

ANNUAL REPORT

2021–2022



About this report

This annual report describes the progress towards achieving our long-term objectives during 2021–22. These objectives are published in the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) Strategic Plan.

The report explains how the QFCC is helping to address some of the main challenges affecting Queensland children and families. It provides information on our forward plans and sets out our financial position and compliance with legislative requirements.

Production costs of this report have been minimised as much as possible. An electronic copy is available on the QFCC website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/annual-report.

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Accessibility



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Acknowledgement

The QFCC acknowledges the Turrbal and Jagera peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the land on which the QFCC meets and works.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique peoples, each with their own rich and distinct cultures, strengths and knowledge. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Queensland and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



Telephone: 07 3900 6000
Reference: CS-F21/627 – D22/9885

31 August 2022

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2021–2022 and financial statements for the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements for the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
- section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided at page 58 of this annual report.

Yours sincerely

Luke Twyford
Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

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Principal Commissioner's report

I am pleased to present the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) Annual Report for 2021–22. This is my first report as the Principal Commissioner, having commenced in the role in January 2022.


I would like to acknowledge and thank the former Principal Commissioner, Cheryl Vardon, for her service to the commission and the children and families of Queensland. I also acknowledge and thank Commissioner Natalie Lewis with whom I share the powers of the commission. I would also like to extend appreciation to all staff at the QFCC for their diligent and dedicated service to Queensland children and families.

The QFCC has been charged by government with significant responsibilities to review and improve the systems that protect our children and their families. We do this by assessing performance, collaborating for impact and amplifying the voices of Queensland's children and their families.

In 2021–22, the commission expended \$13.482 million to deliver its functions and as at 30 June 2022 there were 64 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff working in the commission. Our staff are passionate, culturally responsive, and dedicated to making a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and the families of Queensland.

Significant activities of the QFCC this year included:

- releasing *Principle focus a child-rights approach to systemic accountability for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's First Nations children*
- launching our *Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID 2021* survey which examined the impact of lockdowns and collected the suggestions of young people (aged 13–18) about how government and community leaders could best communicate to them about matters relating to the pandemic
- providing QFCC youth advocates with opportunities to share their voices through mediums including the Mental Health Select Committee, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and the Human Rights Commission Roundtable
- releasing *Rights, Voices, Stories: identifying what matters to children and young people involved with the Queensland child protection system*
- publishing the Child Death Review Board's (CDRB) inaugural annual report and the 2020–21 report on deaths of children and young people in Queensland
- initiating a review of 208 recommendations from 10 QFCC system reviews to determine if they were contributing to system improvement, and consequently if the QFCC was influencing positive change
- releasing our Child and Youth Participation Framework, outlining how we give children and young people genuine opportunities to participate in decision making, to give full effect to the realisation of their rights
- commencing *Yarning for change* – a process of speaking directly to young people with lived experience in the youth justice system to identify systemic improvements
- releasing *Taking Lives: A Queensland study on parents who kill their children* and corresponding paper *Final report – A study of indicators of red flags for fatal child assault and neglect in Queensland*
- gifting *The Right to Be Me* books to every foster and kinship care home in Queensland
- publishing our *Safer pathways through childhood* strategy which outlines the commission's approach to preventing the deaths of children and young people over the next 5 years
- launching a new, user-friendly website including a dedicated 'Youth' space so that the community can better connect to our work and findings.



In addition to our targeted reviews, we continue to monitor the performance of the child and family support system in Queensland. This year's system performance assessment, contained in this annual report, describes what is working well including:

- the number of Queensland families being referred to family support services is growing, and there is evidence that these services are improving outcomes
- the majority of children living in out-of-home care have a health passport and a number of initiatives have been developed by Queensland Health to address reported inconsistencies of health care coordination
- improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in readiness for school, infant mortality, housing and the use of police diversions.

Unfortunately, our analysis shows there are more children and young people entering the out-of-home care system than are exiting and Queensland has one of the lowest proportions of children in care living in home-based care compared with other Australian jurisdictions. Queensland also has one of the highest rates of young people in youth justice supervision and our rates of youth suicide remain of concern. Understanding our ongoing role to influence positive change for Queensland's children has been a key focus over the last financial year.

Internally, the 2021–22 financial year has been a transformational year for the commission. Two reviews of our effectiveness were conducted, the most significant – the ACIL Allen independent review – was tabled in Parliament on 13 January 2022. This review found that the commission was effective and trusted but could optimise its impact by exploring opportunities to work strategically with other statutory agencies and streamlining or reallocating activities where the QFCC does not have a strong impact. In response we have refreshed our strategic plan, implemented new governance and operating models, and challenged ourselves to adopt new oversight and partnership approaches that will maximise our ability to influence positive change.

We are a commission that can make an immense impact on the lives of Queensland's children and their families. In the year ahead, the commission remains focused on our core objectives of raising awareness, advocating for improvement and ensuring system accountability. We will do this through our independent reviews and strategic alliances, recognising that we form part of a broader child safety ecosystem that includes dedicated frontline workers who are equally committed to making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people. We are targeting our efforts to redress inequity for children, young people and their families who are experiencing vulnerability. We will consequently consider the holistic wellbeing of families in our approach, and we will pay particular attention to the gaps in statutory systems, and those created by a lack of access to coordinated universal and targeted supports. The disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in our statutory systems and across multiple indicators of disadvantage is unacceptable. We believe that families are strengthened by inclusive, safe and thriving communities where respect for culture and the rights of children is at the centre.

As we head into the 2022–23 year, I am confident that we will continue to grow, learn, and improve how we influence positive change for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children.



Luke Twyford
Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission



About us

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is a statutory body established by the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* 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.

In 2022, the QFCC undertook an extensive review of its strategic direction. Our objectives and strategies support the government's objective 'Backing our frontline services' to deliver world-class services in areas such as health, education and community safety, particularly where the rights of Queensland children, young people and their families are impacted.

Our vision

Our vision is that every child is loved, respected and has their rights upheld.

Our purpose

Our purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families.

Our commitments

We have made explicit commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families and advancing the rights of children.

Our strategic objectives

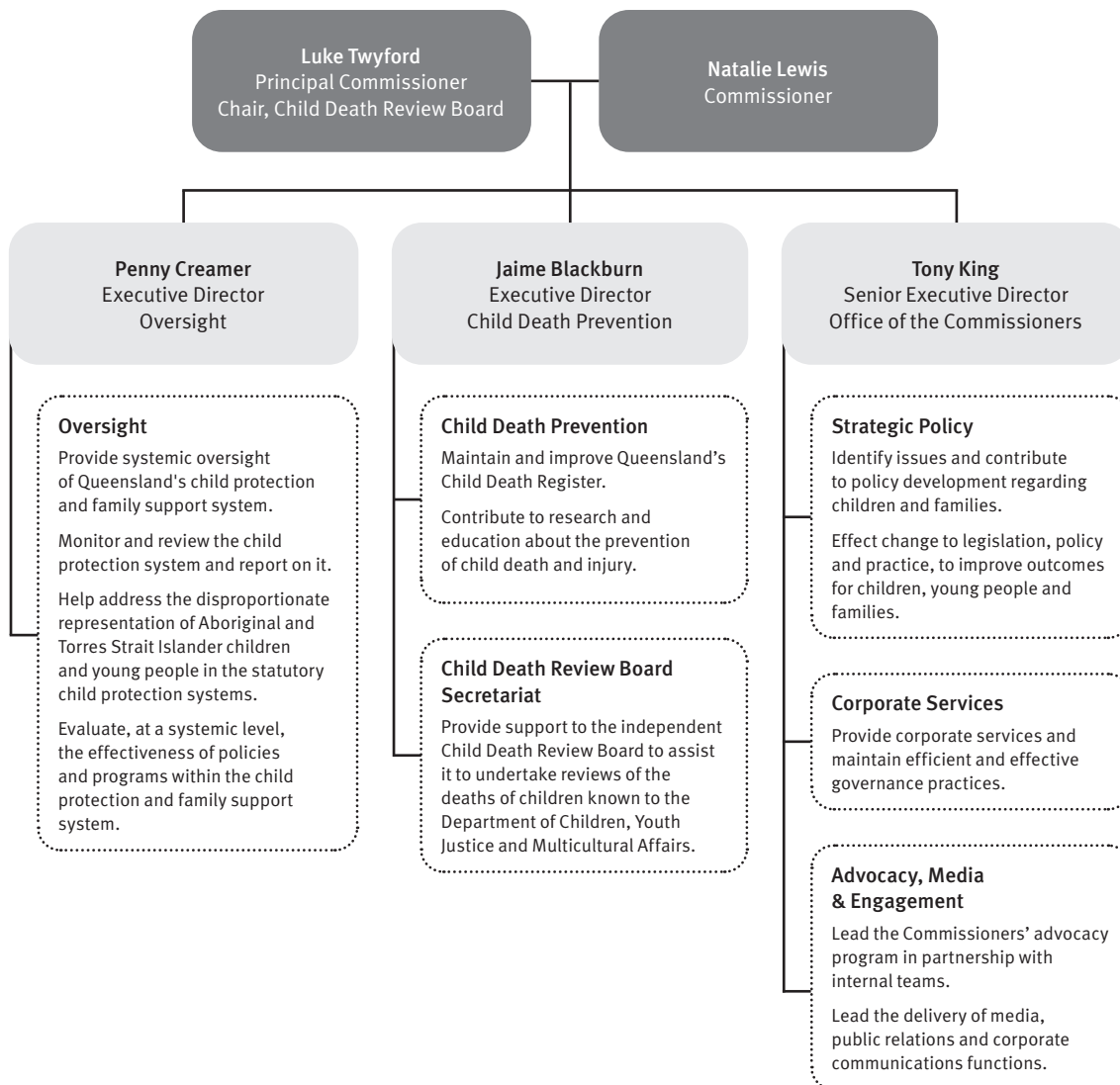
1. Ensure systems are accountable for the impact they have on children and families.
2. Raise awareness and advocate for children and their families.
3. Empower children and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives.
4. Support, connect and collaborate with organisations that advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children.
5. Build our capacity, capability and culture to achieve our vision.

Our workforce

As at 30 June 2022, the QFCC's workforce comprised: 64.39 full-time equivalent staff (FTE), with 8% identifying as Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. The QFCC employs a diverse, highly skilled and empowered team that reflects the community we serve. In addition to our permanent staffing, youth advocates from diverse backgrounds are periodically engaged on a casual basis to amplify the voices of young Queenslanders and provide youth perspectives, advice and leadership to the QFCC.

Our structure

The QFCC organisational structure as of 30 June 2022



Our executive team

As at 30 June 2022, our executive team comprised 5 members:

- **Luke Twyford**, Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
- **Natalie Lewis**, Commissioner
- **Tony King**, Senior Executive Director, Office of the Commissioners
- **Jaime Blackburn**, Executive Director, Child Death Prevention
- **Penny Creamer**, Executive Director, Oversight.

