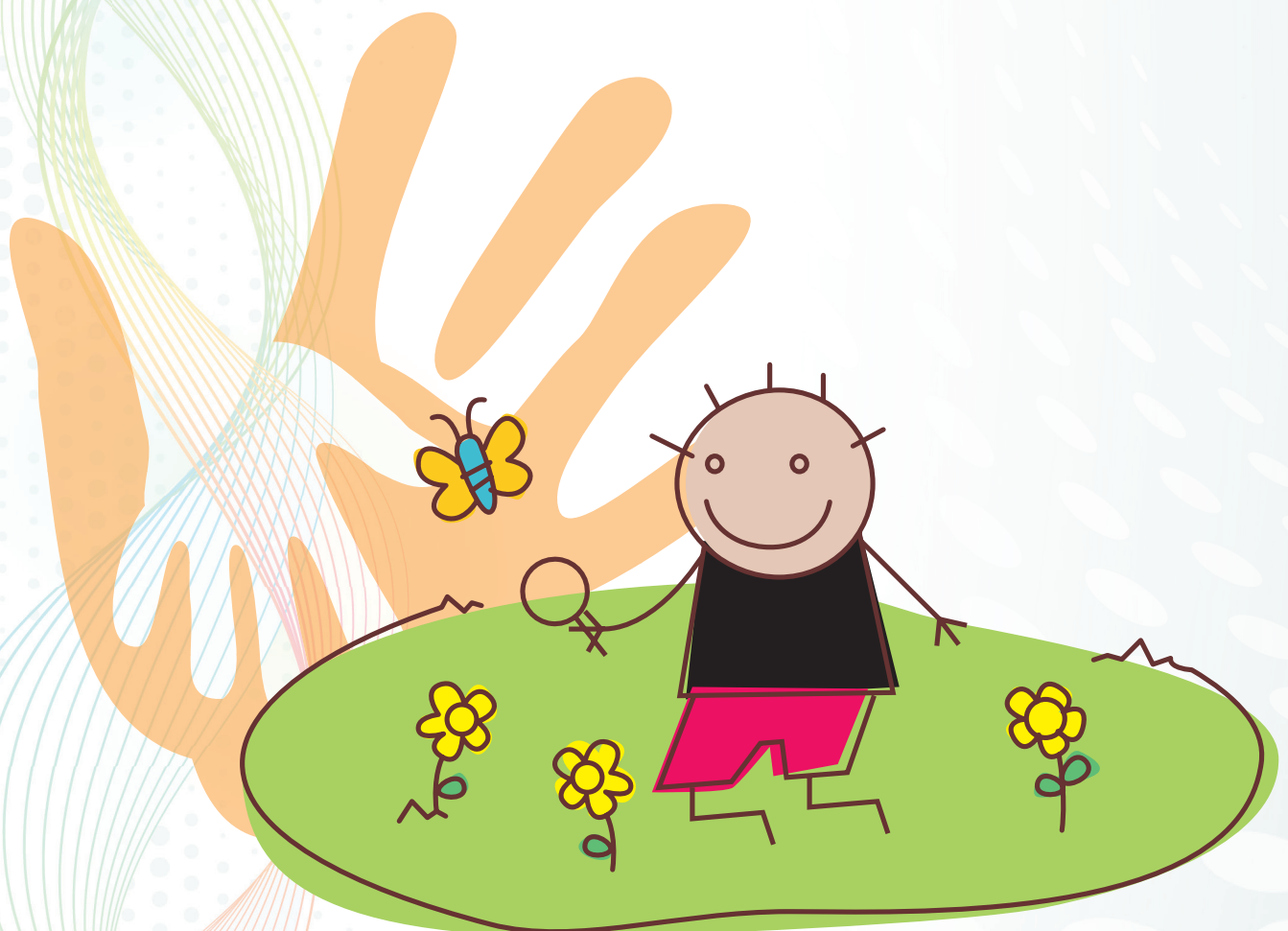


Our executive

There were five members of the Executive Group at 30 June 2016:

| | |
|---|---|
| Cheryl Vardon Principal Commissioner | Cheryl has had a distinguished career as an educator and is recognised for her leadership in the protection of vulnerable children and young people and for Indigenous education. She is an experienced leader of policy implementation and system reform. Cheryl has held a number of senior positions at the Chief Executive and Director-General levels. She has held many board and university council positions and statutory roles on tribunals and commissions including the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Commonwealth Safety and Rehabilitation Compensation Commission. Cheryl is a member of the Australian Institute of Management and a Fellow of the Australian College of Education. Cheryl is the Chief Executive and head of the QFCC. |
| Tammy Williams Commissioner | Tammy is a Murri woman and a Barrister-at-Law admitted to the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia. She has been a member of the National Human Rights Consultative Committee, which undertook the most extensive consultation on human rights in Australia's history. Tammy was a member of the federal government's National Indigenous Council which provided advice on Indigenous issues to the Minister and the Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs. Tammy leads the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specialist Projects Unit. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Max Wise</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner</p> | <p>Max has over 30 years Queensland public sector experience across agencies responsible for helping members of the community subject to consumer fraud and in agencies responsible for overseeing government service delivery to vulnerable members of the community, including young workers, health service clients and children in the child protection and youth justice systems.</p> <p>Max leads the Operations area and chairs the Major Projects Board.</p> |
| <p>Nicole Blackett</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner</p> | <p>Nicole has had a wide and varied public sector career, specialising in the management of large and complex programs of work. Nicole's previous role was the Director of Program Management in Social Policy within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In this role she was responsible for establishing and overseeing the whole-of-program management arrangements to implement the recommendations from the QCPCOI.</p> <p>Nicole leads the Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education area.</p> |
| <p>Andrea Lauchs</p> <p>Assistant Commissioner</p> | <p>Andrea has over 20 years' experience in the human services industry holding positions in both the government and non-government sector in child protection and youth justice. She has worked in multiple jurisdictions including interstate and international.</p> <p>Andrea leads the Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development area.</p> |



Our work groups

In early 2016, the QFCC undertook a comprehensive review of our organisational structure to better advance our legislative obligations and be more responsive to government priorities. New positions were created or redirected from other areas. Funding for these changes was achieved through budget reprioritisation.

Oversight, evaluation and community education (OECE):

- provides systemic oversight of the Queensland child protection system to determine whether services are available to appropriately support family functioning and children and young people in out-of-home care, with a view of achieving the best possible outcomes in all cases and building public confidence
- assesses, at a systemic level, the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of policies and practices relevant to the child protection system and the performance of relevant agencies in delivering services, and assist relevant agencies to do same
- promotes and advocates the responsibility of families and communities for keeping children safe and well
- utilises applied research techniques, in collaboration with our stakeholders, to investigate new and existing problems and develop solutions and new approaches to inform policies, practices and resource development to improve outcomes for children and families in Queensland, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

OECE predominantly contributes to the QFCC's strategic objectives 1 and 3.

Advocacy, policy and sector development (APSD):

- identifies and builds the evidence base about issues for advocacy by engaging with children, young people, families and communities with a specific lens on the most vulnerable
- uses evidence and networks to influence and effect change to legislation, policy and practice design to

improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families

- leads and supports the sector to build and develop the capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support sector system.

APSD predominantly contributes to the QFCC's strategic objective 2.

Operations:

- provides essential corporate support services across the QFCC in the areas of human resources, information and communication technology, records management, finance, facilities, legal and procurement
- leads strategic and operational planning, agency performance reporting and governance and risk management
- maintains a register of all child deaths in Queensland and uses data from the register to identify prevention priorities
- shares information with key stakeholders.

Operations predominantly contributes to the QFCC's strategic objective 4.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specialist Projects Unit:

- supports our commitment to help address the issue of over-representation of Indigenous children in the child protection system. This team was established in June 2016 from existing QFCC staff. The team provide specialist expertise and knowledge on key projects across the QFCC relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

The team is working across a number of priorities including:

- implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy
- coordination of all QFCC positioning papers, and monitoring and review of the Action Plan for Vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Families

- oversight of the (soon to be released) QFCC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory framework and regional and remote location model project
- leading implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan and cultural capability framework
- community engagement projects designed to value the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specialist Projects Unit contributes to all QFCC strategic objectives.

Office of the Commissioners (OotC):

- supports the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner, performs secretariat functions for a number of key governance groups and leads high priority projects
- leads corporate communications for the QFCC including strategic communications and media for the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner.

OotC contributes to all QFCC strategic objectives.

Our performance

The QFCC had one service area objective in the state budget 2015 — 16 service delivery statements to

promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people⁷. Our service area description expands on this objective by recognising the role of families and communities in protecting and caring for children and young people. A summary of the activity and process outlined in the service area description is provided below.

- Providing public education to help families and communities understand their role and responsibilities in protecting and caring for children and young people.
- Supporting the development of strong partnerships between government and non-government service providers and academic experts aimed to improve the delivery of the child protection services in Queensland.
- Working with non-government service providers to help build knowledge, skills and capabilities of the organisations and workforces in Queensland's child protection system, particularly those with limited resources.
- Providing expert views and advice on current research and child protection best practice.
- Monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the performance of the Queensland child protection system in line with the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 — 2020.

In 2015 — 16 the QFCC had one service standard measure which was discontinued.

| QFCC Service standard | Notes | 2015 — 16 Target/est. | 2015 — 16 Est. actual | 2015 — 16 Actual |
|---|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Public awareness of the Talking Families advertising campaign | 1 | 60% | 27% | n/a |
| Notes: | | | | |
| 1. This service standard was discontinued as the specific Talking Families advertising campaign was not undertaken in 2015 — 16 and will not be conducted in future years. Funding was reallocated to other public education campaigns. The 2015 — 16 Estimated Actual and Actual are based on residual awareness from the 2014 — 15 Talking Families campaign. | | | | |

A new service standard has been introduced for 2016 — 17 to measure the percentage increase in the use of oneplace Community Services Directory.

⁷ The QFCC's service area objective was redefined for the 2016 — 17 SDS

Our values

The QFCC has embraced the five public service values (customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous and empower people). The values guide staff behaviour and the way we do business. In late 2015 — 16, work commenced to further define what these values mean to us as an organisation. With finalisation expected in early, 2016 — 17, our specific value statements will underpin all of the work we undertake and be used to recognise and reward staff who epitomise our values.

Governance framework

The QFCC's objectives, strategies, performance indicators and strategic risks as outlined in the strategic plan remained unchanged from the previous financial year. During the year, following the organisational realignment, a comprehensive review of the strategic plan was undertaken. This included two workshops involving staff to gather grass roots input, including identifying environmental factors influencing our agenda, as well as undertaking an exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relevant to the QFCC. A separate workshop for our leadership group (managers and senior management) was held. As a result, a revised strategic plan will come into effect from 1 July 2016.

A risk management framework was developed during the year, with a comprehensive enterprise risk management register also established. Regular leadership group meetings were scheduled to assist with the ongoing management of risks.

Program level operational plans were reviewed and revised during the 2015 — 16 financial year. Business plans describe the objectives, priorities, tactics and risks for each program area and are closely aligned to the QFCC strategic plan.

A comprehensive monthly performance dashboard was also implemented in 2015 — 16. In addition to showing financial, staff and system performance over time, the dashboard provides the QFCC leadership with timely information on the achievement of outcomes and a snapshot of key upcoming milestones and events.

Internal governance

Being a relatively small agency, a number of staff committees have been established to help drive effective management and accountability in pursuit of strategic outcomes.

The Executive Group meets fortnightly and comprises the QFCC Executive along with the Executive Officer and Executive Coordinator. The Executive Group oversees the QFCC's performance relative to our strategic plan, financial performance and high level risk. Stakeholder engagement, partnership and development opportunities are also discussed.

The Leadership Group comprises the QFCC Executive and Managers and meets monthly. Meetings enable members to discuss strategic issues, provide updates on the progress of key QFCC initiatives, identify opportunities to leverage off other projects or upcoming stakeholder interactions and seek peer input into potential issues. Meetings are also used to highlight current topics of interest in relation to broader reform or sector activities.

The Major Projects Board was established to provide governance over business performance and accountability for the QFCC's major projects and initiatives. Membership comprises, Assistant Commissioners, Executive Officer, OotC (Principal Commissioner's representative), Executive Coordinator, OotC (Commissioner's representative) and the Senior Advisor, Legal and Governance (Secretariat).

The Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) was established to facilitate open engagement on a broad range of issues across the staff body and between executive management and staff. The SCC's membership is voluntary and open to all staff with its mandate including workplace culture and morale, organisation-wide policies, strategies and initiatives which support the achievement of the QFCC's goals and objectives.

The Finance and Administration Committee has been established to enable QFCC leaders to engage with QFCC performance and develop as a cohesive management group resulting in improved governance and accountability and reducing risk exposure. Membership comprises, Assistant Commissioners and three managers from the operations group. The Committee provides high-level advice and recommendations to the QFCC

Executive Group on matters relating to budget allocation and financial performance, information management, communication and technology, systems performance, human resources and general governance considerations.

Audit

Given the size of the QFCC, and in line with the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* (FPMS) a decision was made during the year that the establishment of a formal audit committee was not practical. Other governance bodies within the QFCC, are being used to provide advice to the Executive Group on whether the agency is being managed efficiently, effectively and economically.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we will implement a revised program of work with oversight by the newly established Major Projects Board.

External scrutiny

The Corporate Administration Agency provides a range of services to the QFCC under a Service Level Agreement, including internal audit services. In July 2015 a report on a review conducted in 2014 — 15 of our compliance with FPMS and our Act was received.

Financial results

The report provided recommendation for two low risk issues (operational plan development and development of a Risk Management Framework and risk register to monitor and manage strategic and operational risks) and one suggested business improvement (to update section 11.2 of the Financial Management Practice Manual as part of the next review cycle). All three recommendations were implemented during the year.

Financial management

The QFCC is a Statutory Body under the Family and Child Commission Act 2014 and for the purposes of the:

- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982.*

Financial summary 2015-16

The financial summary provides an overview of the QFCC's financial performance for 2015 — 16 and a comparison with 2014 — 15. A detailed view of our financial performance for 2015 — 16 is provided in the financial statements included in this Annual Report.

The QFCC is committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility whilst meeting its objectives.

| Queensland Family and Child Commission | Actual 2014 — 15 \$'000 | Actual 2015 — 16 \$'000 |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Income from Continuing Operations | | |
| Grants and other contributions | 9,523 | 11,569 |
| Other revenue | 54 | 66 |
| Total Income from Continuing Operations | 9,577 | 11,635 |
| Expenses from Continuing Operations | | |
| Employee expenses | 4,535 | 6,006 |
| Supplies and services | 4,633 | 4,863 |
| Grants and subsidies | 224 | 91 |
| Depreciation and amortization | 224 | 253 |
| Other expenses | 20 | 198 |
| Total Expenses from Continuing Operations | 9,636 | 11,411 |
| Operating Result from Continuing Operations | (59) | 224 |

Financial position

| Queensland Family and Child Commission | Actual 2014 – 15 \$'000 | Actual 2015 – 16 \$'000 |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash and cash equivalent | 407 | 1,314 |
| Receivables | 127 | 187 |
| Other current assets | 5 | 22 |
| Total Current assets | 539 | 1,523 |
| Non-current Assets | | |
| Intangible assets | 1,204 | 979 |
| Plant and equipment | 247 | 365 |
| Total Non-Current Assets | 1,451 | 1,344 |
| Total Assets | 1,990 | 2,867 |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Payables | 279 | 605 |
| Accrued employee benefits | 143 | 281 |
| Other current liabilities | - | 189 |
| Total Liabilities | 422 | 1,075 |
| Net Assets | 1,568 | 1,792 |
| Equity | | |
| Contributed equity | 1,627 | 165 |
| Accumulated deficit | (59) | 1,627 |
| Total Equity | 1,568 | 1,792 |

In 2015 – 16 the QFCC received total revenue of \$11.6M in comparison to \$9.6M in 2014 – 15. The increase in revenue can primarily be attributed to deferred funding to 2015 – 16, enterprise bargaining increases and the inception of funding for two Supporting Families Changing Futures reform programs. Total expenses increased in line with the increase in total revenue.

The QFCC maintained a sound net asset position throughout the 2015 – 16 financial year.

Further information

As required by annual reporting guidelines, information relating to consultancies engaged by the QFCC in 2015 – 16 is published online through the Government Open Data website - <https://data.qld.gov.au>.

Our workforce

The QFCC's workforce is employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*, with the exception of the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner who are employed under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2016 the QFCC employed 57.95 full-time equivalent staff, with total employee expenses for the year of \$6.006M. As at 30 June 2016 the QFCC had the following staff profile:

- 80.6% female and 19.4% male
- 12.9% from a non-English speaking background or whose parents originated from a non-English speaking background
- 9.7% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 1.6% identified as having a disability.

Strategic Workforce Plan

During the year the Strategic Workforce Plan 2016 — 2020 (the Plan) was developed in collaboration with the staff consultative committee. The Plan identified innovative workforce initiatives to strengthen our workforce and organisational capability and included:

- developing relevant, contemporary and tailored capability development opportunities
- workforce practices to support organisational efficiency and effectiveness
- implementing a range of initiatives to support health and well-being
- building our information and communication technology (ICT) capability and capacity to support our business needs
- information sharing and working collaboratively across the QFCC.

The Plan also focused on initiatives to address the findings of the 2015 Working for Queensland

Employee Opinion Survey.

Attraction and retention

The QFCC has implemented a number of initiatives to attract and retain an inclusive, diverse and capable workforce including:

- a re-alignment and establishment of a new organisational structure to better enable progression of fulfilling of our legislative obligations
- updating role descriptions which align with Public Service Commission recommendations to deliver more contemporary and effective recruitment and selection practices to attract a diverse and capable workforce
- implementation of simplified corporate standards, checklists and forms to support staff understanding of employment and support arrangements, and
- participation of Human Resource staff on all selection panels to provide expertise, support and consistency to the recruitment and selection processes
- establishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Specialist Project Unit.

Separation rate

During 2015 — 16, our permanent separation rate was 2.78% which was an improvement on the previous year. One employee (the interim Principal Commissioner) received a redundancy package at a cost of \$344,000.

Performance management framework

A number of initiatives to support employee performance management, induction, staff development, talent management and recognition were implemented, including:

- informal and personalised staff induction
- a simplified performance management and development framework
- enhancing leadership capability to drive higher levels of organisational performance through:

- continued roll out of the leadership capability assessment and development program
- QFCC leadership community of practice sessions
- leadership mentoring and coaching
- promotion of leadership training
- development and networking opportunities
- career coaching sessions with staff
- coaching and mentoring staff in ‘agile’ project management to support a culture of proactive and meaningful information sharing
- ongoing work to develop a cultural capability framework to build the capability of staff to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- introduction of the Commissioners’ communique to regularly keep staff and stakeholders informed on the work of the Commissioners and the QFCC as well as events and news
- implementation of the forum for staff to showcase their work and provide updates on their projects and work progress.

Supporting mental and physical well-being

This year we supported the mental and physical well-being of staff offering a range of health and well-being initiatives including:

- a flu vaccination program
- psychometric testing built into recruitment and selection processes for specific QFCC roles
- formal and informal professional support provided to staff who deal with sensitive child related information to provide resilience and peer support
- implementing a new policy and online training offered to staff to support employees affected by domestic and family violence
- ongoing access and promotion of an Employee Assistance Program providing professional,

confidential counselling, coaching and support to employees and their immediate family for a broad range of work and life issues

- a range of seminars offered to staff to build financial security
- a range of physical and mental initiatives offered to staff to support employee health and well-being and support team building.

Flexible working arrangements

The QFCC is committed to providing flexible employment options to assist staff to effectively balance work, family and life responsibilities. A number of opportunities exist for staff including, but not limited to, flexibility of working hours, utilisation of part-time and job-share arrangements, telecommuting and a range of leave options. Leave options can be accessed to support personal responsibilities, such as leave to care for a family member, parental leave and special leave for an emergency or on compassionate grounds.

Flexible working arrangements are promoted through recruitment and selection processes, our leadership development program, our SCC, employee induction and policies. Flexible work practices are carefully considered and approved by the delegate taking into consideration the personal circumstances and needs of an employee and the impact on service delivery and operational needs.

Working for Queensland employee opinion survey 2016

The overall findings of the 2016 working for Queensland employee opinion survey were very positive in comparison with the previous year and the whole of government results. Our data as benchmarked against the Queensland public sector placed us in the first quintile in 15 of 17 assessed factors.

Increased staff satisfaction demonstrated across most metrics is attributed to initiatives developed and implemented under the guidance of the SCC over the past year. The survey items with the most positive change from the previous year were:

Working for Queensland employee opinion survey results

| Survey question | % change from 2015 |
|--|--------------------|
| I get the information I need to do my job well | +38% |
| In my organisation, the leadership is of higher quality | +32% |
| My job gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment | +27% |
| My organisation is well managed | +25% |
| I am satisfied with the opportunities available for career development | +25% |

While the overall results are pleasing, one area requiring future attention is work/life balance. The QFCC SCC has commenced working on initiatives to address this feedback.

Code of conduct/ethics

QFCC staff are covered by the single code of conduct established for the Queensland Public Service. Code of conduct ethics principles and their associated set of values form part of induction training for new staff and mandatory code of conduct training/ refresher training is scheduled annually for all staff. The QFCC performance and development framework and processes also address code of conduct expectations.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17 we plan to:

- initiate an innovation lab approach to provide an opportunity for staff to share continuous improvement ideas
- provide a dedicated collaboration space to encourage innovation between staff and stakeholders
- provide a dedicated parents room
- implement a cultural capability framework.

Information management

Information and communications technology

In 2015 — 16, an information and communications technology roadmap was developed to transition the QFCC's ICT environment from a service oriented focus to one that is both innovative and agile. Implementation of the roadmap will progressively transform our ICT to become a strategic asset, better able to meet the evolving needs of our people and better equipped to comply with regulatory responsibilities.

As part of the roadmap implementation, end of life desktop computers are progressively being replaced with Microsoft Surface Pro 4 devices to enhance staff mobility and flexibility. To complement the rollout, a Wireless network was also installed.

A voluntary 'bring your own device' (BYOD) policy was introduced for eligible staff, leveraging off a similar approach within the DPC. This mitigated an issue raised by staff regarding having to carry two devices and has resulted in a minor cost saving.

To maintain appropriate governance, ICT is a standing agenda item at the QFCC's monthly Finance and Administration Committee meeting.

Records management

The QFCC operates under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*, *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records*. We develop and maintain full and accurate records of our activities and operate within the standards and guidelines issued by the Queensland State Archivist. The QFCC uses the Hewlett-Packard Records Management (HPRM) application to meet our record keeping obligations.

During 2015 — 16, additional information to assist HPRM users was developed, including revising training material and an induction pack for new employees. All staff commencing work at the QFCC undergo training in HPRM by a records management specialist before being granted access to the system. In addition, minor changes were made to the business classification scheme to accommodate changes associated with the review of our organisational structure.

During the year, a post implementation review (PIR) of HPRM, implemented the previous year was undertaken. The PIR found HPRM had proven to be simple to use, was secure, with audit trails of all actions that happen to a document captured, had security levels configured in line with business needs and information classifications and confirmed the classification structure met record keeping standards. A number of actions to improve the user experience and further strengthen record keeping obligations were also identified. The PIR also confirmed an unmet warranty issue was still outstanding and action was taken to address the issue with our service provider.

Our retention and disposal schedule was also reviewed during the year to enable compliance to Information Standard 31.

The year ahead

In 2016 — 17, the phased rollout of Surface Pro 4 devices will be completed.



Appendix A – Glossary of terms

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| ACCG | Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians |
| AIFS | Australian Institute of Family Studies |
| APSD | Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development |
| COP | Community of Practice |
| DATSIP | Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships |
| DCCSDS | Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services |
| DET | Department of Department of Education and Training |
| DPC | Department of the Premier and Cabinet |
| ECEC | Early Childhood Education and Care |
| FaCC | Family and Child Connect |
| FCCA | Family and Child Commission Act 2014 |
| FCQ | Foster Care Queensland |
| FPMS | Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 |
| HPRM | Hewlett-Packard Records Management |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IFS | Intensive Family Support Services |
| OECE | Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education |
| OPG | Office of the Public Guardian |
| OOHC | Out-of-Home Care |
| OotC | Office of the Commissioners |
| PIR | Post Implementation Review |
| QATSICPP | Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak |
| QCPCOI | Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry |
| QCAT | Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal |
| QCOSS | Queensland Council of Social Services |
| QFCC | Queensland Family and Child Commission |
| QHealth | Queensland Health |
| QPS | Queensland Police Service |
| QUT | Queensland University of Technology |
| RAP | Reconciliation Action Plan |
| RLG | Reform Leaders Group |
| ROGS | Report on Government Services |
| SCC | Staff Consultative Committee |
| SNAICC | Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care |

Appendix B – Annual report compliance checklist

| Summary of requirement | | Basis for requirement | Annual Report reference |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| Letter of compliance | A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s | ARRs – section 8 | Letter to Premier, p.i |
| Accessibility | Table of contents | ARRs – section 10.1 | p. v |
| | Glossary | ARRs – section 10.1 | p. 51 |
| | Public availability | ARRs – section 10.2 | Page after cover |
| | Interpreter service statement | <i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 10.3 | N/A |
| | Copyright notice | <i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 10.4 | Page after cover |
| | Information Licensing | <i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 10.5 | Page after cover |
| | | | |
| General information | Introductory Information | ARRs – section 11.1 | p. 1 – 9 |
| | Agency role and main functions | ARRs – section 11.2 | p. 5 |
| | Operating environment | ARRs – section 11.3 | p. 6 |
| Non-financial performance | Government's objectives for the community | ARRs – section 12.1 | p. 5 |
| | Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives | ARRs – section 12.2 | p. 8, 9 |
| | Agency objectives and performance indicators | ARRs – section 12.3 | p. 6 |
| | Agency service areas and service standards | ARRs – section 12.4 | p. 42 |
| Financial performance | Summary of financial performance | ARRs – section 13.1 | p. 44 – 45 |
| Governance – management and structure | Organisational structure | ARRs – section 14.1 | p. 39 |
| | Executive management | ARRs – section 14.2 | p. 39, 40 |
| | Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) | ARRs – section 14.3 | N/A |
| | <i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> | <i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 14.4 | p. 48 |
| | Queensland public service values | ARRs – section 14.5 | p. 43 |
| | | | |

| Summary of requirement | | Basis for requirement | Annual Report reference |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Governance – risk management and accountability | Risk management | ARRs – section 15.1 | p. 43 |
| | Audit committee | ARRs – section 15.2 | p. 44 |
| | Internal audit | ARRs – section 15.3 | p. 44 |
| | External scrutiny | ARRs – section 15.4 | p. 44 |
| | Information systems and recordkeeping | ARRs – section 15.5 | p. 48, 49 |
| Governance – human resources | Workforce planning and performance | ARRs – section 16.1 | p. 46, 47 |
| | Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment | <i>Directive No.11/12 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 16.2 | p. 46 |
| Open Data | Consultancies | ARRs – section 17 | p. 45 |
| | | ARRs – section 34.1 | |
| | Overseas travel | ARRs – section 17 | Nil |
| | | ARRs – section 34.2 | |
| Financial statements | Certification of financial statements | ARRs – section 17 | N/A |
| | | ARRs – section 34.3 | |
| | | ARRs – section 34.3 | |
| | Independent Auditor's Report | ARRs – section 34.3 | |
| Child protection system performance reporting | Certification of financial statements | FAA – section 62 | p. 91 |
| | | FPMS – sections 42, 43 and 50 | |
| | | ARRs – section 18.1 | |
| | Independent Auditor's Report | FAA – section 62 | p. 92, 93 |
| | | FPMS – section 50 | |
| Child protection system performance reporting | Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals | FAA – section 62 | p. 91 |
| | Queensland's performance over time in relation to other jurisdictions | FPMS – sections 42, 43 and 50 | |
| | Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system | ARRs – section 18.1 | |
| Child protection system performance reporting | Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals | FCCA – section 40(1)(a) (i) | p. 11, 12 Appendix D from p. 95 |
| | Queensland's performance over time in relation to other jurisdictions | FCCA – section 40(1)(a) (ii) | p. 11, 12 Appendix D from p. 95 |
| | Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system | FCCA – section 40(1)(a) (iii) | p. 11, 12 Appendix D from p. 95 |

FAA – Financial Accountability Act 2009

FPMS – Financial and Performance Management Standards 2009

ARRs – Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies

FCCA – Family and Child Commission Act 2014 (section 40)

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2016

Queensland Family and Child Commission ***Financial Statements 2015-16***

| <u>Contents</u> | <u>Page No</u> |
|---|-----------------------|
| Statement of Comprehensive Income | 3 |
| Statement of Financial Position | 4 |
| Statement of Changes in Equity | 5 |
| Statement of Cash Flows | 6-7 |
| Notes To and Forming Part of the Financial Statements | 8-37 |
| Management Certificate | 38 |
| Independent Audit Report | 39-40 |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the year ended 30 June 2016

| | Notes | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|--|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Income from Continuing Operations | | | |
| Revenue | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | 3. | 11,569 | 9,523 |
| Other revenue | | 66 | 54 |
| Total Income from Continuing Operations | | 11,635 | 9,577 |
| Expenses from Continuing Operations | | | |
| Employee expenses | 4. | 6,006 | 4,535 |
| Supplies and services | 5. | 4,863 | 4,633 |
| Grants and subsidies | | 91 | 224 |
| Depreciation and amortisation | | 253 | 224 |
| Other expenses | 6. | 198 | 20 |
| Total Expenses from Continuing Operations | | 11,411 | 9,636 |
| Operating Result from Continuing Operations | | 224 | (59) |
| Total Comprehensive Income | | 224 | (59) |

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2016

| | Notes | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|----------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Current Assets | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7. | 1,314 | 407 |
| Receivables | 8. | 187 | 127 |
| Prepayments | | 22 | 5 |
| Total Current Assets | | 1,523 | 539 |
| Non Current Assets | | | |
| Plant and equipment | 9. | 365 | 247 |
| Intangible assets | 10. | 979 | 1,204 |
| Total Non Current Assets | | 1,344 | 1,451 |
| Total Assets | | 2,867 | 1,990 |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Payables | 11. | 605 | 279 |
| Accrued employee benefits | 12. | 281 | 143 |
| Other current liabilities | 13. | 189 | - |
| Total Current Liabilities | | 1,075 | 422 |
| Total Liabilities | | 1,075 | 422 |
| Net Assets | | 1,792 | 1,568 |
| Equity | | | |
| Accumulated surplus | | 165 | (59) |
| Contributed equity | | 1,627 | 1,627 |
| Total Equity | | 1,792 | 1,568 |

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

for the year ended 30 June 2016

| | Accumulated Surplus \$'000 | Contributed Equity \$'000 | TOTAL \$'000 |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Balance as at 1 July 2014 | | | - |
| Operating Result from Continuing Operations | (59) | | (59) |
| Transactions with Owners as Owners: | | | - |
| • Equity injections | - | 206 | 206 |
| • Equity withdrawals | - | - | - |
| • Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian transfer | - | 1,421 | 1,421 |
| Balance as at 30 June 2015 | (59) | 1,627 | 1,568 |
| Balance as at 1 July 2015 | (59) | 1,627 | 1,568 |
| Operating Result from Continuing Operations | 224 | - | 224 |
| • Equity injections | - | - | - |
| • Equity withdrawals | - | - | - |
| • Net assets transferred via MoG changes | - | - | - |
| Balance as at 30 June 2016 | 165 | 1,627 | 1,792 |

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 30 June 2016

| | Notes | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|--|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Cash flows from operating activities | | | |
| <i>Inflows:</i> | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | | 11,774 | 9,584 |
| GST input tax credits from ATO | | 440 | 471 |
| GST collected from customers | | 12 | 12 |
| Interest receipts | | 74 | 51 |
| <i>Outflows:</i> | | | |
| Employee expenses | | (5,857) | (4,892) |
| Supplies and services | | (4,591) | (5,181) |
| GST paid to suppliers | | (499) | (524) |
| GST remitted to ATO | | (12) | (2) |
| Grants and subsidies | | (91) | (224) |
| Other | | (198) | (20) |
| Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities | | 1,052 | (725) |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | | |
| <i>Outflows:</i> | | | |
| Payments for intangibles | | - | (432) |
| Payment for work in progress | | (145) | - |
| Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities | | (145) | (432) |
| Cash flows from financing activities | | | |
| <i>Inflows:</i> | | | |
| Equity Injections | | - | 206 |
| Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities | | - | 206 |
| Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents | | 907 | (951) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year | | 407 | - |
| Cash transferred on restructure | | | 1,358 |
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year | 7. | 1,314 | 407 |

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 30 June 2016

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

CF-1. Reconciliation of Operating Result to Net Cash provided by Operating Activities

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Operating surplus | 224 | (59) |
| Depreciation expense | 253 | 224 |
| Payment of net liabilities transferred from the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian | - | (1,180) |
| <i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i> | | |
| (Increase)/decrease in receivables | (1) | (84) |
| (Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable | (49) | (53) |
| (Increase)/decrease in prepayments | (17) | (5) |
| Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable | 326 | 279 |
| Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits | 138 | 143 |
| Increase/(decrease) in GST payable | (10) | 10 |
| Increase/(decrease) in unearned revenue | 189 | - |
| Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities | 1,052 | (725) |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

Section 1: About QFCC and this Financial Report

Note 1: Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

Note 2: Objectives of the QFCC

Section 2: Notes about our Financial Performance

Note 3: Grants and Other Contributions

Note 4: Employee Expenses

Note 5: Supplies and Services

Note 6: Other Expenses

Section 3: Notes about our Financial Position

Note 7: Cash and Cash Equivalents

Note 8: Receivables

Note 9: Plant and Equipment

Note 10: Intangible Assets

Note 11: Payables

Note 12: Accrued Employee Benefits

Note 13: Other Liabilities

Section 4: Notes about Risks and Other Accounting Uncertainties

Note 14: Commitments for Expenditure

Note 15: Contingencies

Note 16: Financial Risk Disclosures

Note 17: Events Occurring After Balance Date

Note 18: Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

Section 5: Other Information

Note 19: Key Management Personnel Disclosures

Note 20: First year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Policy

Note 21: Taxation

Note 22: Insurance

Note 23: Accounting Estimates and Judgements

Note 24: Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

General Information

This financial report covers the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC). It has no controlled entities.

The QFCC is a statutory body established on 1 July 2014 as part of the Queensland Government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (Carmody Inquiry). The QFCC provides oversight of Queensland's child protection system to ensure government and non-government agencies are delivering best practice services for the families and children of Queensland. It also plays a key role in developing the sector and driving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their children.

The head office and principal place of business of the QFCC is:

Level 22, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane

A description of the nature of the QFCC's operation and its principal activities are included in the notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*.

These financial statements are general purpose financial statements, and have been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations. In addition, the financial statements comply with Queensland Treasury's Financial Reporting Requirements for the year ending 30 June 2016, and other authoritative pronouncements.

With respect to compliance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, the QFCC has applied those requirements applicable to not-for-profit entities, as the QFCC is a not-for-profit entity.

Presentation

Currency and Rounding

Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Comparatives

Comparative information reflects the audited 2014-15 financial statements unless restated where necessary to be consistent with disclosures in the current reporting period.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

1. Presentation (cont)

Current / Non-Current Classification

Assets and liabilities are classified as either 'current' or 'non-current' in the Statement of Financial Position and associated notes.

Assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date. Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or the QFCC does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

Basis of Measurement

The historical cost convention is used unless otherwise stated.

The Reporting Entity

The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity of the QFCC.

Implementation of the Shared Service Initiative

The Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) provides the QFCC with corporate services under the "Shared Services Provider" model. The fees and terms of the services are agreed through a Service Level Agreement, negotiated annually and include:

- Financial Services
- Human Resources Recruitment and Payroll
- Information Systems and Support

Authorisation of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Principal Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

2. Objectives of the QFCC

The QFCC is a statutory body with a legislative mandate to:

- support a high quality, evidence based Queensland child protection and family support system;
- strengthen partnerships and collaboration between government and non-government organisations to achieve better outcomes for children and families; and
- educate Queensland families and communities regarding their role in keeping children and young people safe in the home and inform them about the resources available to assist them.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

2. Objectives of the QFCC (cont)

The QFCC has a specific and consistent focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| 3. Grants and Other Contributions | | |
| Grants received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet | 11,279 | 9,423 |
| Grants received from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services | 290 | 100 |
| Total | 11,569 | 9,523 |

Accounting Policy - Grants and Contributions

Grants, contributions, donations and gifts that are non-reciprocal in nature are recognised as revenue in the year in which the QFCC obtains control over them. Where grants are received that are reciprocal in nature, revenue is progressively recognised as it is earned, according to the terms of the funding agreements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| 4. Employee Expenses | | |
| <i>Employee Benefits</i> | | |
| Wages and salaries | 4,243 | 3,179 |
| Employer superannuation contributions | 591 | 441 |
| Annual leave levy | 453 | 337 |
| Long service leave levy | 98 | 73 |
| Redundancies | 125 | 178 |
| <i>Employee Related Expenses</i> | | |
| Payroll tax | 281 | 193 |
| Workers' compensation premium | 26 | 20 |
| Other employee related expenses | 189 | 114 |
| Total | 6,006 | 4,535 |

The number of employees as at 30 June, including both full-time employees and part-time employees, measured on a full-time equivalent basis reflecting Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) is:

| | 2016 | 2015 |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of employees: | 58.00 | 41.00 |

Accounting Policies - Employee Benefits

Employee Benefits

Employer superannuation contributions and long service leave levies are regarded as employee benefits.

Payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance are a consequence of employing employees, but are not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. They are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as employee related expenses.

Wages, Salaries, Annual Leave and Sick Leave

Wages, salaries and annual leave due but unpaid at the reporting date are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at current salary rates.

For unpaid entitlements expected to be paid within 12 months, the liabilities are recognised at their undiscounted values. Entitlements not expected to be paid within 12 months are recognised at their present value, calculated using yields on fixed rate Commonwealth Government bonds of similar maturity, after projecting the remuneration rates expected to apply at the time of likely settlement.

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods. Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

4. Employee Expenses (cont)

As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

Long Service Leave

Under the Queensland Government's Long Service Leave Central Scheme, a levy is made on the QFCC to cover the cost of employees' long service leave. The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for long service leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears.

Superannuation

Employer superannuation contributions are paid to QSuper, the superannuation scheme for Queensland Government employees, at rates determined by the Treasurer on the advice of the State Actuary. Contributions are expensed in the period in which they are paid or payable. The QFCC's obligation is limited to its contribution to QSuper.

The QSuper scheme has defined benefit and defined contribution categories. The liability for defined benefits is held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in those financial statements pursuant to *AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

Workers' Compensation Premiums

The QFCC pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation.

Workers' compensation insurance is a consequence of employing employees, but is not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. It is not an employee benefit and is recognised separately as employee related expenses.

Key Executive Management Personnel and Remuneration

Key management personnel and remuneration disclosures are detailed in Note 19.

5. Supplies and Services

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Building services | 1,132 | 1,871 |
| Administration costs | 81 | 27 |
| Contractors and consultants | 1,872 | 407 |
| Corporate services provider costs | 902 | 629 |
| Telecommunications | 48 | 45 |
| Advertising and promotions | 404 | 1,537 |
| Travel | 80 | 51 |
| Minor plant and equipment | 261 | 41 |
| Repairs and maintenance | 16 | 13 |
| Professional services | 8 | - |
| Minor capital works | 6 | - |
| Other supplies and services | 53 | 12 |
| | <u>4,863</u> | <u>4,633</u> |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 6. Other Expenses | | |
| Insurance premiums (QGIF) | 4 | 4 |
| External audit fees * | 4 | 16 |
| Other expenses | 190 | - |
| Total | 198 | 20 |

* Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2015-16 financial statements are estimated to be \$15,000 (2014-15: \$16,000). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| 7. Cash and Cash Equivalents | | |
| Cash at bank | 1,314 | 407 |
| Total | 1,314 | 407 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 8. Receivables | | |
| Trade debtors | - | 16 |
| | - | 16 |
| GST receivable | 102 | 53 |
| GST payable | - | (10) |
| Annual leave reimbursements | 69 | 53 |
| Long service leave reimbursement | 16 | 7 |
| Other receivables | - | 8 |
| Total | 187 | 127 |

Accounting Policy - Receivables

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of sale or service delivery i.e. the agreed purchase/contract price. Settlement of these amounts is required within 14 days from the date the invoice is received.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically with provision being made for impairment.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

9. Plant and Equipment

Closing Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amount

| | Total | | | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Plant and Equipment: at cost | 280 | 280 | 280 | 280 |
| Less: Accumulated depreciation | (60) | (33) | (60) | (33) |
| | 220 | 247 | 220 | 247 |
| Work in progress: at cost | 145 | - | 145 | - |
| Carrying amount as at 30 June 2016 | 365 | 247 | 365 | 247 |

Represented by movements in carrying amount:

| | Plant and Equipment | | Work in Progress | | Total | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|----------|------------|------------|
| | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Carrying amount at 1 July | 247 | - | - | - | 247 | - |
| Transfers in | - | 275 | | | - | 275 |
| Depreciation Expense | (27) | (27) | | | (27) | (27) |
| Work in progress | | | 145 | - | 145 | - |
| Carrying amount at 30 June | 220 | 247 | 145 | - | 365 | 247 |

Recognition and Acquisition

Accounting Policy - Recognition Threshold

Expenditure on plant and equipment is capitalised to the extent that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and the asset can be reliably separated and measured.

In addition, expenditure is only capitalised if it increases the service potential or useful life of the existing asset. Maintenance expenditure that merely restores original service potential (arising from ordinary wear and tear etc.) is expensed.

Items with a total value of less than \$5,000 are treated as an expense in the year of acquisition.

9. Plant and Equipment (cont)***Measurement using Historical Cost******Accounting Policy - Cost of Acquisition***

Historical cost is used for the initial recording of all property, plant and equipment acquisitions. Historical cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the asset ready for use such as architects' fees and engineering design fees.

