

ANNUAL REPORT 2016–2017



Communication objective

This Annual Report describes our progress during 2016–17 toward achieving the long term objectives of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) as published in our strategic plan.

In particular, the report focuses on our performance in relation to our strategic objectives, our financial position and our compliance with legislative requirements. It includes some of the key challenges affecting Queensland children and families, and explains how we are helping to address these challenges. It also provides information on 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.

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Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Telephone: 07 3900 6000
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20 September 2017

The Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Premier and Minister for the Arts
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Premier

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2016–17 and financial statements for the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

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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Principal Commissioner's report

It has been another busy year for the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), with major reviews, reforms and activities underway and completed.

We began to implement our *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, designed to make the child protection sector as professional, consistent and accessible as possible to the people who need it most.

We also increased our focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, engaging community leaders, children and their families, including young people moving from care and young people in juvenile detention. We did a great deal of work in breaking down barriers to employment, in determining priorities for services and in designing community-based approaches to meeting challenges and making the most of opportunities.

With our inaugural Commissioner, Tammy Williams—a Murri woman, I visited several Far North Queensland communities. Several QFCC staff also took part in a co-location with organisations in Townsville and Palm Island. Through this, we built strong alliances and developed more understanding of the needs of remote communities. This will help us in effectively advocating on their behalf.

Working with our partners, within and outside government, we have delivered a range of initiatives aimed at helping and making changes for vulnerable children and their families.

These included our cyber-safety 'Out of the Dark' project, our *Talking Families* campaign, and a range of information kits, posters and other resources. All of these were designed to make it easier for children, parents and child safety professionals to access facts and find the right services.

This year, we released the evaluation framework for the child protection reforms and in 2017–18 we will conduct the first formal evaluation of the impacts of these reforms.

We continue to raise awareness of the risk factors that can lead to child death and serious injury. We do this

by providing advice to parliament and other decision-makers. We also maintain data on these issues and make it available for research, public education, policy development and program design.

In 2016–17, we also led a number of major reviews that made recommendations to improve the systems designed to protect Queensland's children. Sadly, some of these reviews arose from the deaths of children. These precious lives were lost, and nothing could make that right, but through the reviews, we had the chance to make a difference for many other vulnerable children.

One of the main themes of the reviews is the need for greater information sharing between government agencies. Each agency has a piece of the puzzle and these pieces need to be brought together to keep children safe.

Several whole-of-government system improvements have been made because of our reviews. These will lead to greater consistency, better coordination and faster responses to child safety issues.

I thank all of the organisations and individuals, particularly our advisory bodies and the children and young people who have contributed their time, energy, experience and advice to our endeavours. Of course, none of it would be possible without the dedicated staff of the QFCC, who work tirelessly to make Queensland's children more than safe. I look forward to working with all of them next year, as we continue to make a difference for children and young people.

2016–17 has been a year of achievement, of reflection, and of renewed purpose. I encourage you to read all about it in this annual report, and to become involved where possible.

Everyone has a role in protecting our children.



Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

About us

Our role

Children, young people and their families are at the heart of everything we do.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is dedicated to improving the child protection and family support system. Our vision, from our *Strategic Plan 2016–2020* is to ‘work collaboratively to influence change so Queensland is a safe place where children, young people and their families thrive in supportive communities’.

We are committed to achieving this vision and supporting the delivery of the government’s *Supporting Families Changing Futures* child protection reform program. This program is focused on delivering the right services at the right time to support families and keep children safely at home.

To achieve this we:

- **provide oversight** by monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the performance and outcomes of the child protection and family support systems and by making sure reform initiatives are effectively evaluated
- **enable** sustainable improvements in services by working with our partners to strengthen the capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support system
- **educate** parents, families, communities and professionals about how they can keep children and young people safe, and about the services available to strengthen and support Queensland families
- **support** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in remaining safe and connected and thrive in supportive communities.

We also have a strong focus on partnering with government and non-government organisations.

Our legislation

The QFCC was established on 1 July 2014 as a result of the Queensland Government’s response to the report of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI)—*Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection 2013*.

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 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 commitment

We contribute to the Government’s objectives for the community¹ 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.

¹ Section 10 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* requires that the government prepares and tables in the Legislative Assembly a statement of the government’s broad objectives for the community.



Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

Every day, the Queensland Family and Child Commission works to improve the child protection and family support system.

Our vision

We work collaboratively to influence change so Queensland is a safe place where children, young people and their families thrive in supportive communities.

Our purpose

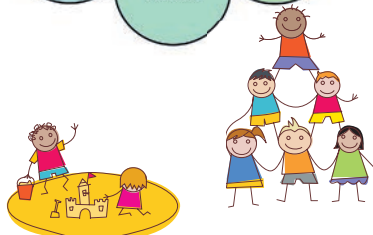
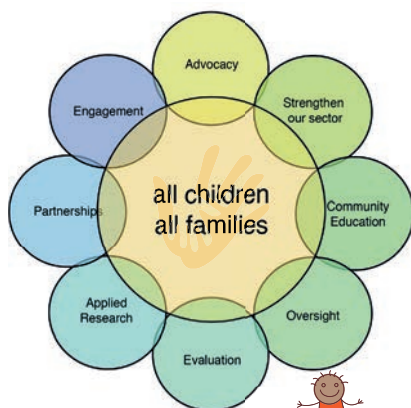
To improve the quality of outcomes for children, young people and families.

Our commitment

The QFCC contributes 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 values



Our measures of success

- Advice on the performance of the child protection system and impact of the reform agenda is used to inform improvements to the system.
- Evidence, promotion and awareness raising contributes to change within the sector.
- Positive feedback on engagement is received from external stakeholders.
- Queensland families and communities:
 - are aware of and understand the role of the child protection and family support system and the changes made as part of the reforms
 - are aware of the services and support available to parents to help them protect and care for their children and young people
 - access the services and support they require.

Our risks

- Ineffective partnerships and stakeholder engagement
- Advice on policy, practice and performance is not informed by evidence
- Unavailability or inadequacy of services to effectively support children and families
- Community does not have confidence in services or resources available



We check the system through reviews, research, and listening to children, families and communities. We work to educate the sector and the broader community about how to keep children safe and well.

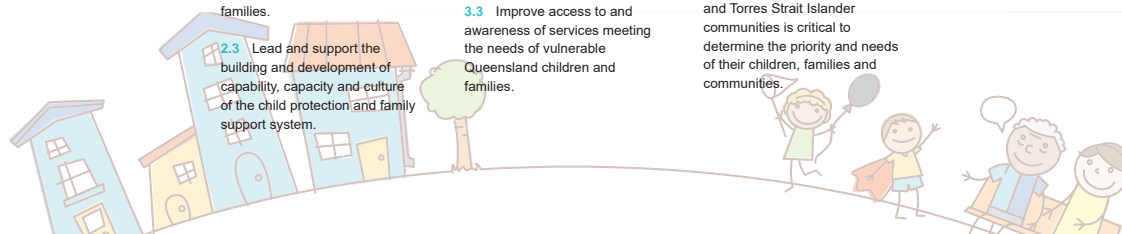
This work seeks to improve the system, by increasing our collaboration across the sector and ultimately, providing the best support for children, families and communities, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Objectives

1. Drive high quality, evidence-based Queensland service systems for vulnerable children and families.
2. A strong sector where partnerships and collaboration between government and non-government organisations achieve better outcomes for children and families.
3. Informed Queensland families and communities who understand their role in keeping children and young people safe and have access to resources to support them.
4. A culturally responsive organisation prioritising and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to remain safe, connected and thrive in supportive communities.
5. Maximise our organisational capability and value.

Strategies

- 1.1 Monitor, review, evaluate and report on the performance of the child protection and family support systems
- 1.2 Influence and guide the sector on practice and policy improvements through promotion of knowledge translation and providing access to best practice data.
- 2.1 Identify and develop evidence about issues for advocacy by engaging with children, young people and families and communities with a specific lens on the most vulnerable.
- 2.2 Use evidence and networks to influence and effect change to legislation, policy and practice to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.
- 2.3 Lead and support the building and development of capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support system.
- 3.1 Promote and encourage help-seeking behaviours among at-risk families and a shared community responsibility for protecting children and young people.
- 3.2 Build an understanding of the child protection and family support systems in Queensland.
- 3.3 Improve access to and awareness of services meeting the needs of vulnerable Queensland children and families.
- 4.1 Monitor, evaluate and research outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families and work collaboratively with government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Elders and their communities.
- 4.2 Advocate, acknowledge and trust that engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is critical to determine the priority and needs of their children, families and communities.
- 5.1 Strengthen capability, capacity and culture.
- 5.2 Improve QFCC's governance and provide evidence of value.



Our performance

In the State Budget 2016–17 service delivery statements, the QFCC had one service area objective. This was to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the role of families and communities in protecting and caring for them. This is measured through the following service standard.

QFCC service standards	Notes	2016–17 Target	2016–17 Actual
Percentage increase in use of the oneplace Community Services Directory	1,2	5%	8%

Notes:

1. This service standard reports on the number of sessions undertaken by people accessing the 'oneplace' Community Services Directory. The oneplace Community Services Directory [set up by the QFCC and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services] is an easily accessible directory of community services to help all Queensland families to get to the right service at the right time. In doing so, it addresses a number of the QFCC's statutory obligations, including by supporting families in taking responsibility and care for children, informing and educating the community about services, and analysing family support service availability.
2. The 2016–17 actual performance exceeds the 2016–17 target as a result of a promotional campaign prompting families who need a support service to access oneplace.

Our values

The QFCC has embraced the five Queensland public service values:

Customers first



Ideas into action



Unleash potential



Be courageous



Empower people



The values guide staff behaviour and the way we do business. During the year, we also developed values statements to define what the public service core values mean to us as an organisation.

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 lead and participate in oversight, governance and advisory groups to help create sustainable change across the sector. Through our partnerships, particularly with the non-government sector, we support a responsive, sustainable service system that benefits children and families.

Child protection reforms

The QCPCOI report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, identified 10 recommendations for the QFCC to lead. 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 10-year roadmap) through the release of *Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms*. The key QFCC-led QCPCOI recommendations were included as priorities in this initiative.

In May 2017, the government released *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families* (Our Way) and *Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*. The Our Way strategy represents a fundamental shift in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

The QFCC is the leader for two of the actions in the Changing Tracks action plan:

- to analyse current investment in sector capacity and workforce capability to help inform future investment to build the child and family sector
- to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability strategy with mainstream child and family service organisations².

We will also partner with other agencies to deliver a number of other priority actions.

The following table provides a summary of the QFCC's progress in implementing the child protection reform recommendations.

² The QFCC has joint leadership of this action with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, and the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council.

QFCC update on implementing QCPCOI recommendations

Recommendation / Status	Progress update on the QCPCOI recommendation
<i>Talking Families</i> social marketing campaign (Rec. 1.1) On track	<p>The <i>Talking Families</i> campaign was launched in 2015. Advertising campaigns undertaken through a range of methods have prompted families to seek help. <i>Talking Families</i> Facebook promotions in 2016–17 promoted discussions on parenting and reached 3.5 million people and 26,500 followers.</p> <p>We started developing a campaign called ‘Travelling the Reform Roadmap’. It is designed to increase public awareness of the child protection system and the reform program through social media promotions.</p>
Community services directory (Rec. 6.1) Delivered	The oneplace community services directory was established on 15 November 2016. It currently contains over 31,600 services. oneplace had 22,700 new visitors in 2016–17.
Advisory Council (Rec. 6.3) Delivered	The QFCC Advisory Council was established in November 2015. The Advisory Council meets quarterly to provide insight into issues affecting children, families and the sector. The Advisory Council also provides guidance on the work of the QFCC. An independent review of the Advisory Council’s functions was completed in June 2017.
Capacity building and governance strategy (Rec. 6.6) Workforce planning and development strategy (Rec. 10.7) Cultural change (Rec. 12.15) On track	Recommendations 6.6, 10.7 and 12.15 were brought together to form a single <i>Strengthening our Sector</i> strategy. The strategy and first action plan were released in August 2016. The first action plan has been substantially implemented. The second action plan will be developed in 2017–18 following consultation with key sector partners.
Establishment of the QFCC (Rec. 12.3) Delivered	The QFCC was established on 1 July 2014. The Principal Commissioner was appointed on 11 September 2015. A commissioner was appointed on 18 April 2016 and held the position until 3 March 2017. Recruitment for a new commissioner is underway. A non-statutory deputy commissioner was appointed in the interim.
Three-year rolling research program (Rec. 12.13) On track	The 2016–19 research agenda was released in December 2016. The QFCC is exploring areas of research it can promote and is encouraging academics and other agencies to consider areas identified in the agenda when looking for research topics.
Evaluation Framework (Rec. 12.14) On track	<p>An evaluation framework has been developed to assess reform program implementation, outcomes and impacts.</p> <p>The QFCC will lead program level evaluations at the 3, 5 and 10 year points. The year 3 evaluation of the child protection reform program will be completed in the first half of 2018.</p>
Resources and information (Rec 13.26) Delivered	<p>The QFCC published a number of resources in 2016–17 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finding out about Child Protection in Queensland</i> (a guide for young people) • <i>Did you know?</i> Key facts for children and young people (in out-of-home care) • <i>An Information Kit on child protection for parents.</i>

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The QFCC continues to monitor and contribute, where appropriate, to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission), making two submissions during the year. In addition, in December 2016, the Principal Commissioner gave evidence at the Royal Commission in relation to online safety, reporting of child harm, and special measures for child witnesses in criminal justice proceedings.

Domestic and family violence prevention

The QFCC is strongly committed to supporting the domestic and family violence prevention agenda. The Principal Commissioner is a member of the Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence Interdepartmental CEO Committee.

In 2016–17, we provided submissions to Queensland Parliament to support review of the:

- *Domestic and Family Violence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*
- *Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017*.

The QFCC also:

- provided a submission to the Queensland Law Reform Commission on a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme
- published research on help-seeking behaviour in the context of domestic violence, with a focus on risk and protective factors in Indigenous families
- implemented a policy to support employees experiencing domestic and family violence
- rolled out a *Recognise, Respond, Refer: Domestic Violence and the Workplace* online training course for all staff.

Queensland mental health, drug and alcohol strategic plan 2014–2019

The QFCC has three actions in the Queensland Mental Health Commission's *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019* and subsequent action plans. These are to:

- trial the practical application of Rumble's Quest (an interactive video game developed by the Griffith Criminology Institute) 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 since 2004, including suicides, and report on data and trends annually.

The QFCC provides regular updates to the Queensland Mental Health Commission on how these initiatives are progressing. Later in this report we provide information on our implementation of these actions.

The remaining chapters in this annual report address the objectives and strategies outlined in the QFCC's *Strategic Plan 2016–2020*.

Oversight

Objective 1

Drive high quality, evidence-based Queensland service systems for vulnerable children and families.

Strategies

Monitor, review, evaluate and report on the performance of the child protection and family support systems.

Influence and guide the sector on practice and policy improvements through promotion of knowledge translation and providing access to best practice data.



Systems reviews

The oversight role of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is focused on systemically monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the child protection system.

We completed and progressed a number of systems reviews in 2016–17.

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

Following the devastating death of Tiahleigh Palmer, the Premier asked the QFCC to undertake a broad whole-of-government systems review. The report was released on 11 July 2016. The review identified a number of system inadequacies and made 29 recommendations to achieve whole-of-government system improvements in responding to children missing from out-of-home care. Findings included the following:

- there were inconsistencies in definitions of a 'missing' child and in the guidance around the policies, procedures and guidelines used by agencies to respond
- there was confusion about requirements for authorising missing person media releases where a child was living in out-of-home care
- there was a lack of coordination and collaborative responses, a lack of data, and differing reporting practices between Queensland government agencies
- there was a lack of requirement for timely notification to parents regarding a child's absence from school.

The QFCC worked with other government agencies to implement all recommendations.

Recommendation 28 Supplementary Review: A report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulated home-based services

Following publication of the *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh—A report into Queensland's children missing from out-of-home care*, the QFCC undertook a supplementary review (recommendation 28 of the report).

Recommendation 28 required the QFCC to undertake a supplementary review into legislation, policies and practices for information sharing to protect all children in regulated service environments. The review focused specifically on those regulated services provided from the home: foster and kinship care, family day care and stand-alone care services.

The *Recommendation 28: Supplementary Review* report was released on 20 February 2017. It made 17 recommendations to increase the visibility of home-based services in order to support regulation and monitoring, improve information sharing between agencies about potential risks, and strengthen suitability assessment processes. Findings included the need:

- to develop a register to allow relevant agencies to access key information about home-based services, including for those households providing more than one home-based service
- for different suitability assessment processes across service types
- for opportunities for increased monitoring and compliance activities
- for improvements to guidelines for sharing information about a child at risk
- for opportunities for earlier information sharing between agencies about an individual who may pose a risk to children.

Recommendations are currently being implemented to improve information sharing between the agencies responsible for regulating home-based services, and to enhance the safety of children accessing these services.

A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child

Following the tragic death of Mason Jet Lee, the Premier asked the QFCC to undertake a review of individual agency findings about the services provided to Mason before his death.

The QFCC had oversight of:

- the internal systems and practice review of the service delivery to Mason Jet Lee by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- the external Child Death Case Review Panel report
- Queensland Health's health services investigation.

The QFCC's review found more could be done by agencies to make sure child death reviews achieved the systems level outcomes needed to keep vulnerable children safe. The report was released on 10 April 2017.

One recommendation was made—to establish a contemporary child death model for Queensland. The recommendation included identifying a suitably independent agency to take responsibility for the external Child Death Case Review Panel.

The QFCC is currently working with key agencies to finalise this recommendation and will report back to government.

Blue card and foster care review

In September 2016, the Premier asked the QFCC to lead a comprehensive examination of the blue card and foster care systems in Queensland to identify any improvements that were required. The review examined current legislative frameworks and operational practices to identify any gaps and inefficiencies in meeting the safety needs of children.

Conducted under Part 3 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the review's terms of reference were to:

1. explore ways to build and sustain public confidence in the respective systems
2. review the blue card system legislation and identify gaps, barriers, inconsistencies or inefficiencies in meeting the safety needs of children in Queensland
3. review key blue card system operations to identify opportunities to streamline, innovate and enhance access for members of the community
4. audit and review foster carer approval and monitoring processes
5. review Child Safety Services within the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to determine whether it is operating effectively.

An expert panel was established to guide the review, identify opportunities for improvement, and oversee the development of robust advice and recommendations for government.

Staff from a number of agencies were seconded as subject matter experts to support the review, with financial assistance provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet; the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

In November 2016, the QFCC released two discussion papers seeking the public's views on key issues in relation to the operation of the current blue card and foster care systems. The discussion papers sought feedback on what could be done to:

- strengthen, streamline and increase community participation in the blue card system
- strengthen carer assessment and approval processes, and safeguards for children in out-of-home care.

The QFCC undertook a broad engagement and consultation process, with over 2260 consultation activities occurring. These included 124 forums with 640 participants, 181 of whom identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In March 2017, the QFCC provided the Premier with its report on the review's fifth term of reference. It also released options papers seeking the public's views on identified options for reform of the two systems. The options presented in these papers represented the broad range of feedback provided during consultation processes and research of the issues. The papers also identified preliminary recommendations about ways to streamline the blue card system.

To be provided to the Premier in July 2017, the review reports will make a number of recommendations to strengthen and streamline the operation of the systems to better protect children in Queensland.

Suspected child abuse and neglect team system review

In December 2016, the Child Protection Reform Leaders Group³ endorsed a proposal for the QFCC to facilitate the development of options for a contemporary model of information sharing.

This followed an earlier request by the Director-General of Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for the QFCC to lead a system and practice review of the suspected child abuse and neglect (SCAN) team system. The review's scope included the operating arrangements for responding to children and families with the most complex needs.

Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott (as lead advisor) and ACIL Allen consulting were contracted to design system options and an implementation strategy for a contemporary model of multi-agency collaboration.

The review considered:

- contemporary approaches in other jurisdictions
- operation of the current SCAN team system
- known barriers and systemic issues with the current practices of joint agency responses to suspected child abuse and neglect
- interfaces with related reforms, including cross-agency working groups on Indigenous overrepresentation in the child protection system
- effective models for agencies to share information and processes in joint investigation and decision-making.

An advisory group of senior executives from a number of government departments informed the review.

Consultation identified that a focus shift from the SCAN team system to a contemporary model for information sharing was required. Any changes would, however, need to align with child protection reform. ACIL Allen provided a draft report to the QFCC on 30 June 2017.

³ The Child Protection Reform Leaders Group is made up of senior executives from government and non-government agencies representing the social services and child protection sectors. It provides a forum for coordinating the whole-of-government implementation of the child protection and family support reforms and resolving interagency issues as they arise.

Feedback is currently being sought from the senior executive advisory group members. The aim is to pilot a conceptual model in 2017–18.

Queensland's performance in achieving state and national child protection goals

Section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* requires the QFCC to include information on the following in its annual report:

- Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system (s40)(1)(a)(i)
- Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions (s40)(1)(a)(ii)
- 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 (s40)(1)(a)(iii).

A range of national data sources have been used to measure performance of the child protection system⁴. All data featured was the most current available as at 30 June 2017⁵. An overview of Queensland's performance in relation to these three areas is provided in Appendix D of this report.

Evaluation

The QFCC has legislative responsibility for analysing and evaluating, at a systems level:

- policies and practices relevant to the child protection system
- the performance of relevant agencies in delivering services.

The QFCC also has lead responsibility for evaluating the child protection reform program at three distinct milestones: Year 3 (2017–18), Year 5 (2018–19) and Year 10 (2023–24), and for assisting relevant agencies to evaluate how well their programs are working.

The QFCC seeks regular updates from departments with child protection responsibilities about their planned evaluation activities. It supports them with this task by facilitating a Queensland Family and Child Evaluation Community of Practice (which has met regularly since 2014) and by publishing evaluation resources.