Cheryl Vardon's appointment as the Principal Commissioner ended on 24 December 2021. There were no further changes in the executive team.

Our legislation

The functions and powers of the QFCC are contained in the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. There were no amendments to the governing legislation during 2021–22.

Our focus

Queensland children are a diverse group, coming from many different social, cultural, geographic and family backgrounds. The 2021 Census estimates the resident population of Queensland to be 5,156,138 and just over 30% of Queenslanders (1.6 million) are under 25 years of age (Table 1). There are approximately 563,327 two-parent families with children in Queensland and 230,026 one-parent families.¹

Table 1: *Number of Queensland children and young people in 2021, by age range*

	0–4 years	5–9 years	10–14 years	15–19 years	20–24 years	0–24 years total
Number	292,452	329,311	342,560	313,506	323,739	1,601,568
%	5.7	6.4	6.6	6.1	6.3	31.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

237,303 Queenslanders (4.6%) identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Of these, more than 50% (124,374) are under 25 years of age.³ In 2021, 19,000 (8.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people used an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home.⁴

Culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people

In Queensland, 80.5% of people only speak English at home and just over one in five Queenslanders (22.7%) were born overseas.⁵ One in eight Queenslanders were born in predominantly non-English speaking countries and 1.8% reported that they did not speak English well or at all.⁶

Where children and young people live in Queensland

Just over half (50.9%) of Queensland's children and young people live in the Greater Brisbane area.⁷ Of the 124,374 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people living in Queensland, only one-third (32.9%) live in the Greater Brisbane area.⁸

Family income and employment

While the median total family income in Queensland is \$105,248 per year, more than 94,000 Queensland families have a family income of less than \$33,800 per year. More than 66,000 families with children under 15 years of age had no parent employed.⁹

Child development and education

In 2021, 51.4% of Queensland children commencing their first year of full-time school were developmentally on track.¹⁰ During semester 1 of 2021, only 67.5% of Queensland students in years 1–10 had an attendance rate of at least 90%, down from 76.9% in 2016.¹¹ In May 2021, most young Queenslanders (79.0%) aged 15–24 years were undertaking some work or study, or a combination of both and a further 11.6% were engaged in part-time work or study. Around 64,600 young people (10.2%) were not engaged in either study or employment.¹²

Maternal and infant health

In 2020, 2.8% of Queensland women who gave birth were under 20 years of age and 11.5% smoked during their pregnancy. Just over 4,000 babies (6.8%) were born with a low birthweight (less than 2500g).¹³ As at 31 March 2022, 92.8% of Queensland children were fully immunised by age 2.¹⁴

Children and young people with a disability

Estimates indicate that in 2018, 11,900 (3.8%) children aged 0–4 years had a disability, 64,600 (9.9%) children aged 5–14 years had a disability and 51,700 (8.2%) children aged 15–24 years had a disability.¹⁵

Children and young people experiencing a mental health disorder

In 2021, 9.6% of Queenslanders reported suffering from a mental health condition including depression or anxiety.¹⁶ Prior studies have found that 13.9% of Australians aged 4–17 experienced a mental health disorder, with males more commonly affected than females (16.3% compared with 11.5%).¹⁷

The impact of COVID-19 on the safety of Queensland's children

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact children and families in 2021–22. While there was a gradual easing of restrictions over the year, Queensland experienced several lockdowns, including a 2-week delay of the start of the 2022 school year.¹⁸

Research has identified that the pandemic affected the health and wellbeing of Australian children and young people. The nationwide Kids Helpline reported that in 2020 they received 176,012 contacts from children and young people aged 5–25 years, an increase of 21% compared with 2019.¹⁹

Queensland school students were vulnerable to having their learning compromised due to COVID-19-related closures. This was particularly prevalent in families that lacked the time and resources to support their children's learning, and with parents with lower levels of educational attainment.²⁰

Research about the impact of the pandemic on child protection services indicates that COVID-19 led to various stresses on families, including financial concerns, domestic and family violence, housing instability and poor mental health. All of these increased as COVID-19 progressed²¹ and many of these are risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

Research also identified some disruption to the operation of child protection services during the pandemic. This included a decrease in the reporting of child maltreatment,²² likely due to decreased contact between children, school and health services.²³

In Queensland, while the number of reports of suspected child abuse and neglect decreased during the initial national lockdown (April 2020), there was an increase in reports from May 2020. As restrictions eased and students returned to school, the number of reports exceeded pre-pandemic figures. Demand data in the statutory system showed a steady increase in child notifications and entries to care in Queensland, which persisted throughout the period of COVID-19 restrictions.



2021–22 in review

Our key highlights and achievements

July 2021

- Our staff attended NAIDOC celebrations in Ipswich and Logan, setting up stalls with activities areas for children, and promoting key QFCC projects that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families.
- We made a submission to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, informed by the voices of young people.
- The Out of the Dark steering committee met and discussed emerging trends and collective responses to online sexual grooming.

August 2021

- We released *Principle focus: A child-rights approach to systemic accountability for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's First Nations children*.
- We advocated through the media about reducing youth suicide following the release of Australian-wide suicide rates since the start of the pandemic. Our efforts focused on increasing conversations with young people and addressing issues for accessing services.
- We advocated through the media with our partners at PeakCare and Queensland Foster and Kinship Care about the age of children in residential care. Our efforts focused on the demand on the system, and demand for foster carers in Queensland.
- We made a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) inquiry into infant inclined products, supporting the option for a combination of mandatory safety standards and information standards for inclined infant sleep and non-sleep products.

September 2021

- We advocated through the media about the increase in student disciplinary absences. Our efforts focused on the importance of children remaining connected to education.
- We supported our Youth Advisory Council members to participate in the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament.
- Minister Scanlon met our Youth Advisory Council in an online forum to discuss youth engagement.
- Our Principal Commissioner attended the Queensland Child Protection Week award ceremony.

October 2021

- We launched the *Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID* survey. More than 1,500 young people aged 13–18 participated in the survey over a 4-week period.
- We celebrated Children's Week and the launch of *The Right to Be Me* a Queensland-first picture book about children's rights.
- We joined sector stakeholders to advocate through the media about extending the age of care support from 18 to 21. Our efforts focused on research showing that approximately half of young people who leave state care at 18 end up unemployed, incarcerated or homeless.
- We published a *Model of participation* and *Youth participation: A quick start guide* on the QFCC website to help other organisations structure their own models of youth participation.

November 2021

- Our staff began engaging with young people in Redcliffe, Logan, Caboolture, Ipswich, Inala and all 3 youth detention centres about their experiences in the youth justice system.
- We celebrated 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through the *Young, Black and Proud* scholarships.
- Our 11 youth researchers launched the youth-led *Rights, Voices, Stories* project report with key stakeholders in the child protection and family support sector.

December 2021

- We released the *Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID* survey report. Fifty guests from related sector agencies attended the launch.
- QFCC youth advocates presented to the *Out of the Dark* steering committee, providing an update on planning for the Amplify Forum: Solutions to Online Safety.
- We farewelled Cheryl Vardon, Principal Commissioner.
- We commissioned a review analysing the implementation of 208 QFCC recommendations accepted by the Queensland Government since 2016.

January 2022

- We welcomed Luke Twyford, Principal Commissioner.
- We published the results of a community perceptions survey on confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system.
- We published survey results from government and non-government frontline workers in the child protection and family support sector.
- An independent report on the QFCC's performance was tabled in parliament.
- We published *Measuring what matters: Evaluation of outcomes achieved through the Queensland Child Protection Reform Environment (2014–20)*.

February 2022

- Commissioner Natalie Lewis participated in the Sunshine Coast University's Young Leaders4Change event. This event showcased the application of the QFCC's *Model of participation* and *Youth participation: A quick start guide*.
- QFCC youth advocates and youth researchers participated in the Human Rights Commission roundtable consultation, as part of the review of the Anti-discrimination Act.
- We released the *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland 2020–21*.
- We gave evidence at the hearing on the Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021.

March 2022

- We introduced a new QFCC governance model.
- Principal Commissioner Luke Twyford and youth advocates appeared before the Mental Health Select Committee at its public hearing.
- Principal Commissioner Luke Twyford visited Townsville to meet with stakeholders including Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and the Queensland Police Service to understand the issues impacting Queensland children and families and hear the views of frontline workers.

April 2022

- We continued our advocacy efforts through the media on school suspension rates and student disciplinary absences, continuing to highlight the importance of children remaining connected to education.
- QFCC youth advocates met with the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce as part of consultation regarding the *Hear her voice* report.
- QFCC staff attended Rights of the Child workshops with the Diplomacy Training Program to increase our understanding of how we can apply a child rights lens to our work.
- We made a submission to the ACCC's discussion paper on helium balloon kits, supporting the option for helium balloon kits to be diluted with oxygen to prevent fatal injuries.

May 2022

- We held an all-staff strategic planning workshop to develop and test our new strategic objectives.
- We advocated through the media about youth justice. Our efforts focused on QFCC's work in Cairns with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in youth justice and the work being done to change the trajectory of this small number of young people.
- We co-delivered with QFCC young advocates the Amplify Forum: Solutions for Online Safety to promote safe and healthy digital practices among young people.

June 2022

- We released new frameworks on child and youth participation and *Safer pathways through childhood*.
- We posted *The Right to Be Me* books to every foster and kinship care home in Queensland.
- QFCC youth advocates participated in a government consultation session to inform the development of a youth housing strategy.
- We made a submission to the ACCC's consultation paper on regulatory options for toppling furniture, supporting the option for toppling furniture to have mandatory safety and information standards, setting out warning labelling, safety information, and minimum stability and anchoring device requirements.
- We made a submission to the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles safety discussion paper, supporting regulatory changes which would impose age restrictions for both quad bike riders and passengers in workplaces, and require use of helmets and seatbelts.
- 3 youth advocates travelled to far north Queensland and the Darling Downs to host 4 school-based workshops with young people to inform an advocacy campaign on safe spaces.
- We released *Taking Lives: A Queensland study on parents who kill their children*.

Ensure systems are accountable for the impact they have on children and families

Accountability is essential within any system that impacts on vulnerable populations – particularly the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families. Our work assures the community that government agencies fulfil their responsibilities. The QFCC raises accountability by overseeing and publicly reporting on the child protection system's performance through data collection and analysis and through our reviews and evaluations. Using our child death register we improve our own and others' understanding of risk factors and support the development of new policies and practices. By bringing together evidence, the experiences of children and young people, and the insights of stakeholders, we produce high-impact analysis and evaluations of system performance.