Accounting Policy - Historical Cost

Plant and equipment is measured at historical cost in accordance with Non-Current Asset Policies. The carrying amounts for such plant and equipment is not materially different from their fair value.

Separately identified components of assets as measured on the same basis as the assets to which they relate.

Depreciation Expense***Accounting Policy - Depreciation***

Depreciation on property, plant and equipment is calculated on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the net cost of each depreciable asset progressively over its estimated useful life to the QFCC.

The following depreciation rate was used:

| Class | Rate % |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Leasehold Improvements: | |
| Office fitouts | 10% |

Impairment***Accounting Policy - Impairment***

All non-current physical assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No indicators of impairment currently exist.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

| | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| 10. Intangible Assets | 2016 | 2015 |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Intangible Assets - Cost | | |
| Software Purchased: At cost | | |
| Gross | 433 | 433 |
| Less: Accumulated amortisation | (95) | (34) |
| | 338 | 399 |
| Software Internally Generated: At cost | | |
| Gross | 1,146 | 1,146 |
| Less: Accumulated amortisation | (505) | (164) |
| Less Amortisation/impairment loss adjusted for transfers | | (178) |
| | 641 | 805 |
| | 979 | 1,204 |

Intangible Assets - Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amounts

| | Software Purchased | | Software Internally Generated | | Total | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Carrying amount at 1 July | 399 | 433 | 805 | - | 1,204 | 433 |
| Transfers in | - | - | - | 969 | - | 969 |
| Amortisation expense | (61) | (34) | (164) | (164) | (225) | (197) |
| Carrying amount at 30 June | 338 | 399 | 641 | 805 | 979 | 1204 |

Accounting Policy - Intangible Assets

Intangible assets of the QFCC comprise of purchased and internally generated software. Intangible assets with a historical cost or other value equal to or greater than \$100,000 are recognised in the financial statements. Items with a lesser value are expensed. Any training costs are expensed as incurred.

There is no active market for the QFCC's intangible assets. As such the assets are recognised and carried at historical cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

10. Intangible Assets (cont)

Expenditure on research activities relating to internally generated intangible assets is recognised as an expense in the period in which it is incurred. Research and development expensed during the period is included in 'supplies and services expenses'.

Costs associated with internal development of computer software are capitalised and amortised under the amortisation policy below.

No intangible assets have been classified as held for sale or form part of a disposal group held for sale.

Amortisation Expense***Accounting Policy - Amortisation***

All intangible assets of the QFCC have finite useful lives and are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful life to the QFCC. Straight line amortisation is used reflecting the expected consumption of economic benefits on a progressive basis over the intangible's useful life. The residual value of all the QFCC's intangible assets is zero.

For each class of intangible assets the following amortisation rates were used:

| Class | Rate % |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Intangibles: | |
| Software internally generated | 14% |
| Software purchased | 14% |

Accounting Policy - Impairment

All intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No indicators of impairment are present.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

| | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 11. Payables | | |
| Trade creditors | 546 | 256 |
| Other payables | 59 | 23 |
| Total | 605 | 279 |

Accounting Policy - Payables

Trade creditors are recognised upon receipt of the goods or services ordered and are measured at the agreed purchase/contract price, gross of applicable trade and other discounts. Amounts owing are unsecured and are generally settled on 30 day terms.

12. Accrued Employee Benefits

Current

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Salaries and wages outstanding | 97 | 32 |
| Annual leave levy payable | 152 | 92 |
| Long service leave levy payable | 32 | 19 |
| Total | 281 | 143 |

Accounting Policy - Accrued Employee Benefits

No provision for annual leave or long service leave is recognised in the QFCC's financial statements as the liability is held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in those financial statements pursuant to *AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

13. Other Liabilities

| | | |
|----------|------------|----------|
| Advances | 189 | - |
| | 189 | - |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

| | 2016 | 2015 |
|--|--------|--------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 |

14. Commitments for Expenditure

(a). Non-Cancellable Operating Lease

Commitments under operating leases at the reporting date (inclusive of non-recoverable GST input tax credits) are payable as follows:

| | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Not later than one year | 819 | 1,132 |
| Later than one year and not later than five years | 2,696 | 2,877 |
| Later than five years | - | 1,300 |
| Total | 3,515 | 5,309 |

Accounting Policy - Operating Leases

Operating lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

Operating leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office accommodation. Lease payments are generally fixed, but with inflation escalation clauses on which contingent rentals are determined.

(b). Other Expenditure Commitments

Material expenditure commitments at the reporting date (inclusive of non-recoverable GST input tax credits) are payable as follows:

| | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Not later than one year | 1,045 | 1,383 |
| Later than one year and not later than five years | - | 611 |
| Later than five years | - | - |
| Total | 1,045 | 1,994 |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

15. Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2016.

16. Financial Risk Disclosures

Financial Instrument Categories

The QFCC has the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities:

| Category | Note | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 |
|--|------|----------------|----------------|
| Financial Assets | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7. | 1,314 | 407 |
| Receivables | 8. | 187 | 127 |
| Total | | 1,501 | 534 |
| Financial Liabilities | | | |
| Financial liabilities measured at amortised costs: | | | |
| Payables | 11. | 605 | 279 |
| Total | | 605 | 279 |

No financial assets and financial liabilities have been offset and presented net in the Statement of Financial Position.

The allowance for impairment reflects the occurrence of loss events. The most readily identifiable loss event is where a debtor is overdue in paying a debt to the QFCC, according to the due date (normally terms of 14 days). Economic changes impacting the QFCC's debtors and relevant industry data also form part of the QFCC's documented risk analysis.

No financial assets have had their terms renegotiated so as to prevent them from being past due or impaired, and are stated at the carrying amounts as indicated.

Financial Risk Management

Risk Exposure

The QFCC's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks - interest rate risk, credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk.

Financial risk management is implemented pursuant to government and QFCC policy. These policies focus on the unpredictability of financial markets and seek to minimise potential adverse effects on the financial performance of the QFCC.

All financial risk is managed by Executive Management under policies approved by the QFCC. The QFCC provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as policies covering specific areas.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

16. Financial Risk Disclosures (cont)

Financial Risk Management (cont)

The QFCC measures risk exposure using a variety of methods as follows:

| Risk Exposure | Definition | Exposure |
|----------------|--|--|
| Credit Risk | Credit risk exposure refers to a situation where the QFCC may incur financial loss as a result of another party to a financial instrument failing to discharge their obligation. | The maximum exposure to credit risk at the balance date in relation to each class of recognised financial assets is the gross carrying amount of those assets inclusive of any provisions for impairment. The QFCC's maximum exposure to credit risk is the carrying amount of its Financial Assets as set out later in this note. |
| Liquidity Risk | Liquidity risk refers to a situation where the QFCC may encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or another financial asset. | The QFCC is exposed to liquidity risk in respect of its payables. All of the QFCC's financial liabilities are due for payment within 1 year. |
| Market Risk | The risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises of three types of risk: currency risk, interest risk and other price risk. Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. | The QFCC does not trade in foreign currency and is not materially exposed to commodity price changes. The QFCC is exposed to interest rate risk through its cash deposited in interest bearing accounts. |

16. Financial Risk Disclosures (cont)***Risk Measurement and Management Strategies***

The QFCC measures risk exposure using a variety of methods as follows:

| Risk Exposure | Measurement Method | Risk Management Strategies |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Credit Risk | Ageing analysis, earnings at risk | No collateral is held as security and no credit enhancements relate to financial assets held by the QFCC. The QFCC manages credit risk through the use of management reports. This strategy aims to reduce the exposure to credit default by ensuring that the QFCC invests in secure assets and monitors all funds owed on a timely basis. Exposure to credit risk is monitored on an ongoing basis. |
| Liquidity Risk | Sensitivity analysis | The QFCC manages liquidity risk through the use of management reports. This strategy aims to reduce the exposure to liquidity risk by ensuring the QFCC has sufficient funds available to meet employee and supplier obligations as they fall due. This is achieved by ensuring that minimum levels of cash are held within the various bank accounts so as to match the expected duration of the various employee and supplier liabilities. |
| Market Risk | Interest rate sensitivity analysis | The QFCC does not undertake any hedging in relation to interest risk and manages its risk as per the liquidity risk management strategy. |

Credit Risk Exposure

The QFCC does not have any financial assets past due date but not impaired for the current year.

Interest Rate Sensitivity Analysis

No sensitivity analysis has been conducted on the basis that the only Financial Instrument held by the QFCC that would be impacted by a change in interest rates is cash, and a +/-1% change would result in an immaterial impact on profit for the year.

Fair Value

The fair value of trade receivables and payables is assumed to approximate the value of the original transaction, less any allowance for impairment.

Recognition

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the QFCC becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Classification

Financial instruments are classified and measured as follows:

- Receivables - held at amortised cost
- Payables - held at amortised cost

16. Financial Risk Disclosures (cont)

Risk Measurement and Management Strategies (cont)

The QFCC does not enter into, or trade with, such instruments for speculative purposes, nor for hedging. The QFCC holds no financial assets classified at fair value through profit and loss.

17. Events Occurring After Balance Date

No event has occurred after the balance date that has a material effect on these financial statements.

18. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

At the date of authorisation of the financial report, the expected impacts of new or amended Australian Accounting Standards issued but with future commencement dates are set out below:

AASB 2016-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards - Disclosure Initiative: Amendments to AASB 107

From reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2017, this Standard amends *AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows* and requires entities preparing financial statements in accordance with Tier 1 reporting requirements to provide additional disclosure that enable users of financial statements to evaluate changes in liabilities arising from financing activities.

These disclosures will include both cash flows and non-cash changes between the opening and closing balance of the relevant liabilities and be disclosed by way of a reconciliation or roll forward as part of the notes to the statement of cash flows. The measurement of assets, liabilities, income and expenditure in the financial statements will be unaffected.

AASB 124 - Related Party Disclosures

From reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2016, the QFCC will need to comply with the requirements of *AASB 124 Related Party Disclosures*. This accounting standard requires a range of disclosures about the remuneration of key management personnel, transactions with related parties/entities, and relationships between parent and controlled entities. The QFCC already discloses information about remuneration expenses for key management personnel in compliance with requirements from Queensland Treasury. Therefore, the most significant implications of AASB 124 for the QFCC's financial statements will be the disclosures to be made about transactions with related parties, including transactions with key management personnel or close members of their families.

AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

This Standard will become effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018 and contains more detailed requirements for accounting for certain types of revenue from customers. Depending on the specific contractual terms, the new requirements may potentially result in a change to the timing of revenue from sales of the QFCC's goods and services, such that some revenue may need to be deferred to a later reporting period to the extent that the QFCC has received cash but has not met its associated obligations (such amounts would be reported as a liability (unearned revenue) in the meantime). The QFCC is yet to complete its analysis of current arrangements for sale of its goods and services, but at this stage does not expect a significant impact on its present accounting practices.

18. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective (cont)

AASB 9 Financial Instruments and AASB 2014-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (December 2014)

These Standards will become effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2018. The main impacts of these standards on the QFCC is that they will change the requirements for the classification, measurement, impairment and disclosures associated with the QFCC's financial assets. AASB 9 will introduce different criteria for whether financial assets can be measured at amortised cost or fair value.

The QFCC has commenced reviewing the measurement of its financial assets against the new AASB 9 classification and measurement requirements. However, as the classification of financial assets at the date of initial application of AASB 9 will depend on the facts and circumstances existing at that date, the QFCC's conclusions will not be confirmed until closer to that time. At this stage, and assuming no change in the types of transactions the QFCC enters into, all of the QFCC's financial assets are expected to be required to be measured at fair value. In the case of the QFCC's current receivables, as they are short-term in nature, the carrying amount is expected to be a reasonable approximation of fair value. Changes in the fair value of those assets will be reflected in the QFCC's operating result.

The QFCC will not need to restate comparative figures for financial instruments on adopting AASB 9 as from 2018-19. However, changed disclosure requirements will apply from that time. A number of one-off disclosures will be required in the 2018-19 financial statements to explain the impact of adopting AASB 9. Assuming no change in the types of financial instruments that the QFCC enters into, the most likely ongoing disclosure impacts are expected to relate to the credit risk of financial assets subject to impairment, and investments in unquoted equity instruments measured at fair value through other comprehensive income and de-recognition of these items.

All other Australian accounting standards and interpretations with future commencement dates are either not applicable to the QFCC's activities, or have no material impact on the QFCC.

AASB 16 Leases

This standard will become effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019. When applied, the standard supersedes *AASB 117 Leases*, *AASB Interpretation 4 Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease*, *AASB Interpretation 115 Operating Leases – Incentives* and *AASB Interpretation 127 Evaluating the Substance of Transactions Involving the Legal Form of a Lease*.

Impact for Lessees

Unlike *AASB 117 Leases*, AASB 16 introduces a single lease accounting model for lessees. Lessees will be required to recognise a right-of-use asset (representing rights to use the underlying leased asset) and a liability (representing the obligation to make lease payments) for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying assets are of low value.

18. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective (cont)***AASB 16 Leases (cont)***

In effect, the majority of operating leases (as defined by the current AASB 117) will be reported on the statement of financial position under AASB 16. There will be a significant increase in assets and liabilities for agencies that lease assets. The impact on the reported assets and liabilities would be largely in proportion to the scale of the agency's leasing activities.

The right-of-use asset will be initially recognised at cost, consisting of the initial amount of the associated lease liability, plus any lease payments made to the lessor at or before the commencement date, less any lease incentive received, the initial estimate of restoration costs and any initial direct costs incurred by the lessee. The right-of-use asset will give rise to a depreciation expense.

The lease liability will be initially recognised at an amount equal to the present value of the lease payments during the lease term that are not yet paid. Current operating lease rental payments will no longer be expensed in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. They will be apportioned between a reduction in the recognised lease liability and the implicit finance charge (the effective rate of interest) in the lease. The finance cost will also be recognised as an expense.

AASB 16 allows a 'cumulative approach' rather than full retrospective application to recognising existing operating leases.

If a lessee chooses to apply the 'cumulative approach', it does not need to restate comparative information. Instead, the cumulative effect of applying the standard is recognised as an adjustment to the opening balance of accumulated surplus (or other component of equity, as appropriate) at the date of initial application. The QFCC will await further guidance from Queensland Treasury on the transitional accounting method to be applied.

The QFCC has not yet quantified the impact on the Statement of Comprehensive Income or the Statement of Financial Position of applying AASB 16 to its current operating leases, including the extent of additional disclosure required.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures

Details of Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the QFCC during 2015-16.

Principal Commissioner

The role provides strategic and cross sectoral leadership and direction to government and non-government agencies to promote laws, policies, practices and services that build the capacity of the sector and the child protection workforce and drives the achievement of the child protection system. The role is responsible for providing expert advice on current research and child protection practice to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, build the capacity and improve the performance of the child protection system.

| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Current | SES4 appointed under the <i>Family and Child Commission Act 2014</i> . | 1 July 2014 | |

Commissioner

The role supports the Principal Commissioner to provide strategic direction and leadership to develop and deliver integrated strategies designed to build capability and capacity and improve the culture of the child protection and family support system. The role has a strong focus on collaboration, partnerships and networks across the sector and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Current | SES3, appointed under the <i>Family and Child Commission Act 2014</i> . | 18 April 2016 | |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (cont)

Details of Key Management Personnel (cont)

Assistant Commissioner, Advocacy, Policy, and Sector Development

| <p>To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and creating evidence about issues for advocacy by engaging with children, young people, families and communities with a specific lens on the most vulnerable, - Using evidence and networks to influence and effect change to legislation, policy and practice design to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families, - Leading and supporting the sector to build and develop the capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support system, and - Utilising applied research techniques, in collaboration with QFCC stakeholders, to investigate new and existing problems and develop solutions and new approaches to inform policies, practices and resource development to improve outcomes for children and families in Queensland, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
| Current | SO appointed under the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> . | 10 August 2015 | |

Assistant Commissioner, Operations

| <p>To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling and managing capacity and capability within the business, - Strategy and agency performance reporting, - Corporate support (HR, ICT, Finance, Facilities, Legal and Procurement), - Governance and risk (Corporate and Projects), and - Maintaining a register of all child deaths in Queensland, identifying prevention priorities and sharing information with key stakeholders. | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
| Current | SO appointed under the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> . | 1 July 2015 | |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (cont)

Details of Key Management Personnel (cont)

Assistant Commissioner, Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education

To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for:

- Providing systemic oversight of the Queensland Child Protection System to determine whether services are available to appropriately support family functioning and children and young people in out-of-home care, with a view of achieving the best possible outcomes in all cases and building public confidence,
- Assessing, at a systemic level, the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of policies and practices relevant to the child protection system and the performance of relevant agencies in delivering services, and assist relevant agencies to do same, and
- Promoting and advocating the responsibility of families and communities for keeping children safe and well.

| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Current | SO appointed under the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> . | 15 February 2016 | |

Director, Strategic Research, Evaluation and Reporting

To lead and provide direction to the Strategic Research, Evaluation and Reporting Program functions and staff by:

- Providing strategic policy advice, research and advocacy on child protection matters,
- Assisting line agencies and non-government organisations in evaluating the efficacy of programs relating to child protection and identifying effective service models, and
- Strategically monitoring and reporting on the performance of the child protection system at a systemic level in relation to progress towards state and national goals and comparisons with other jurisdictions.

| Incumbent | Contract Classification and Appointment Authority | Date of Initial Appointment | Date of Resignation or Cessation |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Current | SO appointed under the <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> . | 1 July 2014 | 14 February 2016 |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (cont)

Remuneration Policies

Remuneration for the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner are set by the Governor in Council in accordance with Division 3, *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. The remuneration and other terms of employment for the other key executive management personnel are in accordance with directives issued under the *Public Service Act 2008* by the Public Service Commission Chief Executive or the Minister responsible for public sector industrial relations.

For the 2015-16 year, remuneration of key management personnel increased by 2.5% in accordance with government policy.

Remuneration packages for key management personnel comprises the following components:

- Short term employee benefits which include:
 - salaries, allowances and leave entitlements earned and expensed for the entire year or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position.
 - non-monetary benefits - consisting of provision of a vehicle together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit.
- Long term employee expenses include amounts expensed in respect of long service leave entitlements earned.
- Post-employment expenses include amounts expensed in respect of employer superannuation obligations.
- Termination benefits are not provided for within individual contracts of employment. Contracts of employment provide only for notice periods or payment in lieu of notice on termination, regardless of the reason for termination.
- Performance bonuses are not paid.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (cont)

KMP Remuneration Expense

1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016

| Position (date resigned if applicable) | Short Term Employee Expenses | | Long Term Employee Expenses | Post-Employment Expenses | Termination Benefits | Total Expenses |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Monetary Expenses \$'000 | Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000 | | | | |
| Principal Commissioner | 252 | 0 | 6 | 26 | 344 | 628 |
| Commissioner | 43 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 48 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development (former Director, Sector Partnerships, Capacity and Governance) | 154 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 0 | 174 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Operations | 136 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 0 | 156 |
| Assistant Commissioner, Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education | 111 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 124 |
| Director, Strategic Research, Evaluation and Reporting | 83 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 96 |
| Total Remuneration | 779 | 0 | 17 | 86 | 344 | 1226 |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (cont)

KMP Remuneration Expense (cont)

1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015

| Position (date resigned if applicable) | Short Term Employee Expenses | | Long Term Employee Expenses | Post-Employment Expenses | Termination Benefits | Total Expenses |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Monetary Expenses \$'000 | Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000 | | | | |
| Principal Commissioner | 225 | 0 | 5 | 25 | 0 | 255 |
| Director, Strategic Research, Evaluation and Reporting | 140 | 0 | 4 | 17 | 0 | 160 |
| Director, Sector Partnerships, Capacity and Governance | 69 | 0 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 92 |
| Acting Director, Sector Partnerships, Capacity and Governance (acting period 10 November 2014 to 30 June 2015) | 70 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 79 |
| Manager, Marketing and Media | 74 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 87 |
| Acting Manager, Marketing and Media (acting period 22 January 2015 to 30 June 2015) | 49 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 56 |
| Manager, Policy and Research | 108 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 0 | 125 |
| Manager, Business Coordination | | | | | | |
| Total Remuneration | 734 | 0 | 26 | 92 | 0 | 852 |

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

20. First year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Policy

Changes in Accounting Policy

The QFCC did not voluntarily change any of its accounting policies during 2015-16.

Accounting Standards Adopted Early for 2015-16

One Australian Accounting Standard has been adopted early for the 2015-16 year as required by Queensland Treasury.

AASB 2015-2 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Disclosure Initiative: Amendments to AASB 101 [AASB 7, AASB 101, AASB 134 & AASB 1049]

The amendments arising from this standard seek to improve financial reporting by providing flexibility as to the ordering of notes, the identification and location of significant accounting policies and the presentation of sub-totals, and provides clarity on aggregating line items. It also emphasises only including material disclosures in the notes. The QFCC has applied this flexibility in preparing the 2015-16 financial statements, including co-locating significant accounting policies with the related breakdowns of financial statement figures in the notes.

Accounting Standards Applied for the First Time in 2015-16

No new Australian Accounting Standards effective for the first time in 2015-16 had any material impact on this financial report.

21. Taxation

The QFCC is a state body as defined under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 and is exempt from Commonwealth taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST). FBT and GST are the only Commonwealth taxes accounted for by the QFCC. GST credits receivable from, and GST payable to the ATO, are recognised (refer to Note 8).

22. Insurance

The QFCC's non-current physical assets and other risks are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund, premiums being paid on a risk assessment basis. In addition, the QFCC pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation.

23. Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of financial statements necessarily requires the determination and use of certain critical accounting estimates, assumptions and management judgements that have the potential to cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Such estimates, judgements and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in future periods as relevant.

Estimates and assumptions that have a potential significant effect are outlined in the following financial statement notes:

Accrued Employee Benefits - Note 12

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

This section discloses the QFCC's original published budgeted figures for 2015-16 compared to actual results, with explanations of major variances, in respect of the QFCC's Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows.

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Comprehensive Income

| | Variance Notes | Original Budget 2016 \$'000 | Actual 2016 \$'000 | Variance \$'000 | Variance % of Budget |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Income from Continuing Operations | | | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | | 11,722 | 11,569 | (153) | (1%) |
| Other revenue | 1 | 30 | 66 | 36 | 120% |
| Total Income from Continuing Operations | | 11,752 | 11,635 | (117) | (1%) |
| Expenses from Continuing Operations | | | | | |
| Employee expenses | 2 | 5,058 | 6,006 | 948 | 19% |
| Supplies and services | 2 | 6,416 | 4,863 | (1,553) | (24%) |
| Grants and subsidies | 3 | | 91 | 91 | 100% |
| Depreciation and amortisation | | 257 | 253 | (4) | (2%) |
| Other expenses | 3 | 21 | 198 | 177 | 843% |
| Total Expenses from Continuing Operations | | 11,752 | 11,411 | (341) | (3%) |
| Operating Result from Continuing Operations | | - | 224 | 224 | 100% |
| Total Comprehensive Income | | - | 224 | 224 | 100% |

QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (cont)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Financial Position

| | Variance Notes | Original Budget 2016 \$'000 | Actual 2016 \$'000 | Variance \$'000 | Variance % of Budget |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Current Assets | | | | | |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 4 | 678 | 1,314 | 636 | 94% |
| Receivables | 5 | 55 | 187 | 132 | 240% |
| Other | | | 22 | 22 | 100% |
| Total Current Assets | | 733 | 1,523 | 790 | 108% |
| Non-Current Assets | | | | | |
| Intangible assets | | 972 | 979 | 7 | 1% |
| Plant and equipment | | 221 | 365 | 144 | 65% |
| Total Non-Current Assets | | 1,193 | 1,344 | 151 | 13% |
| Total Assets | | 1,926 | 2,867 | 941 | 49% |
| Current Liabilities | | | | | |
| Payables | 4 | 124 | 605 | 481 | 388% |
| Accrued employee benefits | 6 | 176 | 281 | 105 | 60% |
| Other Current Liabilities | | | 189 | 189 | |
| Total Current Liabilities | | 300 | 1,075 | (775) | (258%) |
| Total Liabilities | | 300 | 1,075 | (775) | (258%) |
| Net Assets | | 1,626 | 1,792 | 166 | 10% |
| Equity | | | | | |
| Contributed equity | | 1,626 | 1,627 | 1 | 0% |
| Accumulated surplus | | | 165 | 165 | 100% |
| Total Equity | | 1,626 | 1,792 | 166 | 10% |

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015-16

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (cont)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Cash Flows

| | Variance Notes | Original Budget 2016 \$'000 | Actual 2016 \$'000 | Variance \$'000 | Variance % of Budget |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Cash flows from operating activities | | | | | |
| <i>Inflows:</i> | | | | | |
| Grants and other contributions | | 11,722 | 11,774 | 52 | 0% |
| GST input tax credits from ATO | | | 440 | 440 | 100% |
| GST collected from customers | | | 12 | 12 | 100% |
| Interest receipts | | 30 | 74 | 44 | 147% |
| Other | | 325 | | (325) | (100%) |
| <i>Outflows:</i> | | | | | |
| Employee expenses | | (5,051) | (5,857) | (806) | (16%) |
| Supplies and services | | (6,740) | (4,591) | 2,149 | 32% |
| GST paid to suppliers | | | (499) | (499) | (100%) |
| GST remitted to ATO | | | (12) | (12) | (100%) |
| Grants and subsidies | | | (91) | (91) | (100%) |
| Other | | (16) | (198) | (182) | (1138%) |
| Net cash provided by operating activities | | 270 | 1,052 | 782 | 290% |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | | | | |
| <i>Outflows:</i> | | | | | |
| Payments for intangibles | | | - | - | (100%) |
| Payment for WIP | | | (145) | (145) | |
| Net cash (used in) investing activities | | - | (145) | (145) | 100% |
| Cash flows from financing activities | | | | | |
| <i>Inflows:</i> | | | | | |
| Equity Injections | | | | | 100% |
| Net cash provided by financing activities | | - | - | - | 100% |
| Net increase in cash held | | 270 | 907 | | 0% |
| Cash transferred on restructure | | | | | 100% |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year | | 408 | 407 | | (100%) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year | | 678 | 1,314 | - | 0% |

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (cont)**Explanations of Major Variances****Statement of Comprehensive Income**

1. Variance relates to an increase in interest revenue than previously forecasted. A revision of this forecast was undertaken for the April Forward Estimates process.
2. Variance relates to an increase in temporary and permanent positions not previously forecasted by the QFCC. This has been offset by planned savings in supplies and services.
3. Other variances relate to the treatment of end of year deferrals and contributions to grant programs not previously forecasted by the QFCC.

Statement of Financial Position

4. Variance relates to operational costs recognised as expenses/liabilities but not paid at 30 June 2016.
5. Variance relates to Long Service Leave Central Scheme and Annual Leave Central Scheme claims not received by 30 June 2016 and GST receivables not received by 30 June 2016.
6. Variance relates to employee entitlements outstanding at 30 June 2016.

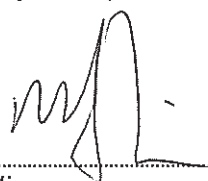
CERTIFICATE OF THE QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), section 43 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with s.62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

(i) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and

(ii) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2016 and of the financial position of the office at the end of that year; and

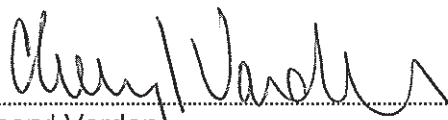
(iii) these assertions are based on an appropriate system of internal controls and risk management processes being effective, in all material respects, with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.



Max Wise
Chief Operating Officer
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date:

29/8/16



Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date:

29/8/2016.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Accountable Officer of the Queensland Family and Child Commission

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the Queensland Family and Child Commission, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certificates given by the Principal Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer.

The Accountable Officer's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Accountable Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with prescribed accounting requirements identified in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, including compliance with Australian Accounting Standards. The Accountable Officer's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Accountable Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. The audit was conducted in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require compliance with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and that the audit is planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control, other than in expressing an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Officer, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report including any mandatory financial reporting requirements approved by the Treasurer for application in Queensland.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* promotes the independence of the Auditor-General and all authorised auditors. The Auditor-General is the auditor of all Queensland public sector entities and can be removed only by Parliament.

The Auditor-General may conduct an audit in any way considered appropriate and is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which audit powers are to be exercised. The Auditor-General has for the purposes of conducting an audit, access to all documents and property and can report to Parliament matters which in the Auditor-General's opinion are significant.

Opinion

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009* –

- (a) I have received all the information and explanations which I have required; and
- (b) in my opinion –
 - (i) the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
 - (ii) the financial report presents a true and fair view, in accordance with the prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission for the financial year 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and of the financial position as at the end of that year.

Other Matters - Electronic Presentation of the Audited Financial Report

Those viewing an electronic presentation of these financial statements should note that audit does not provide assurance on the integrity of the information presented electronically and does not provide an opinion on any information which may be hyperlinked to or from the financial statements. If users of the financial statements are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic presentation of information, they are advised to refer to the printed copy of the audited financial statements to confirm the accuracy of this electronically presented information.



R W HODSON CPA
(as Delegate of the Auditor-General of Queensland)

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane





Appendix D - Performance of the Queensland child protection system

**A companion report to the Queensland Family and Commission Annual Report
2015 — 16**

Performance of the Queensland Child Protection System

2016

Queensland **Family & Child** Commission

A companion report to the Queensland Family & Child Commission Annual Report 2015 — 16



Queensland
Government

Communication objective

This report has been prepared in accordance with Section 40 (1) (a) of the Family and Child Commission Act 2014. This report provides an overview of the performance of the child protection system, with a particular emphasis on performance against the state and national goals and the progress in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Key achievements, statistics and trends have been developed by analysing information from a variety of sources, including publicly available information published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the Productivity Commission's Reporting on Government Services (ROGS), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS).

Additional information and supporting data has been sourced from a range of government agencies. This includes the recommendations of the child protection reform program, as well as results of surveys and reports, including those providing the views of children and families and other contextual information.

An electronic copy of this report is available from the QFCC's website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au.

Contact for enquiries

For enquiries or further information about this annual report (including to receive a hard copy of this report), please contact the QFCC.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

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www.qfcc.qld.gov.au.

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Foreword from Principal Commissioner

One of the key roles of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is to provide systemic oversight of the Queensland child protection system.

I am pleased to make this contribution as evidence based discussions about performance underpin collaboration and the resulting actions and services are key to the sustainability of the child protection system.

This report provides an overview of the performance of the child protection system, with a particular emphasis on performance against the state and national goals and the progress in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This is the second report produced by the QFCC for this purpose. It aims to build the evidence base and focus efforts to improve the child protection system.

The report highlights key achievements, identifies key statistics and trends, and provides opportunities for further investigation. It has been produced at a time of transformative change for the child protection and family support system in Queensland. We have just entered year three of a ten year reform program aimed at improving tertiary services, while also supporting parents, families and communities to take responsibility for protecting and caring for their children.

While a sustained effort is still required to reduce pressure on the tertiary child protection system, there are some encouraging signs that the implementation of the reforms are resulting in the desired increase in access to, and uptake of family support services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families continue to be disproportionately-represented in all aspects of the child protection system. The forthcoming Queensland Action Plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will provide opportunities to explore and address the broader issues of social and economic disadvantage and the specific circumstances in families which drive their over-representation in the statutory child protection system.

I would also like to recognise that in 2016-17, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) has announced further initiatives to address over-representation in the years ahead. As a sector, we are at our best when we work on such challenges together.

I am highly supportive of all initiatives designed to address disadvantage and strengthen family functioning. For those children who are in need of protection, our long term challenge remains to make them more than safe.

I am hopeful this report is useful to child protection system stakeholders, service providers and the community at large in tracking progress over the coming years.



Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 1 | Background..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | Reporting obligations of the Queensland Family and Child Commission | 1 |
| 1.2 | Structure of this report..... | 1 |
| 2 | Queensland’s performance against indicators for national goals | 3 |
| 2.1 | Defining national goals | 3 |
| 2.2 | Progress towards goals of the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009-2020 | 7 |
| 2.3 | Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care in the <i>Report on Government Services</i> | 22 |
| 3 | Queensland performance against indicators for state goals | 40 |
| 3.1 | Defining state goals | 40 |
| 3.2 | Progress towards strategic objectives of Queensland’s child protection reform program | 44 |
| 3.3 | Performance indicators for the tertiary child protection system | 70 |
| 4 | Discussion and key findings..... | 82 |
| 4.1 | Building the range and availability of family support services | 83 |
| 4.2 | Working better with families in contact with the child protection system | 85 |
| 4.3 | Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people.. | 89 |
| 4.4 | Health, social, emotional and economic indicators of well-being | 93 |
| 4.5 | Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families | 98 |
| | Attachment 1 – Key statistics for the Queensland Child Protection system..... | 103 |
| | Attachment 2 – Child deaths in Queensland 2012–2015 | 107 |

List of Tables

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Table 2.1: | Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 subject to a child protection substantiation, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015 | 8 |
| Table 2.2: | Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 years in out-of-home-care, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015 | 11 |
| Table 2.3: | Proportion of children under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012–2015 | 31 |
| Table 3.1: | Domains and strategic objectives..... | 42 |
| Table 3.2: | Measures for the tertiary child protection system | 43 |
| Table A1.1. | Key statistics regarding intakes, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 | 103 |
| Table A1.2. | Key statistics regarding substantiations, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 | 104 |
| Table A1.3. | Key statistics regarding ongoing intervention, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 | 104 |
| Table A1.4. | Key statistics regarding ongoing intervention, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 | 105 |
| Table A1.5. | Key statistics regarding re-entry, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 | 106 |
| Table A2: | Summary of deaths of children and young people in Queensland, 2012–2015 | 107 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|-------------|--|----|
| Figure 2.1: | Report on Government Services child protection performance indicator framework | 5 |
| Figure 2.2: | Percentage change in the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015 | 9 |
| Figure 2.3: | Rate per 1,000 children aged 0-17 subject to a child protection substantiation by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016..... | 10 |
| Figure 2.4: | Percentage change in the rate per 1,000 children in out-of-home care, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015..... | 11 |
| Figure 2.5: | Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016..... | 12 |
| Figure 2.6: | Age-specific birth rate (births per 1,000 females) for women aged 15-19 years, Queensland and Australia, 2008 to 2013 | 13 |
| Figure 2.7: | Age specific birth rate (births per 1,000 females) for women aged 15-19 years by Indigenous status of mother, Queensland, 2008 to 2013 | 14 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 2.8: Liveborn infants with a low birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (as a proportion of all live births), Queensland and Australia, 2008 to 2013 | 15 |
| Figure 2.9: Liveborn infants with a low birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (as a proportion of all live births) by Indigenous status of mother, Queensland, 2008 to 2013 | 16 |
| Figure 2.10: Deaths due to homicide among children aged 0-17 years (rate per 100,000), Queensland and Australia, 2010-11 and 2011-12..... | 17 |
| Figure 2.11: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more AECD domains, Queensland and Australia, 2009, 2012 and 2015..... | 19 |
| Figure 2.12: Average household income (\$ per week) for low income households with dependent children aged 0-12 years in the second and third deciles, Queensland and Australia, 2005-06 to 2013-14..... | 20 |
| Figure 2.13: Proportion of investigations commenced by time taken to commence investigation, Queensland, 2011-12 to 2014-15..... | 23 |
| Figure 2.14: Proportion of investigations finalised by time taken to complete investigation, Queensland, 2011-12 to 2014-15..... | 24 |
| Figure 2.15: Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Queensland and Australia 2011–2012 to 2014–2015 | 25 |
| Figure 2.16: Percentage change in the proportion of substantiated investigations, Queensland and Australia, 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 | 26 |
| Figure 2.17: Proportion of children exiting care in one to two placements by length of time in care, Queensland and Australia, 2009-2010 to 2014-2015..... | 27 |
| Figure 2.18: Percentage change in the proportion of children exiting care after more than 12 months in one to two placements, Queensland and Australia, 2009-2010 to 2014-2015..... | 28 |
| Figure 2.19: Proportion of children exiting out-of-home care after five or more years by number of placements, Queensland and Australia, 2014-2015 | 29 |
| Figure 2.20: Average number of placements for children in out-of-home care in Queensland disaggregated by Indigenous status, September 2013 to March 2016..... | 30 |
| Figure 2.21: Percentage change in the proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012 to 30 June 2015 | 31 |
| Figure 2.22: Proportion of children under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care by Indigenous status, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012-2015..... | 32 |
| Figure 2.23: Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2012 to 2015..... | 33 |
| Figure 2.24: Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2012 to 2015 | 34 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 2.25: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition), Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012 to 2015 | 36 |
| Figure 2.26: Placement details of children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition), Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2015 | 37 |
| Figure 2.27: Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 with a documented and approved case plan, Queensland and Australia, 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 | 38 |
| Figure 2.28: Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 with a documented and approved case plan by Indigenous status, Queensland, 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 | 39 |
| Figure 3.1: Domains in the child protection reform organising framework..... | 42 |
| Figure 3.2: Rate per 1,000 children subject to an intake by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016..... | 72 |
| Figure 3.3: Proportion of investigation and assessment responses recorded within the response timeframes, Queensland, 2010-11 to 2014-15..... | 73 |
| Figure 3.4 Rate per 1,000 children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement in Queensland by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016 | 75 |
| Figure 3.5. Rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection order in Queensland by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 – 2016 | 76 |
| Figure 3.6: Rate per 1,000 children in Out-of-home Care in Queensland, by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016..... | 78 |
| Figure 3.7: Proportion of children subject to ongoing intervention with a current case plan by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016 | 79 |
| Figure 3.8: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention with a cultural support plan, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016 | 80 |

Executive Summary

One of the functions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*¹ is to provide systemic oversight of the Queensland child protection system.

The Act requires the QFCC to report annually on:

- Queensland's performance in relation to achieving State and national goals relating to the child protection system
- Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions
- Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.

This report provides an overview of Queensland's progress in relation to:

- Building the range and availability of family support services
- Working better with families in contact with the child protection system
- Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people
- Health, Social, Emotional and Economic indicators of wellbeing
- Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Key achievements, statistics and trends have been developed by analysing information from a variety of sources, including publicly available information published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the Productivity Commission's Reporting on Government Services (ROGS), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS).

Additional information and supporting data has been sourced from a range of government agencies. This includes the recommendations of the child protection reform program, as well as results of surveys and reports, including those providing the views of children and families and other contextual information.

National and state goals relating to the child protection system

The key set of national goals relating to the child protection system are the outcomes, targets and performance indicators captured in the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* (the National Framework).

The key set of state goals relating to the child protection system are the goals of the Child Protection Reform Roadmap and the outcomes and strategic objectives of the associated reform program.

As is expected and necessary, there is a close relationship between the state and national goals.

Comparison to other jurisdictions

Where possible, Queensland trends over time are compared to other jurisdictions, and data is disaggregated by Indigenous status. Due to jurisdictional differences in policy, practice and reporting

¹ <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/F/FamilyChildCommA14.pdf>

methods, some data is not directly comparable. This report therefore compares trends over time (percentage change) rather than raw numbers or percentages.

Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in the child protection system in Queensland and throughout Australia. Reducing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children is a national priority, and addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families is critical to the success of national and state goals for child protection.

Key findings

As at 31 March 2016, there were 8,671 children and young people living in out-of-home care in Queensland. A key objective of the sector, community, the Queensland Child Protection Reform Program and the National Framework is to reduce the rate at which children enter out-of-home care.

A QFCC survey of over 2000 Queensland parents in late 2015 revealed parents are experiencing high levels of stress, with just over half of the parents surveyed stating they had sometimes found it hard to cope with the stress of being a parent. Over a quarter said they had been worried at some point they were not able to keep their children healthy and safe.

Half of parents also self-reported experiencing one or more risk factors commonly associated with households where children are assessed as being in need of protection, such as domestic violence, mental illness, criminal history, drug or alcohol problems, and intergenerational experience of abuse or neglect.

In responding to this challenge, the child protection system in Queensland is in a state of transition, resulting from an unprecedented level of investment in family support services. It has just entered year three of a ten year reform program aimed at improving tertiary services, while also supporting parents, families and communities to take responsibility for protecting and caring for their children.

Expectations are high that the reform program and progression towards achieving both the national and state goals will result in improved outcomes for Queensland children and young people. However, this will take time.

While a sustained effort is still required to reduce pressure on the tertiary child protection system, there are some encouraging signs the implementation of reforms relating to the reporting and referral of alleged harm is reducing the number of intakes received by the DCCSDS, where matters do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention.

There have been significant achievements in improving access to family support services, with almost 7,000 referrals to new Family and Child Connect services in 2015, and more than 20,000 families accessing free Triple P Parenting Program services between August 2015 and June 2016.

Seventeen per cent of parents surveyed by the QFCC had accessed formal parenting or educational support services in the 2015 calendar year. Encouragingly, of these, 93 per cent said it had made a positive difference for them.

In very simple terms, there is clear evidence that these supports work. The challenge now exists to fully establish support system capacity and normalise the experience of seeking help.

The rate of children entering out-of-home care in Queensland is increasing, but at a slower rate than the national average. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is consistently and significantly higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children, and the gap between the two cohorts is growing.

For those children who enter out-of-home care, a national survey from 2015 revealed 91 percent of children surveyed felt both safe and settled in their current placement. In the same period, only a small proportion (1.7 per cent) of Queensland children in out-of-home care were subject to a substantiated breach of the standards of care.

Unfortunately, children typically enter out-of-home care have after experiencing significant abuse and neglect. This can have major impacts on their life course trajectory, including health outcomes, educational attainment and vocation. As such, a key challenge of the sector is to make these children and young people more than safe and provide them with the support and opportunities which enable them to reach their full potential.

Of significant concern is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families continue to be disproportionally-represented in all aspects of the child protection system. Concerted effort will continue to be applied by all government and non-government stakeholders and service providers to address the factors driving over-representation in the tertiary system, and enhancing the service response.