Evaluation framework

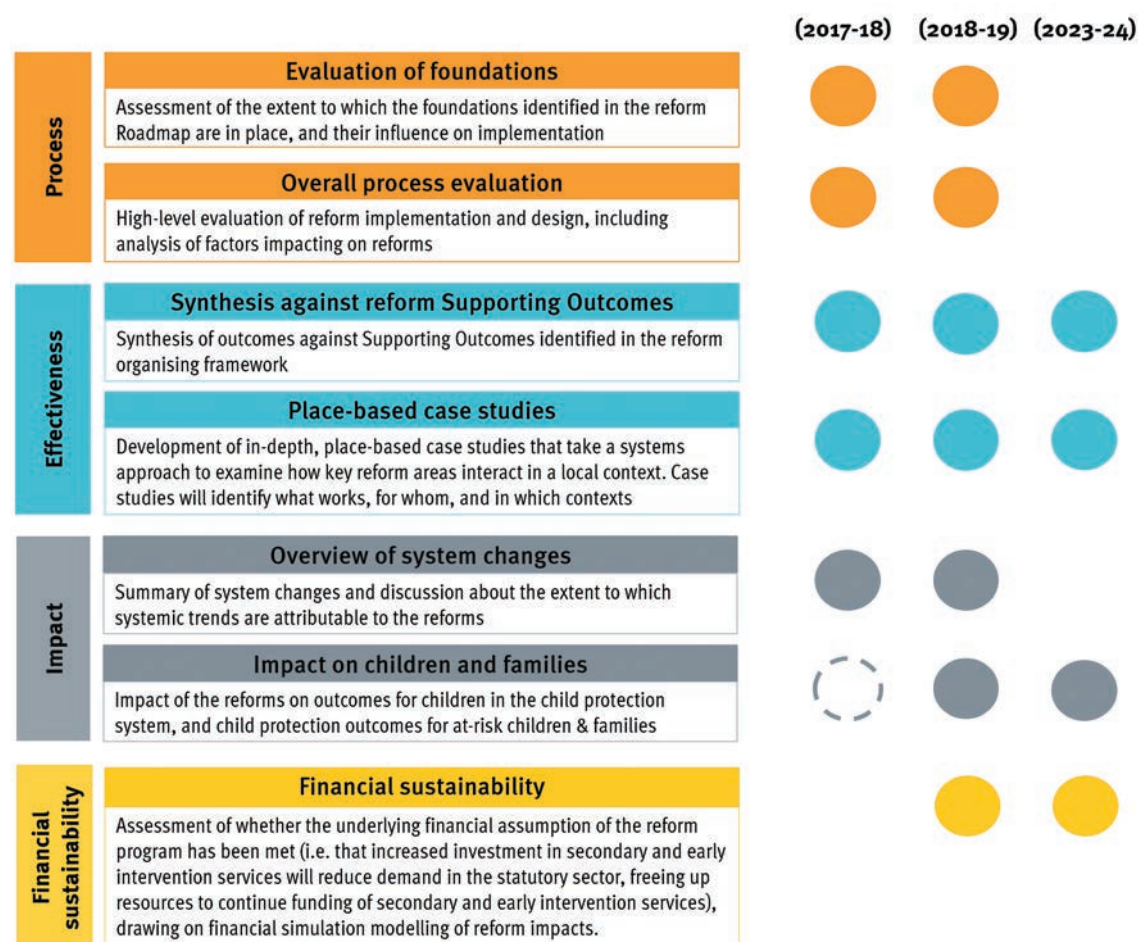
The QFCC has developed an evaluation framework to assess implementation of the reform program, outcomes and program impacts. The framework describes the high-level approach to conducting the reform's program-level evaluations. It also outlines the key design elements of the evaluations led by the QFCC throughout the 10-year reform program.

An evaluation framework reference group, made up of government agencies, non-government organisations and academic institutions, provided input into the framework. It was peer-reviewed by the Centre for Program Evaluation at the University of Melbourne, then approved by the Queensland Interdepartmental CEO Committee in June 2017.

4 Sources include: *Child Protection Australia 2015–16 and Children's Headline Indicators 2013* by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW); *Australian Early Development Census 2015*; and the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services*.

5 Operational data from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for the 2016–17 financial year is released three to four months in arrears. Accordingly, a further snapshot on the performance of the child protection system will be released by the QFCC in December 2017, based on data for the final quarter of the 2016–17 financial year.

As shown in the following infographic, the evaluation framework is divided into a series of components, each of which relates to one of our aspects of evaluation—process, effectiveness, impact or financial sustainability.



Note: It is considered too early to examine impacts on children and families at the Year 3 point, which is why this component is not included in the Year 3 evaluation. However, some evidence of impact may become evident in the course of evaluating other components. If that occurs, it will be summarised for Year 3.

Evaluation resources

The QFCC developed the following evaluation resources in 2016–17:

Workplace practice self-assessment toolkit

This toolkit is a resource for agencies to use in examining and evaluating their workplace and organisational culture and practices and in verifying that they achieve the desired cultural change.

The tools were developed from a QFCC-led workshop, in which stakeholders and specialists from across the child protection and family support system identified workplace practices that align with and reflect the change described in the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) report. The toolkit allows workplace practices in the sector to be assessed across four attributes: strength-based practice, leadership, collaboration and cross-cultural practice.

Australasian Evaluation Society 2016 Conference notes

This resource provides a summary of notes taken by attendees of the 2016 Australasian Evaluation Society Conference. The presentations reflected on what diversity and change in social, cultural, organisational, environmental, political and economic landscapes means for evaluation and evaluators.

The information highlights key messages for those unable to attend the conference.

Data linkage resource

This resource introduces data linkage, which is a process that is used to combine information that relates to an individual entity from within or across multiple sources. It highlights Australian resources and examples for those interested in undertaking a

linked data project in child protection and related fields.

It was developed from discussions between the QFCC-facilitated Family and Child Evaluation Community of Practice and representatives from the data linkage and integration teams of Queensland Health and the Queensland Government Statistician's Office.

Policy advice

The QFCC has a legislative function to 'provide leadership and give expert advice to relevant agencies about laws, policies, practices and services'.

In doing so, it 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 and engage with various stakeholders, children and families to form positions and make recommendations about relevant laws, policies, practices and services.

We also make submissions to parliamentary committees, take part in hearings, give feedback to government agencies and share information across the sector.

QFCC submissions

During the year, the QFCC provided advice and recommendations to Parliamentary Committees and to other agencies through 24 submissions. These included submissions on a number of proposed Bills, notably the:

- *Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17 year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016*
- *Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2016*
- *Limitations of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*

- *Adoption and Other Legislation Bill 2016*
- *Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016*
- *Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting—Mason’s Law) Amendment Bill 2016*
- *Criminal Code Amendment (Protecting Minors Online) Bill 2017*
- *Domestic and Family Violence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017*
- *Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017.*

The QFCC also provided:

- evidence (through public hearings and submissions) on out-of-home care and criminal justice to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- a submission to the Queensland Law Reform Commission on a domestic violence disclosure scheme
- advice and recommendations on a Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services options paper—*The next chapter in child protection legislation in Queensland*
- advice and recommendations to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on sexual abuse civil litigation and redress
- a submission to the Queensland Mental Health Commission on its discussion paper, *A Renewed Plan for Queensland: Reviewing the Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019 to Improve Mental Health and Wellbeing*. The QFCC feedback was in relation to the consultation questions about the impact of mental illness and suicide.

Advocacy

The QFCC is responsible for promoting and advocating for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We focus on hearing what children and young people say, and using it to inform our advocacy work.

The QFCC has established ongoing relationships and joint initiatives with statewide advocacy agencies including the CREATE Foundation, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, the Health and Community Services Workforce Council, the Queensland Council of Social Services, PeakCare and Bravehearts.

This is to make sure the voices of children and young people are heard, and also to identify and address the needs of their families.

Online safety

The QFCC established the ‘Out of the Dark’ initiative following the release of the Byrne Report on the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry. Chapter 4 of this report was about online child sexual offending and child exploitation material.

A cross-agency steering committee of key government and non-government agencies was formed to advocate for, and raise awareness of, the risks of online activities for children and young people. Members include representatives from:

- the Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner
- the Queensland Police Service (including Taskforce Argos)⁶
- the Department of Education and Training
- the Department of Science, Information, Technology and Innovation
- Bravehearts.

⁶ This is the branch of the Queensland Police Service responsible for the investigation of online child exploitation and abuse.

To make sure this initiative was youth-led and youth-focused, the QFCC supported young people in designing products to encourage online safety for young Queenslanders including:

- a rap song and video
- an interactive game concept
- a Google Chrome extension for reporting suspicious online activity
- an informational website.

Young people involved in the QFCC initiative included graduates from the Queensland University of Technology, the CREATE Foundation and The Ted Noffs Foundation Street University.

The ‘Out of the Dark’ initiative culminated in an Expo on 11 March 2017. It was hosted at the State Library of Queensland, attracting 800 attendees and over 10,000 Facebook views, and was accompanied by a learning forum for professionals. The forum advocated a shared responsibility for improving the safety of children and young people from child exploitation and child sexual offending.



Youth justice

The QFCC has a focus on raising awareness of the needs and issues experienced by young people in contact with the youth justice system. Some youth justice initiatives undertaken by the QFCC in 2016–17 included:

- consultation with stakeholders, including the Kurbingui Youth Development, the North West Aboriginal and Islander Community Association (NWAICA) and the Aboriginal Centre of Performing Arts (ACPA), which led to the development of youth justice-related videos. These were posted on the QFCC website.

In one of the videos, a Kurbingui support worker talks about his history in child protection and his subsequent experience with youth justice. In another video, youth workers describe how NWAICA and ACPA have partnered to produce a joint performing arts program for young people

- the QFCC leading the development on an information paper on the age of criminal responsibility in Queensland. The paper, which is available on the QFCC website, proposed a number of considerations for future reform to create a fairer youth justice system. These were that:
 - o the minimum age of criminal responsibility be raised to 12 years
 - o 10 to 12 year olds not be sentenced to youth detention
 - o youth justice conference⁷ be mandatory for the 10 to 12-year-old cohort.

Mental health

The QFCC plays a major role in the GForce⁸ working party led by CREATE⁹ young consultants. One young consultant was helped by the QFCC to share her story of mental health as a young person in care. The story first appeared in the GForce newsletter. Subsequently, the QFCC supported the development of a video.

A number of organisations displayed interest in supporting the young consultant to progress change in the sector. They developed a mental health working group that included Evolve Mental Health Service, the QFCC, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police, and Peakcare. The aim of the group is to develop resources and advocate for improved mental health services for young people in care.

Research

The QFCC has responsibility for developing and coordinating a multi-disciplinary research program to inform policy and practice in the child protection system.

Research agenda 2016–19

The QFCC has developed a rolling three-year research schedule to build an evidence base for improved child protection practices. The *Research Agenda 2016–19* was developed in consultation with 47 sector representatives and identified a number of priority projects. Following additional input and advice from the QFCC's Advisory Council¹⁰, it was made available on the QFCC's website.

⁸ GForce is a Queensland-based working group made up of young consultants and representatives from the sector.

⁹ The CREATE Foundation is the national peak consumer body supporting young consultants with an out-of-home care experience in advocating for children and young people in care and transitioning from care.

¹⁰ The work of the Advisory Council is discussed in the 'Enable' section of this annual report.

⁷ A youth justice conference is a meeting between the people affected by a crime that a young person has committed.

The seven key strategic areas of the research agenda are:

1. building safe, supportive communities for children and families
2. reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system
3. improving out-of-home care
4. reducing young people's involvement with the youth justice system
5. developing and supporting the workforce in meeting the needs of children and families into the future
6. reducing the likelihood of child deaths
7. improving outcome measures.

Online Knowledge and Resource Hub

The QFCC's online 'Knowledge and Resource Hub' is a central location for resources, including research-based material, aimed at improving the quality of outcomes for children, young people and families. The community-friendly channel currently includes resources developed by the QFCC, and in future will include resources developed by other reputable sources.

Research in the Round

The QFCC has a lead role in the translation of research for the benefit of policy makers and child protection practitioners. The QFCC hosts regular research forums known as 'Research in the Round'. These forums showcase the work of key Australian researchers who focus on vulnerable children and families. Facilitated

discussions at these forums explore the implications of current research evidence for policy development and child safety practices.

The two Research in the Round forums in 2016–17, which attracted over 250 people, covered the themes of:

- improving placement stability for children in out-of-home care
- 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe in culture' (understanding how strong connections to culture, in families, the workforce and in communities help keep children safe).

Documents from these events (including research summaries provided by some of the presenters and videos of the presentations with associated transcripts) have been made available on the QFCC website.

Research initiatives

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.

This project used data obtained from the baseline research of a survey of parents and non-parents conducted for the QFCC's *Talking Families* campaign¹¹. The data was used to explore issues surrounding help-seeking in the context of domestic violence, particularly focusing on risk and protective factors for Indigenous parents. The report was published in September 2016.

¹¹ *Talking Families* is a community education campaign designed by QFCC to help children, families and communities find the right information at the right time to reduce the pressures on families.

Collaboration on research needs

In May 2017, the QFCC finalised a partnership statement with the Australian Institute of Family Studies to allow for collaboration between the two agencies. This will increase our understanding of Australian families and should help to improve policy and practice for Queensland families and children.

Rumble's Quest school trial

In 2016–17, the QFCC, in partnership with Griffith University, government agencies and the non-government sector, began a trial of a child-friendly initiative known as 'Rumble's Quest' in three medium to large-sized primary schools. Rumble's Quest is an interactive video game that is intended to provide a measure of the wellbeing of primary school-aged children.

The schools had a range of representation rates (high and low) of Indigenous children and children from non-English speaking backgrounds. Participants in the evaluation of the school-based implementation component were school principals and staff who had played a key role in the implementation of Rumble's Quest. Individual child data was not accessed by the QFCC as part of the trial.

The trial achieved its objective, which was to identify and document critical issues for the schools in implementing Rumble's Quest.

Findings from the trial are being used to guide further enhancements of Rumble's Quest and its reporting software. Griffith University is currently addressing the identified issues and working on enhancing the reporting. This will include enabling system level reporting at a regional level. A large, non-government organisation will then evaluate service outcomes across multiple sites. An additional function will

enable the longitudinal tracking of children's wellbeing over time.

Being able to easily identify children who do not feel safe either at home or at school will be critically important for the many organisations whose role includes ensuring the safety of young children. Once changes have been made, a submission will be prepared to trial Rumble's Quest in three non-government organisations.

Child death prevention

The QFCC is responsible for maintaining a register of child deaths in Queensland, identifying patterns or trends and reporting annually. It is known as the child death register (the register).

Supporting child death prevention efforts

The QFCC's key strategy for child death and injury prevention is to make data held in the register (about over 6,100 deaths) available for research, public education, policy development and program design. Access to the comprehensive dataset is available at no cost to genuine researchers¹².

In 2016–17, the QFCC responded to 17 external requests for detailed data from the register to help support child death and injury prevention initiatives. The types of requests are shown in the following table.

¹² Genuine research is defined as research relating to childhood mortality or morbidity with a view to increasing knowledge of incidence, causes and risk factors. Genuine research includes policy and program initiatives to reduce child death or injury.

Data request by type of data requested 2016–17

Type of data requested	Total
Drowning	5
Suicide	4
Sudden unexpected death in infancy	2
Interstate resident deaths	2
Transport	1
Known to child safety system	1
Product related injury	1
All deaths	1
Total	17

Data source: Queensland Family and Child Commission
(2016–17)

Initiatives to which the QFCC contributed information from the child death register include:

- Victoria's inquest into the drowning death of a child. The QFCC provided the inquest with information on Queensland trends in pool drownings and changes in pool fencing laws. The recommendations from this inquest led to new Victorian pool fencing laws
- the RACQ's education campaign *Driveway run overs can turn holidays into tragedies*. This was informed by data from the register on low-speed run overs
- Lady Cilento Hospital's research on suicide, which led to the publication of a journal opinion article, *Approaches to teen suicide: What nurses can do to understand and prevent youth suicide* (published in *Nursing Review* by T Gillen)
- research projects by the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia into child drowning. These were informed by QFCC data, and resulted in several publications including:

- o *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report 2016*
- o *Reducing Drowning Deaths in Children aged 0–14 years*
- o *Drowning fatalities in Childhood—The role of pre-existing Medical Conditions*, (by Franklin & Peden)
- o *The Hidden Tragedy of Rivers: A decade of unintentional fatal drowning in Australia* (by Peden, Franklin & Leggat).
- National Standards Committee deliberations on how children who have drowned accessed a private swimming pool
- a Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit exploratory review of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy—to explore whether a chin-to-chest position of an infant may have been associated with the infant's death.

Similarly, data provided from the register has supported research in a number of fields of child death and injury prevention, leading to the following published findings:

- *Sudden unexplained early neonatal death or collapse: a national surveillance study*, Lutz T, Elliott E & Jeffery H (2016) *Pediatric Research*
- *Paediatric horse-related trauma*, Theodore J, Theodore S, Stockton K & Kimble R (2017) *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*
- *Unintentional insecticide poisoning by age: an analysis of Queensland Poisons Information Centre calls*, English K, Jagals P, Ware R, Wylie C & Sly P (2016) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

The QFCC also used information from the register to support:

- a submission regarding the *Next Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013–2023*. This recommended that the Pépi-Pods program (a safe sleep initiative currently being rolled out in Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) be considered as part of a national campaign to reduce sudden unexpected deaths in infancy
- submissions made to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) reviews of mandatory safety standards, which made recommendations regarding standards for:
 - o children's toys
 - o baby bath aids
 - o swimming and flotation aids
 - o disposable cigarette lighters.
- *Queensland Suicide Prevention Reference Group*, which supports the implementation of the Queensland Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2015–17
- *Queensland Advisory Group on Suicide Information and Data*, which is 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.

The QFCC also recommended to the ACCC that mandatory safety standards be introduced for baby slings.

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

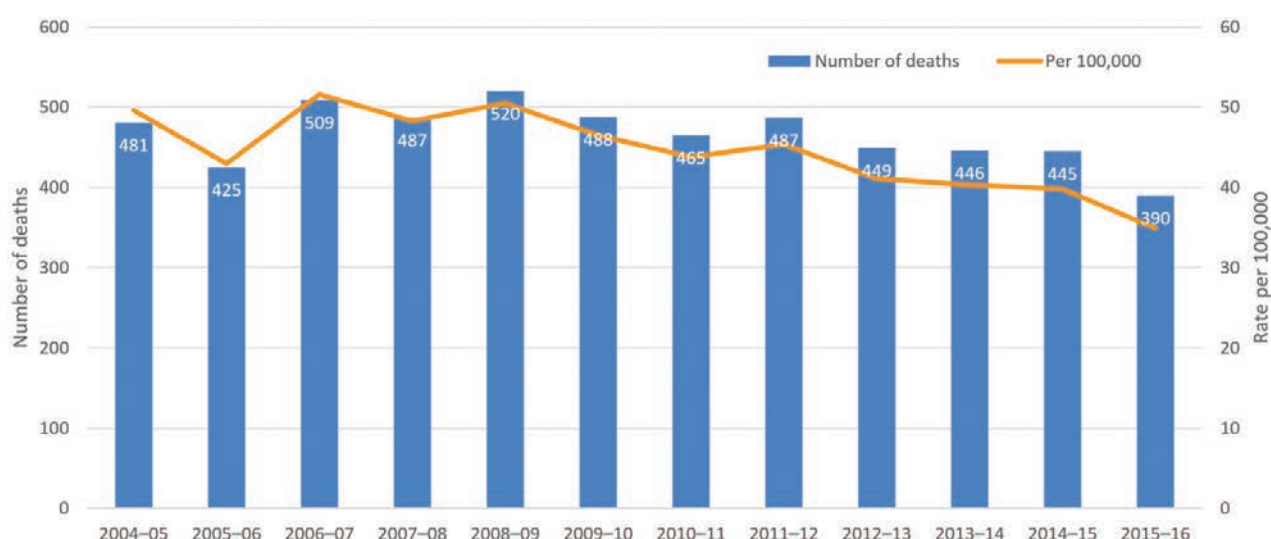
- *Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group*, which aims to identify, address and potentially decrease the number of infant, child and youth deaths by sharing information on issues in the review and reporting of child deaths
- *Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group*, which provides an evidence base to support product safety policy decisions

Annual report 2015–16 on child deaths in Queensland

In March 2017, the QFCC published the *Annual Report: Deaths of Queensland Children 2015–16*. This is the 12th annual report to be produced on child deaths in Queensland.

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

Number and rate of deaths of children and young people in Queensland



In summary, Queensland child deaths decreased in 2015–16 by 12%, with decreases in the two main natural causes of deaths—perinatal conditions¹³ and congenital anomalies, and in external (non-natural) causes of death. The main findings include:

- 57.2% of the deaths registered in 2015–16 were male and 42.8% were female
- infant mortality in Queensland was 3.7 deaths per 1,000 live births, down from 4.5 deaths per 1,000 in 2014–15
- diseases and morbid conditions accounted for the majority of deaths (74.6%)
- 16.4% of deaths were due to external (non-natural)

causes—suicide, transport, drowning, fatal assault and neglect, or other non-intentional injury

- suicide (20 deaths) replaced transport (18 deaths) as the leading external cause of death for the past two years. This was due to recent decreases in transport deaths rather than changes in suicide numbers. Five of the 20 young people who died as a result of suicide were known to the child protection system
- eight children drowned, with five of the children aged one–four years. Three of the children drowned in swimming pools, four drowned in inland waterways and one in a bathtub. No deaths in 2015–16 were due to defective pool fencing

¹³ Diseases and conditions that originate during pregnancy or the neonatal period (first 28 days of life).