Throughout 2021–22 the commission undertook and published a range of audits, reviews and evaluations designed to hold systems accountable for the impact they have on children. This included:

- *Principle focus: A child-rights approach to systemic accountability for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's First Nations children*, released in August 2021. This project analysed publicly available data confirming that Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be over-represented across the continuum of statutory child protection intervention. The position paper generated interest in Queensland and nationally and contributed to our ongoing monitoring of actions designed to reduce over-representation.
- *Rights, Voices, Stories: Identifying what matters to children and young people involved with the Queensland child protection system*, released in November 2021. This review involved 11 youth researchers with previous out-of-home care experience working with the commission to develop a framework for measuring the impact of the system on areas that are important for children and young people living in out-of-home care.
- *Rapid review of QFCC recommendations accepted by the Queensland Government*, completed in December 2021. This review analysed the implementation of 208 QFCC recommendations accepted by the Queensland Government since 2016. Government agencies with responsibility for implementation of recommendations received the report in December 2021. The QFCC accepted 9 suggestions and is working with system partners to improve how it designs, implements, and monitors reviews and recommendations.
- *Living through COVID: Growing up in Queensland 2021*, released in December 2021. The report analysed the feedback from 1,500 young people aged 13–18 who participated in the survey over a 4-week period.
- *Measuring what matters: Evaluation of outcomes achieved through the Queensland Child Protection Reform Environment (2014–20)*, published in January 2022. This review is an evaluation of the progress made following the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry in 2014. The review included consideration of how the reforms have reduced demand on the child protection system; how the reform impacted the frontline Child Safety workforce and what have we learned from program evaluations throughout the reform.
- *2020–21 Annual Report on Deaths of Children and Young People in Queensland*, released in February 2022. The report is required by section 29 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* to analyse the deaths of Queensland children and young people. Factsheets were produced on the key findings including deaths of children known to the child protection system and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality.

- *2019–20 Australia and New Zealand Child Death Statistics*, produced in June 2022. The report presents information on child mortality from all 8 Australian states and territories.
- *Taking Lives: A Queensland study on parents who kill their children* and corresponding paper.
- *Final Report – A study of indicators of red flags for fatal child assault and neglect in Queensland*, released in June 2022. The aim of this study was to better understand fatal child assault and neglect within a family. While filicide is relatively rare compared to other external causes of death, 109 children between 2004 and 2020 have lost their lives at the hands of their parent or someone acting in a parenting role in Queensland.

Annual report on the performance of the Queensland child protection system

Section 40 of the *Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014* requires the QFCC to report annually on:

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

This chapter of our annual report delivers on this legislative requirement. For this report, we identified system performance measures by scanning agencies’ reports and data sets. We also invited agencies to share any information they thought should be included in our reporting. We have used the most current data available to the QFCC.

The Act defines the child protection system as: “the system of services provided by relevant agencies to children and young people in need of protection or at risk of harm” and includes preventative and support services to strengthen and support families and prevent harm to children and young people. Using this definition, this report has assessed Queensland’s performance across 2021–22 against:

- state goals in the *Supporting Families Changing Futures 2019–2023*²⁴ whole-of-government strategy
- national goals (focus areas) in *Safe and Supported: The national framework for protecting Australia’s children 2021–2031*²⁵
- key indicators from the *Family Matters*²⁶ and *Closing the Gap*²⁷ reports (reducing the numbers of, and improving outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people).

There is overlap between state and national goals. Rather than discussing each separately across multiple sections of this report, we have reported against the 5 common themes addressed by both state and national goals (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Alignment of state and national goals for the 2021–22 section 40 report*

State goals ²⁸	National goals ²⁹ (national framework focus areas)
Theme 1: Is the Queensland child protection and family support system supporting families earlier?	
2. Supporting Queensland families earlier	1. A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage
Theme 2: Are there sufficient resources to provide quality support services to Queensland children and families when needed?	
3. Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system 6. Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated and client-focused workforce	4. Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability
Theme 3: Are Queensland's out-of-home care and youth justice systems upholding the rights of the children and young people they serve?	
4. Improving care and post-care for Queensland children and young people	4. Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability*
Theme 4: Are Queensland's out-of-home care and youth justice systems meeting the needs and upholding the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities?	
5. Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities	2. Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems
Theme 5: Is the Queensland child protection and family support system a collaborative and accountable system?	
1. Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children 7. Building and maintaining an accountable, transparent and cost-effective system	3. Improved information sharing, data development and analysis

* Children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect, including children in out-of-home care and young people leaving out-of-home care and transitioning to adulthood, are a priority group for the National Framework.

Theme 1

Is the Queensland child protection and family support system supporting families earlier?

This theme relates to the following state and national goals:

State goal 2:

Supporting Queensland families earlier

National goal 1:

A national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage

Remaining safely at home with their family is in children's best interests.³⁰ Providing effective early support to children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability can prevent their entry to the statutory system. Starting in 2014–15, the Queensland Government invested in the establishment of:

- a community-based referral service—Family and Child Connect
- secondary family support services—Intensive Family Support services and Family Wellbeing Services—for families who, without appropriate support, would be at risk of entering the statutory system.

These services were established to provide families experiencing vulnerability with timely access to a range of supports to help them meet the safety and wellbeing needs of their children and, where appropriate, prevent them from entering or re-entering the statutory child protection system. These services were also expected to reduce demand on the statutory system.

In addition to these targeted supports, Queensland families can access universal services, such as health, early childhood and school initiatives, and other services, such as drug and alcohol, and domestic and family violence services. These make an important contribution to keeping children and young people safe and preventing their entry into the child protection system. However, their impact can be hard to quantify as agencies generally do not directly measure and monitor child protection outcomes.³¹ In future, the QFCC is intent on improving the evidence base for how universal services contribute to child safety and harm reduction.

This section considers the extent to which families experiencing vulnerability are being supported earlier, the funding allocated to secondary services, the impact of the support and any barriers.

How does Queensland compare?

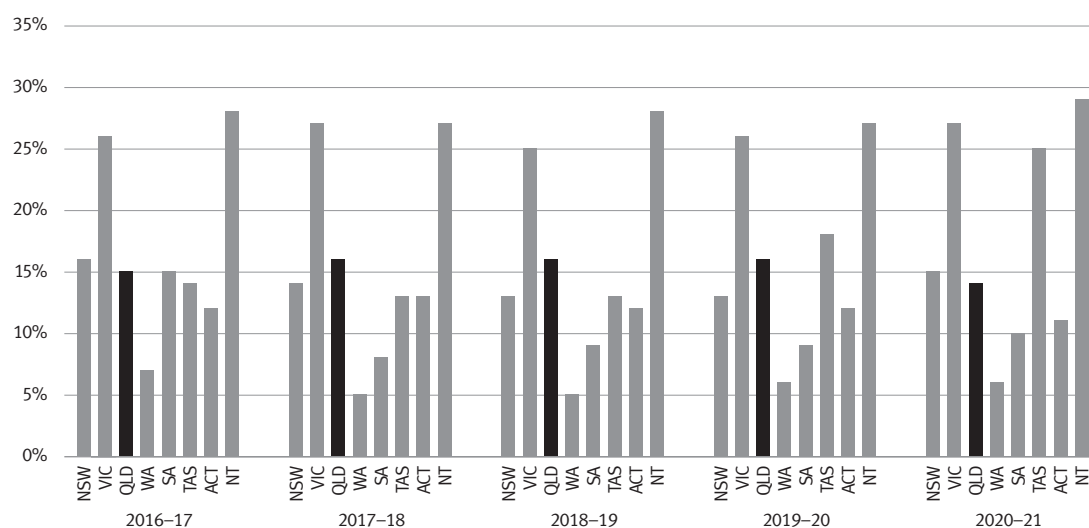
Compared to children in most other states, more Queensland children receive family support services; however, the spend per child is lower. In 2020–21, 15.3 per 1,000 Queensland children received intensive family support services. For each of the past 5 years, Queensland has had the second highest rate of children receiving services behind Tasmania.³²

Queensland's spend per child is among the lowest in the country. Queensland spent an average of \$6,982 per child on intensive family support services—lower than all other jurisdictions except Western Australia (\$6,450 per child) and Tasmania (\$3,416 per child). Since 2016–17, Queensland's average expenditure per child on intensive family support services has ranged between \$6,315 and \$7,570.³³

Figure 1 presents data on the proportion of child protection services funding spent on intensive family support and family support services. It shows that since 2016–17:

- around 15% of Queensland's expenditure has been allocated to these services
- only the Northern Territory and Victoria have consistently allocated a greater proportion of expenditure on these services than Queensland.

Figure 1: A comparison across Australian jurisdictions of the percentage of government real recurrent expenditure on intensive family support and family support services as a percentage of all child protection services (FY2017–FY2021)



Source: Productivity Commission, 2022 Table 16A.8³⁴

What is working well or improving?

- **Many Queensland families are accessing family support services.** The number of referrals to Family Wellbeing Services continues to grow. In 2020–21, there were:
 - 32,141 enquiries to Family and Child Connect services, a 1.1% decrease on 2019–20³⁵
 - 6,304 referrals to Intensive Family Support services, a 6.1% decrease on 2019–20³⁶
 - 4,597 referrals to Family Wellbeing Services, a 3.0% increase on 2019–20.³⁷
- **There is evidence that services are improving outcomes for children and families.** One in 6 referrals to Family Wellbeing Services were self-referrals, suggesting that families have confidence in these services.³⁸ Furthermore, Queensland families who attended a family support service in 2020–21 and whose case was closed with ‘all or the majority of their needs met’ were less likely to have a notification within 6 months than families who did not receive a service (Table 3).³⁹

Table 3: Percentage of children whose case was closed with ‘all or the majority of their needs met’ who had a subsequent Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs’ notification within 6 months

	Service		
	Child Concern Report*	Intensive Family Support	Family Wellbeing Service
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	20.9%	14.6%	10.3%
Non-Indigenous children	12.0%	10.5%	7.1%

* Refers to children who were subject to a child concern report in the June quarter of 2020 and who had a subsequent notification within 6 months.

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022⁴⁰

- **Investment in family support services is increasing.** Since 2016–17, investment has increased by 35.1%.⁴¹ The 2022–23 Queensland Budget includes \$420.2 million over 4 years and \$92.2 million ongoing to continue the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform, including early intervention for families with children and young people at risk of coming into contact with the child protection system; deliver Family Wellbeing Services to provide culturally responsive support services; and continue the Family and Child Connect service to empower families to care for and protect their children at home.⁴²

What needs further improvement?

- **The capacity of the family support system is limited.** Despite increases in the number of families receiving family support service delivery, the demand on the statutory child protection system has also increased (see theme 2). Key findings from the QFCC's study examining the impact of the introduction of secondary services were that: many services have long waitlists; and services often end up supporting families whose needs would be more appropriately met by the statutory system.⁴³
- **The frontline workforce lacks confidence that early intervention services can reduce demand for tertiary services.** Only 8% of respondents to the QFCC's 2022 survey of frontline workers agreed there is sufficient capacity within the secondary support service system to meet demand and only one-quarter (23%) agreed that the services had reduced tertiary system demand.⁴⁴

Theme 2

Are there sufficient resources to provide quality support services to Queensland children and families when needed?

