

2018–2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Communication objective

This annual report describes our progress during 2018–19 towards 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 explains how we are helping to address some of the main challenges affecting Queensland children and families. 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 report is available on the QFCC's website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/annual-report.

Contact for enquiries

For enquiries or further information about this annual report (including to receive a hard copy of it) please contact us at:

Queensland Family and Child Commission
Level 22, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane
PO Box 15217, Brisbane City East QLD 4002
Tel (07) 3900 6000
E-mail info@qfcc.qld.gov.au
www.qfcc.qld.gov.au

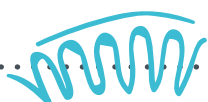
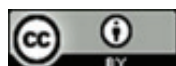
Copyright

Annual Report 2018–19: Queensland Family and Child Commission. Copyright © The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) 2019.

ISSN 2205-6939 (Print)
ISSN 2205-6947 (Online)

Licence

This annual report is licensed by the State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 International licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this annual report, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission). To view a copy of this licence visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. Content from this annual report should be attributed as: The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) annual report 2018–19.





Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Telephone: 07 3900 6000
Reference: CS –F19/367 – D19/15376

04 September 2019

The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Leader of the House
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2018–19 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*
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

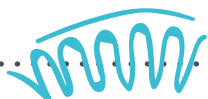
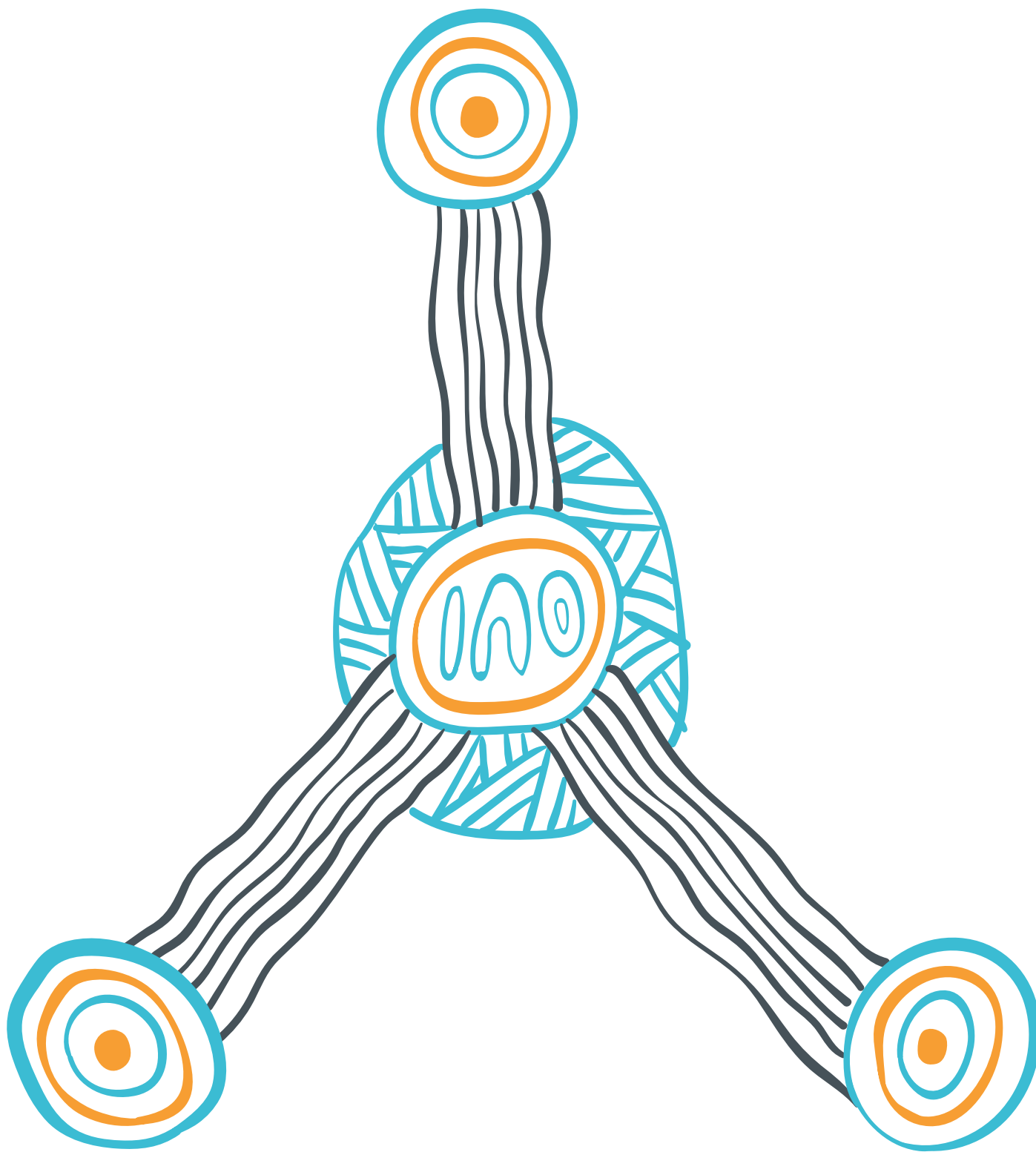
A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is included in the appendices of this report.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Vardon
Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Level 22, 53 Albert Street,
Brisbane Qld 4000
PO Box 15217,
Brisbane City East Qld 4002
Telephone 07 3900 6000
Facsimile 07 3900 6050
Website www.qfcc.qld.gov.au
www.talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au



Contents

Principal Commissioner's report	6
About us	8
Our role	8
Our legislation	8
Our commitment	9
Our strategic plan	9
Our performance	11
Our operating environment	12
Oversight	14
Systems reviews	14
Queensland's performance in achieving state and national child protection goals	19
Evaluation	19
Enable	22
Partnering for success	22
Strengthening the child and family support sector	28
Connecting with children and young people	32
Educate	37
Community education	37
Research	41
Resources	43
Child death prevention	43
Policy and advocacy for children and young people	46
Governance	50
Management and structure	50
Governance framework	53
Financial performance	54
Our workforce	56
Appendix A—Glossary of terms	59
Appendix B—Annual report compliance checklist	60
Appendix C—Financial statements	61
Appendix D—Performance of the Queensland child protection system	96
Queensland's performance against national goals	97
Queensland's performance over time compared to other jurisdictions	110
Queensland's performance against state goals	112
Reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system	115

Principal Commissioner's report

During 2018–19, the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) continued to work with government, the sector and community to keep children, young people and their families safe, well and able to reach their full potential.

Children and young people's voices and experiences continue to influence the QFCC's work. *Our Growing up in Queensland* project invited young people from all over the State to share their thoughts and views about their community, their hopes and dreams, and the issues most heartfelt to them. This engagement has provided us with deep insight. It has led to our advocacy work with Volunteering Queensland to improve the opportunities that young people have to engage in volunteering roles, build skills for their future, and enter the workforce.

Keeping children and young people at the centre of what we do has continued with the help of our Youth Advisory Council, a diverse group of young people aged 14 to 25, who champion the voices of youth across Queensland. Over the past year they have provided advice on a range of QFCC initiatives, including the continued implementation of our *Youth Participation Plan*, so that children and young people's voices are increasingly heard, valued, and celebrated. We are immensely proud of our Youth Advisory Council and value and cherish their involvement in the QFCC.

Raising safe and happy children and young people starts with the work of parents and carers. We all know the reality that parenting can be hard work. The *Talking Families* community education initiative continues to instil confidence in Queensland parents by supporting parents, carers and families through challenging times by providing access to the right information at the right time. In 2018–19, we delivered a new grassroots approach by taking the initiative into Queensland schools.

A project recognising the variety of parenting strengths and celebrating the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parenting was launched during the year. Our *Families are First* movement is a strengths-based approach exploring more than 60,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parenting. The movement gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the opportunity to share their positive parenting practices to promote and celebrate the strengths of culture and connection in parenting.

The QFCC also plays a key role in oversighting and evaluating the child and family support system. Throughout the year, government departments have continued to implement recommendations from the QFCC's reviews of the child protection and family support system. Since our 2017 review of the foster care system, 35 of its 42 recommendations have commenced and 16 recommendations have been completed, providing greater safeguards for children in care. In response to our 2017 review of the blue card system, this year also saw additional safeguards put in place through amended legislation, including a no card, no start policy.

In 2014, Queensland started a 10-year journey of reform to make sure all Queensland kids are safe and well. The QFCC completed the first program level evaluation of the child protection reforms during the year. The evaluation focused on how the reforms have been implemented in the first three years. The reform program introduced considerable changes to the child and family support system, and early evidence suggests that new policies, practices and services are functioning as intended. We need to stay on course and continue working together to embed the changes and allow time for the benefits to be realised. The continuing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system is an ongoing concern requiring additional attention.



The death of any child is an absolute tragedy and we must continually build our understanding of risk factors to reduce child deaths. The QFCC maintains the Queensland Child Death Register and shares data with researchers and government agencies to inform safety awareness initiatives and policy and practice improvements. The child death register function will complement the Child Death Review Panel when it transfers to the QFCC in 2020.

This is just a brief highlight of the QFCC's work throughout 2018—19. This annual report provides a full overview of what we have achieved.

I would like to thank Commissioner Phillip Brooks, QFCC staff, our partner agencies and all the committed people we have worked with throughout the year to deliver this extensive program.

I look forward to working together in 2019—20 to continue to create a place where young Queenslanders grow up in safe and inclusive communities where they are valued and supported to reach their potential.



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 is for Queensland to be a safe place where children, young people and their families thrive.

We are committed to achieving this vision and supporting the delivery of the Queensland 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 realise this, we:

- **provide oversight** by monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the performance and outcomes of the child protection and family support system; 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.

We achieve this by partnering with government and non-government organisations.

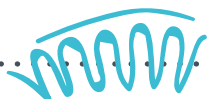
Our legislation

The QFCC was established on 1 July 2014. This was part of the Queensland Government's response to the report of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry—*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 for 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 be appointed by the Governor in Council, one as principal commissioner and chief executive officer. At least one commissioner must be an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander.



Our commitment

The QFCC contributes to several of the priorities in the Government's *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities* plan for the community:

- **Give all our children a great start.** We do this by promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children and young people; increasing awareness about the resources, supports and services available to children, young people and their families; and providing community education programs
- **Keep communities safe.** We contribute to this by listening to the voices of children and young people about issues affecting them and their future—to influence policy decisions and improve service provision; and by continuing to raise awareness of risks associated with online child exploitation and about child death prevention, including youth suicide
- **Be a responsive government.** We do this by providing actions and oversight to strengthen the child protection system; improving information sharing across government and non-government agencies; and strengthening operational processes and safeguards for children.

In doing this, we have a strong focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Our strategic plan

Our vision

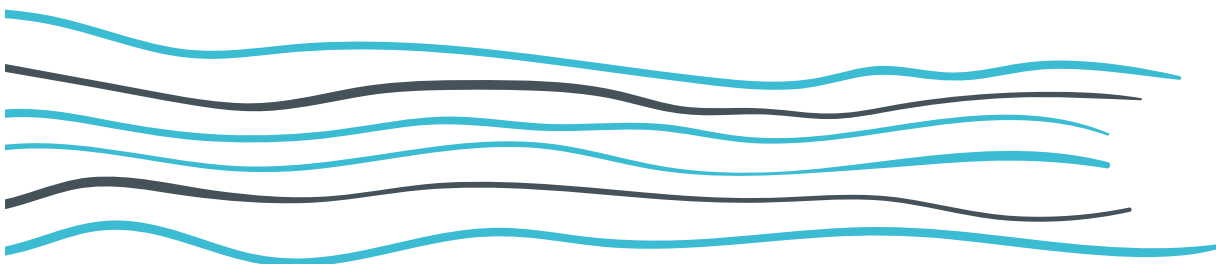
Queensland is a safe place where children, young people and families thrive.

Our purpose

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

Our commitment

We contribute to the Government's objective for the community, *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities*.



Our opportunities

- Build on our oversight reputation by identifying, leading and undertaking key QFCC-initiated investigations of the child protection and family support system
- Drive sustainable system improvements by using lessons learnt from reviews, inquiries and other evidence
- Embed sector strengths and capability improvements across the State to ensure lasting change
- Strengthen engagement with children, young people and their families with a greater presence across regional and rural Queensland communities
- Develop sustainable self help and education programs to help keep kids safe, with a particular focus on e-safety.

Our risks

Our ability to influence and facilitate sustainable change is only possible if we:

- remain in touch and relevant to children, young people, families and the community
- engage effectively with our stakeholders and partners
- base our policy, practice and performance advice on objective evidence
- obtain information from fellow agencies to inform our work.

Our values

The QFCC has embraced the five Queensland public service values: customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous, and empower people.

These values guide our staff behaviour and the way we do business.



Customers first



Ideas into action



Unleash potential



Be courageous



Empower people





Our performance

In the State Budget 2018–19 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 standard	Notes	2018–19 target	2018–19 actual
Percentage increase in use of the <i>oneplace</i> Community Services Directory	1,2,3	5%	11%
Notes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> This service standard reports on the number of online sessions undertaken by people accessing the <i>oneplace</i> Community Services Directory. <i>oneplace</i> 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 several of the QFCC's statutory obligations, including by supporting families in taking responsibility and caring for children, informing and educating the community about services, and analysing family support service availability. The 2018–19 actual performance exceeded the target as <i>oneplace</i> was promoted primarily via social media. Another focus of promotional efforts was the use of widgets¹ on third party websites and presentations to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's local level alliance networks. All these initiatives contributed to increased traffic to the directory. This measure will be discontinued and replaced with a new service standard focused on the number of searches, which is considered to be a more valid representation of the value of the site to the community. The discontinued measure will continue to be monitored internally. 			

¹ The *oneplace* widget takes the form of a search bar which allows users to search *oneplace* directly from third party websites.

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

Child protection reform

The QFCC has delivered all recommendations it received from the *Taking Responsibility: A Road Map for Queensland Child Protection* report.

Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children & families

Changing Tracks sets out the goals, partnerships and responsibilities needed to act on the purpose and vision of the Queensland Government's *Our Way 2017–37 Generational Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families*. *Changing Tracks* acknowledges that government and community organisations must change the way they provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work together with them to enable self-determination.

The QFCC is leading the work on action 6.6 of *Changing Tracks*, to analyse current investment in sector capacity and workforce capability to help inform future investment to build the child and family support sector.

We have outlined progress on this action in the 'Strengthening the child and family support sector' section of this annual report.

The QFCC is involved in several other *Changing Tracks* actions and initiatives including:

- partnering with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women in supporting the design of a holistic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family wellbeing outcomes framework and investment plan
- Commissioner Brooks' participation on the Queensland First Children and Families Board which oversees the implementation of *Changing Tracks* recommendations
- supporting the effective monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its action plans through representation on the Our Way Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group.



Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) included having a national approach to child safe institutions and a national framework for child safety. The Royal Commission also identified 10 child safe standards to make institutions safe for children.

On 19 February 2019, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*. Under its state and national agenda commitments, the QFCC is:

- partnering with the Community Services Industry Alliance to promote the recently developed excellence framework for child safe organisations
- working with lead agencies to provide advice about a model for child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme
- participating in national roundtables on child safe organisations and reportable conduct schemes.

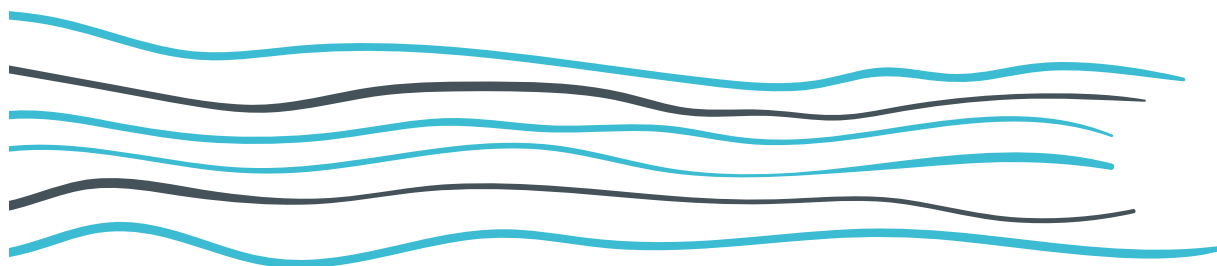
Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023

Queensland's first youth justice strategy—*Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023*—was released by the government in December 2018. The strategy is based on the four pillars recommended by Mr Bob Atkinson AO APM in his *Report on Youth Justice*.

It provides an evidence-based framework that will deliver initiatives proven to reduce offending and reoffending and address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.

The QFCC participated in the development of the youth justice strategy and action plan, led by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. Through the relevant working groups, the QFCC provided contextual evidence-based research to support youth justice advocacy initiatives and advocated for the promotion of the rights of children and young people in the youth justice system.

The remaining chapters in this annual report address the objectives and strategies outlined in the QFCC's *Strategic Plan 2018–2022*.



Oversight

Objective

Identify improvements in the child protection and family support system to ensure those who are most vulnerable are well cared for and able to thrive.

Systems reviews

The Queensland Family and Child Commission's (QFCC) oversight role focuses on monitoring and reviewing the child protection system and reporting on it. This includes conducting reviews into systemic issues affecting the performance of the child protection and family support system.

The QFCC chairs several groups to coordinate and share information on oversight functions and implementation of system reforms.

In 2018–19, several systems reviews were progressed or completed. They are discussed in the following pages.

Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the blue card system

The *Review of the blue card system* in 2017 found that, while the system already provided strong safeguards for Queensland's children, there was scope to make those safeguards even more robust and to improve the system's efficiency. Responsibility for the implementation of the *Review of the blue card system* recommendations lies with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

On 16 May 2019, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 was passed by parliament. Amended legislation provides for several important safeguards including:

- introducing a no card, no start policy
- expanding the range of criminal offences that disqualify a person from obtaining a blue card
- enabling a centralised register for recording and reporting on the blue card status of:
 - ▶ foster and kinship carers, who provide homes for children and young people who aren't able to live with their family
 - ▶ family day care educators, who are professionals engaged by, or registered with, an approved provider to deliver early childhood education and care to children in a residence or approved venue
 - ▶ stand-alone care providers, who provide care for up to six children aged 0–12 in a home, hall or church
 - ▶ adults who reside in places where children and young people receive education, care and/or support service or live in out-of-home care.

By 30 June 2019, five recommendations had been implemented, implementation was underway for 45 recommendations, and was yet to start on 31 recommendations.



Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the foster care system

Our 2017 *Review of the foster care system* found that Queensland's foster care system generally operates as intended and in line with relevant legislation.

The review made 42 recommendations. By 30 June 2019, work had begun on implementing 35 recommendations, with implementation complete on 16 of those. The remaining recommendations are being reviewed as per recommendation 42 of the report, which requires implementing agencies' plans to be revised on the release of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Blue Card and Foster Care Systems Review—Report on Term of Reference 5: Strengthening capacity across Queensland's child protection system

The *Strengthening capacity across Queensland's child protection system* report identified several capacity issues and pressure points in the child protection system. They fall into six broad categories: funding, staffing, court reforms, non-government services, greater collaboration across the system, and change management.

The review made 14 recommendations. The Queensland Government accepted these and committed to increasing support for families and addressing pressures in the child protection system. Of these, 13 have been implemented and work has started on one.

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

Following the implementation of all 29 recommendations from the 2016 *When a child is missing* review, the QFCC undertook a post-implementation review. The aim of this review was to:

- identify whether changes made by agencies in response to the recommendations are operating as intended
- confirm whether the implemented policy changes from the review report are operating effectively in practice
- assess whether cultural change regarding responses to children missing from care is occurring
- agree on a collaborative approach to addressing any areas for improvement that were identified in the review.

The review was undertaken collaboratively with the Queensland Police Service, the Office of the Public Guardian, Queensland Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The review is due to be completed in late 2019.

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) into legislation, policies and practices for information sharing to protect all children in regulated service environments.

The supplementary review report, released in February 2017, made 17 recommendations. The review focused specifically on those regulated services provided from home: foster and kinship care, family day care and stand-alone care services.

At 30 June 2019, implementation of all 17 recommendations had been started [and completed on five].

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

In March 2017, the QFCC provided a report to government—*A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child*. This detailed the QFCC's analysis and findings following consideration of individual agency reviews. The report made one recommendation, which was that:

- the Queensland Government consider a revised external and independent model for reviewing the deaths of children known to the child protection system.

In September 2017, the QFCC provided a further report to the Premier—*A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child*. This outlined an implementation and transition proposal for a revised external and independent model.

The QFCC and other relevant agencies worked with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to develop a new child death review model. In the 2019–20 state budget, the government provided \$4.1 million in funding over four years to establish a new and independent child death review panel to review the deaths of children known to the child protection system. This was made up of \$2.5 million in new funding and \$1.6 million redirected from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The QFCC will host a new and independent Child Death Review Panel following legislative amendments.

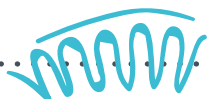
Health Check II—follow-up health check review

In 2014–15, the QFCC undertook a review to:

- assess the impact of legislative changes on mandatory reporting and referral behaviours (i.e. changes to the way professionals refer families to support services and/or report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities)
- determine whether families are being referred to the right service at the right time.

Health Check I was completed in December 2015 and made several recommendations, including for the QFCC to undertake a second health check no sooner than six months after the full implementation of state-wide information, intake and referral services (Family and Child Connect) and case management support for at-risk families (Intensive Family Support services) was completed.

The follow-up health check (Health Check II) was completed in December 2018. Its focus was on assessing if mandatory reporting and referral behaviours are successful in diverting concerns about children who do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention (i.e. children who have a parent that is willing and able to care for them and are not at risk of future harm) away from the child protection system.



The main findings from Health Check II were:

- children and families have improved access to secondary services.
- families that have accessed Intensive Family Support services are positive about their experiences.
- these services are yet to relieve intake pressures on the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.
- there is still considerable scope for mandatory reporters to make more direct referrals to Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services rather than reports to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

Systemic review of responses to 5 and 10 day notifications

During 2018–19, the QFCC worked collaboratively with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to examine the responsiveness of the statutory child protection system to notifications of harm. This review aimed to:

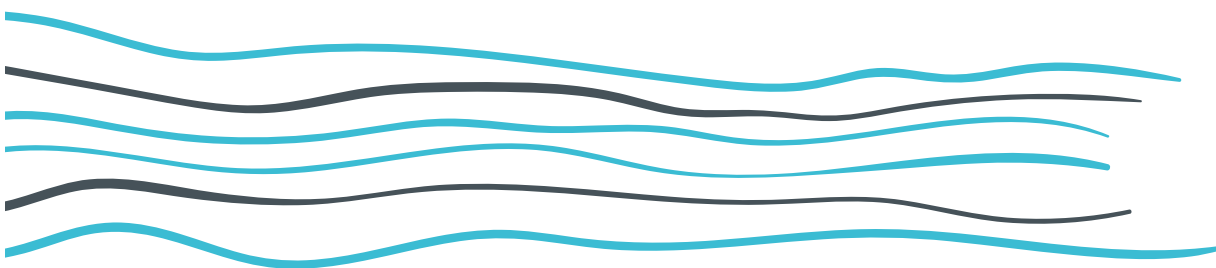
- provide context and insights as to why some 5 and 10 day notifications are not commenced within the assessed policy timeframes (i.e. within 5 or 10 days of receipt)
- analyse the circumstances that exist when they are commenced within the assessed timeframes
- share lessons learnt (including areas of systemic excellence)
- identify opportunities to improve the 5 and 10 day notification response system.

Phase 1 of the review was completed in March 2019.

Phase 2 of this program is currently being scoped. The QFCC will continue to work with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to look at response times to identify where the child protection system is performing well and whether systemic lessons can be learnt from well-performing Child Safety Service Centres.

Other reviews

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice asked the QFCC to undertake three new whole-of-system reviews and to provide reports on the findings. These reviews are underway.



QFCC Oversight Strategy 2019–2022

The QFCC has developed its draft *Oversight Strategy 2019–2022* in collaboration with key stakeholders. The strategy establishes an approach for monitoring children’s rights, wellbeing and safety and guiding a responsive child protection and family support system. The approach to defining performance measures and indicators is focused on outcomes for children, young people and families (i.e. ensuring they are safe and well, have access to education and support). The strategy will be supported by external data sources including:

- administrative and non-administrative data
- national published statistics.

In support of this strategy, a QFCC data program is also being developed. It will scope and identify potential sources of data and approaches to gathering information.

Vulnerability project

The QFCC has started work to capture how Queensland’s most vulnerable children experience the child and family support sector.

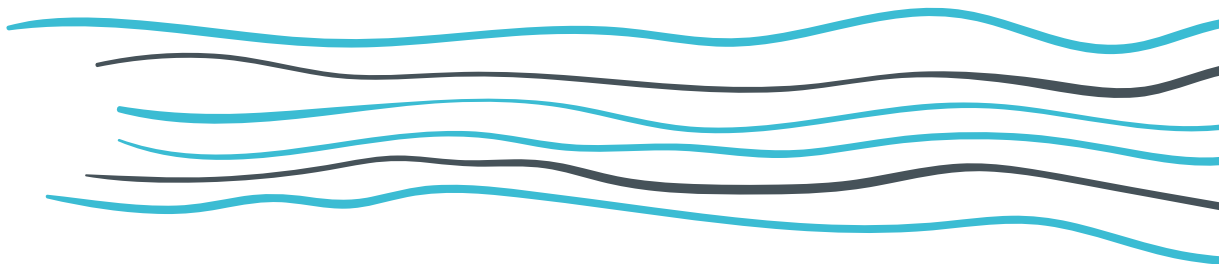
By mapping system connections, the QFCC will be better positioned to identify potential pressure points across the system that can lead to children and families ‘falling between the cracks’.

This work will inform the QFCC’s Oversight Strategy and support the continuous improvement of the child and family support system for better outcomes for children and families.