- nine children are suspected or confirmed to have died from fatal assault or neglect in 2015–16, with six alleged to have been killed by a family member and two by a non-family member (the category for the remaining death is still to be determined). Four of the nine children who died due to fatal assault or neglect were known to the child protection system
- 52 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children died in 2015–16, a 30% decrease from 74 deaths in 2014–15. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous child mortality rates narrowed between 2007 and 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality, however, continues to be twice the rate for non-Indigenous children.

The QFCC published key findings factsheets relating to:

- child deaths in Queensland
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality
- key causes of external and preventable child deaths.

The QFCC also coordinated and published *Australian and New Zealand child death statistics 2014*, with the assistance of the other members of the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group.

The year ahead

In 2017–18, as part of our oversight objective, we will:

- complete reports into the examination of the blue card and foster care services in Queensland
- conduct a review of changes to the reporting behaviours of professionals with mandatory reporting obligations
- continue to work with partners to develop a whole-of-system outcomes framework for the child protection and family support system
- commence reporting on the outcomes the child protection system achieves for children and their families
- undertake a comprehensive review of the oversight mechanisms for residential care services
- undertake a review of the commencement timeframes for five-and 10-day notification investigation and assessments
- undertake the Year 3 formal evaluation of the child protection reform program by mid-2018, with a focus on implementation and early indicators of progress towards achieving reform program outcomes
- continue to build the evaluation capacity of agencies by convening the Queensland Family and Child Evaluation Community of Practice and producing or promoting evaluation resources
- continue to consult on research gaps identified by the sector for the three-year rolling research agenda
- conduct further Research In the Round events, responding to sector priorities, with possible expansion of the forum to regional areas
- publish information and data fact sheets about current issues affecting children and young people and practical measures for prevention
- publish the *Annual Report: Deaths of Queensland Children 2016–17*
- continue to respond to data requests and support government and non-government agencies in developing responses to reduce the number of children and young people who die in Queensland each year
- begin a project to improve the child death register database.

Enable

Objective 2

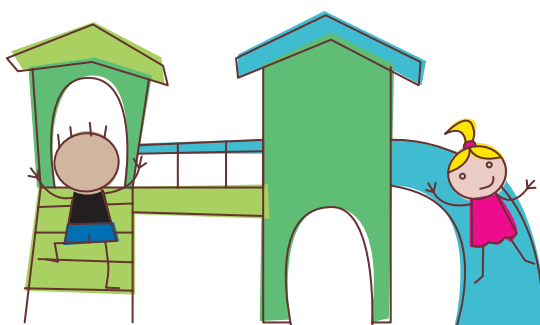
A strong sector where partnerships and collaboration between government and non-government organisations achieve better outcomes for children and families.

Strategies

Identify and develop evidence about issues for advocacy by engaging with children, young people, families and communities, with a specific lens on the most vulnerable.

Use evidence and networks to influence and effect change to legislation, policy and practice to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

Lead and support the building and development of capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support system.



Partnering and engagement

The QFCC develops and maintains partnerships across the child protection and family support sector to improve the wellbeing of children and families.

During 2016–17, we 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.

We also worked with stakeholders at a local level to trial initiatives that fostered stronger community connections and supported local decision-making. This was in order to respond to the needs of organisations, workers, children and families where they lived.

Over the last year, our partnerships, while sharing the same aims, can be grouped loosely into:

- accessing high level guidance, insight and cooperation from the:
 - o Advisory Council
 - o Community Partnerships group.
- focusing on the workforce and organisations (in line with our Strengthening the sector strategy), developing:
 - o workforce and organisational profiles
 - o performance baselines
 - o career and capability frameworks
 - o community controlled organisations
 - o child safe organisations

- o learning and development approaches.
- trialling local solutions to:
 - o place-based methodologies¹⁴
 - o improving employment pathways
 - o developing workforce in a cultural context.
- engaging with young people, particularly with regard to:
 - o transitioning to independence
 - o sharing real life stories
 - o the ‘hear me, see me’ art exhibition
 - o youth leadership programs
 - o youth engagement.

These activities and achievements are explored in the following pages.

¹⁴ ‘Place-based’ refers to stakeholders engaging in a collaborative process to address issues as they are experienced within a geographic space, be it a neighbourhood, a region or within a service ecosystem.

Advisory Council

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) Advisory Council provides guidance on the work of the QFCC and expert insight into the issues affecting children, families and the sector. It also helps promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe. Members come from a range of disciplines, providing a diverse range of experience and expertise about how to improve the lives of Queensland's children.

An independent review of the Advisory Council (agreed to at the establishment of the Advisory Council) has been completed. The review considered the current model and operation of the Advisory Council. The review report is currently being considered.

The Advisory Council met four times in 2016–17. The membership is currently made up of:

Name	Position
Cheryl Vardon	Principal Commissioner QFCC (Chair)
Professor Lesley Chenoweth AO	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 Chief Executive Officer, Bravehearts
Zac 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, UQ Centre for Clinical Research
Professor Clare Tilbury	Carol Peltola Research Chair, Life Without Barriers, School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University
Heather Watson	Director, McCullough Robertson

Community Partnerships Group

The Community Partnerships Group was established with peak body organisations to help the QFCC in its objective to improve the child protection system. It does so by providing relevant diverse and independent views, advice and support to the Principal Commissioner. Where it differs from the Advisory Group is in its particular focus on supporting a strong, collaborative and capable service sector.

The group ‘will continue to advocate for a fairer youth justice system, in the best interest of Queensland’s children and young people’¹⁵.

The Community Partnerships Group met four times in 2016–17. Membership is currently made up of:

Name	Position
Cheryl Vardon	Principal 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

¹⁵ From the QFCC Community Partnerships Group Joint Statement.

Partnering in support of a responsive, sustainable child and family support sector

The QFCC is responsible for developing and reviewing sector-wide workforce planning and development strategies, increasing collaboration and building capacity across the child and family support system.

To improve outcomes for children and families, the service system has to be well coordinated and easily accessible. It also needs to be adequately resourced and staffed by skilled people. Everyone involved in child and family services must take responsibility for their own role in keeping children safe.

In 2016–17, the QFCC released the three year *Strengthening our sector—a strategy for working together for a responsive, sustainable service system across the child and family support sector* (the strategy).

The intent of the strategy is to bring together the whole child and family support sector, with everyone collectively working to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

In developing the strategy, the QFCC worked with peak bodies and industry partners from across the sector to formulate priorities and agree shared implementation responsibilities.

The outcomes of the strategy are:

- strengthen our workforce—enhance the ability of our sector workforce to meet the needs of children and families
- strengthen our organisations—enhance organisational capabilities and strengthen sector relationships

- strengthen our professional practice culture—build a proactive and positive culture in the way we work to support children and families
- harness the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and community.

The strategy's *First Action Plan 2016–17* focused on the foundations required to:

- establish programs to support long-term workforce participation
- create a space for discussing future industry direction and managing tensions between maintaining community and client connection and establishing development priorities
- generate momentum for cultural change in the way we work together across our sector and with families and communities.

Achievements from the first action plan are highlighted in the following pages. More information on the strategy and the first action plan can be found on the QFCC website.

Establishing baseline evidence for workforce and organisations

A workforce profile for the child and family support sector

In 2016–17, the QFCC partnered with the Health and Community Services Workforce Council¹⁶ to conduct a workforce survey. This was to build a better understanding of the child and family support workforce.

¹⁶ Queensland's peak body for workforce issues.

The *Your Workforce, Your Future: 2016 Survey Report: Queensland's Child Protection and Family Support Workforce* is available on the QFCC website.

The survey results informed the QFCC's development of the strategy and a career and capability framework for the sector.

Some of the interesting findings included:

- there is a young (72% under 50 years), feminised (73%) workforce
- it is a sector of small organisations (median workforce size 24)
- the workforce is qualified (68% of organisations set minimum employment qualifications).



Source: *Your Workforce, Your Future: 2016 Survey Report: Queensland's Child Protection and Family Support Workforce*.

An organisational profile and performance baseline for industry

In 2016–17, the QFCC partnered with the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)¹⁷ to build an organisational performance evidence base.

The intent of the work was to support improvement over time to the industry's organisational performance in areas that affect the quality and delivery of services to children. These include sustainable financing, improved

¹⁷ The CSIA is an independent, community services industry body established to give a unified voice, focused on business and sustainability, to the Queensland community services industry.

workforce recruitment and development, increased digital capabilities, and increased capacity for research and innovation.

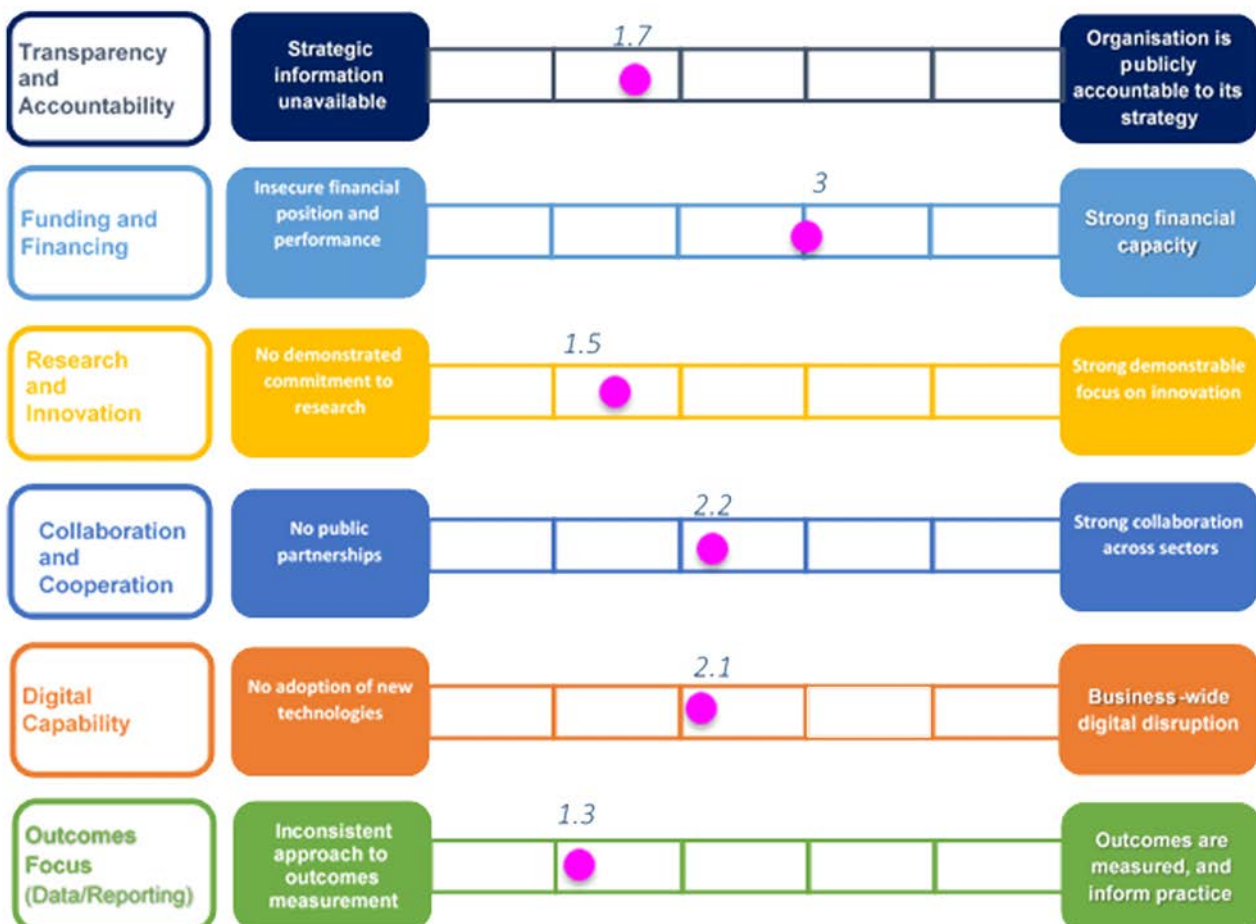
The CSIA undertook the research in two stages:

Stage one (collecting data on organisations in the sector), used publicly-available data on a sample set of 200 organisations. The CSIA developed an organisational profile of the child and family support sector industry. This evidence included a profile of the organisations as a set of businesses, and an industry-level assessment against organisational performance criteria. This was expressed as an organisational performance scorecard.

Data collected in stage one was analysed and scored (using averages on a five point scale) against six of the scorecard's eight organisational performance domains (workforce and governance were excluded from data due to limited publicly-available information). This created a benchmark for the industry's organisational performance.

Findings from stage one were published in CSIA's *Laying Foundations Stage One* report (released in May 2017). They are summarised in the following diagram.

Stage one organisational performance results



The *Laying Foundations Stage One* report containing the full organisation performance scorecards are available on the CSIA website.

Stage two (industry-led consultation across regional Queensland), used various industry engagement tools to assess organisational performance. The CSIA began work identifying how core business functions (such as those outlined in the diagram) operate in different sized organisations. This work produced a map of the industry's organisational performance.

Developing a sector-wide career and capability framework

During 2016–17, the QFCC led a collaborative approach to developing an industry-owned and shared framework for understanding and describing the key job families, capabilities and attributes of the child and family support workforce.

The *Your Workforce, Your Future: 2016 Survey Report: Queensland Child Protection and Family Support Workforce* highlighted the number and complexity of roles in the sector. It identified 294 job titles for frontline workers. Many of these are not clear, and this makes it hard for job seekers to understand and build career pathways.

This finding emphasised the importance of developing a consistent, sector-wide approach to understanding, shaping and talking about roles in the sector. This will improve how the sector attracts, retains and develops its workforce.

In response, the QFCC began the development of a *Career and Capability Framework* for the child and family support workforce. This work was informed by a sector-wide (government and non-government) 'Job Family Forum' in August 2016. This forum identified the shared capabilities and attributes necessary for working with vulnerable children and families.

Following this forum, the QFCC led a sector-wide process to develop capability frameworks for both frontline and operations management workforces.

Building capacity-building partnerships to support community controlled organisations

Community controlled organisations (CCOs) play a significant role in reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care and in securing better outcomes for these children and families. The opportunity exists to achieve these aims by strengthening the capacity and capability of all service providers in a way that recognises and respects the unique role of CCOs.

During 2016–17, the QFCC partnered with the Public Service Commission (PSC) Community Insights team to create a capacity-building partnership within the sector. The combined team facilitated a process to gather diverse, informed views about:

- the context in which CCOs operate
- what success looks like for these organisations in meeting the needs of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities
- what impedes CCOs in achieving success.

The results of this work will be used to identify capacity-building strengths, challenges and opportunities for CCOs delivering services in the child and family support sector.

Promoting and fostering child safe organisations

During 2016–17, the QFCC and sector professionals brought together senior executive leaders from across the sector in order to develop a *More than safe* statement. This is a sector-wide leadership commitment to how organisations will work together to support children and families.

The statement, outlined in the following diagram, will help organisations to communicate their expectations in recruiting, inducting and supervising staff.



The QFCC also contributed to the *National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations*, through a round table forum in 2017 and through its membership on the Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians group. The statement is to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments.

Supporting a shared approach to learning and development

During 2016–17, the QFCC engaged child and family service providers operating in Brisbane’s Bayside region to identify and respond to shared training and development priorities across the service sector. This collaborative planning process was hosted with the Bayside Local Level Alliance¹⁸. Training on how organisations can better partner together to improve integrated outcomes for children and families was identified as a priority from this process.

The QFCC facilitated the delivery of ‘Brokering Better Partnerships’ training across four locations: Bayside, Beaudesert, Gympie and Toowoomba. This internationally accredited training program, developed by Partnership Brokers Association, introduced best practice core principles and frameworks of partnering for success. Feedback from participants highlighted the importance of having shared language and tools for effective collaboration.

The QFCC hosted a series of stakeholder learning forums throughout 2016–17. These promoted shared learning and practice knowledge, and fostered the development of positive relationships across the child and family support sector. The learning forums were on topics such as:

- child safe organisations
- foetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- placement stability for children in out-of-home care
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe in culture
- online safety (Out of the Dark)
- local level alliance collaboration and partnership.

Listening to and supporting local solutions for local communities

Responding to the unique circumstances and needs of individual communities is core in building local capability and capacity in the sector. The QFCC partnered with the Queensland Council of Social Services¹⁹ and advisory groups in Rockhampton and Maryborough. This was to test the effectiveness of place-based methodology in building capacity, capability and positive professional culture in the child and family support sector.

Two projects undertaken during this trial were:

- Family Voice—Families Being Heard (Rockhampton): Valuing the voice of family and enabling them to better inform and influence service design, practice and policy
- Bringing and Keeping our Ghundus Home! (Fraser Coast): Having a voice, having a say, keeping our kids out of the system, bringing our kids home. Ten QFCC *Talking Families* videos use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers as the spokespeople to encourage help-seeking behaviours and to improve awareness of, and access to, available services and supports.

The QFCC found that developing local solutions is an effective and successful way to achieve local outcomes.

Identifying local priorities for improving employment entry pathways

During 2016–17, the QFCC worked with local stakeholders in Far North Queensland and South East Queensland to identify local priorities for increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enter the child and family support workforce.

¹⁸ Local level alliances regularly bring representatives of child and family service organisations together at the community level. Each alliance includes representatives from government and non-government organisations who work with vulnerable families and children.

¹⁹ The Queensland Council of Social Services is the statewide peak body for individuals and organisations working in the social and community service sector.

In doing so, we worked with key stakeholders for Far North Queensland, including from:

- the Cape Torres and Torres Strait Islands regions
- child and family support providers
- training and education providers
- government agencies.

In partnership with a regional working group and local contractors, this work produced:

- an *Employment entry pathways framework* for the Far North Queensland region, informed by a profile of the sector's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in the region
- a resource guide called *Connections work!* to support organisations in accessing assistance to employ and skill Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers
- a draft strategy designed to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to/in organisations delivering child and family services across Far North Queensland.

Developing workforce in a cultural context

The QFCC partnered with the Health and Community Services Workforce Council to pilot an innovative workforce development program on Kalkadoon country (Mt Isa). This involved working with regional stakeholders, including local Kalkadoon Elders and community, to identify and explore:

- cultural capability priorities within the Mt Isa context
- workforce strategies to improve the delivery of services to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Participant feedback stated the program contributed to:

- their growth and development, leading to changes in practice
- their ability to challenge and change organisational policy
- identifying shared practical solutions to challenges experienced in keeping their workforce and organisations culturally safe.

Engagement with young people

The QFCC listens to children, families and the community in all our work. Throughout the year we:

- **shared**—we heard about and shared the successes and challenges for children, young people and communities
- **connected**—young people and families learnt, developed and interacted with us, and we made community and professional connections to help solve the biggest issues
- **engaged**—young people and families had the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities to actively participate in positive change.

Transition to independence

Every year, more than 500 young people in Queensland aged between 15 and 18 years old leave the care system. Without support from carers, friends, family and community, these young people often struggle to achieve positive life outcomes.

The QFCC partnered with the CREATE Foundation and Next Step Aftercare²⁰ to share young people's views and experiences leading up to and following their transition to independence. Three videos were developed to highlight key aspects of the transition. These videos have been widely shared at QFCC external meetings and events. They are now used in training by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

²⁰ This is a Queensland service for young people who have left care.

Children's and young people's experiences

The QFCC has a webpage dedicated to sharing real life stories from children and young people living in Queensland.

The QFCC supported a young person in attending the YMCA youth parliament residential week in September 2016. At this event, youth parliament members wrote Bills on topics such as Genetic Innovation and Drought Management. The Principal Commissioner addressed the youth parliament members and encouraged them to continue with their passion for enacting change in their communities.

'Hear Me, See Me' Art Exhibition of children's perspectives and voices

The QFCC invited children and young people aged 5–18 to create and submit art works to share their vision and voice and celebrate the world they want to live in. They were asked to show, using any artistic medium, what the words safety, love, joy, hope, trust and family meant to them. The art works will be showcased in exhibitions in Brisbane during Child Protection Week in September 2017 and regionally during Children's Week in October 2017.

Youth leadership programs

The QFCC actively supports the empowerment of future leaders through programs like the Queensland Youth Parliament and Indigenous Youth Parliament.

We have developed a collaborative relationship with young people working in YFS's²¹ youth participatory leadership program "#R4Respect". The #R4Respect Youth Ambassadors program trains young people in a structured leadership methodology, empowering them to lead group work in schools and vulnerable communities. This is intended to reduce anti-social

behaviour and violence in communities by fostering healthy and respectful relationships between young people.

The QFCC was a partner of the program in 2016–17 and supported young ambassadors in attending a National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Child Protection Week breakfast.

These ambassadors then facilitated an information session with QFCC staff to share messages about respectful relationships.

Youth engagement

As part of implementing the *Children and youth engagement* strategy, the QFCC has continued to nurture established partnerships with the CREATE Foundation, Noffs Foundation Street University, and Next Steps After Care.

We also invited a number of young people to participate in steering committee and advisory council meetings, and the QFCC's Research in the Round forums to influence change.

Some of our engagement activities throughout the year included:

- working with the Noffs Foundation Street University in Logan and Caboolture to capture stories and opinions on a number of topics relating to family and parents
- visiting Open Doors Youth Service in Brisbane to discuss the needs of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transvestite Intersex young people
- promoting a joint Aboriginal Centre of Performing Arts and North West Aboriginal and Islander Community Association program aimed at supporting young people from the youth justice system

²¹ YFS is a not-for-profit organisation that delivers a range of services to the people of Logan and surrounds. It caters to people who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or want to improve their circumstances.

- seeking input from the Youth Empowered Towards Independence group (a group helping young people in need) in Cairns to gain young people's views on the paper—*the age of criminal responsibility in Queensland*. This was developed by the QFCC to advocate for improving the way the youth justice system responds to 10 to 12-year-old offenders
- working with the CREATE Foundation to run a workshop with young consultants to support developing employment entry options in the sector for children and young people with personal experience of out-of-home care
- taking the lead in developing the GForce newsletter, which highlighted the work of young consultants and positive stories from the sector
- hearing from young people about their experiences to inform the blue card and foster care review
- participating in Cherbourg celebrations against domestic violence, and in NAIDOC activities.