This theme relates to the following state and national goals:

State goal 3:

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

National goal 4:

Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability

State goal 6:

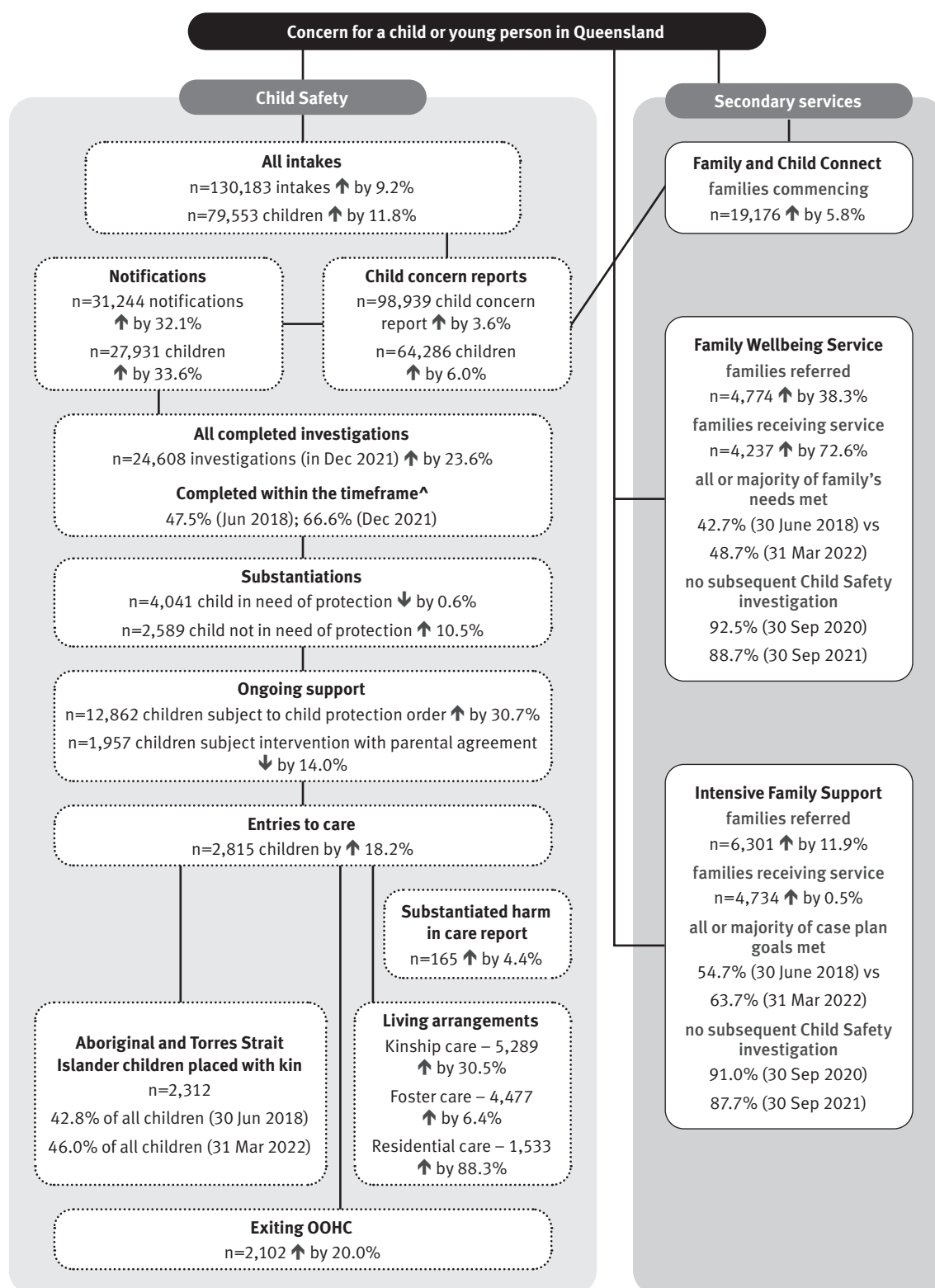
Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated and client-focused workforce

Queensland spent over \$1.5 billion on child protection services in 2020–21. From this funding:

- 8.4% (\$127 million) was spent on intensive family support services
- 5.8% (\$87.5 million) was spent on family support services
- 20.1% (\$304 million) was spent on protection intervention services
- 65.6% (\$991 million) was spent on out-of-home care services.⁴⁵

Figure 2 describes the Queensland child protection and family support system for 12 months ending 31 December 2021.⁴⁶

Figure 2: Flow chart with relevant available data for various points of the child protection and family support system—12 months ending 31 March 2022 noting percentage change from 12 months ending 30 June 2018



* Data notes: data is for the year ending March 2022 (12 months of data). Unless otherwise stated, percentage change reference point (where relevant) is 12 months ending 30 June 2018. Family and Child Connect services, Family Wellbeing Services and Intensive Family Support services were implemented from 2017, with new services rolled out over time.

[^] Note: From 1 September 2019, the prescribed timeframe for completing an investigation and assessment changed from 60 calendar days to 100 calendar days.

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022

The importance of the child protection and family support workforce cannot be understated.⁴⁷ ‘Many of the decisions that workers need to make involving vulnerable children, young people and their families can comprise extremely complex situations involving multiple stakeholders. The decisions can be ethically fraught and emotionally challenging, demanding a high level of knowledge and skill.’⁴⁸

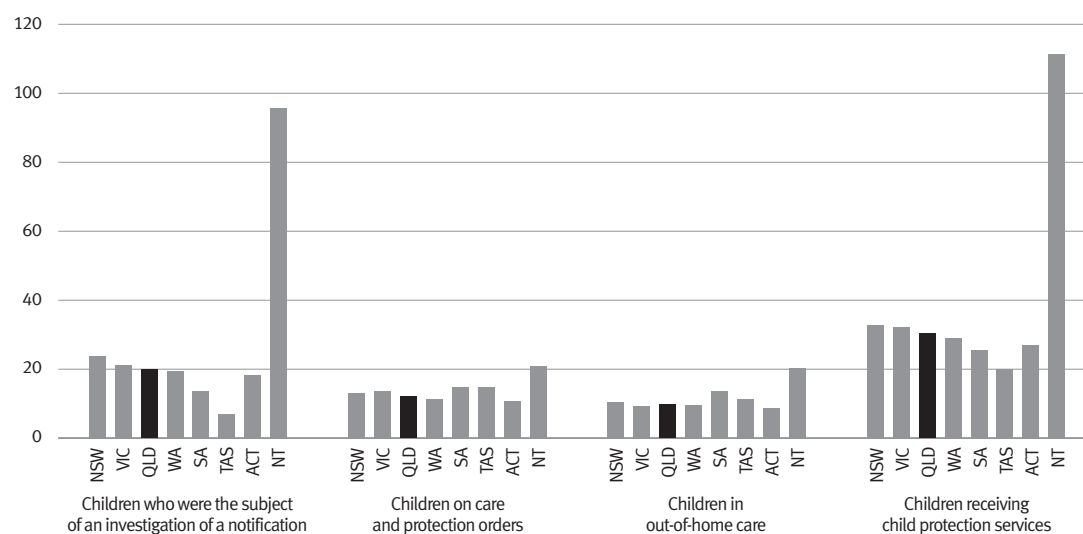
In 2020, there were approximately 55,530 child and family support workers in Queensland.⁴⁹ This includes both secondary and statutory services, in addition to universal services such as health and education.⁵⁰ Some of this workforce includes:

- 1,291 child safety officers employed by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs in Queensland as at 17 June 2022⁵¹
- 5,868 foster and kinship carer families in Queensland in 2020–21⁵²
- one dedicated student protection principal advisor in each of the 7 Department of Education regions⁵³
- 22 Queensland Police Service workers in Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect teams and 640 workers in Child Protection and Investigation Units.⁵⁴

How does Queensland compare?

During 2020–21, more than 178,800 Australian children, including 36,060 Queensland children, received child protection services. The Queensland rate was 30.3 children per 1,000 compared with a national average of 31.6 per 1,000 children (Figure 3). Queensland’s rate per 1,000 children remains slightly behind the national average for the proportion of children: who were the subject of an investigation of a notification; on care and protection orders; and in out-of-home care.⁵⁵

Figure 3: A comparison across Australian jurisdictions of the rate per 1,000 children and young people receiving child protection services (2020–2021)



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022 Table 2.2⁵⁶

Since 2016–17, rates of children in out-of-home care in Queensland and 4 other states have increased. Rates decreased in New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory over the same time period.⁵⁷

What is working well or improving?

- **The number of families volunteering to care for children in care is increasing.** In 2020–21 there were 5,868 carer families, a 4.6% increase from 2019–20.⁵⁸ However, while the number of kinship and foster carer families has increased, these increases have not kept pace with the number of children and young people entering out-of-home care.⁵⁹
- **There are more child safety officers working in Queensland.** The number of child safety officers in the last pay period of the year rose from 1,251 in 2020–21 to 1,291 in 2021–22—an increase of 3.2%.⁶⁰ In addition, the number of funded positions in the frontline child protection and family support workforce has increased. Our study of investment in the frontline child safety workforce found that between 2015–16 and 2020–21, an additional 550.9 frontline Child Safety roles were funded.⁶¹ The Queensland Government has also funded approximately 5,400 positions within non-government organisations that provide secondary services (Family and Child Connect, Intensive Family Support services and Family Wellbeing Services).⁶²
- **There is increased investment in the Queensland statutory systems** recognising the demand as well as the need to improve the quality of services. Investment in out-of-home care increased by 49.6% between 2016–17 and 2020–21. Investment in youth justice increased by 48.6% over the same time period.⁶³
- **The effectiveness of child safety interventions is improving.** Since 2017–18, there has been an increase in the percentage of children who did not experience subsequent substantiations after their initial substantiation (Table 4).

Table 4: Number (and %) of individual children and young people who did not experience a further substantiation after their first substantiation (FY2017–2021)

	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
No substantiation after first substantiation (within 6 months)	5,501 (88.1%)	5,850 (88.0%)	5,788 (87.0%)	6,231 (88.4%)	6,671 (89.6%)
No substantiation after first substantiation (within 12 months)	5,110 (81.9%)	5,460 (82.2%)	5,422 (81.5%)	5,830 (82.7%)	6,277 (84.3%)

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022⁶⁴

- **Frontline workers see value in the work they do and feel that they receive support from their peers.** Respondents to the QFCC's 2022 survey of frontline workers agreed their work serves an important purpose (97%), leads to positive change (81%) and gives them a sense of satisfaction (83%).⁶⁵
- **The average caseload of a child safety officer in Queensland has decreased.** On average caseloads have decreased from 20 in 2013–14 to 16.2 for the year ending 31 December 2021.^{a,66} The recommended caseload for child safety officers is 15.⁶⁷ Among respondents to the QFCC's 2022 survey of frontline workers:
 - 57% agreed their workload was manageable while approximately one third disagreed
 - 63% agreed they received the right amount of professional supervision to do their job well
 - 87% agreed they receive support from their colleagues/peers to do their job well.⁶⁸
- **The rate of entry into statutory systems is decreasing.** Over the last year, the number of children subject to a substantiation and entering out-of-home care has decreased by 2 and 5% respectively. There has also been a 12% increase in the number of children exiting out-of-home care (Table 5).

a Note: From 30 June 2021 onward the caseload calculation methodology changed to reflect the updated Workload Management Policy for child safety officers working with children receiving ongoing support. As such data is not comparable to previous years data.