QFCC Review Strategic Oversight Group

The Review Strategic Oversight Group meets quarterly and is chaired by the QFCC. Membership includes representatives from all government departments with responsibility for implementation of the recommendations from *Recommendation 28 Supplementary Review: A report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulated home-based services and Keeping Queensland’s children more than safe: Review of the foster care system*.

This group provides strategic advice to the QFCC Principal Commissioner about the ongoing implementation of the government’s response to the recommendations and subsequent changes in the child protection system.



QFCC Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group

The Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group meets quarterly and is chaired by the Principal Commissioner. The purpose of the group is to discuss sector-wide trends and issues, with a focus on external, systemic and cross-agency oversight. Membership consists of senior representatives from agencies responsible for external oversight of the child protection and family support system.

They include the:

- Queensland Family and Child Commission
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Office of the Health Ombudsman
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Children's Court Brisbane
- Coroners Court of Queensland.

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 report on Queensland's performance relating to the child protection system. Appendix D of this report provides an overview of Queensland's performance. All included data was the most current available as at 30 June 2019.

The QFCC is currently completing its *Oversight Strategy 2019–2022*. Once finalised, its data will report on the performance and risks of the child protection system and on areas for continuous improvement in upholding and protecting the rights, wellbeing and safety of Queensland children.

Evaluation

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

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

We conduct annual data collection activities to support our evaluation work, including:

- annual surveys of the community, frontline child protection and family support sector workforce
- place-base studies examining systemic issues within local contexts.

We also design and conduct system-level evaluations.

We have lead responsibility for evaluating child protection reform (which is being implemented in response to the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report) at three distinct milestones over the 10-year reform program.

These evaluations will assess how well the reform program has been implemented and the outcomes and impacts it has achieved. We also assist 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.

Reform program implementation evaluation

The QFCC conducted the implementation evaluation of the child protection reform program to identify factors facilitating or impeding implementation and early indicators of progress towards outcomes during the first three years of implementation (1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017).

The evaluation has contributed to refinement of how the reforms are being managed and provided a baseline for subsequent evaluations. This will enable a greater focus on outcomes and impact.

More than 2,300 people were consulted for the implementation evaluation. We used multiple data collection methods to collect the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, including:

- semi-structured interviews with key reform stakeholders
- a survey of the general community's perspectives
- a survey of frontline workers
- place-based studies examining local reform implementation
- analysis of agency data and relevant evaluation reports.

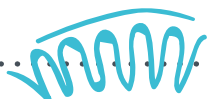
KPMG independently reviewed the evaluation report and found that it was fit for purpose, timely and relevant to government priorities. The final evaluation report was delivered to government in late 2018 for consideration.

Evaluation capacity building across the sector

The QFCC supported agencies in building their evaluation capacity and capability by:

- hosting face-to-face presentations and workshops
- delivering presentations on system-level evaluation at the Australian Evaluation Society conference and lunchtime seminar series
- developing evaluation resources
- hosting online information sharing and networking
- providing advice on scoping and procuring evaluations, including serving as members of procurement panels.

Through representation on the Our Way Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group, the QFCC also supports effective monitoring and evaluation of the *Our Way 2017–37 Generational Strategy* and its action plans.



The year ahead

In 2019–20, as part of our oversight objective, we will:

- continue to work with partners to develop a monitoring framework for the child protection and family support system
- start the outcomes evaluation of the reform program
- progress the second stage of the review of the response timeframes for investigation of 5 and 10 day notifications of harm to a child—*Seeing they are safe: child protection response times* initiative
- undertake a systems review of the implementation of youth justice reforms
- benchmark the current status of culturally responsive practice state-wide
- complete the Vulnerability project
- finalise the QFCC *Oversight Strategy 2019–2022*.



Enable

Objective

Work closely with all Queenslanders to build safe, caring and connected communities that are well supported by quality frontline child protection and family support services.

Partnering for success

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) believes everyone is responsible for helping Queensland children thrive and reach their full potential. We want Queensland's child and family support system to be the best it can be.

In improving outcomes for children and families we need to:

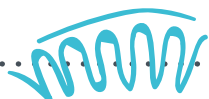
- know what works well (and not so well)
- recognise the challenges faced by children, families, communities and organisations
- work collaboratively to influence change.

To help achieve these aspirations, effect meaningful system-wide change, and foster stronger community connections, the QFCC develops and maintains partnerships with a broad range of peak bodies, industry partners, communities, advisory groups, academics, and government and non-government organisations.

The QFCC partnering mechanisms for 2018–19 included:

- seeking guidance, insight and cooperation from the:
 - Advisory Council
 - Community Partnerships Group
 - Youth Advisory Council
 - Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group
 - Reviews Strategic Oversight Group
 - Joint Agency Protocol Reference Group and Working Group.
- implementing the *Young, Black and Proud* scholarships program in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane.
- facilitating the final implementation stages of the action plans of the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy.

These are all explained in the following pages.



Advisory Council

Under Part 4 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the Principal Commissioner has established an Advisory Council to:

- help promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe
- provide insight into the issues affecting children, families and the child and family support sector
- provide guidance on the work of the QFCC.

The Advisory Council met four times in 2018–19. The membership is currently made up of:

Cheryl Vardon	Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner, QFCC (Chair)
Phillip Brooks	Commissioner, QFCC
Kay Ganley	Former owner and Chief Executive Officer, Charlton Brown
Detective Chief Superintendent Cameron Harsley APM	Executive Director, Operations Support, Crime and Corruption Commission
Anne Hollonds	Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)
Hetty Johnston AM	Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Bravehearts
Zoe Rathus AO	Senior Lecturer in Law, Griffith Law School
Heather Watson	Director and Principal Lawyer, Watson Advisory & Consulting Pty Ltd
Dr James Scott	Associate Professor, Conjoint Associate Professor, SOM Central—Psychiatry—RBWH, Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Dr Gerald Featherstone	Chief Executive Officer, Kummara Association
Merrilyn Strohfeldt	Chief Executive Officer, Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network



Community Partnerships Group

The Community Partnerships Group was established with peak body organisations to help guide the QFCC in it's work to improve the child protection and family support systems. It provides diverse and independent views, advice and support to the commissioners.

Cheryl Vardon	Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner, QFCC
Phillip-Brooks	Commissioner, QFCC (Chair)
Belinda Drew	Chief Executive Officer, Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)
Mark Henley	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Council of Social Services
Natalie Lewis	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
Lindsay Wegner	Chief Executive Officer, PeakCare
Neil Willmet	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
Rachael Donovan	Queensland State Coordinator, CREATE Foundation



Youth Advisory Council

The QFCC's Youth Advisory Council (the Council) champions the voices of children and young people and provides youth perspectives and leadership to the QFCC. The Council meets monthly and provides advice to the commissioners and the QFCC on what is important to children and young people in Queensland. It works with other young people to identify the important issues, then designs and implements a response to address these issues.

The Council is made up of young people aged between 14 and 25. Members, known as Youth Champions, have diverse backgrounds and represent regional and metropolitan areas.



In 2018–19, Youth Champions provided advice on a range of QFCC initiatives and participated in designing, implementing and launching the QFCC's *Growing up in Queensland* project.

In recognition of their contributions, the QFCC facilitates Youth Champion participation in conferences, stakeholder events and media opportunities. The Youth Champions also receive important on-the-job professional development (such as learning media and advocacy skills).

During Queensland Youth Week, the QFCC launched a recruitment campaign to increase the number of Youth Champions.

The Council membership is currently made up of:

Annika	<p>Annika is a proud Torres Strait Islander from Iama (Yam) Island (central Torres Strait). She brings her cultural authority and leadership to give a voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people throughout her personal and professional networks.</p> <p>Annika studied a Bachelor of Psychological Sciences (Hons). She also sits on the Premier's Advisory Committee to help the Queensland Government act on the 29 recommendations from the Queensland Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce report.</p>
Caroline	<p>Caroline is studying a Bachelor of Human Services and a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice. As a result of her own journey in the care system, Caroline is a strong advocate for children and young people living in out-of-home care, having worked with the CREATE Foundation to promote and create systemic change in the out-of-home care sector.</p>
Chantel	<p>Chantel is studying a Bachelor of Education and works part time as a legal receptionist. She is a member of the government's Queensland Youth Engagement Panel.</p> <p>She was a member of the Queensland Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce and attended the YMCA Youth Parliament Community Consult² with the QFCC.</p>
Rosie	<p>Rosie has been the Junior Ambassador for Queensland Children's Week for the past four years. In this role, she promotes the importance of children's and young people's rights through various media channels and speaking events.</p> <p>Rosie is a strong advocate for the rights of young people—especially those who are marginalised or excluded.</p>
Tom	<p>Tom works for a domestic violence prevention program, R4Respect. In this role, he creates social media content for young people, with messages about warning signs, controlling attitudes and how to form non-violent, respectful relationships.</p> <p>He has formed his perspectives based on interactions he has with young people online and with his peers.</p>
Kathryn	<p>Kathryn is a practising solicitor and an advocate for equality and inclusion. She is a current member of Pride in Law, the only LGBTIQ+ legal network in Australia. She is also a member of the executive committee of the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament, as mentor to the Child Safety, Youth and Women Committee.</p> <p>As the convener of the Bond Sony Foundation Children's Holiday Camp, Kathryn is experienced in helping young people who require special assistance.</p>

² The YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament provides young people with an opportunity to be a voice for their electorate, advising politicians and decision-makers across the state. Through the program they are immersed in unique educational opportunities, experience parliamentary operation first hand, mingle with members of Government and Opposition, and have their say through debates on topical issues.

Madison	<p>Madison is the 2019 Queensland Youth Volunteer of the Year and was a recipient of the International Diana Award for being an inspiring and exceptional volunteer, mentor and changemaker. Madison was recently shortlisted for 2019 Queensland Young Australian of the Year and was a finalist for the Australian Human Rights Commission Young People's Human Rights medal.</p> <p>Madison is studying a Bachelor of Business.</p>
Ben	<p>Ben is studying a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Global Studies. He was a recipient of the Australian Future Leaders' Justice and Equity Award and the Peter Dutton Public Speaking Award.</p> <p>Ben has previously worked as a Youth Ambassador for Save the Children Australia, where he had the opportunity to deliver the Youth Manifesto for change to the Australian Government.</p>
Dominic	<p>Dominic is studying a Bachelor of Business and a French language course. He is a member of the Queensland Youth Engagement Panel, is the domestic student representative on the Queensland International Student Advisory Panel and was a Queensland representative at the National Schools Constitutional Convention.</p>
Ameya	<p>Ameya is a Year 9 high school student. She is a United Nations Youth Student Ambassador, a 2019 United Nations Voice of the Youth state finalist and has been awarded a Rostrum public speaking award.</p> <p>As a proud second-generation Australian, Ameya enjoys a diversity of experience and tradition through her heritage and appreciates learning about other cultures, their beliefs and traditions.</p>
Gillian	<p>Gillian is studying a Bachelor of Human Services and has previously completed a Diploma of Community Services. She is a member of headspace³ Taringa's Youth Reference Group, where she advocates for the importance of youth mental health through functions and events.</p>
Remington	<p>Remington is studying a Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Paramedic Science. He works as a University Student Ambassador and a lifeguard. Over the past five years, he has been actively engaged in water safety awareness and drowning prevention as a volunteer surf life saver. Remington is a member of Towards Rural and Outback Health Professionals in Queensland.</p>
Aimee	<p>Aimee is a proud Worimi woman and works at the CREATE Foundation as a Youth Facilitator.</p> <p>She has been a strong advocate for issues such as youth justice, homelessness, housing, disability, minorities and disadvantaged people.</p>
Li Xuan	<p>Li Xuan is studying a Bachelor of Economics and recently completed a student internship in an education start-up in China. Li Xuan volunteers with United Nations Youth Queensland, facilitating insightful conversations about critical global issues with high school students.</p>

³ a non-profit providing youth mental health services for Australians aged 12-25.



Young, Black and Proud Scholarships program

The QFCC is continuing to celebrate the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including recognising the skills of young people in Queensland.

In partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane, the QFCC again funded the state-wide *Young, Black and Proud* Scholarships program.

In 2019, 60 scholarships valued at up to \$2,000 each were awarded in the categories of education and training (primary, secondary and tertiary), the arts, and sports. The program supports and celebrates the talents and strengths of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who exhibit outstanding promise, but who may need further support and resources to fulfil their potential.

The QFCC and ATSICHS Brisbane promoted scholarship nominees through social and traditional media to celebrate and share their achievements and encourage other young people to seek out opportunities.

The *Young, Black and Proud* Scholarships program supports the QFCC's engagement with Indigenous Australians, our response to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care, and our contribution to the national Closing the Gap commitment.



Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon with 2018 Young Black and Proud scholarship recipients.

Strengthening the child and family support sector

The QFCC is contributing to, and delivering on, important government reform agendas including *Supporting Families Changing Futures* and *Advancing Queensland*.

The QFCC is responsible, under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, for developing and reviewing workforce planning and development strategies. We do this through the *Second Action Plan 2017–19* of our *Strengthening our Sector* strategy. The plan focuses on three outcome areas:

- strengthening the workforce—enhancing the ability of our sector workforce to meet the needs of children and families
- strengthening organisations—enhancing organisational capabilities and strengthening sector relationships
- strengthening the professional culture—building a proactive and positive culture in the way we work to support children and families.

We focus on harnessing the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities across all outcome areas.

The plan also reflects the QFCC’s responsibilities under important reform agendas, such as the Queensland Government’s:

- *Our Way* generational strategy 2017–37 and the first *Changing Tracks Action Plan 2017–19*
- *Partnering for the future: advancing Queensland’s community services industry 2017–25*.

An update on each of the outcome areas is provided over the following pages for 2018–19:

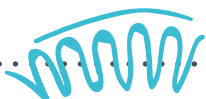


Outcome area 1—Strengthening the workforce

The QFCC is committed to ensuring the child and family support sector workforce reflects the community it services. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Career promotion initiative

The career promotion initiative encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to consider a career in the child and family support sector. An increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working in the sector will enhance cultural expertise in practice and will support the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.



The QFCC developed a campaign to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work where their story makes a difference. Valuable input was provided at focus groups held around Queensland. The campaign showcases various career pathways and opportunities. The campaign also offers resources, tools and practice standards for sector employers looking to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff such as:

- a promotional video, [Work where your story makes a difference](#), which has been screening on National Indigenous Television and Indigenous Community Television. The video showcases the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women already working in the sector
- a webpage, within the QFCC website, which offers an extended video and further information and referrals for those considering a career in the sector and for sector employers.

Outcome area 2—Strengthening our organisations

The QFCC is assisting the child and family support sector to position itself well to meet the needs of Queensland's children and families and respond to changing environments, demands and reform.

To strengthen the sector, the QFCC works in collaboration with peak bodies and services.

Supporting the success of community controlled organisations

Community controlled organisations play fundamental roles in helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to stay together and in improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

In a continued partnership with the Public Service Commission, we expanded our gathering of the views and experiences of people in government, regulatory and peak bodies to include metropolitan, remote and discrete locations within Queensland. This involved consulting communities and organisations about:

- opportunities and barriers to the success of community controlled organisations
- capability and capacity needed to sustain success throughout the child and family support system.

With all engagement now completed, the final project report: *Supporting the success of community controlled organisations* is currently being finalised. The report will provide insights into how we can build sector capacity and workforce capability to support Indigenous children and young people and their families.

Capacity building investment analysis

Under the Queensland Government's *Our Way, Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2019*, the QFCC has responsibility for leading Action 6.6, which is to:

Analyse current investment in sector capacity and workforce capability to help inform future investment to build the child and family support sector.

In this, the QFCC has partnered with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

After consulting these partners, the QFCC prepared a report that offers insights to help guide future investment. The aim is to ensure the sector and its workforce is supported in responding effectively to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The draft report is being shared with partners for review, and the final report is scheduled for completion in August 2019.

Business maturity scorecard

In 2018–19, a digitised version of the previously published business maturity scorecard was developed. The scorecard, developed in collaboration with the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), helps organisations measure their business maturity in areas such as funding and financing, research and innovation, workforce, service integration and governance.

A CSIA report *Digitised Business Maturity Scorecard: Testing Report, November 2018* outlined the findings from the industry-informed development and testing of this digitised version of the scorecard ahead of the development of an implementation plan for the Business Maturity Scorecard in 2019.

Potential benefits of this scorecard include having:

- easy access and broad availability, allowing organisations to measure, track and develop their business maturity over time
- a consistent way of measuring the business maturity of individual organisations
- access to data that can be used in strategic planning and investment decisions of individual organisations
- a comprehensive, industry-wide dataset to be used in future planning and investment by government and non-government stakeholders.

The scorecard is a free, online tool.

Industry excellence framework for child safe organisations

The QFCC also worked with the CSIA to develop an industry excellence framework for child safe organisations. It is an interactive resource package and was developed in consultation with more than 65 community service organisations to make sure the framework responds to the needs of the child and family support sector. The framework outlines the excellence aspirations of the sector and provides organisations with a methodology to:

- move from traditional compliance approaches to the pursuit of excellence
- create a culture of professional excellence across the sector
- spell out the benefits in fostering a child-safe, child-friendly culture across the sector
- improve community confidence in the sector and its ability to keep children safe.

This QFCC-CSIA collaboration has led to the scoping of the workforce supply and capability needs of the sector, including the challenges involved in recruiting, retaining and developing the workforce outside of South-East Queensland.



The final CSIA report—*Implementing an industry development agenda and excellence framework for the child and family support sector*—includes a summary of the main outcomes of the QFCC and CSIA partnership.

Outcome area 3—Strengthening our professional culture

The QFCC is focused on building a positive and professional culture, where services work together to support Queensland children and families.

Place-based projects

Place-based work involves bringing together community members to deal with certain community challenges. Research shows the most effective way of solving complex social problems (such as localised disadvantage) is to empower local communities to identify and lead their own locally tailored solutions.

The QFCC continued a partnership with the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOS) to model a community-led approach to helping communities be strong and more independent in defining their own priorities and developing their own solutions.

The QFCC provided funding to support QCOS in developing a generic place-based approach document (framework). It includes a supporting practical toolkit and associated resources (for example, case studies) to help local communities in understanding and developing place-based approaches. The framework and toolkit have been published online.

Leadership forums

The QFCC is leading positive culture change in the child and family support sector by delivering leadership forums, which provide opportunities to share learnings and capitalise on achievements.

Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon delivered a masterclass presentation on ‘the student voice’ at the state school Principals’ national conference in February 2019. In this presentation, entitled *Thinking schools—better world*, the Principal Commissioner shared some of the insights gathered by the QFCC from 7,000 Queensland children and young people as part of the *Growing up in Queensland* project.

In March 2019, Commissioner Phillip Brooks presented at the 3rd National Social and Emotional Wellbeing Conference in Cairns. Insights and stories were shared about what works when providing for the cultural wellbeing of children and young people, their kinship circles and communities.

Workforce futures

Building on the now completed *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, the QFCC began a workforce futures initiative. This will identify sector and QFCC priorities. The intent is to build the sector so it will support our most vulnerable children and families.

We conducted four workshops to consider how the child and family support sector can harness technology, policy, social and demographic changes. More than 90 representatives from 42 organisations (peak bodies, government departments and non-government service providers) identified imperatives and priorities for the sector and the QFCC. A discussion paper based on workshop outputs will be delivered soon.

Connecting with children and young people

Under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the QFCC is responsible for engaging with, and taking account of, the views of children, young people and their families.

Under Articles 3 and 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, children have the right to be heard and have their best interests considered by decision makers in areas such as budget, policy and law.

The QFCC's main mechanisms for engaging with, and hearing the voices of, children and young people during 2018–19 included the:

- *Growing up in Queensland* project
- Development of a *Youth Participation Plan*
- QFCC Youth Advisory Council
- *Real Skills for Real Life* online survey.

Growing up in Queensland

In 2018, the *Growing up in Queensland* project gave children and young people the opportunity to share their thoughts, views and opinions about their community, their hopes and dreams, and the most important issues to them.

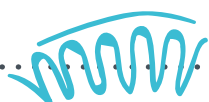
The project was unique in that it empowered a broad range of Queensland children and young people aged 4 to 18 years of age to participate in genuine conversations to meaningfully and honestly reflect on their own experiences, and to personally express their concerns.

Growing up in Queensland heard from more than 7,000 young Queenslanders from as far north as the Torres Strait, west to Mt Isa and south to the Gold Coast. They participated in a variety of ways, including through:

- an online survey
- a teacher-and librarian-led artwork activity
- submissions written on postcards
- school-based focus groups
- youth group workshops.

Growing up in Queensland focused on gaining a broad understanding of children's and young people's opinions on the three main lines of inquiry:

- how they experience life in their community, including their relationships with friends and family; safety; support; and the places they spend time
- their career aspirations and the supports and barriers that might affect them
- the big issues that worry them and their ideas for solutions.



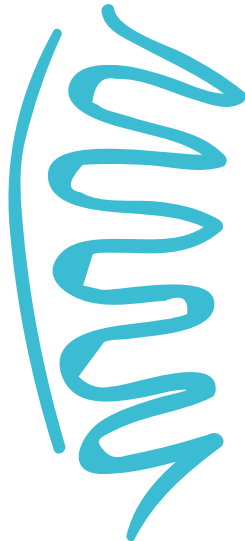
The findings are detailed in the report *This place I call home: The views of children and young people on growing up in Queensland*, which was launched on 20 November 2018 by the Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. The full report and a youth-friendly version are available on the QFCC's website.

The results of the *Growing up in Queensland* project provide signposts for ways adults can assist children and young people to feel safe in their communities, achieve their hopes and dreams and address their concerns.

WHAT DID YOUNG QUEENSLANDERS SAY THEY NEEDED FROM ADULTS?

We need adults to:

- ✦ be present, pay attention and make time for us
- ✦ listen without judgement and take us seriously
- ✦ have open conversations about:
 - what is happening in our lives especially at school and with our friends
 - what they can do to support us
- ✦ work with us to come up with solutions
- ✦ provide us with clear and relevant information that includes where to get help and where to report problems
- ✦ create and provide access to programs and training to help us support our friends
- ✦ provide opportunities for us to have a say and to take action on issues that are important to us.



Two key messages came through strongly from the children and young people who participated in the project:

1. They are passionate about having the opportunity to participate in conversations about issues impacting on their lives. They want adults to respect their opinions and include them when they are making decisions.
2. They value face-to-face connections with people. They want to have conversations with the adults in their lives to help them make decisions about their future and deal with the things they worry about.

To date, the QFCC has delved deeper into two issues raised by children and young people through the project:

- The QFCC partnered with Volunteering Queensland to deliver an issues paper on young people's participation in volunteering in Queensland. The paper identifies barriers to volunteering for young people under 18 years of age (including legal barriers) and the views of children and organisations.

One outcome of this action will be to improve the opportunities that young people have to gain skills and work experience to help them to enter the workforce.

- The QFCC partnered with the Office for Youth to ask Queenslanders aged 13 to 25-years-old what life skills they need to prepare them to become independent adults. The *Real Skills for Real Life* online survey was developed in consultation with QFCC Youth Champions and was launched during Queensland Youth Week.

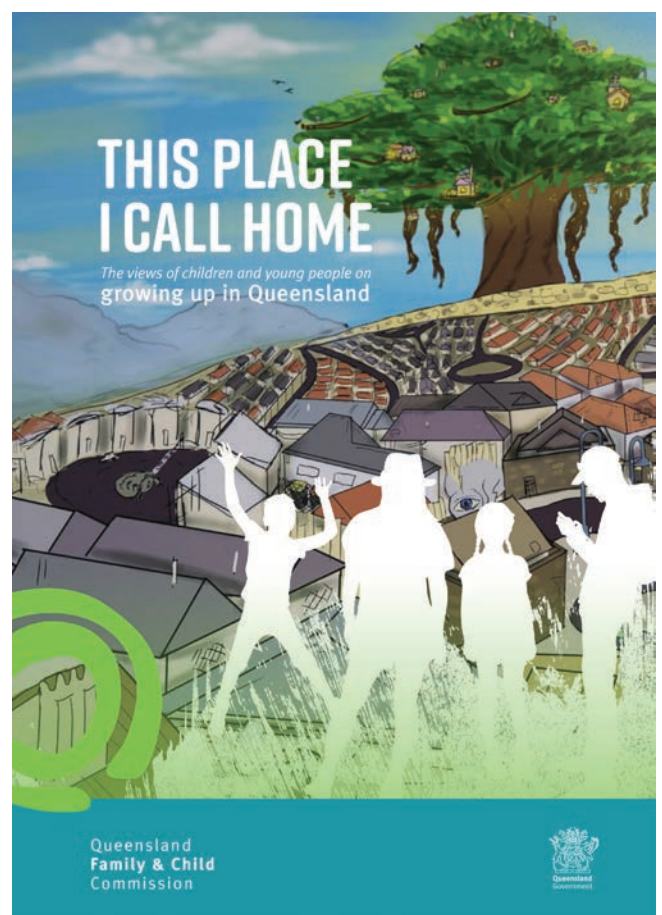
Over 200 young people responded, and the results will be reported on the QFCC's website in 2019–20.

The *Growing up in Queensland* report encourages the Queensland community to act on its findings. By including the voices of youth in planning, designing and delivering work, leaders in government and business can achieve better outcomes for communities.

To complement the report, factsheets linking the findings from each of the project themes with the Queensland Government's *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities* are available on the QFCC's website.

Being heard (is really important to children and young people). Most children's opinions are overlooked ... children have sensible opinions that could really make a difference. Children think differently to adults but that is sometimes a good thing. This ... is giving me a chance to be heard. Now it is up to you to listen.