1 Background

1.1 Reporting obligations of the Queensland Family and Child Commission

One of the functions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*² is to provide oversight of the Queensland child protection system. To deliver this function, the QFCC monitors, reviews and reports on the child protection system from a systemic perspective.

Under section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the QFCC is required to include the following information in its Annual Report:

- Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system
- Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions
- Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.

In delivering on QFCC's reporting obligations, this report uses data and information for the 2015-16 financial year wherever possible. In other cases, the most recent publicly available data is included. Where relevant, information about developments between 1 July and 30 August 2016 is also included.

It is acknowledged that the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, schedule 1 defines the child protection system as including preventative and support services. However, due to significant limitations in the availability and quality of data, this report on the performance of the child protection system is largely limited to an analysis of the tertiary child protection system.

As the Queensland child protection reform program continues with the rollout of reform strategies, it is anticipated data in relation to preventative and support services will be more readily available and reportable.

The QFCC is working with other government agencies to develop data sets which will provide further insight into the functioning of the child protection system as a whole. This data is expected to be incorporated into future reports, providing a more comprehensive view on the health and performance of the Queensland child protection and family support system.

1.2 Structure of this report

Section 2 describes Queensland's performance against the indicators for the national goals relating to the child protection system – the goals of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*³ (the National Framework).

The outcomes and performance indicators for the National Framework and associated Action Plans are outlined, as are the performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care in the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services (ROGS)*⁴.

² <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/F/FamilyChildCommA14.pdf>

³ <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/publications-articles/protecting-children-is-everyones-business>

⁴ <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services>

A short introduction is provided for each performance indicator, and then relevant data is presented. This section discusses trends over time, and Queensland's performance in comparison to other jurisdictions. Where available, data is disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Section 3 describes Queensland's performance against the indicators for state goals relating to the child protection system – the goals of the Queensland Child Protection Reform Program.

A brief introduction to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and resulting reform program is provided, and the strategic objectives of the reform program are outlined. An overview of the progress towards the strategic objectives is provided, including implementation status of relevant recommendations and significant achievements.

Section 3 also provides additional performance measures for the Queensland child protection system, including data on key aspects of the phases or pathways a child or young person may follow while in the child protection system.

Where available, data presented in section 3 is disaggregated by Indigenous status to describe Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.

Section 4 draws together the key findings in terms of the performance of the Queensland child protection system, in relation to the legislative requirements outlined in the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

Queensland's performance is analysed and reported in relation to the following key service areas:

- building the range and availability of family support services
- working better with families in contact with the child protection system
- improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people
- health, social, emotional and economic indicators of wellbeing.

A summary of Queensland's performance in regards to reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system is also provided.

For each focus area, the relevant national and state goals are provided, followed by an outline of key statistics, trends and achievements, drawing upon the data provided in sections 2 and 3. Additional supporting data and information has also been incorporated, including those which provide the views of children and families and other contextual information. Key findings and opportunities for further investigation are presented.

Attachment 1 provides additional statistics for the Queensland child protection system, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016. Attachment 2 provides a summary of deaths of children and young people in Queensland for 2012–2015.

2 Queensland's performance against indicators for national goals

2.1 Defining national goals

The key set of national goals relating to the child protection system are the outcomes, targets and performance indicators captured in the National Framework.

Data relevant to the National Framework is described in section 2.1.1, and presented in section 2.2.

The Productivity Commission also publishes national data annually in the RoGS according to a framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services.⁵

Data relevant to the Productivity Commission's RoGS is described in section 2.1.2, and presented in section 2.3.

Where possible, Queensland trends over time are compared to other jurisdictions, and data is disaggregated by Indigenous status. Due to jurisdictional differences in policy, practice and reporting methods, some data is not directly comparable. This report therefore compares trends over time (percentage change) rather than raw numbers or percentages.

2.1.1 *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*

The National Framework consists of high-level and supporting outcomes, strategies to be delivered through a series of three-year action plans and indicators of change which can be used to monitor the success of the National Framework.

The actions and strategies which governments and others agree to take under the National Framework are all aimed to achieve the following high-level outcome:

Australia's children and young people are safe and well.

As a measure of this outcome, governments and the non-government sector have set the following target:

A substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect in Australia over time.

It is acknowledged measuring a reduction in child abuse and neglect is difficult, as Australia currently does not have robust data on incidence/prevalence. Even if such data existed, it may not be sensitive to change over a short period.

To demonstrate progress towards achieving the target the following measures have been identified:

- trends in key national indicators of children's health, development and wellbeing

⁵ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2016/community-services/child-protection/rogs-2016-volume-f-chapter15.pdf>

- trends in hospital admissions and emergency department visits for neglect and injuries to children under three years
- trends in substantiated child protection cases
- trends in the number of children in out-of-home care.

The six supporting outcomes are:

1. children live in safe and supportive families and communities
2. children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
3. risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed
4. children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing
5. indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities
6. child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

The supporting outcomes and strategies help to focus effort and actions under the National Framework in order to reach the high-level outcome. Indicators of change are provided to measure the extent to which governments and non-government organisations are achieving the supporting outcomes.

Given the inherent difficulties in isolating the impact of specific actions on broader social outcomes, a global suite of indicators have been identified which, when viewed collectively, will provide a basis for measuring progress over the life (12 years) of the National Framework.

Third Action Plan (2015-18)

The Third Action Plan (2015-2018) was released in December 2015 and focuses on three primary strategies:

- early intervention with a focus on the early years – particularly the first 1,000 days for a child
- helping young people in out-of-home care to thrive into adulthood
- organisations responding better to children and young people to keep them safe.

The Third Action Plan has an integrated focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and a research agenda to promote evidence-based interventions.

Work is continuing to identify targets and progress markers for each of the three strategies under the Third Action Plan. Once the targets and progress markers are developed, the QFCC will monitor and report on Queensland's performance against them.

Second Action Plan (2012-15)

Eight indicators were established for the Second Action Plan (2012-2015) to measure progress towards the high-level outcome (*Australia's children and young people are safe and well*), including:

1. substantiated child protection cases
2. children in out-of-home care
3. teenage births
4. infants born of low birth weight
5. child homicide
6. early childhood development
7. family economic situation
8. child social and emotional wellbeing.

Queensland data is available for the first seven indicators (see section 2.2). However, data for the ‘child social and emotional wellbeing’ indicator is currently unavailable for reporting and is therefore not included in this report.⁶

2.1.2 Report on Government Services child protection performance indicators

The Productivity Commission publishes national data annually in the RoGS according to a framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services.⁷

The annual RoGS report provides information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia, including child protection services. The latest report, providing data for the 2014-15 financial year, was progressively released between 27 January and 4 February 2016.

A framework of performance indicators for the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of the child protection and out-of-home care services has been established (see Figure 2.1). However, it should be noted not all indicators have data which are complete and comparable.

This report provides data against the following effectiveness output measures:

1. response times to commence and complete investigations
2. proportion of finalised investigations that are substantiated
3. stability of placement
4. children aged under 12 years in home-based care
5. placement with extended family
6. placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
7. children with current case plans.

The following effectiveness output and outcome indicators are not included in this report, as the data is not available and/or agreed measures are not yet developed:

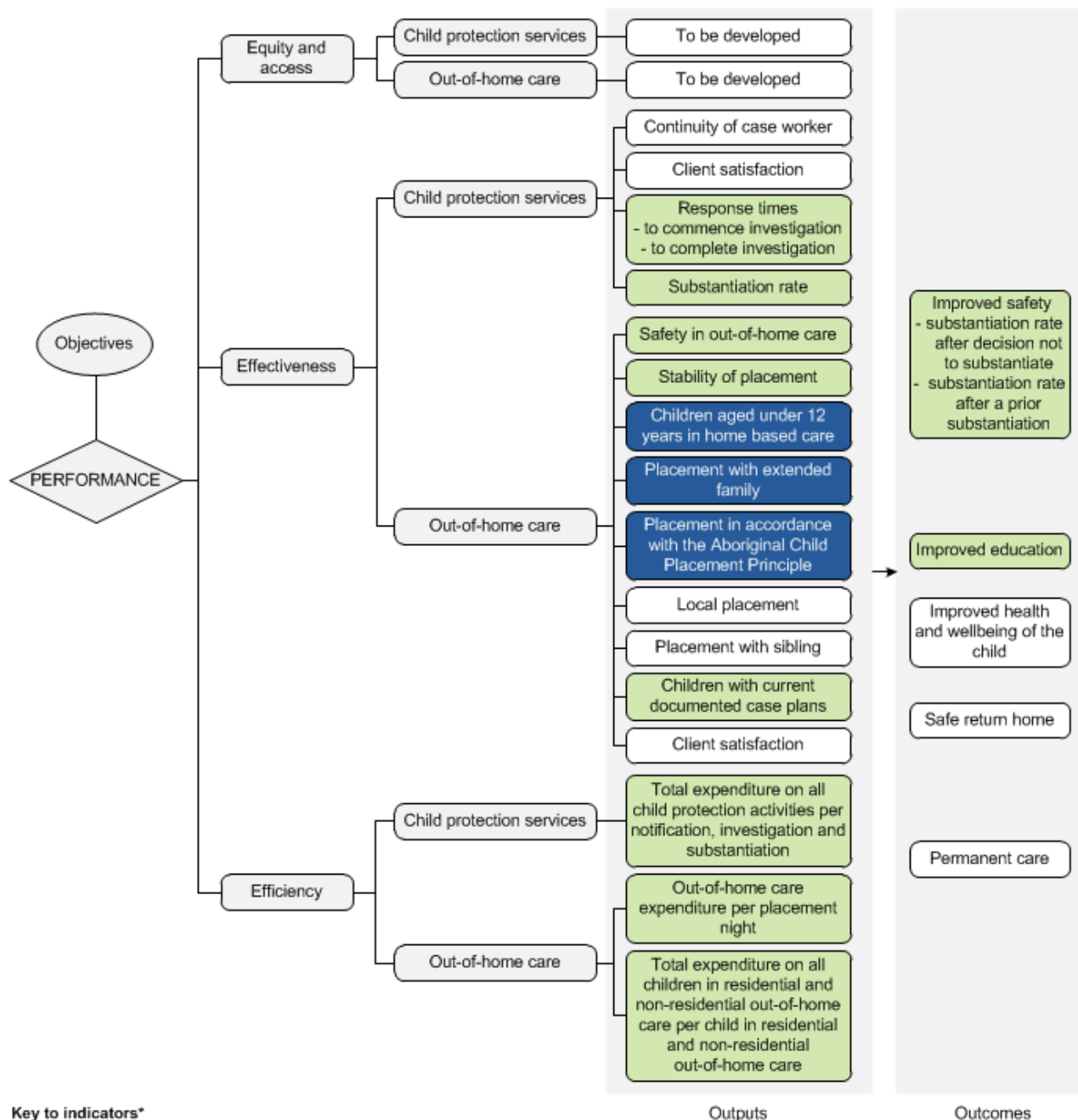
- continuity of case worker
- client satisfaction
- safety in out-of-home care
- local placement
- placement with sibling
- improved health and wellbeing
- safe return home.

This report does not include efficiency measures.

Figure 2.1: Report on Government Services child protection performance indicator framework

⁶ Child social and emotional wellbeing is to be measured by the proportion of children aged 8–17 years scoring ‘of concern’ on the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire*. This indicator is currently pending the implementation of an Australian Bureau of Statistics data source and is therefore not yet reportable.

⁷ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016*, p15.18. <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2016/community-services/child-protection/rogs-2016-volume-f-chapter15.pdf>



Key to indicators*

| | |
|------|---|
| Text | Most recent data for all measures are comparable and complete |
| Text | Most recent data for at least one measure are comparable and complete |
| Text | Most recent data for all measures are either not comparable and/or not complete |
| Text | No data reported and/or no measures yet developed |

* A description of the comparability and completeness of each measure is provided in indicator interpretation boxes within the chapter

Source: Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services 2016, Child protection (Chapter 15)*

<http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2016/community-services/child-protection>

2.2 Progress towards goals of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

This section presents data against the first seven indicators of the Second Action Plan (2012-2015):

- substantiated child protection cases (see section 2.2.1)
- children in out-of-home care (see section 2.2.2)
- teenage births (see section 2.2.3)
- infants born of low birth weight (see section 2.2.4)
- child homicide (see section 2.2.5)
- early childhood development (see section 2.2.6)
- family economic situation (see section 2.2.7).

It is expected future reports will describe progress against the (yet to be released) targets and progress markers that are developed for the Third Action Plan (2015-18).

This section reports the data for each indicator in terms of trends in Queensland over time, comparison of Queensland trends to the national average, and, where available, data is disaggregated by Indigenous status. Due to difference in policy, practice and reporting, Queensland data is not always comparable to other jurisdictions. Thus trends in Queensland are compared to the national average using percentage change, as opposed to raw data.

For each indicator, a breakout box has been included to highlight the findings QFCC is required to report on, including:

- Queensland's performance over time
- Queensland's performance in comparison to other jurisdictions (where available)
- Queensland's performance in relation to the number of and/or outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (where available).

2.2.1 Substantiated child protection cases

Substantiated child protection cases are measured as the rate of children aged 0-17 years subject to a child protection substantiation. That is, the incidence of cases which have been reported to state and territory departments responsible for child protection, and following an investigation, found that a child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.⁸

Between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, the rate per 1,000 children in Queensland subject to a child protection substantiation was consistently lower than the national average (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 subject to a child protection substantiation, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015

| Year | Queensland | Australia |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| 2009-10 | 5.9 | 6.2 |
| 2010-11 | 5.6 | 6.2 |
| 2011-12 | 6.5 | 7.4 |
| 2012-13 | 6.5 | 7.8 |
| 2013-14 | 6.0 | 7.8 |
| 2014-15 | 5.2 | 8.0 |

Source: AIHW *Child Protection Australia*, data collections 2009-10 to 2014-15⁹

However, while jurisdictions share similar legal definitions of harm and risk of harm there are subtle differences in policy and practice across states and territories. The breadth of these variations is not reflected in the combined national totals, which limits the comparability of substantiation figures and rates.

For this reason, Figure 2.2 compares percentage change in the rate of children subject to a child protection substantiation using 2009-2010 as the baseline reference year.

Nationally, the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation grew 29 per cent between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015.

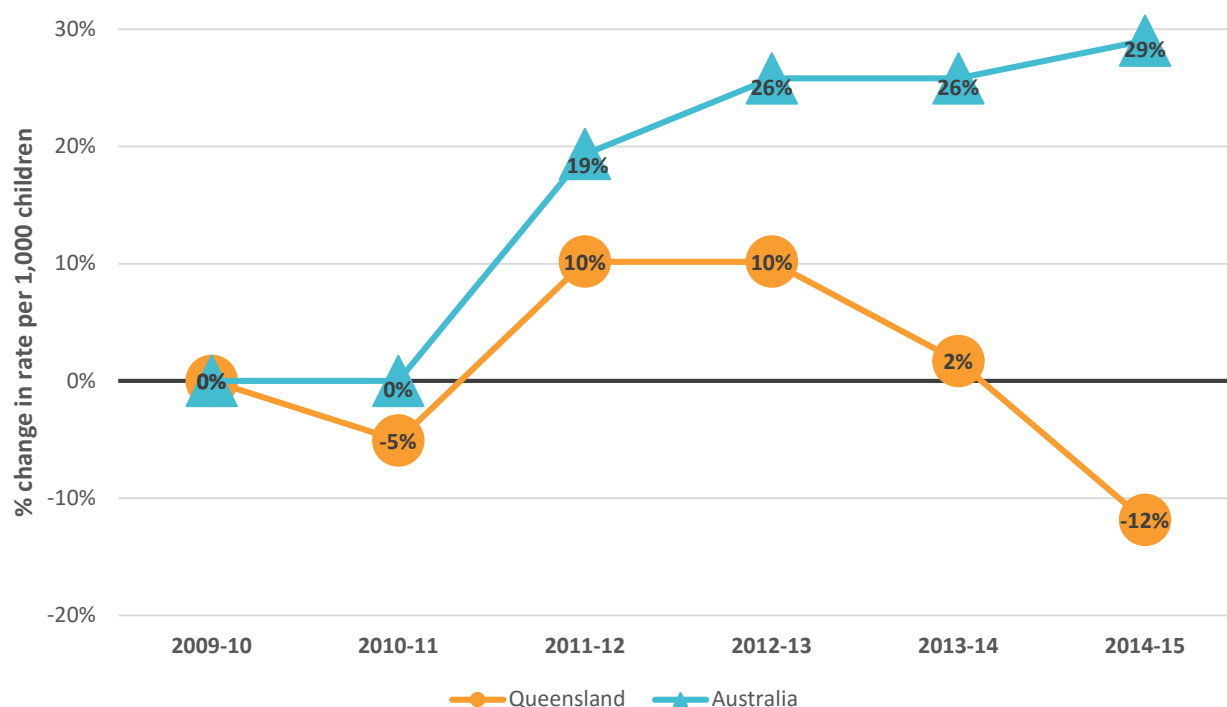
Comparatively, in Queensland the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation has fluctuated, decreasing between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, before increasing in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

In the two previous financial years, the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation has declined, resulting in an overall 12 per cent reduction in the rate in 2014-2015, compared to the 2009-2010 baseline reference year.

⁸ Annual Report to COAG, 2012-13.

⁹ Population data used by AIHW for this measure was based on 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data. A child may be subject to more than one substantiation. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Child Protection Australia 2014-15*, Table: A14 Notes).

Figure 2.2: Percentage change in the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015



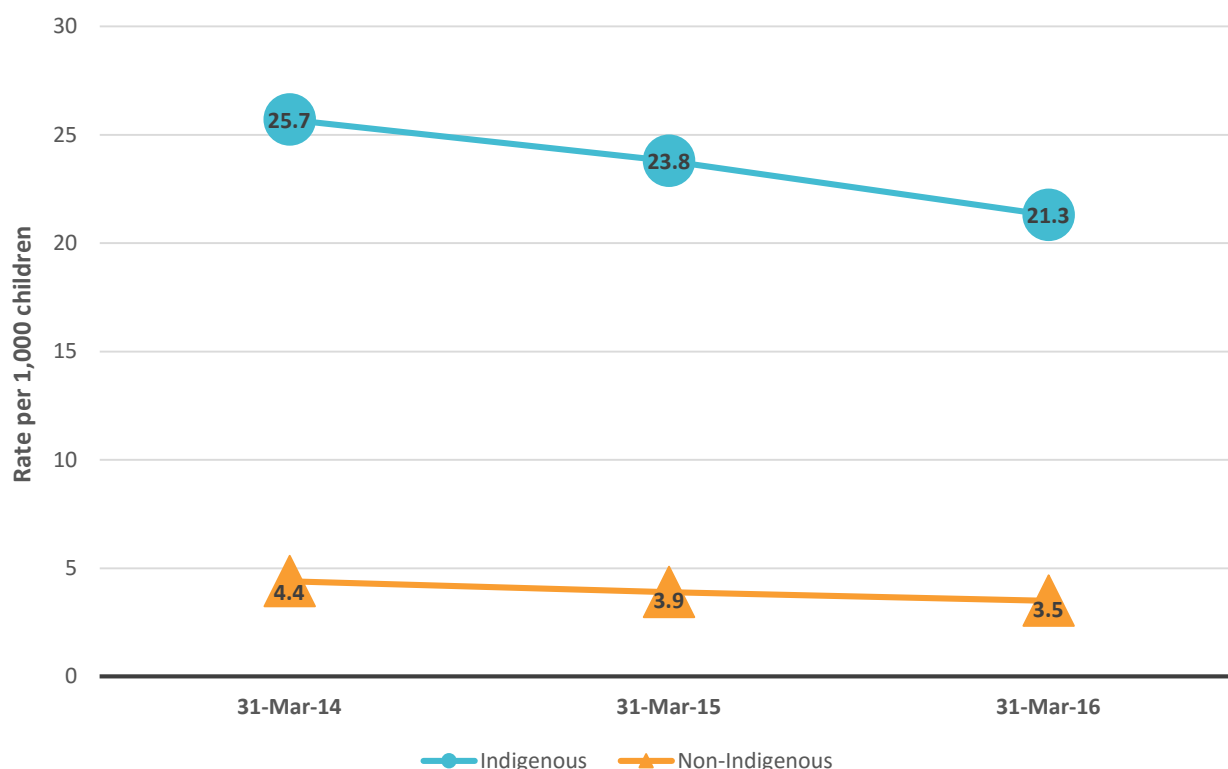
Source: AIHW *Child Protection Australia*, data collections 2009-10 to 2014-15 ¹⁰

In Queensland, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a child protection substantiation is higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children subject to a child protection substantiation. This is highlighted in Figure 2.3, which shows the rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection substantiation between the year ending 31 March 2014 and the year ending 31 March 2016.

Although the rate of Indigenous children per 1,000 subject to a substantiation remains higher than the rate for the general population, the difference between the two figures has decreased slightly over time. In the year ending 31 March 2014, the rate of Indigenous children subject to a child protection substantiation was 21.3 per 1,000 children higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children. In the year ending 31 March 2016, the gap had narrowed to a difference of 17.8 per 1,000 children.

¹⁰ Population data used by AIHW for this measure was based on 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data. A child may be subject to more than one substantiation. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Child Protection Australia 2014-15*, Table: A14 Notes).

Figure 2.3: Rate per 1,000 children aged 0-17 subject to a child protection substantiation by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016



Source: DCCSDS <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/>, accessed 4 July 2016

Substantiated child protection cases

The rate of children per 1,000 subject to a child protection substantiation in Queensland fluctuated over the period with an overall declining trend (see Figure 2.2).

The rate of children per 1,000 subject to a child protection substantiation in Queensland has been consistently below the national average for this period (see Figure 2.2).

In Queensland, the rate per 1,000 Indigenous children subject to a child protection substantiation has been consistently higher than the rate per 1,000 non-Indigenous children. However, the gap between the two cohorts has declined over the past three years (see Figure 2.3).

2.2.2 Children in out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is provided across Australia to children when it has been assessed that it is not safe for them to be cared for by their parents. As at 30 June 2015, there were 43,399 children in out-of-home care across Australia, representing a population rate of 8.1 per 1,000 children (aged 0-17 years).¹¹

While the national rate of children in out-of-home care has grown over the past five years (up from 7.1 in 2010) it has remained stable at 8.1 per 1,000 children over the past two years. In comparison, the

¹¹ AIHW (2016), *Child protection Australia 2014-15*, Table 5.7. Accessed online (07/07/2016) from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554973>

Queensland rate of 7.5 per 1,000 children at 2105 is lower than the national rate of 8.1 per 1,000 children in June 2015 (see Table 2.2).

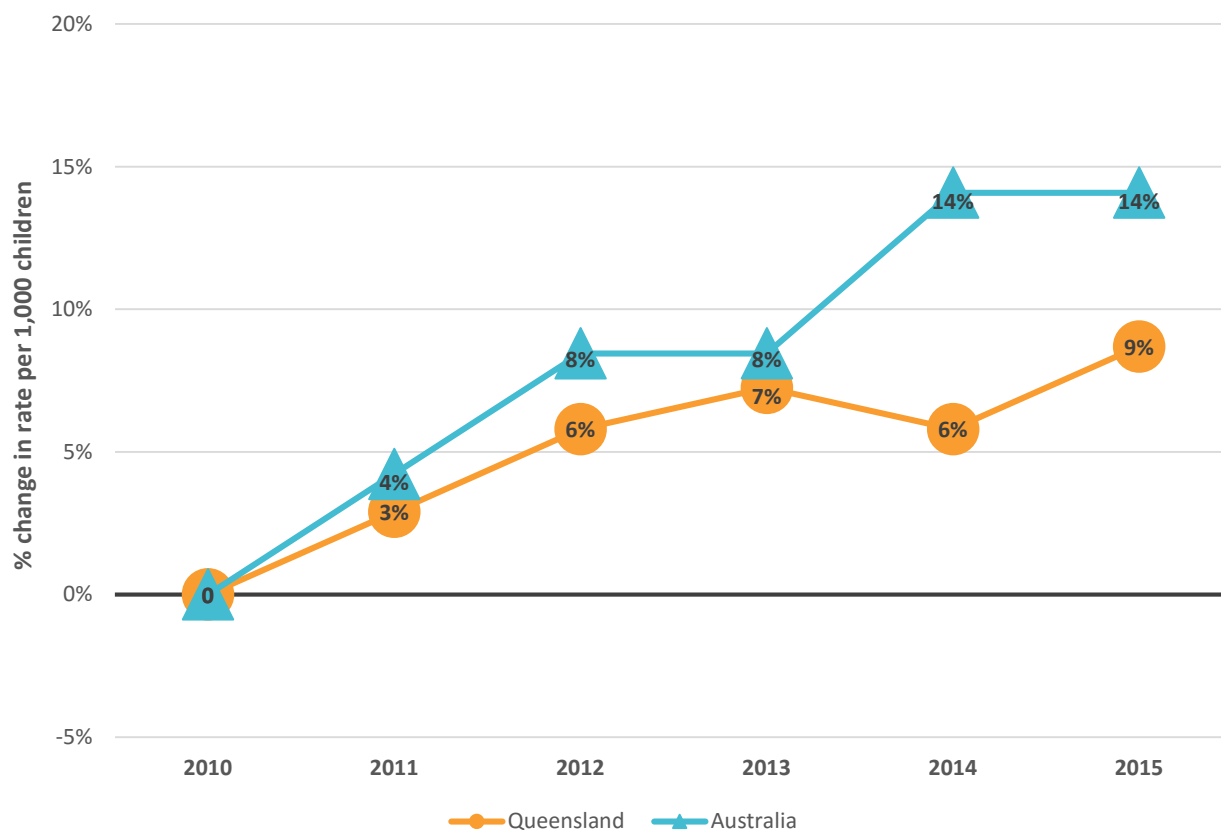
Table 2.2: Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 years in out-of-home-care, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015

| Year | Queensland | Australia |
|------|------------|-----------|
| 2010 | 6.9 | 7.1 |
| 2011 | 7.1 | 7.4 |
| 2012 | 7.3 | 7.7 |
| 2013 | 7.4 | 7.7 |
| 2014 | 7.3 | 8.1 |
| 2015 | 7.5 | 8.1 |

Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Australia 2014-15*, Table 5.7¹²

While the rate of Queensland children in out-of-home care has increased over the past five years, the percentage change in increase has been smaller than the national average when comparing 2015 figures to the baseline reference year of 2010 (see Figure 2.4). The national rate of children in out-of-home care per 1,000 increased 14% between 2010 and 2015, whereas the rate of children per 1,000 in Queensland increased 9% (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Percentage change in the rate per 1,000 children in out-of-home care, Queensland and Australia, 2010-2015



Source: AIHW, *Child Protection Australia 2014-15*, Table 5.7¹³

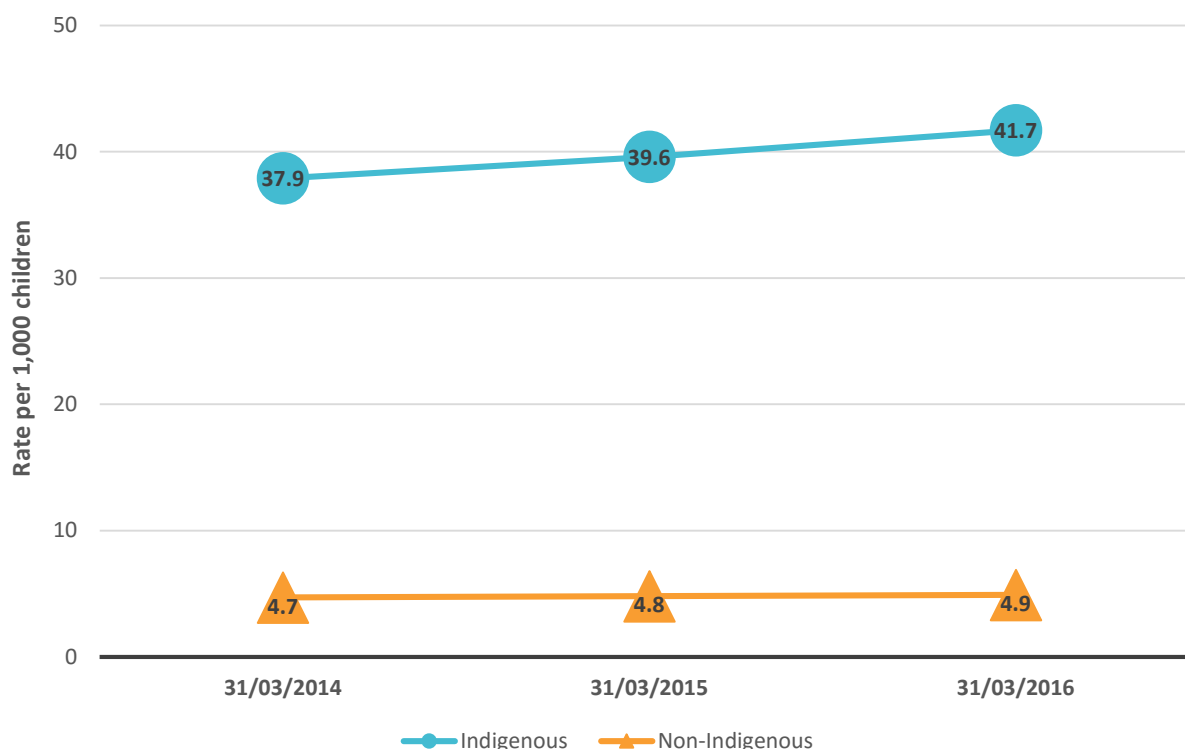
¹² Australian rates are affected by data caveats applicable to each individual jurisdiction. Rates published by AIHW were calculated using 2011 ABS Census data. Rates may differ from previous *Child Protection Australia* reports due to retrospective data updates. (AIHW, *Child protection Australia 2014-15*, Table 5.7, Notes).

¹³ Australian rates are affected by data caveats applicable to each individual jurisdiction. Rates published by AIHW were calculated using 2011 ABS Census data. Rates may differ from previous *Child Protection Australia* reports due to retrospective data updates. (AIHW, *Child protection Australia 2014-15*, Table 5.7, Notes).

In Queensland, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children per 1,000 in out-of-home care was consistently higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children between the year ending 31 March 2014 and the year ending 31 March 2016 (see Figure 2.5).

Over this time period, the difference between the two cohorts increased. In the year ending 31 March 2014, difference between the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children out-of-home care was 33.2 per 1,000. In the year ending 31 March 2016, this difference had increase to 36.8 per 1,000 children (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Rate of children per 1,000 aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016



Source: DCCSDS <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/>, accessed 4 July 2016

Additional information about children in out-of-home care is presented in section 2.3.

Children in out-of-home care

The rate of children per 1,000 in out-of-home care in Queensland is increasing.

However, the rate of children per 1,000 in out-of-home care is growing more slowly than the national average.

In Queensland, the rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care is higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children. The gap between the two cohorts has increased over the past three years.

2.2.3 Teenage births

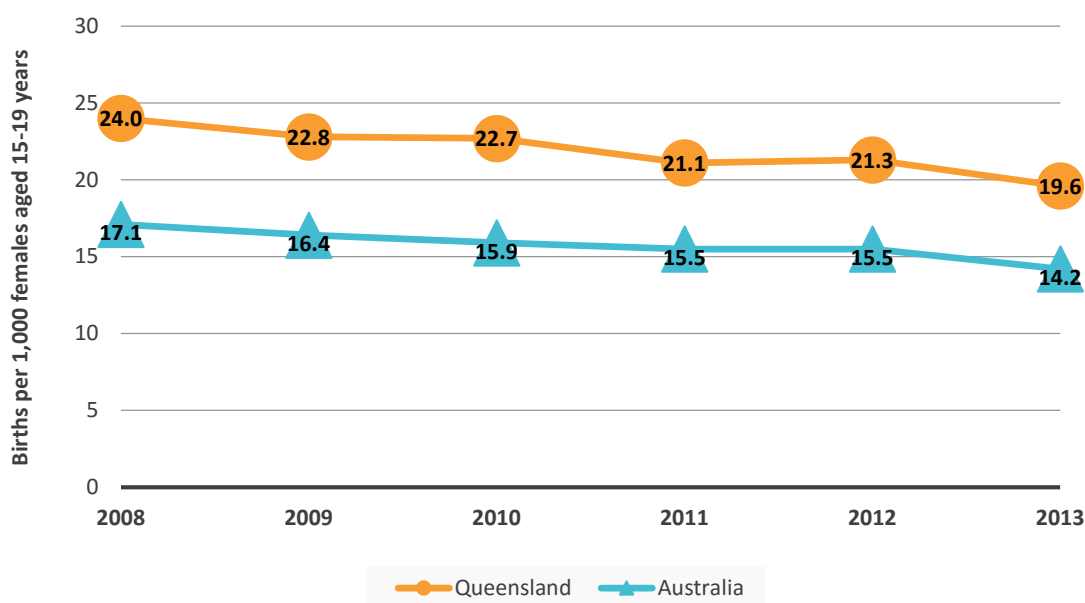
Teenage births can have significant short and long-term impacts, for both the mother and child. Babies born to teenage mothers have an increased risk of pre-term birth and low birth weight, as well as other complications associated with these risks.¹⁴ Both the mother and child are also at greater risk of experiencing, over the longer term, poorer health, education and socioeconomic outcomes.¹⁵

When considered in the context of other factors associated with child safety and wellbeing, teenage birth rates can be an indicator of future education and career prospects for women. Young mothers are more likely to drop out of education and work in low-paid jobs with long-term consequences on family welfare.¹⁶

The number of teenage births is measured as the rate of live births to women aged less than 20 years of age.¹⁷ The most recent AIHW data on teenage births is for 2013 and indicates a national teenage birth rate of 14.2 per 1,000 females. In comparison, the birth rate for teenage mothers in Queensland in 2013 was 19.6, well above the national rate.

In both Queensland and nationally, there has been a decline in the rate of teenage births over the past six years. Specifically, Figure 2.6 shows the Queensland rate has reduced from 24.0 in 2008 to 19.6 in 2013, while nationally the rate has decreased from 17.1 in 2008 to 14.2 in 2013.

Figure 2.6: Age-specific birth rate (births per 1,000 females) for women aged 15-19 years, Queensland and Australia, 2008 to 2013



Source: AIHW, *Children's Headline Indicators*, updated June 2016¹⁸

¹⁴ AIHW, updated 2016, *Child Health Risk Factors*, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-health/risk-factors/>, accessed 07/07/2016.

¹⁵ AIHW, updated 2016, *Children's Headline Indicators*, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>, accessed 07/07/2016.

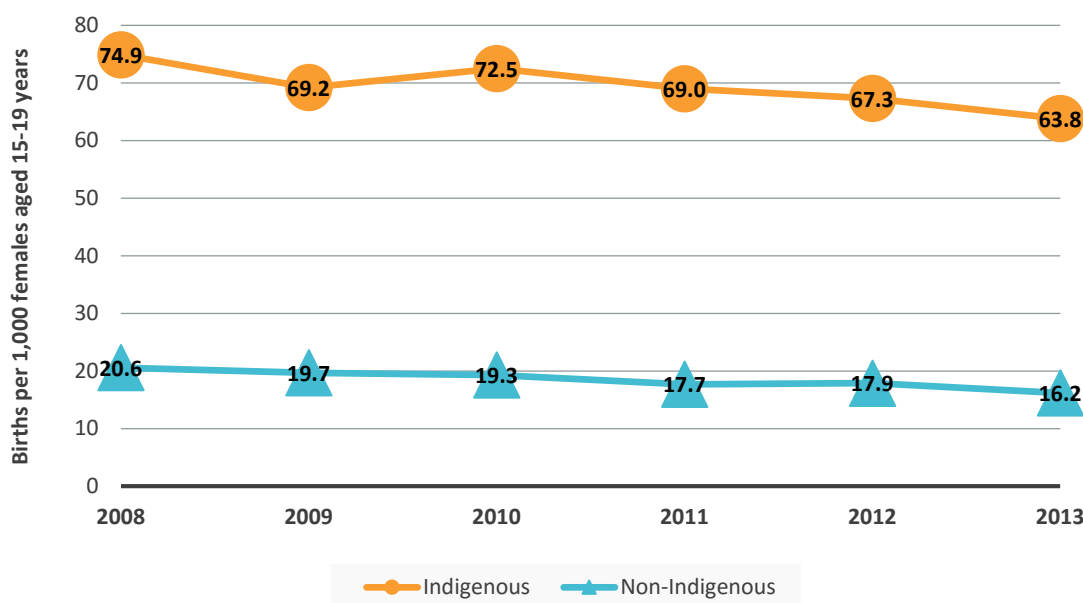
¹⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Jan 2014, *Fertility Indicators - Share of births outside marriage and teenage births*, http://www.oecd.org/els/family/SF2_4_Births_outside_marriage_and_teenage_births.pdf, accessed 30/07/2015.

¹⁷ Live births to mothers under 15 years of age are included in the numerator, but not denominator.

¹⁸ Data based on mother's place of usual residence. Excludes non-residents and records where state of usual residence was not stated, except in totals for Australia. Victoria provided provisional data in 2009, 2010 and 2012. The rates of 'total teenage birth' were recalculated in November 2014 by AIHW using estimates of Australia's resident population data (based on the ABS 2011 Census). AIHW utilises AIHW National Perinatal Data for number calculations.

Figure 2.7 shows the rate of teenage births for Indigenous mothers in Queensland is almost four times the rate of non-Indigenous mothers. However, the teenage birth rate for Indigenous mothers in Queensland is showing a similar decreasing trend (from 74.9 in 2008 to 63.8 in 2013) to the rate for non-Indigenous mothers (from 20.6 in 2008 to 16.2 in 2013).

Figure 2.7: Age specific birth rate (births per 1,000 females) for women aged 15-19 years by Indigenous status of mother, Queensland, 2008 to 2013



Source: AIHW, *Children's Headline Indicators*, updated June 2016¹⁹

Teenage births

The rate of teenage births in Queensland is declining over time.

The rate of teenage births in Queensland is higher than the national average.

The rate of teenage births to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers in Queensland, while decreasing, is almost four times the rate for non-Indigenous mothers.

2.2.4 Infants born of low birth weight

The proportion of live born infants weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth is a key indicator of infant health and a significant determining factor of a baby's chance at survival, good health, and development and wellbeing outcomes.

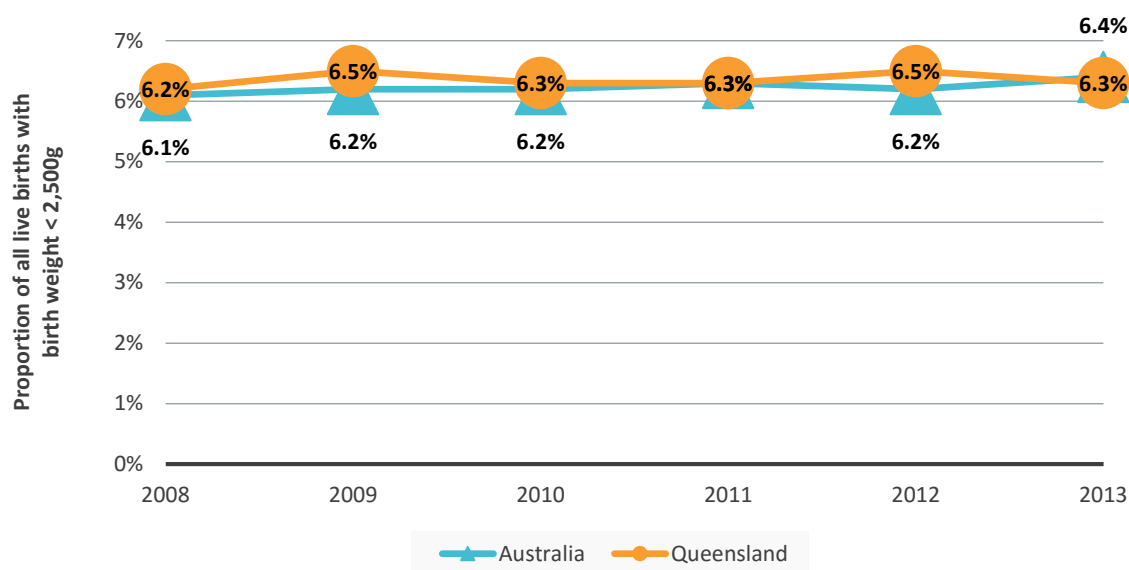
There are many factors that can contribute to low birth weight including: maternal age, illness in pregnancy, low socioeconomic status, multi-foetal pregnancy, maternal history of spontaneous

¹⁹ Data based on mother's place of usual residence. Excludes non-residents and records where state of usual residence was not stated, except in totals for Australia. Victoria provided provisional data in 2009, 2010 and 2012. The rates of 'total teenage birth' were recalculated in November 2014 by AIHW using estimates of Australia's resident population data (based on the ABS 2011 Census). AIHW utilises AIHW National Perinatal Data for number calculations.

abortion, harmful behaviours (drinking alcohol, smoking, drug taking), poor nutrition through pregnancy and poor pre-natal care.²⁰

The most recent AIHW data on birth weights is for 2013. Both nationally and for Queensland, specifically, there has been little change in the proportion of low birth weight babies over time²¹ (see Figure 2.8), with the proportion fluctuating just above 6 per cent. The proportion of liveborn infants born with a low birth weight in Queensland has remained relatively consistent, with only minor fluctuations between 2008 and 2013. The proportion of babies born with low birth weight in Queensland is similar to the national average.