Table 5: *Number (and rate per 1,000) of individual children and young people subject to Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs interventions during the financial years (FY2018–2021)*

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	Change since 2017–18	Change since 2020–21
Notifications	20,899 (18.1)	22,767 (19.5)	23,273 (19.8)	25,233 (21.2)	20.7% increase	8.4% increase
Substantiations	5,896 (5.1)	6,063 (5.2)	6,551 (5.6)	6,408 (5.4)	8.7% increase	2.2% decrease
Entering out-of-home care	2,382 (2.1)	2,807 (2.4)	3,117 (2.6)	2,958 (2.5)	24.2% increase	5.1% decrease
In out-of-home care	9,074 (7.9)	9,647 (8.3)	10,527 (8.9)	11,065 (9.3)	21.9% increase	5.1% increase
Exiting out-of-home care	1,752 (1.5)	1,786 (1.5)	1,803 (1.5)	2,022 (1.7)	15.4% increase	12.1% increase
Intervention with parental agreement	2,276 (2.0)	2,095 (1.8)	1,988 (1.7)	1,863 (1.6)	18.1% decrease	6.3% decrease

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022⁶⁹

What needs further improvement?

- **Too many families are cycling through the child protection system.** Of the 36,060 Queensland children that received a child protection service in 2020–21, 24,613 (68%) had received a service in a prior year.⁷⁰ There are more children and young people entering the out-of-home care system each year than are exiting the system and since 2017–18, there has been an increase in the number and the rate of children: subject to a notification and in out-of-home care.⁷¹
- **Data collection and reporting around the child protection and family support workforce could be improved.** We lack the data to fully understand how the Queensland workforce compares with other jurisdictions. Workforce data is either not comparable across jurisdictions or is not available.⁷² Publicly available data about the child protection and family support workforce, such as that provided by the New South Wales government, would increase transparency.⁷³ It would also assist understanding how the workforce is supported to provide high quality services to children, for example through professional supervision and training. System-level data related to the secondary services workforce would also provide further insight, particularly in relation to future workload demands.
- **The child protection and family support workforce feels strained.** As part of our study of the workforce, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs staff told us that while their caseload has decreased, their workload has increased. Reasons for this included the increasing complexity families are facing, and new processes and systems being implemented.⁷⁴
- **There are ongoing delays between commencing an investigation and sighting a child.** In September 2021, 12 months after the completion of the *Seeing they are Safe: Responsiveness to 5-day and 10-day notifications of child harm in Queensland*⁷⁵ review, the QFCC sought evidence to see whether improvements had been made. While there was variation across Queensland regions, on average it was taking between 2 and 9 weeks to sight the child when the notification was commenced by information only⁷⁶. The most recent data on 5-day and 10-day notifications indicates that the percentage of investigations commenced within the timeframe is higher than in 2017–18 but has dropped since 2020–21.⁷⁷

Theme 3

Are Queensland's out-of-home care and youth justice systems upholding the rights of the children and young people they serve?

This theme relates to the following state and national goals:

State goal 4:

Improving care and post-care for Queensland children and young people

National goal 4:

Strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability*

* Children and young people who have experienced abuse and/or neglect, including children in out-of-home care and young people leaving out-of-home care and transitioning to adulthood, are a priority group for the National Framework.

The QFCC is committed to leading a children's rights agenda in Queensland and assisting others to integrate children's rights into their business. A rights-based approach recognises that decisions should be underpinned by 4 key principles:

- devotion to the best interests of the child
- the right to life, survival and development
- respect for the views of the child
- non-discrimination.

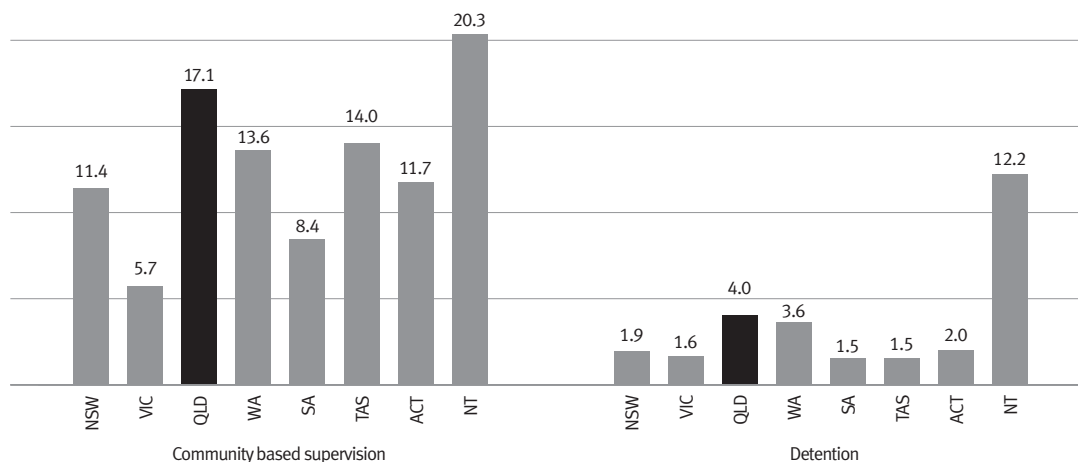
Out-of-home care that is safe and stable can help children and young people recover from experiences of maltreatment. Under the previous national framework, the national standards⁷⁸ were designed to improve the lives of children and young people by focusing on areas that directly influence positive outcomes. They included indicators relating to health, education, connection to family, culture and community, transition from care, belonging and identity, and safety, stability and security. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports annually on available data at the national level. In this section, we report on a selection of recent Queensland data describing the extent to which children in out-of-home care and youth justice systems in Queensland are receiving quality support that upholds their rights.

Many young people with care experiences go on to complete higher education, start families and have successful careers. Overall, however, children in contact with the child protection system are particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes while they are in care and after they have left the system. They are more likely to experience homelessness, criminal justice interventions, unemployment, and worse physical, mental health and educational outcomes.^{79, 80, 81, 82}

How does Queensland compare?

- **Compared to other jurisdictions that reported data, Queensland is leading in assisting children in care to read in year 5.** Queensland has a higher percentage of children in out-of-home care meeting national reading standards compared to other jurisdictions that reported data. In 2019, rates were highest for Queensland (77.2%), followed by Western Australia (71.3%) and South Australia (70.8%).⁸³ The percentage of children with a current education support plan has increased from 55.6% in 2016–17 to 80.9% in 2020–21.⁸⁴
- **Queensland has the second highest rate of youth justice supervision among its children and young people.** During 2020–21, Queensland had the second highest rate of young people in youth justice custody on an average day (4.0 per 10,000) and the second highest rate of young people under community-based supervision on an average day (17.1 per 10,000) behind the Northern Territory (Figure 4).⁸⁵ In total, 1,013 Queensland young people aged 10–17 years were in youth justice custody, including 994 who spent time in unsentenced custody.⁸⁶

Figure 4: A comparison across Australian jurisdictions of the rate of young people aged 10–17 per 10,000 in community-based supervision and youth justice detention (average daily number in 2020–21)



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021⁸⁷

- **Queensland has the third lowest rate of homelessness service access for children on orders.**⁸⁸ While 1,099 Queensland children who were the subject of a care and protection order accessed specialist homelessness services in 2020–21, this number has dropped by an average of 5.1% each year since 2015–16.
- **Queensland has one of the highest rates of unsentenced detention for children.** In June 2021, 88% of children in Queensland detention centres were unsentenced. The average rate of unsentenced detention in Australia was 72%.⁸⁹ However, it is worth noting that in 2020–21, the number of young people in unsentenced custody in Queensland decreased by 7.3% (Table 6).⁹⁰

Table 6: Number (and rate per 10,000) of children and young people within the Queensland youth justice system (FY2018–FY2021)

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	Change since 2017–18
Community-based supervision	2,540	2,849	2,541	2,396	5.7% decrease
	(56.6)	(54.5)	(48.0)	(44.7)	
Unsentenced custody	1,072	1,108	1,006	994	7.3% decrease
	(23.9)	(21.2)	(19.0)	(18.6)	
All custody	1,098	1,122	1,033	1,013	7.7% decrease
	(24.4)	(21.5)	(19.5)	(18.9)	

Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs⁹¹

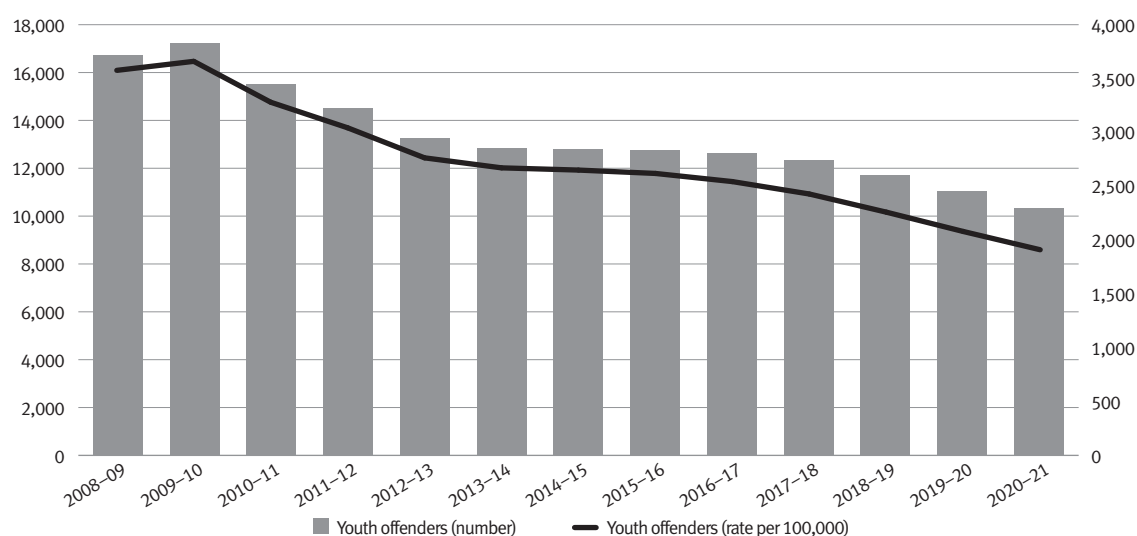
- **Queensland has one of the lowest proportions of children living in home-based care.** When children are not able to remain safely at home, placing them in home-based care is considered to be in their best interests.⁹² In 2021, Queensland had the second lowest proportion of children living in home-based care behind South Australia.
- Between 2016–17 and 2020–21:
 - the ratio of children in home-based care to the number of approved carer families increased from 1.58 to 1.65⁹³
 - the number of children on child protection orders living in residential care almost doubled (96.3% increase) from 644 to 1,264 children.⁹⁴

- **Queensland children and young people in out-of-home care experience more placements than children in many other states.** Between 2019–20 and 2020–21 Queensland saw a slight increase in children exiting care with only one or 2 placements from 42.0% to 44.0%. In 2020–21, across all Australian jurisdictions, Queensland had the third lowest percentage of children exiting care with only one or 2 placements (44.0%). Victoria had the greatest proportion of children exiting with only one or 2 placements (65.4%).⁹⁵

What is working well or improving?