*~Postcard response,
South-East Queensland*



Youth participation plan

The QFCC develops an annual youth participation plan in collaboration with its Youth Advisory Council. The plan details how we will respectfully include children and young people in the QFCC's work, connect children and young people with their communities through youth participation, and amplify the diverse voices and stories of children and young people.

The plan also provides measures for clearly reporting and evaluating how well the QFCC is performing on its commitments.



Youth Participation Plan

Our vision for youth participation: Queensland children and young people are connected with their communities and respectfully included in the decisions that affect their lives. Their voices will be heard, valued and celebrated.

Objectives

The QFCC will engage with children and young people across Queensland, including First Australians, young people from refugee and culturally diverse backgrounds, young people with a disability as well as those who identify as being LGBTIQ* and those from rural and remote communities.

The QFCC promotes youth participation for all young Queenslanders, including those who rely on child protection, youth justice, mental health and online safety services to stay safe and well.

	RESPECT	CONNECT	CELEBRATE
GOALS	The QFCC respectfully includes children and young people in our work.	The QFCC connects children and young people with their communities by advocating for youth participation.	The QFCC amplifies the voices and stories of children and young people and celebrates diversity.
OUTCOMES	Children and young people participate in the work of the QFCC.	Children and young people are involved and have a say in decisions impacting their lives.	Children and young people are celebrated with their perspectives promoted by the QFCC.
INDICATORS	<p>Children and young people are aware of the QFCC and engage in our youth participation opportunities.</p> <p>Children and young people directly influence the work of the QFCC.</p> <p>The QFCC supports youth-led processes and projects.</p>	<p>Children and young people are involved in the decisions affecting them.</p> <p>The QFCC facilitates communication connections between stakeholders and young people.</p> <p>The importance of including children and young people in decision making processes is valued.</p>	<p>Children and young people are celebrated by the QFCC.</p> <p>The voices of children and young people in Queensland are amplified to effect change.</p> <p>Children and young people see value in their contributions and see how they can effect change.</p>
MEASURES	<p>Number of children and young people engaged with the QFCC.</p> <p>Number of projects and activities that include the participation and/or voices of children and young people.</p> <p>Number of projects and activities involving or led by Youth Champions.</p>	<p>Number of projects and activities connecting children, young people and stakeholders.</p> <p>Number of projects and activities promoting youth participation.</p>	<p>Number of projects and activities promoting the stories and achievements of a diverse range of children and young people.</p> <p>Number of projects and activities amplifying the voices of children and young people.</p>

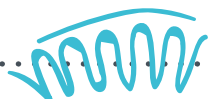
Other important QFCC youth engagement-related actions in 2018–19 included:

- continuing to involve QFCC Youth Champions in developing and delivering the QFCC’s program of work
- continuing to develop initiatives that respond to the findings of *Growing up in Queensland*
- advocating for improvements to child safety standards, the youth justice system, online safety for children and young people; and for the inclusion of youth perspectives in the decision-making processes of government and non-government bodies
- celebrating children and young people by championing their voices and diverse stories through social media and the *Growing up in Queensland* project
- maintaining the commissioners’ engagement with children, young people and families
- supporting G-Force (a CREATE Foundation committee consisting of government and non-government members and young people with a care experience who share knowledge, practice, linkages and advice to practitioners and policy makers).

The year ahead

In 2019–20, as part of our enable objective, we will:

- support ongoing Youth Advisory Council meetings and projects
- continue to implement the workforce futures initiative
- progress analysis of themes identified from the *This place I call home: The views of children and young people on growing up in Queensland* report
- continue supporting youth-led initiatives such as G-Force
- maintain the commissioners’ public engagements to strategically strengthen opportunities between the QFCC and children, young people and their families
- continue to advocate for improvements to child safety standards, youth justice systems and the online safety of young Queenslanders
- promote the inclusion of youth perspectives in both government and non-government decision-making processes, including the development of policy and legislation
- continue to work with schools, communities and agencies to strengthen the child protection and family support system
- develop a tool to help entities assess the impact of new or amended laws, policies and practices on children’s rights
- support young people in contributing to submissions
- support young people in having their say on policy issues.



Educate

Objective

Promote and advocate for the safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland, and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them.

Community education

The education initiatives of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) are designed to encourage people to seek help, including:

- through the uptake of early intervention support services
- by educating the public about the child and family support system
- promoting wellbeing.

The QFCC's ongoing work in community education campaigns aligns with the government's commitment to Queenslanders to keep children more than safe. Initiatives include:

Talking Families

The QFCC designed *Talking Families*—a community education initiative designed to reduce stigma and instil confidence in parents that it is normal to seek and accept help with the stresses of parenting. *Talking Families* empowers parents to seek information and support early, before problems escalate. This initiative is ongoing.

The QFCC's third phase of its digital *Talking Families* campaign was successfully concluded in July 2018, with a marked increase in the followers of the *Talking Families* online community.

The QFCC's third phase of its Talking Families campaign resulted in:

- 152,000 Facebook engagements
- over 5,000 comments
- a 25% growth in followers (32,500)

Talking Families Schools

Talking Families Schools is a place-based community-led education initiative designed by the QFCC in collaboration with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's Family and Child Connect (FaCC). The initiative supports parents, carers and families through challenging times, encouraging them to seek help so they can find the right information at the right time to reduce the pressures on families.

Talking Families Schools aims to remind parents that they are not alone and give them confidence to seek timely help, from family and friends, the school community or the many community services available in their local area—before issues escalate.

The QFCC launched a *Talking Families Schools* pilot with the Sunshine Coast FaCC service in 2018. Subsequently, a number of FaCC service providers asked for the *Talking Families* program to be implemented into schools in their catchment areas. The QFCC has been working in partnership with several FaCC service providers and the Department of Education to extend this program to additional schools.

Highlighting its value in community engagement, approximately 400 children and 100 parents attended an April 2019 *Talking Families Schools* launch involving the Woodridge, Berrinba East and Kingston state schools.

Talking Families Schools has so far been launched in six schools.



oneplace Community Services Directory

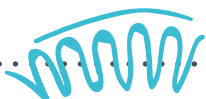
The *oneplace* Community Services Directory website provides a single point of access to over 53,000 community services across Queensland. It was designed to help children, families and professionals find the right service.

In 2018–19, *oneplace* attracted over 33,000 new users, with more than 53,000 sessions activated and more than 180,000 searches conducted. Over 68% of the visitors were new visitors.

Online safety—Out of the Dark

The *Out of the Dark* project addresses internet-related sexual offending against children and child exploitation material. The project was initiated in response to the 2015 Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report (the Byrne Report). The report acknowledged that the proliferation of new and emerging information and communication technologies has resulted in increased exposure of children and young people to risks and harms associated with the online environment.

The *Out of the Dark* project addresses the issues through educational resources, online reporting tools, media and research.



Out of the Dark supports a key outcome of the 2009–2020 *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* (which was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments). This was to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly when using the internet. *Out of the Dark* also helps to identify gaps and improvement areas in policy, legislation, standards and practice for online-related child sexual abuse.

During the year, the QFCC:

- published a list of preferred online safety service providers
- produced resources, including a brochure and poster, that provide hints and tips for adults to help children and young people to stay safe online
- hosted a session from Alicia Kozakiewicz, an international survivor of online grooming and an advocate for preventative safety education and effective legislation
- promoted a video produced by the Queensland Police Service's Taskforce Argos, highlighting the dangers online and encouraging parents to learn more about the issue and how to protect their children
- consulted with children and young people to develop content for a #doiknowu campaign to raise awareness and direct children, peers and parents/carers to information about how to stay safe online.

QFCC findings on cyberbullying from the Growing Up in Queensland project:

3,917	young people responded to survey topics about bullying and cyberbullying
228	submitted written responses about bullying and cyberbullying
55.6%	said cyberbullying is a top 10 issue for children and young people
48.2%	identified online safety as a top 10 issue for children and young people in Queensland
1 in 5	were concerned about their own online safety
30.5%	reported being cyberbullied in the past three months.
15.9%	said they had been personally affected by cyberbullying
1 in 10	reported being involved in cyberbullying another person.

As cyberbullying is also a serious and growing risk in the online environment, the QFCC committed to and supported the Premier's Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce in 2018–19 by:

- specifically including bullying and cyberbullying in the *Growing up in Queensland* project, with 3,917 young people responding to the bullying and cyberbullying topics in the online survey
- providing a submission outlining recent QFCC activities to tackle cyberbullying
- supporting a QFCC Youth Champion to be an appointed member to the taskforce, to provide the young person's perspective on issues related to this topic
- supporting the appointment of two QFCC Youth Champions to the Premier's Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce Implementation Advisory Board.

In commissioning Queensland-wide, youth-centred, qualitative research to understand the environment and opinions about the *Out of the Dark* topic, the QFCC found that:

- Queensland's youth are more concerned about their online profile and image, rather than their broader personal safety online
- Queensland teenagers are aware there are online predators, but they do not know how they operate and do not feel susceptible to the threat
- bullying/cyberbullying is a significant issue for teenagers
- bullying/cyberbullying is one of the most important issues for Queensland children and young people.

The findings are being incorporated into the #doiknowu campaign to educate children, families and professionals about how to recognise internet child sexual abuse, prevent any risk or harm, and respond to risk, if it occurs.

The QFCC also worked with several children and young people for the filming of a social media series titled *What Kids Say*. The series will be run across social media for 12 months.

Seconds count campaign on low-speed vehicle run-overs

The QFCC's *Seconds Count* campaign was launched to raise awareness of child safety risks from low-speed run-over accidents that typically occur in the family driveway and public car parks.

The QFCC worked with KidSafe Queensland to provide the evidence base for this joint community safety campaign, which was sponsored by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

A fact sheet on driveway safety, titled *Don't go if you don't know*, augmented the campaign.

Families are First

In 2019, the QFCC launched its *Families are First* movement. The objective of *Families are First* is to change the narrative on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parenting practices through:

- exploring strengths (for example, culture, connection and attitudes) used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to raise children
- celebrating (for example, through a story-telling approach) families' positive stories
- sharing these stories throughout the community (including the general public, media and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) to show the value of support and supportive networks in child development and wellbeing.

In early 2018, The QFCC contracted an Indigenous-led agency to conduct stakeholder engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland.

The QFCC is using the findings and recommendations from this to implement the *Families are First* movement's objectives and maintain its momentum. Outputs of the engagement with families will be used in developing a community education program to celebrate and share stories of strong parenting in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

“Every night I tell my kids I love them in language”

- Kuku Yalanji Father, FNQ



Research

The QFCC is responsible for developing a research agenda used to inform policy and best practice across priority areas requiring development within the child protection system. We translate research into easily usable information for policy makers and practitioners to assist them in helping vulnerable Queensland children and families.

Our research team activities include:

- conducting Research in the Round forums, which influential government and non-government stakeholders attend to hear researchers present on their research findings and their implications for policy and practice
- conducting Regional Research Roundtables, where smaller groups explore place-based solutions to issues inspired by the latest research
- producing and distributing monthly research scans
- providing research summaries, which focus on identifying implications of research for policy and practice
- maintaining a Knowledge and Resource Hub, on the QFCC's website, providing easy access to important research papers and reports.

Research agenda

The QFCC developed the *Research Agenda 2016–19* in consultation with service providers, government agencies and academics to:

- identify areas in the child protection and family support area that need research
- drive the QFCC's strategies to target and improve research and its use, in order to deliver better outcomes for Queensland children and families.

The *Research Agenda 2019–22* is being developed to replace the 2016–19 research agenda and will be made available on the QFCC website.

It will identify research opportunities and priorities to expand the evidence base on matters relevant to Queensland children, young people and families. It will also provide direction to the QFCC as it meets its legislative responsibilities under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

Research in the Round forums

As part of its responsibility to develop and coordinate a multi-disciplinary research program, the QFCC has continued to host regular Research in the Round forums, to showcase the work of Australian researchers who focus on vulnerable children and families.

These forums present relevant research findings to an audience of high-level policy makers, practitioners, other stakeholders and community members who can effect or influence change. We use facilitated panel discussions to explore the implications of current research evidence for policy development and child safety practices.

The three Research in the Round forums held in 2018–19 covered the themes of:

- **Protecting children from online grooming:** This Brisbane forum, conducted in November 2018, attracted more than 140 attendees.
- **Improving youth mental health:** Two forums were held, in Brisbane in March 2019 (attended by over 200 people) and in Cairns in June 2019 (attended by over 130 people). The discussions covered youth mental health and the underlying complexities.

Regional Research Roundtables

Smaller than Research in the Round forums, Regional Research Roundtables explore place-based solutions to issues within a geographical area.

The three Regional Research Roundtable forums held in 2018–19 covered the theme of *Preventing homelessness for young people leaving care*. They were held in:

- **Toowoomba in October 2018:** This roundtable brought together 25 key state and local government representatives, non-government organisations, and academics to share the latest research and discuss place-based solutions that do not rely on additional funding, but rather explore ways of operating more effectively.
- **Gold Coast in March 2019:** This event explored effective local solutions and brought together service providers, policy makers and community organisations to look at what more is required to prevent youth homelessness.
- **Cairns in June 2019:** This roundtable discussed opportunities to enhance local support for young people leaving out-of-home care in the Cairns region.

Research scans

The QFCC's monthly family and child research scans provide a selection of research papers designed to inform child protection policy and practice—to contribute to better services and systems for vulnerable children and families. These are made available on the QFCC website. In 2018–19, the QFCC produced 12 family and child research scans.

Research summaries

The QFCC provides short research summaries of contemporary research findings. They are designed to make research more readily accessible to policy makers and practitioners. The research summaries identify the implications of the findings for policy and practice. In 2018–19, the QFCC produced four research summaries.

Online Knowledge and Resource Hub

The QFCC's online Knowledge and Resource Hub provides ready access to the latest research information, to assist policy makers and practitioners with improving the quality of outcomes for children, young people and families. It is publicly available on the QFCC website.

More than 835 research summaries, monthly research scans, links to research papers and reports and data have been uploaded to the Knowledge and Resource Hub since 1 July 2018.



Resources

To support the QFCC's mandated functions, we produced several resources during 2018–19 and made them available on the QFCC website. These included:

- research summaries on topics such as:
 - sudden and unexpected infant deaths in Queensland
 - reported rates of accidental versus intentional exposure to online sexual content
 - the extent of children's and young people's exposure to online sexual content
 - homelessness and other negative outcomes experienced by young people transitioning from out-of-home care.
 - reunification with parents and/or family for children in out-of-home care
- monthly research scans providing short summaries of recently released research that could inform policy and practice
- adding 835 information resources and links to research papers, reports and data to the QFCC's Knowledge and Resource Hub.

In 2018–19, as part of its child death prevention function, using data from the child death register, the QFCC produced several fact sheets, including on:

- Child deaths in Queensland
- Children known to the child protection system
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality
- *Don't go if you don't know* driveway and car park safety
- Mapping of child drownings in Queensland
- Youth suicide in Queensland.

Child death prevention

The QFCC maintains the Queensland child death register. We analyse information from the register and produce an annual report on the deaths of all children in Queensland. This helps to improve understanding of risk factors and supports the development of new policies and practices to reduce child deaths.

The register contains data for more than 6,900 child deaths registered since 1 January 2004. It provides a valuable evidence base that is used to:

- develop activities for safety and injury prevention
- monitor the effectiveness of prevention activities
- provide detailed child death data to researchers and government agencies.

The QFCC's *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland 2017–18* was tabled in parliament on 7 December 2018.

Supporting child death prevention efforts

The QFCC's main strategy for preventing child death and injury is to make data held in the register available for research, public education, policy development and program design. Access to the comprehensive dataset is available at no cost to genuine researchers⁴.

In 2018–19, the QFCC responded to 24 requests from researchers and government agencies for detailed data from the register, including:

- for the Paediatric Quality Council's review of sudden unexpected infant deaths
- on child drowning for the Royal Life Saving *National Drowning Report*
- on fatal child injuries from falling furniture or televisions for KidSafe
- on youth suicide for the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Community Meeting 2019
- for a hospital-based clinical audit on paediatric deaths
- for a research and prevention campaign to reduce paediatric trauma
- for research in relation to Aboriginal youth suicides in Toowoomba, Darling Downs and south-west Queensland regions.

Three QFCC submissions were prepared using child death register data. They were for:

- the Queensland Government's *Open Doors to Renting Reform*
- the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's reviews on:
 - a permanent ban on miniature motorbikes
 - the safety standard for corded internal windows.

The QFCC continued to monitor and support prevention of suicide deaths of children and young people. In 2018–19, this included:

- sharing information with the Department of Education to support suicide postvention in affected schools⁵
- providing briefings and data updates to senior government officers
- promoting mental wellbeing tips through QFCC social media channels
- addressing youth mental health through Research in the Round forums in Brisbane and Cairns
- engaging with the Mental Health Commission in developing a suicide prevention plan in Queensland.



⁴ 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.

⁵ Postvention is support provided to people close to those who have suicided, as they may be at risk as a consequence.



Participation in state and national advisory groups

The QFCC's child death prevention staff participated on several advisory bodies including the:

- Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group
- Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group
- Queensland Government Births and Deaths Working Group
- Shifting Minds Strategic Leadership Group
- Suicide Prevention Plan Cross-Agency Working Group
- Queensland Paediatric Quality Council Steering Committee
- Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy Multiagency Working Group
- Road Safety Research Network.

Child Death Review Panel

Following the 2017 release of its report, *A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child*, the QFCC worked with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and nominated agencies to identify a new model for reviewing deaths of children known to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

The government has announced that the QFCC will host a new and independent child death review panel from 2020.

Activities to improve collection of child death information

The QFCC completed the migration of older child death records from 2004–2012 into the current child death database, allowing for improvement to the timeliness and accuracy of analysis and data provision to government and researchers. The QFCC is also upgrading the database that houses the Queensland child death register.

Annual report on child deaths in Queensland

In December 2018, the *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland 2017–18* was tabled in parliament. This was the 14th annual report to be produced on child deaths in Queensland. The authorised electronic version of the annual report can be accessed on the Queensland Parliament website or the QFCC website.

QFCC child death publications

The QFCC produces factsheets with key findings and prevention messages. In 2018–19, these addressed the following topics:

- *Child deaths in Queensland 2017–18*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality 2017–18*
- *Children known to the child protection system 2017–18*
- *Youth suicide in Queensland 2017–18.*

The QFCC also published 14-year data tables: *Analysis of deaths of children and young people, Queensland, 2004–05 to 2017–18.*

Policy and advocacy for children and young people

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

In all we do, the QFCC promotes and advocates for the rights, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people. This includes a focus on the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all children and young people who are in the child protection or the youth justice system.

The QFCC delivers on its policy and advocacy functions in a variety of ways, including:

- developing submissions to inform reviews and inquiries
- making recommendations about relevant laws, policies, practices and services
- preparing information papers to influence policy or to advocate for change
- actively participating in national and state reference and working groups
- building and maintaining strong partnerships with government and non-government agencies, including as a participative member of the:
 - ▶ Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Child Guardians and the associated Policy Officer's Network
 - ▶ Family Matters Policy Working Group (national)
 - ▶ CREATE Foundation G-Force committee.
- consulting with children, young people, their families and communities
- amplifying the stories of children and young people through social media and other communication channels
- providing data from the child death register to assist agencies and other bodies to prevent child deaths
- leading the *Out of the Dark* online safety initiative to reduce online sexual exploitation of children.

In 2018–19, the QFCC's policy and systemic advocacy focus has been on:

- unnecessary criminalisation
- the promotion of children's rights
- youth justice responses
- representing and responding to the perspectives of children and young people (captured in the Growing up in Queensland consultations and other engagement opportunities).

Joint agency protocol to reduce police call-outs to residential care services

Children and young people reported through CREATE and the G-Force sub-committee that they were being unnecessarily exposed to police, and in some instances charged, while living in residential care services.

To address these concerns collaboratively, the QFCC, in partnership with a cross-sector reference group of government, non-government and peak agencies, developed a *Joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police call-outs to residential care services* (the Joint agency protocol).



The Joint agency protocol establishes an agreed and collective response to concerns about the criminalisation of children living in residential care services. It does this by establishing four guiding principles to drive strengthened trauma-responsive practice. These clearly define the responsibilities of each relevant agency, and outline strategies to prevent police involvement in residential care services for incidents more appropriately managed by service staff.

The Joint agency protocol was supported by all relevant agencies and released in September 2018. Its release was accompanied by two additional information resources for the sector:

- the *Criminalisation of children living in out-of-home care in Queensland* information paper
- the *Young people's perspectives on residential care, including police call-outs* paper.

The Joint agency protocol, and supporting papers, contribute to the Queensland Government's priority to reduce rates of youth reoffending under *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities*.

Youth justice

The QFCC is responsible for promoting and advocating for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the youth justice system.

Reducing young people's involvement in the youth justice system was a strategic area of our 2016–19 *Research Agenda*.

In 2018–19, the QFCC continued to advocate for children and young people on important youth justice issues, including as a representative on the Youth Justice Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Advocacy focus areas included:

- the transition of 17-year-olds to the youth justice system
- criminalisation
- minimum age of criminal responsibility
- children detained in watch houses
- oversight of youth detention centres—including consideration of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture*.

The QFCC also worked closely with the then Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (now the Department of Youth Justice) and other stakeholders to provide feedback and advice on early drafts of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, the *Working Together Changing the Story*, *Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023*, and the associated *Youth Justice Strategy Action Plan*.

The QFCC also maintained regular contact with the main stakeholder agencies about the ongoing practice of detaining children in watch houses, with a particular interest and advocacy focus on safety, wellbeing and children's rights.

In 2018–19, the QFCC collected the views of children and young people in contact with youth justice through:

- visits to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and Brisbane Youth Detention Centre
- visits to the Brisbane City Watch House
- consultations to inform the *Joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police call-outs to residential care services*
- providing an opportunity for young people in youth detention to participate in the *Growing up in Queensland* project.

QFCC submissions

During the year, the QFCC contributed to 19 submissions, panels and roundtables by:

- providing information from the *Growing up in Queensland* project to influence policies and actions, such as on how children and young people want to be included in decision-making processes
- participating in cross-agency leadership groups to influence actions contributing to *Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities*
- providing a submission to the parliamentary Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on the Human Rights Bill 2018, Criminal Code (Non-consensual Sharing of Intimate Images) Amendment Bill 2018 and Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019
- providing a submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee on the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018
- providing a submission to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee on the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018
- participating in roundtables on the United Nations *Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- providing a submission to the (Australian) Department of Communities and the Arts on the *Review of the Enhancing Online Safety Act 2015 and its consultation on the draft Online Safety Charter*
- providing a submission to the then Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's *Sexual violence prevention: having the conversation* background paper
- providing a submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission on the *Inquiry into imprisonment and recidivism*
- providing a submission to the Australian Government Productivity Commission on the *Mental health issues* paper and *Systems for Protecting Children* consultation paper
- providing a submission to the Australian Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties) Bill 2018
- providing a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's *Review of the permanent ban on miniature motorbikes (monkey bikes) with unsafe design features*.

Six submissions specifically addressed promoting positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



The year ahead

In 2019–20, as part of our educate objective, we will:

- advocate for the needs, interests and perspectives of children, young people and their families, particularly those in child protection or youth justice systems
- provide leadership and expert advice about laws, policies, systems and practices
- make sure the needs, interests and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities are advocated for and are taken into account in systems-wide improvements
- introduce the next phase of the *Out of the Dark* online safety awareness initiative
- continue to promote and advocate a shared responsibility for improving the protection, safety and wellbeing of children and young people during their online interactions
- continue promoting the *oneplace* directory as a help-seeking tool for Queensland families
- continue the *Families are First* movement to hear and promote the stories and strengths of Indigenous parenting in Queensland
- continue to promote practical advice and messaging on prevention of child death and injury
- continue to source and distribute research findings that increase community awareness of the prevalence and impacts of online child abuse and exploitation
- conduct further research events in response to sector priorities; and maintain and update the QFCC online Knowledge and Resource Hub
- publish the *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland 2018–19*
- continue to respond to data requests about 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
- continue to roll-out the *Talking Families Schools* initiative more broadly across the state in partnership with Family and Child Connect and schools
- complete the upgrade of the database system that holds the child death register.

Governance

Management and structure

Our executive

There were six permanent members of the Executive Group at 30 June 2019.

Cheryl Vardon

*Chief Executive and
Principal Commissioner*

Cheryl has had a distinguished career as an educator and is recognised for her leadership in the protection of vulnerable children and young people. She has an extensive track record of expertise in the translation of complex policies into strategies and outcomes.

In 2016 and 2017, Cheryl led a series of reviews for the Queensland Government leading to practical reform measures to keep vulnerable children more than safe. She is an experienced reviewer of systems, using case studies and stories to influence policy and establish reforms.

In previous roles, Cheryl has provided strategic analysis and advice on contested areas of public policy within highly regulated environments.

Her breadth of experience has seen her conduct assignments and provide advice in policy development and strategy review, business development, leadership mentoring and community services.

She has represented Australian governments, companies and organisations nationally and internationally.

Her work in education and services for Indigenous children and young people received a Prime Minister’s Reconciliation Award.

Cheryl has held many leadership, board and statutory roles, as a director-general, chief executive, commissioner and adjunct professor, in private, public and not-for-profit organisations. These have included education departments, children’s services departments, consumer affairs, a national charity, universities and tribunals.

She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Managers and Leaders, a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators, a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member (Women for Media) of the Women’s Leadership Institute Australia.

She was awarded an honorary doctorate (Doctor of the University) by Griffith University.

Cheryl has held the office of Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) since October 2015.

Phillip Brooks

Commissioner

Phillip’s career has mainly been in the child, youth and family support portfolio in Queensland. He began working for the Queensland Government 18 years ago as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee with the Queensland Police Service.

Phillip is a descendant of the Bidjara Tribe (great grandfather), the Kairi Tribe (great grandmother), and the Ducabrook Clan located at Springsure, Central Queensland.