In 2016–17, the Principal Commissioner engaged with children at many forums including:

- through regional engagement at Palm Island, Aurukun, Yarrabah and Thursday Island—to understand local issues so we can best advocate for children, young people and families
- at the Ashgrove Hear and Say Centre
- at the Logan YFS Innovation in Youth Participation Forum
- at the Milton Your Town celebration of 20 years of Parentline
- at the Cleveland and Townsville Youth Detention Centres. This was to understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees
- through visits to a number of schools across the state
- by speaking to senior All Hallows school students about the dangers online and participating in the Courier-Mail's 'Generation Sext' event to answer questions from Brisbane school students
- through meetings with CREATE young consultants.

The year ahead

In 2017–18, as part of our enable objective, we will:

- continue to engage sector leaders and our strategic partners in identifying priorities for the *Strengthening Our Sector Action Plan 2017–18*
- implement the second *Strengthening our sector* action plan by coordinating streams of activity on the actions with sector partners, networks of professionals and service providers
- develop a new strategy for engaging with children, young people and families—to make sure their voices continue to be heard. This will include a project to hear from children across the state about what it is like growing up in Queensland
- establish a youth advisory council
- partner with the Public Service Commission to engage with government and the sector to identify capacity building strengths, challenges and opportunities for community controlled organisations delivering services in the child and family support sector.

Educate

Objective 3

Informed Queensland families and communities who understand their role in keeping children and young people safe and have access to resources to support them.

Strategies

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

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

Improve access to and awareness of services meeting the needs of vulnerable Queensland children and families.



Community education

The key Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) responsibility is 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

Talking Families is a community education campaign designed by the QFCC to help children, families and communities find the right information at the right time to reduce the pressures on families. *Talking Families* also aims to demystify the child and family support sector.

The *Talking Families* campaign is part of a public communication strategy. It uses a social marketing approach to raise awareness among families and communities that protecting and caring for Queensland's children is a shared responsibility. The program:

- educates the public about the child protection system
- promotes and advocates the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people
- encourages uptake of early intervention support services.

Following the research findings of the first phase of the *Talking Families* social marketing campaign in 2014–15, phase two of the campaign focused on driving behavioural change among parents and the community. The aim was to achieve a better uptake of available early intervention and sector support services. An evaluation of phase two is pending.

Talking Families stakeholder survey 2016

In 2016, the QFCC conducted an online survey of stakeholders in the child and family support sector in order to identify perceptions of why families would

or would not seek out services or take up support services. The survey complemented the *Talking Families Baseline Survey* conducted with parents and non-parents in 2015. The stakeholder survey was completed by 200 respondents between 29 June and 21 July 2016.

The survey found:

- 32% of stakeholders did not think families believe it is important to get help
- 32% did not think most children, young people and families who need help are comfortable requesting assistance
- 37% believed children and families do not access services if and when they require them.

The surveyed stakeholders believed that barriers for parents were:

- stigma
- the fear of being judged or having children removed
- issues such as awareness, access, availability and appropriateness of the services.

The respondents also believed there were some limitations in access to services, particularly for children, young people and/or families with special needs, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families.

In contrast, stakeholders believed the following factors encouraged help-seeking behaviours:

- minimisation of stigma through a non-judgemental approach
- empathetic, skilled and warm staff
- recommendations and referrals from other families who had had a positive experience
- awareness of the services

- the need to reach out for help
- the families' own motivation and support during that process.

Stakeholders believed that clients' family and friends don't always act in the child's best interests.

Overall, child and family support sector professionals felt empowered to make a difference in the lives of their clients but believed families face strong barriers. The barriers identified by respondents from the sector were consistent with those identified by respondents in the *Talking Families* campaign research report.

The *Talking Families Stakeholder Survey 2016* is available on the QFCC website.

***Talking Families* advertising campaign—'one conversation or service can make the difference'**

From December 2016–April 2017, the QFCC undertook a campaign to improve public awareness of, and access to, support for families. It developed an animation to promote the concept that 'one conversation or service can make the difference'.

It was broadcast through various channels, including the QFCC You Tube Channel (more than 650,000 views in 2016–17), Tonic Media (in 236 doctor surgeries) and 12 cinemas throughout Queensland.

The effectiveness of the animation advertisement was evaluated by the QFCC and the findings are expected in coming months. The results of the evaluation will be used to determine the content and type of advertising channel for future *Talking Families* campaigns.

To further promote the core message of the campaign, the QFCC partnered with Queensland Rail. A train



was wrapped with the campaign's graphical designs. *Talking Families* posters were also placed in Central, South Brisbane, Roma Street and other suburban train stations and on the Gold Coast light rail.

The QFCC *Talking Families* Facebook site (<https://www.facebook.com/talkingfamiliesqld>) promotes and encourages discussions about parenting and the pressures faced by families.

The Talking Families Facebook page has steadily grown over the year. It now has over 27,000 followers, and posts reached more than 3.5 million people in 2016–17.

***Talking Families* resources**

The QFCC developed items for Facebook social media ('shareables'), and articles for publication in social media, e-newsletters and network emails. These were distributed through various government and non-government stakeholder channels.

To further raise the awareness of the *Talking Families* campaign among targeted and mainstream audiences, the QFCC distributed brochures and postcards through government and non-government agencies and through public forums and facilities such as cafes.

***Talking Families* research workshops and regional engagement**

In November 2016, three workshops were delivered in Logan, Brisbane and Townsville to present a summary of *Talking Families* campaign research undertaken in the previous year. The workshops were attended by participants representing 43 family and child support sector organisations. Participants provided feedback as to how the findings from the research could be used to normalise help-seeking behaviours and to improve children's safety through increasing the number of help-seeking parents.

After the Brisbane workshop, the QFCC was asked to

partner with the Sunshine Coast Local Level Alliance to develop a targeted community awareness campaign for the north coast community. Work on this pilot partnership initiative started in April 2017.

In addition, the QFCC established a partnership with Logan Together²² to develop resource materials targeting vulnerable communities such as newly settled refugees, the Pasifika community and other culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

oneplace community services directory

oneplace²³ is an online, statewide information source of community support services. It is designed to help children, families and professionals find the right service. It currently has more than 49,700 records listed and had over 32,000 sessions accessed in 2016–17.

oneplace functionality was improved during the year to:

- enable domestic and family violence services to list events
- promote 13FAMILY (Family and Child Connect) by making sure the service appears at the top of search results when people are looking for issues relevant to children and parenting.

Resources

The QFCC produces a range of information resources and practice tools on child protection. These include information kits, guides and posters with information for children, families and professionals on various child protection issues including:

- responding to concerns about children
- supporting families

²² Logan Together is a long-term, whole-of-community effort to create the best life opportunities for every child in Logan.

²³ oneplace is a partnership between the QFCC and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

- court processes
- child rights
- complaints processes
- available supports.

Examples of resources produced in 2016–17 and available on the QFCC website include:

- a myth-busting guide for professionals in the child and family support sector. The guide dispels common myths. It also informs professionals of the facts around information sharing between agencies about children and families and helps in understanding the child protection system
- videos and transcripts (developed in conjunction with GForce) capturing the experiences and needs of three young people as they transition from the child protection system to independence
- an information kit—*Finding out about child protection in Queensland*, which was developed to help young people figure out the child protection system (by explaining things simply and clearly). It helps readers know their rights, have a say and find people who can help them
- an *Information Kit on child protection for parents*, which the QFCC developed in partnership with the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service
- a *Did you know?* QFCC poster on key facts for children and young people in out-of-home care.

The QFCC also developed an information kit on child protection for professionals, in order to build shared knowledge across the sector. The kit will be published in July 2017.

The year ahead

In 2017–18, as part of our educate objective, we will:

- introduce the next phase of the *Talking Families* campaign
- continue regional engagement activities with the Sunshine Coast Local Level Alliance and with Logan Together
- continue to develop resources to assist children and families to understand the child protection system and court processes
- introduce the second phase of the ‘Out of the Dark’ online safety awareness project
- partner with the Department of Science, Information, Technology and Innovation, Bravehearts and Taskforce Argos to encourage young people to report inappropriate images or contact through online tools
- continue to promote practical child death and injury prevention advice and messaging
- roll out a *Travelling the Reform Roadmap* awareness campaign to highlight the responsibility everyone has in protecting Queensland’s children
- publish the information kit on child protection for professionals
- publish an online information module—*Protecting children*—providing professionals and the community with the information they need to keep children more than safe
- coordinate with other campaigns, such as domestic and family violence prevention and the Queensland Government’s *Our Way—A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*.

Supporting First Australians

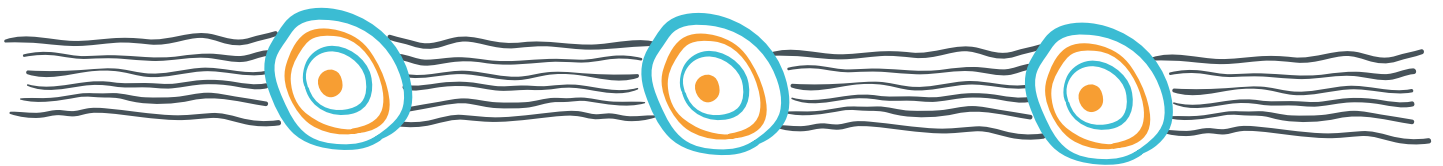
Objective 4

A culturally responsive organisation prioritising and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to remain safe, connected and thrive in supportive communities.

Strategies

Monitor, evaluate and research outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families and work collaboratively with government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, Elders and their communities.

Advocate, acknowledge and trust that engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is critical to determine the priority and needs of their children, families and communities.



Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

In support of Queensland's whole-of-government *Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP), the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) developed its *Reconciliation Action Plan 2015–17*.

This outlines the QFCC's commitment to work towards reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It also highlights the QFCC's commitment to building and strengthening existing partnerships through the themes of respect, relationships and opportunities.

The QFCC's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy 2016–17* supports the QFCC's RAP in driving strong partnerships and engagement with Indigenous young people, families and organisations. It serves 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.

In 2016–17, as part of this strategy, the QFCC actively took part in a number of important activities. Some of these activities are detailed in the following pages.

Community consultations and partnerships

Establishing ongoing and sustainable strategic local partnerships is critical to achieving successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

As part of the QFCC commitment to valuing the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service providers, staff from the QFCC have undertaken consultation and engagement with a number of urban, regional and remote communities and attended a number of significant community events; including:

- a statewide listening tour by the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner, who visited four remote Indigenous communities in Far North Queensland in August 2016 to hear the voices and experiences of Queensland children and families. This was so the QFCC can better understand the needs of remote communities, effectively advocate on their behalf, and respond appropriately to keep them safe and well



- trialling a community engagement ‘co-location’ model where QFCC staff spent extended periods of time engaging with Townsville and Palm Island communities. Co-location engagement activities included local cultural inductions, a Talking Families forum, a Palm Island white ribbon event (in support of preventing violence against women), meetings about the blue card review and the safe house review, engagement with young people in detention and a ‘thank you Townsville’ community event. As a result of this pilot, staff established relationships with these communities, and the communities developed greater awareness of the QFCC’s services
- regional visits, where discussions were held with community members from more than 50 agencies or groups across Queensland including:
 - o Traditional Owners
 - o Elders
 - o community leaders
 - o young people and their families
 - o young people transitioning from care
 - o young people in juvenile detention.

The Commissioner (along with representatives from Blue Card Services, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) took part in a follow-up workshop in Aurukun to explain blue card and Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal processes.

Learnings from the workshop provided local insights into the barriers and challenges for Indigenous people in accessing blue cards. They also helped to identify local solutions for blue card application processes.

The QFCC is a gold sponsor of the *Family Matters* campaign, a national partnership to reduce Indigenous overrepresentation in out-of-home care by 2040.

In partnership with the sector, the QFCC:

- started work in Cairns to establish entry pathways and employer support resources for attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and young people
- worked with community controlled providers to determine investment priorities for better services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- facilitated place-based, community informed and led responses to capability, capacity and culture challenges and opportunities in Central Queensland
- piloted a program for organisations to include cultural proficiency into strategic workforce plans.

This work will support the QFCC’s *Strengthening our sector—a strategy for working together for a responsive sustainable service system across the child and family support sector* and associated action plans. It will strengthen the capability, capacity and professional culture of the sector.

Our Mob, Our Voice

The QFCC engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of its mandate to monitor progress towards reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. The findings from a series of QFCC-held interviews will be used to present a community narrative interwoven with statistical data, trends and case studies.

Research

The QFCC commissioned research by the Domestic Violence and Family Research Centre to better understand help-seeking behaviour in the context of domestic violence, with a focus on risk and protective factors in Indigenous families. The report was published in September 2016.

The theme of the QFCC's Research in the Round (research forum) of May 2017 was 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe in culture'. Transcripts from the presentations (by Dr Gerald Featherstone from the Kummara Association, Professor Roianne West from Griffith University, Lisa Hillan from the Healing Foundation and Frank Cook from the Torres Strait) are available on the QFCC website.

Representation of Indigenous issues

Over the last year, the QFCC participated in several high-level committees that have the potential to address issues of Indigenous overrepresentation (in the child protection system), such as the:

- Reform Leaders Group
- Recognised Entity Review Steering Committee
- Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board
- Mount Isa Lead Health Management Committee
- Cultural Agency Leaders Committee
- Kupai Omasker Working Group

The Principal Commissioner visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, and QFCC staff made subsequent visits, in order to better understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees.

In 2016–17, the QFCC continued to provide advice to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through submissions to government agencies and other publications. These included:

- a submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission's inquiry into service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- a public information paper on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality 2015–16
- a research summary paper on improving outcomes for children with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- a research summary paper on culturally safe places through innovative workforce development.

Services and supports available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been flagged in the oneplace community services directory. This will make them easily identifiable.

Culturally-specific branding

Following research confirming that the use of culturally-specific design elements in government communications assists in establishing relevance for and affinity with Indigenous audiences, the QFCC introduced its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander motif. The motif and artwork were designed by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to honour these two unique cultures.

It is hoped this QFCC branding will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to better engage with and relate to QFCC services and messages.

The QFCC motif is shown in the following image, along with its underlying story.



Family is at the core of the QFCC motif, represented by an Aboriginal icon. It shows a surrounding family culture, radiating out from the orange circles. Stemming from this core element are three pathways leading to a circular meeting place—representing the support networks (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) for children, families and professionals.

The stars around the border represent the five regions of the Torres Strait Islands. They also represent the fact that children can reach their full potential and become ‘stars’ with support from the QFCC.

The background represents the blue oceans of the Torres Straits—the unpredictability and all the complexities surrounding them—yet the assurance that when they are calm, there can be peace and sustenance found within them.

Keeping families safe in culture takes holistic and collaborative support from Indigenous and non-Indigenous networks. With this support, families, like the Torres Straits, can be calm and at peace within culture.

This symbol was commissioned by Gilimbaa and created by Goreng artist Rachael Sarra in collaboration with Torres Strait Islander artist, Luke Maille.

The year ahead

In 2017–18, in supporting First Australians, we will:

- establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council to provide expert insights into issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and the sector
- establish tools and processes to guide QFCC staff in applying a cultural lens to decisions and projects
- provide a report into the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the system
- report on 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
- progress a number of initiatives under the *Strengthening our Sector strategy*. This will include further work to create a meaningful approach to:
 - o recognising and building successful community controlled organisations (CCOs)
 - o supporting workforce attraction and career pathways focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- as lead or partner agency, implement the actions in the government’s *Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and families 2017–19*. This plan is intended to put Queensland on a new track so all Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and young people can grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.

Governance

Objective 5

Maximise our capability.

Strategies

Strengthen organisational capability.

Optimise internal processes and tools.



Management and structure

Our executive

There were six permanent* members of the Executive Group at 30 June 2017.

Cheryl Vardon	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/director-general levels.
Principal Commissioner	
	Cheryl is the Chief Executive of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC).
Commissioner	A recruitment process is underway following the resignation of Tammy Williams.
Cheryl Leavy	Cheryl has enjoyed a notable career working with both the private sector and across state and federal governments in the health, taxation, education and transport portfolios. She has served on several boards including as a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
Deputy Commissioner	Cheryl has deep experience and expertise in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. A Kooma Traditional Owner, Cheryl's country is in southern inland Queensland between Cunnamulla and St George.
	Cheryl is the Deputy Commissioner (non-statutory position) and joined the QFCC in June 2017.

Natalie Conner

Chief Operating Officer
(Operations)

Natalie has worked as a Senior Executive in the Queensland public service for over a decade and has broad experience gained in regional and head office environments. Her industry experience includes working with sectors as diverse as transport, and parks, sport and racing. Prior to coming to the QFCC, she worked in the social policy team responsible for child protection and domestic and family violence prevention in the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Natalie leads the Research and Corporate Services area and chairs the Major Projects Board. She began working with the QFCC in October 2016.

Max Wise

Chief Operating Officer

Max has over 30 years of Queensland public sector experience. Some of this has been in agencies responsible for helping members of the community subject to consumer fraud. The rest has been spent 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.

This year, Max led the review of the foster care and blue card systems.

Max leads the Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education area.

Andrea Lauchs

Assistant Commissioner

Andrea has over 20 years of 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 internationally.

Andrea leads the Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development area.

Tracy Fogarty

Acting Director

Tracy has worked in a range of governance and program management roles in the Queensland public service for over a decade. Working across a diverse range of portfolios, Tracy has provided professional executive support to a number of chief executives.

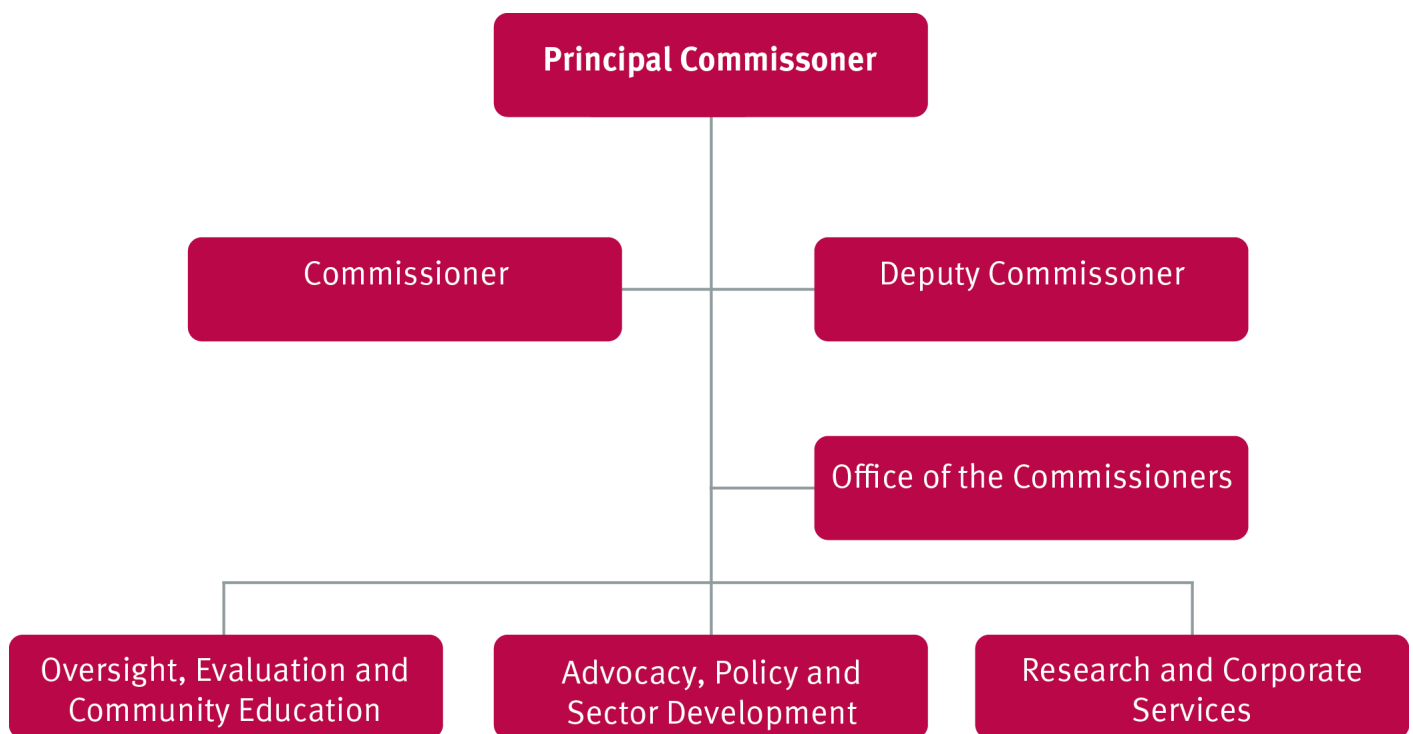
Tracy is the acting Director of the Office of the Commissioners and began in the role in June 2017.

* At 30 June 2017, Peter Cantwell was acting Assistant Commissioner Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education and Sue Gleed was acting Assistant Commissioner Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development while Max Wise and Andrea Lauchs were involved in the review of the foster care and blue card systems.

Our structure

The QFCC operates out of 53 Albert Street Brisbane and delivers its services through the structure outlined in the organisational chart below. The QFCC undertook a comprehensive review of the organisational structure in early 2017. Implementation commenced in June 2017 with the final structure to be in place from 3 July 2017.

The QFCC organisational structure at 30 June 2017



Governance framework

The QFCC's objectives, strategies, performance indicators and strategic risks as outlined in the strategic plan remain relatively unchanged from the previous financial year. An additional QFCC strategic objective on supporting First Australians has been added.