- **The rate of youth offending in Queensland has been steadily decreasing since 2008.** Between 2008–09 and 2020–21 the number of *young offenders proceeded against by police* aged between 10 and 17 years in Queensland decreased from 16,709 to 10,314 (a rate of 3,575.8 per 100,000 persons aged between 10–17 years to 1,909.7) (Figure 5).⁹⁶ The number of children aged 10–13 in contact with the youth justice system is low. In 2020–21 only 549 child defendants had proven offences (charges) in a criminal court.⁹⁷

Figure 5: A comparison of the number of youth offenders aged 10–17 years and the rate per 100,000 persons aged 10–17 years (FY2008–2021)



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022⁹⁸

- **There has been an increase in the use of diversionary practices in Queensland.** Between 2018–19 and 2020–21, there was an increase in the number of cautions administered from 12,442 to 13,619 (although the number was higher in 2019–20 (15,428 cautions) and restorative justice conferences for young offenders from 1,866 to 2,295.⁹⁹
- **In January 2022, Government announced more than 200 young people in the youth justice system had graduated from a Queensland Government program that successfully reduces reoffending.** The Transition to Success (T2S) program experienced its largest ever number of graduates following its expansion to 20 locations across the state.¹⁰⁰ The 2022–23 Budget increased funding for Indigenous youth and family workers and family led decision making; to continue the work of the youth co-responder teams, and to expand the multi-agency collaborative panels.¹⁰¹
- **Over the past 5 years, there has been a decrease in the number and the rate of children and young people subject to: community-based supervision and custody, including unsentenced custody.** Between 2017–18 and 2020–21, the rate of distinct young people:
 - in youth justice custody fell from 24.4 to 18.9 per 10,000 young people aged 10–17¹⁰²
 - subject to community-based supervision fell from 56.6 to 44.7 per 10,000 young people aged 10–17.¹⁰³
- **Services are in place to support children in out-of-home care raising concerns.** In 2020–21, the Office of the Public Guardian conducted 38,466 visits to 10,203 children and young people. They raised 16,507 issues and made 125 formal complaints.¹⁰⁴ Frontline worker respondents to our 2022 workforce survey¹⁰⁵ agreed that within their organisation:
 - the views of children and young people are listened to and valued (80%)
 - decisions are made in children’s and young people’s best interests (84%).

- **The Child Protection Act 1999 has been improved to enhance the rights of children.** In May 2022, the Act was amended to ensure children will be genuinely empowered and supported to participate in decisions about their lives and the child protection system. The amendments are designed to:
 - reinforce children’s rights in the legislative framework
 - strengthen children’s voices in decisions that affect them
 - streamline, clarify and improve the regulation of care.¹⁰⁶
- **Support to children leaving out-of-home care is extending.** Government has announced it will support children who exit the out-of-home care system for longer, recognising their continuing parental responsibility to care for children who have been removed from their parents. In June 2022 the government announced that young people leaving care will be supported in their transition to adulthood through a range of new measures commencing in 2023–24. Measures include continuing the carers allowance for 19 to 21-year-olds remaining at home and providing financial support and mentoring for young people aged 18 to 21 leaving non-family-based care.¹⁰⁷
- **The majority of children living in out-of-home care have a health passport.** Over the past 5 years, the proportion of children with a health passport has ranged between 86.3% and 96.9%.¹⁰⁸ Several initiatives have also been developed by Queensland Health to address the reported inconsistency of health care coordination, referrals and checks for children and young people under the child health passport model.¹⁰⁹
- **The number of children in care receiving NDIS support is increasing.** Many children in contact with the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs receive NDIS support. As at 30 June 2021, 2,541 Queensland children (26.9%) in out-of-home care had a disability.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, 2,262 children subject to an ongoing intervention with the Department (either a child protection order or intervention with parental agreement) had an NDIS support plan.¹¹¹

What needs further improvement?

- **School suspension rates are markedly higher for children living in out-of-home care.** One per cent of Queensland state school students (5,692 students in 2021) live in out-of-home care. Between 2017 and 2021, rates of student disciplinary absences increased from:
 - 7.0% to 7.3% among children who were not in care
 - 23.4% to 24.9% among children living in out-of-home care.¹¹²
- **Academic performance is markedly lower for children living in out-of-home care.** In 2021, 72.1% of Queensland state school year 5 students on child protection orders met national reading standards compared with the year 5 average of 92.6%. Between 2017 and 2021 the percentage of year 5 students in out-of-home care reaching national reading standards ranged between 72.1% and 78.2%.¹¹³
- **Unaddressed, significant adversity remains a precursor to youth justice exposure.** In 2020–21, 10 to 17-year-olds from the lowest socio-economic areas were five times more likely to be under youth justice supervision than those from the highest socio-economic areas.¹¹⁴ In 2021, a total of 1,642 young offenders were surveyed in the Youth Justice Census. Of these:
 - 52% were disengaged from education, training or employment
 - 51% had experienced or been impacted by domestic and family violence
 - 32% had been living in unstable and/or unsuitable accommodation
 - 31% had at least one parent who spent time in adult custody
 - 15% had a disability (assessed or suspected), including 14% who had a cognitive or intellectual disability
 - 18% had an active Child Protection Order
 - 45% had at least one mental health or behavioural disorder (diagnosed or suspected).¹¹⁵
- **While most children living in out-of-home care are safe, a number experience additional harm.** Between 2016–17 and 2020–21, the proportion of children with substantiated harm reports remained around 2%. In 2020–21, 227 children in out-of-home care experienced harm.¹¹⁶ Since November 2018, the Queensland Government has been a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme (the Scheme). In June 2022, the Commonwealth Government, who lead the Scheme, confirmed it had provided payments to applicants totalling more than \$748 million through the Scheme for historical institutional child sexual abuse. In the same period, the Queensland Government had linked 156 people, who had accepted an offer of redress through the Commonwealth, with access to counselling and psychological care services.¹¹⁷
- **Frontline child safety workers express concern that the system is not meeting the needs of children.** Across all QFCC surveys of frontline workers, the majority of respondents consistently disagreed that the child protection and family support system met the needs of children, young people and families. This trend has continued in our most recent survey in 2022, with 61% disagreeing, compared with 16% agreeing.¹¹⁸

Theme 4

Are Queensland's out-of-home care and youth justice systems meeting the needs and upholding the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities?

This theme relates to the following state and national goals:

State goal 5:

Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

National goal 2:

Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems

The theme also examines 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.

The QFCC recognises the rich and resilient cultures that continue to sustain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect the right to self-determination and the importance of continuing connection to kin, Country and culture in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also recognise the significant disparities and challenges experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. First Nations children and families continue to be disproportionately represented in statutory child protection and youth justice systems in Queensland and across Australia. The QFCC is committed to identifying and highlighting the dynamics and drivers of this over-representation, and helping others understand and address the causes.

How does Queensland compare?

Over the past 3 years, the extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in out-of-home care has worsened in every Australian state and territory.¹¹⁹ The disproportionality ratio^b for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Queensland in 2020–21 was 5.5. This means that there were 5.5 times more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Queensland than expected based on the proportion of First Nations children in the population. This disproportionality ratio was higher than Tasmania (3.6) and Northern Territory (2.2) but lower than all other states (Table 7). Across every state and territory, the disproportionality ratio was higher in 2020–21^c.

Table 7: Disproportionality ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years in out-of-home care across Australian jurisdictions (FY2017–2021)

	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
2020–21	6.7	16.0	5.5	8.6	7.6	3.6	9.4	2.2
2019–20	6.5	15.8	5.4	8.5	7.6	3.4	10.0	2.1
2018–19	6.3	15.0	5.4	8.1	7.3	3.3	9.4	2.2
2017–18	6.2	14.5	5.1	8.2	6.9	3.0	10.3	2.2
2016–17	6.0	11.8	5.1	8.1	6.9	2.6	9.1	2.1

Source: Productivity Commission, 2022 Table 16A.9¹²⁰

^b Disproportionality refers to when representation of a particular group is higher than it should be by statistical standards. If the cohort's representation is proportionate to their representation in the target population, the disproportionality ratio will equal 1.0.

^c From 2018–19 the scope of out-of-home care changed. This means that in some jurisdictions disproportionality ratios for out-of-home care from 2018–19 are not comparable with data for previous years.

Disproportionate representation does not occur in isolation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people's experiences within the child protection system are affected not only by the child protection system itself but also by their interactions with other systems and services. Australia's National Agreement on Closing the Gap outlines targets to reduce inequality around a range of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a target end date of 2031.¹²¹ Reducing disproportionate representation in child protection is one of the agreement's 17 socio-economic outcome areas. Other targets relate to early childhood, schooling, health, economic participation, housing, safe communities, and disproportionate representation in youth justice.¹²² Addressing these inequalities is a human rights issue.¹²³ Ensuring the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are upheld will go some way to address the lack of equity in their outcomes.¹²⁴

In 2018, Queensland became the first state to embed the 5 elements of the ATSICPP in legislation.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (ATSICPP) was developed in recognition of the devastating effects of forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, communities and culture. It has 5 inter-related elements: prevention, partnership, placement, participation, and connection.¹²⁵ There is an emerging body of work being undertaken at both the state and national level to develop indicators to measure the progress of ATSICPP implementation.^{126, 127} Current measures reported at the national level solely assess the placement and connection elements.¹²⁸ Further development of measures of prevention, partnership and participation is needed.