Figure 2.8: Liveborn infants with a low birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (as a proportion of all live births), Queensland and Australia, 2008 to 2013



Source: AIHW, *Children's Headline Indicators*, updated June 2016²²

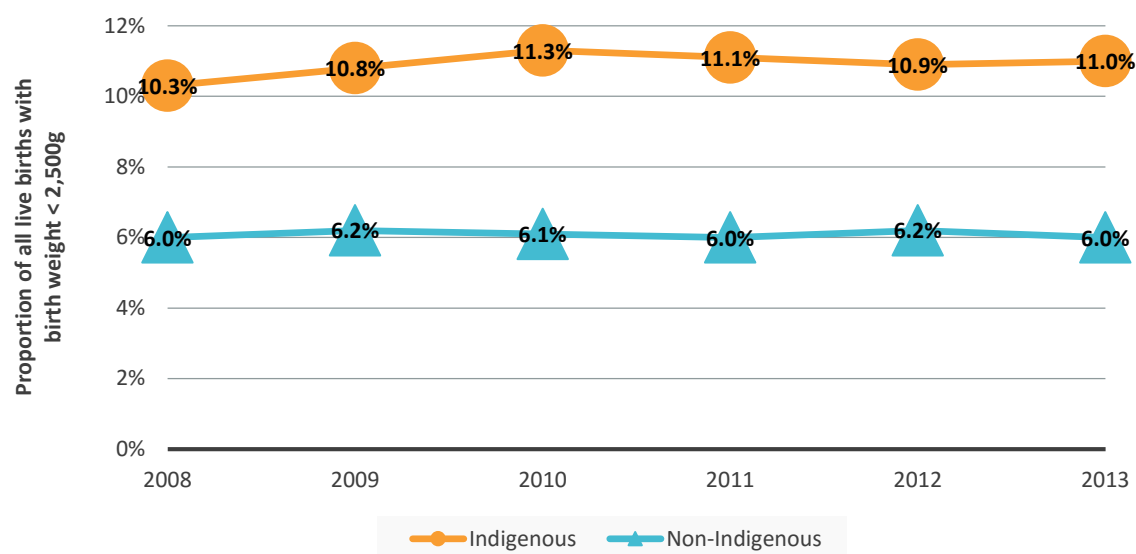
Figure 2.9 shows the proportion of low birth weight babies for Indigenous mothers in Queensland is almost double the proportion of non-Indigenous mothers. The variation in the proportion of low birth weight babies for Indigenous mothers in Queensland (10.3-11.3%) during the period is slightly greater than the more stable trend for non-Indigenous mothers (6.0-6.2%), although this is to be expected given the difference in the size of the populations.

²⁰ National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, 2013, *Technical paper on operational definitions and data issues for key national indicators*, p9.

²¹ AIHW, *Children's Headline Indicators, Low birth weight*, updated June, 2016.

²² Includes live born babies of at least 400 grams birth weight or at least 20 weeks gestation (excludes stillborn babies). Victorian provided provisional data in 2009, 2010 and 2012. This would be reflected in the Australian rate calculation. AIHW utilises AIHW National Perinatal Data for number calculations.

Figure 2.9: Liveborn infants with a low birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (as a proportion of all live births) by Indigenous status of mother, Queensland, 2008 to 2013



Source: AIHW, *Children's Headline Indicators*, updated June 2016²³

Infants born of low birth weight

The proportion of low birth weight babies in Queensland is stable over time.

The proportion of low birth weight babies in Queensland is consistent with the national average.

The proportion of low birth weight babies born to Indigenous mothers in Queensland is almost double the proportion for non-Indigenous mothers.

2.2.5 Child homicide

Child homicide is measured nationally as the rate of children aged 0–17 years subject to homicide or death from fatal outcomes of intentionally inflicted wounds.²⁴ While child homicide is a rare event, this data is a key indicator of the nature and level of extreme and serious interpersonal violence experienced by an extremely vulnerable cohort.

During the two financial years 2010–11 to 2011–12 in Australia, there were 62 deaths nationally due to homicide among children aged 0–17, representing a population rate of 0.6 per 100,000 children.²⁵

Figure 2.10 shows the rates of death due to homicide across age groups within Queensland during the two year period were quite different in comparison to national rates, as Queensland reported a higher rate of child homicide among children younger than one year (5.8 compared with 2.2 nationally), yet reported no homicide-related deaths for the older category of 15–17 year olds

²³ Includes live born babies of at least 400 grams birth weight or at least 20 weeks gestation (excludes stillborn babies). Victorian provided provisional data in 2009, 2010 and 2012. This would be reflected in the Australian rate calculation. AIHW utilises AIHW National Perinatal Data for number calculations.

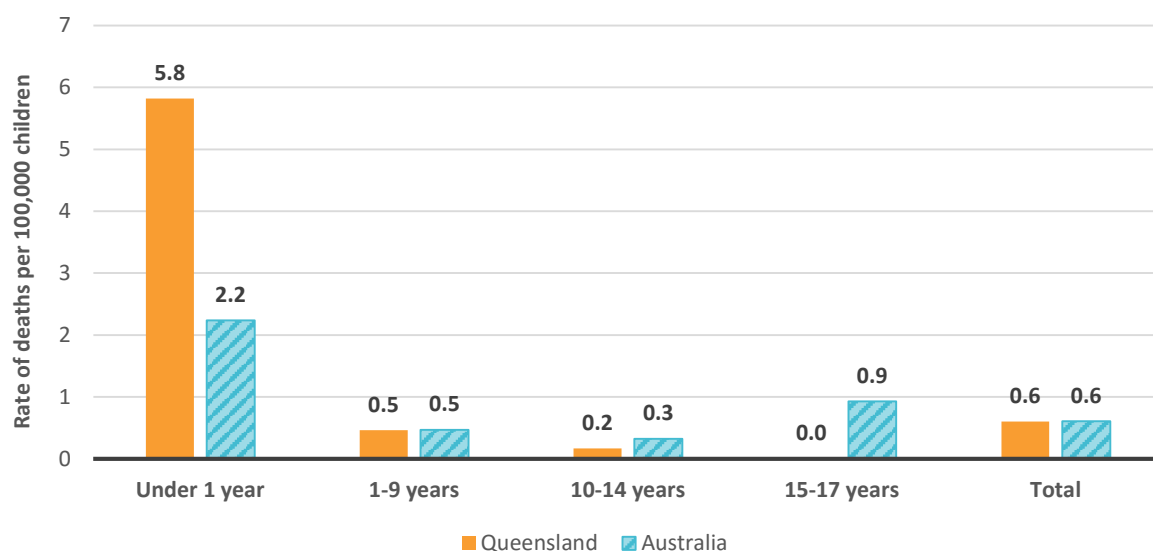
²⁴ National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020, *Technical paper on operational definitions and data issues for key national indicators* (NHMP), p11.

²⁵ Australian Institute of Criminology (2015). *Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12: National Homicide Monitoring Program Report (NHMPR)*, p18. The definition of homicide in the NHMPR utilises the operational definition consistent with police throughout Australia "all cases resulting in a person or persons being charged with murder or manslaughter; all murder-suicides classed as murder by police"; and "all other deaths classed by police as homicides (including infanticides), whether or not an offender has been apprehended" (NHMPR, 2015, p. 1).

(compared with 0.9 nationally). Queensland child homicide data recorded by the QFCC Queensland Child Death Register categorises child homicide as ‘fatal assault and neglect’.

However due to the extremely low numbers of deaths due to homicide in children, caution should be exercised when interpreting these rates. Indigenous status of victims was included in the AIC *Homicide in Australia (2010-2012)* report ²⁶, but this particular data is not disaggregated by age. As a result, the number of child homicide victims who may have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander could not be specified for inclusion in this report.

Figure 2.10: Deaths due to homicide among children aged 0-17 years (rate per 100,000), Queensland and Australia, 2010-11 and 2011-12



Source: Australian Institute of Criminology National Homicide Monitoring Program, *Homicide in Australia 2010-2011 to 2011-2012*; 2015

Child homicide

All child deaths in Queensland are reported by the Queensland Family and Child Commission, *The Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland*.

At the time of this report, national homicide data beyond 2011-12 has not been released by the Australian Institute of Criminology. Noting the data is from 2012, Queensland’s rate of homicide for children under one year was higher than the national average.

The number of child homicide victims who may have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander could not be specified for inclusion in this report.

²⁶ Australian Institute of Criminology (2015). *Homicide in Australia: 2010-11 to 2011-12: National Homicide Monitoring Program Report (NHMPR)*, p18. The definition of homicide in the NHMPR utilises the operational definition consistent with police throughout Australia “all cases resulting in a person or persons being charged with murder or manslaughter; all murder-suicides classed as murder by police”; and “all other deaths classed by police as homicides (including infanticides), whether or not an offender has been apprehended” (NHMPR, 2015, p. 1).

2.2.6 Early childhood development

Early childhood development can impact a child throughout life, including their future life successes, physical health and emotional wellbeing. There are multiple factors which impact childhood development including, for example, families, communities, broader social norms as well as government policies and practices.²⁷

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is completed by teachers in a child's first full-time schooling year (prep through to before commencing grade one) and occurs every three years. The AEDC measures five domains of early childhood development:

1. physical health and wellbeing
2. social competence
3. emotional maturity
4. language and cognitive skills (schools-based)
5. communication skills and general knowledge.

The AEDC results are then reported as average scores and proportions of children who are determined as 'developmentally vulnerable', 'developmentally at-risk', or 'developmentally on track'.²⁸ The National Framework indicator is the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC.

The AEDC was completed in 2009, 2012 and 2015. In all three years, a higher proportion of Queensland children were identified as developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains than the national average.

In 2015, 26.1 per cent of Queensland children were reported as developmentally vulnerable, compared with 22.0 per cent of children nationally (see Figure 2.11). Similarly, in Queensland, 14.0 per cent of children were reported as developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains, compared with 11.1 per cent of children nationally.

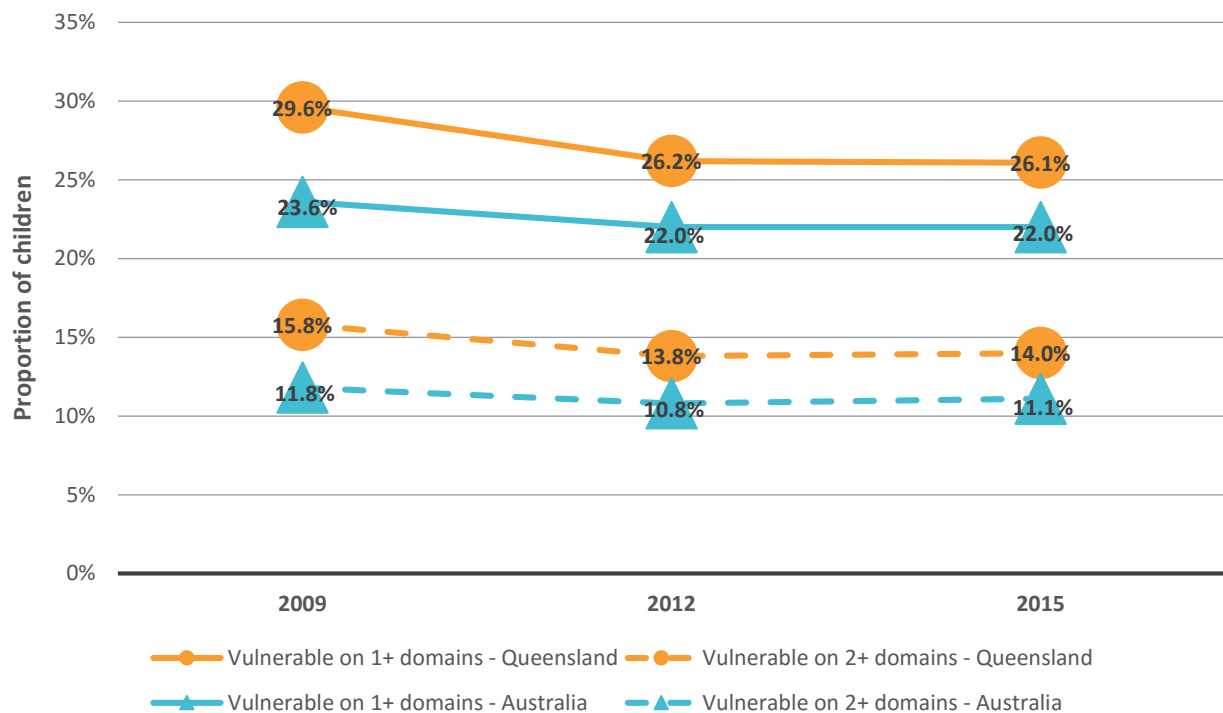
This difference is not surprising as Queensland has consistently reported lower proportions of children 'on track' than national proportions for each individual domain. It is positive to note, however, there has been a decrease in Queensland's proportion of children developmentally vulnerable between the years 2009 and 2015. For example, the proportion of children reported to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains is down from 29.6 per cent in 2009 to 26.1 per cent in 2015 (see Figure 2.11).

Data published by AEDC is not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

²⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Early Development Index, 2014-2015, *What influences child development*, <http://www.aedc.gov.au/communities/aedc-userguide/understanding/what-influences-child-development>, accessed 31/07/2015

²⁸ Children falling below the 10th percentile are categorised as 'developmentally vulnerable' while children falling between the 10th-25th percentiles are categorised as 'developmentally at risk' (*AEDC National Report 2015*, p.8, accessed 8/7/2016). Children who score above the 25th percentile (in the top 75 per cent) of the national AEDC population are categorised as 'developmentally on track'. (*AEDC, How to understand the AEDC results*, accessed 31/7/2015).

Figure 2.11: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more AECD domains, Queensland and Australia, 2009, 2012 and 2015



Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2015, Queensland and national emerging trends (2009, 2012, and 2015)²⁹

Early childhood development

The proportion of Queensland children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains is declining over time.

The proportion of Queensland children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains is higher than the national average.

The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains by Indigenous status was not included in this report, as data published by AECD is not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

2.2.7 Family economic situation

Low family income can adversely affect the health, education and self-esteem of children. Regular adequate income is the single most important indicator of their financial situation.³⁰

The headline indicator for ‘family economic situation’ is the average income of households with children aged 0–12 years in the second and third income deciles³¹, as captured in the biannual Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Income and Housing.

²⁹ The AEDC data is a population measure of child development only. Data are only included when there are more than 15 children and two teachers participating in the survey within each geographical area.

³⁰ AIHW, *Families and communities*. Accessed online (11/7/2016) from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-health/families-and-communities/#safety>

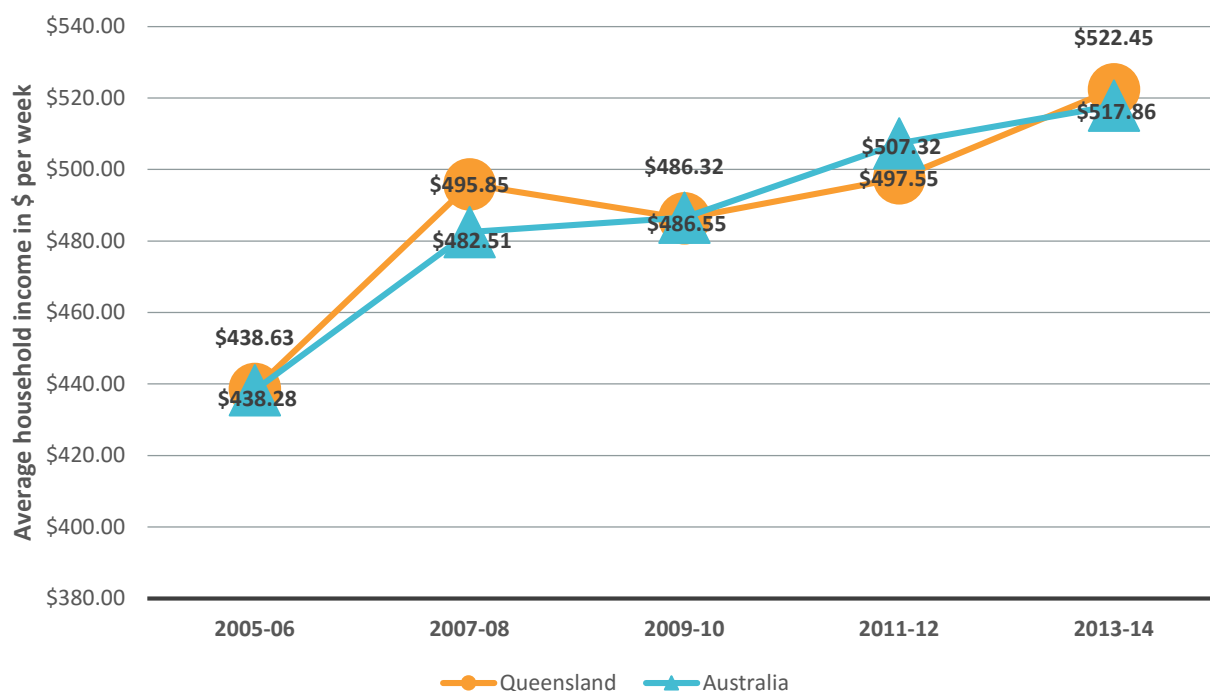
³¹ Income deciles are groupings that result from ranking either all households or all persons in the population in ascending order according to income, and then dividing the population into ten equal groups, each comprising approximately 10% of the estimated population. The first decile contains the bottom 10%, the second decile contains the next 10%, and the tenth decile contains the top 10%. Income which is not stated or not known is excluded from the calculation of deciles.

This economic indicator is important as families without adequate income are more likely to have insufficient resources to support a minimum standard of living, thus adversely affecting: a child's nutrition, education, access to medical care; a child's health and wellbeing and its standard and quality of living'; the child's safety environment and the family's ability to provide appropriate housing, heating and clothing.³²

Figure 2.12 shows the average household income³³ for low income Queensland families is similar to the national average, with minor fluctuations above and below the national figure over time. In the 2013-14 survey, the average household income for low income Queensland families (\$522.45/week) was slightly greater than the national average (\$517.86).

Household incomes for low income families in Queensland and nationally have markedly improved since 2005-06 when the average weekly household income for low income families in Australia was only \$438.28. Data is not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Figure 2.12: Average household income (\$ per week) for low income households with dependent children aged 0-12 years in the second and third deciles, Queensland and Australia, 2005-06 to 2013-14



Source: AIHW, 2016, *Children's Headline indicators*. Indicator 16: Family economic situation. Accessed online (7/7/2016) from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>.

³² AIHW, *Families and communities*. Accessed online (11/7/2016) from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-health/families-and-communities/#safety>

³³ Household indicator data are derived from the ABS Survey of Income and Housing and represents the average equivalised disposable income in low income households (defined as those in the 2nd & 3rd income deciles) with children aged 0-12 years (which is total household income left after tax, that has been adjusted to account for the number of people living in the house and number of household incomes). Data for all years is expressed in 2013-14 dollars.

Family economic situation

The average household income of low income Queensland households with children aged 0-12 years in the second and third deciles is increasing over time.

The average household income of low income Queensland households with children aged 0-12 years in the second and third deciles is similar to the national average.

The average household income of low income Queensland households with children aged 0-12 years in the second and third deciles by Indigenous status was not included in this report.

The Indigenous status of households was not included in this report, as data published by AECD is not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

2.3 Performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care in the *Report on Government Services*

This section presents data against the following effectiveness output measures:

- Response times to commence and complete investigations (see section 2.3.1)
- Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated (see section 2.3.2)
- Stability of placement (see section 2.3.3)
- Children aged under 12 years in home-based care (see section 2.3.4)
- Placement with extended family (see section 2.3.5)
- Placement in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (see section 2.3.6)
- Children with current case plans (see section 2.3.7).

This section reports the data for each indicator in terms of trends in Queensland over time. Where possible and appropriate, Queensland trends are compared to the national average. Due to difference in policy, practice and reporting, Queensland data is not always comparable to data from other jurisdictions. Thus trends in Queensland are compared to the national average using percentage change, as opposed to raw data. Where available, data is disaggregated by Indigenous status.

For each indicator, a breakout box has been included to highlight the findings QFCC is required to report on, including:

- Queensland's performance over time
- Queensland's performance in comparison to other jurisdictions (where available)
- Queensland's performance in relation to the number of and/or outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

2.3.1 Response time to commence and complete investigations

Response times are compared against two measures:

- a) Response time to commence investigations** which refers to the number of days between the date a department records a notification and the date the investigation commences.
- b) Response time to complete investigations** as measured by the number of days between the date a department records a notification and the date the investigation outcome is determined.

There are significant differences between jurisdictions in regards to the stage at which a notification is counted and recorded, the action constituting the commencement of an investigation, and the policy and legislative requirements for commencement timeframes based on the seriousness of the concern.

Queensland remains the only jurisdiction to respond to all notifications by conducting an investigation and assessment.

Given the extent of these policy and legislative differences, data in this section are not compared to the data from other jurisdictions. Trends over time within Queensland are considered for both time to commence and time to complete an investigation.

Further discussion about commencement response times in Queensland is provided in section 3.3.2.

a) Time to commence investigations

Response time to commence investigations refers to the number of days between the date a department records a notification and the date the investigation commences.

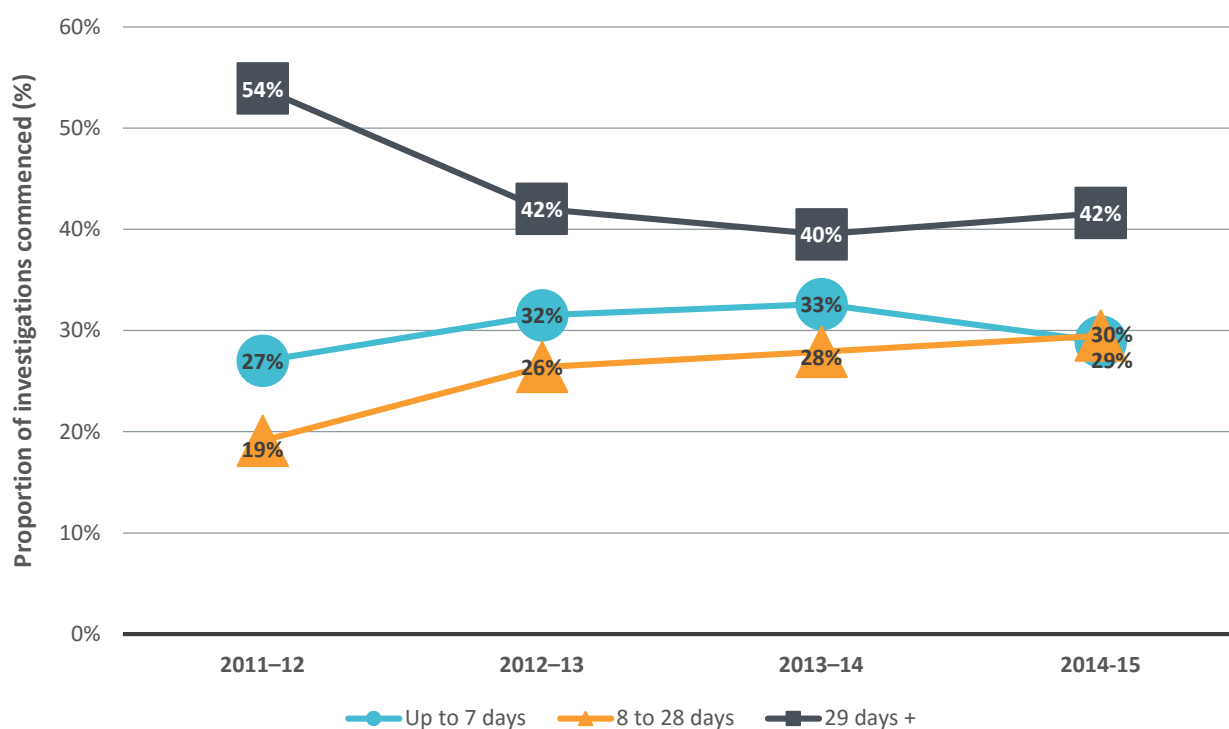
Figure 2.13 shows there was considerable change in the response time to commence investigations between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 in Queensland.

The proportion of investigations commenced in seven days or less grew from 27 per cent in 2011-2012 to 32 per cent in 2012-2013 and 33 per cent in 2013-2014. However, the proportion of investigations commenced within this timeframe fell to 29 per cent in 2014-2015 (see Figure 2.13).

The proportion of investigations commenced between eight and 28 days grew each year between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 (see Figure 2.13).

As a result of these increases, the proportion of investigations commenced in 29 days or more fell sharply between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 from 54 per cent to 42 per cent. For the remainder of the time period, there was little change in this category between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 (see Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13: Proportion of investigations commenced by time taken to commence investigation, Queensland, 2011-12 to 2014-15



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.15

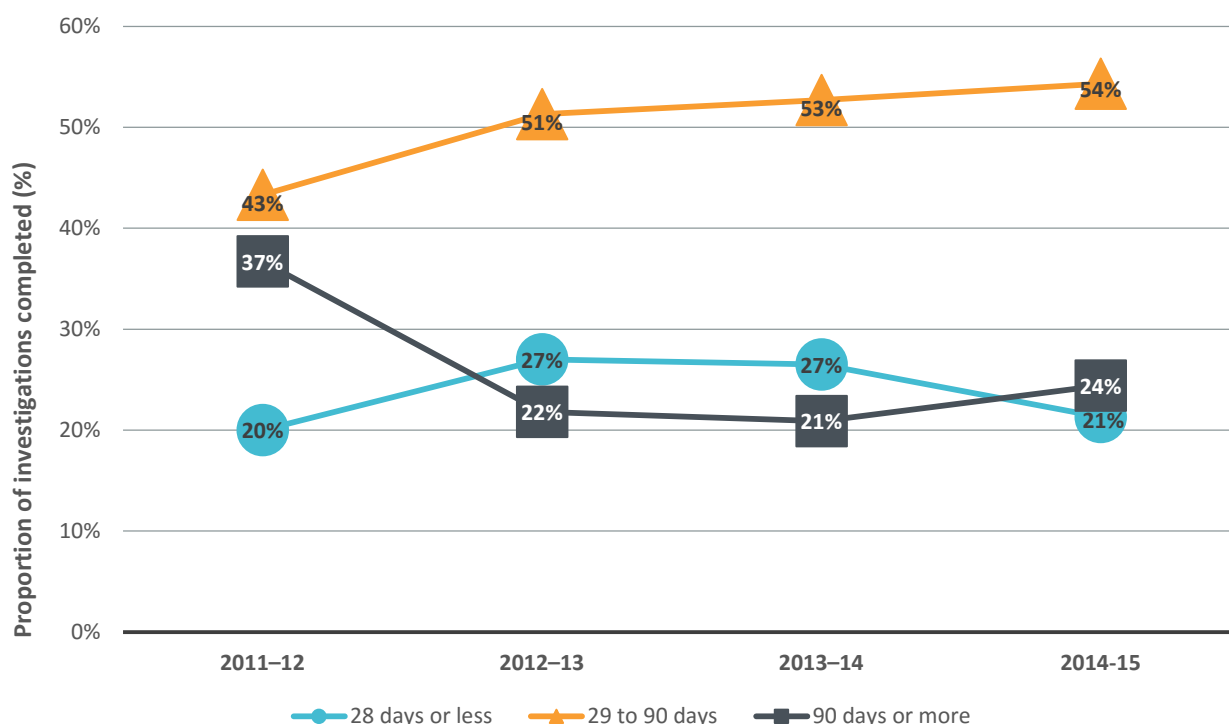
b) Times to complete investigations

Response time to complete investigations is measured by the number of days between the date a department records a notification and the date the investigation outcome is determined. It can be a measure of a department's effectiveness in conducting timely investigations.

In 2014-15, 21.3 per cent of investigations in Queensland were completed within 28 days. The proportion of investigations completed in Queensland within 28 days had increased from 20.0 per cent in 2011-12 to 26.5 per cent in 2013-14 but then decreased to 21.3 per cent in 2014-15 (see Figure 2.14).

Similarly, the proportion of investigations in Queensland taking more than 90 days to complete had decreased from 36.7 per cent in 2011-12 to 20.9 per cent of all finalised investigations in 2013-14 but has since increased to 24.4 per cent in 2014-15. The proportion of investigations taking 29-90 days has steadily increased from 43.3 per cent in 2011-12 to 54.3 per cent in 2014-15 (see Figure 2.14).

Figure 2.14: Proportion of investigations finalised by time taken to complete investigation, Queensland, 2011-12 to 2014-15



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.16

Response time to commence and complete an investigation

Response time to commence an investigation in Queensland changed sharply after 2011-12, and has shown only minor fluctuations since then. The proportion of investigations commenced in 29 days or more decreased sharply between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 as a result of an increase in the proportion of investigations commenced within 28 days or less (see Figure 2.13).

Response time to complete an investigation shows a similar pattern over the time period. There was an overall decline in the proportion of investigations finalised in 90 days or more, an increase in the proportion of those finalised within 29 to 90 days, and fluctuation in the proportion finalised in 28 days or less (see Figure 2.14).

Due to considerable differences in policy and legislation, these data have not been compared to the national average.

These data are not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

2.3.2 Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated

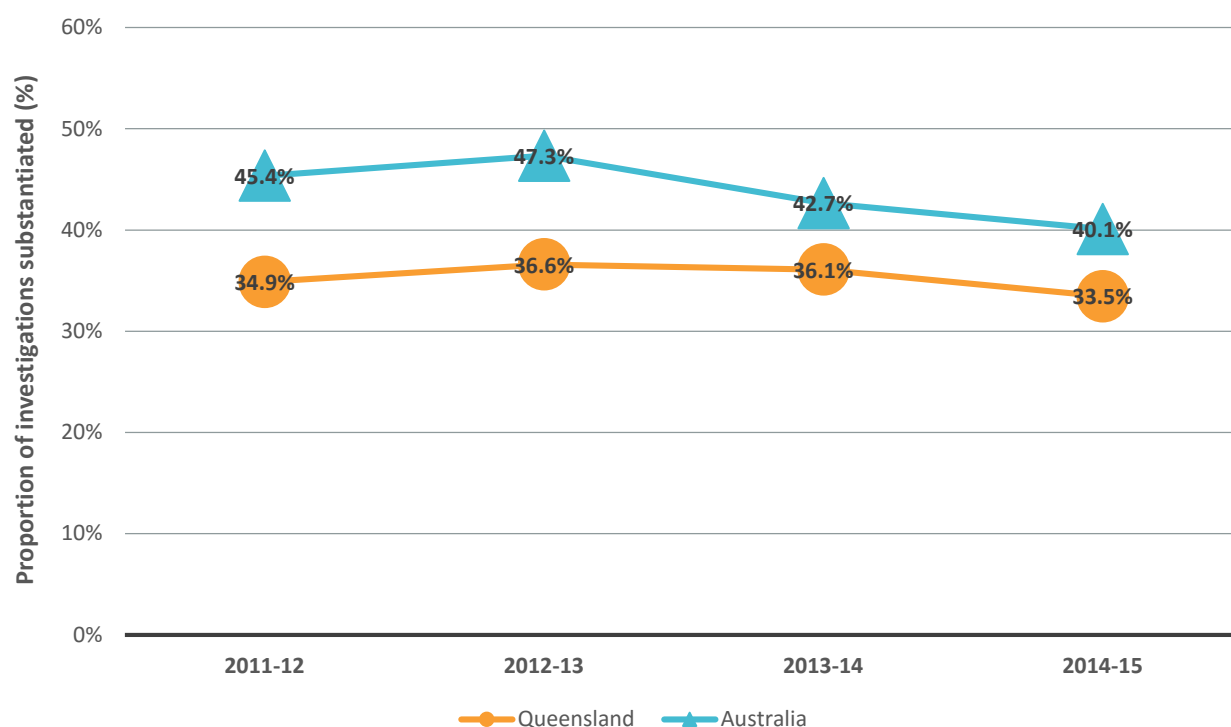
Under the ROGS indicator framework, substantiation rate is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where abuse or neglect or risk of abuse or neglect was confirmed.

The substantiation rate provides an indication of the extent to which government avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no abuse or neglect had occurred or was at risk of occurring. Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable as a very low substantiation rate might indicate notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted to appropriate cases whereas a very high substantiation rate might indicate the criteria for substantiation are unnecessarily bringing 'lower risk' families into the statutory system.

Queensland's rate of finalised investigations where harm or risk of harm was substantiated in 2014-15 was 33.5 per cent (see Figure 2.15). The proportion of finalised investigations substantiated in Queensland fluctuated slightly between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 (see Figure 2.15).

The proportion of finalised investigations substantiated in Queensland was consistently lower than the Australian proportion over this time period (see Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15: Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Queensland and Australia 2011–2012 to 2014–2015



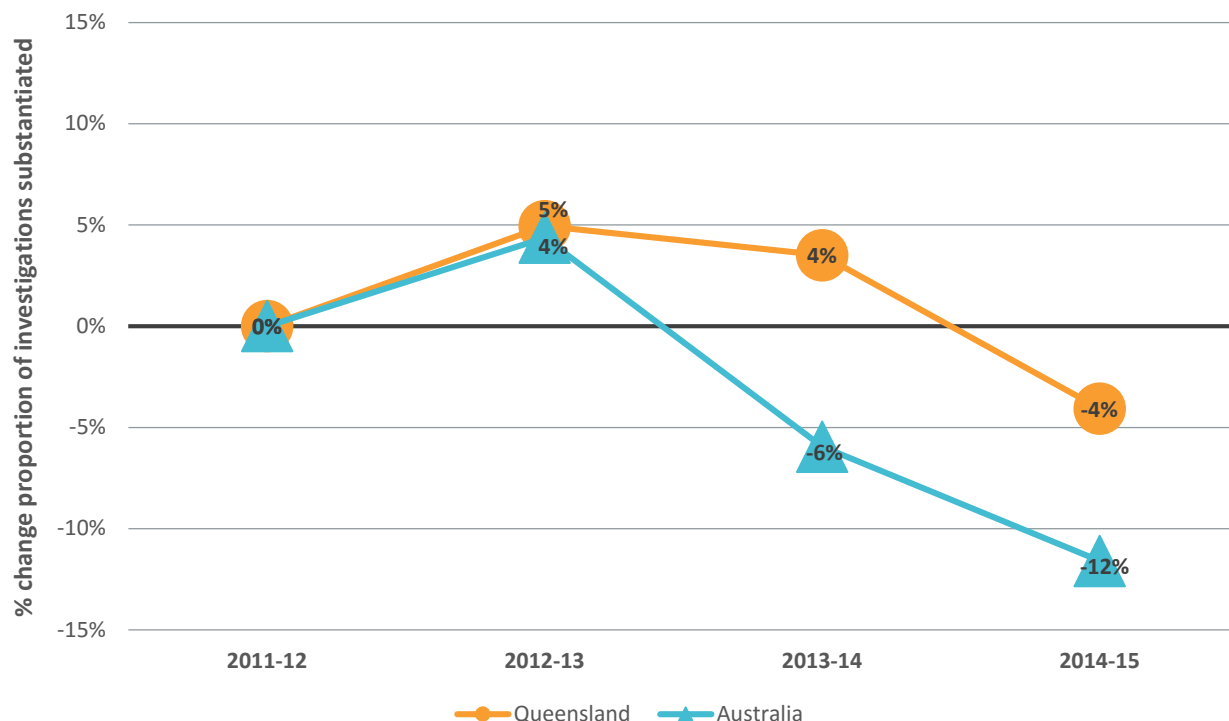
Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.9

There are some issues with comparing substantiations data across jurisdictions as states have differences in the threshold for recording a substantiation. Care should be taken when interpreting these data.

For this reason, Figure 2.16 shows the percentage change in the proportion of investigations where harm or risk of harm was substantiated over time, comparing the Queensland to the national average using 2011-2012 as the baseline reference year.

As Figure 2.16 demonstrates, both datasets show a somewhat similar pattern, although the Australian proportion decreased at a greater rate than the Queensland proportion between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015.

Figure 2.16: Percentage change in the proportion of substantiated investigations, Queensland and Australia, 2011-2012 to 2014-2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.9

Proportion of investigations substantiated

The proportion of finalised investigations substantiated in Queensland has remained relatively steady over time, at or just above one third of investigations.

The proportion of finalised investigations substantiated in Australia has fluctuated, but shows a greater overall decrease than the Queensland proportion.

This data is not disaggregated by Indigenous status.

2.3.3 Stability of placement

Stability of placement is one indicator of how well the needs of children in out-of-home care are being met. The Productivity Commission measures stability of placement as the proportion of children on an order who exited care during the period, by their number of placements and their length of time in out-of-home care.

In general, a low number of child placements is desirable but this must be balanced against other considerations such as compliance with Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings. These data are comparable across jurisdictions.

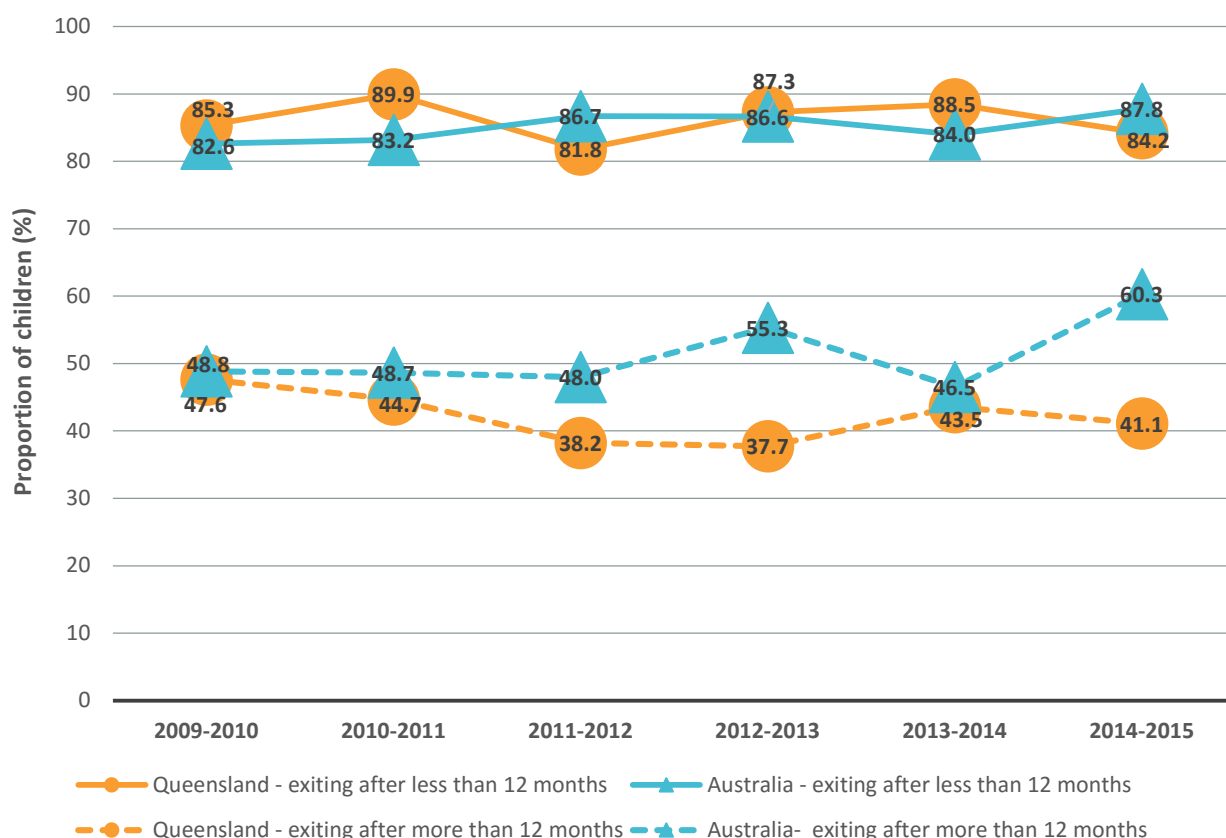
In Queensland between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 the proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after less than 12 months in one to two placements has fluctuated (see

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Figure 2.17). In contrast, the Australian average shows less fluctuation over this time period. In general, the proportion of children in Queensland exiting care after less than 12 months in one to two placements is similar to the Australian average (see Figure 2.17).

For children exiting care after more than 12 months between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, Queensland consistently reported a lower proportion of children in one to two placements than the national average (see Figure 2.17).

Figure 2.17: Proportion of children exiting care in one to two placements by length of time in care, Queensland and Australia, 2009-2010 to 2014-2015

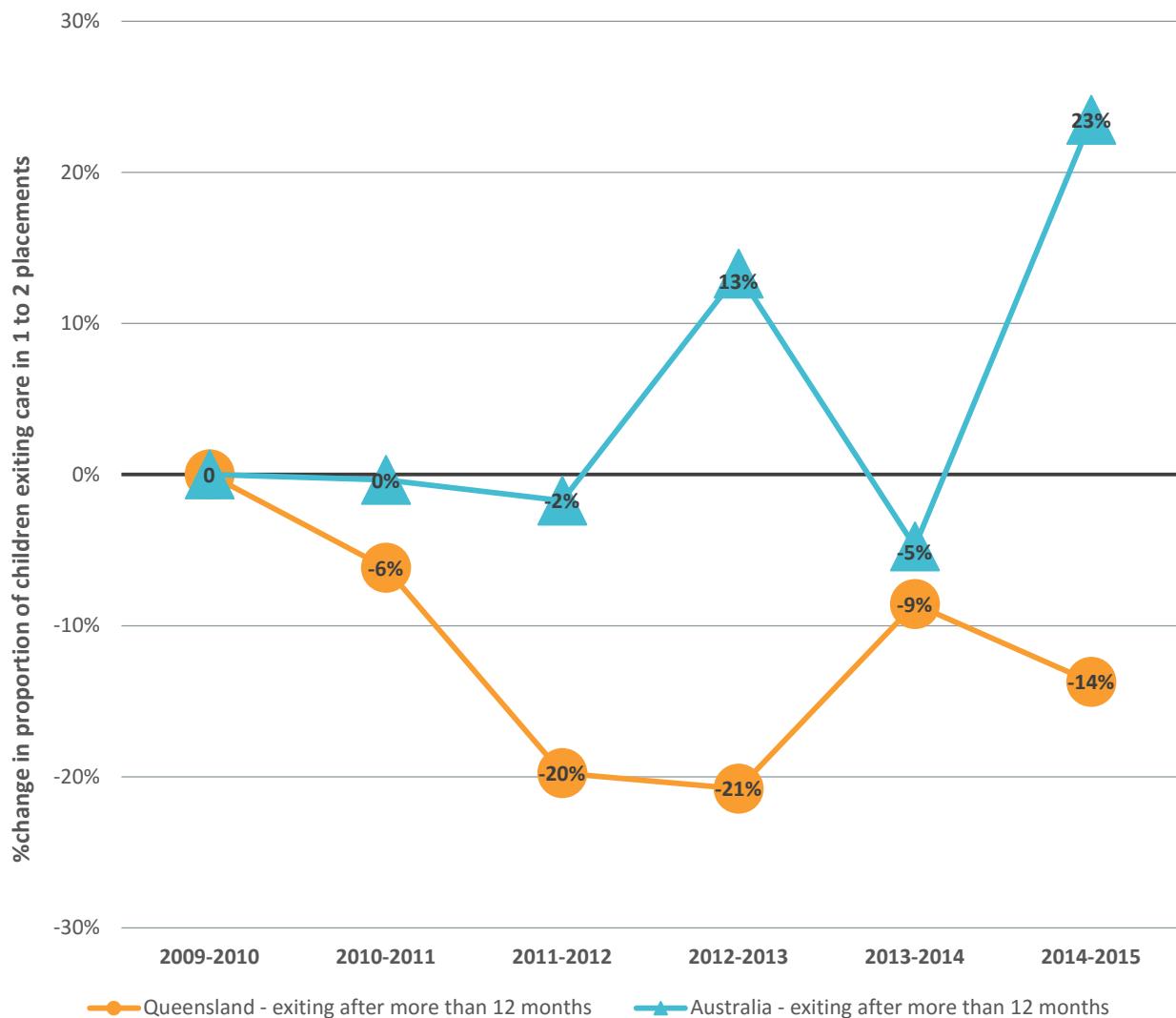


Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.26

Both the Queensland data and the Australian average fluctuated over this period (see Figure 2.17). However, comparing percentage change in the proportion of children exiting care in one to two placements using 2009–2010 as the baseline reference year, the Queensland data generally show a declining proportion (see Figure 2.18).