Program level operational plans were reviewed and revised during the 2016–17 financial year. A six-monthly review of operational tactics and risks was also undertaken.

Internal governance

As the QFCC is 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 is made up of the QFCC executives. This 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 *Leader Group* is made up of 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.

The *Major Projects Board* was established to provide governance of business performance. It oversees the QFCC's major projects and initiatives and its finances. Given the size of the QFCC, and in line with the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, a decision was made (previously) to not establish a formal audit committee. The Major Project Board assumes responsibility for internal audit and risk management.

External scrutiny

The Queensland Parliament's Finance and Administration Committee (the committee) held a public hearing 1 March 2017 with regard to the committee's oversight responsibilities of the QFCC. The final committee report has yet to be tabled.

Information and communications technology

In 2016–17, our information and communications technology three year roadmap was implemented. As part of the roadmap implementation, end of life desktop computers were progressively replaced with Microsoft Surface Pro 4 devices to enhance staff mobility and flexibility.

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 application to meet our record keeping obligations.

Financial performance

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 2016–17

The financial summary provides an overview of the QFCC's financial performance for 2016–17 and a comparison with 2015–16. A detailed view of our financial performance for 2016–17 is provided in the financial statements included in this annual report.

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

Financial results

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2015–16 \$'000	Actual 2016–17 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations		
Grants and other contributions	11,569	13,561
Other revenue	66	871
Total Income from Continuing Operations	11,635	14,432
Expense from Continuing Operations		
Employee expenses	6,006	9,174
Supplies and services	4,863	4,550
Depreciation and amortisation	253	270
Other expenses	289	77
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	11,411	14,071
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	224	361

The 2016–17 increases in income and employee expenses resulted from the QFCC undertaking additional systems reviews in this year. Details of the reviews are in the oversight section of this report. The QFCC maintained a sound net asset position throughout the 2016–17 financial year.

Financial position

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2015–16 \$'000	Actual 2016–17 \$'000
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,314	1,834
Receivables	187	361
Other current assets	22	1
Total Current Assets	1,523	2,196
Non-current Assets		
Intangible assets	979	753
Plant and equipment	365	388
Total Non-Current Assets	1,344	1,141
Total Assets	2,867	3,337
Current Liabilities		
Payables	605	832
Accrued employee benefits	281	353
Other current liabilities	189	0
Total Liabilities	1,075	1,185
Net Assets	1,792	2,152
Equity		
Contributed equity	165	525
Accumulated deficit	1,627	1,627
Total Equity	1,792	2,152

Further information

As required by annual reporting guidelines, information relating to consultancies engaged by the QFCC in 2016–17 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 2017, the QFCC employed 65 full time equivalent staff, with total employee expenses for the year of \$9.174 million. The QFCC's staff profile was:

- 81% female and 19% male
- 10% from a non-English speaking background or had parents who came from a non-English speaking background
- 10% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 3% identified as having a disability.

Strategic workforce plan

During the year, the *Strategic Workforce Plan 2016–2020* was reviewed in conjunction with staff to make sure the existing workforce strategies and initiatives still reflected the needs of the staff and the organisation. Focus areas identified included:

- developing contemporary and tailored capability development opportunities
- designing and promoting our desired workplace culture
- refining workforce practices to support organisational efficiency and effectiveness
- implementing a range of initiatives to support health and wellbeing

- building our Information and Communication Technology capability and capacity to support business needs
- enabling information sharing and working collaboratively across the QFCC.

The review incorporated findings from the 2016 *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 revised organisational structure to make it easier to fulfil our legislative obligations
- greater attraction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants through our recruitment and selection processes
- updated performance and development plans and assessment tools to deliver a more contemporary and effective performance and development framework.

Separation rate

During 2016–17, our permanent separation rate was 18%. This was influenced by the separation of a number of staff seconded to undertake the blue card and foster care review.

Three employees received a redundancy package at a cost of \$214,913.

Performance management framework

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

- a simplified performance management and development framework
- a contemporary approach to staff induction
- enhancement of our leadership capability to drive higher levels of organisational performance through:
 - o continuing the implementation of the leadership capability assessment and development program
 - o promotion of leadership training
 - o providing training to current and aspiring team leaders to build their knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively manage people in the workplace
 - o information sharing and networking through the Leaders Group monthly meetings
 - o development and networking opportunities through participation in inter-agency community of practice forums.
- continued coaching and mentoring of staff in ‘agile’ project management to support a culture of proactive and meaningful information sharing
- mandatory online training—Code of Conduct, Information Privacy, Right to Information, Bullying, Domestic and Family Violence, and *Walk with Us* (cultural capability)
- informal QFCC ‘Gratitude for Attitude’ awards to recognise the performance, achievements and high standards of work by staff linked to our values
- a range of initiatives to build our cultural capability, including the launch of an ongoing Cultural Capability Program—*Journey with Us*—an

ongoing journey of safely moving towards cultural capability in a meaningful, practical and culturally sensitive way.

Supporting staff wellbeing

The QFCC offered a number of health and wellbeing initiatives to support staff including:

- a flu vaccination program
- formal and informal professional support for staff who deal with sensitive child-related information—to provide resilience and peer support
- 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 help staff to build financial security
- a range of physical and mental initiatives offered to staff to promote employee health and wellbeing 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 range of opportunities are available to staff.

Flexible working arrangements are promoted through recruitment and selection processes, employee induction, policies and factsheets. Flexible work practices are given due consideration and approved by the delegate, taking into consideration the personal circumstances and needs of an employee and the impact on service delivery and the operational needs of the organisation.

Code of conduct

The QFCC's staff are covered by the single code of conduct established for the Queensland Public Service. Code of conduct principles and their associated set of values form part of induction training for new staff. All staff are required to complete mandatory online code of conduct training.

The previously mentioned mandatory face to face ethics training was conducted to provide all staff with the knowledge and skills to identify and manage conflicts of interest and promote ethical behavior in daily interactions. The training helps staff to assess and respond to ethical dilemmas and understand core government values. The QFCC performance and development framework and processes also address code of conduct expectations.

Cultural capability

A *QFCC Cultural Capability Employee Development Program* was approved in September 2016. This program outlines a development process for QFCC employees to build skills and confidence in delivering services to, and on behalf of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. A five-step *Journey with Us* training program was designed to allow QFCC staff to move towards cultural capability in a meaningful, practical and sensitive way.

The QFCC has been developing an *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2017–19*, which feeds into the Queensland Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander *Cultural Capability Framework*. This action plan should be finalised in the second half of 2017.

The QFCC conducted a staff information session as part of National Reconciliation Week in May 2017.

The year ahead

In 2017–18, as part of our governance objective, we will:

- provide greater tailored professional development opportunities to staff in line with information captured through our performance and development planning process
- streamline recruitment and selection processes with online support tools
- enhance analysis and reporting tools to more effectively manage workforce planning and employment arrangements
- provide a range of initiatives to support health and wellbeing
- conduct 'lunch and learn' sessions on topics of interest—providing opportunities for professional and personal development
- continue our commitment and rollout of ongoing cultural capability initiatives under our *Journey with Us* program to support the needs of our staff and organisation
- develop an attraction and retention strategy to increase employment and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Appendix A—Glossary of terms

CCO	Community Controlled Organisation
CSIA	Community Services Industry Alliance
QCPCOI	Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry
QFCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission
SCAN	Suspected child abuse and neglect

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. ii
	Glossary	ARRs – section 10.1	p. 57
	Public availability	ARRs – section 10.2	Page after cover
	Interpreter service statement	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 10.3	QFCC is not a participating statutory body
	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	pp. 1–7
	Agency role and main functions	ARRs – section 11.2	p. 2
	Operating environment	ARRs – section 11.3	p. 5
Non-financial performance	Government’s objectives for the community	ARRs – section 12.1	p. 2
	Other whole-of-government plans / specific initiatives	ARRs – section 12.2	pp. 5–7
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs – section 12.3	p. 3
	Agency service areas and service standards	ARRs – section 12.4	p. 4
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs – section 13.1	pp. 51–53
Governance–management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs – section 14.1	p. 50
	Executive management	ARRs – section 14.2	pp. 48–49
	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. 56
Financial performance	Queensland public service values	ARRs – section 14.1	p. 4

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual Report reference
Governance–risk management and accountability	Risk management	ARRs – section 15.1	p. 51
	Audit committee	ARRs – section 15.2	N/A
	Internal audit	ARRs – section 15.3	p. 51
	External scrutiny	ARRs – section 15.4	p. 51
	Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs – section 15.5	p. 51
Governance–human resources	Workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 16.1	p. 54–56
	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	<i>Directive No.11/12 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 16.2	p. 54
Open Data	Consultancies	ARRs – section 17 ARRs – section 34.1	p. 53
	Overseas travel	ARRs – section 17 ARRs – section 34.2	Nil
	Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 17 ARRs – section 34.3	N/A
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 42, 43 and 50 ARRs – section 18.1	p. 91
	Independent auditor’s report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 50 ARRs – section 18.2	p. 92–93

FAA—*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

FPMS—*Financial and Performance Management Standards 2009*

ARRs—Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies

Appendix C—Financial Statements

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2017

Queensland Family and Child Commission Financial Statements 2016-17

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No</u>
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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	8-31
Management Certificate	32
Independent Audit Report	33-34

Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME****for the year ended 30 June 2017**

		2017	2016
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
Grants and other contributions	3.	13,561	11,569
Other revenue		871	66
Total Income from Continuing Operations		14,432	11,635
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	9,174	6,006
Supplies and services	5.	4,550	4,863
Depreciation and amortisation		270	253
Other expenses	6.	77	289
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		14,071	11,411
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		361	224
Total Comprehensive Income		361	224

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 30 June 2017

	Notes	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7.	1,834	1,314
Receivables	8.	361	187
Prepayments		1	22
Total Current Assets		2,196	1,523
Non Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	9.	388	365
Intangible assets	10.	753	979
Total Non Current Assets		1,141	1,344
Total Assets		3,337	2,867
Current Liabilities			
Payables	11.	832	605
Accrued employee benefits	12.	353	281
Other current liabilities	13.	-	189
Total Current Liabilities		1,185	1,075
Total Liabilities		1,185	1,075
Net Assets		2,152	1,792
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		525	165
Contributed equity		1,627	1,627
Total Equity		2,152	1,792

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
for the year ended 30 June 2017**

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2015	(59)	1,627	1,568
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	224	-	224
Balance as at 30 June 2016	165	1,627	1,792
Balance as at 1 July 2016	165	1,627	1,792
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	361	-	361
Balance as at 30 June 2017	525	1,627	2,152

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 30 June 2017

	Notes	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
<i>Inflows:</i>			
Grants and other contributions		13,299	11,774
GST input tax credits from ATO		482	440
GST collected from customers		3	12
Interest receipts		54	74
Other revenue		817	-
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Employee expenses		(9,233)	(5,857)
Supplies and services		(4,302)	(4,591)
GST paid to suppliers		(452)	(499)
GST remitted to ATO		(3)	(12)
Grants and subsidies		-	(91)
Other		(77)	(198)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		588	1,052
Cash flows from investing activities			
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Payments for plant and equipment		(68)	-
Payment for WIP		-	(145)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(68)	(145)
Cash flows from financing activities		-	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		520	907
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,314	407
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	7.	1,834	1,314

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 30 June 2017

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

Reconciliation of Operating Result to Net Cash provided by Operating Activities

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Operating surplus	361	224
Depreciation and amortisation expense	270	253
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(204)	(1)
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	30	(49)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	21	(17)
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable	227	326
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	72	138
Increase/(decrease) in GST payable	-	(10)
Increase/(decrease) in advances received from Queensland Treasury	(189)	189
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	588	1,052

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

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 (KMP) 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 2016-17

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). 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.

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 operations 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 2017, 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 2015-16 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 2016-17

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation (contd)

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 the following objectives:

- Drive high quality evidence-based Queensland service systems for vulnerable children and families
- A strong sector where partnerships and collaborations between government and non-government organisations achieve better outcomes for children and families
- Informed Queensland families and communities who understand their role in keeping children and young people safe and have access to resources to support them

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

2. Objectives of the QFCC (contd)

- A culturally responsive organisation prioritising and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to remain safe, connected and thrive in supporting communities
- Maximise our organisational capability and value

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
3. Grants and Other Contributions		
Grants received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet	13,311	11,279
Grants received from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	250	290
Total	13,561	11,569

Accounting Policy - Grants and Contributions

Grants, contributions and donations are non-reciprocal in nature so do not require any goods or services to be provided in return. Corresponding revenue is recognised in the year in which the department obtains control over the grant/contribution/donation (control is generally obtained at the time of receipt).

4. Employee Expenses

Employee Benefits

Wages and salaries	6,701	4,243
Employer superannuation contributions	894	591
Annual leave levy	686	453
Long service leave levy	146	98
Redundancies	215	125

Employee Related Expenses

Payroll tax	392	274
Fringe Benefit Tax	14	7
Workers' compensation premium	44	26
Other employee related expenses	82	189

Total	9,174	6,006
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	No.	No.
Full-Time Equivalent Employees	65	58

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

4. Employee Expenses (contd)

Accounting Policy - Wages and Salaries

Wages and salaries due but unpaid at reporting date are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at the current salary rates. As the QFCC expects such liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, the liabilities are recognised at undiscounted amounts.

Accounting Policy - Sick Leave

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

Accounting Policy - Annual Leave

The Queensland Government's Annual Leave Central Scheme (ALCS) became operational on 30 June 2008 for departments, commercialised business units and shared service providers. Under this scheme, a levy is made on the QFCC to cover the cost of employees' annual leave (including leave loading and on-costs). The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for annual leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears.

Accounting Policy - Long Service Leave

Under the Queensland Government's Long Service Leave 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.

Accounting Policy - Superannuation

Post-employment benefits for superannuation are provided through defined contribution (accumulation) plans or the Queensland Government's QSuper defined benefit plan as determined by the employee's conditions of employment.

Defined Contribution Plans - Contributions are made to eligible complying superannuation funds based on the rates specified in the relevant enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) or other conditions of employment. Contributions are expensed when they are paid or become payable following completion of the employee's service each pay period.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

4. Employee Expenses (contd)

Accounting Policy - Superannuation (cont)

Defined Benefit Plan - 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*. The amount of contributions for defined benefit plan obligations is based upon the rates determined on the advice of the State Actuary. Contributions are paid by the QFCC at the specified rate following completion of the employee's service each pay period. The QFCC's obligations are limited to those contributions paid.

Accounting Policy - Workers' Compensation Premiums

The Commission 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 considered an employee benefit and is recognised separately as employee related expenses.

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

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
5. Supplies and Services		
Building services	882	1,132
Administration costs	250	81
Contractors and consultants	1,792	1,872
Corporate services provider costs	689	902
Telecommunications	58	48
Advertising and promotions	317	404
Travel	232	80
Minor plant and equipment	113	261
Repairs and maintenance	31	16
Professional services	29	8
Minor capital works	9	6
Other supplies and services	148	53
	4,550	4,863

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
6. Other Expenses		
Insurance premiums (QGIF)	4	4
External audit fees *	22	4
Sponsorships paid	51	91
Other expenses	-	190
Total	77	289
* Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2016-17 financial statements are estimated to be \$19,000 (2015-16: \$15,000). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.		
7. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank	1,834	1,314
Total	1,834	1,314
8. Receivables		
Trade debtors	72	-
	72	-
GST receivable	72	102
Annual leave reimbursements	170	69
Long service leave reimbursement	46	16
Other receivables	1	-
Total	361	187

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 30 days from date invoice 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 2016-17

9. Plant and Equipment

Closing Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amount

	Total	
	2017	2016
	\$'000	\$'000
Plant and Equipment: at cost	493	280
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(105)	(60)
	388	220
Work in progress: at cost	-	145
Carrying amount at 30 June	388	365

Represented by movements in carrying amount:

	Plant and Equipment		Work in Progress		Total	
	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	220	247	145	-	365	247
Acquisitions	68	-	-	-	68	-
Transfers between classes	145	-	(145)	-	-	-
Depreciation Expense	(45)	(27)	-	-	(45)	(27)
Work in progress	-	-	-	145	-	145
Carrying amount at 30 June	388	220	(0)	145	388	365

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.

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 assets ready for use, including architects' fees and engineering design fees.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

9. Plant and Equipment (contd)

Measurement using Historical Cost

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 are 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 2016-17

10. Intangible Assets	2017	2016
	\$'000	\$'000
Intangible Assets - Cost		
Software Purchased: At cost		
Gross	433	433
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(157)	(95)
	276	338
 Software Internally Generated: At cost		
Computer Software - Internally Generated (cost)	1,146	1,146
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(669)	(505)
	477	641
	753	979

Intangible Assets - Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amounts

	Software Purchased		Software Internally Generated		Total	
	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	338	399	641	805	979	1,204
Amortisation expense	(62)	(61)	(164)	(164)	(226)	(225)
Carrying amount at 30 June	276	338	477	641	753	979

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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

10. Intangible Assets (contd)

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 2016-17

	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
11. Payables		
Trade creditors	753	546
Other payables	79	59
Total	832	605

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	139	97
Annual leave levy payable	177	152
Long service leave levy payable	37	32
Total	353	281

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 received from Queensland Treasury	-	189
	-	189

14. Commitments for Expenditure

(a) Non-Cancellable Operating Lease

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

Not later than one year	881	819
Later than one year and not later than five years	894	2,696
Later than five years	-	-
Total	1,775	3,515

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

14. Commitments for Expenditure (contd)

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.

15. Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2017.

16. Financial Risk Disclosures

Financial Instrument Categories

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

Category	Note	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7.	1,834	1,314
Receivables	8.	361	187
Total		2,195	1,501
Financial Liabilities			
Financial liabilities measured at amortised costs:			
Payables	11.	832	605
Total		832	605

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

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 assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the statement of Financial Position when the commission becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. The commission has the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities:

- Cash and cash equivalents - Note 7

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

16. Financial Risk Disclosures (contd)

- Receivables at amortised cost - Note 8
- Payable at amortised cost - Note 11

The commission does not enter into transactions for speculative purposes, nor for hedging. No financial assets or liabilities are classified at fair value through profit or loss.

17. Events Occurring After Balance Date

No event has occurred after 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

As from QFCC's financial statements for 2017-18, this standard will require additional disclosures to enable the reader 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 in the notes to the Statement of Cash Flows.

AASB 1058 - Income of Not-for-Profit Entities and AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers

These standards will first apply to the QFCC from its financial statements for 2019-20.

The QFCC has commenced analysing the new revenue recognition requirements under these standards and is yet to form conclusions about significant impacts. Potential future impacts identifiable at the date of this report are as follows:

- Grants received to construct non-financial assets controlled by the QFCC will be recognised as a liability, and subsequently recognised progressively as revenue as the department satisfies its performance obligations under the grant. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue upfront.
- Under the new standards, other grants presently recognised as revenue upfront may be eligible to be recognised as revenue progressively as the associated performance obligations are satisfied, but only if the associated performance obligations are enforceable and sufficiently specific. The QFCC is yet to evaluate the existing grant arrangements with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet as to whether revenue from those grants could be deferred under the new requirements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

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

AASB 1058 - Income of Not-for-Profit Entities and AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers (contd)

- Grants that are not enforceable and/or not sufficiently specific will not qualify for deferral, and continue to be recognised as revenue as soon as they are controlled. The department receives several grants for which there are no sufficiently specific performance obligations - these grants are expected to continue being recognised as revenue upfront assuming no change to the current grant arrangements.
- The QFCC does not currently have any revenue contracts with a material impact for the period after 1 July 2018, and will monitor the impact of any such contracts subsequently entered into before the new standards take effect.

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

These standards will first apply to the QFCC from its financial statements for 2018-19. The main impacts of these standards on the QFCC are 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 the new standard 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 (instead of the measurement classifications presently used in Note 16). 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.

Another impact of AASB 9 relates to calculating impairment losses for the QFCC's receivables. Assuming no substantial change in the nature of the QFCC's receivables, as they don't include a significant financing component, impairment losses will be determined according to the amount of lifetime expected credit losses. On initial adoption of AASB 9, the QFCC will need to determine the expected credit losses for its receivables by comparing the credit risk at that time to the credit risk that existed when those receivables were initially recognised.

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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

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

AASB 16 Leases

This standard will first apply to the QFCC from its financial statements for 2019-20. 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.

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 effective 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.

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

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) 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 2016-17.

Position	Position Responsibility
Principal Commissioner	The role provides strategic and cross sectorial 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 drive 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 well being of children and young people, build the capacity and improve the performance of the child protection system.
Commissioner / Deputy 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.
Assistant Commissioner Advocacy, Policy, and Sector Development	To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for: <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 sector system, and - Utilising 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.
Assistant Commissioner Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education	To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.
Director, Office of the Commissioners	To provide strategic and operational support to the Commissioners and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide detailed briefings to the Commissioners and external stakeholders on policy and program initiatives to support the achievement of strategic objectives - Coordinate the delivery of multi-disciplinary projects of a substantial and complex nature, including child protection reforms and other high profile initiatives to drive quality achievements within timeframes and budgets, and - Maintain detailed knowledge of progress across the QFCC program of work and provide high-level information and advice to the Commissioners about issues and risks.
Chief Operating Officer (Blue Card)	To provide strategic direction and oversee the execution of the Blue Card and Foster Care Review in line with the established terms of reference and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide expert advice to the QFCC Commissioners and the Expert Panel - Establish steering and advisory mechanisms representative of the scope of the Blue Card and Foster Care Systems - Assess and consider relevant developments in other jurisdictions, and - Deliver findings and recommendations to the Premier.
Chief Operating Officer (Operations)	To provide strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for: <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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (contd)

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.