He is deeply invested in responding in ways that support and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to exercise their responsibilities and to heal, grow and prosper.

As Commissioner, Phillip is responsible for the sector development and community education programs. He joined the QFCC in October 2017.



Natalie Conner

*Deputy Commissioner,
Corporate and
Communications*

- Natalie has worked as a senior executive in the Queensland public service for over a decade and has broad experience in regional and head office environments. Her industry experience includes working with sectors as diverse as transport, parks, sport and racing.
- Prior to coming to the QFCC, Natalie 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 Corporate Services and Communications area and chairs the Major Projects Board. She began working with the QFCC in October 2016.

Dr Leanne Gill

*Deputy Commissioner,
Programs*

- Leanne has extensive experience as a public sector executive and leader, building teams and working with stakeholders to deliver innovative solutions to meet government priorities.
- She has worked in strategic change roles across the Queensland public service and tertiary education sectors. In doing so, she has drawn on her background in organisational development, talent management, capability development, performance management, applied research and performance evaluation. She has also worked as a university lecturer in the field.
- Leanne has been the Deputy Commissioner for Programs since September 2017. She is responsible for the QFCC's Oversight and Evaluation of the child and family support sector.

Jaime Blackburn

Chief Operating Officer

- Jaime is a senior executive and qualified accountant with extensive experience in both the public and private sector, having spent a significant period of her career delivering professional services within a 'Big 4' environment in Queensland and in the United Kingdom.
- Jaime previously worked for the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet and held roles in corporate governance, risk management and internal audit services. Jaime also acts as a risk management advisor to the Audit and Risk Management Committee of the Queensland Art Gallery.
- As the Chief Operating Officer, Jaime currently manages the Child Death Prevention, Family and Child Research and Child Death Review teams. She joined the QFCC in October 2018.

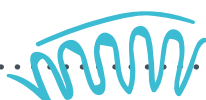
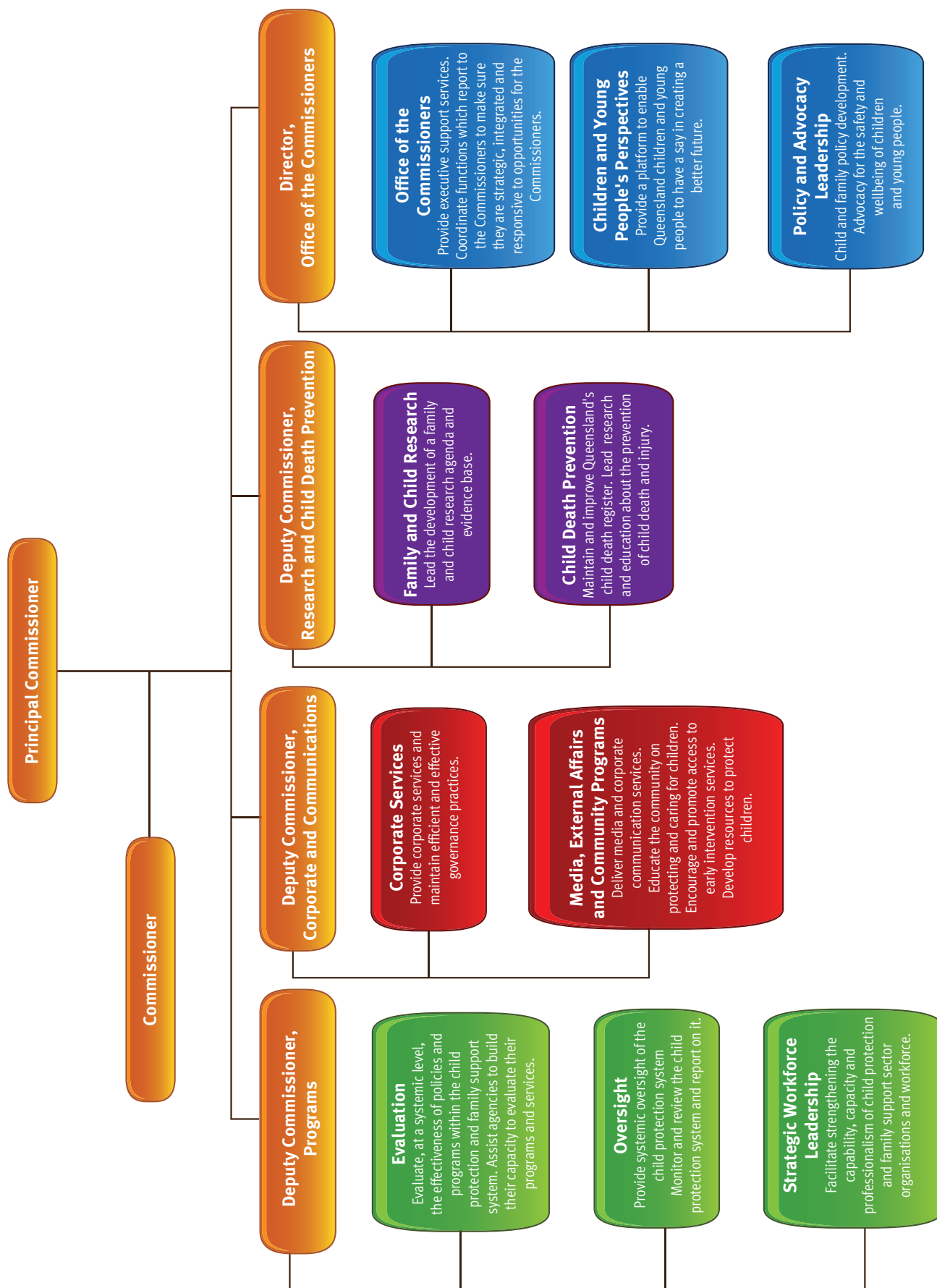
Tracy Fogarty

*Director, Office of the
Commissioners*

- Tracy has worked in a range of governance and program management roles in the Queensland public service for over a decade. Across a diverse range of portfolios, she has provided professional executive support to several chief executives.
- Tracy has been the Director of the Office of the Commissioners since June 2017. She also manages the Policy and Advocacy Leadership and the Children and Young Peoples' Perspective functions. She started with the QFCC in April 2016.

Our structure

The QFCC operates out of 53 Albert Street Brisbane and delivers its services through the structure outlined in the following organisational chart. Minor structural changes were undertaken during the year to best support strategic direction and future work priorities and to align with the functions of the Commissioner within s20 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.



Governance framework

The QFCC operates several internal committees to help maintain effective governance.

The *Executive Group* meets fortnightly and is made up of the QFCC executives. This group oversees our performance relative to our strategic plan, financial performance and high-level risk. It also addresses stakeholder engagement, partnership and development opportunities.

The *Leader Group* is made up of the QFCC executive, directors and managers. Meeting monthly, members discuss strategic issues, provide updates on the progress of our important initiatives, identify opportunities to leverage off other projects or upcoming stakeholder interactions, and seek peer input into potential initiatives.

The *Major Projects Board* provides governance of business performance. It oversees the QFCC's major projects, initiatives and finances and provides advice to the Executive Group.

The *Staff Advisory Insights Committee* is made up of the Principal Commissioner, Commissioner and staff representatives. Meeting monthly, this group focuses on providing a safe, positive and professional working environment within the QFCC. An important aim of the forum is to facilitate communication between the executive and the staff group about whole-of-QFCC matters.

The *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Steering Committee* is an internal advisory body to the Executive Group on ICT issues. It had its inaugural meeting in February 2019. The committee's purpose is to make sure infrastructure and information resources adequately support the QFCC and align with government strategies and regulations.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The QFCC established an Audit and Risk Management Committee in 2018. Meetings are held quarterly, with the chair and deputy chair positions held by standing members external to government. Remuneration for external members is \$500 (chair) and \$300 (deputy chair) per meeting. The purpose of the committee is to provide independent assurance and assistance to the Principal Commissioner on the QFCC's:

- risk oversight and compliance management frameworks
- external accountability responsibilities as prescribed in the:
 - ▶ *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
 - ▶ *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*
 - ▶ *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and other relevant legislation.*

The responsibilities of the committee include oversight of risk and financial management, compliance and internal controls, internal and external audit, and performance management.

The committee's achievements for 2018–19 included:

- development of the committee's terms of reference
- endorsement of the QFCC risk management framework
- review and ongoing monitoring of the corporate and operational risk registers
- monitoring of risk mitigation controls of QFCC major projects
- monitoring of the register of previous audit recommendations
- endorsement of audit plans for the upcoming financial year.

There were four standing members and three regular observers of the Audit and Risk Management Committee at 30 June 2019. The committee met twice in 2018–19, operated within the audit committee guidelines, and observed the terms of its charter. Its membership is currently made up of:

Standing members	
Heather Watson	Director and Principal Lawyer, Watson Advisory & Consulting Pty Ltd, (Chair)
Peter Dowling (AM)	Accountant and experienced company director (Deputy Chair)
Jaime Blackburn	Chief Operating Officer, QFCC
Tracy Fogarty	Director, Office of the Commissioners, QFCC
Regular observers	
Melissa Fletcher	Director, Queensland Audit Office
Martin Linnane	Manager, Audit Services, Corporate Administration Agency
Lyle Gerbich	Director, Corporate Services, QFCC

External scrutiny

The parliamentary Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee held a public hearing on 25 February 2019 as part of its statutory oversight of the QFCC. Following examination of the QFCC's 2017–18 annual report, the committee met with Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon and Commissioner Phillip Brooks. The committee's report on the oversight of the QFCC had not been tabled at 30 June 2019.

Information systems and record keeping

The QFCC operates under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*. It maintains full and accurate records of QFCC activities and operates within the standards and guidelines issued by the Queensland State Archivist.

We use a Hewlett-Packard Content Management application to meet our record-keeping obligations. We manage our records in accordance with the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Human Rights Act 2019

The *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019* was released in February 2019. The QFCC received no human rights-related complaints in 2018–19.

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 2018–19

This summary provides an overview of the QFCC's financial performance for 2018–19 and a comparison with 2017–18. A detailed view of the financial performance for 2018–19 is provided in the financial statements included in this annual report.

We are committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility while meeting our objectives.

Financial results

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2018–19 \$'000	Actual 2017–18 \$'000
Income from continuing operations		
Grants and other contributions	11,879	12,451
Other revenue	72	123
Total income from continuing operations	11,951	12,574
Expenses from continuing operations		
Employee expenses	7,885	8,015
Supplies and services	3,411	4,226
Depreciation and amortisation	279	279
Other expenses	109	115
Total expenses from continuing operations	11,684	12,635
Operating result from continuing operations	267	(61)

In 2018–19, the QFCC received total revenue of \$11,951 million in comparison to \$12,574 million in 2017–18. The QFCC maintained a sound net asset position in the 2018–19 financial year.

Financial position

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2018–19 \$'000	Actual 2017–18 \$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,224	2,137
Receivables	267	305
Other current assets	37	112
Total current assets	3,528	2,554
Non-current assets		
Plant and equipment	288	342
Intangible assets	303	528
Total non-current assets	591	870
Total assets	4,119	3,424
Current liabilities		
Payables	626	1,021
Accrued employee benefits	335	312
Total liabilities	961	1,333
Net assets	3,158	2,091
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	731	464
Contributed equity	2,427	1,627
Total equity	3,158	2,091

Further information

As required by annual reporting guidelines, information relating to consultancies engaged by the QFCC in 2018–19 is published online through the government's Open Data website (<https://data.qld.gov.au/>).

Our workforce

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

Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2019, the QFCC employed 58 full-time equivalent staff, with total employee expenses for the year of \$7.885 million, representing 67% of the QFCC operating expenditure.

Our staff profile was 79% female and 21% male, with:

- 8% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 5% identifying as having a disability.

Separation rate

During 2018–19, our permanent separation rate was 9%. No redundancy packages were paid during the period.

Strategic Workforce Plan

Our *Strategic Workforce Plan* is regularly reviewed to make sure our workforce strategies and initiatives remain relevant and consider the needs of the staff and the organisation.

Focus areas include:

- developing initiatives to strengthen the culture of the organisation
- developing and implementing innovative internal and external development programs and support tools that use whole-of-government initiatives to build leadership capabilities
- contemporary and innovative recruitment practices that target a diverse and wide pool of candidates with a focus on attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates to strengthen our cultural capability
- implementing a range of health and wellbeing initiatives to support staff needs
- continuing to improve our information and communication technology to support an agile and mobile workforce to work off-site when required
- enhancing information sharing and working collaboratively across the QFCC
- incorporating findings from the 2018 *Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey*.

We have continued to fine-tune our organisational structure and governance arrangements to best support our strategic direction and future work priorities.



Attraction and retention

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

- making minor changes to our organisational structure to provide greater efficiency in meeting our legislative mandate
- further strengthening our ability to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees—using strategies and initiatives from our *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy* including:
 - ▶ designating selected positions as specified⁶
 - ▶ designating an Indigenous recruitment champion for prospective employees to call to confidentially discuss our cultural support and stage of development
 - ▶ advertising vacancies through specialist Indigenous recruitment firms.
- listening to staff to drive improved business practices and organisational culture.

Performance management framework

We implemented several initiatives to support staff performance and development during 2018–19. These included:

- timely completion of annual performance development plans to identify individual and organisational learning and development initiatives
- participation in LEAD4QLD, a development program providing insights into individual leadership strengths, development areas and the behaviours that underpin leadership roles
- mandatory online training on code of conduct, information privacy, right to information, bullying, domestic and family violence, and cultural capability
- encouraging our leaders to take up development opportunities offered by the Public Service Commission.

Supporting staff wellbeing

The QFCC offered several 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 boost resilience and provide peer support
- ongoing access and promotion of an employee assistance program, which provides 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 to help staff to build financial security
- a range of physical and mental initiatives to promote employee health and wellbeing.

Flexible working arrangements

The QFCC provides flexible employment options to assist staff to effectively blend work, family and life responsibilities. Many opportunities are available to staff and are promoted through recruitment and selection processes, employee induction, policies and factsheets.

Flexible work practices are offered, considering the personal circumstances of the employee and the potential impact on operational needs.

⁶ An specified position requires a reference from an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander attesting to an applicant's knowledge, skills and experience to meet the cultural capabilities required of the role.

Code of conduct

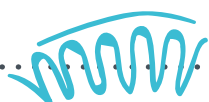
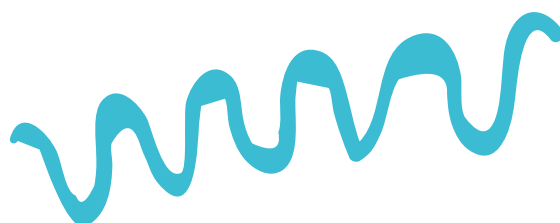
QFCC staff are covered by the single code of conduct established for the Queensland Public Service. Code of conduct principles and their associated set of values form part of induction training for new staff. All staff are required to complete mandatory online code of conduct training. The QFCC performance and development framework and processes also address code of conduct expectations.

QFCC staff are encouraged to raise any workplace issues they experience with their line manager. Local resolution is the preferred option. A complaints management policy and factsheet on harassment and bullying outline avenues if local resolution isn't successful.

The year ahead

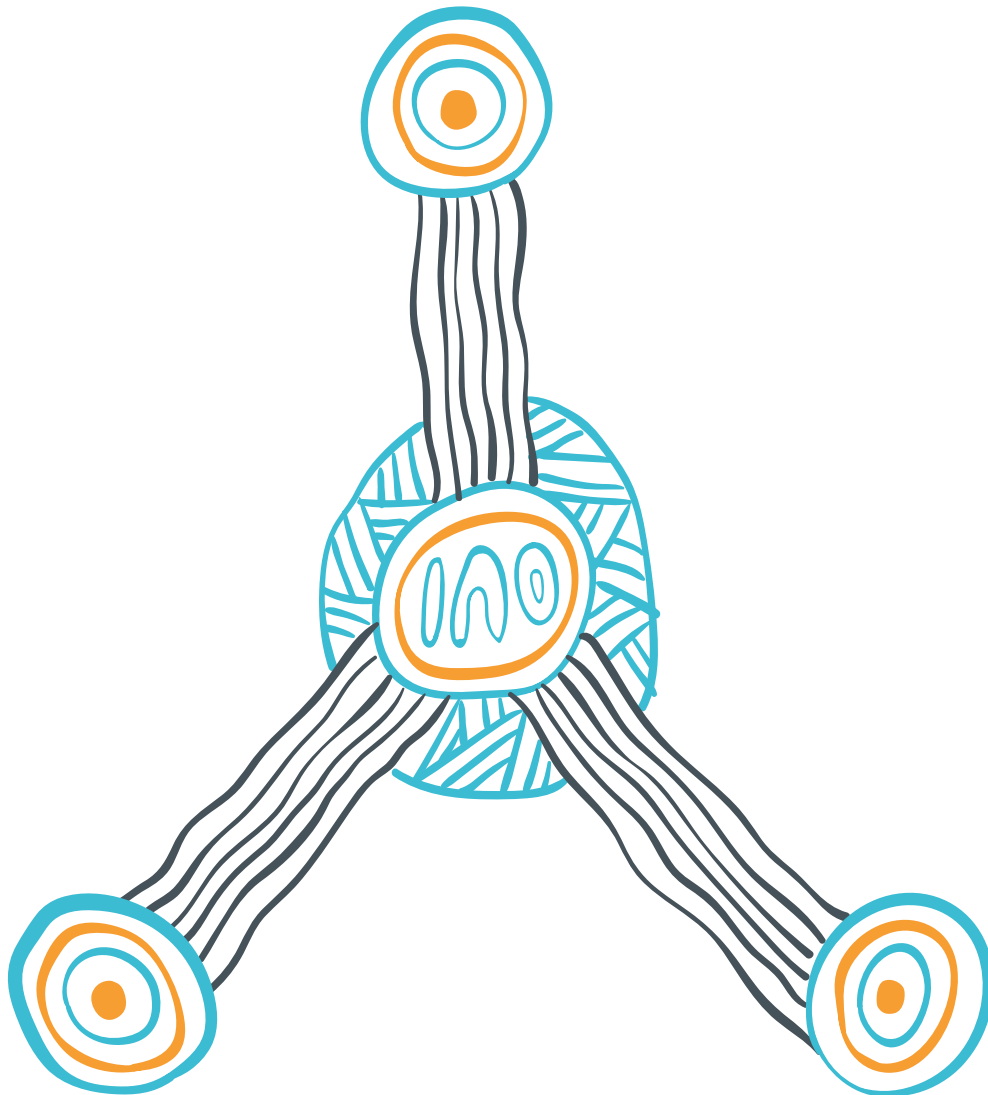
In 2019–20, as part of our governance responsibilities, the QFCC will:

- upgrade our Hewlett-Packard Content Management records management system
- undertake an assessment of the maturity of our record keeping practices
- continue to explore cost-reduction initiatives
- identify professional development opportunities for staff including
 - considering a leadership development offering for all staff
 - seeking opportunities to partner with other agencies to offer professional development.
- continue to provide a range of health and wellbeing initiatives
- continue our commitment to and roll-out of cultural capability initiatives under our *Journey with Us* program to support the needs of our staff and organisation
- implement a new child safe practices policy and complete training on this for all staff.



Appendix A—Glossary of terms

ATSICHS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
CPO	Child Protection Order
CSIA	Community Services Industry Alliance
FaCC	Family and Child Connect
IPA	Intervention with Parental Agreement
QCOSS	Queensland Council of Social Services
QFCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission



Appendix B—Annual report compliance checklist

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 7	p. 3
Accessibility	Table of contents	ARRs—section 9.1	p. 5
	Glossary		p. 59
	Public availability	ARRs—section 9.2	p. 2
	Interpreter service statement	Queensland Government Language Services Policy ARRs—section 9.3	QFCC is not a participating statutory body
	Copyright notice	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs—section 9.4	p. 2
	Information licensing	QGEA—Information Licensing ARRs—section 9.5	p. 2
General information	Introductory information	ARRs—section 10.1	pp. 6–13
	Machinery of government changes	ARRs—section 31 and 32	N/A
	Agency role and main functions	ARRs—section 10.2	p. 8
	Operating environment	ARRs—section 10.3	p. 12
Non-financial performance	Government's objectives for the community	ARRs—section 11.1	p. 9
	Other whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives	ARRs—section 11.2	pp. 12–13
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs—section 11.3	p. 11
	Agency service areas and service standards	ARRs—section 11.4	p. 11
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs—section 12.1	pp. 54–55
Governance—management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs—section 13.1	p. 52
	Executive management	ARRs—section 13.2	pp. 50–51
	Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs—section 13.3	N/A
	Public Sector Ethics Act 1994	Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 ARRs—section 13.4	p. 58
Financial performance	Queensland public service values	ARRs—section 13.5	p. 10
Governance—risk management and accountability	Risk management	ARRs—section 14.1	p. 53
	Audit committee	ARRs—section 14.2	p. 53
	Internal audit	ARRs—section 14.3	p. 53
	External scrutiny	ARRs—section 15.4	p. 54
	Information systems and record keeping	ARRs—section 14.5	p. 54
Governance—human resources	Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs—section 15.1	pp. 56–57
	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.11/12 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> Directive No.16/16 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment (from 20 May 2016)</i> ARRs—section 15.2	p. 56
Open Data	Statement advising publication of records	ARRs—section 16	p. 55
	Consultancies	ARRs—section 33.1	N/A
	Overseas travel	ARRs—section 33.2	N/A
	Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs—section 33.3	N/A
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	FAA—section 62 FPMS—sections 42, 43 and 50 ARRs—section 17.1	pp. 61–93
	Independent auditor's report	FAA—section 62 FPMS—section 50 ARRs—section 17.2	pp. 94–95

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 2019

Queensland Family and Child Commission Financial Statements 2018-19

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No</u>
Statement of Comprehensive Income	3
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Changes in Equity	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6-7
Notes To and Forming Part of the Financial Statements	8-32
Management Certificate	33
Independent Audit Report	34-35

Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME****for the year ended 30 June 2019**

	Notes	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
Grants and other contributions	3.	11,879	12,451
Other revenue		72	123
Total Income from Continuing Operations		11,951	12,574
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	7,885	8,015
Supplies and services	5.	3,411	4,226
Depreciation and amortisation	6.	279	279
Other expenses	7.	109	115
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		11,684	12,635
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		267	(61)
Total Comprehensive Income		267	(61)

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2019

	Notes	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,224	2,137
Receivables	8.	267	305
Prepayments		37	112
Total Current Assets		3,528	2,554
Non Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	9.	288	342
Intangible assets	10.	303	528
Total Non Current Assets		591	870
Total Assets		4,119	3,424
Current Liabilities			
Payables	11.	626	1,021
Accrued employee benefits	12.	335	312
Total Current Liabilities		961	1,333
Total Liabilities		961	1,333
Net Assets		3,158	2,091
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		731	464
Contributed equity		2,427	1,627
Total Equity		3,158	2,091

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY for the year ended 30 June 2019

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2017	525	1,627	2,152
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	(61)	-	(61)
Balance as at 30 June 2018	464	1,627	2,091
Balance as at 1 July 2018	464	1,627	2,091
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	267	-	267
Transactions with Owners as Owners:			
• Non-Appropriated Equity Injections	-	800	800
Balance as at 30 June 2019	731	2,427	3,158

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
for the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
<i>Inflows:</i>		
Grants and other contributions	11,879	12,451
GST input tax credits from ATO	495	433
GST collected from customers	5	10
Interest receipts	71	62
Other revenue	1	126
<i>Outflows:</i>		
Employee expenses	(7,888)	(7,985)
Supplies and services	(3,731)	(4,149)
GST paid to suppliers	(431)	(520)
GST remitted to ATO	(5)	(10)
Other	(109)	(115)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	287	303
Cash flows from financing activities		
<i>Inflows:</i>		
Equity Injections	800	-
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	800	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	1,087	303
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	2,137	1,834
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3,224	2,137

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
for the year ended 30 June 2019

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

Reconciliation of Operating Result to Net Cash provided by Operating Activities

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Operating surplus	267	(61)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	279	279
Gain on recognition of previously expensed asset	-	(8)
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(26)	144
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	64	(88)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	75	(111)
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable	(395)	189
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	23	(41)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	287	303

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

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 Contributions

Note 4: Employee Expenses

Note 5: Supplies and Services

Note 6: Depreciation and Amortisation

Note 7: Other Expenses

Section 3: Notes about our Financial Position

Note 8: Receivables

Note 9: Plant and Equipment

Note 10: Intangible Assets

Note 11: Payables

Note 12: Accrued Employee Benefits

Section 4: Notes about Risks and Other Accounting Uncertainties

Note 13: Commitments for Expenditure

Note 14: Contingencies

Note 15: Financial Instrument Categories

Note 16: Events Occurring After Balance Date

Note 17: Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

Section 5: Notes on our Performance compared to Budget

Note 18: Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

Section 5: Other Information

Note 19: Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures

Note 20: Taxation

Note 21: Insurance

Note 22: Accounting Estimates and Judgements

Note 23: First Year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Accounting Policy

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

General Information

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

The QFCC is a statutory body established on 1 July 2014 as part of the Queensland Government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (Carmody Inquiry). The QFCC provides oversight of Queensland's child protection system to ensure government and non-government agencies are delivering best practice services for the families and children of Queensland.

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.

Compliance with Prescribed Requirements

QFCC has prepared these financial statements in compliance with section 43 of the *Performance Management Standard 2009*. The financial statements comply with Queensland Treasury's Minimum Reporting Requirements for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2018.

QFCC is a not-for-profit entity and these general purpose financial statements are prepared on an accrual basis (except for the statement of cash flows which is prepared on a cash basis) in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations applicable to not-for-profit entities.

New accounting standards early adopted and/or applied for the first time in these financial statements are outlined in Note 23.

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 2017-18 financial statements.

Current / Non-Current Classification

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

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation (contd)

Presentation (contd)

Current / Non-Current Classification (contd)

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

Historical cost is used as the measurement basis in this report.