In contrast, the Australian average shows smaller decreases in the proportion of children exiting care after more than 12 months in one to two placements, as well as some increases over the time period (see Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18: Percentage change in the proportion of children exiting care after more than 12 months in one to two placements, Queensland and Australia, 2009-2010 to 2014-2015

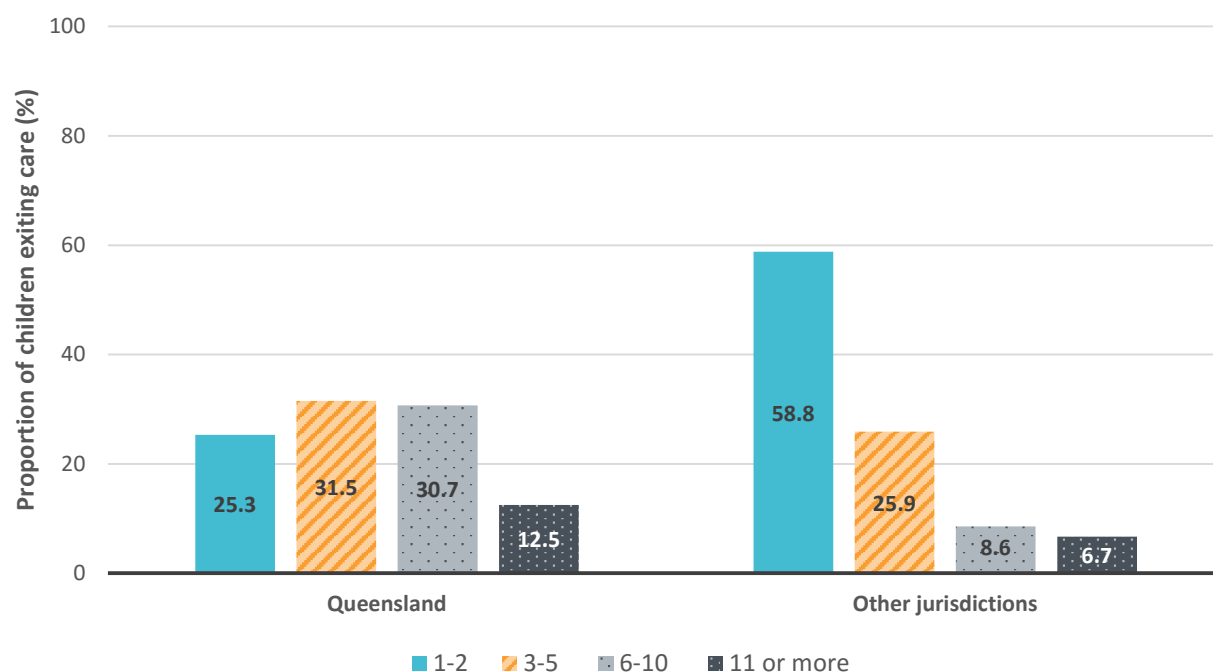


Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.26

In 2014-15, in comparison to other jurisdictions, Queensland children exiting after five or more years in out-of-home care are less likely to have been in one or two placements compared to the average across other jurisdictions.

Exiting after five or more years in care, only 25.3 per cent of Queensland children in 2014-15 had experienced one or two placements, compared to 58.8 per cent across all other states and territories (see Figure 2.19). The proportion of children exiting care in Queensland with 11 or more placements (12.5%) was also higher than the national average of 6.7 per cent.

Figure 2.19: Proportion of children exiting out-of-home care after five or more years by number of placements, Queensland and Australia, 2014-2015

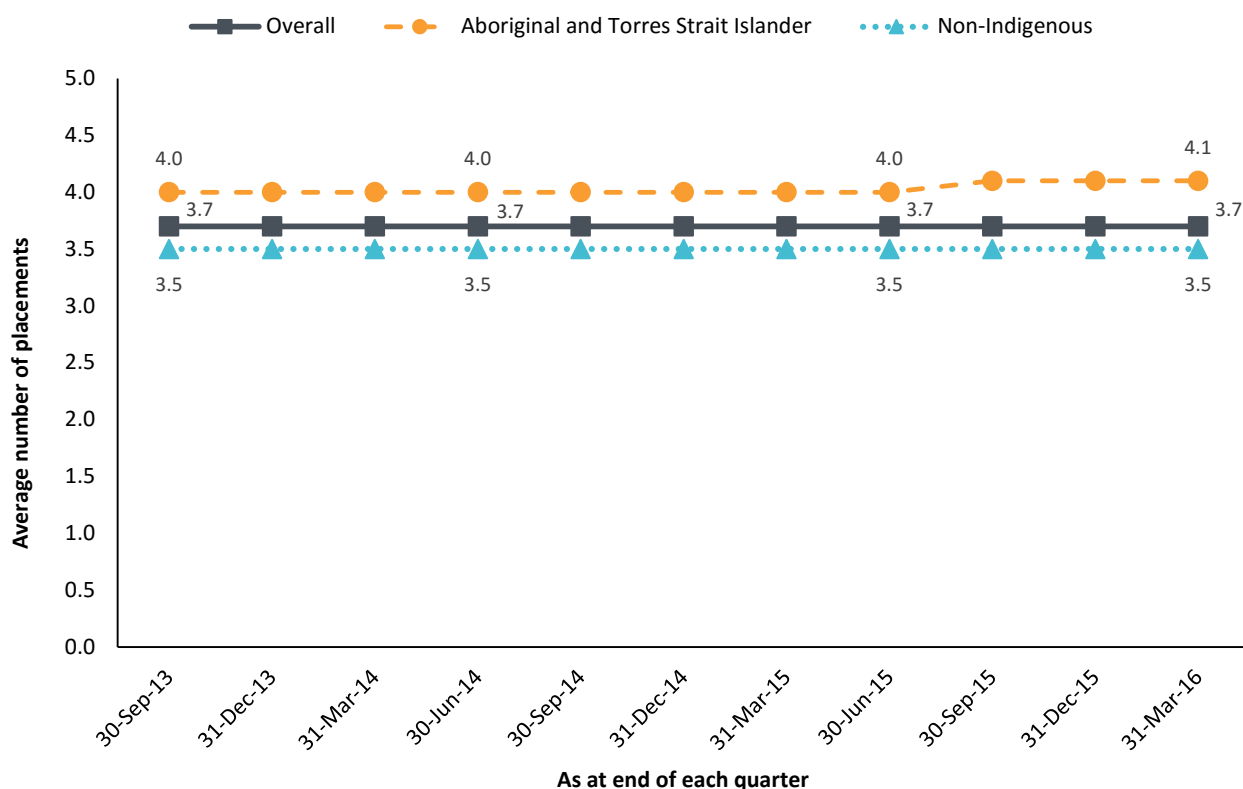


Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.26

Figure 2.20 shows in Queensland between 30 September 2013 and 31 March 2016, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children consistently reported a higher number of placements, on average, than non-Indigenous children.

Over this time period, the average number of placements for non-Indigenous children remained steady at 3.5. The average number of placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was steady between 30 September 2013 and 30 June 2015 at 4, but grew slightly to 4.1 placements after this time point (see Figure 2.20).

Figure 2.20: Average number of placements for children in out-of-home care in Queensland disaggregated by Indigenous status, September 2013 to March 2016



Source: DCCSDS <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/>, accessed 4 July 2016

Stability of placement

The proportion of children in Queensland exiting care with one to two placements fluctuated over time.

In comparison to other jurisdictions in 2014-2015, Queensland children were more likely to experience a higher number of placements when exiting care after more than five years compared to the Australian average.

The average number of placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is higher than the average for non-Indigenous children.

2.3.4 Children aged under 12 years in home-based care

Home-based care is generally considered the best option for caring for children, especially younger children, as opposed to residential care or group home settings. This measure is defined as the number of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care.

In Queensland, the proportion of children under 12 years placed in home-based care has remained relatively steady, at over 97 per cent of all children in out-of-home care between 2012 and 2015 (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Proportion of children under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012–2015

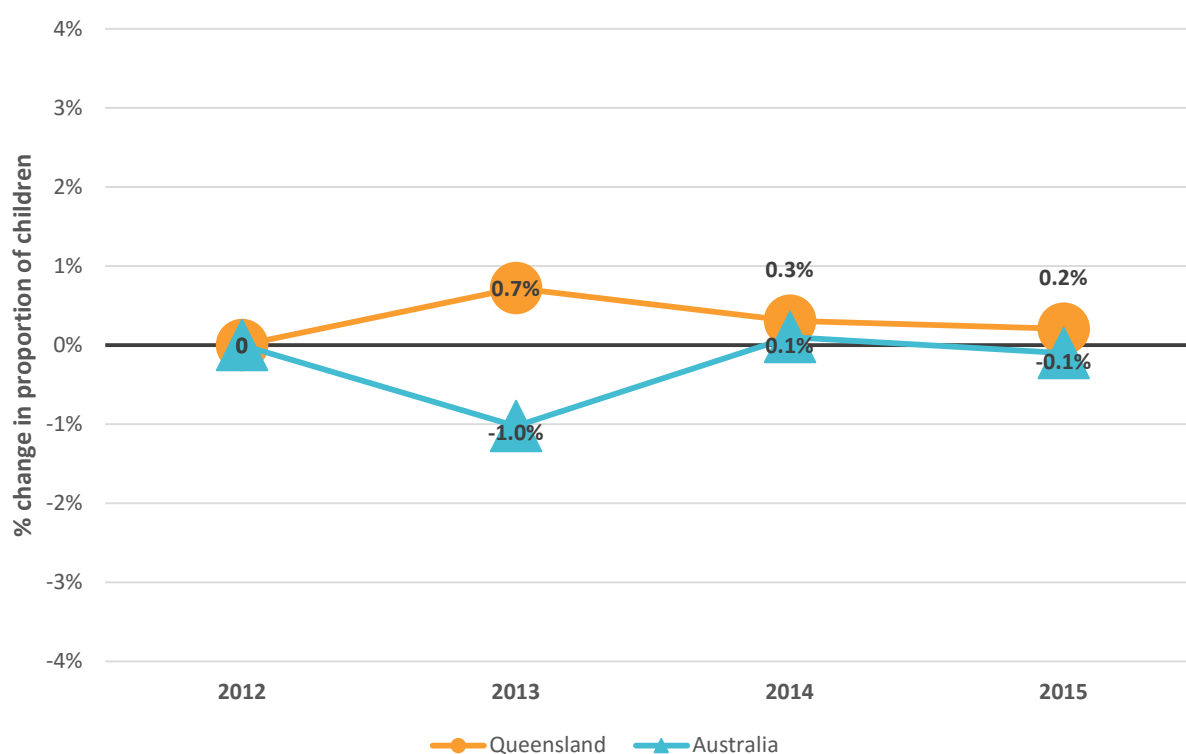
| Year ending | Queensland | Australia |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 30-Jun-12 | 97.4% | 97.5% |
| 30-Jun-13 | 98.1% | 96.5% |
| 30-Jun-14 | 97.7% | 97.6% |
| 30-Jun-15 | 97.6% | 97.4% |

Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.25

Figure 2.21 shows the percentage change in the proportion of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care, comparing change in the Queensland data to the Australian average using the year ending 30 June 2012 as the baseline reference year.

As Figure 2.21 highlights both the Queensland and Australian data have remained relatively steady over this time with percentage changes of one per cent or less compared to the baseline reference year.

Figure 2.21: Percentage change in the proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012 to 30 June 2015

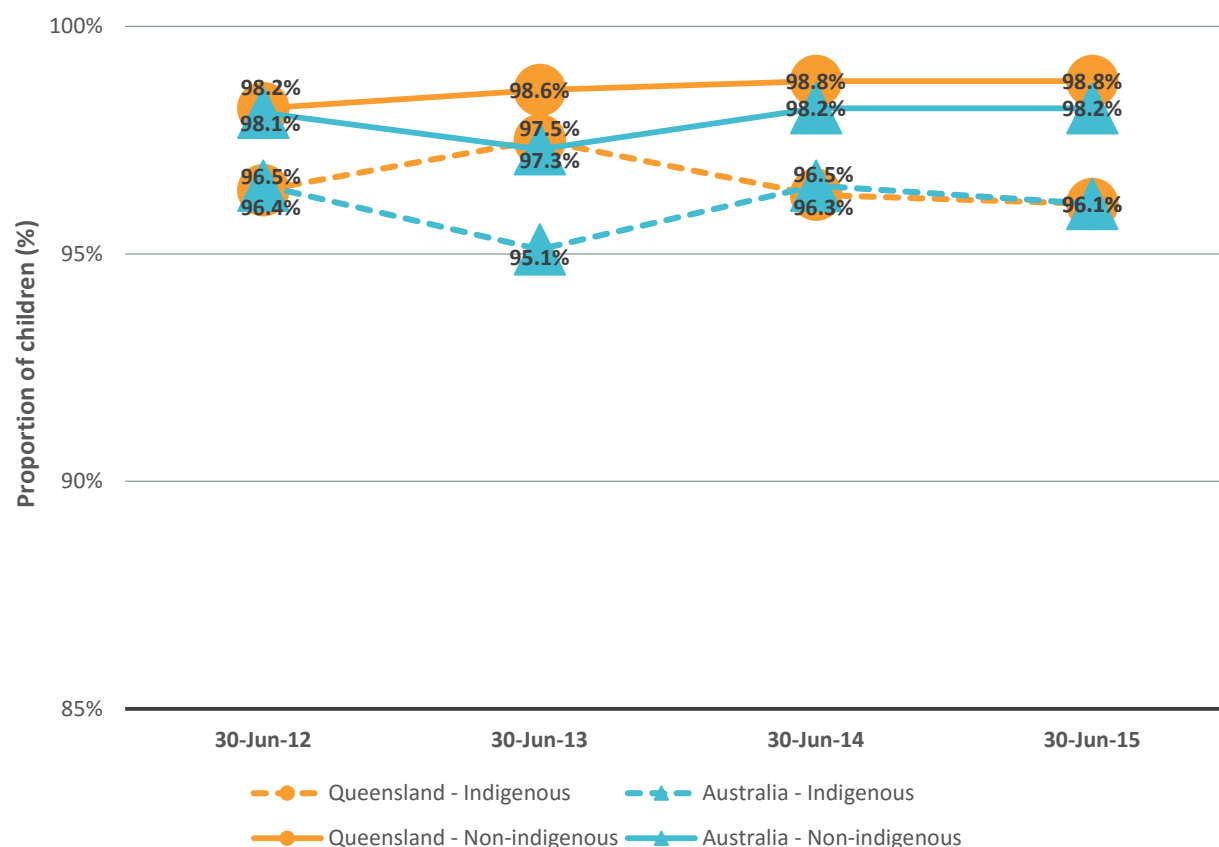


Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.25

Figure 2.22 shows the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children under 12 years living in home-based care as a percentage of the total children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care.

The proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care has been lower than the proportion of non-Indigenous children. This trend is observed in Queensland and Australian data (see Figure 2.22).

Figure 2.22: Proportion of children under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care by Indigenous status, Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012-2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.25

Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care

The proportion of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care has remained steady.

This is consistent with the trend in the Australian average, which has also remained steady.

In Queensland and Australia, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care placed in home-based care is consistently lower than the proportion of non-Indigenous children.

2.3.5 Placement with extended family

There are a number of factors which may affect the placement of children with extended family, including the availability and suitability of family members to care for the child, as well as other placement considerations, such as ensuring the continuity of education or maintaining contact with parents.

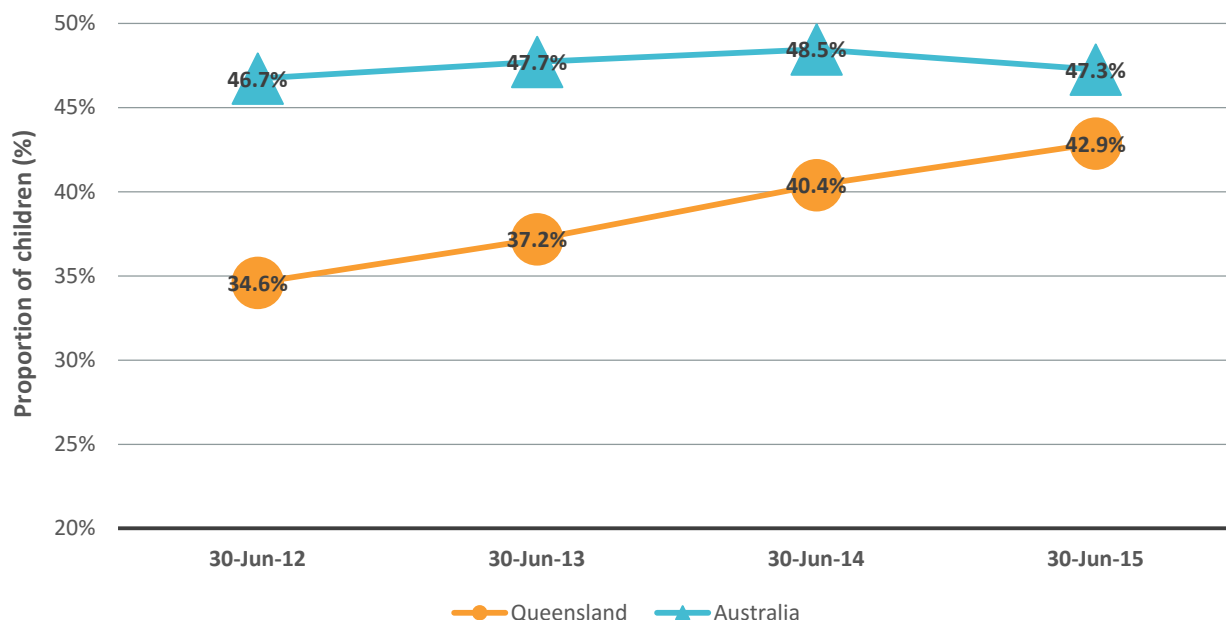
Placing children with extended family is often associated with better outcomes due to increased continuity, familiarity and stability for the child.

Placement with extended family is the proportion of all children in out-of-home care placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for the child.

As Figure 2.23 shows, the proportion of children in out-of-home care in Queensland placed with relatives or kin increased each year between the year ending 30 June 2012 (34.6%) and the year ending 30 June 2015 (42.9%).

However, the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin in Queensland was consistently lower than the Australian average during this period (see Figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23: Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2012 to 2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.23

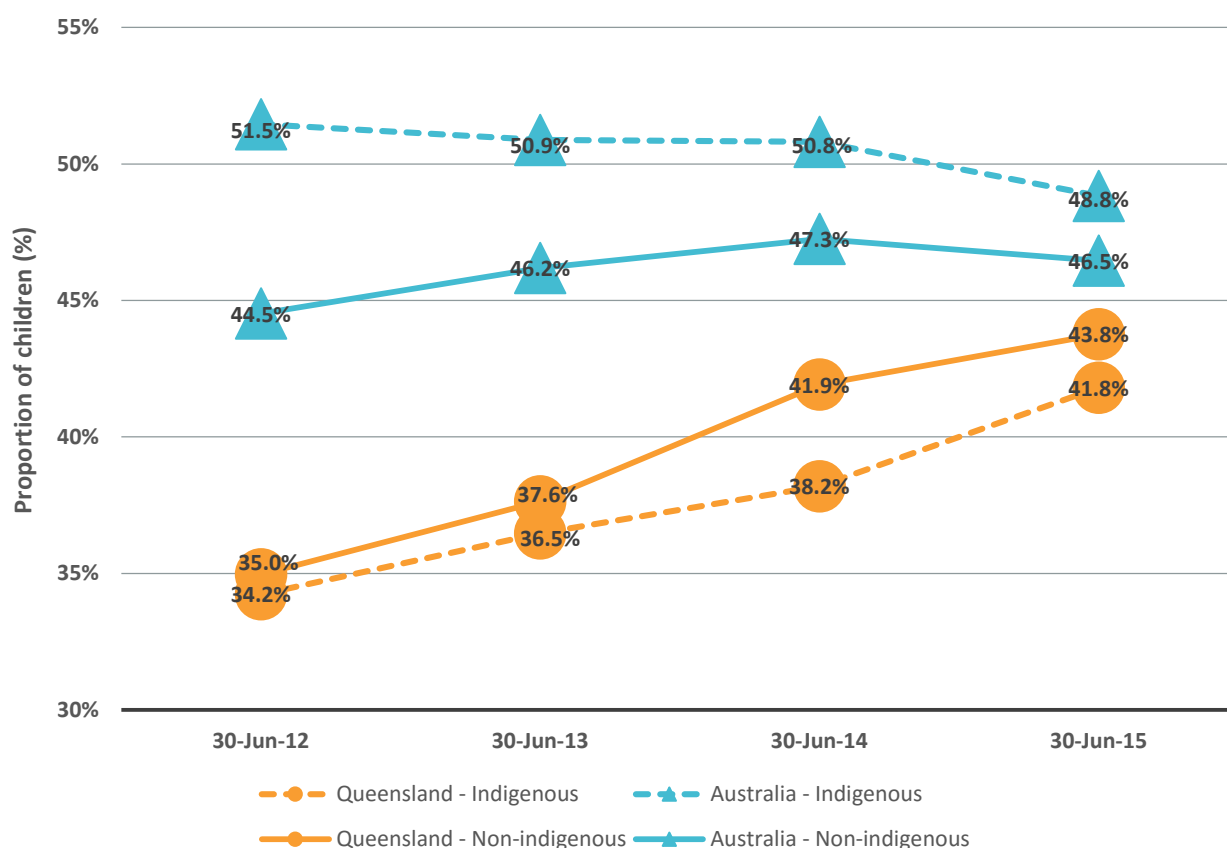
Figure 2.24 shows the proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives or kin by Indigenous status, comparing the Queensland data to the national average.

In Queensland the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with extended family has been consistently lower than the proportion of non-Indigenous children for the years ending 30 June 2012 to 30 June 2015 (see Figure 2.24).

This contrasts with the Australian data, which show a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children than non-Indigenous children placed with relatives or kin over the same time period (see Figure 2.24).

However, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with extended family in Queensland has increased over time, whereas the Australian data report a decrease in the proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care placed with relatives or kin (see Figure 2.24).

Figure 2.24: Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2012 to 2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.23

Placement with extended family

The proportion of children in Queensland placed with extended family has increased over time.

The proportion of children in Queensland placed with extended family is consistently lower than the Australian average.

In Queensland, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with extended family is consistently lower than the proportion of non-Indigenous children. This contrasts with the Australian data, in which the proportion of Indigenous children placed with extended family is consistently higher than the proportion of non-Indigenous children.

2.3.5 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

All Australian states and territories have adopted a hierarchy of placement options when placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care ('The Child Placement Principle'). This Child Placement Principle specifies the following placement preferences:

- placement with the child's extended family
- placement within the child's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- placement with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Report on Government Services measurement of compliance with the Child Placement Principle is based on placement. This means the indicator does not reflect whether the principle's hierarchy of placement options was considered, nor whether consultation occurred with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals or organisations.

The placement of a child in out-of-home care is considered to comply with the Child Placement Principle if the child is placed:

- with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander relative or kin
- with a non-Indigenous relative
- with a carer who is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care.³⁴

If a child is placed with a non-Indigenous carer or in a non-Indigenous residential facility, the placement is defined as not complying with the Child Placement Principle.

It must be noted this *Report on Government Services* definition of compliance with the Child Placement Principle is not in strict accordance with *Child Protection Act 1999*. The *Child Protection Act 1999* section 83 (7) enables placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with non-Indigenous carers providing that the carer is committed to facilitating contact between the child and their family, helping the child maintain contact with their community and language group, helping the child maintain a connection with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and preserving the child's sense of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity. Therefore Queensland's results are not directly comparable with the national average. The data presented in Figures 2.25 and 2.26 should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Figure 2.25 shows the proportion of Indigenous children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition) in Queensland and Australia for the years ending 30 June 2012 to 2015.

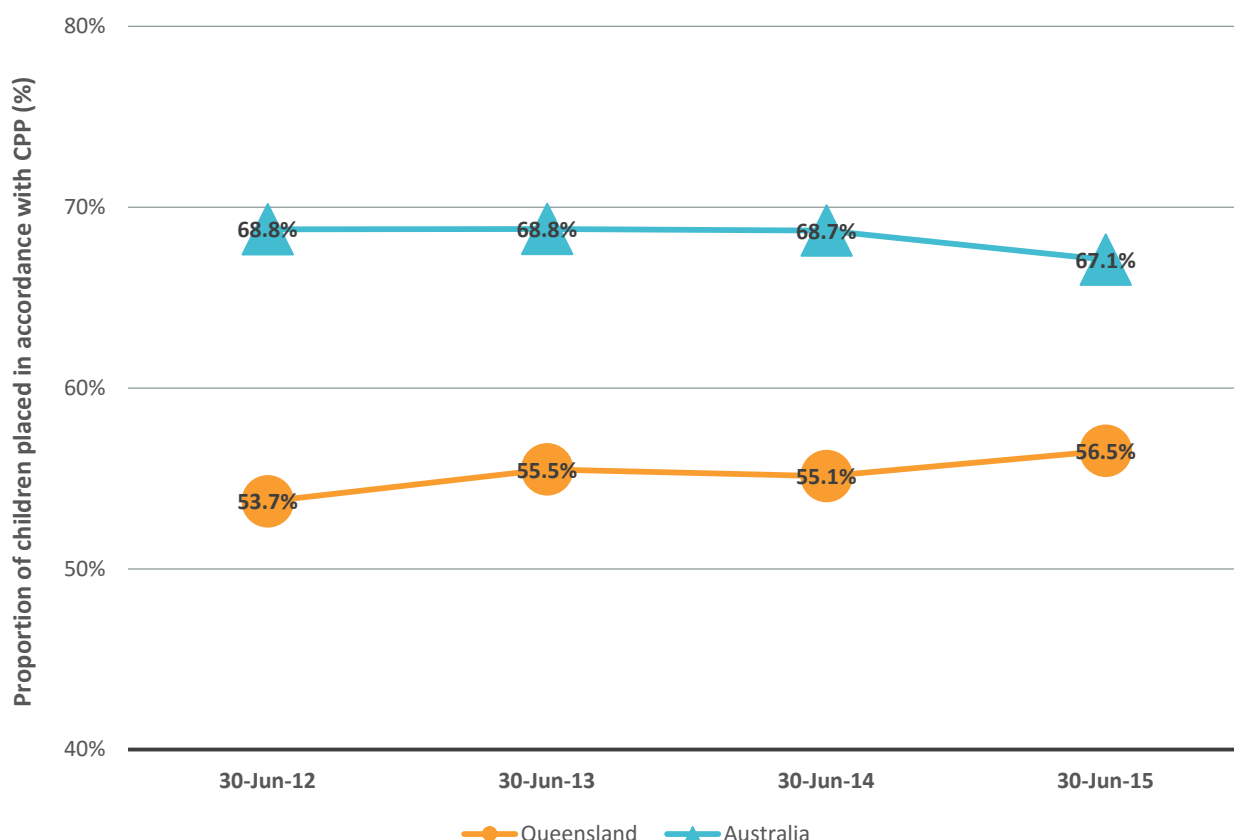
Queensland's performance on this indicator has increased slightly from 53.7 per cent recorded in 2012. However, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle as per ROGS definition has been consistently below the Australian proportion for the years ending 30 June 2012 to 2015.

Of the 3,512 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care in Queensland as at 30 June 2015, only 56.5 per cent were placed with relatives or kin, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer, or in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care service.³⁵

³⁴ DCCSDS adopts these placement categories as an indicator of whether placement is made in accordance with the Child Placement Principle. However, from 2014-15 Queensland has supplied unit record (child-level) files extracted from the Integrated Client Management System according to nationally determined definitions and technical specifications. This means that data reported in ROGS may not match Queensland figures published elsewhere.

³⁵ ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.24

Figure 2.25: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition), Queensland and Australia, years ending 30 June 2012 to 2015

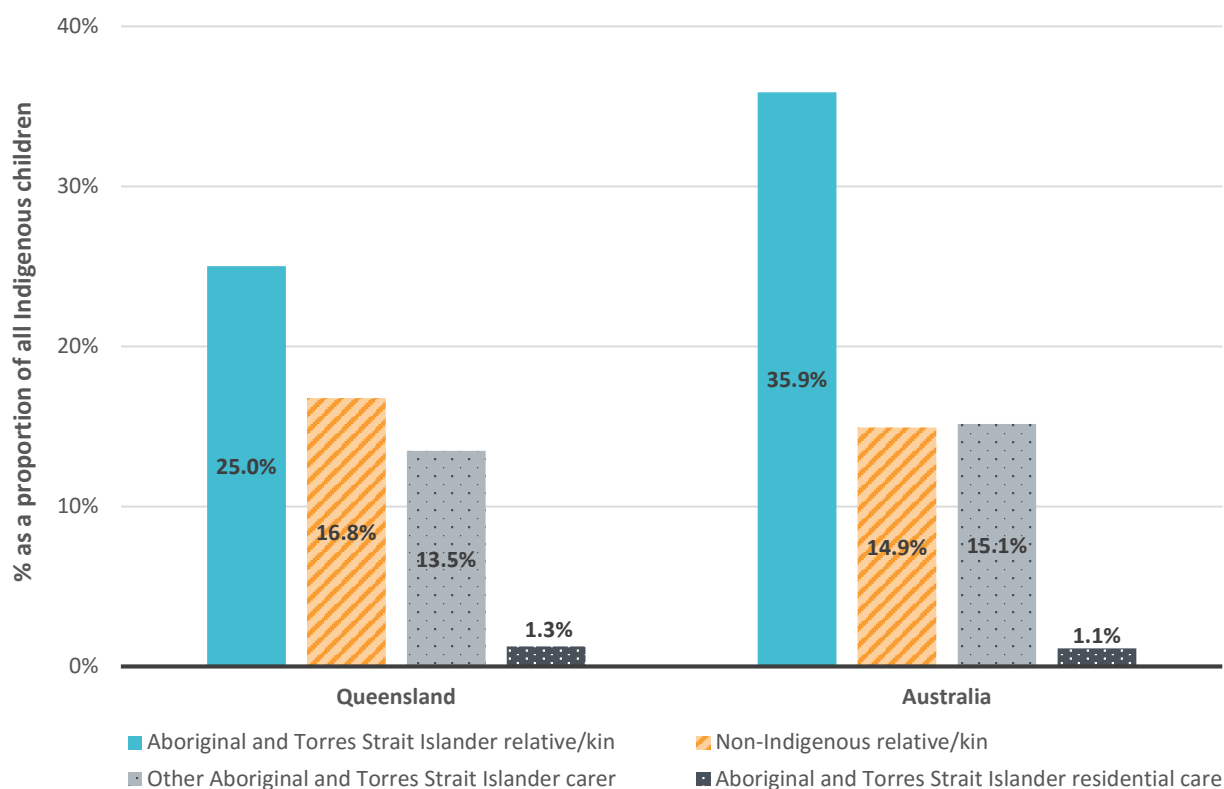


Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.24

Figure 2.26 shows the placement details of those children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition) in Queensland and Australia as at 30 June 2015. As the figure highlights, of those children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle, Queensland had a lower proportion of children placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relative or kin (25.0%) compared to the Australian data (35.9%).

In Queensland in 2015, placement in other categories which meet the requirements of the Child Placement Principle (placement with non-Indigenous relative/kin, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care) were similar to the Australian data (see Figure 2.26).

Figure 2.26: Placement details of children placed in accordance with the Child Placement Principle (as per ROGS definition), Queensland and Australia, as at 30 June 2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.24

Placement in accordance with the Child Placement Principle

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland placed in accordance with the Report on Government Services definition of the Child Placement Principle has increased over time.

2.3.7 Children with current case plans

A case plan is developed for all children assessed as being in need of protection and includes information on the child's individual health and education needs, living arrangements, goals for ongoing intervention and actions required to achieve these goals. A current case plan is one which has been approved or reviewed within the previous 12 months.

Between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015, the proportion of children in Queensland aged 0 to 17 years with a documented and approved case plan was consistently over 97 per cent (see Figure 2.27).

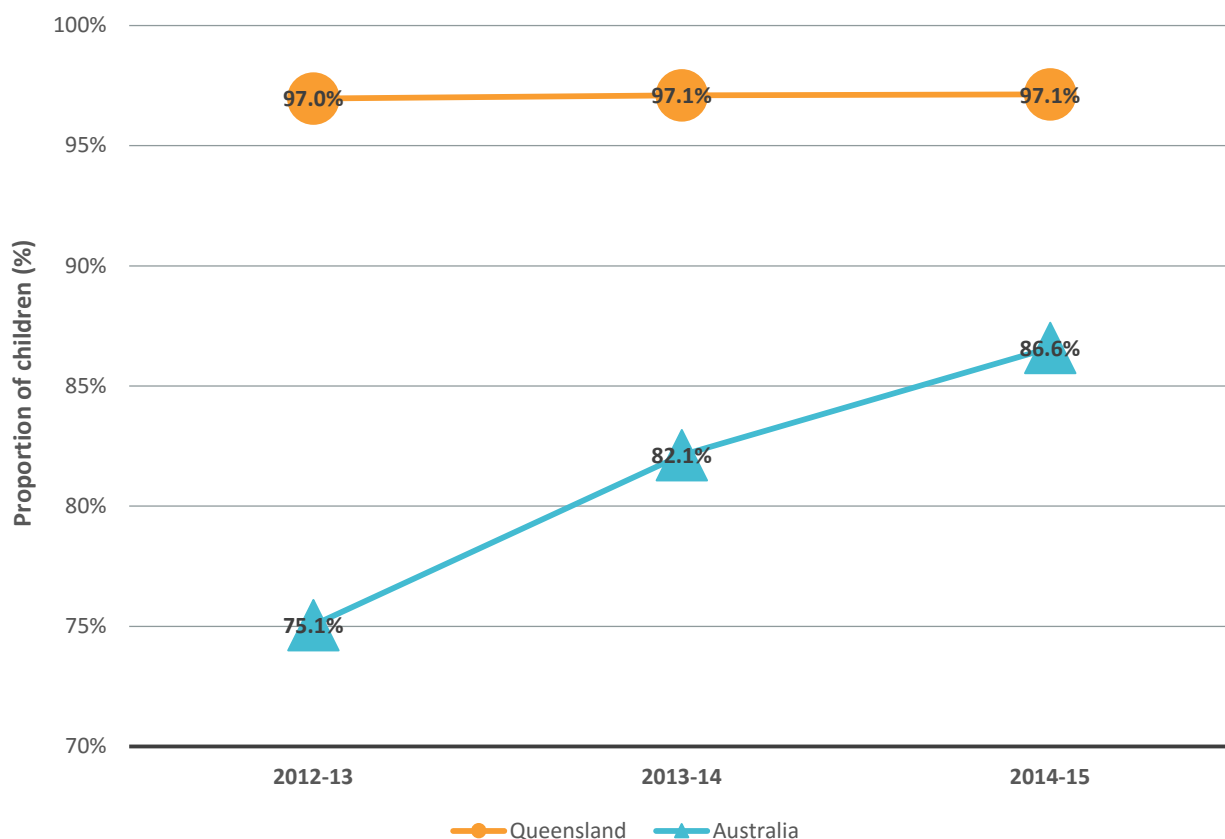
The proportion of children in Queensland with a documented and approved case plan has been consistently higher than the national average over the reporting period (see Figure 2.27).

While there has been little change in the proportion of children in Queensland with a documented and approved case plan, the proportion of children in Australia with a documented and approved case plan has increased each year since 2012-2013, with an overall increase of 11.5 percentage points during the period.

However, care must be taken when comparing data across jurisdictions as policies and legislation vary regarding timeframes within which children are required to have case plans prepared. Queensland's proportion of children with a case plan is predictably high as, under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, (s59 [b]), a child protection order may only be issued if there is a case plan for the child.

Case plans should also be put in place when an interim order is granted, and/or a child is subject to an open Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) case.

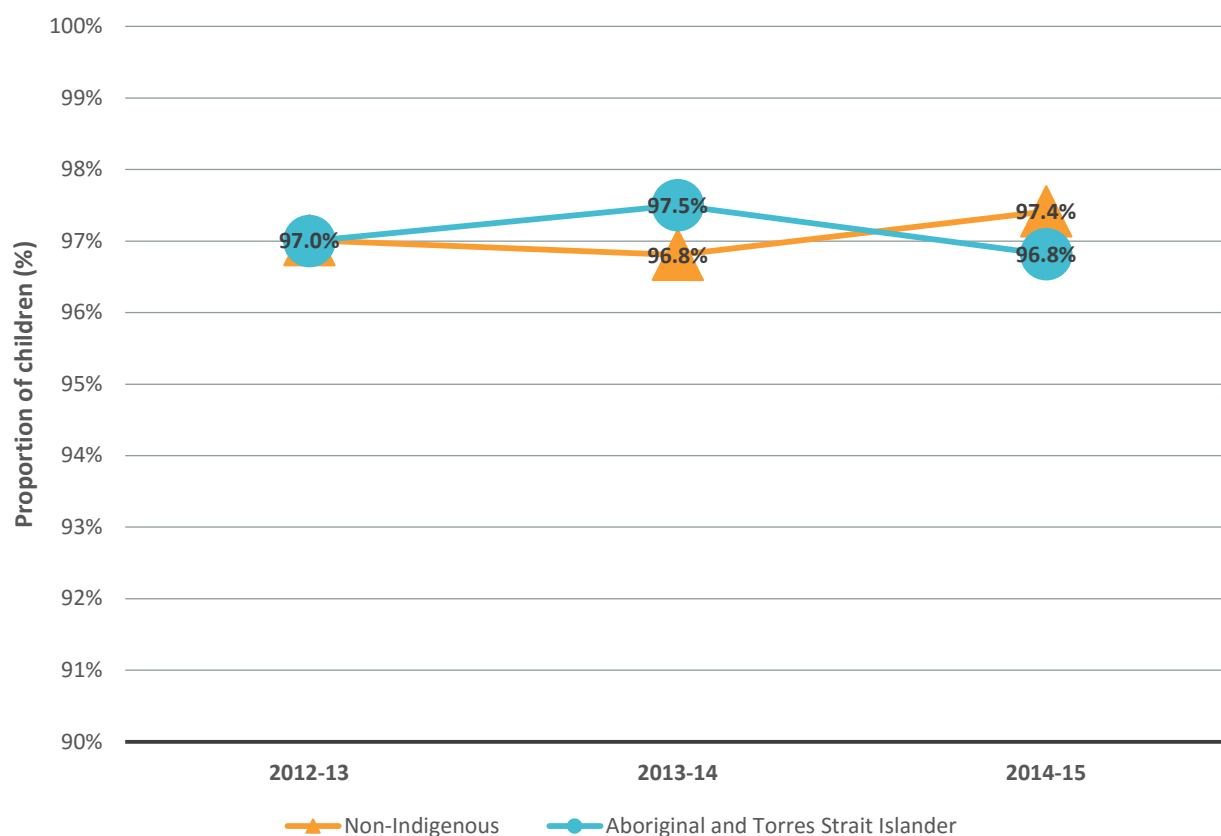
Figure 2.27: Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 with a documented and approved case plan, Queensland and Australia, 2012-2013 to 2014-2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.17

Figure 2.28 shows the proportion of children in Queensland aged 0 to 17 with a documented and approved case plan disaggregated by Indigenous status. Although the Queensland proportion has remained relatively constant, there have been very minor fluctuations in the proportion of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children with a documented and approved case plan.

Figure 2.28: Proportion of children aged 0 to 17 with a documented and approved case plan by Indigenous status, Queensland, 2012-2013 to 2014-2015



Source: ROGS, 2016, Table 15A.17

Children with current case plan

The proportion of children in Queensland with a documented and approved case plan has remained steady over time.

The proportion of children in Queensland with a documented and approved case plan is higher than the national average, although care must be taken when comparing these data.

There have been very minor fluctuations in the proportions of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children with current case plans.

3 Queensland performance against indicators for state goals

3.1 Defining state goals

Section 3.2 of this report describes the progress towards the goals of the Queensland Child Protection Reform Program. As the reform is only two years into a 10 year reform program, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the overarching reform goals are being achieved. Therefore this section focusses on progress against the strategic objectives of the reform domains.