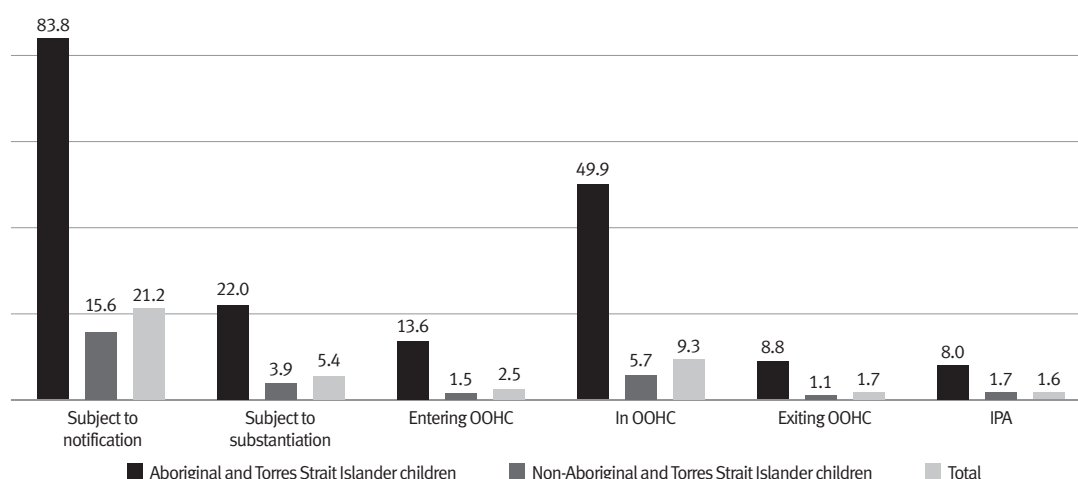
What is working well or improving?

- **The legal definition of kin has been amended** so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can be placed with people who are regarded as kin if they have a legitimate cultural connection to the child. On 10 May 2022, amendments in the *Child Protection Act 1999* passed parliament.¹²⁹
- **There have been improvements in infant mortality, readiness for school, housing and the use of police diversions**, but there is an ongoing and significant gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children.
 - According to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), between 2009 and 2021 the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland who were developmentally on track to start school has risen from 21.5% to 33.8%. In 2021 this compared with 53.2% of non-Indigenous children in Queensland. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children has remained consistent across the past 5 AEDC censuses.¹³⁰
 - The infant mortality rate in 2020–21 in Queensland was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants than non-Indigenous infants (6.5 versus 3.5 per 1,000 births). However, the annual rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infant deaths has been decreasing, on average, by 4.6% per year since 2007 versus a reduction of 2.9% for non-Indigenous infants.¹³¹
 - The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) dwellings increased from 74.6% in 2011¹³² to 81.2% in 2021.¹³³ However, the rate of appropriately sized dwellings was much higher for non-Indigenous Queenslanders (94.6% in 2016).
- **Family Wellbeing Service funding is empowering families to work with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to keep children out of the statutory system.** In March 2022 the government announced that 20,510 First Nations families have received culturally appropriate support from these services since 2016.¹³⁴
- **When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are reunified with their families, it is usually successful.** The number of reunifications has been consistent over time—195 in 2016–17, 203 in 2017–18, and 173 in 2018–19.¹³⁵ In 2019–20, 194 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were reunified with their families (around 4.3% of all children in out-of-home care) and 172 (88.7%) did not return to care within 12 months.¹³⁶

What needs further improvement?

- There is clear evidence of continuing disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the Queensland child protection system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people account for around 8.2% of all children in Queensland but they constitute approximately 44% of all children in care.¹³⁷ Figure 6 demonstrates the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at various stages of the child protection system.

Figure 6: Rates per 1,000 children and young people at various stages of the Queensland child protection statutory system, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (2020–21)



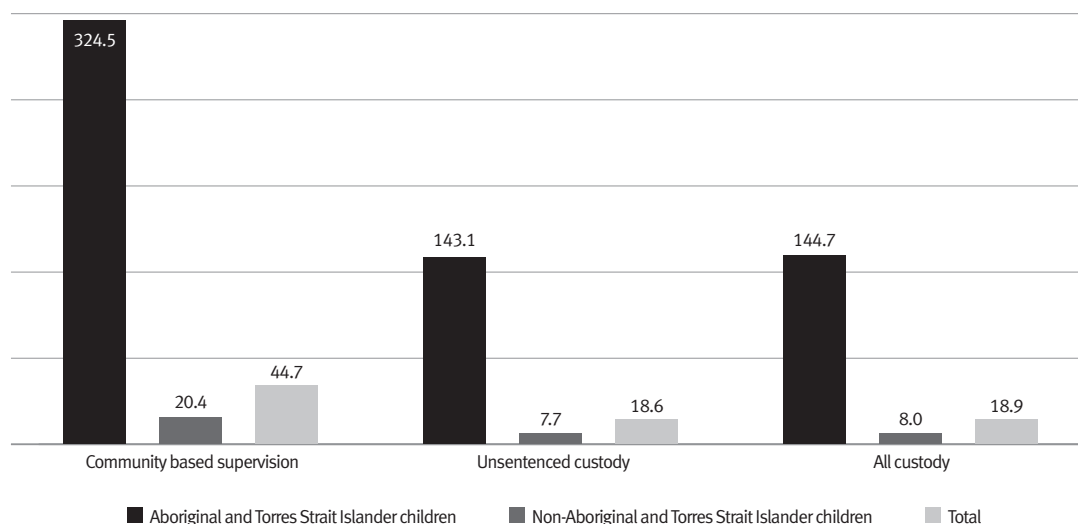
Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022¹³⁸

- **The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering care continues to exceed the number exiting.** Between 2017–18 and 2020–21, the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:
 - being discharged from out-of-home care increased by 16.6% from 741 to 864¹³⁹
 - entering out-of-home care increased by 39.9% from 948 to 1,326.¹⁴⁰

In 2020–21 in Queensland, for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child who was discharged from out-of-home care, 1.5 children were admitted.¹⁴¹

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in out-of-home care are more likely to be placed with carers with no family connection to them** than with kin or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers. As at 30 June 2021, 2,170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care were placed in kinship care (44.4%), 2,125 in foster care (43.5%) and 587 in residential care (12.0%). Of those in foster care, three-quarters were placed with non-Indigenous carers. Of those in residential care, 9 out of 10 were placed in non-Indigenous facilities.¹⁴²
- **The disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the Queensland youth justice system is ongoing** (Figure 7). Despite comprising around only 8% of all children aged 10–17 years in Queensland, in 2020–21, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children accounted for 46% of all child defendants who had a charge finalised in a Queensland court.¹⁴³ Figure 6 demonstrates the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the Queensland youth justice system.

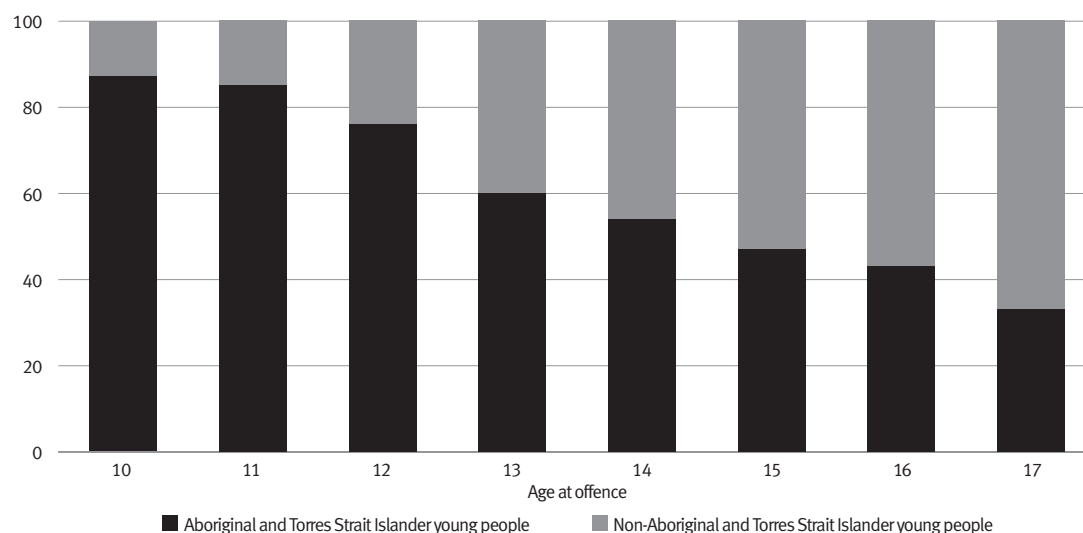
Figure 7: Rates per 10,000 distinct young people involved with the Queensland youth justice system, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (2020–21)



Source: Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, 2022¹⁴⁴

- **Disproportionate representation is highest for younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defendants.** In 2020–21, 87% of 10-year-olds, 85% of 11-year-olds, 76% of 12-year-olds and 60% of 13-year-old defendants were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (Figure 8).¹⁴⁵ By comparison with non-Indigenous children, 10 to 13-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 61 times more likely to be under community-based supervision and 50 times more likely to be in detention.¹⁴⁶ Of children who spent time in detention, on average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were detained for 88 nights versus 79 nights for non-Indigenous children.¹⁴⁷

Figure 8: A comparison of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status of distinct child defendants and age at offence (2020–2021)



Source: Children's Court of Queensland, 2021¹⁴⁸

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are less likely to be diverted from the youth justice system.** Where appropriate, children in conflict with the law should be dealt with, without judicial system intervention.¹⁴⁹ Police can deal with offenders using either court actions (laying charges that must be answered in court) or non-court actions (such as cautions, conferencing or issuing fines). The rate of proceedings by police against young people using court action dropped for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from 75.8% of all proceedings in 2018–19 to 72.0% of proceedings in 2020–21. However, over the same period, the rate for non-Indigenous young people dropped from 53.7% to 48.0%.¹⁵⁰

Theme 5

Is the Queensland child protection and family support system a collaborative and accountable system?

This theme relates to the following state and national goals:

State goal 1:

Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children

National goal 4:

Improved information sharing, data development and analysis

State goal 7:

Building and maintaining an accountable, transparent and cost-effective system

To ensure the successful implementation of reforms and overall system improvement, there must be shared responsibility and governance.¹⁵¹

The Supporting Families Changing Futures 2019–23 strategy notes the importance of shared governance, stating: ‘Together with our sector and community partners, all relevant government agencies are working together to continuously improve connected services and systems to better support families through the Interdepartmental Committee.’¹⁵²

The importance of building and maintaining an accountable, transparent and cost-effective system is also noted: ‘Over the next 5 years we will consolidate on what we’ve built. Taking what our partners, families, children and young people are telling us and using evidence, we will refine, improve, strengthen, enhance and hone our responses. By doing this, we will create a more efficient and effective system that puts families, children and young people experiencing vulnerability at its centre and help them to thrive and excel in their lives.’¹⁵³

How does Queensland compare?

Queensland has a strong child and family support sector. There are many organisations operating to provide advocacy and frontline support to children and their families. Queensland led the Australian move towards collective impact through its delivery of the Logan Together model, and it is now continuing to demonstrate strong collaborative practice through emerging new models such as the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP). TQKP is a cross-sectoral ‘coalition of the willing’ made up of tertiary, not-for-profit, government, and philanthropic bodies committed to making a difference through ‘systems work’ that takes ‘science to service’. In May 2022 the TQKP attracted \$7 million in philanthropic funding to continue its work to:

- advance the health, development, safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people,
- disrupting disadvantage, adversity and insecurity, and
- building capabilities, connections and resilience.¹⁵⁴

Queensland also has an active Prevention Alliance, focussed on the role that different sectors, communities and individuals have in keeping children safe and thriving. The Alliance brings together key government, non-government, community groups and the private sector across the community to focus on primary prevention strategies and includes representatives from yourtown, ARACY/TQKP, Act for Kids, QFCC, PeakCare, Every Child, Clubs Qld, QATSICPP, Qld Human Rights Commission and Stand By You Foundation/Westfield Australia partnership.