Under the historical cost, assets are recorded at the amount of cash or cash equivalents paid or the fair value of the consideration given to acquire assets at the time of acquisition. Liabilities are recorded at the amount of proceeds received in exchange for the obligation or at the amounts of cash or cash equivalents expected to be paid to satisfy the liability in the normal course of business.

The Reporting Entity

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

Accounting Policy - Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the statement of financial position and the statement of cash flows, cash assets include all cash and cheques receipted but not banked as at 30 June.

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
- Internal Audit Services.

Authorisation of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Principal Commissioner and the Executive Director, Corporate and Communications (formerly Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications) at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

2. Objectives of the QFCC

The QFCC has the following objectives:

- Work closely with all Queenslanders to build safe, caring and connected communities who are well supported by quality frontline child protection and family support services;
- Promote and advocate for the safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them; and
- Improve the child protection and family support system to ensure those most vulnerable are well cared for and able to thrive.

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
3. Grants and Contributions		
Grants received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet	-	6,226
Grants received from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General	11,879	6,225
Total	11,879	12,451

Accounting Policy - Grants and Contributions

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

4. Employee Expenses

Employee Benefits

Wages and salaries	5,903	5,963
Employer superannuation contributions	778	787
Annual leave levy	589	598
Long service leave levy	132	125

Employee Related Expenses

Payroll tax	344	351
Fringe Benefit Tax	20	16
Workers' compensation premium	32	55
Other employee related expenses	87	120

Total	7,885	8,015
--------------	--------------	--------------

Full-Time Equivalent Employees	58	59
--------------------------------	----	----

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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

4. Employee Expenses (contd)

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 (LSLS), 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.

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 QFCC pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation. Workers' compensation insurance is a consequence of employing employees, but is not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. It is not employee benefits and is recognised separately as employee related expenses.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
5. Supplies and Services		
Building services *	1,021	986
Administration costs	120	95
Contractors and consultants	1,197	1,636
Corporate services provider costs	526	637
Telecommunications	54	57
Advertising and promotions	75	392
Travel	103	171
Minor plant and equipment	94	8
Repairs and maintenance	2	1
Professional services	21	7
Other supplies and services	198	236
Total	3,411	4,226

* Building Services includes lease payments to DHPW of \$893k (2018- \$862k) and these are expended in the periods in which they are incurred.

Accounting Policy - Operating Lease Rentals

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.

6. Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation and amortisation were incurred in respect of:

Depreciation Expense - Plant and Equipment	54	54
Amortisation Expense	225	225
Total	279	279

Depreciation Expense

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

The following depreciation rate was used:

Class	Rate
Plant and equipment	10-33%

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

6. Depreciation and Amortisation (contd)

Amortisation Expense

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%

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
7. Other Expenses		
Insurance premiums (QGIF)	4	4
External audit fees *	23	30
Sponsorships paid	82	81
Total	109	115

* Total audit fees quoted in the Queensland Audit Office's plan for 2018-19 is \$22,500 (2017-18: \$21,975).

8. Receivables		
GST receivable	96	160
Annual leave reimbursements	136	135
Long service leave reimbursement	35	10
Total	267	305

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

8. Receivables (contd)

Accounting Policy - Receivables

Receivables are measured at amortised cost which approximates their fair values at reporting date.

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 the date the invoice is received.

Impairment of Receivables

Accounting Policy - Impairment of Receivables

The loss allowance for trade and other debtors reflect lifetime expected credit losses and incorporates reasonable supportable forward-looking information. Economic changes impacting the QFCC's debtors, and relevant industry data from part of QFCC's impairment assessment.

QFCC other receivables are from Queensland Government agencies or Australian Government agencies. No loss allowance is recorded for these receivables.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

9. Plant and Equipment

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
Plant and Equipment: at cost	501	501
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(213)	(159)
Carrying amount at 30 June	288	342

Reconciliation of carrying amount:

	2019	2018
	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Plant and Equipment</i>		
Carrying amount at 1 July	342	388
Acquisitions	-	8
Depreciation Expense	(54)	(54)
Carrying amount at 30 June	288	342

Recognition and Acquisition

Accounting Policy - Recognition

Basis of capitalisation and recognition thresholds

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 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 architectural fees and engineering design fees.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

9. Plant and Equipment (contd)

Measurement using Historical Cost

Accounting Policy

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

Impairment

Accounting Policy

All non-current physical assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No significant indicators of impairment were present at reporting date.

10. Intangible Assets	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Software Purchased: At cost		
Gross	433	433
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(281)	(219)
	152	214
Software Internally Generated: At cost		
Gross	1,146	1,146
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(996)	(832)
	150	314
Carrying amount at 30 June	303	528

Intangible Assets - Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amounts

	Software Purchased		Software Internally Generated		Total	
	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	214	276	314	477	528	753
Amortisation expense	(62)	(62)	(163)	(163)	(225)	(224)
Carrying amount at 30 June	152	214	151	314	303	528

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

10. Intangible Assets (contd)

Recognition and Measurement

Accounting Policy

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.

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.

Impairment

Accounting Policy

All intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No significant indicators of impairment were present at reporting date.

11. Payables

Trade creditors
Other payables

2019	2018
\$'000	\$'000

568	965
58	56

Total

626	1,021
-----	-------

Accounting Policy

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
Annual leave levy payable
Long service leave levy payable

133	123
167	155
35	34

Total

335	312
-----	-----

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

12. Accrued Employee Benefits (contd)

Accounting Policy

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. Commitments for Expenditure

2019	2018
\$'000	\$'000

(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	1,003	957
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,601	-
Total	2,604	957

Accounting Policy - Operating Lease Rentals

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.

Disclosure - Operating Leases

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

(b) Other Expense Commitments

The other material expenditure commitments of the QFCC (inclusive of non-recoverable GST input tax credits) contracted for at reporting date but not recognised in the accounts are payable as follows:

Not later than one year	607	857
Later than one year and not later than five years	586	579
Total	1,193	1,436

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

14. Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2019.

15. Financial Risk Disclosures

Financial Instrument Categories

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

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

Category	Note	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,224	2,137
Financial assets measured at amortised cost:			
Receivables	8.	267	305
Total		3,491	2,442
Financial Liabilities			
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost:			
Payables	11.	626	1,021
Total		626	1,021

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

16. Events Occurring After Balance Date

No events have occurred after balance date that has a material effect on these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

17. 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 effective dates are set out below:

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

The transition date for both AASB 15 and AASB 1058 is 1 July 2019. Consequently, these standards will first apply to QFCC when preparing the financial statements for 2019-20. QFCC has reviewed the impact of AASB 15 and AASB 1058 and identified the following impacts (or estimated impact where indicated) on adoption of the new standards:

- The QFCC receives one grant for which there are no sufficiently specific performance obligations. This grant is 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, but will monitor the impact of any such contracts subsequently entered into before the new standards take effect.

AASB 16 - Leases

This standard will first apply to 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

Under AASB 16, the majority of operating leases (as defined by the current AASB 117 and shown at Note 13) will be reported on the statement of financial position as right-of-use assets and lease liabilities.

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.

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

AASB 16 - Leases (contd)

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. In accordance with Queensland Treasury's policy, QFCC will apply the 'cumulative approach', and will 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.

Outcome of review as lessee

QFCC has completed its review of the impact of adoption of AASB 16 on the statement of financial position and statement of comprehensive income and has identified the following major impacts which are outlined below:

During the 2018-19 financial year, QFCC held one operating lease under AASB 117 from the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) for non-specialised, commercial office accommodation through the Queensland Government Accommodation Office (QGAO). Lease payments under these arrangements totalled \$893k p.a. QFCC has been advised by Queensland Treasury and DHPW that, effective 1 July 2019, amendments to the framework agreements that govern QGAO will result in the above arrangement being exempt from lease accounting under AASB 16. This is due to DHPW having substantive substitution rights over the non-specialised, commercial office accommodation used within these arrangements. From 2019-20 onwards, costs for these services will continue to be expensed as supplies and services expense when incurred.

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

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

18. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

This section contains explanations of major variances between QFCC's actual 2018-19 financial results and the original budget presented to Parliament.

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Comprehensive Income

		Original Budget 2019 \$'000	Actual 2019 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
	Variance Notes				
Income from Continuing Operations					
Grants and other contributions		11,879	11,879	-	0%
Other revenue		47	72	25	53%
Total Income from Continuing Operations		11,926	11,951	25	0%
Expenses from Continuing Operations					
Employee expenses	1.	7,426	7,885	459	6%
Supplies and services	2.	4,165	3,411	(754)	(18%)
Depreciation and amortisation		277	279	2	1%
Other expenses	3.	58	109	51	88%
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		11,926	11,684	(243)	(2%)
Total Comprehensive Income		-	267	267	100%

QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

18. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Financial Position

		Original Budget 2019 \$'000	Actual 2019 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
	Variance Notes				
Current Assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	4.	1,704	3,224	1,520	89%
Receivables		218	267	49	22%
Other		-	37	37	100%
Total Current Assets		1,922	3,528	1,606	84%
Non-Current Assets					
Plant and equipment		290	288	(2)	(1%)
Intangible assets	4.	1,103	303	(800)	(73%)
Total Non-Current Assets		1,393	591	(802)	(58%)
Total Assets		3,315	4,119	804	24%
Current Liabilities					
Payables		394	626	232	59%
Accrued employee benefits		302	335	33	11%
Total Current Liabilities		696	961	(265)	(38%)
Total Liabilities		696	961	(265)	(38%)
Net Assets		2,619	3,158	539	21%
Total Equity		2,619	3,158	539	21%

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

18. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Cash Flows

	Variance Notes	Original Budget 2019 \$'000	Actual 2019 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Cash flows from operating activities					
<i>Inflows:</i>					
Grants and other contributions		11,879	11,879	-	0%
GST input tax credits from ATO		380	495	115	30%
GST collected from customers		-	5	5	100%
Interest receipts		47	71	24	51%
Other		-	1	1	100%
<i>Outflows:</i>					
Employee expenses	5.	(7,446)	(7,888)	(442)	(6%)
Supplies and services	5.	(4,174)	(3,731)	443	11%
GST paid to suppliers		(380)	(431)	(51)	(13%)
GST remitted to ATO		-	(5)	(5)	(100%)
Other		(63)	(109)	(46)	(73%)
Net cash (used in) operating activities		243	287	44	18%
Cash flows from investing activities					
<i>Outflows:</i>					
Payments for non-financial assets	6.	(800)	-	800	100%
Net cash provided by investing activities		(800)	-	800	(100%)
Cash flows from financing activities					
<i>Inflows:</i>					
Equity injections		800	800	-	0%
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		800	800	-	0%
Net increase in cash held		243	1,087	844	347%
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,461	2,137	676	(54%)
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		1,704	3,224	1,520	89%

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

18. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Explanations of Major Variances

Statement of Comprehensive Income

1. An increase in Employee Expenses was primarily due to a change in project delivery approach for our oversight and review work. Approach changed from engaging outsourced contractors to using seconded officers from within government. This temporary secondment approach was funded by, and resulted in, a corresponding decrease in supplies and services.
2. Supplies and Services vary each year as projects are dependant on available grant funding, the program of work to be undertaken and expertise available internally. The decrease in Supplies and Services is primarily due to a change in project delivery approach and a reduction in IT managed service costs, offset in part by increased employee costs.
3. An increase in Other Expenses is primarily due to sponsorship initiatives (\$82,000).

Statement of Financial Position

4. An increase in Cash assets is due to the receipt of funds (\$800,000) for the Child Death Register software development still to be undertaken and the timing of payments (operational expenses recognised but not paid) as at 30 June 2019.

Statement of Cash Flows

5. Variances between budget and actual expenditure for Employee Costs and Supplies and Services is due to the same factors outlined in the major variances for the Statement of Comprehensive Income.
6. The decrease in cash outflows for non-financial assets has resulted from delay of the replacement of the Child Death Register software development as outlines in the explanations of major variances for the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party 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 2018-19 and 2017-18.

Position	Position Responsibility
Principal Commissioner	<p>As the Chief Executive of the agency, the role provides strategic and cross-sectorial leadership and direction to government and non-government agencies to strengthen laws, policies, practices and services that improve the family and child support system.</p> <p>The role is responsible for providing expert advice on child protection practices, underpinned by research, to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Maintaining the rights of children in all situations continues to drive the work of the agency.</p>
Commissioner	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications	<p>The role supports both Commissioners and specifically provides strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- strategic and agency performance reporting, governance and risk management,- corporate support (HR, ICT, Finance, Facilities, Legal and Procurement), and- communication, marketing, and community education. <p>This role also maintains a detailed knowledge of progress across the QFCC program of work and provides high-level information and advice to the Commissioners about issues and risks.</p>

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (contd)

Details of Key Management Personnel (contd)

Position	Position Responsibility
Chief Operating Officer	<p>The role provides strategic leadership and direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in developing and coordinating a multidisciplinary research program to inform policies and practices, - informing the community about research relevant to the child protection system, - in maintaining a reliable register of the deaths of all children in Queensland, - providing valuable information on patterns and trends of child death, and - making evidence-based recommendations about laws, policies and practices to reduce the likelihood of child deaths. <p>The role also provides strategic support to Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications on corporate matters.</p>
Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Death Prevention (This position ceased in January 2019)	<p>The role provides strategic leadership and direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leading the QFCC's research function to manage the development and implementation of mandated responsibilities relating to research projects, - maintaining a register of all child deaths in Queensland, identifying prevention priorities and sharing information with key stakeholders, and - providing leadership with the development of evidence based policies and practices that improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
Deputy Commissioner, Programs	<p>The role provides strategic direction and leadership to drive the implementation of workforce futures, oversight and evaluation strategies that effectively monitor, review and report on the adequacy of the child protection and family support system in Queensland.</p>
Director, Office of the Commissioners	<p>The role provides strategic and operational support to the Commissioners and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides detailed briefings to the Commissioners and external stakeholders on policy and program initiatives to support the achievement of strategic objectives, and - coordinates 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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party 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 expenses for those KMP comprise the following components:

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

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (contd)

KMP Remuneration Expense

1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Principal Commissioner	269	4	6	27	-	306
Commissioner	200	2	4	22	-	228
Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications	111	5	2	12	-	130
Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Death Prevention (ceased 4 January 2019)	104	7	2	12	-	125
Deputy Commissioner, Programs	201	1	4	22	-	228
Director, Office of the Commissioners	139	1	3	18	-	161
Chief Operating Officer (from 15 October 2018)	126	0	3	13	-	142
Total Remuneration	1150	20	24	126	-	1320

1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Principal Commissioner	248	0	5	27	-	280
Commissioner (from 13 October 2017)	168	6	3	15	-	192
Deputy Commissioner, Corporate	153	6	3	15	-	177
Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Death Prevention	207	7	4	22	-	240
Deputy Commissioner, Programs (from 7 September 2017)	74	5	1	6	-	86
Director, Office of the Commissioners	135	1	3	16	-	155
Total Remuneration	985	25	19	101	-	1130

The position, Deputy Commissioner, Corporate became Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications in 2018-19.

The Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications was on leave from October 2018 to January 2019.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

19. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party 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.

QFCC's primary ongoing source of funding is grant funding provided in cash by Department of Justice and Attorney General (Note 3).

QFCC received services from CAA (Note 1) totalling \$230k and has an operating lease from DHPW for commercial office accommodation (Note 17) totalling \$893k.

20. 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 under Note 8 - Receivables.

21. Insurance

The QFCC's non-current physical assets and other risks are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund with 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.

22. 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 Note 6 - Depreciation and Amortisation.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

23. First Year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Accounting Policy

Changes in Accounting Policies - AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*

QFCC applied AASB 9 Financial Instruments for the first time in 2018-19. Comparative information for 2017-18 has not been restated and continue to be reported under AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement. The nature and effect of the changes as a result of adoption of this new accounting standard are described below.

Classification and measurement

Under AASB 9, debt instruments are categorised into one of three measurement bases – amortised cost, fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) or fair value through profit or loss (FVTPL). The classification is based on two criteria:

- whether the financial asset's contractual cash flows represent 'solely payments of principal and interest', and
- QFCC's business model for managing the assets.

QFCC's debt instruments comprise of receivables disclosed in Note 8. They were classified as Receivables as at 30 June 2018 (under AASB 139) and were measured at amortised cost. These receivables are held for collection of contractual cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest. As such, they continue to be measured at amortised cost beginning 1 July 2018.

Impairment

AASB 9 requires the loss allowance to be measured using a forward-looking expected credit loss approach, replacing AASB 139's incurred loss approach. AASB 9 also requires a loss allowance to be recognised for all debt instruments other than those held at fair value through profit or loss.

In 2018 QFCC did not record any impairment losses. On adoption of AASB9's new impairment model, QFCC did not recognise any additional impairment losses as these were assessed to be immaterial.

Accounting Standards Early Adopted

No Australian Accounting Standards have been early adopted for 2018-19.

Accounting Standards Applied for the First Time

Other than AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*, which is detailed above, no accounting standards that apply to QFCC for the first time in 2018-19 have any material impact on the financial statements.

**Queensland Family and Child Commission
Management Certificate
for the year ended 30 June 2019**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), s.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 2019 and of the financial position of the office at the end of that year; and

We acknowledge responsibility under s.8 and s.15 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.



Natalie Conner

Executive Director, Corporate and
Communications

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 21.8.19



Cheryl Vardon

Principal Commissioner

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 21.8.19

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Principal Commissioner of the 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 2019, 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 2019, 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 Principal Commissioner 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 Principal Commissioner determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Principal Commissioner 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 Accountable Officer 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.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2019:

- 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.



Melissa Fletcher
as delegate of the Auditor-General

26 August 2019

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

Appendix D—Performance of the Queensland child protection system

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

- Queensland’s performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system [(s 40)(1)(a)(i)]
- Queensland’s performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions [(s 40)(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 [(s 40)(1)(a)(iii)].

Under Schedule 2 of the Act (Definitions), the child protection system:

- means the system of services provided by relevant agencies to children and young people in need of protection or at risk of harm
- includes preventative and support services to strengthen and support families and prevent harm to children and young people.

In line with this definition, this report includes performance information relating to prevention, early intervention and protective intervention efforts as they relate to national and state goals.

For the purposes of this report, national and state goals align with the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children (2009–2020)*, its *Fourth Action Plan (2018–2020)* and the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda, respectively.

In addition, a range of measures are reported to demonstrate performance in reducing the number of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including those in the child protection system.

Performance measures have been identified for each national and state goal through a scan of agencies’ reports and datasets, and through consultation with agencies to determine the suitability, availability and limitations of the data.

Where possible, existing performance measures have been used to demonstrate progress towards achieving national and state goals. Where these were not available, the QFCC has identified performance measures relevant to the objectives and actions associated with each goal.

To the extent possible, outcomes data have been used to demonstrate performance. Where outcomes data was not available, proxy measures have been used to indicate progress towards achieving goals. Data is disaggregated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status where available.

Reporting dates for data sets range from 30 June 2018 to 31 March 2019. In all cases, the most current data set available to the QFCC has been used. Point in time reports are also referenced according to the date of public release.



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 systems.⁷

Progress towards implementing 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. There are six supporting outcomes:

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

The *Fourth Action Plan (2018–2020)* of the National Framework was endorsed by federal, state and territory ministers in December 2018.⁸ It outlines four priority areas for action, building on three previous action plans that were intended to lay the foundations for long-term reform to Australia's child protection systems. The four priority areas are:

1. improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of entering, or in contact with, child protection systems
2. improving prevention and early intervention through joint service planning and investment
3. improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care by enhancing placement stability through reunification and other permanent care options
4. improving organisations' and governments' ability to keep children and young people safe from abuse.

Queensland's performance against each of these national goals is outlined in the following pages.

National goal number 1—improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of entering, or in contact with, child protection systems

Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system remains a major concern for all governments. Significant work is underway in Queensland to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the best possible outcomes. This is guided by the *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families* and associated action plans.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people make up 8.8% of the estimated resident population of children and young people aged 0–19 in Queensland (in 2019),⁹ while representing 42.4% of all children subject to ongoing intervention with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (as at 31 March 2019).¹⁰

⁷ Commonwealth of Australia (2009), [Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia's children 2009–2020](#).

⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (2018), [Fourth Action Plan 2018–2020: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020](#).

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, [3101.0 – Australian Demographics Statistics, Dec 2018](#).

¹⁰ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).

The disproportionate rates of representation of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care has increased steadily since 2010–11, rising to 5.3 times over-representation in out-of-home care services in 2017–18.¹¹

The rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be raised in their own culture are recognised throughout the sector. Similarly, we recognise the importance and value of their family, extended family, kinship networks, culture and community. Consequently, in October 2018, Queensland enshrined in legislation the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles of:

- prevention
- partnership
- placement
- participation
- connection.

These principles seek to reduce rates of child removal from family and kin, and enhance and preserve children's connections to family, community and culture as well as their sense of cultural identity.¹²

Queensland is increasingly supporting and investing in community controlled organisations, which are controlled and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. Through a combination of reforms, the scope of services they offer has changed considerably. Investment is increasingly targeted to the community controlled organisations to deliver culturally safe services across sectors.

Figure 1 provides a snapshot of major reforms, and the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention since 1997.

As the figure illustrates, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering the child protection system continues to increase. This is despite repeated inquiries and investigations into the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. Over-representation is a central focus of the *Family Matters* national campaign.

Queensland Population 2019 aged 0-19



8.8% Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland aged 0–19 (ABS 2019)

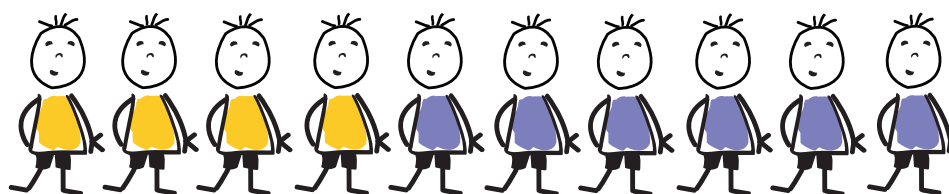


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children



Non-Indigenous Children

Queensland Children aged 0-19 in the Statutory Child Safety System in 2019



42.4% Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (As of 31 March 2019)

¹¹ Australian Government Productivity Commission 2019, [Report on Government Services 2019](#).

¹² Australian Institute of Family Studies 2015, [Enhancing the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles: Policy and practice considerations](#), CFCA Paper No 34.



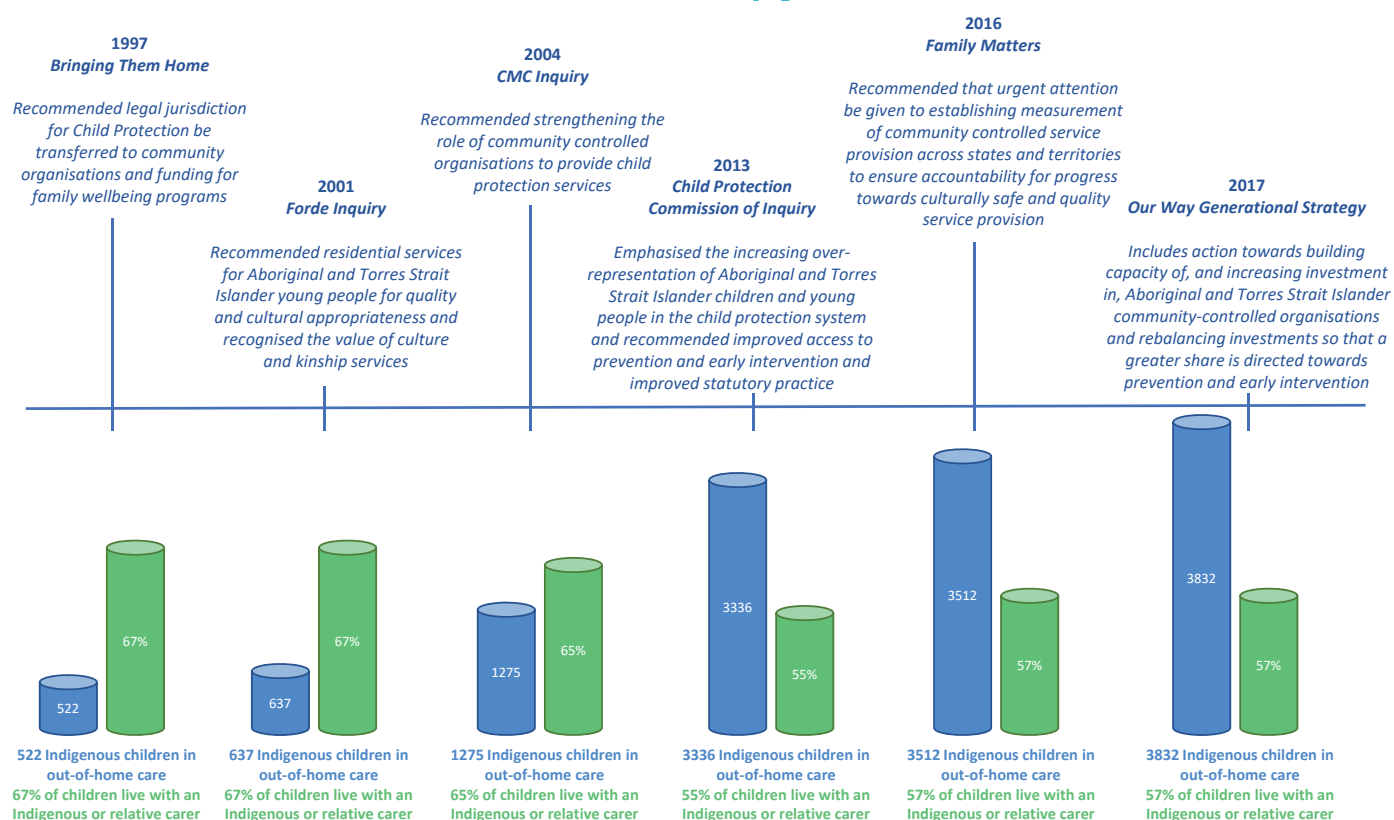


Figure 1: Landscape of Queensland reforms (1997–2017)
Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission (2019)

Three measures have been selected to show progress towards the national goal of improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of entering, or in contact with, child protection systems:

1. number and percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to ongoing intervention, by intervention type
2. percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care placed with kin or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers or residential care services
3. percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care indicating they feel connected with culture.