Section 3.3 provides additional performance measures for the Queensland child protection and family support system. Additional statistics for the Queensland child protection system, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016 is provided at Attachment 1.

3.1.1 Queensland child protection reform program

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (the Inquiry) was established on 1 July 2012 to review Queensland's child protection system. The final report of the Inquiry, *Taking responsibility: A roadmap for Queensland child protection*³⁶, was delivered to the Queensland Government on 1 July 2013.

The report outlines the two overarching goals of the Child Protection Reform Roadmap as:

- parents and families protect and care for their children
- children in care are protected and cared for.

The Inquiry report argues that prior to the reform program, tertiary³⁷ services were consuming the over-whelming majority of funding and resources in the Queensland child protection system. The report emphasises that in order to ensure the system is sustainable, increased investment in 'early intervention' secondary³⁸ services is required, which will in theory lead to comparatively less funding and resources required for tertiary 'mitigation' efforts.

The Commission of Inquiry recommended the reform program be delivered in three phases: planning and preparation (2013-14), gradual rollout of reform strategies (2014-15 to 2018-19) and consolidation (2019-20 to 2023-24).

The final report includes 121 recommendations which comprise the Child Protection Reform Roadmap, giving directions about how the reform process should be undertaken to achieve the overarching goals. In December 2013, the Queensland Government accepted all recommendations (115 in full and six in principle)³⁹. These recommendations formed the basis of the Child Protection Reform Program.

³⁶ http://www.childprotectioninquiry.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/202625/QCPCI-FINAL-REPORT-web-version.pdf

³⁷ Tertiary services target families, children and young people where maltreatment has occurred. Their purpose is to reduce the long-term implications of maltreatment and prevent re-occurrence.

³⁸ Secondary services target families, children and young people at risk of maltreatment. Their purpose is to address risk factors and alleviate problems and prevent escalation through a focus on early intervention.

³⁹ <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/reform-renewal/qg-response-child-protection-inquiry.pdf>

Over time, some additional activities to achieve goals of the reform have been added to the 121 recommendations. These additional activities are outlined in the publication: *Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms*⁴⁰.

The vision of the Child Protection Reform Program is:

Queensland children and young people are cared for, protected, safe and able to reach their full potential.

Queensland families and communities are empowered to become stronger, more capable, more resilient and are supported by a child and family support system that understands and respects the importance of family, community, and culture.

The primary long-term outcome of the program is ***“children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities”***. This high-level outcome is underpinned by four supporting outcomes:

1. Children and families have timely access to high-quality services
2. Queensland's child and family support system is efficient, effective, client-centred, and focused on prevention
3. The level of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system is significantly reduced
4. Communities have confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system.

These goals and outcomes are consistent with the goals of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*.

The Child Protection Reform Program is led by the Child Protection Reform and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Interdepartmental CEO Committee, which is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC). The Child Protection Reform Leaders Group supports the Interdepartmental CEO Committee to ensure successful implementation and delivery of program outcomes.

An organising framework was developed for the reform program, grouping the 121 recommendations into 45 work packages (or projects) under seven domains. Eight strategic objectives have been identified and mapped against the domains. Table 3.1 outlines the domains and strategic objectives.

Domains 1, 6 and 7 are considered necessary to enable Domains 2, 3, 4 and 5 which involve practice and service delivery.

While there is a commitment within the organising framework to ensure focus is maintained on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in undertaking all activities, Domain 5 groups together specific additional actions required to meet the requirements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Figure 3.1 summarises the domains within the organising framework, including the principles which underpin the domains, and the number of recommendations and work packages within each. Table 3.1 provides an outline of the domains and the strategic objective(s) for each domain.

⁴⁰ <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/gateway/stronger-families/supporting-families-changing-futures.pdf>

Figure 3.1: Domains in the child protection reform organising framework

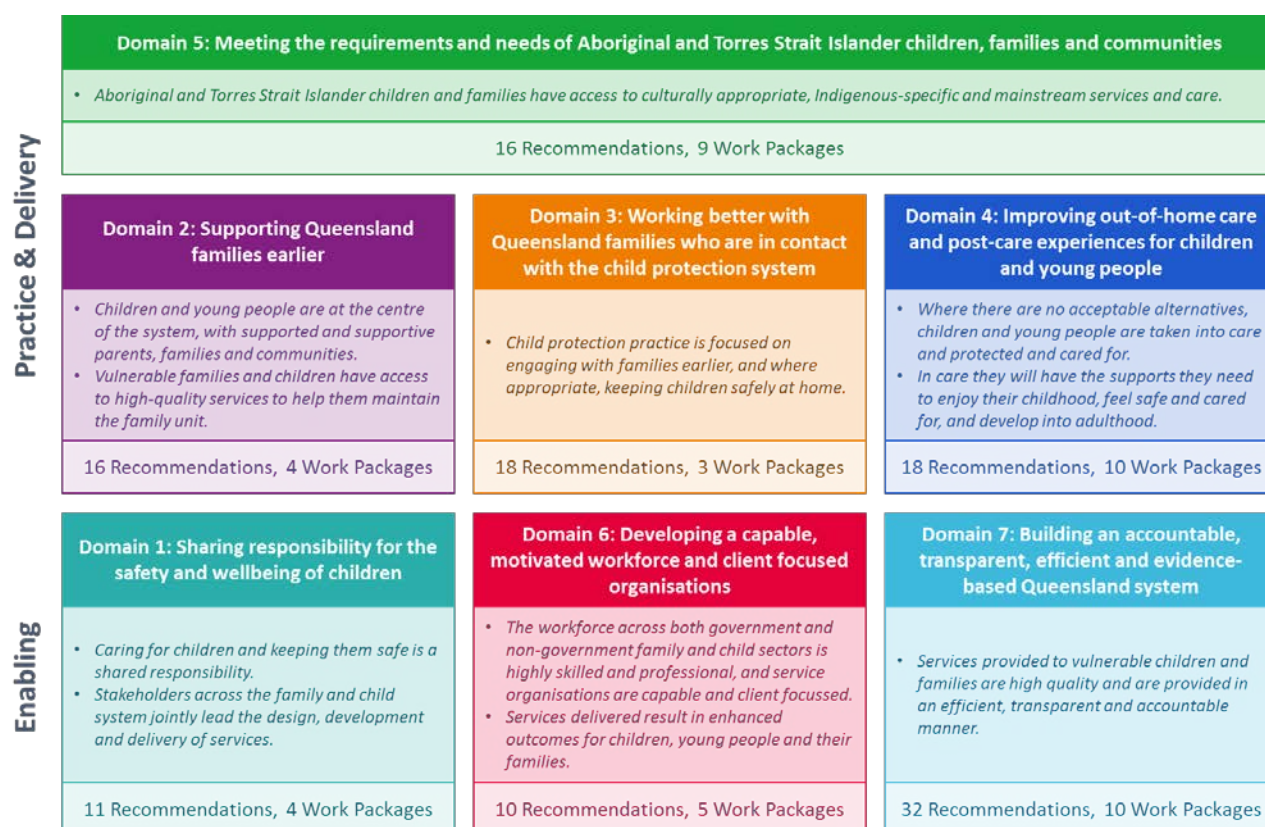


Table 3.1: Domains and strategic objectives

| Domain | Strategic objectives |
|--|---|
| Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children | Government and non-government agencies work in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services and support |
| Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier | Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system | Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and keeping children safely at home where appropriate |
| Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people | Children and young people in care are protected, cared for, and supported to reach their full potential Young people leaving care have high prospects, ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and feel connected to their culture and community |
| Domain 5: Meeting the requirements and needs of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities | Indigenous children and young people are safe and supported in their communities as part of a culturally responsive and capable system |
| Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations | A client-focused workforce that is appropriately skilled, motivated and supported |
| Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost effective Queensland system. | The child and family support system is efficient, accountable, and informed by a culture of learning |

3.1.2 Performance indicators for the tertiary child protection system

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' "Our Performance" website provides a wide range of performance data relating to the Queensland child protection system.

This includes data on the following phases or pathways a child or young person may follow while in the child protection system:

- *Intake phase* – determining the most appropriate response to concerns received about harm or risk of harm to a child
- *Investigation and assessment phase* – determining whether a child is in need of protection and ongoing departmental intervention is required
- *On-going intervention phase* – reducing the likelihood of a child experiencing future harm, and increasing the likelihood that a child experiences continuity of care and transitions successfully into adulthood.

Table 3.2: Measures for the tertiary child protection system

| Phase | Measure |
|------------------------------|--|
| Intake | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rate of children subject to an intake |
| Investigation and assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commencement of investigations and assessments• Substantiated harm reports |
| On-going intervention | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rate of children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement Case• Rate of children subject to a custodial child protection order• Rate of children in out-of-home care• Percentage of completed case plans• Percentage of completed cultural support plans |

It is anticipated the QFCC will work collaboratively with partners in the child protection system to enhance and expand on this framework, so more measures can be included for these phases of the child protection continuum in future reports.

It would be valuable if future discussion on the performance of the child protection system could also include measures which relate to the educational outcomes and voices of children and young people within the child protection system.

3.2 Progress towards strategic objectives of Queensland's child protection reform program

This section describes the strategic objectives, principles and key strategies of each domain in the child protection reform program, and provides information on the implementation status⁴¹ of the activities designed to lead to change necessary to achieve the reform goals, including significant achievements for 2015-16.

3.2.1 Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 1 is “Government and non-government agencies work in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services and support”.

The principle of Domain 1 is “Caring for children and keeping them safe is a shared responsibility. Stakeholders across the family and child system jointly lead the design, development and delivery of services”.

The strategic objective of Domain 1 will be achieved by:

- promoting to families and communities their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children
- establishing central governance arrangements that provide for cross-sectoral leadership and responsibility for the protection and care of children
- establishing regional governance arrangements to facilitate strong collaboration and coordination of services at the local level.

The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

- promoting to families, communities and elders their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children
- respecting the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by ensuring decisions are made upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in promoting responsibility and self-determination of their communities
- ensuring that all governance arrangements enable meaningful participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of undertaking business are understood and respected.

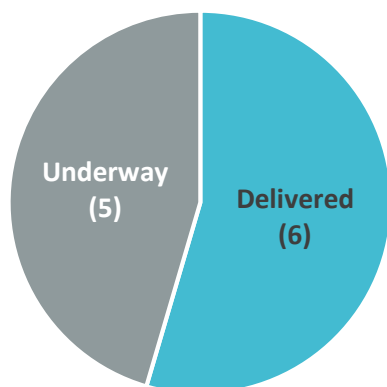
⁴¹ Agencies are responsible for reporting the status of recommendations they lead to the Department of Premier and Cabinet Program Management Office upon request. This report includes information from the most recent report, describing status as at 30 June 2016.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 11 recommendations within four work packages in this domain.

As at 30 June 2016:

- six recommendations have been delivered
- five recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

Talking Families

The Talking Families community education campaign was established by the QFCC in response to recommendation 1.1 of the QCPCOI report – *the Queensland Government promote and advocate to families and communities their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children*.

A central objective of Talking Families is to raise awareness about the pressure on families and the need to seek support, with the ultimate goal to see more parents asking for and accepting help when they're struggling and the broader community offering help more often.

The first phase of the campaign began in November 2014 with a six-week wave of radio and television advertising across the state. An independent evaluation of the first phase showed that there was statistically significant behaviour change among 'concerned family and friends', with this group more likely to offer and provide help to parents; however no significant behaviour change in the 'parent' group in asking for or accepting help.

In July 2015, the QFCC commissioned a large-scale baseline study of more than 4,000 Queensland adults (including a sub-sample of over 1,000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders) to understand what drives help-seeking, help-offering and help-accepting behaviours. The results from this research will be used to support and inform the development of the next phase of the Talking Families campaign, which is expected to be released in 2017.

Between April and June 2016, a Talking Families campaign was run promoting the oneplace Community Services Directory, comprising direct e-mail, YouTube, google and radio advertisements and social media posts. The campaign aimed to connect families to local early intervention support services, and resulted in a more than 1200% increase in visits to the oneplace directory.

The Talking Families' Facebook page aims to increase positive conversations around parenting and provides tips, support and ideas to help parents make better choices for their families. The page has grown to over 17,300 followers since launch in 2014, and has connected with more than 2.3 million people.

The Talking Families website continues to attract around 1,000 visitors per month, and has been translated into Torres Strait Yumplatok following requests from Far North Queensland communities.

Review of program governance

The QCPCOI provided specific recommendations in regard to reform governance arrangements, including the establishment a number of governance groups.

In early 2016, these governance arrangements were reviewed to ascertain if they remain fit for purpose and to consider opportunities to align and integrate governance arrangements for the child and family reforms with the domestic and family violence reforms.

A key outcome of the review was the establishment of the Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence Interdepartmental CEO Committee (IDCC) in 2016 to oversight both the child and family reforms and the domestic and family violence reforms.

The IDCC sets the strategic direction and priorities for both the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program and the domestic and family violence reform agenda.

The IDCC is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and membership comprises Directors-General (or equivalent) of all agencies with child and family responsibilities, as well as the Principal Commissioner of the QFCC and the Public Guardian.

IDCC members are responsible for:

- strategically leading and aligning relevant current and future government policy direction to enable the successful implementation of the 10-year child protection and domestic and family violence prevention reforms. This includes taking into account any priorities agreed at the Council of Australian Governments regarding child protection and domestic and family violence prevention
- enabling, within their organisations and across government, a culture that delivers strong interagency and community collaboration.

The Child Protection Reform Leaders Group supports the Interdepartmental CEO Committee to ensure successful implementation and delivery of program outcomes.

The Reform Leaders Group was established in response to recommendation 4.13 and is chaired by the Deputy Director-General of Policy in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Membership includes senior executives from the following government and non-government agencies representing the social services and child protection sectors.

Regional Child and Family Committees

Nine Regional Child and Family Committees have been established across Queensland to drive reforms at the local level - Far North Queensland (with three Regional Child and Family Committees covering North Queensland, Townsville Mackay and Mt Isa) North Coast; Central Queensland; South West Queensland; Brisbane and South East Queensland.

Regional Child and Family Committees are responsible for determining regional priorities for implementing the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program and the domestic and family violence reform agenda in line with statewide directions established by the IDCC and the Reform Leaders Group. They also play a key role in facilitating effective working relationships at regional and local levels. While the membership for each RCFC varies depending on regional needs and priorities, each committee includes representatives from both government and non-government agencies from across their region.

The Short Street Hub was established in Pioneer, a suburb of Mt Isa, as a result of a project stemming from the Mt Isa Action Plan. The Short Street Hub is based on the concept of a place based response and provides a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community engagement. It brings residents, government departments, the local business community and organisations together and aims to improve the quality of life for children and families in the community.

Appointment of QFCC Commissioners and Advisory Council

On 12 October 2015, Cheryl Vardon commenced as Principal Commissioner of the QFCC, replacing Steve Armitage who had been interim Principal Commissioner since the QFCC's inception on 1 July 2014. Tammy Williams was appointed as the inaugural Commissioner and commenced on 18 April 2016.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission Advisory Council was established in November 2015 in response to recommendation 6.3.

Members come from a broad range of disciplines including two Indigenous sector experts and a young consultant from out of home care. The members provide a diverse range of views about how to improve the lives of Queensland's children.

The Advisory Council helps promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe, provides insight into the issues affecting children, families and the sector, and also provides guidance on the work of the QFCC.

During the year the Advisory Council assisted QFCC progress its research agenda, community education program, review of systemic issues and build cross sector networks.

3.2.2 Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 2 is “Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities”.

The principle of Domain 2 is “Children and young people are at the centre of the system, with supported and supportive parents, families and communities. Vulnerable families and children have access to high-quality services to help them maintain the family unit”.

The strategic objective of Domain 2 will be achieved by:

- introducing a new community-based intake gateway (dual pathway)
- building the capacity of the family support services sector (both government and non-government)
- ensuring families who have a child with a disability are adequately supported to continue to care for their child.

The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

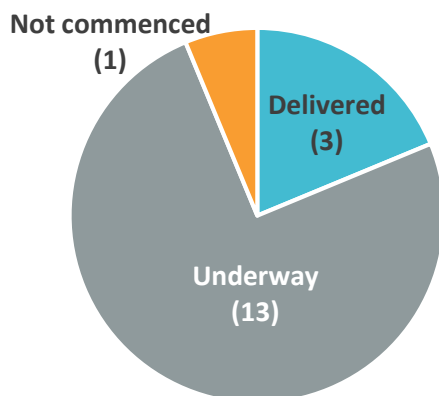
- building the capacity and capability of all child and family support services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- ensuring that all engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the delivery of services are conducted within the appropriate cultural context
- ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families receive culturally appropriate family support services that are responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 16 recommendations within four work packages in this domain.

As at 30 June 2016:

- three recommendations have been delivered
- 12 recommendations were underway
- 1 recommendation had not commenced⁴².



⁴² Recommendation 6.5 - review the progress made in building the capacity of non-government organisations after five years with a view to determining whether they can play a greater role by undertaking case management and casework for children in the statutory protection system

Significant achievements under this domain

Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services

A key aim of the reform program is to make sure families and children have access to preventative and support services when they are needed.

New community-based services, known as Family and Child Connect, are continuing to be rolled-out across the state. These were established by DCCSDS in partnership with non-government organisations to support families who are at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system.

Families who need of support can contact Family and Child Connect for assistance by calling 13FAMILY (13 32 64). If professionals (such as teachers, health workers and police) or members of the community have concerns about a child's wellbeing, they can also refer the family to Family and Child Connect for information and advice, instead of Child Safety.

In 2015/16, additional Family and Child Connect services commenced in Browns Plains/Beaudesert, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Maryborough/Bundaberg, Kingaroy, and Rockhampton/Emerald/Gladstone, Brisbane, Cairns and Mackay. There are now 16 Family and Child Connect services operating across 18 catchments, with only two catchments, Cape York/Torres Strait and Mount Isa/Gulf left to complete full statewide implementation.

Family and Child Connect is supported by significant new investment through the establishment of Intensive Family Support services. These services work with vulnerable families who have multiple or more complex needs to ensure they receive the necessary support before DCCSDS intervenes. Intensive Family Support services have been established in more than 21 locations with one further Intensive Family Support services to be operating in Mount Isa/Gulf by the end of this year.

Trials of the Early Intervention and Family Services Support Service (disability focus) commenced during October 2015 in the North Coast Region. The service, established in response to recommendation 4.12, aims to develop an early intervention response to help build capacity in families who may be at future risk of relinquishment, to continue caring for their child with disability in the family home.

New specialist services are also being established across Queensland to better support people affected by domestic and family violence. These services will complement the roll-out of Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services and help to build an integrated suite of support services for vulnerable families.

They will strengthen the capacity of the service system to respond to the needs of people affected by domestic and family violence including locations where little or no services were previously provided, and will work closely with the specialist domestic and family violence workers based in each of the Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services.

While support will be provided to any individual, including those without children, the services will also support families at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system as a result of domestic and family violence. Individuals will have greater access to specialised domestic and family violence support including counselling, court-based services, and perpetrator intervention programs.

Organisations have been funded to deliver new domestic and family violence services in Brisbane, Bundaberg, Burdekin, Cassowary Coast, Central Queensland, Charters Towers/Flinders, Emerald, Gladstone (including Biloela), Goodna/Springfield/Lockyer Valley, Greater Townsville, Hinchinbrook, Maryborough/Hervey Bay, Longreach, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe, Redlands, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, South Burnett, Tablelands, Toowoomba and Townsville.

oneplace – Community Services Directory

In November 2016, the QFCC released the oneplace Community Services Directory (oneplace) in response to recommendation 6.1 – *the establishment and maintenance of an online statewide information source of community services available to families and children to enable easy access to services and to provide an overview of services for referral and planning purposes.*

oneplace is an online state-wide information source of community support services to assist children, families and professionals to find the right service. With more than 48,000 records listed, nearly 29,000 new and 11,000 returning visitors, oneplace is the go-to resource to find local community support services and events.

The QFCC worked closely with a number of stakeholders including young people and families in designing the key features, look and name for oneplace. The QFCC partnered with the DCCSDS to contract Infoxchange, a not-for-profit social enterprise, to deliver the directory.

Additional functionality was added to oneplace in February 2016 to record specific support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

New functionality was also released in August 2016 to allow ‘registered user roles’ for Government agencies, non-Government agencies and Peak bodies. Registered users can list events, save searches, add favourites and run reports to assist with service demand mapping and service gap analysis.

Triple P Parenting Program

In August 2015 the Triple P Parenting Program was made available free of charge and on a voluntary basis to all Queensland parents and carers of children (up to 16 years of age) in a \$6.6 million commitment by the state government. Delivery of the Program has been rolled out progressively across Queensland as part of this 2-year government trial to ensure families across the state have free, universal access until 2017.

With a focus on prevention and early intervention Triple P is accessible through a range of seminars, group workshops and one-on-one consultations, as either a one-off session or as part of a series over several weeks or months depending on individual preference. The Program provides evidence-based strategies to help parents positively manage their children’s behaviour as well as their own stress levels and is considered a valuable resource in helping families to raise happy, confident children and prevent future issues before they occur.

Clinical studies consistently show children raised in a calm, consistent and positive home environment are more likely to succeed at school, have better jobs, experience more positive relationships and enjoy better mental and physical health. Parents who complete Triple P are also more likely to have lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress, so there are plenty of good reasons for parents to learn more about the benefits of positively parenting their children.

The range of support includes an online program, topic-specific seminars, parent discussion groups and one-on-one consultations as well as more intensive, small group-based and individual programs.

More than 20,000 Queensland families have received free parenting advice and a helping hand to positively manage the pressures of raising a family.

3.2.3 Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 3 is “Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and keeping children safely at home where appropriate”.

The principle of Domain 3 is “Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier and, where appropriate, keeping children safely at home”.

The strategic objective of Domain 3 will be achieved by:

- introducing a new child protection practice framework with supporting policies and procedures that is strengths-based, and focused on engaging with families
- strengthening the voices of children and families in the court system and more broadly, in the best interest of the child.

The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

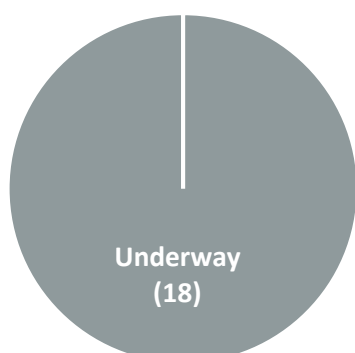
- introducing a new strengths-based approach to working with families that reflects the significance of cultural safety as integral to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child’s wellbeing
- ensuring that practice standards, developed by Community Controlled services, are embedded across the reform program, and are evidenced through establishment of appropriate Key Performance Indicators
- enhancing the legal advocacy and other support available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the court system and more broadly, in the best interest of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 18 recommendations within three work packages in this domain.

As at 30 June 2016,

- all 18 recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

New framework for practice

The introduction of a new child protection practice framework (and the associated change in workplace culture) was identified as a critical element of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry's vision for a reformed child protection system for Queensland.

The Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice was developed by DCCSDS in partnership with the Children's Research Center and Sonja Parker Consultancy, and launched in March 2015. The framework sets out a strengths-based, safety-oriented approach which will enhance Queensland's child protection practice and deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families in need.

It identifies a range of sources of knowledge critical to effective child protection practice. It highlights that, while research and practitioner sources of knowledge are valued, so too is the knowledge held by individuals and families, the community and culture, and the broader system in which children and family are located.

More than 3,750 government and non-government staff across the state have been trained in the new framework for practice – creating a shared language so children and families experience consistent and client-focused messages and practice across the service spectrum.

To further strengthen the practice skills of child protection workers to better engage with vulnerable children, young people and families, including fathers, DCCSDS also undertook Engaging Fathers initiatives with government and non-government partners, including a number of statewide reforms.

Regional implementation teams have been established to serve as focused and accountable groups for embedding and assessing the implementation of the framework.

Child Protection Information Kits

The QFCC recently published an Information Kit on Child Protection for Parents as a deliverable of recommendation 13.26 - *develop key resource material and information for children and families to better assist them in understanding their rights, how the child protection system works including court and tribunal processes and complaints and review options in response to child protection interventions.*

The Kit was developed in partnership with the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service and provides parents with information about rights, investigation and case management processes, what to expect during court, how to make a complaint and where to find support.

An Information Kit on Child Protection for Young People is currently in development.

Collaborative Family Decision-making

During 2016, DCCSDS undertook trials in Brisbane, North Coast and North Queensland in response to recommendation 7.2 to improve family group meeting processes. These approaches included working more collaboratively with families in making decisions and developing plans to meet their children's safety and wellbeing needs.

The trials, which ended on 30 June 2016, informed the development of an investment strategy to transition the current family group meeting model to a more inclusive process for planning and decision making with families.

The Family Group Meeting Convenor brought together DCCSDS, service providers from the non-government sector and family members of the child to work in partnership throughout the decision making process. These trials provided a positive opportunity to strengthen partnerships within the regions.

From 1 July 2016, DCCSDS has commenced work to transition the current family group meeting model to a more inclusive process for planning and decision making with families, supported by an investment of \$8.652 million over three years from July 2016.

This includes:

- establishing an Indigenous Investment Principle aimed at responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and their communities
- increasing the number of qualified and experienced family group meeting convenors within the department, who will report to a senior officer within each region
- engaging external convenors to facilitate particular family dynamics, and offer greater choice and flexibility in meeting the needs of families, and
- developing a statewide workforce strategy to build collaborative family decision making practice quality and skills.

3.2.4 Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people

Strategic objectives, principle and approach

The strategic objectives of Domain 4 are “Children and young people in care are protected, cared for, and supported to reach their full potential” and “Young people leaving care have high prospects, ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and feel connected to their culture and community”.

The principle of Domain 4 is “Where there are no acceptable alternatives, children and young people are taken into care and protected and cared for. In care they will have the supports they need to enjoy their childhood, feel safe and cared for, and develop into adulthood”.

The strategic objectives of Domain 4 will be achieved by:

- strengthening and expanding existing health and therapeutic services to children and young people
- ensuring best match of children and young people to carers and models of care
- enhancing placement stability for children and young people
- building the capacity of the non-government sector to better support and train carers
- strengthening transition planning to better equip young people when they leave care, and providing post-care support.

The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

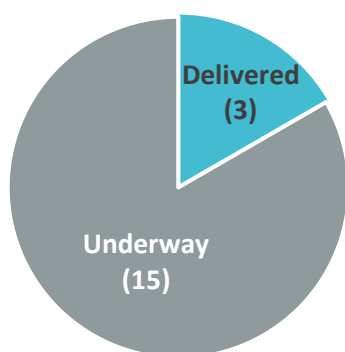
- ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people receive culturally appropriate services that are responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. This includes:
 - ensuring the cultural needs and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are acknowledged and upheld throughout their involvement with the statutory child protection system
 - transition planning and post-care support.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 18 recommendations within 10 work packages in this domain.

As at 30 June 2016:

- three recommendations have been delivered
- 15 recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

Improving residential care services for children and young people

A consistent trauma-informed therapeutic framework — the Hope and Healing Framework — was developed by Encompass and PeakCare Queensland in 2015, and involved a comprehensive consultation process with the residential care sector.

The new framework will improve the quality and consistency of residential care provided to children and young people, by ensuring the support they receive has a strong therapeutic focus to help them overcome trauma they may have experienced.

The framework will be rolled out across Queensland by December 2018. It will apply to all funded residential care services including supported independent living services and Safe Houses.

The DCCSDS will collaborate with the sector to co-design a joint two-year training program to support and equip residential care staff to implement the required changes to structures, systems and processes.

The training program will:

- reflect the collaborative and needs-based approach of the Hope and Healing Framework
- facilitate partnerships with stakeholders to identify and assess training needs, change management issues and professional development solutions
- foster a culture of excellence in delivering residential care services
- complement existing trauma and therapeutic practice
- include support resources and tools.

Next Step After Care

In response to recommendation 9.2, DCCSDS has funded non-government organisations to deliver targeted support services to people leaving care.

These services, known as Next Step After Care, are now available for the first time, to young people up to 21 years old who have transitioned from out-of-home care, and who need help. The service is delivered by Life Without Barriers in partnership with Uniting Care Community and the CREATE Foundation.

Next Step After Care offers young people two types of service:

- A statewide connections program which young people can access 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Tailored individual support to young people, particularly those with complex or multiple needs and who require face-to-face individual support.

These services will work with young people to develop their educational opportunities and job-ready skills, strengthen their self-reliance and independent living skills, and enable them to acquire and maintain stable and suitable accommodation.

Platform 18

Platform 18 is a free primary health care service for young people aged 15 -18 years who are on child protection orders. This service provides health assessments and support services relating to all aspects of a young person's health and wellbeing.

Platform 18 is provided by Lady Cilento Children's Hospital and covers a catchment area north of Brisbane to Strathpine, west to Forest Lake and south to Redlands. Health assessments are carried out by nurses. Depending on needs, the young person may also see a doctor, social worker, psychologist or oral health professional.

Brisbane Emergency Response Outreach Service

The Brisbane Region Emergency Response Outreach Service commenced work in September 2015 and is targeted directly to young people who are on a child protection order in the Brisbane Region, who are missing or absent from placement, and who may be engaging in high risk behaviours or activities.

The service encompasses ascertaining the safety and wellbeing of a young person referred to the service, casework and intervention for each young person and provides an emergency contact and accommodation assistance.

3.2.5 Domain 5: Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 5 is “Indigenous children and young people are safe and supported in their communities as part of a culturally responsive and capable system”.

The principle of Domain 5 is “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families have access to culturally appropriate, Indigenous-specific and mainstream services and care”.

The strategic objective of Domain 5 will be achieved by:

- building the capacity of the family support sector for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and redesigning existing program delivery to increase access to existing services
- providing increased training and support to carers and staff, and streamlining our carer assessment processes, where appropriate
- changing our practice to better meet the requirements and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- working to better support children and families in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

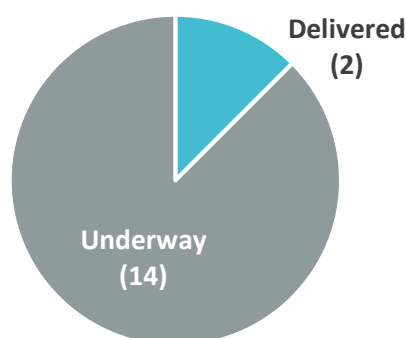
The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

- ensuring reform is managed in a way which recognises the critical role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector in the delivery of services to their community
- ensuring when an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child or young person enters care every attempt is made to preserve and enhance their relationships with their family and community
- promoting comprehensive and consistent implementation of the Indigenous Child Placement Principle, ensuring it is applied, as intended, in every decision affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, services and communities
- developing a holistic understanding of child protection which does not compartmentalise child protection issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all key reforms
- encouraging innovative service responses which build on existing service responses in other sectors
- encouraging funding models which will support options in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 16 recommendations within nine work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2016:

- two recommendations have been delivered
- 14 recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

Development of an Action Plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

It is recognised much more needs to be done to overcome both the broader issues of social and economic disadvantage and the specific circumstances in families which drive the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the statutory child protection system.

Led by DCCSDS and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the action plan is a key commitment in Supporting Families Changing Futures and will focus on the fundamental shift needed in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Drawing on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and organisations, the action plan will build on existing initiatives as well as include new, practical actions guided by Elders and community leaders, community-run organisations, peak bodies and relevant government agencies, aimed at

- reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system
- reducing child and youth sexual abuse
- closing the gap in life outcomes for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Scheduled for completion in late 2016, the plan will provide a cohesive, integrated response strengthened by consultations held over the past 18 months, and on initiatives being undertaken by government and partner organisations with urban, regional and remote communities.

Particular focus will be centred on key factors which can lead to contact with the child protection system including parental substance abuse, domestic and family violence, inter-generational abuse and trauma, mental health, and contact with the justice system.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing services

In May 2016, as part of the first wave of contributions towards the action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families experiencing vulnerability, the Queensland Government announced investment of more than \$150 million over five years from 2016–17 in revamped parenting and family support and wellbeing services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

These services are vital to supporting children and families and addressing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

The first new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing services will be rolled out in September 2016 in areas of great need – in the Roma, Mackay, South Burnett and Moreton Bay catchments– with further services across the 20 catchments to be fully operational in 2017.

The Family Wellbeing service model directly reflects the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, communities, families and children gathered through continuous and extensive consultation undertaken in partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak.

Family Wellbeing Services will be rolled out progressively from 2016-17 with the aim of offering practical support to over 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to help build their capacity to safely care for their children by 2018.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Reform Project

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Reform Project will find better ways of working with, and meeting the needs of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities in response to recommendations 11.2, 11.11 and 11.12 of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry.

The Project is designed to improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to culturally appropriate programs and services and reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system, especially in out-of-home care. The Project is led through a partnership between DATSIP, DCCSDS and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

In October 2015, PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting was engaged to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Service Reform Project including to: undertake a review of the Safe House Model; assess the adequacy of existing universal, early intervention and family support services of particular relevance to child protection identifying gaps, overlaps and inefficiencies; develop strategies and service delivery models to enhance the accessibility of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and improve collaboration between service providers; and incorporate a collaborative case-management approach to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

To ensure a co-design approach for enhanced service delivery responses for communities, PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting convened a series of “design jams”. These collaborative forums have supported the development of practical prototypes designed to address the service delivery needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The review of the Safe House Model provides recommendations on the future direction of the Safe House program to help deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Discrete Community Reforms

In response to recommendation 11.8, the Public Safety Business Agency and Queensland Police Service (QPS) undertook a review of current arrangements for the enforcement of domestic violence orders in discrete communities. The findings of the review report indicates police are providing adequate assistance to seek and enforce domestic violence orders in discrete communities, however there are a number of areas where improvements can be made. The QPS has committed to actions to deliver these improvements and has also made sure relevant linkages are made with the broader domestic violence and child protection reform work currently occurring.

To address recommendation 11.9, regarding the importance of the safety of women and children in determining whether an Alcohol Management Plan should be withdrawn or alcohol carriage limits reduced, DATSIP is undertaking a Review of Alcohol Management Plans. The review has as its paramount concern community safety, particularly of women and children. Submissions have been received by the 19 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with Alcohol Management Plans in place, and will inform the Review recommendations.

In addition, with respect to recommendation 11.10 regarding increasing awareness amongst service providers on discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of dry place declarations, DATSIP developed a factsheet, web content, an operational procedure, and implemented a regional engagement strategy. DATSIP provides ongoing reporting on the number of dry place declarations taken up in communities. As at 30 June 2016, there were 55 current dry place orders in place in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision making and shared practice with Recognised Entities

The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in decision making and recognition of family strengths where concerns are raised about the safety of children are at the forefront of a new shared practice model.

The DCCSDS and its non-government partners have developed and implemented trials of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-Led Decision-Making Model for Family Group Meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Trials of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-Led Decision-Making Model work alongside new integrated family support services to help keep children safely in their homes. The project supports the implementation of Recommendations 7.3, 11.3 and 7.5 from the Inquiry and will enhance and clarify the roles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and Recognised Entities.

The Inquiry identified the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-Led Decision-Making Model, and shared practice with Recognised Entities working more closely with the DCCSDS, as important approaches to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait over-representation through creating opportunities to prevent entry and divert children from the statutory system and to reduce the level of intervention for those in need of protection.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision making and shared practice has been trialled in Ipswich, Mount Isa, Cairns and the Torres Strait Islands.

Led by Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the project was piloted through trials in Ipswich, Mount Isa, Cairns and Torres Strait Islands, in collaboration with participating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations. The new models will be assessed for their long-term social, health and economic benefits.

Such initiatives enable the DCCSDS to continue to divest and empower decision making to families and ensure the process undertaken to develop support plans is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

3.2.6 Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client focused organisations

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 6 is “A client-focused workforce that is appropriately skilled, motivated and supported”.

The principle of Domain 6 is “The workforce across both government and non-government family and child sectors is highly skilled and professional, and service organisations are capable and client focused. Services delivered result in enhanced outcomes for children, young people and their families”.

The strategic objective of Domain 6 will be achieved by:

- strengthening the capacity and capability of the child protection workforce and service organisations, and establishing a positive culture
- enhancing legal services and advice provided to DCCSDS child protection workers.

The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

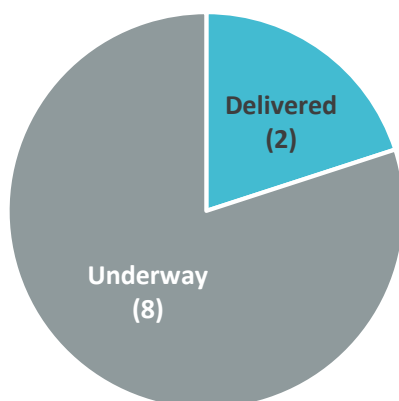
- celebrating the strength and resilience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
- investing in capability building activities and developing creative career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in acknowledgement of a range of issues they face and the increasing need for their services
- ensuring the broader child protection workforce receives high quality and ongoing cultural sensitivity training.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 10 recommendations within five work packages in this domain.

As at 30 June 2016:

- two recommendations have been delivered
- 8 recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor

In March 2016, in response to recommendation 13.16, DCCSDS established an internal Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor with an appointment to the position of Official Solicitor.

The establishment of the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor represents the beginning of a change to the way the DCCSDS undertakes court work relating to child protection matters.

The Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor provides early, independent legal advice to child safety workers about child protection matters, and works closely with staff in service centres to prepare applications for child protection orders.

The Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor commenced operations on 1 July 2016, and has responsibility for:

- providing early, more independent legal advice to departmental officers in the conduct of alternative dispute-resolution processes and the preparation of applications for child protection orders;
- working closely with the proposed specialist investigation teams so legal advice is provided at the earliest opportunity; and
- preparing briefs of evidence to be provided to the proposed Director of Child Protection Litigation in matters where the department considers a child protection order should be sought.

While the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor will continue to apply for temporary orders to keep children safe in emergency situations, a new independent body called the Director of Child Protection Litigation has been established by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to apply for Child Protection Orders (instead of DCCSDS).

This new approach aims to introduce a quicker timeframe to resolve matters and improve consistency across the state. Most importantly, children and young people will have a greater opportunity to present their views in court, if they wish to, and access legal representation for themselves and their families, when they need it. These new arrangements also commenced from 1 July 2016.

Strengthening our Sector

In response to recommendations 6.6, 10.7 and 12.15 the QFCC was asked to lead the development of sector wide workforce planning and development strategies to increase collaboration, build capacity and facilitate a process of positive cultural change across the child and family support system.

The QFCC released the draft *Strengthening our Sector* strategy in early 2016. Using a range of engagement strategies, the QFCC worked with key sector stakeholders to build the final Strengthening our Sector Strategy 2016-19 and First Action Plan 2016-17 which was released in August 2016.

The strategy focuses on four key outcome areas:

- strengthening our workforce – enhancing the ability of our sector to meet the needs of children and families.
- strengthening our organisations – enhancing organisational capabilities and strengthen sector relationships.

- strengthening our professional practice culture – building a proactive and positive culture in the way we work to support children and families.
- harnessing the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and community.

To support the strategy, and deliver on its outcome areas, a series of initiatives and programs will be implemented across three annual action plans. The first action plan focuses on building foundations to strengthen the capacity and capability of the child and family support sector and establish a positive culture in the way we work to support children and families.

The priority action areas include:

- harnessing pathways for entry to our sector
- supporting whole of community participation to identify local priorities and solutions
- strengthening systemic supports for our workforce
- building shared knowledge and capacity across our sector
- creating an environment for organisations to flourish.

In June 2016, the QFCC hosted an Executive Leadership Forum *‘Setting the tone at the top’* – bringing together Executives across Government and non-Government services to develop a shared commitment statement on how leaders will work together in supporting families and children.

The QFCC also hosted the first sector learning forum under the strategy in June 2016, with Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott, one of Australia’s leading child protection experts, presenting her research model and implementation findings on cross agency collaboration.

Department of Education and Training Student Protection Principal Advisors

In late 2015, the Department of Education and Training established eight full-time Principal Advisor Student Protection positions in order to improve the oversight of and compliance with student protection reporting obligations.

The Principal Advisors Student Protection commenced in February 2016, with a Principal Advisor located in each education region, and one in the Department of Education and Training Central Office. The Principal Advisors are jointly funded by the Department of Education and Training and DCCSDS.

The Principal Advisors provide key point of contact for support and advice to principals, school leaders and regional staff regarding the reporting of student protection matters. They identify where support is required and work with principals to make informed decisions through analysis of data.

Where it is beneficial, the Principal Advisors liaise with the Queensland Police Service and DCCSDS on behalf of principals and follow up to ensure principals are provided with timely feedback on the outcome of student protection matters which have been reported or referred for support.

The Principal Advisors also:

- offer targeted student protection training for principals, teachers and other school staff, including teacher-aides, administrative staff and cleaners
- work closely with schools to build the capacity to provide support to students and families at a local level, including consultation and coordination of a range of services including Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services

- work with specialist regional staff, principals and families to facilitate the safe re-engagement in schooling for at-risk students
- monitor data for students in out-of-home care and provide schools with up-to-date information about support available, as well as supporting principals to provide any additional assessment, planning and support which will keep these students engaged in learning and allow them to reach their full academic, social and emotional potential.

3.2.7 Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost effective Queensland system

Strategic objective, principle and approach

The strategic objective of Domain 7 is “The child and family support system is efficient, accountable, and informed by a culture of learning”.

The principle of Domain 7 is “Services provided to vulnerable children and families are high quality and are provided in an efficient, transparent and accountable manner”.

The strategic objective of Domain 7 will be achieved by:

- improving court processes and efficiencies
- increasing accountability and transparency and reducing duplication and red tape
- reviewing our legislation.