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 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 2016-17

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (contd)

KMP Remuneration Expense

1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses	Non-Monetary Benefits				
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Principal Commissioner	248	0	5	26	0	279
Commissioner	144	0	3	16	0	163
Deputy Commissioner	12	0	0	1	0	13
Assistant Commissioner Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development	146	0	3	18	0	167
Assistant Commissioner Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education	80	0	2	14	0	96
Director, Office of the Commissioners	12	0	0	1	0	13
Chief Operating Officer (Blue Card)	128	0	3	12	0	143
Chief Operating Officer (Operations)	55	0	1	0	0	56
Total Remuneration	825	0	17	88	0	930

1 July 2015 - 30 June 2016

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses	Non-Monetary Benefits				
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'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 2016-17

19. Key Management Personnel Disclosures (contd)

Related Party Transactions

Transactions with people/entities related to KMP

The QFCC did not enter into any transactions with people, or entities, related to Key Management Personnel during the audit period.

Transactions with other Queensland Government -controlled entities

The QFCC transacts with other Queensland Government controlled entities consistent with normal day-to-day business operations provided under normal commercial terms and conditions.

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 2016-17.

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:

Depreciation of Plant and Equipment - Note 9

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

This section discloses the QFCC's original published budgeted figures for 2016-17 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

		Original Budget 2017 \$'000	Actual 2017 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Income from Continuing Operations					
Grants and other contributions	1	12,188	13,561	1,373	11%
Other revenue	1	50	871	821	1642%
Total Income from Continuing Operations		12,238	14,432	2,194	18%
Expenses from Continuing Operations					
Employee expenses	2	7,345	9,174	1,829	25%
Supplies and services		4,597	4,550	(47)	(1%)
Depreciation and amortisation		275	270	(5)	(2%)
Other expenses		21	77	56	267%
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		12,238	14,071	1,833	15%
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		-	361	361	100%
Total Comprehensive Income		-	361	361	100%

QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Financial Position

		Original Budget	Actual		
	Variance Notes	2017 \$'000	2017 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Current Assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	3	958	1,834	876	91%
Receivables	4	136	361	225	165%
Other		5	1	(4)	(80%)
Total Current Assets		1,099	2,196	1,097	100%
Non-Current Assets					
Intangible assets		744	753	9	1%
Plant and equipment		325	388	63	19%
Total Non-Current Assets		1,069	1,141	72	7%
Total Assets		2,168	3,337	1,169	54%
Current Liabilities					
Payables	3	294	832	(538)	(183%)
Accrued employee benefits	5	157	353	(196)	(125%)
Total Current Liabilities		451	1,185	(734)	(163%)
Total Liabilities		451	1,185	(734)	(163%)
Net Assets		1,717	2,152	435	25%
Equity					
Contributed equity		1,717	1,627	(90)	(5%)
Accumulated surplus		-	525	525	100%
Total Equity		1,717	2,152	435	25%

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Cash Flows

	Variance Notes	Original Budget 2017 \$'000	Actual 2017 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Cash flows from operating activities					
<i>Inflows:</i>					
Grants and other contributions		12,188	13,299	1,111	9%
GST input tax credits from ATO		-	482	482	100%
GST collected from customers		-	3	3	100%
Interest receipts		50	54	4	7%
Other		326	817	491	151%
<i>Outflows:</i>					
Employee expenses		(7,338)	(9,233)	(1,895)	(26%)
Supplies and services		(4,924)	(4,302)	622	13%
GST paid to suppliers		-	(452)	(452)	(100%)
GST remitted to ATO		-	(3)	(3)	(100%)
Other		(21)	(77)	(56)	(267%)
Net cash provided by operating activities		281	588	307	109%
Cash flows from investing activities		-	(68)	(68)	(100%)
Net increase in cash held		281	520	239	85%
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		677	1,314	637	(6%)
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		958	1,834	876	91%

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2016-17

24. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Explanations of Major Variances

Statement of Comprehensive Income

1. Increase in grants and other revenue due to receipt of additional grant funding and contributions associated with Blue Card and Foster Care Review.
2. Increase in employee expenses due to an increase in short-term temporary staff acquired from other departments to assist in the Blue Card and Foster Care Review.

Statement of Financial Position

3. Increase in cash and trade payables driven by timing of payments (operational expenses recognised but not paid) as at 30 June 2017.
4. Increase relates to Long Service Leave Central Scheme, Annual Leave Central Scheme claims and GST receivables not received by 30 June 2017.
5. An increase in employee accrued benefits due to timing of accrued leave entitlements and leave taken by employees and additional temporary staff for the Review of Blue Card and Foster Care Systems.


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:

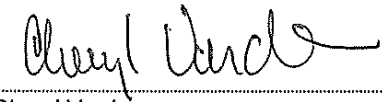
(i) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and

(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 2017 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.


Natalie Conner
Chief Operating Officer
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 31.8.17


Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 31/8/2017

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Queensland Family and Child Commission

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Queensland Family and Child Commission .

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2017, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended
- b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, 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 summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

I am independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*.

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

Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and Australian Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Board is also responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the entity or to otherwise cease operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the entity.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. I base my conclusions on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2017:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required.
- b) In my opinion, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.



Nick George
as delegate of the Auditor-General



Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

Appendix D—Performance of the Queensland child protection system

Queensland's performance against national goals

The *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020* (the National Framework) outlines national goals for Australia's child protection system²⁴. The National Framework is a long-term program of change promoting a unified approach to child protection in Australia. It shifts the focus of 'protecting children' from a statutory response to abuse and neglect to a more holistic view, where the safety and wellbeing of children is the collective responsibility of families, communities and governments.

Australia's progress on the National Framework is measured against a series of outcomes and performance indicators that support the high-level goal of ensuring 'Australia's children and young people are safe and well'.²⁵ The six supporting outcomes focus on the following complementary areas:

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. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are supported and safe in their families and communities
6. child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

The *Third three-year action plan 2015–18* (the Third Action Plan) to implement the National Framework places strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention. As the indicators to measure outcomes for the Third Action Plan have not yet been released, the QFCC has retained its focus on indicators from the *Second three-year action plan 2012–2015* (the Second Action Plan) to measure Queensland's progress.

The Second Action Plan uses eight indicators to measure progress towards the high-level goal that children and young people are safe and well:

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

²⁴ The National Framework was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments on 30 April 2009.

²⁵ Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*, p. 11.

6. early childhood development
7. child social and emotional wellbeing
8. family economic situation.

Queensland's performance in relation to achieving national goals has been examined against the first five of these indicators only²⁶. Data has been sourced from a number of publications and brought together to present a picture of the safety and wellbeing of children in Queensland compared with the national average.

This data is presented in graphs, with definitions and analysis included below. We have included information specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

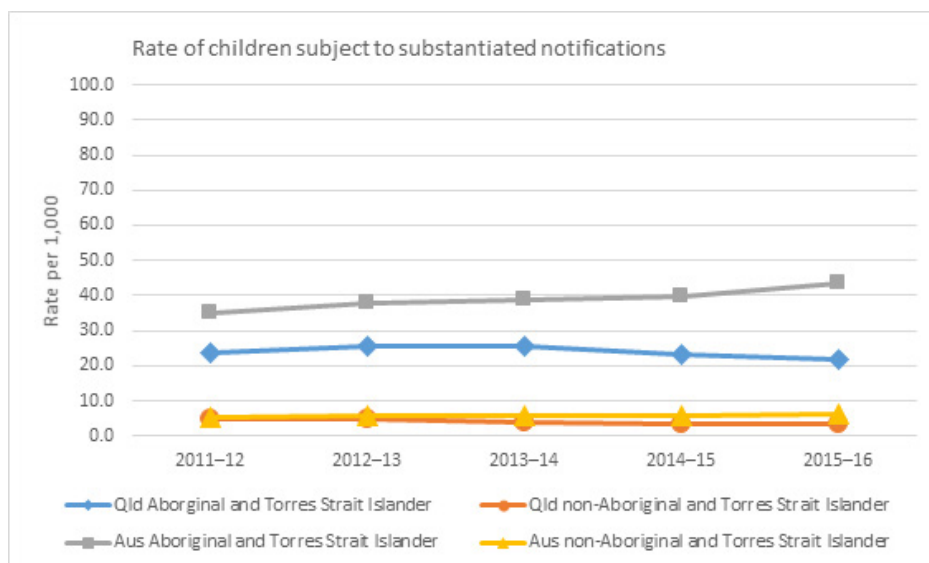
Please note the caveats in each section. As the data used to provide comparisons between Queensland and other jurisdictions is drawn from a variety of sources, which may adopt different data definitions, reference periods or population figures, data is not always directly comparable.

²⁶ Data to support Indicator 6 (early childhood development) has not been updated since the QFCC last reported on this measure in its 2016 Performance of the Queensland Child Protection System report. This data has therefore not been reported again here. The data source to measure Indicator 7 (child social and emotional wellbeing) is waiting on the implementation of an Australian Bureau of Statistics data source and is therefore not yet reportable. The data for Indicator 8 (family economic situation) is not currently available as a measure for each jurisdiction. Therefore, Queensland's performance cannot be measured and the indicator is not included in this report.

Indicator 1—Substantiated child protection cases

Rate of children aged 0–17 (per 1,000) subject to a substantiation, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2011–12 to 2015–16

Data



	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
QLD²⁷	6.5	6.5	6.0	5.2	5.0
AUS	7.4	7.8	7.8	8.0	8.5

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.9.

Definition

Substantiated child protection cases are measured as the rate of children aged 0–17 years subject to a child protection substantiation. Substantiations of notifications occur when an investigation has concluded and there is reasonable cause to believe that the child had been, was being, or was likely to be, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.

Substantiations may also include cases where there is no suitable caregiver, such as children who have been abandoned or whose parents are deceased²⁸.

Analysis

The rate of Queensland children subject to a substantiation was consistently lower than the national average. In 2015–16, Queensland children were subject to a substantiation at a rate of 5.0 per 1,000 children, while the national rate of children subject to a substantiation was 1.7 times higher at 8.5 per 1,000.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Between 2011–12 and 2015–16, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a substantiation, both in Queensland and nationally, was consistently higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The rate of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a substantiation has been slowly declining since 2012–13, while the national rate has seen a significant increase in finalised investigations substantiated in 2015–16.

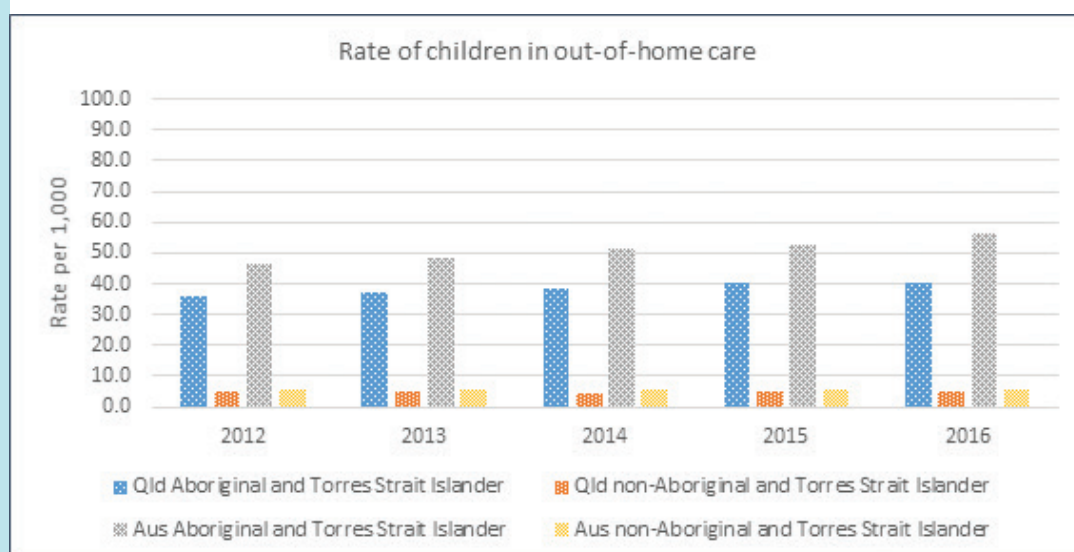
²⁷ This table is a measure of the rate of substantiation for all children, inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and children where cultural status is unknown.

²⁸ Quoted directly from: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017, *Child Protection Australia 2015–16*, Child Welfare series no. 66. Canberra, p. 20.

Indicator 2—Children in out-of-home care

Rate of children aged 0–17 (per 1,000) who were in out-of-home care, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, as at 30 June 2016

Data



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
QLD²⁹	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.6
AUS	7.7	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.6

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.17.

Definition

Out-of-home care is defined as overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. It includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight child care services³⁰.

Analysis

As at 30 June 2016, there were 46,448 children in out-of-home care across Australia, a rate of 8.6 per 1,000 children aged 0–17 years. The national rate of children in out-of-home care has grown steadily over the past five years, up from 7.7 per 1,000 in 2012 to 8.6 per 1,000 children at 30 June 2016.

The rate of children living in out-of-home care in Queensland has remained relatively stable between 2012 and 2016 and was consistently lower than the national average, at a rate of 7.6 per 1,000 children as at 30 June 2016.

²⁹ This table is a measure of the rate of out-of-home care for all children, inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and children where cultural status is unknown.

³⁰ Quotes directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.37

Rate of children aged 0–17 (per 1,000) who were in out-of-home care, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, as at 30 June 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Both in Queensland and nationally, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (per 1,000) in out-of-home care is consistently higher than the rate of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

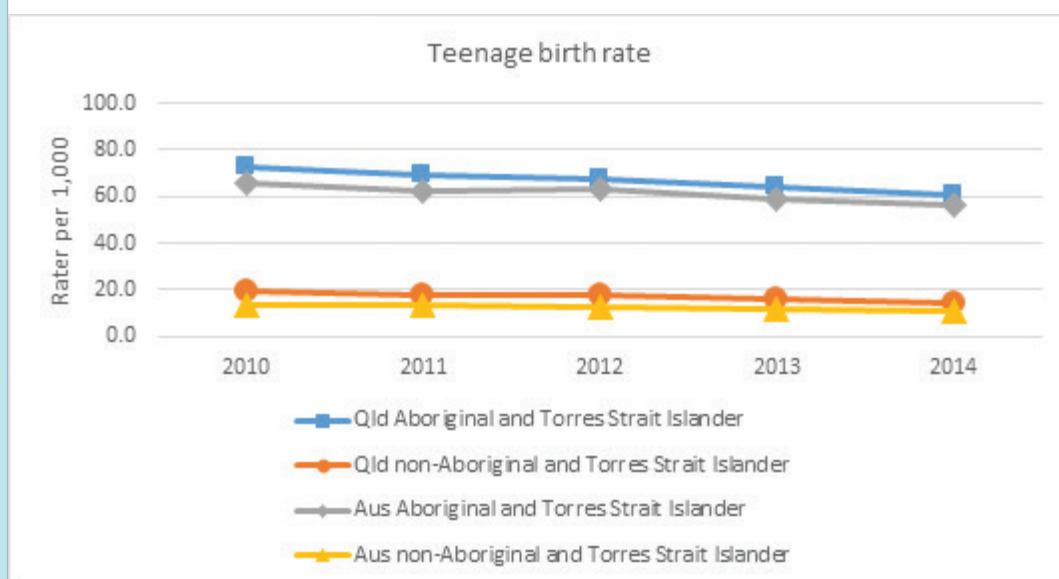
As at 30 June 2016, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over eight times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (40.6 per 1,000 compared with 4.8 per 1,000).

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were almost 10 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as at 30 June 2016 (56.7 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children compared with 5.8 per 1,000 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children).

Indicator 3—Teenage births

Age-specific birth rate for women aged 15–19 years (births per 1,000 females), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010–2014

Data



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ³¹
QLD³²	22.7	21.1	21.3	19.6	17.8
AUS	15.9	15.5	15.5	14.2	13.0

Source

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, 'Teenage births', *National framework for protecting Australia's children*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Children's Headline Indicators 'Teenage births,' (updated 2016), accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>

Definition

Teenage births are measured by the rate of live births to women aged less than 20 years³³.

Analysis

The teenage birth rate for mothers in Queensland has remained consistently higher than the national rate in the five years to 2014. Overall, the teenage birth rate has slightly declined over the past five years, both in Queensland and nationally.

In 2014, the teenage birth rate for Queensland mothers aged 15–19 years was about 1.4 times higher than the national rate (17.8 per 1,000, compared with 13.0 per 1,000).

31 The most recent data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare at the time of writing is 2014.

32 This table is a measure of the teenage birth rate for all females aged 15–19 years inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, females who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and females where cultural status is unknown.

33 Rates are calculated using the population of females aged 15–19 years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, 'Teenage births', *National framework for protecting Australia's children*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>).

Age-specific birth rate for women aged 15–19 years (births per 1,000 females), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010–2014

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

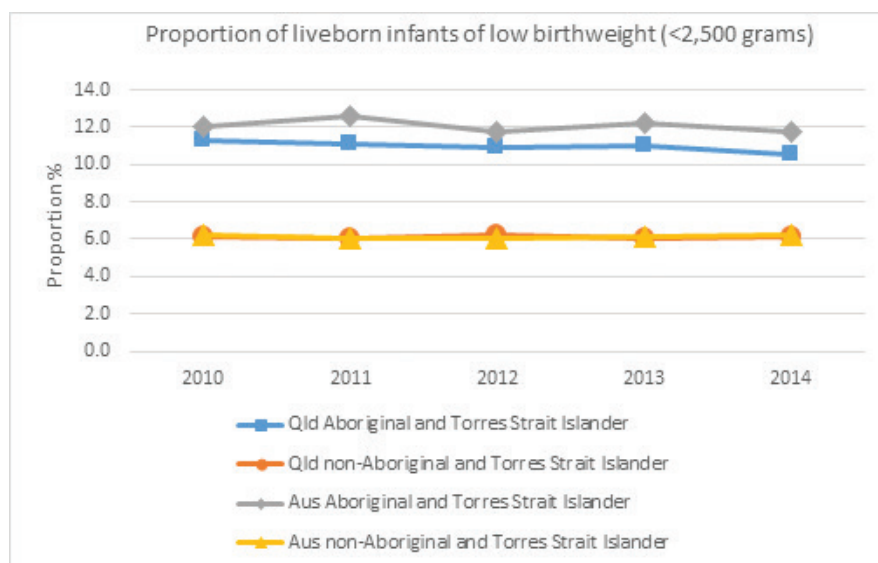
In 2014, the birth rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15–19 years in Australia was over five times higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (56.2 per 1,000 compared with 10.6 per 1,000), and approximately four times higher in Queensland (60.9 per 1,000 compared with 14.5 per 1,000).

The teenage birth rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers has declined slightly in the five years to 2014.

Indicator 4—Infants born of low birth weight

Live born infants born with birth weight of less than 2,500 grams (per cent of all live births), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010–2014

Data



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ³⁴
QLD³⁵	6.3%	6.3%	6.5%	6.3%	6.4%
AUS	6.2%	6.3%	6.2%	6.4%	6.4%

Source

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Children's Headline Indicators, 'Low birth weight' (updated 2016), accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/>

Definition

Low birth weight is defined as live born infants with a birth weight less than 2,500 grams³⁶.

Analysis

The proportion of low birth weight babies born each year between 2010 and 2014 was relatively stable both in Queensland and Australia-wide.

In 2014, 6.4% of live born babies were of low birth weight in Queensland and nationally.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

There was minimal change in the proportion of low birth weight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies over the five years to 2014, both in Queensland and nationally³⁷.

Babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers were more likely to be of low birth weight (Queensland 10.5%, Australia 11.8%) than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies (Queensland 6.1%, Australia 6.2%).

³⁴ The most recent data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare at the time of writing is 2014.

³⁵ This table is a measure of low birth rate for all infants, inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, infants who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and infants where cultural status is unknown.

³⁶ The World Health Organization defines low birth weight as less than 2,500 grams. Stillbirths, miscarriages and terminations are excluded from this measure (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, 'Low birth weight', *National framework for protecting Australia's children*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>).

³⁷ Data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births relate to babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers only, and excludes babies born to non-Aboriginal mothers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers. Therefore, the information is not based on the total count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, 'NFPAC Indicator 0.4', *National framework for protecting Australia's children* supplementary tables & resources, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/supplementary/>).

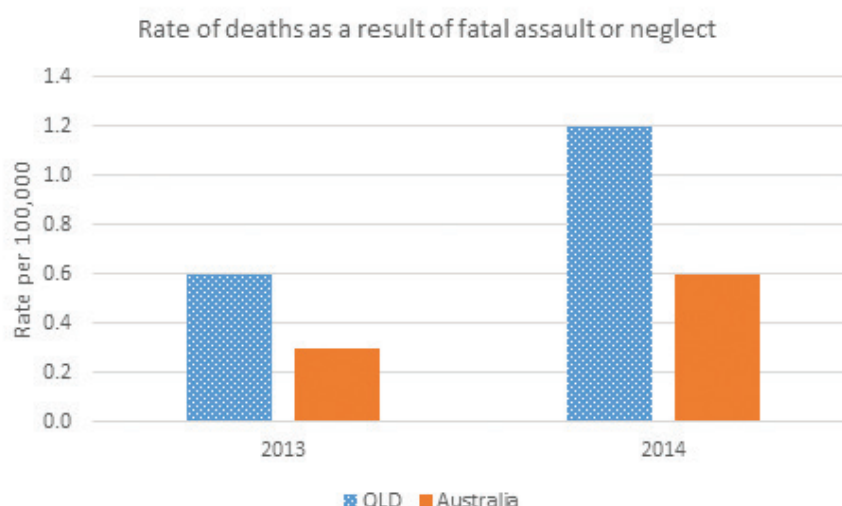
Indicator 5—Child homicide

While a reduction in child homicide rates form an indicator of progress under the National Framework, no national data has been released on this measure since February 2015³⁸. As this data has been previously reported by the QFCC in its *Performance of the Queensland Child Protection System 2016* report, these figures have not been reported again here.