Number and percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to ongoing intervention, by intervention type

As at 31 March 2019, there were 5,141 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to an ongoing intervention with Child Safety Services, compared to 6,980 non-Indigenous children and young people.

The following figure provides a comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children subject to ongoing intervention, by intervention type. It demonstrates that child protection orders (CPO) have increased significantly (14.8%) between 2014–15 and 2017–18 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, while increasing by only 4.0% for non-Indigenous children. Interventions with parental agreement (IPA) have increased by 3.4% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people while decreasing for non-Indigenous children and young people by half a percent (-0.5%).

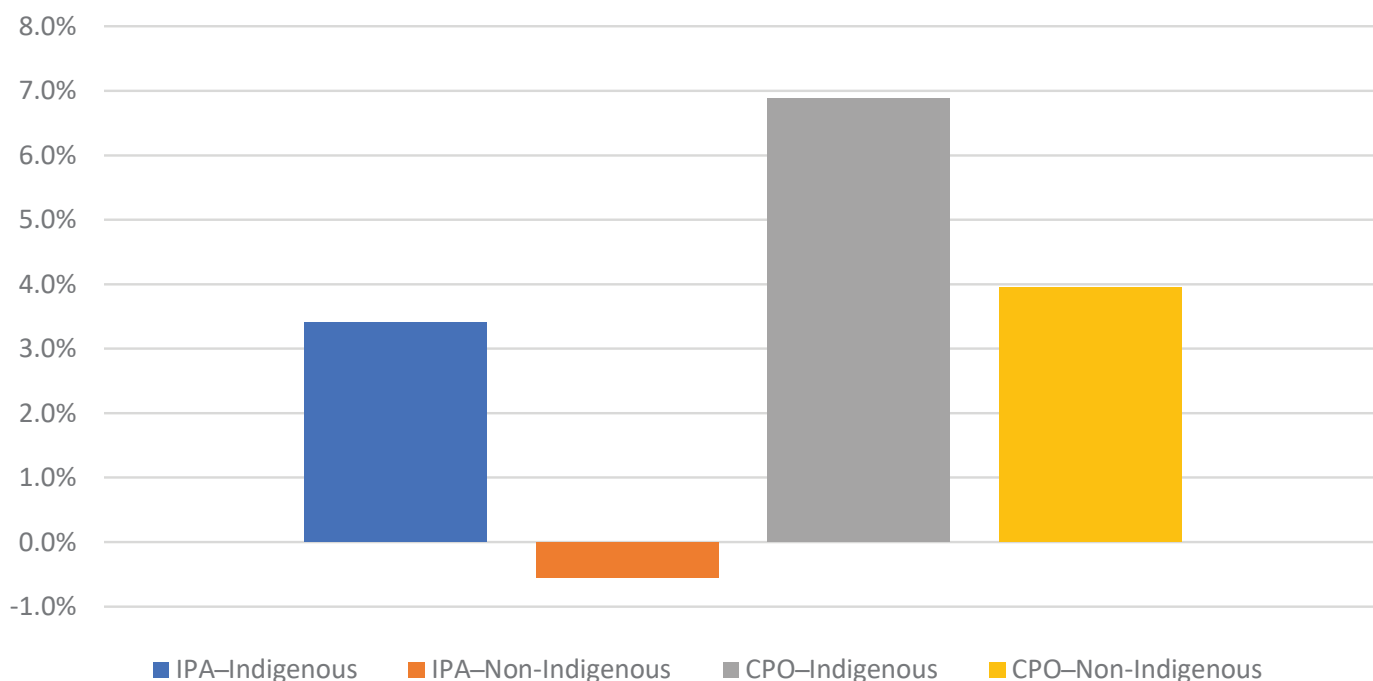


Figure 2: Percentage increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to ongoing intervention by type, between 2014-15 to 2017-18 **Source:** Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (2018)

Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care placed with kin or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers or residential care services

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care in Queensland who are placed with relatives or kin, or with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service, has steadily increased each year since 2014. This includes children placed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander foster carers, provisionally approved carers, kinship carers and in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care services.

However, a large percentage (43.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care continue to be placed with non-Indigenous carers or in non-Indigenous care and support services.

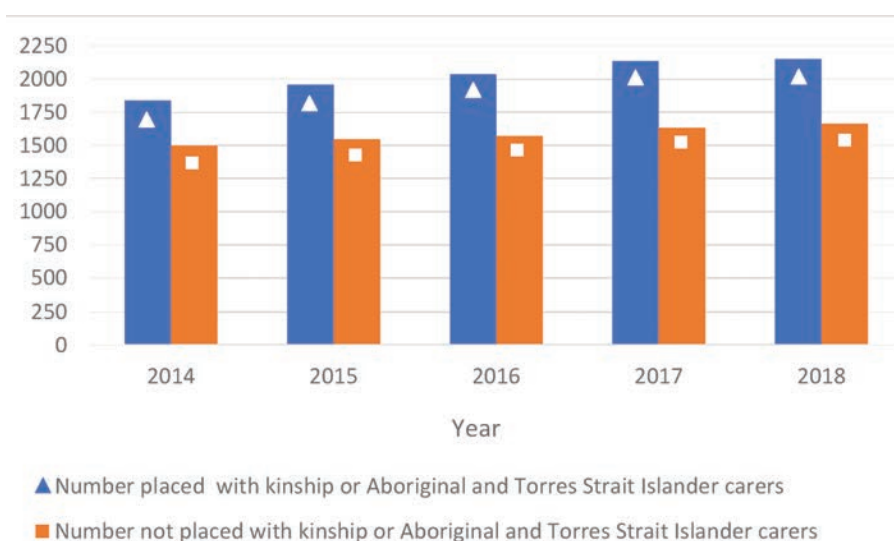
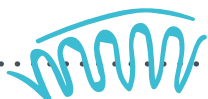


Figure 3: Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers/services **Source:** Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).



Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care indicating they feel connected with culture

A significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care are not placed with kin or with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer. It is critical that they are given the opportunity to remain connected to their culture.

In 2018, the CREATE Foundation conducted a study eliciting the views of children and young people living in out-of-home care. CREATE asked whether children felt connected to culture. The survey identified that 56.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people reported feeling connected to culture, while 30% reported 'little connection'.¹³

CREATE found that carers and family members were the strongest source of information about culture for children and young people in Queensland.¹⁴

Of all Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to an ongoing intervention, 95.4% have a cultural support plan¹⁵ recorded and 90.9% of those plans were current as at 30 June 2018.¹⁶ However, CREATE reported that fewer than 20% of Indigenous survey respondents in Queensland were aware of having a cultural support plan.¹⁷

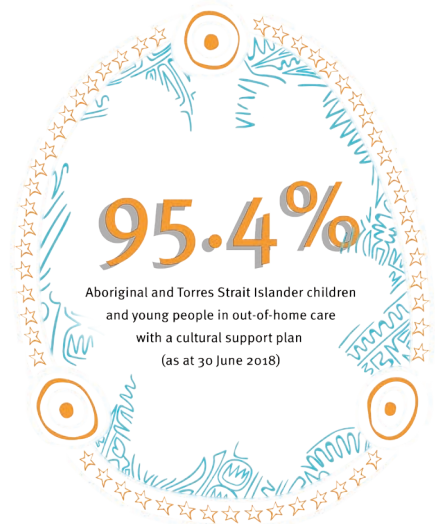
National goal number 2—improving prevention and early intervention through joint service planning and investment

The importance of prevention and early intervention is widely recognised across service systems as a critical factor in ensuring the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. All children deserve to grow up in thriving families and communities and develop into healthy, connected, nurturing and productive adults and parents.

Significant investment has been made in recent years to establish a range of preventative and early intervention support services to ensure Queensland families have the support they need at the right time. The child and family support sector works diligently in cross-agency, multi-sector collaborations across regions to develop solutions to challenging issues and address the underpinning drivers of entry into child protection systems.

Two proxy measures have been selected to show progress towards the second national goal:

- proportion of government expenditure on early intervention and prevention services
- active engagements [of families] by Family and Child Connect.



¹³ CREATE Foundation 2018, [Out-of-home care in Australia: children and young people's views after five years of national standards](#), p. 63.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ A cultural support plan is developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are subject to ongoing intervention. It aims to keep children connected to their culture, families and communities regardless of where they are living.

¹⁶ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).

¹⁷ CREATE Foundation 2018, [Out-of-home care in Australia: children and young people's views after five years of national standards](#), p.66.

Proportion of government expenditure on early intervention and prevention services

The best way to protect children is to prevent harm or abuse from occurring in the first place. This requires accessible and high-quality prevention and early intervention services and supports so needs are met before they escalate.¹⁸

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry emphasised this, finding that Queensland was significantly underspending on early intervention and voluntary support services for families.¹⁹ This formed one of the major work programs of Queensland's *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reform agenda.

As at 30 June 2018, Queensland's proportional expenditure on statutory intervention services (for example, out-of-home care and protective intervention services) compared with voluntary intervention services (Family Support Services and Intensive Family Support services) is 84% and 16%, respectively.

Queensland has substantially increased spending on Intensive Family Support and Family Support services—by 127% and 28% respectively since 2013–14—placing it third in terms of total expenditure among Australian states and territories for early intervention spending.²⁰

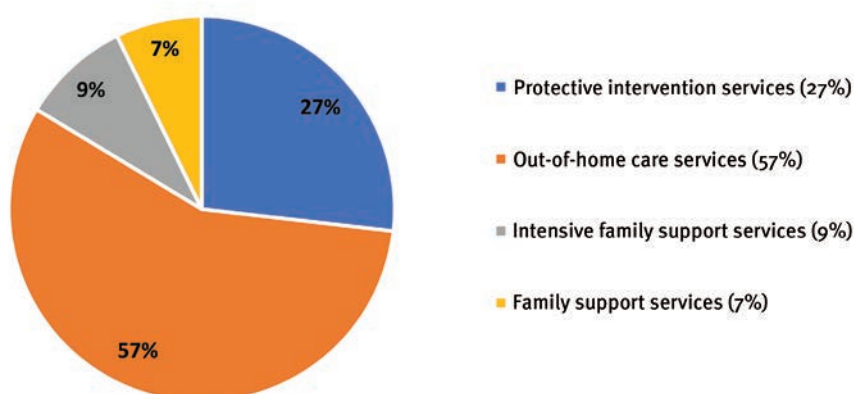


Figure 4: Queensland's expenditure on services, by service type (2018)

Source: Australian Government Productivity Commission 2019, *Report on Government Services 2019*.

Active engagements by Family and Child Connect

Family and Child Connect (FaCC) is a non-government service that provides information, advice and referrals to prevention and early intervention services to address concerns about the wellbeing of children, young people and families. FaCC services assist families with navigating local service systems and increase access to services and supports.

The number of referrals and active engagements with referred families has increased steadily since the establishment of FaCC services in 2015. This increase is due in part to the increasing state-wide coverage of FaCC services.

¹⁸ Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth 2009, [Inverting the Pyramid: Enhancing systems for protecting children](#).

¹⁹ Queensland Government 2013, [Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection](#).

²⁰ Australian Government Productivity Commission 2019, [Report on Government Services 2019](#).

For the 12 months ending 31 March 2019, 18,424 families had actively engaged with FaCC services across the state.²¹ From 30 June 2017 to 31 March 2019, FaCC services experienced a 21.4% increase in active engagements across the state.²²

The Queensland Government has also allocated significant investment towards increasing service system capacity to respond to the increased demand from families for voluntary support services (generated from FaCC referrals). To date, 44 Intensive Family Support services and 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services have been established across Queensland.

National goal number 3—improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care by enhancing placement stability through reunification and other permanent options

This national goal focuses on safety and stability for children and young people in out-of-home care, to be achieved in a timely manner that will support lifelong relationships, a sense of belonging, identity and connection.

All children have the right to grow up feeling stable and safe. Research indicates that a sense of security, stability, and permanency are strong predictors of better outcomes for young people after they leave care.²³

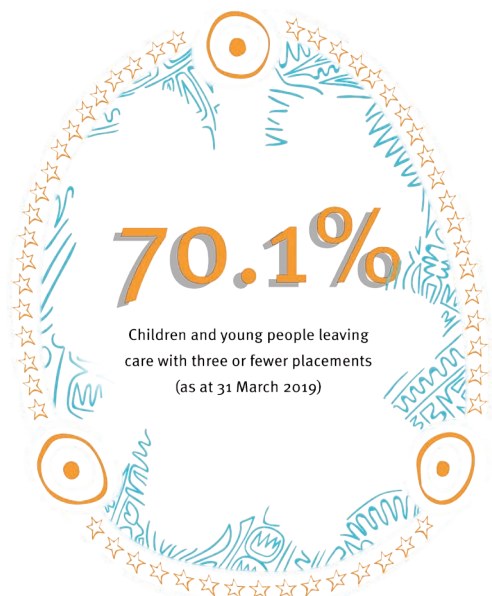
Several actions are underway across Queensland to improve placement stability and permanency for children and young people in out-of-home care. This includes initiatives aimed at building the capacity of foster and kinship carers and strengthening partnerships across the care sector.

Four measures have been selected to show progress towards the third national goal:

- percentage of children and young people who had less than three placements prior to exiting care
- percentage of young people leaving care with a transition to adulthood plan who then participated in their plan
- percentage of children and young people who report feeling safe and secure in their current placement
- percentage of children and young people in out-of-home care placed with kin.

Percentage of children and young people who had less than three placements prior to exiting care

Decades of research have established that a stable attachment to a responsive adult caregiver is important for all children and young people.²⁴ A stable and consistent home environment is important for the healthy development of all children. Placement instability, however, can be common for many children in out-of-home care.



²¹ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).

²² *ibid.*

²³ Commonwealth of Australia 2018, [Fourth Action Plan 2018–2020: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020](#).

²⁴ Queensland Family and Child Commission 2017, [Research Summary: Placement Stability](#).

Legislative changes in October 2018 aimed to improve placement permanency and stability for children by promoting physical, relational and legal permanency for children and young people in care.²⁵ As at 31 March 2019, nearly one in three (29.9%) Queensland children and young people exiting out-of-home care had four or more placements, and one in eight (11.7%) had seven or more placements.²⁶

Percentage of young people leaving care with a transition to adulthood plan who then participated in their plan

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's Child Safety Practice Manual advises that transition from care planning should be a joint process between a Child Safety Officer and a young person, to be undertaken throughout the case planning cycle of assessment, planning, intervention and review.²⁷

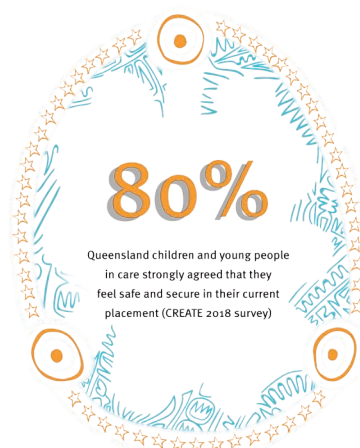
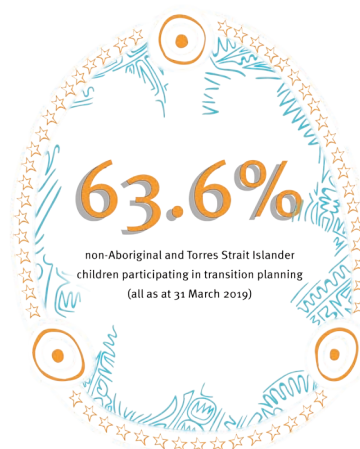
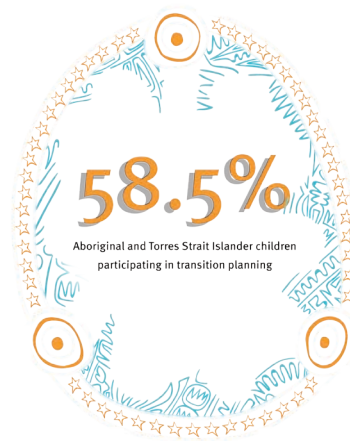
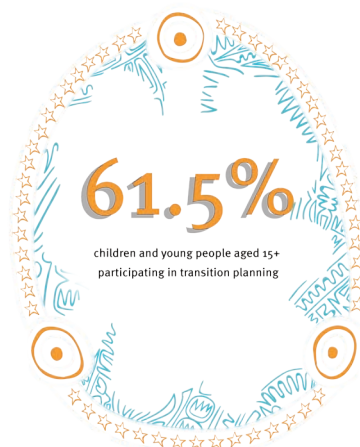
As at 31 March 2019, 61.5% of young people (938) aged 15 years and over, subject to a child protection order granting custody to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women Chief Executive, participated in transition to adulthood planning.

The difference in proportional participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is 5.1%.²⁸ That is, on average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people participate less in formal transition to adulthood planning.

Percentage of children and young people who report feeling safe and secure in their current placement

The first of the national standards for children in out-of-home care is measured by children's and young people's feelings of safety and security in their placement. Research shows that children and young people in out-of-home care must have safe and predictable care for healthy development, and that stability contributes to a sense of feeling safe—safe in their placement, and also safe in the stability of their relationships, connections, schooling, community and/or participation in community activities such as sports teams.²⁹

CREATE Foundation's 2018 survey of children and young people in out-of-home care revealed that 92.7% of the children and young people across Australia (who responded to this survey) strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel safe and secure' in their current placement. Approximately 80% of Queenslanders responding to this survey question strongly agreed with this statement.



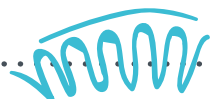
²⁵ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women 2018, [Child protection legislative reform](#).

²⁶ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).

²⁷ *ibid*.

²⁸ *ibid*.

²⁹ Commonwealth of Australia 2011, [An Outline of National Standards for out-of-home care](#), p. 36.



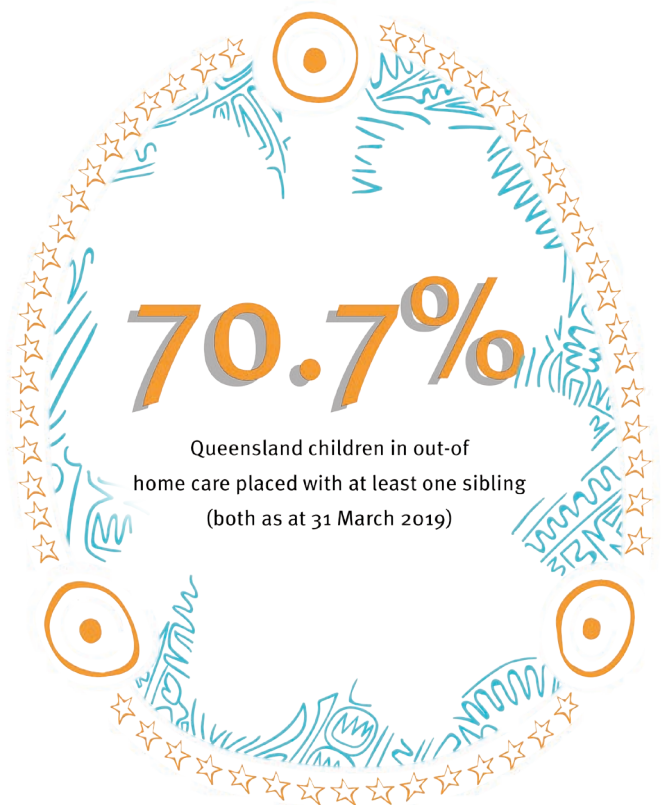
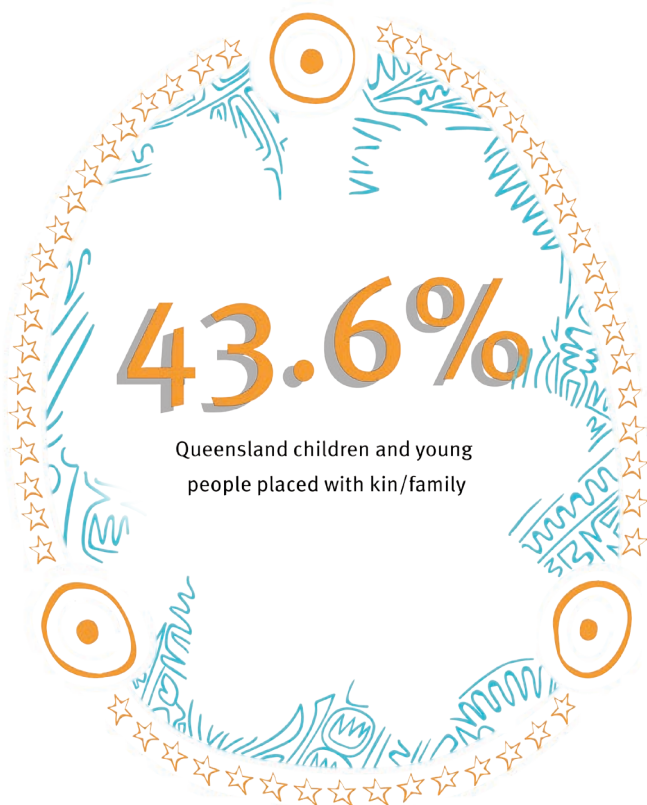
Percentage of children and young people in out-of-home care placed with kin

Where children and young people can no longer live with their parents, the preferred out-of-home care placement is with kinship carers who are relatives or other members of a child's social network.

As at 31 March 2019, 43.6% of all Queensland children and young people in out-of-home care were placed with kin.

Children and young people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander were somewhat less likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be placed with kin, demonstrated by a difference of 3.9 percentage points (41.3% compared with 45.2%, respectively). As at 31 March 2019, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people made up 39.9% of all children in kinship care placements.

Relational permanency is also an important factor for stability for young people in care. Where possible, the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women aims to place siblings together when it is in the best interests of all children.³⁰ As at 31 March 2019, 70.7% of siblings in out-of-home care in Queensland were placed with at least one sibling.³¹



³⁰ Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (March 2019 data), [Our Performance](#).

³¹ *ibid.*

National goal number 4—improving organisations’ and governments’ ability to keep children and young people safe from abuse

Every day, child and family support services strive to protect children and young people and keep them more than safe. Significant effort has gone into building capacity and strengthening families and communities to care for their children through responsive and high-quality support services.

State and territory child protection agencies continue working towards establishing robust protocols and procedures facilitating information sharing between agencies and jurisdictions so that potential risks are identified, and children are better supported.

The *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*, agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019, aim to ensure organisations engaging with children and young people have cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing.

Significant work has also gone into building the capacity of the workforce through the *Strengthening our Sector Strategy*³² delivered by the QFCC in partnership with government and non-government partners. The following figure provides a snapshot of Queensland’s child and family support workforce. As it shows, a significant proportion of the workforce is located outside of South-East Queensland, which aligns with the distribution of the population.

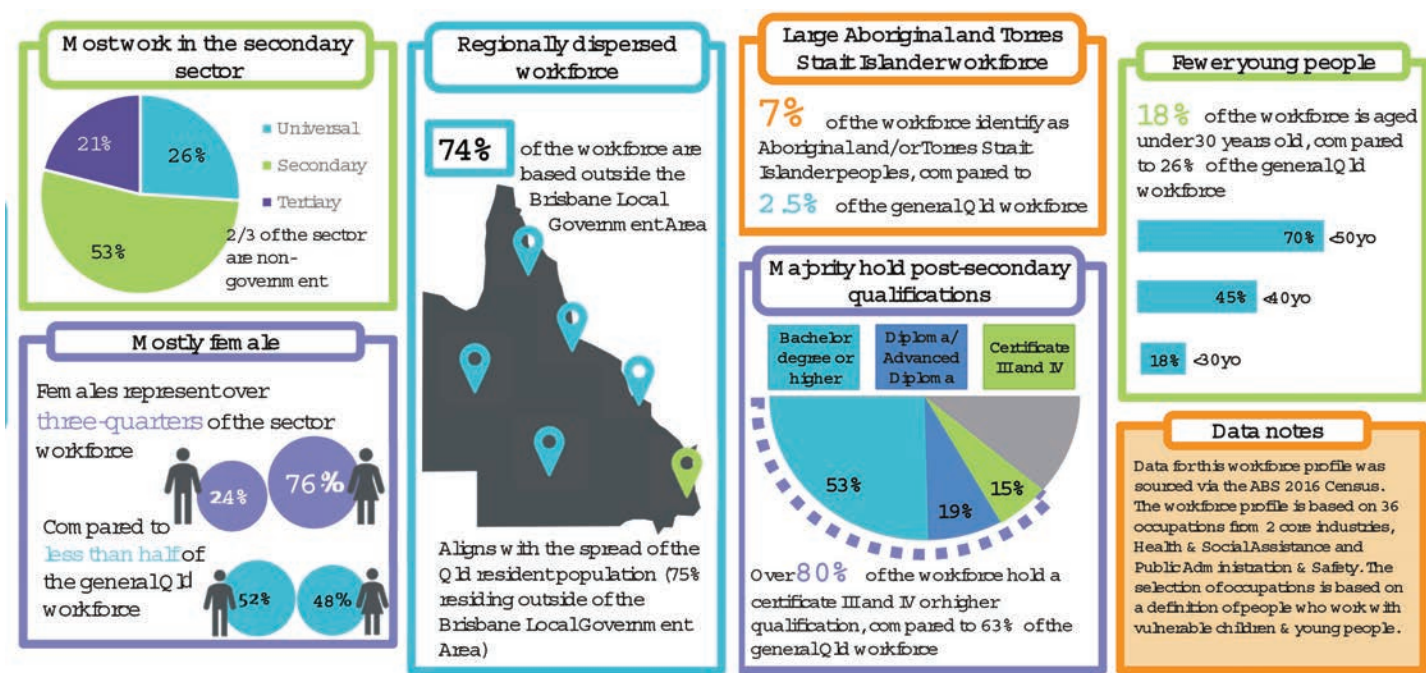


Figure 5: Snapshot of Queensland’s child and family support workforce

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission 2019

Children and young people have the right to feel safe at home and in their communities. The QFCC conducted a survey of over 4,900 Queensland young people, asking them about their feelings of safety at home and in the community.