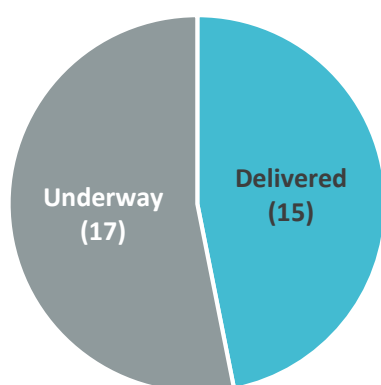
The focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will be maintained by:

- ensuring that processes for the evaluation of all programs and reporting on system performance enables the examination of distinct outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- ensuring that key principles of importance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are preserved and enhanced in any review of legislation
- ensuring procurement processes include a requirement to demonstrate capacity to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and is consistent with endorsed principles.

Implementation status of recommendations

There are 32 recommendations within 10 work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2016:

- 15 recommendations have been delivered
- 17 recommendations were underway.



Significant achievements under this domain

Director of Child Protection Litigation

On 1 July 2016, the Director of Child Protection Litigation was established as an independent statutory agency in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General portfolio with responsibility to decide whether an application for a child protection order should be made, the type of order to be application for and to litigate the application. Mr. Nigel Miller was appointed as Queensland's first Director of Child Protection Litigation.

The establishment of the Director of Child Protection Litigation was in response to recommendation 13.17 – to establish within the justice portfolio an independent statutory agency to make decisions as to which matters will be the subject of a child protection order application and what type of child protection order will be sought, as well as litigate the applications.

The main principle the Director of Child Protection Litigation must comply with is – the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount.

The Director of Child Protection Litigation works collaboratively with the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor within DCCSDS (refer section 3.2.6 – Significant achievements for Domain 6) to manage child protection order applications and proceedings.

The Director of Child Protection Litigation will improve outcomes for children and their families by providing greater accountability and oversight for child protection order applications which are being proposed by the DCCSDS, by ensuring the applications filed in court are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision making.

The Director of Child Protection Litigation does not provide services directly to the community. However, through the involvement of lawyers at an early stage in Queensland's child protection system, the community can be assured state intervention will only occur when necessary, contributing to the overall standard of service provided to Queenslanders by the government.

Reforms in the Childrens Court

In addition to the appointment of the Director of Child Protection Litigation, a number of key reforms in the Childrens Court were developed during the 2015/16 financial year. These reforms relate primarily to the establishment of a judicially-led case management framework for child protection proceedings in the Childrens Court, through the development of the remade Childrens Court Rules 2016. The Childrens Court Rules 2016 commenced on 1 July 2016.

The Commission of Inquiry recommended the establishment of the framework to allow for the Childrens Court to implement a case management approach to child protection proceedings (recommendation 13.2 – court case management framework). A court case management committee was established to develop and deliver the framework. The objective of the framework is to provide a structure for the Childrens Court to actively manage proceedings, minimise delay, and improve the quality of evidence and decision-making in child protection matters.

Major achievements regarding court processes also include the appointment of two additional specialist Childrens Court magistrates to have matters before the court dealt with in a more expeditious and efficient manner, and the development of the remade Childrens Court Rules.

The Childrens Court Rules are made under the Childrens Court Act 1992 and are written and set out in a manner which, as far as practicable, is easy to understand for users of the Childrens Court, particularly for unrepresented parties. The ability for parties, particularly unrepresented parties, to understand court processes ensures efficiency throughout proceedings.

The main object of the Rules is to provide for flexible procedures which allow the court to decide a proceeding consistently with the child protection principles for a court assessment order proceeding or child protection order proceeding – or, for an adoption proceeding, with the adoption principles.

The Rules are also designed to ensure proceedings are decided fairly, as soon as possible, with the minimum cost and legal technicality, and in accordance with the nature, importance and complexity of the issues to be resolved in the proceeding.

Where a proceeding involves an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, the Rules provide that the Court must have regard to Aboriginal tradition or Island custom, which reflects the Child Protection Act 1999.

Review of the Child Protection Act 1999

In response recommendation 14.1, DCCSDS is leading a comprehensive review of the *Child Protection Act 1999* to ensure it provides a contemporary legislative framework for the reformed child protection and family support system.

This comprehensive review follows a range of legislative changes undertaken in 2014 and 2015, including:

- the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, *Public Guardian Act 2014* and *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014*, forming the foundation on which the new child protection system will be built
- further amendments to the *Child Protection Act 1999*, providing the legal framework for sharing information about child protection concerns
- the renamed *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* to streamline the Blue Card system.

From September 2015 to February 2016, DCCSDS consulted with Queenslanders as part of the review, and insights were gathered through community forums, written submissions, meetings, focus groups and small group sessions.

A discussion paper was developed to guide consultation on the current review of the legislation, and the DCCSDS is currently considering the responses received. The discussion paper outlined key foundational issues underpinning the legislation, identified a range of possible approaches and solicited public views about the best way forward.

The government is currently considering the responses received as part of the consultation to determine a way forward with the reforms.

3.3 Performance indicators for the tertiary child protection system

This section provides information on the following performance indicators, grouped under the phases or pathways a child or young person may follow while in the child protection system:

1. **Intake** (see section 3.3.1)
 - Rate of children subject to an intake
2. **Investigation and assessment** (see section 3.3.2)
 - Commencement of investigations and assessments
 - Investigation and assessments with a substantiated outcome
3. **Ongoing intervention** (see section 3.3.3)
 - Rate of children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) case
 - Rate of children subject to a child protection order
 - Rate of children in out-of-home care
 - Percentage of completed case plans
 - Percentage of completed cultural support plans

This section reports the data for each indicator in terms of trends in Queensland over time and, where available, data is disaggregated by Indigenous status.

It is acknowledged these measures reflect a compliance with legislation and policy rather than an indication of the quality of outcomes for children who have contact with the tertiary child protection system. It would add value if future reports also include measures which relate to the educational, health and life skills outcomes as a result of case planning in addition to compliance rates.

For each indicator, a breakout box has been included to highlight the findings QFCC is required to report on, including:

- Queensland's performance over time
- Queensland's performance in relation to the number of and/or outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (where available).

The data in this section is publicly available on the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' "Our Performance" website.

3.3.1 Intake Phase

‘Intakes’ refer to the number of reports (concerns) of suspected harm or risk of harm to a child which are received from various sources (e.g., parents, neighbours, relatives, teachers, and police) by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS).

Once DCCSDS receives a report, an assessment of the information is made. There are two departmental responses to information received at intake:

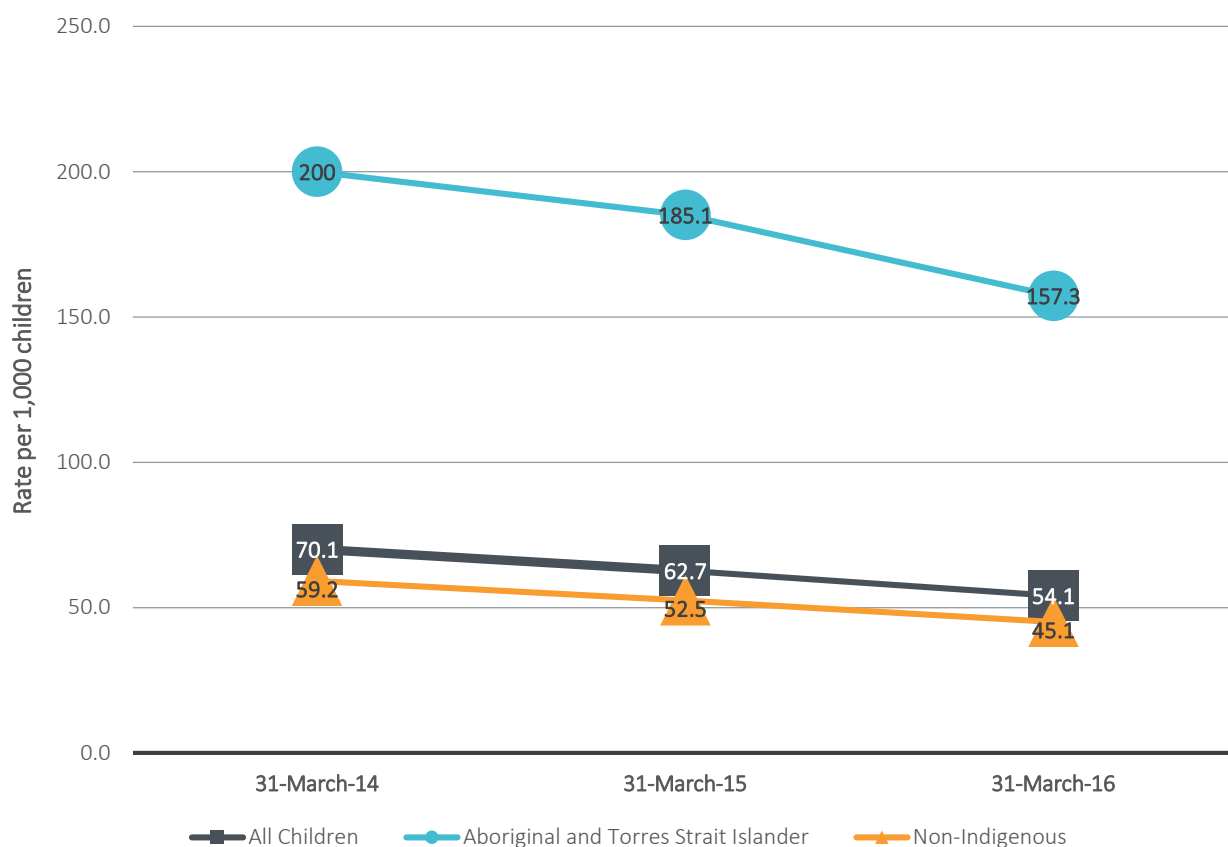
1. **Child Concern Reports** – information received indicates the concerns raised do not meet the legislative threshold to record a notification; or
2. **Notifications** – information received is assessed as reaching the legislative threshold to record a notification (i.e. it is reasonably suspected that a child is in need of protection).

Figure 3.2 shows, in Queensland, the rate of children per 1,000 subject to an intake has declined between the year ending 31 March 2014 and the year ending 31 March 2016.

While the rate per 1,000 of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an intake remains more than three times the rate of non-Indigenous children, the difference between these cohorts has significantly decreased during this period.

In the year ending 31 March 2014, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children per 1,000 subject to an intake was 140.8 per 1,000 higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children. In the year ending 31 March 2016, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an intake was 111.9 per 1,000 children higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children.

Figure 3.2: Rate per 1,000 children subject to an intake by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

Children subject to an intake

The rate of children per 1,000 subject to an intake in Queensland has declined over time.

The rate per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an intake has been consistently higher than the rate per 1,000 non-Indigenous children.

The gap between the two cohorts has decreased.

3.3.2 Investigation and assessment Phase

Commencement of investigations and assessments

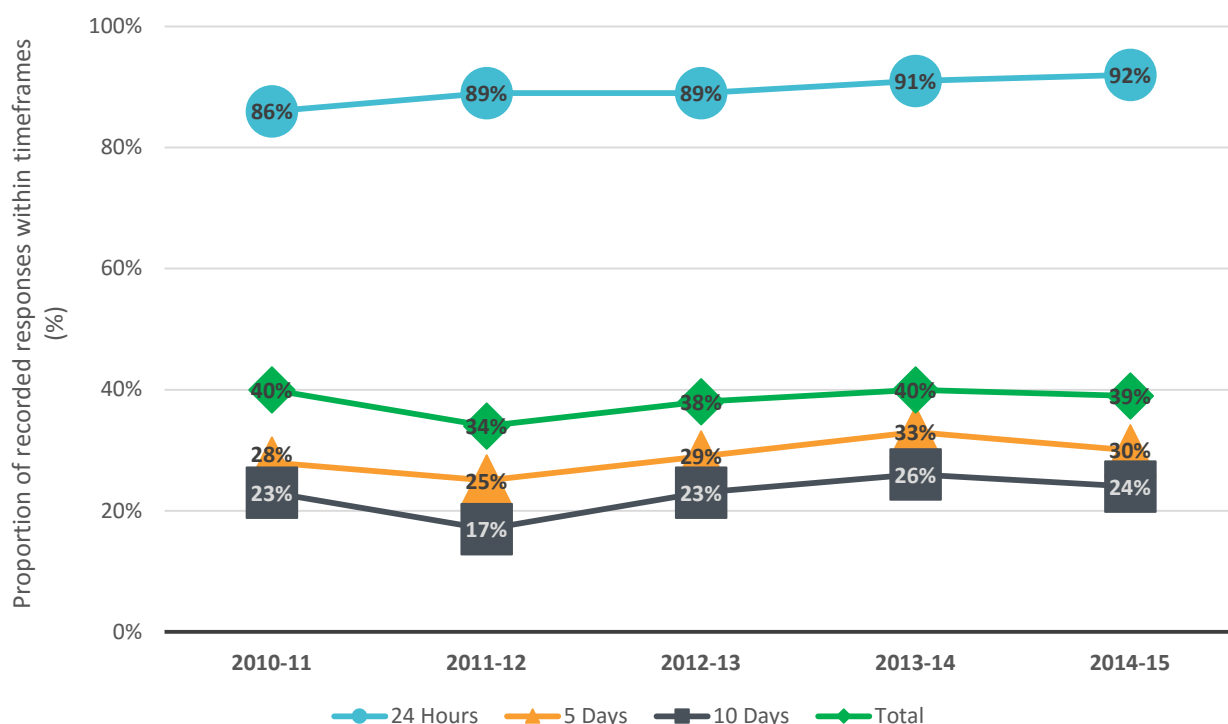
Once a decision has been made to record a notification, further assessment is made to determine the response timeframe for commencing the investigation and assessment, considering the child protection concerns, the child's need for immediate safety and the risk of harm to the child in the near future. According to current policy the recommended response timeframe will be either:

- 24 Hours
- 5 days
- 10 days

Figure 3.3 shows the proportion of recorded responses by whether investigations and assessments commenced within the proposed timeframes from 2010-11 to 2014-15. This data was not available for 2015-16.

This measure refers to the total numbers of investigations which have been commenced, regardless of whether they have been finalised.

Figure 3.3: Proportion of investigation and assessment responses recorded within the response timeframes, Queensland, 2010-11 to 2014-15



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

From the 2010-11 to 2014-15 financial years, there has been limited change in the total proportion of Investigation and assessment responses recorded within the proposed timeframes, with proportions fluctuating between 34-40 per cent across this period (see Figure 3.3).

The proportion of investigation and assessment responses recorded within the 5 day and 10 day timeframes demonstrate a similar pattern. Comparatively, the proportion of investigation and Assessment responses recorded within the 24 hour timeframe has steadily increased over the same period.

Proportion of investigations and assessments commenced in the response timeframes.

The proportion of investigations and assessments commenced within the 24 hour response time continues to increase, and has remained above 90 percent for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 period.

The proportion of investigation and assessment responses commencing within the 5 day response time is below 40 percent for the 2014-15 period. There has been little improvement in commencement of 5 day response time investigations over the 2010-11 to 2014-15 period.

The proportion of recorded investigation and assessment responses commencing within 10 days is even lower – with only 24 percent of these investigations commencing within the required time frame during 2014-15.

Investigation and assessments with a substantiated outcome

An investigation or assessment is the process of investigating a notification of alleged harm or risk of harm. It involves an investigation of the alleged harm and an assessment of the child's protective and safety needs.

ROGS reports 53.5 per cent of finalised investigations and assessments completed within Queensland result in an unsubstantiated outcome which in the majority of cases does not result in any ongoing intervention by the tertiary child protection system.

Further details are provided at section 2.3.2 – *Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated* (ROGS indicator), including

- Figure 2.15 *Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Queensland and Australia 2011–2012 to 2014–2015*; and
- Figure 2.16 *Percentage change in the proportion of substantiated investigations, Queensland and Australia, 2011-2012 to 2014-2015*.

3.3.3 Ongoing Intervention Phase

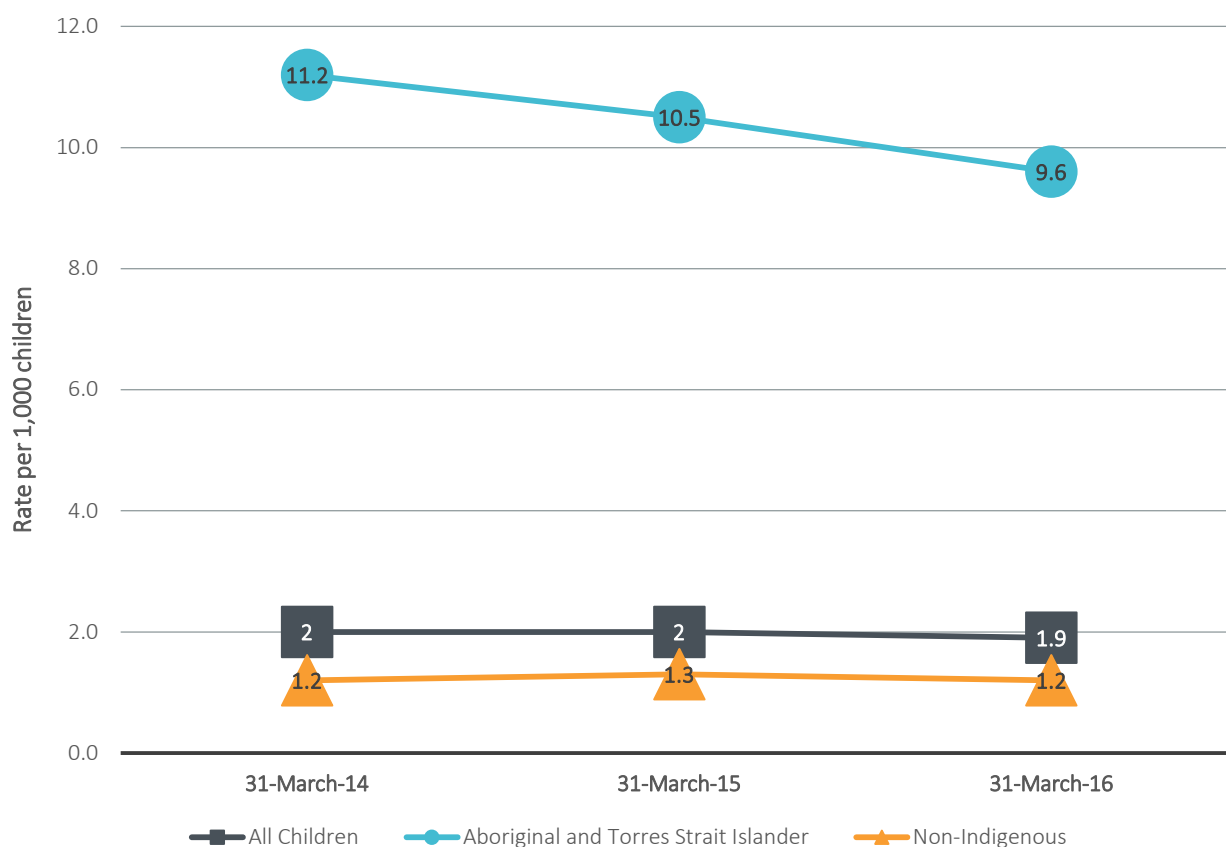
Intervention with Parental Agreement Cases

An Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) case is opened following an assessment by DCCSDS that parents are able and willing to work actively with the department to meet the protection and care needs of the child.⁴³

Figure 3.4 below shows the change in rates per 1,000 Queensland children subject to an IPA from the year ending 31 March 2014 to the year ending 31 March 2016. This includes data disaggregated by Indigenous status.

⁴³ DCCSDS Performance Homepage: *Intervention with parental agreement*. Accessed online (18/7/2016) from: <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/ongoing-intervention-phase/intervention-with-parental-agreement>.

Figure 3.4 Rate per 1,000 children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement in Queensland by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

The rate of Queensland children per 1,000 subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) has remained fairly stable with a decrease of only 0.1 per 1,000 children between the year ending 31 March 2014 and the year ending 31 March 2016.

While the rate of non-Indigenous children per 1,000 has also remained fairly steady, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an IPA has decreased 1.6 per 1,000 over this period. However, this rate still remains 8 times the rate of non-Indigenous children subject to an IPA.

Children subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement

The rate of Queensland children per 1,000 subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement has remained stable over time.

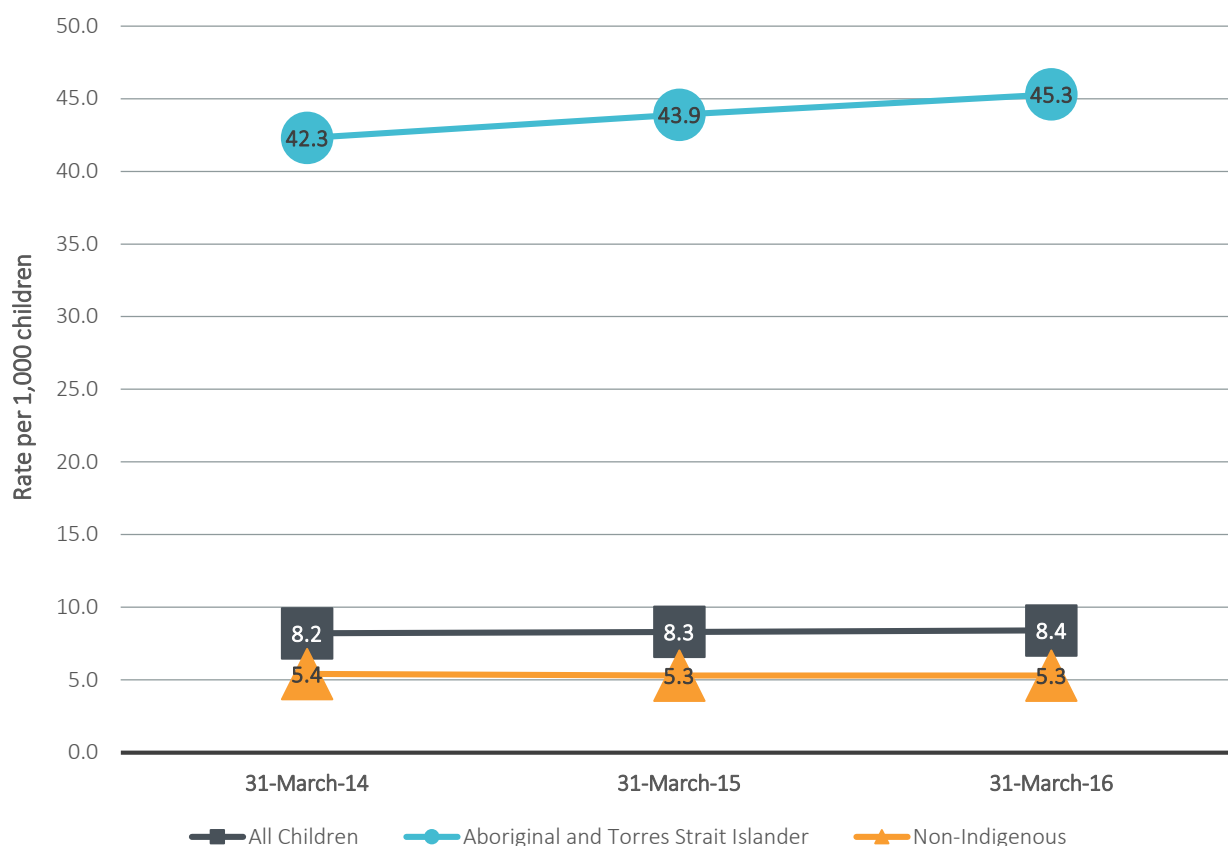
While the rate per 1,000 non-Indigenous children subject to IPA has remained steady, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has decreased.

Child protection orders

Child protection orders either grant custody and/or guardianship to the Chief Executive or to a child's relative, direct a parent to do or refrain from doing something directly related to the child's protection, or requires the Chief Executive to supervise the child's protection. Recent yearly quarters show an increase in the number of children subject to a child protection order.

Figure 3.5 below shows the change in rates per 1,000 children subject to a child protection order from year ending 31 March 2014 to the year ending 31 March 2016. This includes data disaggregated by Indigenous status.

Figure 3.5. Rate per 1,000 children subject to a child protection order in Queensland by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 – 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

The rate of Queensland children subject to a child protection order has changed minimally, with an increase of only 0.2 per 1,000 children between the year ending 31 March 2014 and the year ending 31 March 2016.

Over this period, the difference between the two cohorts has increased. In the year ending 31 March 2014, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children per 1,000 subject to a child protection order was 36.9 per 1,000 higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children. In the year ending 31 March 2016, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a child protection order was 40 per 1,000 children higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children.

Children subject to a child protection order

Overall, the rate of Queensland children per 1,000 subject to a Child Protection Order has made minimal change from March 2014 to March 2016.

Comparatively, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children per 1,000 subject to a Child Protection Order has steadily climbed. As such, the gap between the two cohorts has increased.

Children in out-of-home care

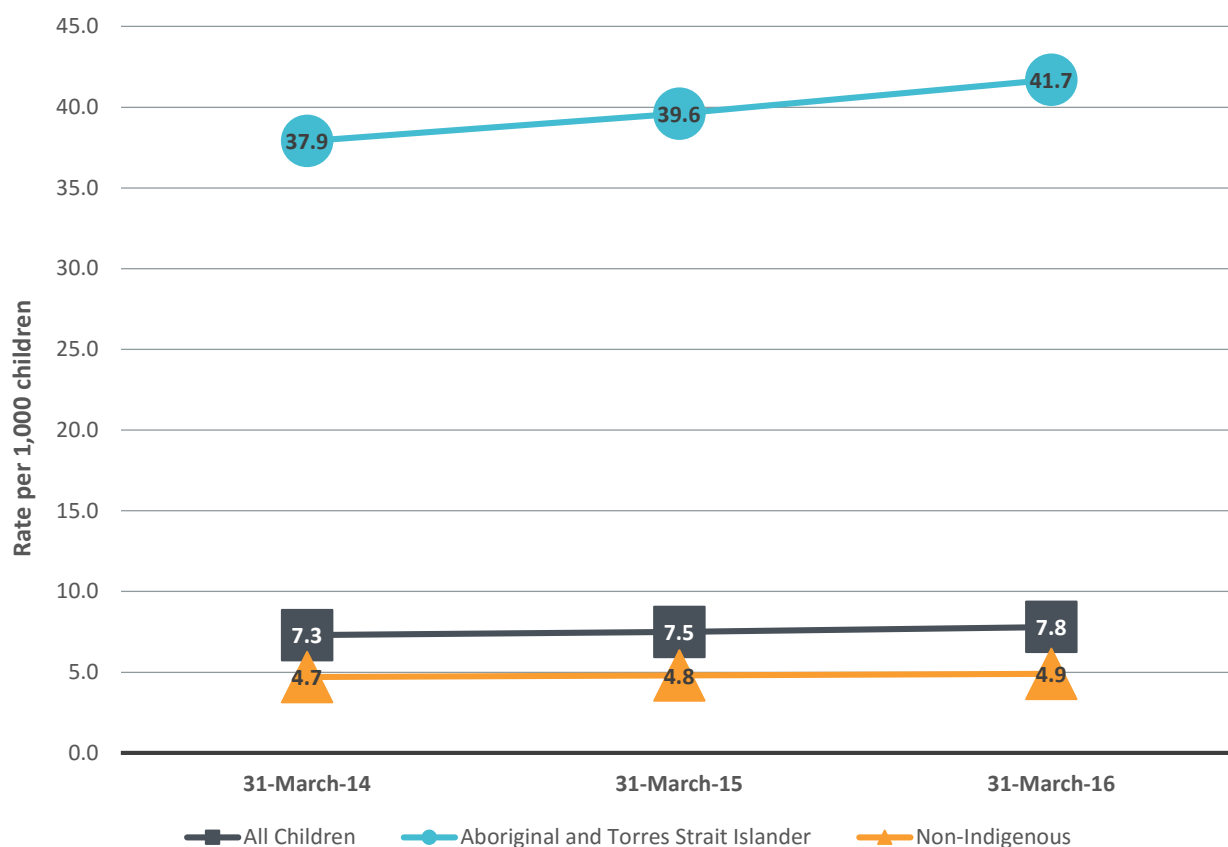
The measure of 'children in-out-of-home care' refers to children placed in home-based care (i.e. foster care, kinship care, provisionally approved care) or residential care services.

Figure 3.3 shows the rate of Queensland children per 1,000 in out-of-home care has increased slightly between the year ending 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2016.

The rate of non-Indigenous children per 1,000 in out-of-home care has demonstrated a similar shift, increasing at a rate of only 0.2 per 1,000 across the reference period. Comparatively, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has increased 3.8 per 1,000 during the same period. Accordingly, the difference between these two cohorts has also increased.

In the year ending 31 March 2014, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children per 1,000 in out-of-home care was 33.2 per 1,000 higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children. In the year ending 31 March 2016, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care was 36.8 per 1,000 higher than the rate for non-Indigenous children.

Figure 3.6: Rate per 1,000 children in Out-of-home Care in Queensland, by Indigenous status, by year ending 31 March 2014 - 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

Children in out-of-home care

The rate of Queensland children per 1,000 in out-of-home care has increased slightly over time.

The rate of non-Indigenous children in out-of-home care has increased by 0.2 per 1000 children from March 2014 to March 2016.

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care has increased by 3.8 per 1000 children from March 2014 to March 2016.

Case plans

A case plan is a written plan for meeting a child's needs and records the goals and outcomes for the child whilst ongoing intervention is occurring. Queensland's proportion of children with a case plan is predictably high as, under the Child Protection Act 1999 (s59 [b]), a finalised child protection order can only be granted by the court if a case plan is in place.

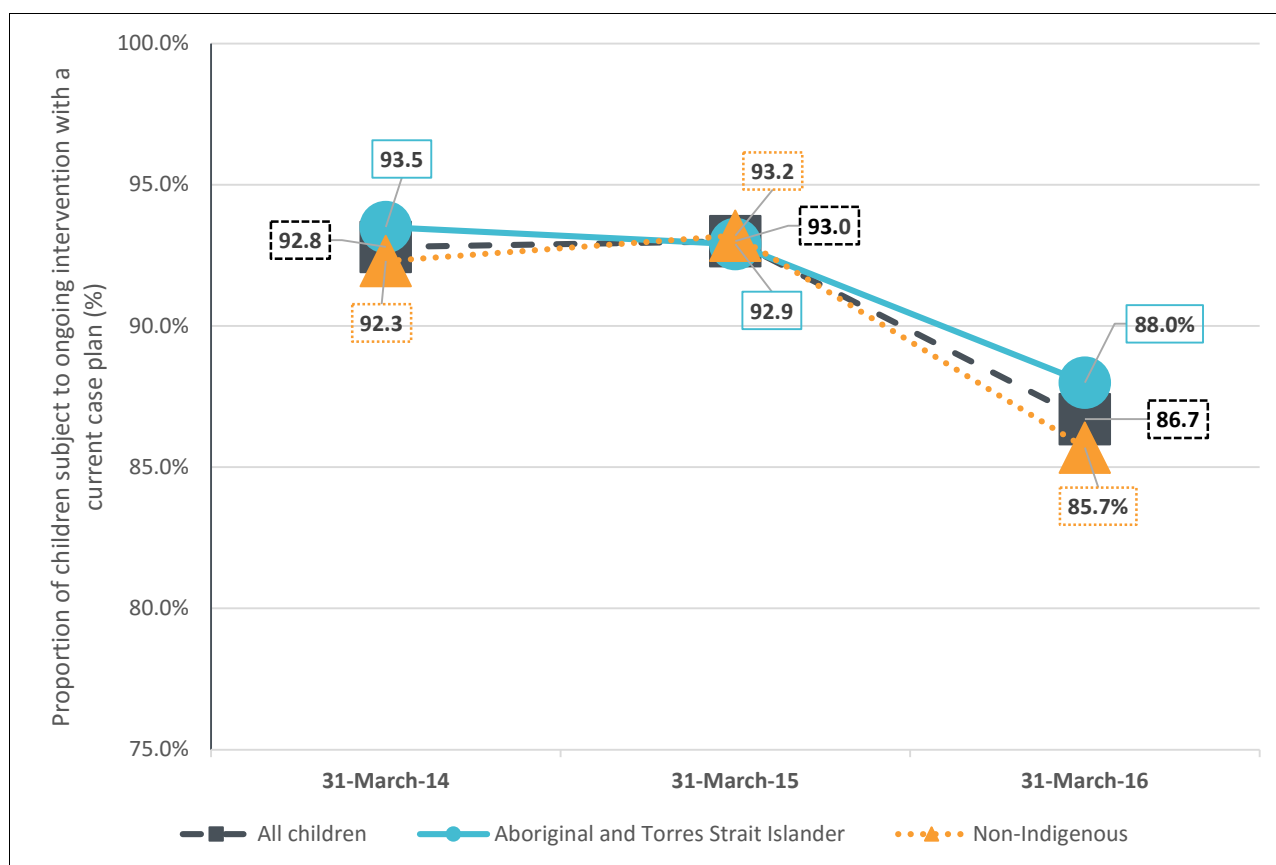
Case plans should also be put in place when an interim order is granted, and/or a child is subject to an open Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) case.

Figure 3.4 shows the proportion of children subject to ongoing intervention with a current case plan has fluctuated from the year ending 31 March 2014 to year ending 31 March 2016. While initially

stable, increasing only 0.2 per cent, this proportion has since decreased from year ending 31 March 2015 to 31 March 2016.

While both the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children with a current case plan has remained stable, shifting less than 1.0 per cent between year ending 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2015, data is not yet available to compare these two cohorts to the decrease observed for 'all children' for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Figure 3.7: Proportion of children subject to ongoing intervention with a current case plan by Indigenous status, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

Case plans

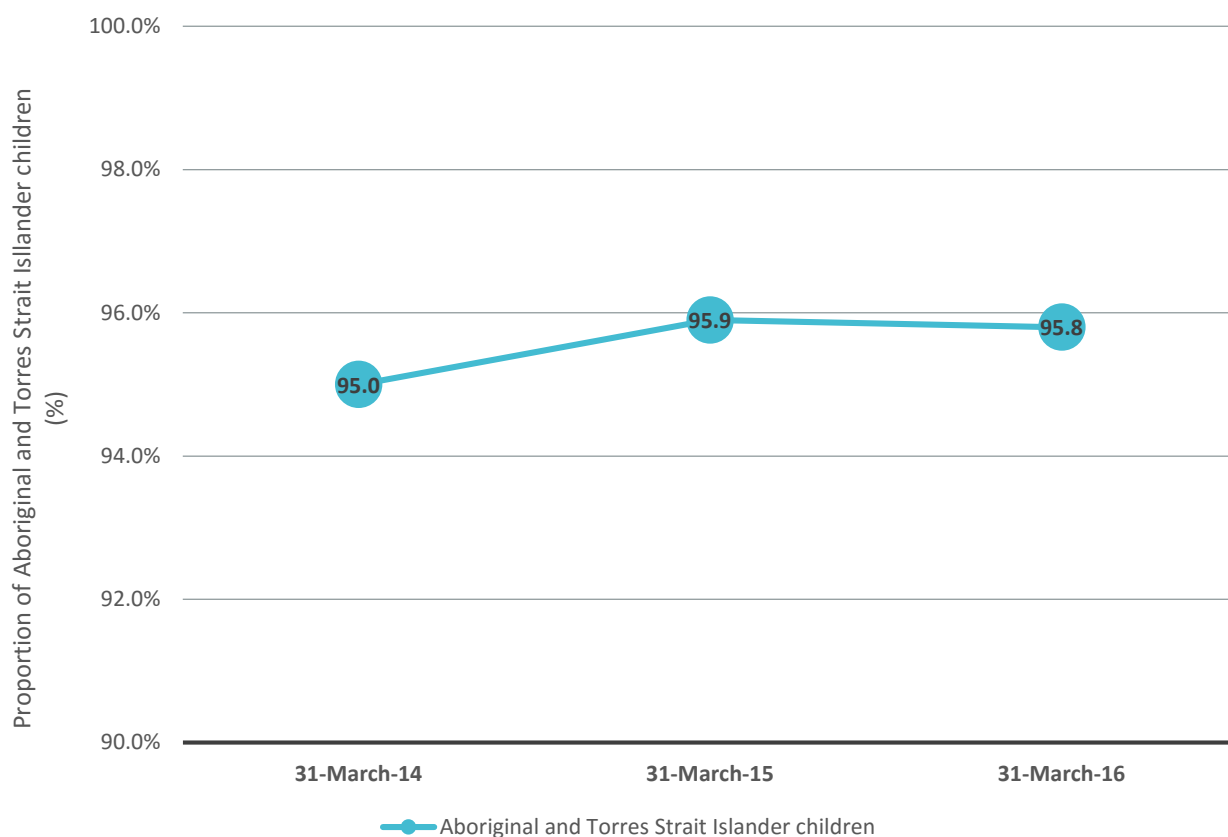
While initially stable, the proportion of children subject to ongoing intervention with a current case plan has since decreased by 6.3 percent from March 2015 to March 2016.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Support Plans

A cultural support plan is a key part of the case planning process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The cultural support plan aims to keep children connected to their culture, families and communities regardless of their placement.

Figure 3.5 shows the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention with a cultural support plan has remained relatively stable in recent years, changing less than 1.0 per cent from the year ending 31 March 2014 to 31 March 2016.

Figure 3.8: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention with a cultural support plan, Queensland, by year ending 31 March 2014 to 2016



Source: Our Performance Website, DCCSDS, as at July 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Support Plans

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a cultural support plan has remained relatively stable over this period.

Substantiated Harm Reports (harm substantiated while a child is in out-of-home care)

A harm report will be recorded for any child where the information gathered indicates:

- a child in out-of-home care has experienced harm or it is suspected they have experienced harm, *and*
- the harm or suspected harm may have involved the actions or inactions of a carer, adult household member or the staff member of a care service, including failure to protect a child.

The harm report is substantiated where it is assessed that the child or young person has experienced harm and/or there is unacceptable risk of future harm.⁴⁴

The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were subject to a harm report substantiation is reported over the period of 8 July 2013 – 30 June 2014 to 2014 – 15.

Trends are not reported for this performance indicator, as data collected prior to July 2013 is not comparable due to revised policy and procedures. This includes a change to the reporting of harm reports and replacing the child placement concern report with alternative responses to concerns about the standards of care, including conducting a standards of care review⁴⁵.

However, for the time period 8 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 to the time period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 the proportion of children in out-of-home care who have been subject to a substantiated harm report has increased by 0.1 per cent from 1.6 per cent to 1.7 per cent.

Substantiated standard of care breaches

The proportion of children in out-of-home care subject to a harm report substantiation has remained relatively stable over the reference period.

⁴⁴ <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance/glossary-of-terms>

⁴⁵ DCCSDS introduced the **Responding to concerns about the standards of care** policy in July 2013

4 Discussion and key findings

This section draws together key findings in terms of the performance of the Queensland child protection system, in relation to:

- State and national goals relating to the child protection system
- Performance in relation to other jurisdictions
- Progress in reducing the numbers of and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system.

Queensland's performance has been analysed and reported in relation to the following key service areas:

1. Building the range and availability of family support services
2. Working better with families in contact with the child protection system
3. Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people
4. Health, Social, Emotional and Economic indicators of wellbeing
5. Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

For each service area, the relevant state and national goals are provided. As is expected and necessary, there is a close relationship between the state and national goals.

As previously stated, undertaking accurate cross-jurisdictional analysis is difficult due to differences in policy and legislation. For this reason, this report has limited cross-jurisdictional assessments to a comparison of Queensland's performance against the national data, using percentage change in measures over time in cases where direct comparison is particularly problematic.

Key statistics and trends are outlined by analysing:

- Indicators of the National Framework's Second Action Plan (see section 2.2)
- ROGS key performance child protection effectiveness output measures (see section 2.3)
- Key information in relation to implementation of the recommendations of the child protection reform program (see section 3.2)
- Key Queensland child protection performance indicators (see section 3.3).

Additional supporting data and information has also been incorporated, including those which provide the views of children and families and other contextual information.

4.1 Building the range and availability of family support services

This service area relates to the following national and state goals:

| Framework | Goal/Outcome | Details |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| National Framework | Primary Outcome | Australia's children are safe and well |
| | Supporting Outcome 1 | Children live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 2 | Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early |
| | Supporting Outcome 3 | Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Roadmap | Overarching Goal 1 | Parents and families protect and care for their children |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Program | Primary Outcome | Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 1 | Children and families have timely access to high-quality services |
| | Supporting Outcome 2 | Queensland's family support system is efficient, effective, client-centred and focused on prevention |
| | Supporting Outcome 4 | Communities have confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system |
| | Domain 2 Strategic Objective | Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |

4.1.1 Key statistics, trends and achievements

Queensland Child Protection Reform Program

A key aim of the reform program is to make sure families and children have access to preventative and support services when they are needed.

The majority of recommendations relating to enhancing family support services are captured in domain 2 (see section 3.2.2).

There are 16 recommendations within four work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2016, three recommendations have been delivered, 12 recommendations were underway and 1 recommendation was not due to commence until year five of the reform program.

Significant achievements:

- Roll out of **Family and Child Connect services** (FaCC) to support families who are at risk of entering or re-entering the tertiary child protection system.
- Roll out of **Intensive Family Support services** to work with vulnerable families who have multiple or more complex needs to ensure they receive the necessary support.

- Release of **oneplace Community Services Directory**, an online state-wide information source of community support services to assist children, families and professionals to access the right service.
- Roll out of **Triple P Parenting Program**, available free to all Queensland parents and carers of children (up to 16 years of age).

Access to support services

The rate of uptake of family support services may be an indicator of the availability and appropriateness of these services.