As part of its child death register functions, the QFCC reports annually on the deaths of all children and young people aged 0–17 years in Queensland, and classifies these deaths according to cause, demographic information and other relevant factors. The QFCC works closely with relevant agencies in other jurisdictions to produce an overview of child death statistics across Australia and New Zealand. This has been used here to provide a proxy measure in the absence of current national homicide data³⁹.

Rate of deaths as a result of fatal assault or neglect, 2013 and 2014

Data⁴⁰



Source

Queensland Family and Child Commission 2017, *Australian and New Zealand Child Death Statistics 2014*, p. 12.

Queensland Family and Child Commission 2015, *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland, 2014–15*, p. 86.

Definition

While methodological differences exist between jurisdictions, fatal assault is generally defined as the death of a child at the hands of another person who has inflicted harm through some means of force or physical aggression. Fatal neglect is defined as a death where a child who is dependent on a caregiver for the necessities of life dies owing to the failure of the caregiver to meet the child's ongoing basic needs⁴¹.

38 Australian Institute of Criminology 2015, *Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

39 Queensland Family and Child Commission 2017, *Australian and New Zealand Child Death Statistics 2014*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, accessed 8 August 2017, <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/child-deaths-annual-report-2015-16/supplementary-chapter-australian-and-new-zealand-child-death-statistics-2014.pdf>.

40 The rates of child homicide are reported per 100,000 population, compared with per 1,000 as used for other measures included in this report. This aligns with rates as reported in all QFCC child death publications.

41 Quoted directly from: Queensland Family and Child Commission 2016, *Annual Report: Deaths of Children and Young People, Queensland, 2015–16*, p. 53.

Rate of deaths as a result of fatal assault or neglect, 2013 and 2014

Analysis

The rate of child death from assault or neglect in Queensland was higher than the national average in both 2013 and 2014. However, a number of factors must be taken into account in interpreting this data:

- national rates of fatal assault and neglect have been calculated using the information provided by individual states and territories in each reporting year⁴².
- caution must be exercised when making comparisons and interpreting rates due to the small number of deaths analysed, especially at jurisdictional level.
- the high rate of fatal assault and neglect for Queensland in 2014 was due in part to a single incident involving multiple fatalities.
- states and territories differ in approaches to classifying a death as fatal assault or neglect. In some jurisdictions, cause of death is pending until an official cause is determined. In Queensland, the fatal assault and neglect category includes suspicious deaths where information available to the QFCC indicates a homicide investigation was initiated, or where an alleged perpetrator was charged, or the alleged perpetrator is known but deceased.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

No data is currently available to compare the rate of death from fatal assault and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at a national level.

However, the QFCC's Australian and New Zealand Child Deaths Statistics 2014 report indicates that the rate of death (from all causes) in Queensland was 2.6 times higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (88.8 per 100,000) than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (33.8 per 100,000). Queensland had the third highest rate of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in 2014, behind the Northern Territory (101.1 per 100,000) and South Australia (93.7 per 100,000)⁴³.

⁴² In 2013, Western Australia did not provide any data to contribute to the national total. In addition, Victoria did not provide an actual figure of deaths from assault or neglect (it was reported as less than five deaths). As such, in calculating the national total, the number of deaths in Victoria was estimated as four.

⁴³ Jurisdictions may experience difficulty with the collection of child death data regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. This may result in an under-count in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander death rates, limiting the comparability of the data.

Performance against state goals

Progress on implementing the child protection reforms

Queensland's state goals in relation to child protection are primarily captured in the current *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda resulting from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI).

In June 2013, the QCPCOI released its final report, providing 121 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Queensland Government⁴⁴. The QCPCOI provided a roadmap that proposed the reforms be implemented over a 10-year period⁴⁵.

A number of actions were prioritised for delivery in the planning and early rollout phases. These included creating governance and program management arrangements, and making amendments to legislation to establish the systems and structures needed to support the implementation of the reform program.

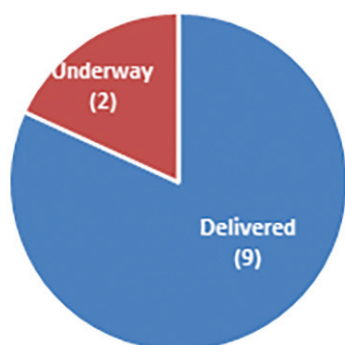
Implementation is currently focused on a gradual rollout of reform strategies and trials. This allows for non-government organisations to build their capacity and workforce capability to effectively deliver the new service models. It enables reform strategies to be trialled in identified locations and adjusted as needed. It also means the specific characteristics and needs of rural and regional communities can be considered.

The following summary provides an overview of the current status of reform recommendations as at June 2017. As part of the organising framework developed for the reform program, the recommendations were grouped into 45 work packages (programs of work) under seven domains.

Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children

The strategic objective of Domain 1 is 'Government and non-government agencies work in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services and support'. This 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-sector 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.



There are 11 recommendations divided across four work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- nine recommendations had been delivered
- two recommendations were underway.

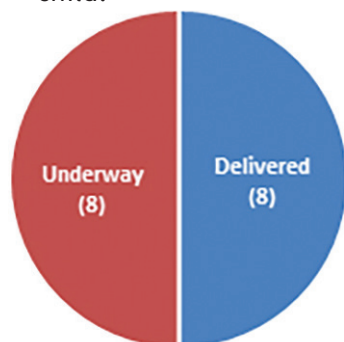
⁴⁴ Six of these recommendations were accepted in principle.

⁴⁵ Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, 2013, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, State of Queensland.

Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier

The strategic objective of Domain 2 is ‘Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities’. This 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 in continuing to care for their child.



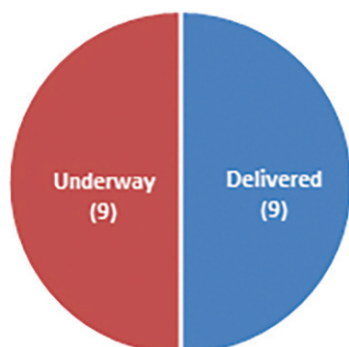
There are 16 recommendations divided across four work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- eight recommendations had been delivered
- eight recommendations were underway.

Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system

The strategic objective of Domain 3 is ‘Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and on keeping children safely at home where appropriate’. This 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 interests of the child.



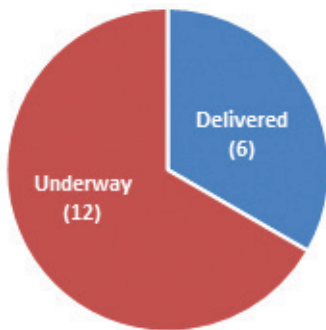
There are 18 recommendations divided across three work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- nine recommendations had been delivered
- nine recommendations were underway.

Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people

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’. This 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.



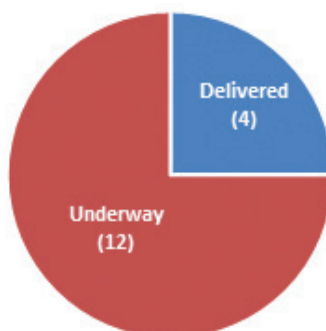
There are 18 recommendations divided across 10 work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- six recommendations had been delivered
- twelve recommendations were underway.

Domain 5: Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

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'. This 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 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.



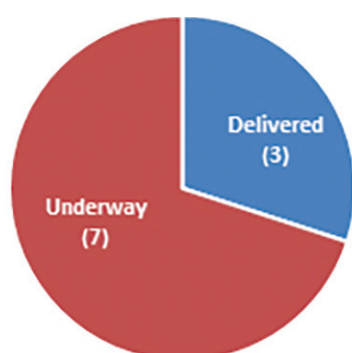
There are 16 recommendations divided across nine work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- four recommendations had been delivered
- twelve recommendations were underway.

Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations

The strategic objective of Domain 6 is 'A client-focused workforce that is appropriately skilled, motivated and supported'. This will be achieved by:

- strengthening the capacity and capability of the child protection workforce and service organisations, and establishing a positive culture
- enhancing the legal services and advice provided to Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services child protection workers.



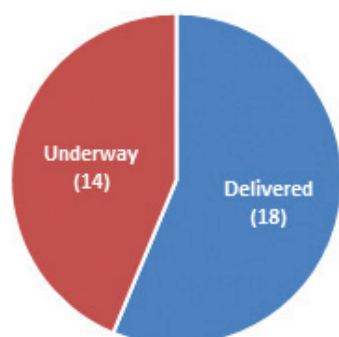
There are 10 recommendations divided across five work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- three recommendations had been delivered
- seven recommendations were underway.

Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system

The strategic objective of Domain 7 is 'The child and family support system is efficient, accountable, and informed by a culture of learning'. This will be achieved by:

- improving court processes and efficiencies
- increasing accountability and transparency and reducing duplication and red tape
- reviewing our legislation.



There are 32 recommendations divided across ten work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2017:

- eighteen recommendations had been delivered
- fourteen recommendations were underway.

Queensland's performance in comparison to other jurisdictions

Queensland's performance has been compared to other jurisdictions using the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2017*. This report provides a framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services. Queensland's performance in comparison to other jurisdictions is assessed against this framework⁴⁶.

This section uses data from the Report on Government Services to analyse six of the seven effectiveness indicators as well as the two outcome indicators for which data are available and generally comparable⁴⁷ (these indicators are drawn from the *Report on Government Services 2017*).

The effectiveness indicators are:

1. response times
2. substantiation rate
3. stability of placement
4. children aged under 12 years in home-based care
5. placement maintains connections
6. children with current documented case plans.

The outcome indicators are:

1. improved safety
2. improved education.

This data is presented in graphs, with definitions and analysis included below. Where available, we have included information specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It should be noted that significant legislative, policy and practice differences exist between jurisdictions. As a result, accurate comparisons between jurisdictions cannot always be made. This is reflected in the following results.

Effectiveness indicator 1—Response times

The *Report on Government Services* defines response time by two measures: response time to commence investigations and response time to complete investigations. The time taken to commence an investigation is measured by the number of days between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is subsequently commenced. The length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation indicates the promptness of response to child protection concerns⁴⁸.

46 Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.6. The *Child protection services performance indicator framework* was considered to include the most appropriate indicators to compare performance across jurisdictions because of the specific focus on child protection, regularity of reporting, and continued work towards additional outcome measurement.

47 Data to support the 'safety in out-of-home care' effectiveness indicator (the indicator not analysed in this annual report) is not at all comparable due to differences across jurisdictions in policies, practices and reporting methods.

48 Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.10.

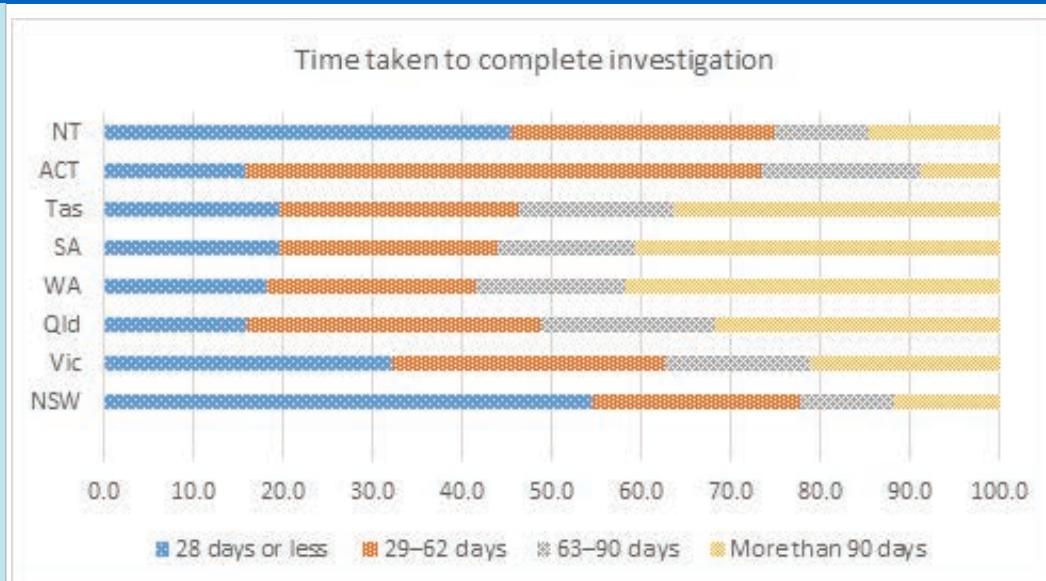
In Queensland, an investigation is not considered commenced until the child is sighted or, in the case of an unborn child, the pregnant woman is interviewed. Prior to sighting the child (or interviewing the pregnant woman) child safety officers begin actively working on the case by reviewing the child protection history of the child and family and determining who will be involved in the investigation process. This may include making contact with other agencies such as police, schools and hospitals⁴⁹.

Data reported for this measure is not comparable across jurisdictions as jurisdictions count notifications at different points in response to a report, and have different policies and protocols governing the type of response to a notification⁵⁰.

Effectiveness indicator 1—Response times

Proportion of investigations finalised, by time taken to complete investigation - Australian states and territories, 2015–16

Data



		2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
QLD	< 28 days	20.0%	27.0%	26.5%	21.3%	16.1%
	29 to 62	27.5%	33.8%	35.7%	36.3%	32.7%
	63 to 90	15.9%	17.5%	17.0%	18.0%	19.3%
	90 days +	36.7%	21.8%	20.9%	24.4%	31.9%
AUS	< 28 days	37.4%	36.4%	45.8%	38.2%	40.7%
	29 to 62	20.4%	23.8%	25.7%	25.8%	26.4%
	63 to 90	12.2%	13.4%	12.8%	13.5%	13.5%
	90 days +	30.0%	26.4%	15.7%	22.5%	19.4%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.15.

49 *ibid*, Table 16A.14, explanatory notes.

50 *ibid*.

Proportion of investigations finalised, by time taken to complete investigation - Australian states and territories, 2015–16

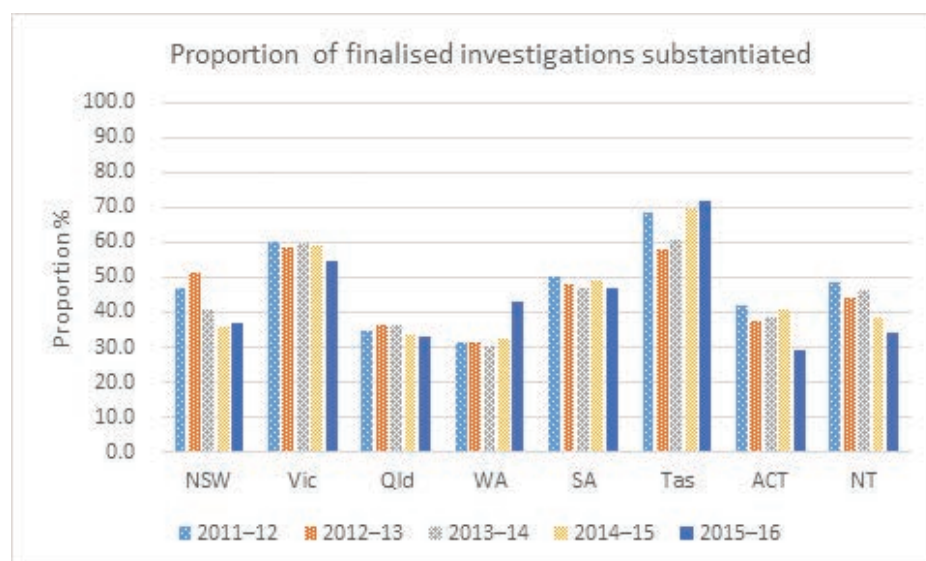
Definition	<p>The proportion of investigations completed within specified time periods is measured by the number of days between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is completed (that is, the date an investigation outcome is determined).</p> <p>A higher and increasing proportion of investigations completed in shorter time periods is desirable. The length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation indicates the effectiveness in conducting investigations in a timely manner⁵¹.</p> <p>Caution should be exercised when interpreting results, as jurisdictions count notifications at different points in response to a report, and have different policies and protocols covering the type of response to a notification.</p>
Analysis	<p>In 2015–16, Queensland completed 16.1% of investigations within 28 days, which was significantly lower than the national average of 40.7%. The majority of investigations in Queensland took between 29 and 62 days to complete (32.7%).</p> <p>The proportion of investigations in Queensland taking more than 90 days to complete has increased from 24.4 % in 2014–15 to 31.9% in 2015–16.</p> <p>This increase may be due to the implementation of a number of reform initiatives, including the introduction of the new <i>Strengthening Families Supporting Children Framework for Practice</i>. The QFCC will continue to monitor Queensland's performance in relation to time taken to complete investigations in 2017–18.</p>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	<p>The <i>Report on Government Services 2017</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.</p>

51 Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.10.

Effectiveness indicator 2—Substantiation rate

Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Australian states and territories, 2011–12 to 2015–16

Data



	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
QLD	34.9%	36.6%	36.1%	33.5%	33.3%
AUS	45.4%	47.3%	42.7%	40.1%	40.3%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.10.

Definition

'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 services were targeted to those at greatest risk, thereby avoiding 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 desirable⁵².

Analysis

In 2015–16, 33.3% of investigations finalised in Queensland were substantiated. This substantiation rate is significantly lower than the national average of 40.3%, and lower than the majority of other states and territories, with only the Australian Capital Territory reporting a lower substantiation rate of 29.0%. Queensland's rate of substantiation has remained relatively steady over the past five years, with a slight decline in the last two reporting periods.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

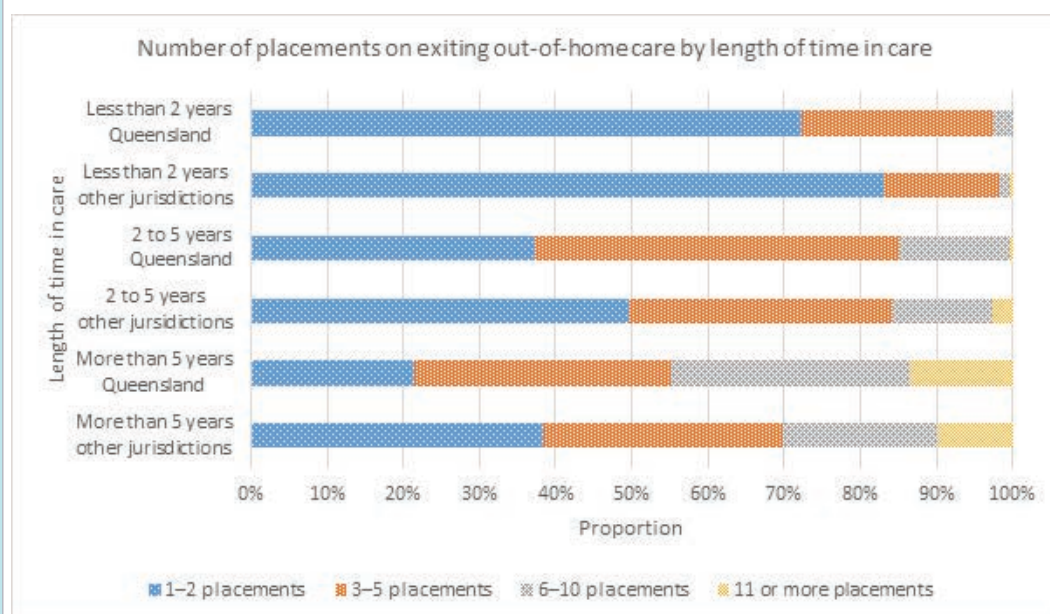
The *Report on Government Services 2017* data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.

52 Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.12.

Effectiveness indicator 3—Stability of placement

Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting out-of-home care during the year, by number of placements and length of time in care, 2015–16

Data



Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.25.

Definition

'Stability of placement' is defined as the proportion of children who had one or two placements during a period of continuous out-of-home care.

A low number of child placements (one or two) per period of care is desirable, but must be balanced against other placement indicators⁵³.

Analysis

Across all measures of length of time in care, Queensland recorded a lower proportion of children who had only one to two placements compared to the national average. In 2015–16, of those children exiting care after two to five years, 37.2% of children in Queensland had only one or two placements, compared to the average of 49.6% for other jurisdictions.

When looking at combined data for one to two and three to five placements, Queensland becomes reasonably consistent with the national average for timeframes of less than two years and two to five years. However, almost half of Queensland children (44.9%) exiting after five or more years in care had experienced upward of six placements, compared with 30.3% across all other states and territories.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

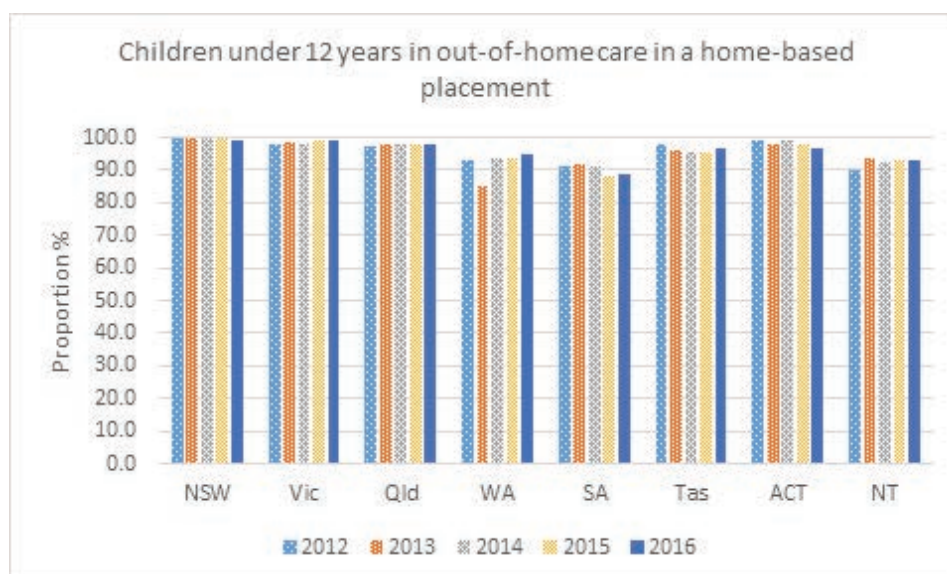
The Report on Government Services 2017 data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.