³² Queensland Family and Child Commission 2016, *Strengthening our sector*.



As reported in *This place I call home: The views of children and young people growing up in Queensland*, young people who responded to these survey items reported:

- being bullied (in person) in the past three months (4%)
- being cyberbullied in the past three months (30%)
- feeling safe in their neighbourhood or town (78%)
- feeling concerned about family conflict (34%)
- feeling concerned about domestic violence (20%).

Four proxy measures have been selected to show progress towards the fourth national goal:

- provision of service information to organisations and families
- number of individuals and organisations registered with blue cards
- percentage of notifications received, by primary source
- percentage of children in care who report they have opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact on their lives and that they feel listened to.

Provision of service information to organisations and families

In 2015, the QFCC developed the *oneplace* Community Services Directory, which provides individuals and organisations with access to information about more than 53,000 Queensland family and community services. In 2019, over 180,000 searches were undertaken on the *oneplace* directory.

The *oneplace* directory is continuously monitored to track the services being searched and the locations of the individuals conducting the searches.

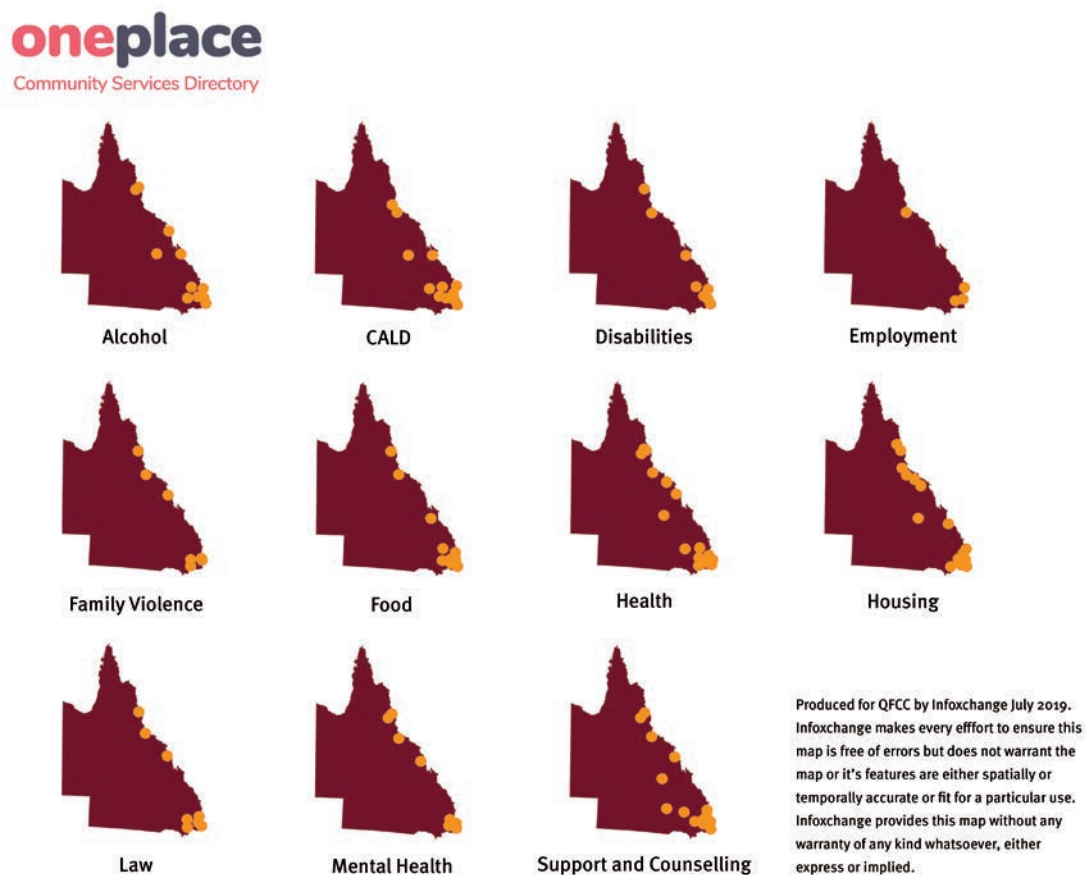


Figure 6: *oneplace* service directory searches, by service type and location in which the search originated

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission 2019

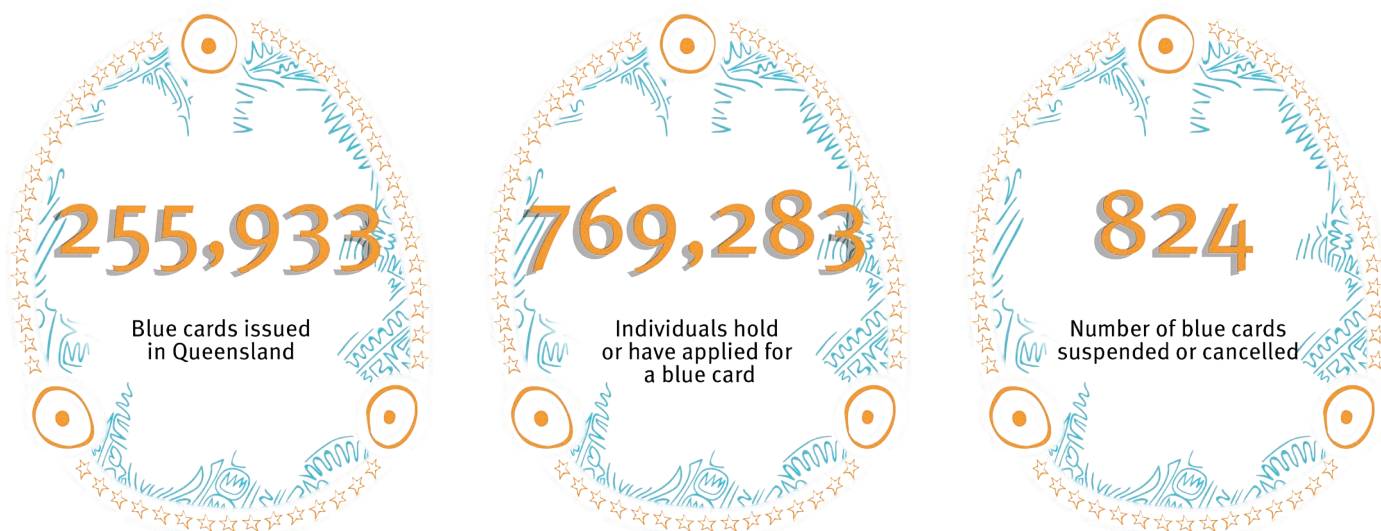
Number of individuals and organisations registered with blue cards

The blue card system aims to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people and contribute to safe and supportive environments. It does this by registering and monitoring individuals and organisations working with children and young people in Queensland.

In 2018–19, 255,933 blue cards were issued in Queensland, bringing the total of blue card holders and applicants to 769,283 individuals. These figures indicate the extent of community participation and the scope of ongoing monitoring activity required by Blue Card Services (the administrators of the system).

In 2018–19, 3,606 individuals³³ were prohibited from working with children due to known high-risk police or disciplinary information.³⁴

Where blue card holders have a change in their criminal history that relates to their child-related employment, their card may be suspended or cancelled. At June 2019, 824 blue cards had been suspended or cancelled, demonstrating the active and ongoing monitoring of card holders.³⁵



Percentage of notifications received, by primary source

Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility, from parents, families and communities through to allied networks of service providers and government agencies. Two central aspects of Queensland's *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda is shared responsibility for keeping children and young people safe and providing timely support for families so that all Queensland children and young people have the best possible chance to thrive.

Individuals who work in certain professions are legislatively required to make a report to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering harm. Legislation also allows them to refer concerns that do not meet the risk threshold to non-statutory family support services such as Intensive Family Support services.³⁶ Children, young people and families can also self-refer and self-report.

³³ Blue Card Services, [Reporting—June 2019](#).

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Blue Card Services, [Reporting – June 2019](#).

³⁶ Queensland Government, [Child Protection Act 1999](#), Mandatory Reporters, Division 2, section 13 E.

The following figure shows that police officers, school personnel and health professionals make up a combined 59.1% of the total notifications to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. Parents, family, friends and neighbours and the child themselves make up another 18.0% of notifications.

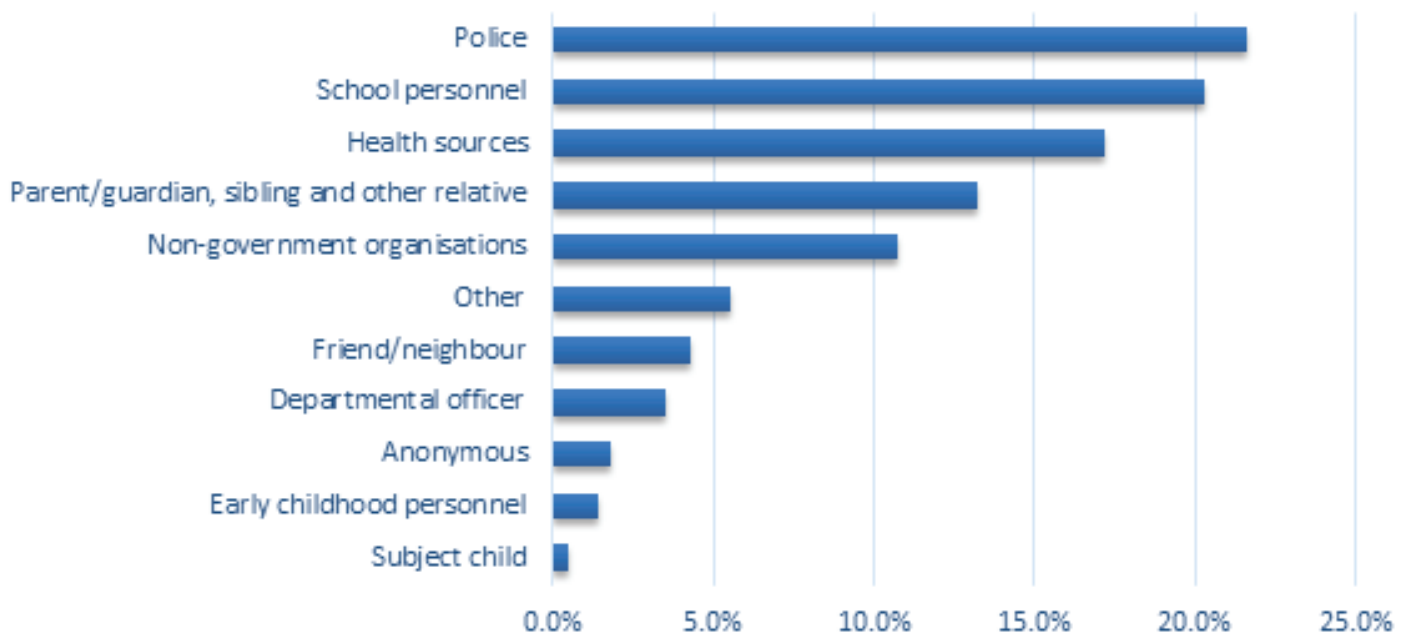


Figure 7: Notifications, by primary source (year ending 31 March 2019)

Source: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, *Our Performance*

Percentage of children in care who report they have opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact on their lives and that they feel listened to

A 2018 CREATE Foundation report highlighted the extent to which children and young people in out-of-home care felt they had a say about education, family contact and placement changes. On a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being 'never' and 6 being 'all the time', Queensland respondents reported the following (*estimated*) responses:

- education: 4.4
- family contact: 4.2
- placement changes: 3.5.

Queensland's performance over time compared to other jurisdictions

Queensland's performance over time in comparison with other jurisdictions is assessed according to specific performance measures relating to the national goals. The Productivity Commission's 2019 *Report on Government Services* is the primary source. Any other sources are referenced within the tables in Figure 8. The QFCC has used available data that is comparable across states and territories and years.

QFCC's assessment ratings are as follows:

- 'good' means Queensland data was better than the national totals or the majority of states and territories
- 'satisfactory' means Queensland data was on par with national totals or the majority of states and territories
- 'requires improvement' means Queensland data was below par compared to national totals or the majority of states and territories.

National goal	Measure	Main result	Supporting data	Assessment
Improving prevention and early intervention through joint service planning and investment	State and territory government recurrent expenditure on all child protection services (2017–18 dollars) at 30 June 2018 *Issues with comparability limit analysis to 2017–18.	Queensland had the third highest proportional expenditure on voluntary (Intensive Family Support and Family Support) intervention services (16%) of the states and territories, and the third lowest proportional expenditure on statutory (protective and out-of-home care) intervention services (84%); The Northern Territory had the highest proportional expenditure on voluntary intervention services (24%) and Western Australia the lowest (5%), while Western Australia had the highest expenditure on statutory intervention services (95%) and Victoria the lowest (73%).		Satisfactory
Improving prevention and early intervention through joint service planning and investment	Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level	Of the three jurisdictions reporting on achievement of national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy for children on guardianship or custody orders (Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland), Queensland achieved the highest percentages in all categories except numeracy for children on orders. However, the rates of literacy and numeracy are considerably lower for children on orders than for the entire student population (including children not on orders)		Requires improvement


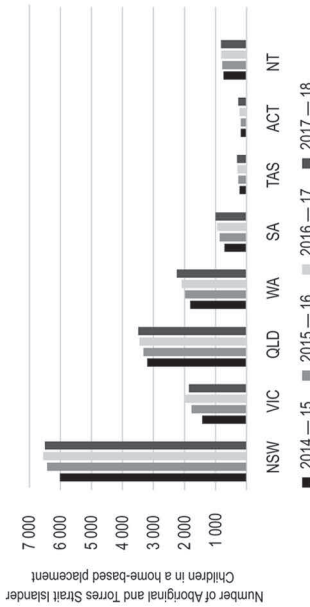
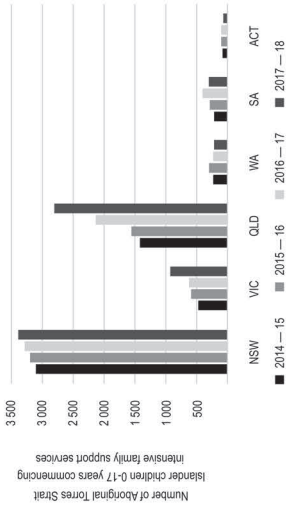
National goal	Measure	Main result	Supporting data	Assessment
Improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care by enhancing placement stability through reunification and other permanent options	(Estimated) percentage of children and young people who report feeling safe and secure in their current placement	Approximately 80% of Queensland children and young people reported feeling safe and secure in their placement, surpassed only by children and young people in Western Australia and New South Wales Source: CREATE Foundation Report (2018) <i>Out-of-Home Care in Australia: Children and Young People's Views After 5 Years of National Standards</i>		Satisfactory
Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of entering, or in contact with, child protection systems	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in a home-based placement at 30 June 2018	Queensland has seen an 8.5% increase (+272) in home-based placements between 2014–15 and 2017–18, representing the third lowest proportional increase in home-based placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across all states and territories. Victoria showed a decrease of -7.4% (-438) while South Australia showed an increase of 30.1% (+324) over this period.		Requires improvement
Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of entering, or in contact with, child protection systems	Intensive Family Support services: number of children aged 0–17 years starting Intensive Family Support services * Issues with comparability limit analysis to five states/territories.	The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland accessing Intensive Family Support services rose by 98.5% between 2014–15 and 2017–18, the highest increase in Intensive Family Support service access of all states and territories involved in this comparison. Victoria also saw a considerable increase in Intensive Family Support service access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (98.1%), while Western Australia saw a decrease (-7.6%).		Good

Figure 8: Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions

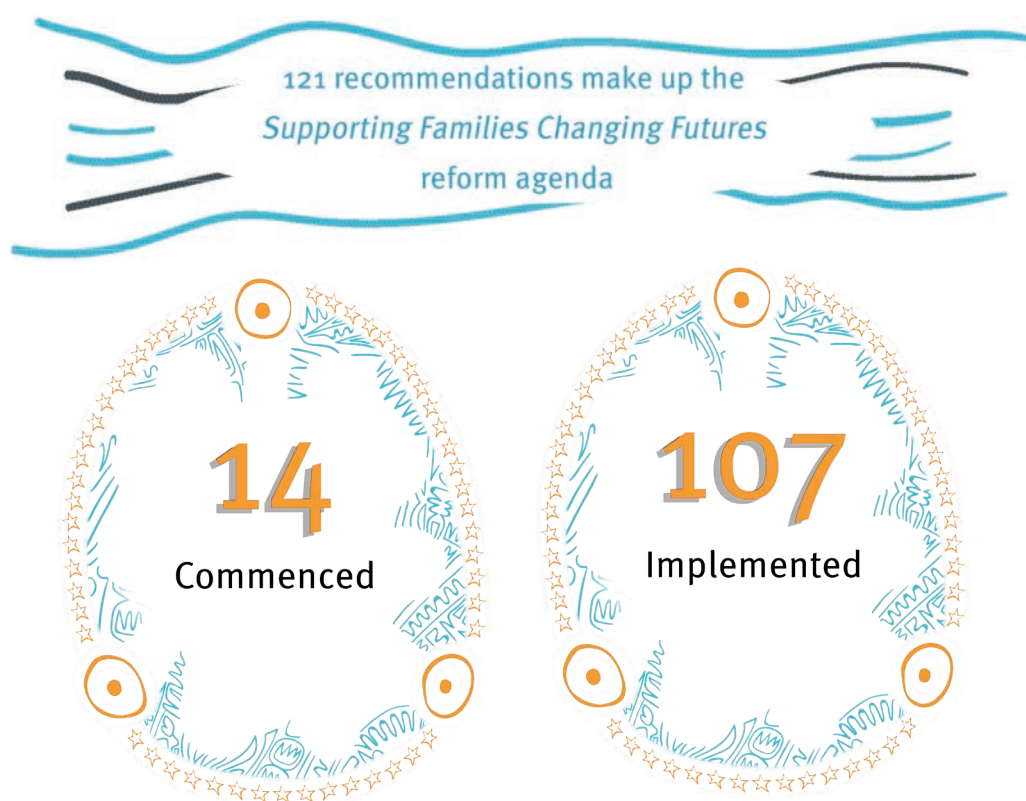
Queensland's performance against state goals

Queensland's child protection system goals are captured in the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda, which followed on from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. Implementation of this reform agenda began in 2014 and has been rolling out gradually over the last five years. The second five-year *Supporting Families Changing Futures* strategy was released on 25 July 2019.³⁷

This section reports on progress with implementation of the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda. The state goals against which progress is reported relate to seven domains that comprise the strategic directions of the reform agenda. They are:

- Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children
- Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier
- Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system
- Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people
- Domain 5: Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities
- Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations
- Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system.

All information in this section is current as at 30 June 2019.

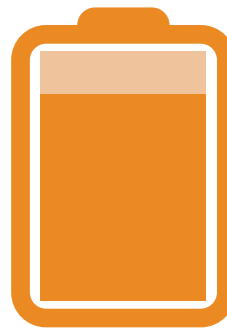


³⁷ Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (2019), [Supporting Families Changing Futures 2019–2023](#).

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

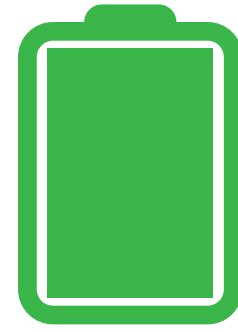
Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children is based on partnership approaches delivering effective and efficient services and support. This involves government and non-government entities, as well as families and communities who have responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children.

There are 11 recommendations within this domain. All (100%) have been implemented.



2017—18

2 commenced (18%)
9 implemented (82%)



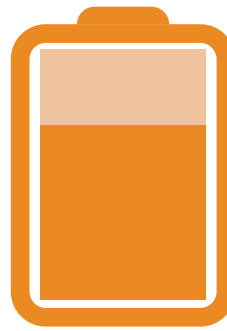
2018—19

11 implemented (100%)

Domain 2—Supporting Queensland families earlier

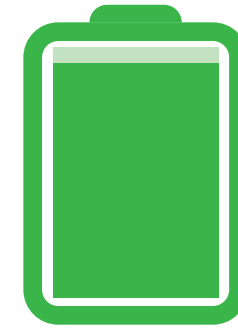
Supporting families earlier is a central aspect of the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda. Significant investment has been made in Queensland to provide the full continuum of care so families are supported, and children and young people have the best possible start to life.

Of the 16 recommendations making up this domain, 15 (93.8%) have been implemented and one (6.3%) is in progress.



2017—18

5 commenced (31%)
11 implemented (69%)



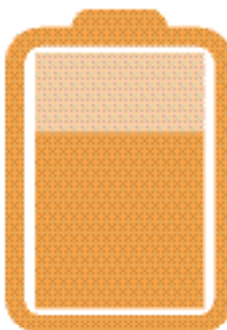
2018—19

1 commenced (6.2%)
15 implemented (93.8%)

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

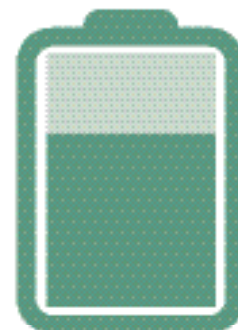
Significant effort has been made to improve practice so that families who have come into contact with the child protection system are treated in a client-centred way, and their voices and views are heard. The new *Strengthening Families, Protecting Children Framework for Practice* has been embedded to improve consistency and quality of practice so families can improve their capacity to care for their children and cope with challenges.

There are 19 recommendations within this domain. Sixteen (84.2%) have been implemented. Three (15.8%) have commenced and are reported to be 'on track'.



2017—18

5 commenced (31%)
11 implemented (69%)



2018—19

3 commenced (15.8%)
16 implemented (84.2%)

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

Where it is not possible for children and young people to remain with their families, great care must be taken to ensure their experience in out-of-home care is safe and stable, they have access to information and remain connected to their support networks.

There are 18 recommendations within this domain. All 18 (100%) have been implemented.

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

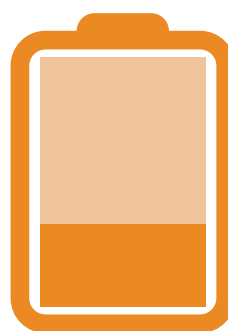
A central focus of the *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda is to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are safely cared for by their families and communities, they remain significantly over-represented in the child protection system. We need a fundamental shift in how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

There are 16 recommendations within this domain, all of which have been implemented (100%).

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

The child and family support sector works to help families to care for and nurture their children, through the delivery of high quality services at the right time and in the right place.

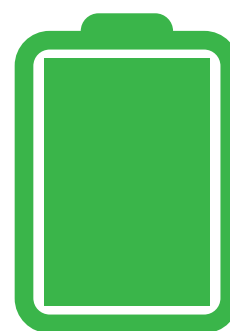
There are nine recommendations within this domain, focused on building the capacity and capability of the frontline workforce. Eight recommendations (89%) have been implemented. One recommendation (11%) has commenced and is reported to be on track.



2017—18

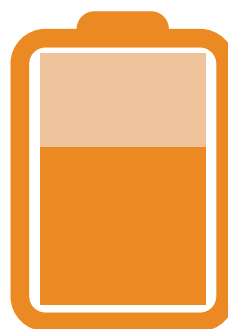
11 commenced (61%)

7 implemented (39%)



2018—19

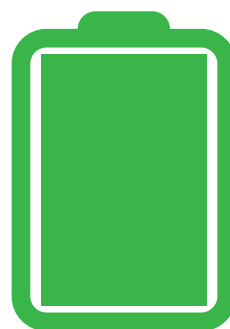
18 implemented (100%)



2017—18

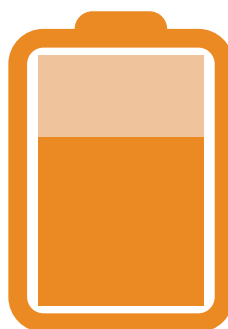
6 commenced (37.5%)

10 implemented (62.5%)



2018—19

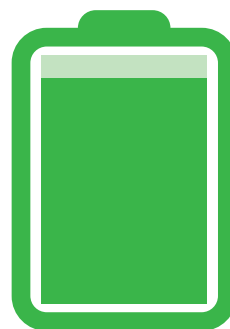
16 implemented (100%)



2017—18

3 commenced (33%)

6 implemented (67%)



2018—19

1 commenced (11%)

8 implemented (89%)

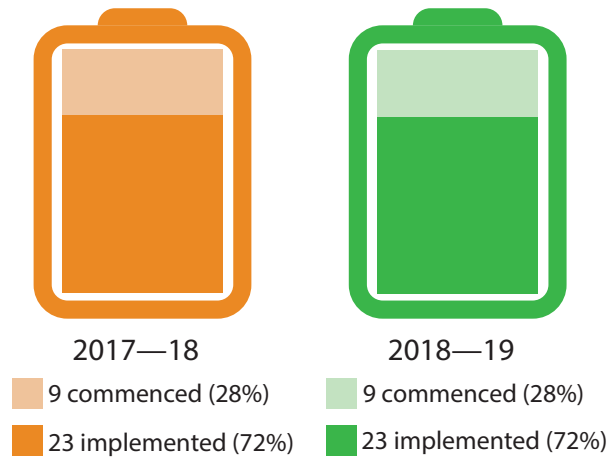


Domain 7—Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system.