Key trends and statistics:

- A QFCC survey of over 2000 Queensland parents conducted in late 2015 revealed 17 per cent of parents surveyed used a parenting support service or attended an educational parenting program in the 2015 calendar year. Of these, 93 per cent said it made a positive difference.
- The majority of parents surveyed (75 per cent) had contacted at least one community service organisation or professional for help in the 2015 calendar year. Most parents had contact with a doctor (66 per cent), 41 per cent had contacted teachers, and 22 per cent had contacted nurses or midwives.
- Parents rated doctors as the most trusted community service professional (7.7 out of 10), followed by nurses and midwives (rated 7.4 out of 10) and Child and Baby Health Clinics (rated 7.1 out of 10).
- More than 20,000 Queensland families have accessed the Triple P Program since August 2015.
- As at 30 June 2016, 30,509 discrete services were listed in the oneplace Community Service Directory. Between April and June 2015, there were a total of 30,454 visits to the website.
- For the 2015 calendar year, almost 7,000 referrals were made to Family and Child Connect services.

4.1.2 Key findings and opportunities for further investigation

Key findings:

Significant gains have been made in improving access to family support services. As this has been a focus of the first stage of the implementation of the child protection reform program this is not unexpected. However the progress is significant and commendable.

Opportunities for further investigation:

The uptake of family support services will continue to be monitored, with further analysis of the effectiveness of these services in achieving desired outcomes.

The National Framework's Third Action Plan has a focus on organisations responding better to children and young people and helping to keep them safe. Work is continuing at the national level to identify targets and progress markers for this strategy. Once developed, these targets and progress markers may provide a guide for future priority action, including monitoring and reporting by the QFCC.

4.2 Working better with families in contact with the child protection system

This service area relates to the following national and state goals:

| Framework | Goal/Outcome | Details |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| National Framework | Supporting Outcome 3 | Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed |
| | Supporting Outcome 4 | Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Program | Primary Outcome | Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 2 | Queensland's family support system is efficient, effective, client-centred and focused on prevention |
| | Supporting Outcome 4 | Communities have confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system |
| | Domain 3 Strategic Objective | Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and keeping children safely at home where appropriate |

4.2.1 Key statistics, trends and achievements

Queensland Child Protection Reform Program

A key aim of the reform program is to make sure child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and keeping children safely at home where appropriate.

The majority of recommendations relating to enhancing family support services are captured in domain 3 (see section 3.2.3).

There are 18 recommendations within three work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2016, all 18 recommendations were underway.

Significant achievements:

- Introduction of the **Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Framework for Practice** to enhance child protection practice and deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and families.
- Publication of an **Information Kit on Child Protection for Parents** to assist families to understand their rights, how the child protection system works including court and tribunal processes, and complaints and review options in response to child protection interventions.
- Trials of **Collaborative Family Decision-Making** to improve family group meeting processes, and work collaboratively with families in making decisions and developing plans to meet their children's safety and wellbeing needs.

Intakes

When concerns regarding the safety of a child are reported (an ‘intake’), Child Safety Officers will determine how best to respond to the situation.

There are two departmental responses to information received at intake:

1. *Child Concern Reports* – information received indicates the concerns raised do not meet the legislative threshold to record a notification; or
2. *Notifications* – information received is assessed as reaching the legislative threshold to record a notification (i.e. it is reasonably suspected that a child is in need of protection).

Key trends and statistics:

- Between March 2014 and March 2016, the rate of intakes to DCCSDS reduced from 70 per 1000 children to 54 per 1000 children (refer Figure 3.2)

In 2015, the QFCC undertook a ‘Healthcheck’ of system level reporting/referral behaviours at the request of the Child Protection Reform Leaders Group. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness of the change management process and impact of the legislative amendments on professional reporting which commenced in January 2015.

The review found there were positive signs the implementation of reforms relating to the reporting and referral system had reduced the number of intakes received by DCCSDS which do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. There has also been a corresponding increase in referrals to secondary support services.

A subsequent Healthcheck report of reporting/referral behaviours will be undertaken by QFCC at least six months after state-wide implementation of FaCC and IFS services.

Achieving a reduction in intakes is dependent many factors. These include state and federal government policies and processes, the child protection and family support system sharing responsibility for vulnerable children, and families and communities acknowledging and being supported to address the multiple factors related to child abuse and poor life outcomes.

Investigations and assessments

Once a decision has been made to record a notification, further assessment is made to determine the response timeframe for commencing the investigation and assessment (24 hours, 5 days or 10 days).

Queensland remains the only jurisdiction to respond to all notifications by conducting an investigation and assessment. Given the extent of these policy and legislative differences, this report does not compare data relating to investigations and assessments in Queensland to those in other jurisdictions.

The child protection reforms are changing the way the child protection system works with families in contact with the child protection system. These changes may impact on the time taken to complete an investigation.

Key trends and statistics:

- Between 2010 and 2015, the proportion of investigations requiring a 24 hour response which commenced within the required timeframe has increased by 8 per cent – from 86 per cent to 92 per cent (see Figure 3.3).

- In 2014-15, only 30 per cent of investigations requiring a five day response and 24 per cent of investigations requiring a 10 day response commenced within the required timeframe (see Figure 3.3).
- The response time to complete an investigation changed sharply in 2012-13, and has fluctuated since then. There has been an overall decline in the proportion of investigations finalised in 90 days or more – from 37 per cent in 2011-12 to 24 per cent in 2014-15, an increase in the proportion of those finalised between 29 and 90 days – from 43 per cent in 2011-12 to 54 per cent in 2014-15, fluctuation in the proportion of those finalised in 28 days or less – 20 per cent in 2011-12, 27 per cent in 2012-13 and 2013-14, and 21 per cent in 2014-15 (see Figure 2.14).

Substantiations

If an investigation has found that a child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, this is recorded as having a substantiated outcome.

Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable as a very low substantiation rate might indicate notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted to appropriate cases. Whereas a very high substantiation rate might indicate the criteria for substantiation are unnecessarily bringing ‘lower risk’ families into the statutory system.

Key trends and statistics:

- Between 2009 and 2015, the rate of child protection substantiations in Queensland has reduced by 12 per cent, while the national rate has increased by 29 per cent over the same period (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2).
- In 2014-15, 33.5 per cent of all investigations completed within Queensland had a substantiated outcome. Queensland’s proportion of finalised investigations with a substantiated outcome is consistently lower than the Australian proportion over the period of 2011-12 to 2014-15 (see Figure 2.15).

4.2.2 Key findings and opportunities for further investigation

Key findings:

There are positive signs the implementation of reforms relating to the reporting and referral policies, procedures and practices are reducing the number of intakes received by DCCSDS which do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. There has also been an increase in referrals to secondary support services.

Queensland is the only jurisdiction which responds to all notifications by conducting an investigation and assessment, however less than half of investigations completed have a substantiated outcome.

The proportion of investigations requiring a 24 hour response commencing within this timeframe (the commencement rate) continues to rise, from 86 per cent in 2010-11 to 92 per cent in 2014-15.

However, the commencement rate for investigations requiring a five or a 10 day response has remained relatively steady. In 2014-15, 30 per cent of investigations requiring a five day response and

24 per cent of investigations requiring a 10 day response were commenced within required timeframes.

Opportunities for further investigation:

Any unintended impacts of the level of reporting and reduced intakes will be considered as part of the subsequent Healthcheck of reporting/referral behaviours. This review will be undertaken at least six months after state-wide implementation of FaCC and IFS services.

There is an opportunity to undertake further analysis of the investigation and assessment processes especially in regards to the time taken to commence five and 10 day responses, as well as the proportion of investigations resulting in a substantiated outcome.

Further work could also be undertaken to understand possible impacts of the child protection reforms on the time taken to complete an investigation and assessment.

4.3 Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people

This service area relates to the following national and state goals:

| Framework | Goal/Outcome | Details |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| National Framework | Supporting Outcome 4 | Children who have been abused or neglected receive support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Roadmap | Overarching Goal 2 | Children in care are protected and cared for |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Program | Primary Outcome | Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 1 | Children and families have timely access to high quality services |
| | Supporting Outcome 3 | The level of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system is significantly reduced |
| | Supporting Outcome 4 | Communities have confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system |
| | Domain 4 Strategic objectives | Children and young people in care are protected, cared for, and supported to reach their full potential Young people leaving care have high prospects, ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and feel connected to their culture and community |

4.3.1 Key statistics, trends and achievements

Queensland Child Protection Reform Program

A key aim of the reform program is to make sure children in care are protected and well cared for. The state and national goals both place importance on making sure children in out-of-home care receive appropriate, quality and responsive care.

The majority of recommendations relating to improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people are captured in domain 4 (see section 3.2.4).

There are 18 recommendations within 10 work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2016, three recommendations had been delivered and 15 recommendations were underway.

Significant achievements:

- Development of the **Hope and Healing Framework**, a consistent trauma-informed therapeutic framework aimed at improving residential care services for children and young people.
- The delivery of the **Next Step After Care** services to deliver targeted support services to people leaving care to develop their educational opportunities and job-ready skills,

strengthen their self-reliance and independent living skills, and enable them to acquire and maintain stable and suitable accommodation.

- Opening of **Platform 18** at Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, a free primary health care service for young people aged 15-18 years who are subject to a child protection order. Health assessments are conducted by nurses and support services relating to all aspects of a young person's health and wellbeing are provided.

Children in out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is provided to children when it has been assessed that it is not safe for them to be cared for by their parents. An understanding of the rate of children entering and number of children in out-of-home care, provides key insights into the success of the reform program in reducing the pressure on the tertiary child protection system.

Key trends and statistics:

- As at 31 March 2016, there were 8,671 children in out-of-home care in Queensland (or 7.8 per 1,000 children). Of these, 3,614 were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children (or 41.7 per 1,000 children) (See Table A1.3).
- The rate of children in out-of-home care is still increasing, but at a slower rate than the national average (see Table 2.2; Figure 2.4; Figure 3.6).
- The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is increasing at a greater rate than for non-Indigenous children (see figure 3.3).

Placement Stability:

Placement stability is a key factor in supporting children in out-of-home care to achieve their full potential. In general, a low number of placements is desirable, but this must be balanced against other considerations, including the Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings.

Key trends and statistics:

- Between 2013 and 2016, the average number of placements children in out-of-home care are experiencing has remained relatively stable (see Figure 2.20).
- However, the average number of placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (between 4 and 4.1) is consistently higher than experienced by non-Indigenous children (steady at 3.5) (see Figure 2.20).
- Queensland children who exited after five or more years in care were more likely to experience six or more placements (43.2 percent), compared to the national average (15.3 percent) (see Figure 2.19).
- 15.8 per cent of Queensland children who were in out-of-home care for less than 12 months, and 58.9 per cent of children who were in care for more than 12 months have experienced more than two placements (see Figure 2.17).

Type of out-of-home care

When a child requires out-of-home care, it is widely recognised that the best option for the child is home-based care (i.e. foster, kinship and provisionally approved carers). Wherever possible, children should be placed with extended family (kinship carers) in order to maintain family connections. When placing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child in out-of-home care, a culturally appropriate placement should be sought in accordance with the Child Placement Principle.

Key trends and statistics:

- The proportion of children in Queensland placed with extended family has increased from 34.6 per cent as at 30 June 2012 to 42.9 per cent as at 30 June 2015. However, it is lower than the national average at 47.3 per cent (see Figure 2.23).
- As at June 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland are less likely to be placed with extended family (41.8 per cent) than non-Indigenous children (43.8 per cent).
- This contrasts with the Australian data, in which the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with extended family (48.8 per cent) is consistently higher than the proportion of non-Indigenous children (46.5 per cent) (see Figure 2.24).

Quality of care for children in out-of-home care

It is vital that children in out-of-home care are cared for, protected, safe and able to meet their full potential. A case plan is developed for all children assessed as requiring ongoing intervention, and includes information on the child's individual health and education needs, living arrangements, goals for ongoing intervention and actions required to achieve these goals. As such, it plays a significant part in improving a child's wellbeing by helping to address their care and protection needs.

Key trends and statistics:

- As at 31 March 2016, 86.7 per cent of children subject to ongoing intervention had a current case plan. However this figure is up from 6.3 per cent from the previous year (see Figure 2.27 and Table A1.4).
- As at 31 March 2016, 95.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention had cultural support plans (see Figure 2.27 and Table A1.4).
- Ninety-one per cent of children in out-of-home care have voiced feeling both safe and settled in their current placement. Ninety-seven per cent surveyed believed they have a significant adult who cares about them now and in the future. (*National Standards for Out-of-Home Care (the 'National Standards')*, AIHW, 2015).
- The proportion of children in out-of-home care subject to a harm report (standard of care) substantiation has remained low and relatively stable at around 1.7 per cent (see Section 3.3.3).

4.3.2 Key findings and opportunities for further investigation

Key findings:

The rate of children in out-of-home care in Queensland is increasing, but at a slower rate than the national average. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is consistently higher than the rate of non-Indigenous children, with the gap between the two cohorts increasing from 2014 to 2016.

The average number of placements of children in out-of-home care has remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2016. However the average number of placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is consistently higher than for non-Indigenous children.

Significant gains have been made in placing children in out-of-home care with extended family, and while the gap is narrowing, this rate remains lower than the national average.

Queensland has very high rates of completion of case plans and cultural support plans for children subject to ongoing intervention, and is consistently higher than the national average.

Encouragingly, a very high proportion of Australian children in out-of-home care have voiced feeling both safe and settled in their current placement. The proportion of Queensland children in out-of-home care subject to a harm report substantiation has remained low and relatively stable at around 1.7 per cent.

Opportunities for further investigation:

Placement stability for children in out-of-home care will continue to be monitored, with further analysis of what can be done to reduce placement instability, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

There is an opportunity to examine the influences (both within and external to the tertiary child protection system) on why the rate of Queensland children in home-based care and with extended family is lower than the national average.

There is an opportunity to undertake further analysis of the effectiveness and currency of case plans and cultural support plans to determine if the needs of children in out-of-home care are being adequately identified and they are receiving the supports they need.

The National Framework's Third Action Plan has a focus on helping young people in out-of-home care to thrive into adulthood. Work is continuing at the national level to identify targets and progress markers for this strategy. Once developed, these targets and progress markers may provide a guide for future priority action, including monitoring and reporting by the QFCC.

4.4 Health, social, emotional and economic indicators of well-being

This service area relates to the following national and state goals:

| Framework | Goal/Outcome | Details |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| National Framework | Primary Outcome | Australia's children are safe and well |
| | Supporting Outcome 1 | Children live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 2 | Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early |
| | Supporting Outcome 3 | Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Roadmap | Overarching Goal 1 | Parents and families protect and care for their children |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Program | Primary Outcome | Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 1 | Children and families have access to high-quality services |
| | Supporting Outcome 2 | Queensland's child and family support system is efficient, effective, client-centred and focused on prevention |
| | Domain 2 Strategic Objective | Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |

4.4.1 Key statistics, trends and achievements

Parental risk factors for abuse and neglect

A series of reports published in 2008 and 2009 identified characteristics of parents involved in the Queensland child protection system⁴⁶. One of the major issues facing these households was the existence of multiple and complex risk factors:

- parents with a drug and/or alcohol problem
- parents' intergenerational experience of abuse or neglect
- parents with a criminal history
- parents with a diagnosed mental illness
- domestic violence.

Key trends and statistics:

A QFCC survey of over 2000 Queensland parents conducted in late 2015 revealed just over half (54 per cent) of parents surveyed had one or more risk factors whilst 20 per cent had at least two.

Approximately half (54 per cent) of Queensland parents surveyed stated they had sometimes found it hard to cope with the stress of being a parent. Of these, 81 per cent had felt this was a least once in

⁴⁶ *Characteristics of parents involved in the Queensland child protection system*

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/childsafety/about-us/performance/child-protection/report-6-key-findings.pdf>

the past month, including 5 per cent who felt this way every day. Over a quarter (28 per cent) said they had been worried at some point they were not able to keep their children healthy and safe.

Twenty-one percent of parents surveyed reported physical domestic violence. This was more common amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents (53 per cent), young parents (48 per cent), parents with at least one dependent with a disability or chronic condition (32 per cent), and those who parent on their own (31 per cent).

Queensland Child Protection Reform Program

The primary outcome of the reform program is children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities.

While there are few recommendations relating directly to improving the health, social, emotional and economic status and outcomes for children and families, a key aim of the reform program is to enable parents and families to protect and care for their children through delivering support earlier. This will likely have an effect on reducing the risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

The majority of recommendations relating to enabling parents and families to protect and care for their children in the reform program are captured in domain 2 (see section 3.2.2 and 4.2).

Teenage births

A low rate of teenage births is desirable in order to reduce risk factors for child abuse and neglect as both the mother and child are at greater risk of experiencing, over the longer term, poorer health, education and socioeconomic outcomes.

Key trends and statistics:

- The rate of teenage births in Queensland has decreased from 24 per 1000 females in 2008 to 19.6 per 1000 females in 2013. However, this is still higher than the national average (see Figure 2.6).

Infants born of low birth weight

An infant's birth weight is a key indicator of infant health and a significant determining factor of a baby's chance of survival, good health and development and well-being outcomes.

Key trends and statistics:

- The percentage of low birth weight babies in Queensland (6.3 per cent) is stable and consistent with the national average (6.4 per cent) for the period 2008 to 2013.

Child death – Queensland only

The QFCC publishes an annual report analysing the deaths of Queensland children and young people, focusing on the circumstances and risk factors surrounding external (non-natural) causes of death.

Since data collection commenced in January 2004, there have been some year to year fluctuations in child death rates, however there has been a general reduction in recent years.

Key trends and statistics (see Table A2):

- The deaths of 445 children and young people were registered in Queensland 2014–15, representing a rate of 40.2 deaths per 100,000 population aged 0–17 years.
- External (non-natural) causes accounted for 20.2 per cent of deaths (90 deaths).
- Suicide was the leading external cause of death overall (28 deaths) followed by transport incidents (25 deaths), drowning (16 deaths), fatal assault and neglect (14 deaths).
- Fifteen of the 28 young people who died as a result of suicide were known to the child protection system in last 12 months before their death. Three of the 14 children who died due to fatal assault or neglect were known to the child protection system.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children accounted for 16.4 per cent of all child deaths in 2014–15, and are over-represented in most preventable causes of child death.

Child homicide

While child homicide is a rare event, this data is a key indicator of the nature and level of extreme and serious interpersonal violence experienced by an extremely vulnerable cohort.

Child homicide is measured nationally as the rate of children aged 0–17 years subject to homicide or death from fatal outcomes of intentionally inflicted wounds. At the time of this report, national homicide data beyond 2011–12 had not been released by the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Queensland child homicide data recorded by the QFCC Queensland Child Death Register categorises child homicide as ‘fatal assault and neglect’.

Key trends and statistics:

- During the two financial years 2010–11 to 2011–12 in Australia, there were 62 deaths nationally due to homicide among children aged 0–17, a rate of 0.6 per 100,000 children.
- For the period 2010–2012, the rate of child homicides for children under one year was higher in Queensland (5.8 per 100,000) than the national average (2.2 per 100,000) (see Figure 2.10).
- For the period 2010–2012, the rate of child homicides for children aged 15–17 years in Queensland was below than the national average (0.0 per 100,000 in Queensland compared with 0.9 per 100,000 nationally) (see Figure 2.10).
- In 2014–15, 14 children died of fatal assault and neglect in Queensland. This number is due, in part, to a single incident involving multiple fatalities. Nine children were victims of domestic homicide, four deaths were fatal child abuse and one death was due to neonaticide (see Table A2).

Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development can impact a child throughout life, including their future life successes, physical health and emotional wellbeing. There are multiple factors which impact childhood development including families, communities, broader social norms, as well as government policies and practices.

Key trends and statistics:

- The proportion of Queensland children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census has been declining over time from 29.6 per cent in 2008 to 26.1 per cent in 2015 (see Figure 2.11).
- The proportion of developmentally vulnerable Queensland children is higher than the national average (see Figure 2.11).

Family income and financial stress

Low family income can adversely affect the health, education and self-esteem of children. Regular adequate income is the single most important indicator of their financial situation.

Financial stress can also be a compounding contributor to parental stress. It is often the combination of a number of stressors in people's lives which can put people at risk of coming into contact with the tertiary child protection system.

Key trends and statistics:

- The average household income for low income Queensland households with 0-12 year olds is similar to the national average (see Figure 2.11).
- However, almost half (47 per cent) of Queensland parents surveyed in late 2015 reported they experienced financial stress in the last year. This was more pronounced in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort, with over three quarters (76 per cent) reporting experiencing financial stress.
- Just over a quarter (29 per cent) of parents surveyed reported they were not able to pay their utility bills on time, 26 per cent had asked for financial help, 23 per cent had to pawn or sell something due to a lack of money, 16 percent could not pay their mortgage or rent on time, 13 percent had gone without meals, and 9 per cent had asked for help from a welfare organisation.

4.4.2 Key findings and opportunities for further investigation

Key findings:

Just over half of Queensland parents surveyed in 2015 have self-reported experiencing one or more risk factors which are common in households with a child assessed as in need of protection and requiring ongoing support or intervention. Twenty percent of Queensland parents surveyed reported experiencing two or more of these risk factors.

Approximately half of Queensland parents surveyed stated they had sometimes found it hard to cope with the stress of being a parent, and over a quarter said they had been worried at some point they were not able to keep their children healthy and safe.

Twenty-one percent of all parents and 53 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed reported physical domestic violence.

Almost half (47 per cent) of Queensland parents and 76 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed reported they experienced financial stress in the last year.

Queensland is consistent with the national average for:

- low birth weight babies
- the rate of child homicide
- the average household income of low income families with children.

Queensland performs below the national average for:

- the rate of teenage births
- early childhood development
- the rate of child homicide for children under one year.

Opportunities for further investigation:

There is an opportunity through the Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence Interdepartmental CEO Committee to continue to explore the links between the domestic and family violence reforms and the child protection reforms to ensure successful implementation and delivery of program outcomes.

The National Framework's Third Action Plan has a primary strategy of on early intervention with a focus on the early years – particularly the first 1,000 days for a child. Work is continuing at the national level to identify targets and progress markers for this strategy. Once developed, these targets and progress markers may provide a guide for future priority action, including monitoring and reporting by the QFCC.

4.5 Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families underpins all national and state goals for child protection. Similarly all the goals, objectives and supporting outcomes of the Queensland Child Protection Reform Program contribute to improving the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

However, it is recognised additional specific and targeted actions are required to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and address over-representation in the tertiary child protection system.

The table below therefore identifies the national and state goals which have a specific focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families:

| Framework | Goal/Outcome | Details |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| National Framework | Primary Outcome | Australia's children are safe and well |
| | Supporting Outcome 5 | Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Roadmap | Overarching Goal 1 | Parents and families protect and care for their children |
| | Overarching Goal 2 | Children in care are protected and cared for |
| Queensland Child Protection Reform Program | Primary Outcome | Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities |
| | Supporting Outcome 3 | The level of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system is significantly reduced |
| | Strategic Objective 5 | Indigenous children and young people are safe and supported in their families and communities as part of a culturally responsive and capable system |
| | Domain 5 Strategic Objective | Meeting the requirements and needs of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. |

4.5.1 Key statistics, trends and achievements

As at 30 June 2014, there were just over 86,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in Queensland, which is 7.8 per cent of the population of Queensland's children (aged 0-17 years).

Of all children who had contact with the Queensland child protection system as at 30 June 2014, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were approximately:

- five times more likely to be subject to a notification
- eight times more likely to be subject to ongoing intervention
- eight times more likely to be in out-of-home care⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ The Queensland Government Statistician's Office published population estimates for 2001-2014 has been combined with 2013-2014 data available on the Our Performance website (www.communities.qld.gov.au) to develop these statements.

Queensland Child Protection Reform Program

A key aim of the reform program is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are safe and supported in their communities as part of a culturally responsive and capable system.

While there is a commitment to ensure focus is maintained on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in undertaking all activities, the Commission of Inquiry identified several focus areas and made 16 specific recommendations aimed at reducing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system and improving outcomes for them and their families.

These specific recommendations are grouped under nine work packages in domain 5. As at 30 June 2016, two of these recommendations had been delivered and 14 were underway.

Significant achievements:

- Commitment to develop an **Action Plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families** to address the broader issues of social and economic disadvantage and the specific circumstances in families which drive the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the statutory child protection system.
- Work of the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Service Reform Project** in reviewing the Safe House Model, assessing the adequacy of existing universal, early intervention and family support services, and developing strategies and service delivery models to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- **Reviews of current arrangements for the enforcement of domestic violence orders in discrete communities** to identify and drive improvements and linkages to the domestic violence and child protection reform programs.
- Trials of an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family-Led Decision-Making Model for Family Group Meetings** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Ipswich, Mount Isa, Cairns and the Torres Strait Islands.
- Trial of the **Winangay kinship care assessment tools** throughout Queensland.
- The recruitment of **10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practice leaders** to drive culturally responsive practice.

Family Support Services

Access to culturally appropriate family support services is vital in order to ensure services are delivered in a culturally appropriate way, as early as possible. Culturally appropriate intervention with a family before concerns escalate may help reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the early phase of the tertiary child protection system.

Key trends and statistics:

- A QFCC survey of over 500 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents conducted in late 2015 revealed 57 per cent of parent surveyed had difficulty in asking for help and support from friends, families and neighbours.
- The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed (91 per cent) had contacted at least one community service organisation or professional in the 2015 calendar year. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents had contact with doctors (74 per cent), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Clinics (72 per cent).
- Parents rated doctors as the most trusted community service professional (7 out of 10), followed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Clinics (6.6 out of 10) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned or run community or welfare association (rated 6.1 out of 10).

- 17 per cent of parents surveyed reported using a parenting support service or attended an educational parenting program in the 2015 calendar year. Of these, 99 per cent said it made a positive difference.

Recent developments:

The Queensland Government has recently taken a number of steps to improve family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

In May 2016, as part of the first wave of contributions towards the action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families experiencing vulnerability, the Queensland Government announced investment of more than \$150 million over five years from 2016–17 in revamped parenting and family support and wellbeing services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Family Wellbeing Services will be rolled out progressively from 2016-17 offering practical support to over 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to help build their capacity to safely care for their children.

Working better with families in contact with the child protection system

Given the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in all phases of the tertiary child protection continuum, every opportunity to engage better with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, relatives and communities must be explored and enhanced.

More effective engagement and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families by child protection agencies and their workers will support the reform aim of keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe and supported.

Key trends and statistics:

- While the rate per 1,000 of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an intake remains more than three times the rate of non-Indigenous children, the difference between these cohorts has significantly decreased between 2014 and 2016 (see Figure 3.2).
- While the rate of Queensland children per 1,000 subject to an Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) has remained relatively steady between 2014 and 2016, the rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has decreased from 11.2 in 2014 to 9.6 in 2016 (see Figure 3.4).

Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for children and young people

There will always be circumstances when it is assessed that it is necessary for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child to be placed in out-of-home care in order to address their safety and well-being needs.

In these circumstances it is imperative a child's experience in out-of-home care meets their cultural, social and emotional well-being needs, alongside their educational and health needs.

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is an indicator of demand for culturally appropriate out-of-home care services. It can also be an indicator of whether early intervention services are effective.

Key trends and statistics:

- As at 31 March 2016, there were 3,614 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Queensland. This equates to 41.7 per cent of all children in out-of-home care in Queensland (see Table A1.3).
- The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is increasing at a greater rate (from 37.9 per 1,000 children in 2014 to 41.7 per 1,000 in 2016) than non-Indigenous children in out-of-home care (4.7 in 2014 to 4.9 in 2016) (see Figure 3.6).
- The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a Child Protection Order has steadily increased from 42.3 per 1000 in 2014 to 45.3 per 1000 in 2016, whereas the rate of non-Indigenous children subject to a Child Protection Order has remained steady at around 5.3 per 1,000 over the same period (see Figure 3.5).
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland placed with relatives/kin (in accordance with ROGS definition of the Child Placement Principle) has increased from 34.2 per cent in 2012 to 41.8 per cent in 2015 (see Figure 2.24).

Health, Social, Emotional and Economic Indicators

Health, social and emotional well-being indicators provide an insight into population based measures which potentially indicate populations which may be at risk of child abuse and neglect in the future.

Key trends and statistics:

- Of the more than 500 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed by QFCC in late 2015, 75 per cent self-reported experiencing one or more risk factors common in households with a child assessed as in need of protection and requiring on-going support or intervention. Twenty-one per cent self-reported experiencing two or more of these risk factors.
- Nearly half of the parents surveyed (47 per cent) said they have, at times, found it hard to cope with the stress of being a parent or caregiver, and 26 per cent said they have been worried at some point they were not able to keep their children healthy and safe.
- Nearly three quarters (74 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed reported they had experienced financial stress, and 53 per cent reported physical domestic violence.
- Over three quarters (76 per cent) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed reported they experienced financial stress in the 2015 calendar year. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) reported they had asked for financial help from family and friends, 57 per cent were not able to pay their utility bills on time, 33 per cent had asked for help from a welfare organisation, 35 per cent could not pay their mortgage or rent on time, 27 per cent had had to pawn or sell something due to a lack of money, and 21 per cent had gone without meals.
- As at 2013, the rate of births to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenage mothers in Queensland (63.8 per 1000 females) was four times the rate of non-Indigenous teenage mothers (16.2 per 1000) (see Figure 2.7).
- As at 2013, the proportion of low birth weight babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenage mothers in Queensland (11 per cent) was almost double the proportion for non-Indigenous mothers (6 per cent) (see Figure 2.9).
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children accounted for 16.4% of all child deaths registered in Queensland during 2014-15. Indigenous children are over-represented in infant deaths from diseases and morbid conditions, suicide deaths and sudden unexpected deaths in infancy.

4.5.2 Key findings and opportunities for further investigation

Key findings:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families continue to be over-represented across most of the national and state performance indicators for the child protection system.

Specifically:

- The rate of Indigenous children in out-of-home care is higher than non-Indigenous children and this gap has increased.
- The average number of placements for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is higher than the average for non-Indigenous children.
- Data continues to indicate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are being subject to higher rates of tertiary intervention, and at greater rates, when compared to non-Indigenous children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families continue to experience very high levels of stressors and risk factors common in households with a child that is assessed as in need of protection.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents had contacted at least one community service organisation or professional in the 2015 calendar year, with doctors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Clinics being the most frequently contacted and the most trusted service.

Seventeen per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents surveyed reported using a parenting support service or attended an educational parenting program in the 2015 calendar year. Encouragingly, of these, 99 per cent said it made a positive difference.

Opportunities for further investigation:

Addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation within the tertiary child protection system is both a national and state focus.

The National Framework's Third Action Plan has an integrated focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Work is continuing at the national level to identify targets and progress markers for this Action Plan. Once developed, these targets and progress markers may provide a guide for future priority action, including monitoring and reporting by the QFCC.

The Queensland Action Plan for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families will provide opportunities to explore and address the broader issues of social and economic disadvantage and the specific circumstances in families which drive the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and in the statutory child protection system.

Attachment 1 – Key statistics for the Queensland Child Protection system

The following information was sourced from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services “Our Performance” website: <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/our-performance>, accessed 4 July 2016.

‘Non-Indigenous’ includes non-Indigenous children and children whose Indigenous status is unknown or not stated.

The rate per 1,000 was calculated for the years ending March 2014, March 2015 and March 2016 using the estimated residential population for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children as at 30 June 2013 sourced from the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (QGSO): <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/pop-est-indigenous-status/index.php>, accessed 6 July 2016.

The QGSO estimates have been compiled using the latest information available at time of production, however is subject to change and revision.

Table A1.1. Key statistics regarding intakes, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016

| Intakes | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous | All children |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Children subject to an intake ¹ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 17,133 | 60,448 | 77,581 |
| | Rate per 1000 | 200.0 | 59.2 | 70.1 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 16,042 | 54,087 | 70,129 |
| | Rate per 1000 | 185.1 | 52.5 | 62.7 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 13,638 | 46,847 | 60,485 |
| | Rate per 1000 | 157.3 | 45.1 | 54.1 |
| Children subject to an intake for the first time | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 21.4 | 41.5 | 37.1 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 20.1 | 38.1 | 34.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 19.8 | 37.7 | 33.6 |
| Children subject to a notification | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 5,905 | 14,515 | 20,420 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 68.9 | 14.2 | 18.4 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 5,693 | 13,872 | 19,565 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 65.7 | 13.5 | 17.5 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 5,506 | 13,777 | 19,283 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 63.5 | 13.4 | 17.2 |

1. If a child was subject to both an approved notification and an approved child concern report they are counted only once according to their first intake type (refer DCCSDS Tables I1-I5).

Table A1.2. Key statistics regarding substantiations, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016

| Substantiations | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous | All children |
|--|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Children subject to a substantiation ² | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 2,203 | 4,534 | 6,737 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 25.7 | 4.4 | 6.1 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 2,063 | 3,978 | 6,041 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 23.8 | 3.9 | 5.4 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 1,849 | 3,630 | 5,479 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 21.3 | 3.5 | 4.9 |

2. Notifications recorded during the reference period, where an assessment has been finalised and the investigation outcome was recorded as substantiated within two months after the end of the reference period. If a child is subject to more than one substantiation in the period, the child is counted only once (refer DCCSDS Tables S1-S9).

Table A1.3. Key statistics regarding ongoing intervention, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016

| Ongoing Intervention | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous | All children |
|--|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Children subject to ongoing intervention ³ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 4,584 | 6,737 | 11,321 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 53.5 | 6.6 | 10.2 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 4,711 | 6,734 | 11,445 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 54.3 | 6.5 | 10.2 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 4,764 | 6,771 | 11,535 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 55.0 | 6.6 | 10.3 |

| Children subject to Intervention with Parental Agreement | | | | |
|---|----------------|------|-------|-------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 961 | 1263 | 2224 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 11.2 | 1.2 | 2.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 908 | 1,297 | 2,205 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 10.5 | 1.3 | 2.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 836 | 1,257 | 2,093 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 9.6 | 1.2 | 1.9 |

| Children subject to a Child Protection Order | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 3,623 | 5,474 | 9,097 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 42.3 | 5.4 | 8.2 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 3,803 | 5,437 | 9,240 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 43.9 | 5.3 | 8.3 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 3,928 | 5,514 | 9,442 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 45.3 | 5.3 | 8.4 |

| Children subject to a long-term Child Protection Order | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 2,045 | 3,266 | 5,311 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 23.9 | 3.2 | 4.8 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 2,239 | 3,397 | 5,636 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 25.8 | 3.3 | 5.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 2,414 | 3,456 | 5,870 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 27.8 | 3.4 | 5.3 |

| Children in out-of-home care | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 3,251 | 4,826 | 8,077 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 37.9 | 4.7 | 7.3 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Number | 3,429 | 4,933 | 8,362 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 39.6 | 4.8 | 7.5 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Number | 3,614 | 5,057 | 8,671 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 41.7 | 4.9 | 7.8 |

| Proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care placed with kinship or Indigenous carers | | | | |
|--|----------|------|----|----|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 55.5 | .. | .. |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 54.4 | .. | .. |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 56.3 | .. | .. |

3. Includes children subject to intervention with parental agreement or a child protection order. If a child is subject to both intervention with parental agreement and a child protection order (such as an order directing a parent's actions), they are counted only once as a child protection order.

Table A1.4. Key statistics regarding ongoing intervention, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016

| Ongoing Intervention | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous | All children |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Proportion of children subject to ongoing intervention with a current case plan | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Number | 4,584 | 6,737 | 11,321 |
| | Rate per 1,000 | 53.5 | 6.6 | 10.2 |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 93.5 | 92.3 | 92.8 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 92.9 | 93.2 | 93 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | | | . | 86.7 |

| Proportion of Indigenous children subject to ongoing intervention with a cultural support plan ⁴ | | | | |
|---|----------|------|----|----|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 95.0 | .. | .. |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 95.9 | .. | .. |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 95.8 | .. | .. |

| Proportion of children aged over 15 years with transition from care planning | | | | |
|--|----------|------|------|------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 71.7 | 72.0 | 71.9 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 69.9 | 72.7 | 71.7 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | | | 68.0 |

| Proportion of children aged over 15 years with transition from care planning who participated in their planning | | | | |
|---|----------|------|------|------|
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 89.2 | 91.3 | 90.6 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 90.2 | 91.3 | 90.9 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | | | 92.1 |

⁴ The number of Indigenous children subject to ongoing intervention with a cultural support plan recorded on the central system as at the reference date (DCCSDS Table CSP.1Q-footnote (a))

Table A1.5. Key statistics regarding re-entry, years ending 31 March 2014, 31 March 2015 and 31 March 2016

| Re-entry | | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander | Non-Indigenous | All children |
|--|----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Proportion of children subject to a substantiation experiencing a resubstantiation within three months ⁵ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 10.0 | 8.1 | 8.7 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 8.6 | 7.7 | 8.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 6.3 | 6.8 | 6.6 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|------|------|------|
| Proportion of children subject to a substantiation experiencing a resubstantiation within 12 months ⁵ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 22.1 | 18.9 | 19.9 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 20.4 | 18.1 | 18.9 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 18.6 | 16.8 | 17.4 |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| Children subject to an initial decision not to substantiate, experiencing a substantiation within 3 months ⁶ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 4.5 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 5.4 | 3.5 | 4.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 5.7 | 3.4 | 4.0 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|------|------|------|
| Children subject to an initial decision not to substantiate, experiencing a substantiation within 12 months ⁶ | | | | |
| Year ending 31 March 2014 | Per cent | 14.2 | 9.9 | 11.0 |
| Year ending 31 March 2015 | Per cent | 15.3 | 10.0 | 11.4 |
| Year ending 31 March 2016 | Per cent | 13.8 | 9.3 | 10.6 |

5. Substantiations are measured as the proportion of distinct children subject to substantiations during the reference year who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within a period of three or 12 months (DCCSDS Table RE.1)

6. Children who were subject to a decision not to substantiate experiencing a subsequent substantiation are measured as the proportion of distinct children subject to a decision not to substantiate during the reference year who were subject to a substantiation within a period of three or 12 months (DCCSDS Table RE.2).

Attachment 2 – Child deaths in Queensland 2012–2015

Table A2: Summary of deaths of children and young people in Queensland, 2012–2015

| | 2012–13 | | 2013–14 | | 2014–15 | | Yearly average |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Total <i>n</i> | Rate per 100,000 | Total <i>n</i> | Rate per 100,000 | Total <i>n</i> | Rate per 100,000 | Rate per 100,000 |
| All deaths | | | | | | | |
| Deaths of children 0–17 years | 449 | 41.1 | 446 | 40.3 | 445 | 40.2 | 40.4 |
| Cause of death | | | | | | | |
| Diseases and morbid conditions | 360 | 33.0 | 359 | 32.4 | 309 | 27.9 | 31.0 |
| Explained diseases and morbid conditions | 328 | 30.1 | 331 | 29.9 | 303 | 27.4 | 29.0 |
| Unexplained diseases and morbid conditions | 32 | 2.9 | 28 | 2.5 | 6 | 0.5 | 2.0 |
| <i>SIDS and undetermined causes (infants)</i> | <i>32</i> | <i>2.9</i> | <i>26</i> | <i>2.3</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>0.5</i> | <i>1.9</i> |
| <i>Undetermined causes (>1 year)</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0.0</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>*</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>0.0</i> | <i>*</i> |
| External causes | 87 | 8.0 | 76 | 6.9 | 90 | 8.1 | 7.6 |
| Transport | 28 | 2.6 | 31 | 2.8 | 25 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| Suicide | 22 | 2.0 | 23 | 2.1 | 28 | 2.5 | 2.2 |
| Drowning | 11 | 1.0 | 7 | 0.6 | 16 | 1.4 | 1.0 |
| Other non-intentional injury-related death | 15 | 1.4 | 9 | 0.8 | 7 | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Fatal assault and neglect | 11 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.5 | 14 | 1.3 | 0.9 |
| Cause of death pending | 2 | * | 11 | 1.0 | 46 | 4.2 | 1.8 |
| Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI) | | | | | | | |
| Sudden unexpected infant deaths | 48 | 75.9 | 43 | 67.7 | 39 | 61.4 | 68.2 |
| Sex | | | | | | | |
| Female | 204 | 38.4 | 198 ^a | 36.7 | 207 ^a | 38.4 | 37.7 |
| Male | 245 | 43.8 | 247 ^a | 43.5 | 236 ^a | 41.6 | 42.7 |
| Age category | | | | | | | |
| Under 1 year | 288 | 455.4 | 298 | 468.9 | 285 | 448.5 | 456.9 |
| 1–4 years | 48 | 19.3 | 45 | 17.8 | 54 | 21.4 | 19.4 |
| 5–9 years | 31 | 10.3 | 39 | 12.6 | 31 | 10.0 | 10.9 |
| 10–14 years | 38 | 12.8 | 21 | 7.0 | 22 | 7.4 | 9.0 |
| 15–17 years | 44 | 24.2 | 43 | 23.6 | 53 | 29.0 | 25.6 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status | | | | | | | |
| Indigenous | 60 | 70.8 | 69 | 80.5 | 73 | 85.2 | 78.6 |
| Non-Indigenous | 389 | 38.6 | 377 | 36.9 | 372 | 36.4 | 37.1 |
| Known to the child protection system | | | | | | | |
| Known to the child protection system | 63 | 38.0 | 80 | 47.8 | 52 | 53.7 | .. |

Source: Queensland Child Death Register (2012–2015)

* Rates have not been calculated for numbers less than four.

.. Average across the three-year period has not been calculated due to the break in series (see note 4).

^a Excludes the death of one infant of indeterminate sex in 2013–14 and two infants of indeterminate sex in 2014–15.

1. Data presented here is current in the Queensland Child Death Register as at June 2015 and thus may differ from those presented in previously published reports.

2. Rates are based on the most up-to-date denominator data available and are calculated per 100,000 children (in the age/sex/Indigenous status) in each year.
3. Rates for cause of death are calculated per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years in Queensland in each year, with the exception of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy, which are calculated per 100,000 infants under the age of 1 year in Queensland.
4. For 2013–14 and all earlier periods, the number of children known to the child protection system represents the number of children, whose deaths were registered in the reporting period, who were known to the Department of Communities in the three-year period prior to their death. For 2014–15, this was changed to the deaths of children known to the Department of Communities in the one-year period prior to their death.
5. Average annual rates have been calculated using the estimated resident population data at June 2013 (the mid-point for the period).