53 Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.15.

Effectiveness indicator 4—Children aged under 12 years in home-based care

Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement, 2012–2016

Data



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
QLD	97.4%	98.1%	97.7%	97.6%	97.6%
AUS	97.5%	96.5%	97.6%	97.4%	97.4%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.24.

Definition

'Children aged under 12 years in home-based care' 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.

A high or increasing rate of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care that are placed in home-based care is desirable⁵⁴.

Analysis

At 30 June 2016, the proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care nationally who were placed in home-based care was 97.4%.

Queensland's proportion of children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care is comparable to the national figures. Queensland's performance for this indicator has remained consistently high, measuring between 97.4% and 98.1% over the last five years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

At 30 June 2016, proportions of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care were similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in both Queensland (96.7% to 98.3%) and Australia (96.3% and 98.2%).

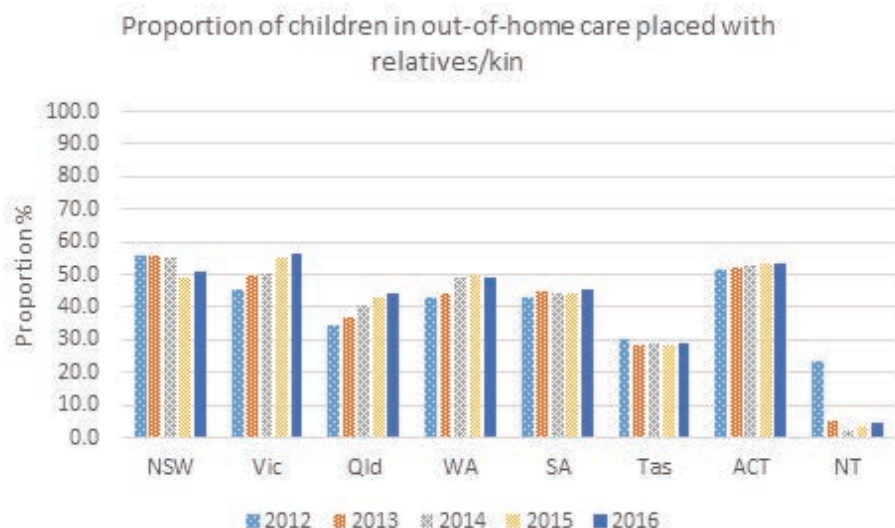
These numbers have been consistent across available time series data.

⁵⁴ Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.17.

Effectiveness indicator 5—Placement maintains connections

Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, 2012–2016

Data



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
QLD	34.6%	37.2%	40.4%	42.9%	44.3%
AUS	46.7%	47.7%	48.5%	47.3%	48.7%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.22.

Definition

This is the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child⁵⁵.

Analysis

At 30 June 2016, the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin in Queensland was 44.3%, slightly lower than the proportion of children Australian-wide (48.7%).

Queensland's proportion of children placed with relatives or kin has steadily increased by almost 10% since 2012.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

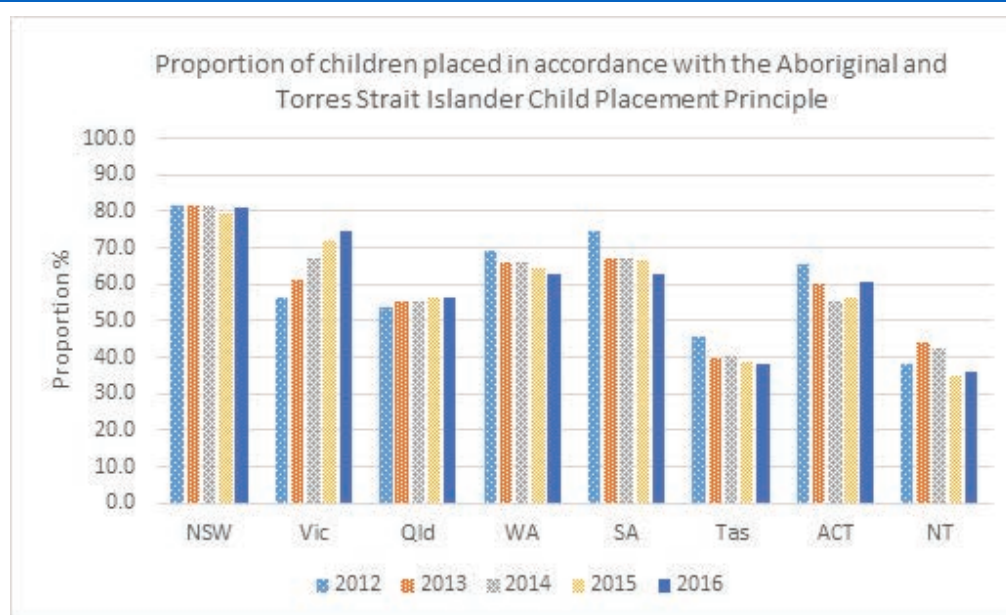
At 30 June 2016, 49.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care nationally were placed with relatives/kin. This number was marginally higher than the proportion of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at 48.1%.

The proportion of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with relatives/kin has consistently risen since 2012. However, Queensland continues to measure below the national average. At 30 June 2016, Queensland had the second lowest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin at 42.6%, ahead only of Tasmania at 26.3%.

⁵⁵ Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.18.

Proportion of children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, 2014–16

Data



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
QLD	53.7%	55.5%	55.1%	56.5%	56.6%
AUS	68.8%	68.8%	68.7%	67.1%	67.9%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.23.

Definition

All Australian states and territories have adopted a hierarchy of placement options when placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. 'Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle' is the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with the child's extended family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people⁵⁶.

⁵⁶ The measure 'placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle' should be interpreted with care. This is a proxy measure, reporting the placement outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children rather than compliance with the principle (that is, the process of determining placement options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) (Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p 16A.18).

Proportion of children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, 2014–16

Analysis

Compared with other states and territories, Queensland's performance regarding children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is relatively poor.

It must be noted that definition of compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle used in the *Report on Government Services 2017* is not in strict accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Therefore, Queensland's results are not directly comparable with the national average and the data should be interpreted with caution.

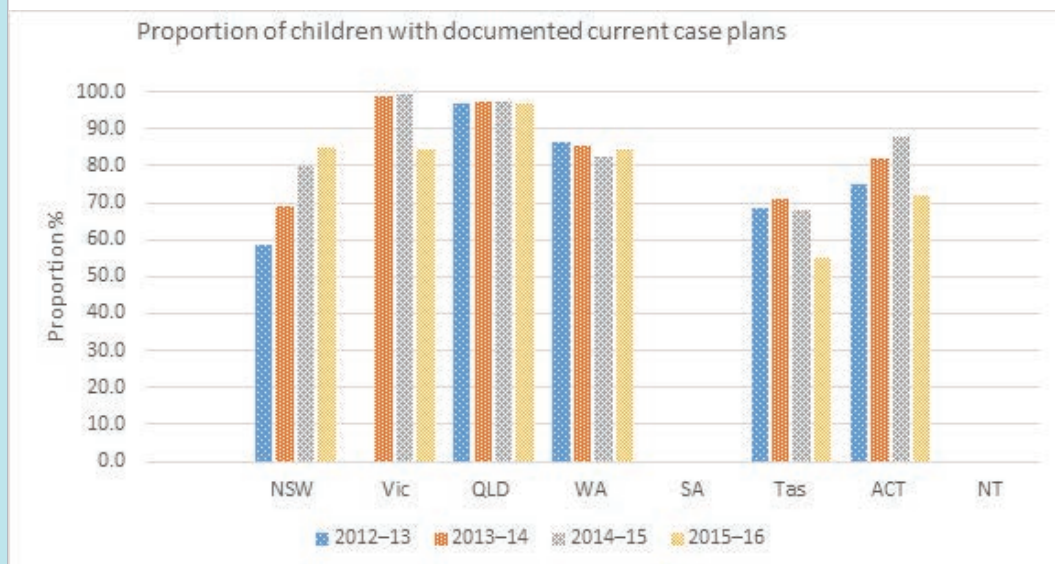
As at 30 June 2016, 56.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care in Queensland were placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principle. This is lower than the national proportion of 67.9%.

Nationally, the proportion of children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle has decreased slightly over the past five years. In comparison, while consistently lower than the national average, Queensland's proportion has increased from 53.7% to 56.6%.

Effectiveness indicator 6—Children with current case plans

Proportion of children with documented current case plans 2012–16

Data



	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
QLD	97.0%	97.1%	97.1%	96.6%
AUS ⁵⁷	75.1%	82.1%	86.6%	86.3%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.16.

Definition

A case plan is an individualised, dynamic written plan (or support agreement) developed between a family and an agency on the basis of an assessment process. A current documented case plan is one that has been approved and/or reviewed within the previous 12 months⁵⁸.

Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time, but is not comparable across jurisdictions, as policies and legislation varies⁵⁹.

Analysis

Nationally, 86.3% of children required to have a current documented case plan had a plan at 30 June 2016.

The proportion of children with a current documented case plan in Queensland has remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2016 (96.6% to 97.1%) and consistently higher than the national average.

⁵⁷ Data is not available for SA due to systems changes in the case management and data reporting system. Data is not available for NT due to recording issues. Data is not available for Vic for the 2012–13 reporting period.

⁵⁸ Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p 16.21. This data was collected for the first time for the 2011–12 reporting period. Data is experimental and subject to further review and refinement in future reports (Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.16, explanatory notes).

⁵⁹ Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p 16A.18); Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.16, explanatory notes.

Proportion of children with documented current case plans 2012–16

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In Queensland, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a current documented case plan was higher than the rate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

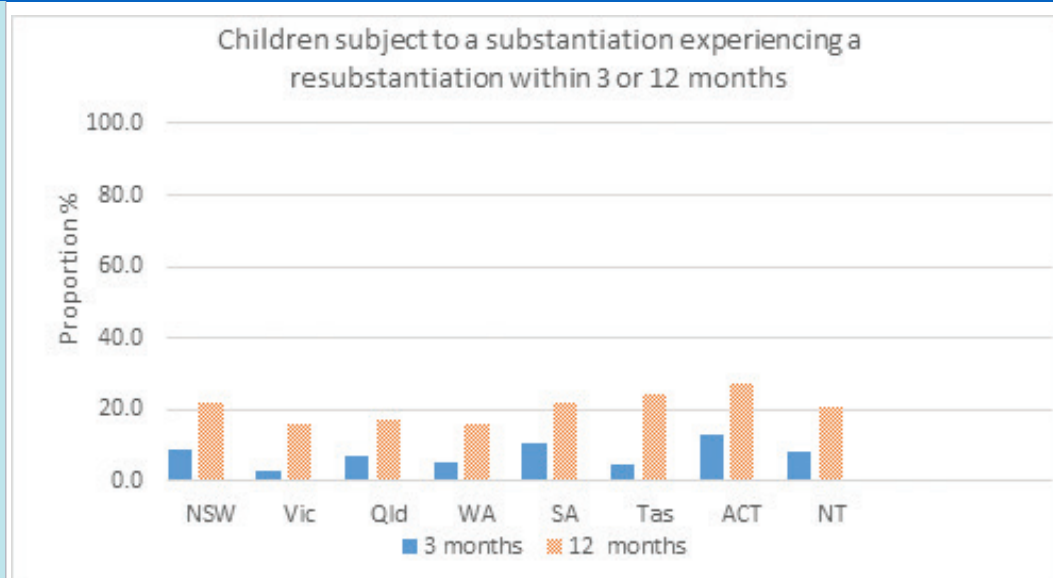
As at 30 June 2016, the proportion of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a documented current case plan was 17.0% higher than the proportion of national population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a documented case plan and 14.4% higher than the proportion of national population of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a documented case plan.

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are less likely to have a current documented case plan than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as at 30 June 2016 (80.5% compared with 83.1%).

Outcome indicator 1—Improved safety

Proportion of children aged 0–17 who were the subject of a substantiated investigation, who were also the subject of a resubstantiation within 3 and/or 12 months

Data



	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
QLD 3 months	8.4%	8.6%	7.4%	7.1%
QLD 12 months	20.4%	19.8%	18.2%	17.1%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.12.

Definition

Substantiation rate after a prior substantiation is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were then the subject of a further substantiation within the following 3 or 12 months⁶⁰.

Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but is not comparable across jurisdictions. The year reported relates to the year of the initial substantiation⁶¹.

Analysis

The proportion of children subject to a substantiated investigation, who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months in Queensland has decreased between 2012 and 2015 (8.4% to 7.1% and 20.4% to 17.1% respectively).

Queensland compares favourably against other jurisdictions, (7.1% in Queensland compared with 7.7% nationally for resubstantiation within 3 months and 17.1% compared with 20.7% for resubstantiation within 12 months).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

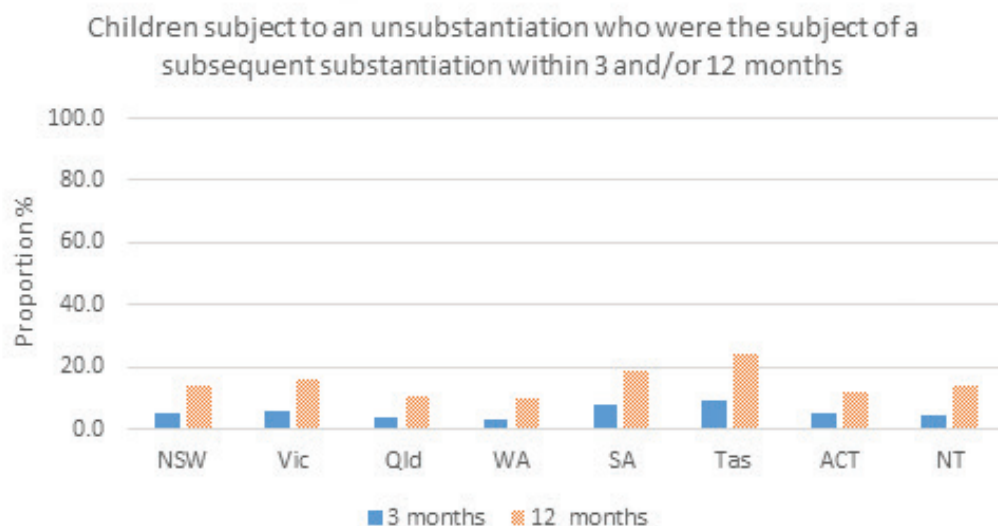
The *Report on Government Services 2017* data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.

60 Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.28.

61 *ibid*.

Proportion of children aged 0–17 who were the subject of an unsubstantiated investigation, who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months

Data



	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15
QLD 3 months	3.4%	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%
QLD 12 months	9.8%	11.6%	10.6%	10.6%

Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.11.

Definition

Substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within 3 or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate⁶².

Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but is not comparable across jurisdictions. The year reported relates to the year of the initial substantiation⁶³.

Analysis

The proportion of children subject to an unsubstantiation who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months in Queensland has increased slightly between 2011 and 2015 (3.4% to 4.1% and 9.8% to 10.6% respectively). Queensland has the second lowest proportion of children subject to an unsubstantiation who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, after Western Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The *Report on Government Services 2017* data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.

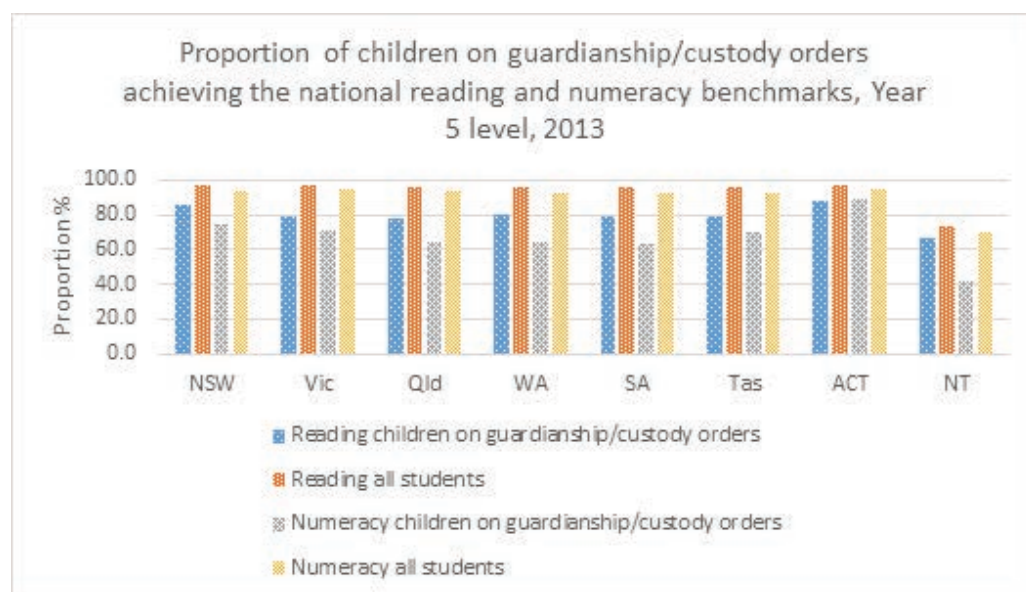
62 Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.28.

63 *ibid*.

Outcome indicator 2—Improved education

Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level, 2013

Data⁶⁴



Source

Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.13.

Definition

'Improved education' is defined as the proportion of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy in Year 5, compared with all children. It is desirable to have a high or increasing rate of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy⁶⁵.

The availability of NAPLAN data for government and non-government school students varied across jurisdictions. Queensland includes government and non-government schools. For 2013 data: New South Wales, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory includes government, Catholic and Independent schools; Western Australia and Tasmania includes government schools only; Northern Territory includes government and Christian schools. This should be considered when interpreting the results, along with other contextual factors⁶⁶.

⁶⁴ Data reported for this measure is complete for the reporting period of 2013. Only Queensland and SA have data available for the 2014 reporting period.

⁶⁵ Quoted directly from: Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2017*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.31.

⁶⁶ *ibid*, Table 16A.13, explanatory notes.

Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level, 2013

Analysis	<p>In Queensland, the proportion of children in care who are at or above the national minimum standards for Year 5 reading and numeracy was significantly below the proportion for all students (78.0% for reading and 64.5% for numeracy, compared to 96.2% and 93.6% of all Queensland children respectively).</p> <p>In comparison to other jurisdictions, the proportion of children in care in Queensland achieving the national reading and numeracy standards is below the national average for children in care for both reading and numeracy⁶⁷.</p>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	<p>The <i>Report on Government Services 2017</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.</p>

⁶⁷ When interpreting NAPLAN data, it is important to take into account student participation rates. Children exempted from NAPLAN testing are recorded as not having met the national minimum standards in reading and numeracy. Experimental data indicates that children on guardianship and custody orders are exempted from NAPLAN testing at significantly higher rates than the general student population, which might contribute to poorer reported NAPLAN results for children on orders, compared with the general student population (Productivity Commission 2017, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', Report on Government Services 2017, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.31).

Assessment summary

In assessing Queensland's performance over time in comparison with other jurisdictions, the QFCC considers performance to be:

- 'good' when Queensland data is better than the national totals or the majority of states and territories,
- 'satisfactory' when Queensland data is on par with national totals or the majority of states and territories
- 'requires improvement' when Queensland data is below par with national totals or the majority of states.

Overall, the most recent publicly available national child protection data suggests that Queensland's performance is variable, being good in some areas and requiring improvement in others. The table below summarises the key result for each measure, supporting data, and our assessment of these results.

Summary of key results and the QFCC's assessment by measure

Measure	Key results (2016–17)	Supporting data	Assessment
Response time to complete investigations	Fewer investigations are completed within 28 days in Queensland.	16.1% in Queensland compared to the national total of 40.7%.	Requires improvement
Stability of placement	Queensland children in care for five or more years are more likely to have experienced between six and 10 placements, and less likely to have had only one or two placements than children elsewhere in Australia.	31.46% of Queensland children exiting care after five years or more had experienced between six and 10 placements, compared to 20.49% of children in all other states and territories; 21.46% of Queensland children had experienced only one or two placements, compared to 38.52% of children in other jurisdictions.	Requires improvement
Children aged under 12 years in home-based care	The majority of Queensland children in care aged under 12 years are in home-based care.	97.6% of Queensland children compared to the national total of 97.4%.	Good
Placement with relatives or kin	Fewer children in care are placed with extended family in Queensland.	44.3% of Queensland children compared to the national total of 48.7%.	Requires improvement
Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle	Fewer Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are placed with kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.	56.6% of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are placed in accordance with the placement principle compared to 67.9% for all jurisdictions.	Requires improvement

Measure	Key results (2016–17)	Supporting data	Assessment
Children with current case plans	The majority of children in care in Queensland have a current case plan.	96.6% of Queensland children; national total is 86.3%.	Good
Improved safety	<p>A smaller proportion of Queensland children were subject to a substantiation compared to other states and territories.</p> <p>A smaller proportion of Queensland children were subject to a substantiation within 12 months following a decision not to substantiate than in other states and territories.</p>	<p>17.1% of Queensland children were re-substantiated within 12 months, compared to a range of 15.8% to 27.4% in other jurisdictions.</p> <p>10.6% of Queensland children were subject to a substantiation compared to a range of 9.7% to 24.5% in other jurisdictions.</p>	Satisfactory
Improved education	Fewer children in care in Queensland are achieving the national minimum standards for Year 5 reading and numeracy.	78% compared to an average total across jurisdictions of 79.5% for reading, 64.5% compared to 67.4% for numeracy.	Requires improvement

Queensland's performance on these indicators is expected to be affected over the coming years with the continued implementation of the reform agenda, most notably, the significant investment in developing the secondary support system. The QFCC will continue to examine and appraise Queensland's performance in these areas in comparison to other states and territories, as one part of our systemic oversight role.