To be accountable to Queensland's children, young people and families, the child and family support system must be seen to be accountable, transparent and reliable. For it to be sustainable, it must be cost-effective and productive. This requires oversight, performance monitoring, quality assurance and inter-agency cooperation.

The system must have robust mechanisms in place to ensure confidentiality and privacy, while allowing for action that gives paramount consideration to the best interests of children, young people and families.

There are 32 recommendations within this domain. Of these, 23 (72%) have been implemented and 9 (28%) have commenced and are reported to be 'on track'.



Reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system

A range of state and national strategies specifically focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and addressing their over-representation in statutory child protection and youth justice systems. These strategies address similar health, educational, economical and wellbeing indicators of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that are known to cause and perpetuate disadvantage.

There are some areas in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families have seen a statistical improvement in life outcomes. A range of initiatives have been designed, built and implemented with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. There are also areas that require improvement.

Queensland is currently progressing *Our Way: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families (2017–2037)* to address the disadvantage and inequality of wellbeing and life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This strategy is aligned with the national *Family Matters Roadmap* and its *Building Blocks* for change which are:

1. All families enjoy access to quality, culturally safe, universal and targeted services necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children.
3. Law, policy and practice in child and family welfare are culturally safe and responsive.
4. Governments and services are accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The policies and practices outlined in the *Family Matters Roadmap* closely align with performance measures and information identified under national and state goals. However, given the continuing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the child protection system, further performance measures have been identified. These will monitor performance in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland.

A selection of measures is provided in this section relating to child protection, education, health and youth justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Child protection

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data estimates there are 1,261,693 children and young people aged 0–19 in Queensland, comprising approximately 27.3% of Queensland’s population.³⁸ Children and young people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander make up 8.1% of Queenslanders aged 0–19 and approximately 2.2% of all Queenslanders.³⁹

Approximately 5% of Queensland children and young people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are subject to ongoing intervention with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The remaining 95% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are not involved with Child Safety services.⁴⁰

Queensland Population

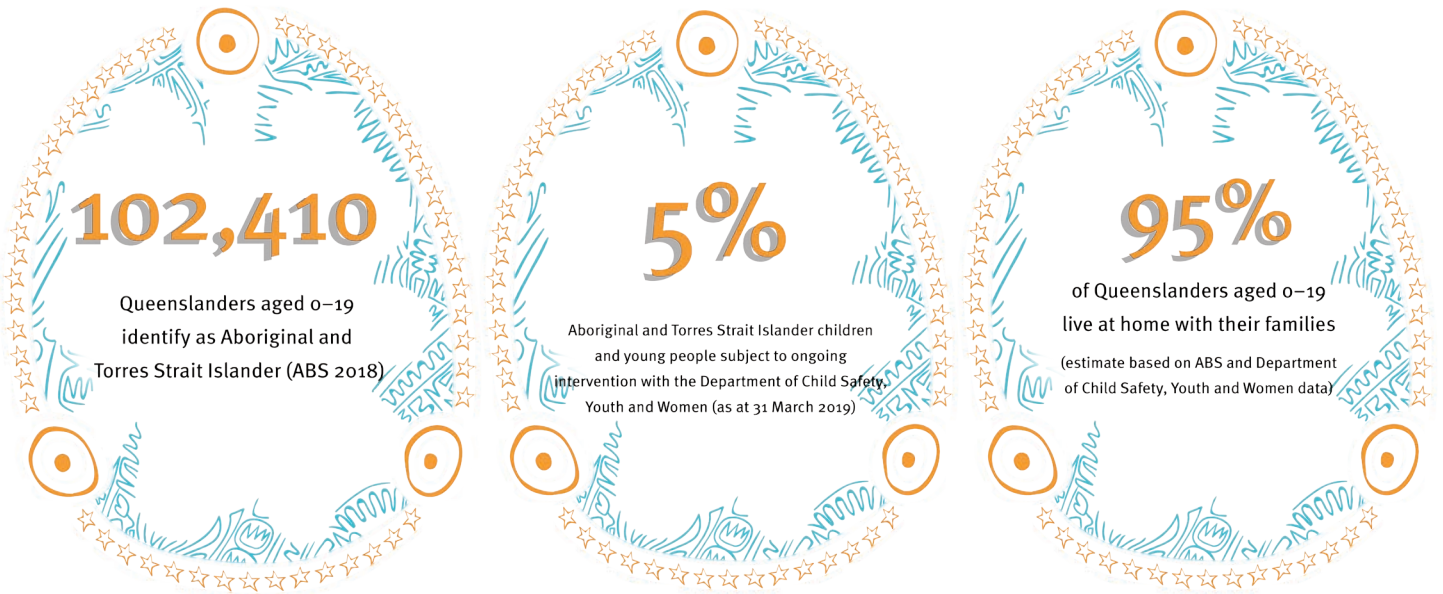


1 in 4 Queenslanders are children and young people aged 0-19

³⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, [3101.0 – Australian Demographics Statistics, Dec 2018](#).

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, [3238.0.55.001 – Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016](#).



Education

Of a total enrolment of 298,532 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Queensland, 13,424 (4.5%) were enrolled in early childhood education as at March 2018.⁴²

Using 2016 census figures for children aged 0–4, we can estimate the proportion of children enrolled in early childhood education, noting the enrolment data is dated two years later than the census data. Of the total estimated population of Queensland children aged between 0–4 in Queensland, 58.7% of non-Indigenous children aged 0–4 years are enrolled in early child education compared to 34.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

This shows that enrolments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly lower than for the general population.

As at February 2019, 58,143 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled full-time in Queensland state schools. This equates to 10.4% of all Queensland state school enrolments.^{43,44} Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments have grown 16.9% since 2015 and continue to increase.

School attendance rates are higher for non-Indigenous students across all grade levels.⁴⁵



⁴¹ This service information was provided to the QFCC by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

⁴² Queensland Department of Education 2018, [Service Level Enrolments \(Indigenous Children\)](#).

⁴³ Queensland Department of Education 2019, [Corporate Enrolment Collection – 2019 February](#).

⁴⁴ Note: This data is for full-time students only and is for students who self-identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

⁴⁵ Queensland Department of Education 2019, [Student Enrolment – Student Attendance \(2014–2018\)](#), Attendance rates by year level and Indigenous status.

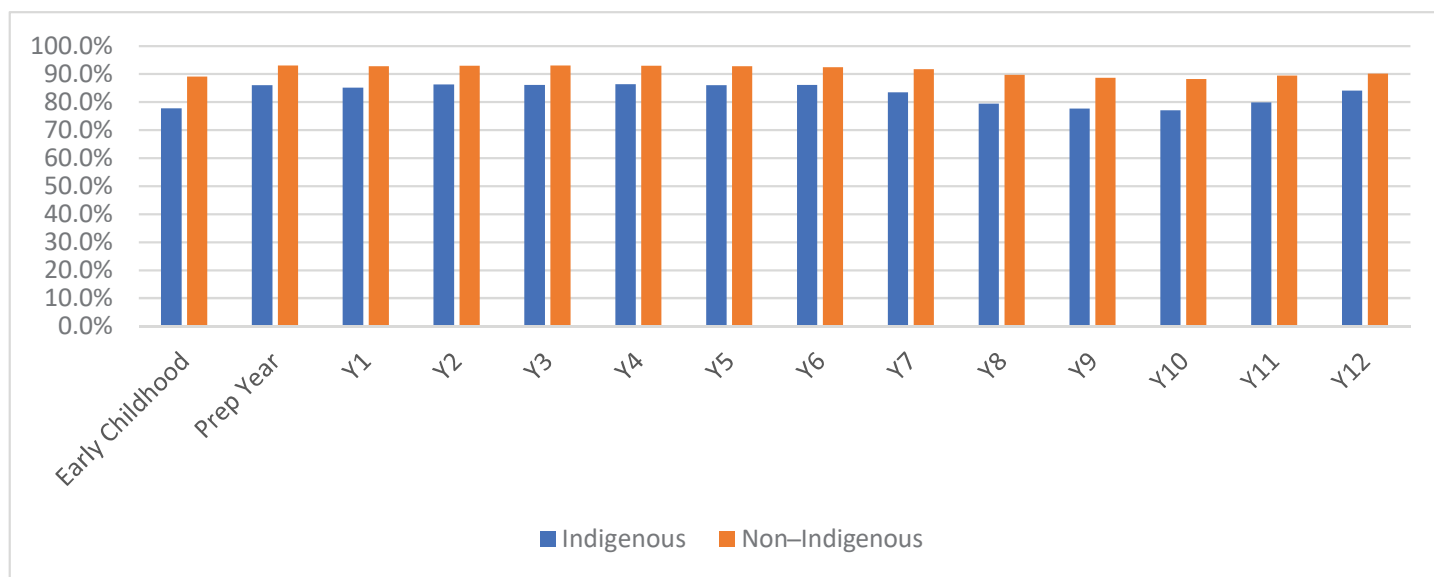


Figure 9: School attendance rates by Indigenous status and level

Source: Queensland Department of Education (2018)

However, the data shows a trend of decreasing retention as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' progress to higher grade levels. This is more pronounced as students reach high school age.

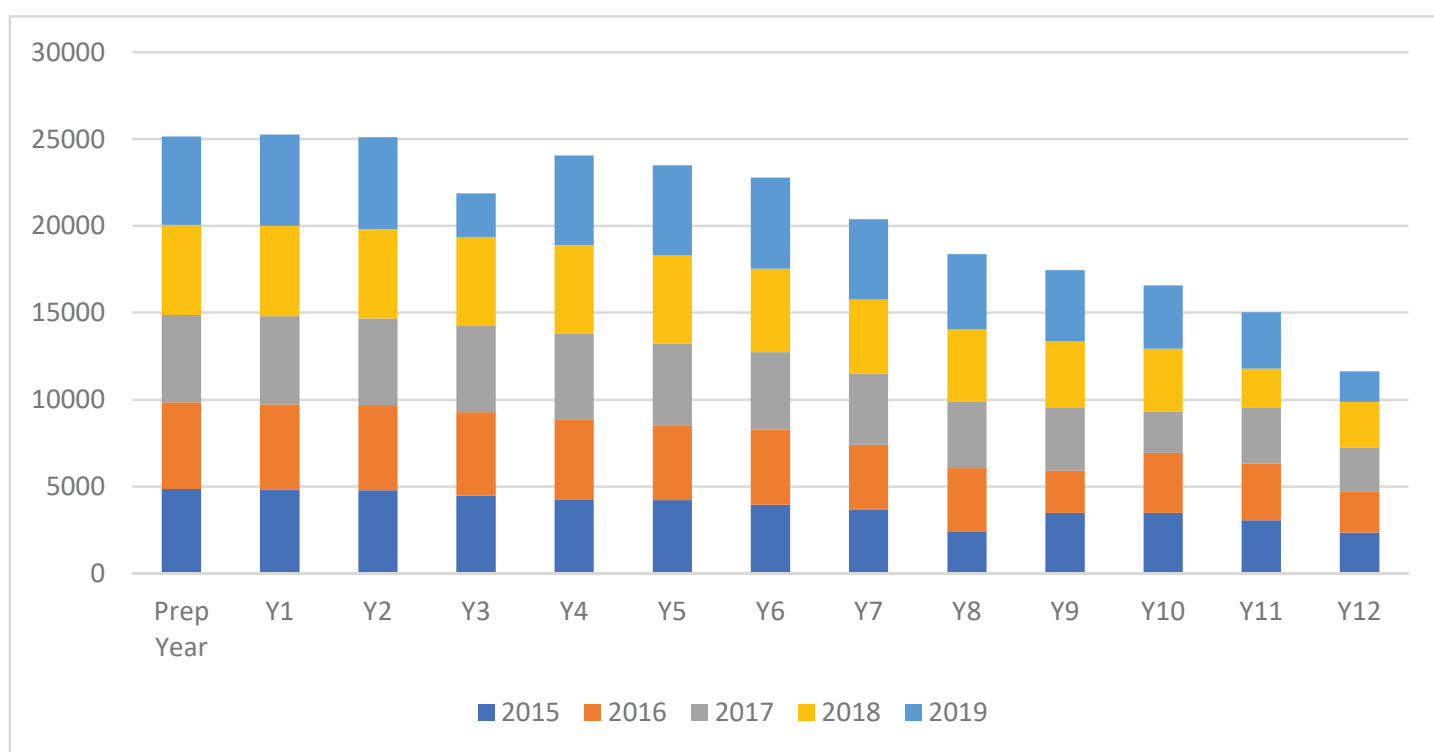


Figure 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments, by year, by grade. 2014–2019

Source: Queensland Department of Education (2019)

The primary destination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who stay the course to year 12 is full-time employment, followed by part-time employment and vocational education.

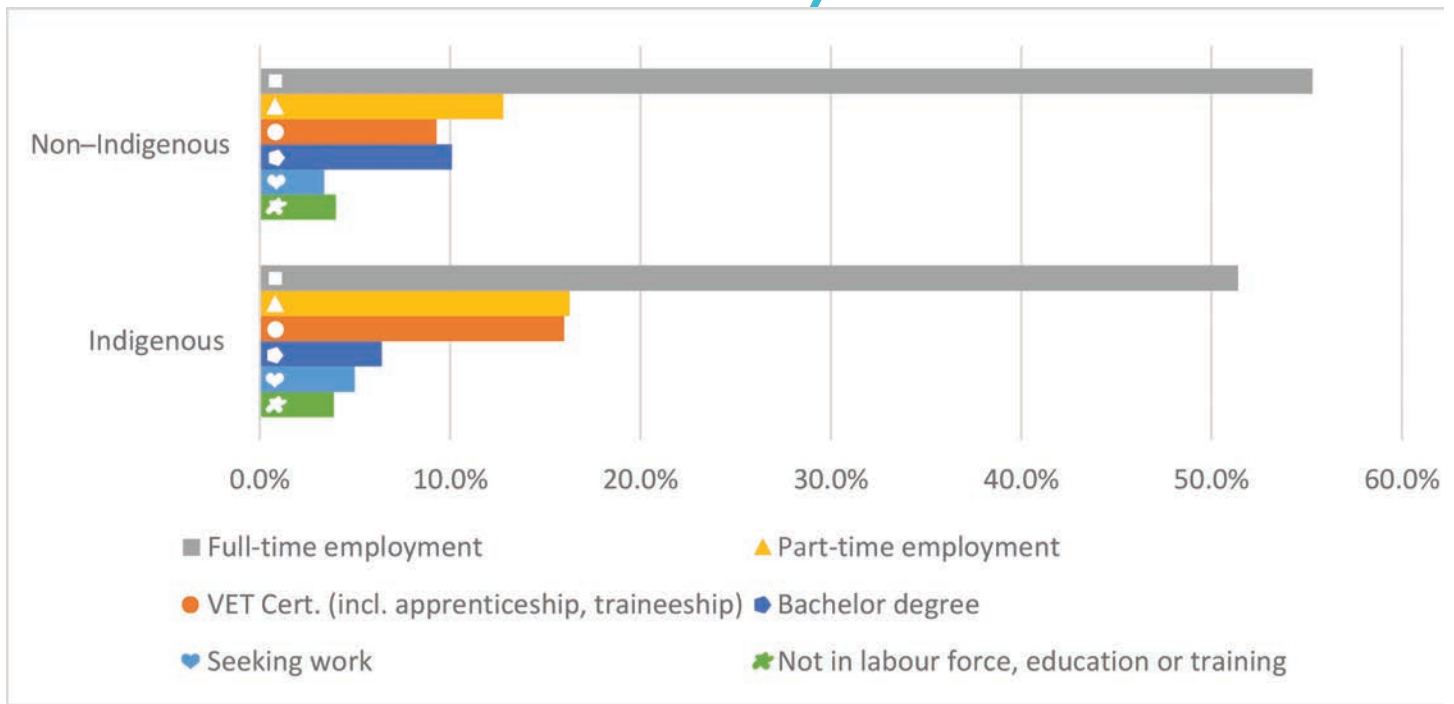


Figure 11: Main destination of Year 12 completers from 2010, by Indigenous status, Queensland 2018

Source: Queensland Government 2018, [Next Step Longitudinal study 2018](#)

Youth justice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are disproportionately represented in the youth justice system, particularly in detention.⁴⁶ The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women reports that, as at 12 February 2018, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were:

- 11 times as likely to have a proven offence
- 17 times as likely to have a supervised order
- 29 times as likely to be held in custody on remand
- 31 times as likely to be held in custody.

Queensland's *Working Together to Change the Story 2019–2023* strategy has a core focus on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the youth justice system. This is mainly being achieved by addressing the causes and the consequences of youth crime.

The strategy outlines actions that include empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to prevent and deal with crime in their communities and to help design effective community-led initiatives to address youth justice issues.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Queensland Government 2018, [Report on Youth Justice, Version 2](#).

⁴⁷ Queensland Government 2019, [Working Together, Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023](#).

Developmental outcomes

The 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) involved more than 98% of Queensland's eligible children across 1,414 schools. The AEDC assesses children according to five domains of vulnerability, including:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills (school-based)
- communication skills and general knowledge.

The following figures show that rates of developmental vulnerability have decreased since 2009 by 15.1% for Indigenous children and 13.8% for non-Indigenous children. However, Indigenous children continue to be more developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

The inverse is true for children who are developmentally on track in four or more domains, with non-Indigenous children being more likely to be on track than their Indigenous counterparts.

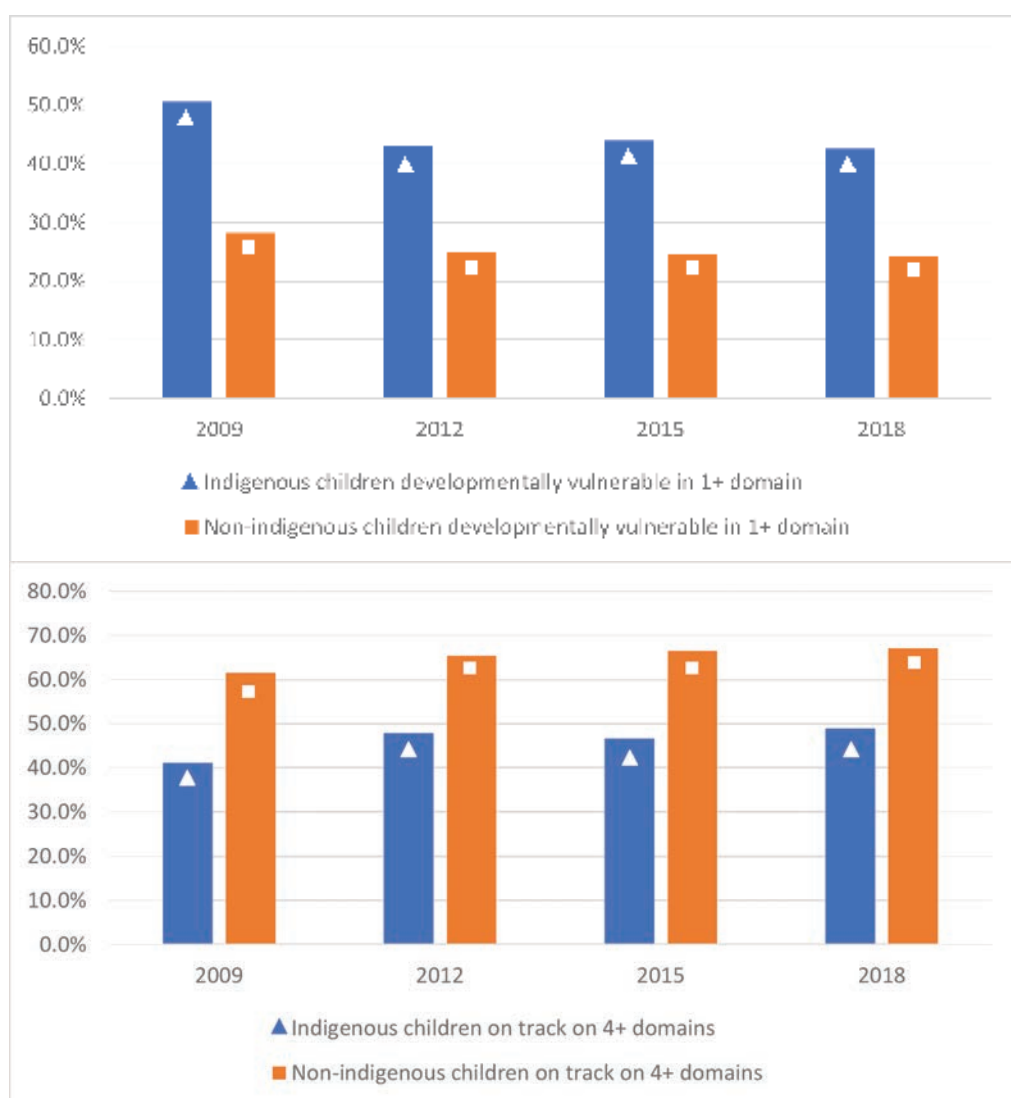


Figure 12: AEDC 2018 Queensland data snapshot

Source: Queensland Government Department of Education (2019)

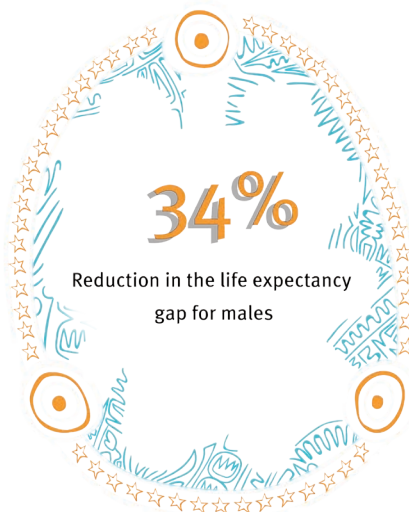
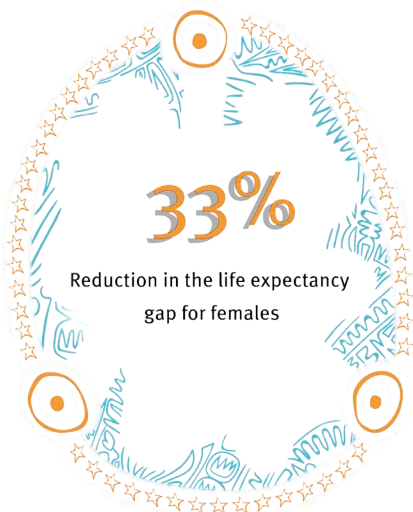
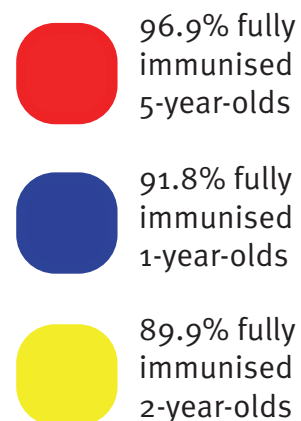
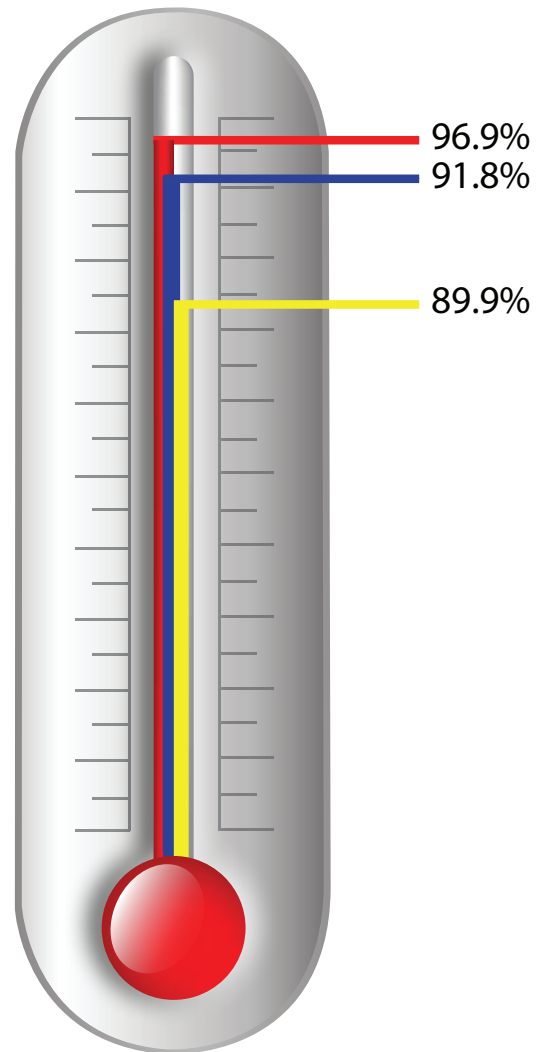
Health

Queensland continues to experience a baby boom, with a 21% increase in births from 2015–16 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers gave birth to 5,410 babies, which is 8.4 percent of births in 2016.^{48,49}

Queensland has seen a range of improvements in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including:

- positive growth in life expectancy at birth 3.3 years for males and 2 years for females (surpassing all other jurisdictions over the past five years)
- reduction in child (0–4 years) mortality rates of 14% from 2004–08 to 2013–17
- reduction in the life expectancy gap with other Queenslanders for both males (34%) and females (33%).⁵⁰

An important factor for children's health is early and timely immunisation. Trends suggest that in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community this message is being heard. According to 2017–18 Queensland Health data, 96.9 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 5-year-olds were fully immunised.⁵¹



⁴⁸ Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2018, [Births, Queensland, 2017](#).

⁴⁹ ABS 2016 census data was the most recent data available to the QFCC on birth rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

⁵⁰ Queensland Government Department of Health 2018, [Closing the gap: Performance report 2018](#).

⁵¹ *ibid.*