Consistent with other Australian jurisdictions, Queensland is upgrading its data collection and information sharing capabilities. In Queensland, the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs is currently updating its Integrated Client Management System. The new client-centric system should improve information sharing and collaboration across Queensland government agencies.¹⁵⁵ A desktop review across jurisdictions found examples of technology being used to support information sharing and governance for the safety and wellbeing of children. For example, the Victorian *Child Information Sharing Scheme* facilitates information sharing across organisations to support the wellbeing and safety of children and young people aged 0–18 years.¹⁵⁶ Complementing the scheme, *Child Link* supports information sharing through a web-based platform that shows information about a child to authorised professionals responsible for the wellbeing and safety of a child or young person.¹⁵⁷

Consistent with other Australian jurisdictions, Queensland continues to undertake evaluations of the impact of the programs and services it delivers. A desktop review of child protection system evaluation found all jurisdictions have undertaken reviews and evaluations, often in isolation from each other, and findings are not consistently shared. In our study *Learning from evaluations*,¹⁵⁸ we found that there were several implementation evaluations early in Queensland's reform period. However, over time, the number of evaluations decreased. The study highlighted the need for continuous action: 'Now that reform initiatives have had time to become more established, agencies need to determine whether they are achieving what they set out to achieve.' In our *Measuring what matters* report, we noted that while there was some evidence of system improvements, for example using evaluations to inform future service delivery, the Queensland system is not always acting on evaluation findings.¹⁵⁹

What is working well or improving?

- **There is increasing transparency about the performance of the statutory child safety system.** The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs has recently updated the *Our Performance* website, which provides data visualisations for several administrative data points they collect, including the average caseload of child safety officers.¹⁶⁰
- **Steps are being taken to improve self-determination through the implementation of Delegated Authority arrangements.** Commencing in 2022, the Queensland Government has commenced trialling Delegated Authority, a process whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations make decisions regarding children in their communities.¹⁶¹ Preliminary feedback from our stakeholders suggests the trials are having a positive impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.
- **There has been concerted effort to improve cross-portfolio coordination for individual children.** A number of governance groups have been tasked with leading components of the child and family sector agenda including:
 - The youth justice taskforce led by the Queensland Police Service is focused on building intensive multi-agency case management of high-risk repeat youth offenders.¹⁶²
 - The QFCC's Child Death Review Board conducts systemic reviews following the death of a child connected to the child protection system under Part 3A of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.¹⁶³
 - Domestic violence high risk teams led by the Attorney-General's department will enhance responses to domestic and family violence through time-critical information sharing, safety management for victims and increased line of sight of high-risk perpetrators.¹⁶⁴
 - Supported by DCYJMA, the Queensland First Children and Families Board made up of eminent and respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders from across the state, continues to provide strategic guidance and oversight for the implementation of the *Our Way* strategy, to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland's child protection system.¹⁶⁵
 - The *Our Way* Interagency Strategic Partnership group, led by DCYJMA, including Deputy Directors-General from relevant government agencies, continues to foster collective action across government to eliminate the disparity of First Nations children and families in child protection in Queensland to achieve the *Our Way* vision and targets.
- **Queensland's child protection and family support sector is committed to information sharing and collaboration.** There are many examples of effective collaboration and local level leadership within the Queensland child protection and family support sector. The QFCC's 2022 survey of frontline workers found 82% of respondents agreed that their workplace has a culture that supports collaboration with other organisations to achieve client outcomes.¹⁶⁶

What needs further improvement?

- Queensland can improve its ownership of a robust, whole-of-government child and family policy agenda.** In our *Measuring what matters* report, we noted a gap in central governance following the cessation of the Interdepartmental Committee in May 2021.¹⁶⁷ Prior to 2021, the Interdepartmental Committee undertook a central role in the governance of Queensland's child protection and family support system. In 2021, the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) concluded that the Interdepartmental Committee should have an increased role in the leadership and governance of the system.¹⁶⁸
- There are opportunities for Queensland to become more involved with cross-government and national data linkage initiatives.** As stated within the current national framework, 'Better sharing and linking of data across different levels of government and with non-government organisations can improve our understanding of children and young people's experience of child protection and other service systems and of the service design and models that are required.' Many data linkage activities have been carried out at the state and federal level linking outcomes data from children and young people in the out-of-home care system with other administrative data.¹⁶⁹ The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also collates data at the national level about children and their experiences of childhood.¹⁷⁰ Such exercises can improve our understanding of outcomes for children both within the system and after they leave.



Objective Two

Raise awareness and advocate for children and their families

The QFCC provides leadership on matters that impact on the safety, rights and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families. We do this by raising awareness and advocating for them. We are in a unique position to do this, with a legislated mandate and a system-level perspective. We deliver objective analysis and advice that supports government decision-making and system improvement. Underpinning this objective is hearing from Queensland children, young people and their families so their views can inform change.

In 2021–22, the QFCC made formal submissions, spoke at public hearings and facilitated youth participation opportunities to make sure children's voices were heard and children's rights were considered in the development and implementation of policy. We use different forums and channels across the Queensland community to raise awareness and influence change. These included:

- our public facing website
- position statements and information papers
- submissions to inform reviews and inquiries
- recommendations about relevant laws, policies, practices and services
- participation on national and state reference groups and working groups
- strong partnerships with government and non-government agencies
- consultation with children, young people and their families and communities.

Public advocacy

During 2021–22, the QFCC and QFCC youth advocates contributed written submissions with recommendations to reviews and inquiries, including:

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's review of the Australian Curriculum
- Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce first discussion paper
- Implementing the successor plan to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, led by the Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
- Queensland Parliamentary inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness
- Options for legislating against coercive control and the creation of a standalone domestic violence offence for Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce
- Women and girls' experience of the criminal justice system for Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce
- Inspector of Detention Services Bill 2021
- Review of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*

- Review of the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- Mental Health Select Committee inquiry into the opportunities to improve mental health outcomes for Queenslanders
- Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Bill 2021
- Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2021
- Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021
- The ACCC Infant Inclined Products issues paper
- The ACCC Helium Balloon Kits discussion paper
- The ACCC Toppling Furniture consultation paper on regulatory options
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Quad Bikes and Side-by-side Vehicles Safety discussion paper
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications consultation on the Vehicle Reversing Aids Regulation Impact Statement.

Our submissions are available on our website.

Parliamentary hearings and inquiries

Throughout 2021–22, the QFCC commissioners and staff appeared before 3 parliamentary hearings and contributed to one taskforce. These were:

- **Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, oversight hearing:** On 28 March 2022, our commissioners and executive directors gave an overview of the QFCC’s key pieces of work including *Principle focus; Rights, voices, stories; Growing up in Queensland; Measuring what matters; Yarning for change* and the first Child Death Review Board annual report. Our executive team highlighted concerns about the rising incidence of youth suicide in Queensland, the pervasiveness of domestic violence in the case files we review, the life trajectories of children who are removed from their family, and society’s view of children who commit a crime.
- **Mental Health Select Committee:** In February 2022, the Mental Health Select Committee invited representatives of the QFCC Youth Advisory Council to attend a private hearing with committee members. The youth advocates’ candour and courage in speaking about their views and experiences of mental health was admirable. The parliamentary hearing was an excellent opportunity to amplify the voices of young Queenslanders in this important conversation. The Mental Health Select Committee report was tabled in Parliament in June 2022. Youth advocates who appeared before the Committee were quoted in the report and their comments were reflected in the 57 recommendations made to improve mental health outcomes for all Queenslanders.
- **Minimum age of criminal responsibility:** In October 2021, the QFCC made a formal submission to the Queensland Parliament Community Support and Services Committee regarding the Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Bill 2021. In February 2022, the commissioners spoke at the committee’s public hearing, advocating for the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Queensland to be raised to 14 years in line with international expectations and emerging research on children’s capability to understand their actions at such a young age. We will continue to advocate for reform in this area in 2022–23, including through our program of youth justice oversight.
- **Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce:** In 2021–22, the QFCC made 3 submissions to the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, highlighting the experience of girls and young women of domestic, family and sexual violence. We also provided a copy of the QFCC Model of Participation to the taskforce and facilitated 2 workshops for the taskforce to speak directly to the QFCC Youth Advisory Council about their experiences. The QFCC submissions and comments from the QFCC Youth Advisory Council were directly quoted and referenced in the taskforce’s 2 reports, contributing to the 274 recommendations the taskforce made to reform legislation, policy and practice in Queensland.

Media advocacy

Throughout 2021–22, the QFCC engaged in public campaigns and public commentary to raise awareness and advocate for children and their families. Key topics included:

- school disciplinary absences
- youth participation in the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce
- age of children in residential care
- extending the age of support for children in care from 18 to 21
- *Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID* report
- youth participation in the Mental Health Select Committee.

The QFCC led messages that focused on 6 key areas:

- advocating for children and young people
- listening to the views of children and young people
- advocating for the rights of children and young people
- supporting the child protection and family support sector
- influencing policy
- influencing change in the Queensland child protection system.

We analyse our media coverage each year to evaluate our public reputation and the likely impact of our messages among our target audiences. Between May 2021 and April 2022, the QFCC featured in 879 media reports (including syndicated coverage), generated through proactive opportunities, reactive media enquiries, or passing mentions. Overall, 66% of coverage was positive or very positive in tone.

Coverage promoting reports released by the QFCC attracted the most media coverage, with our *Growing up in Queensland* and *Changing the Sentence* reports featuring prominently and positively throughout the period. Other notable media coverage centred around the QFCC’s child death data, our advocacy around raising the age of criminal responsibility and the extension of support for young people in care to age 21.

Media monitoring organisation Isentia assigned us a Media Impact Score of 3.4. This score is derived from a comparative index of more than 400 Australian organisations’ media performance across 2020. Our score is comparable with the media performances of organisations in the university and not-for-profit sectors and sits at the ‘very positive’ end of the spectrum.

In addition to public media activities, QFCC commissioners and staff also raised awareness of the rights, safety and wellbeing of children at events, webinars and panel discussions. In 2021–22, this included:

- Children’s Policy Centre webinar panel discussion on embedding children and young people’s views, experiences, and rights into your work
- Diplomacy Training Program Webinar on advancing Children’s Rights via the UN Reporting Mechanism – the role of the UN and Children’s Commissioners
- CREATE Foundation Voices in Action biennial conference.

Research

The QFCC translates research into easily usable information for policy makers and practitioners, to assist them in helping vulnerable Queensland children and families. Our research agenda identifies opportunities and priorities to expand the evidence base on matters that are relevant to Queensland children, young people and families, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. In 2021–22, as part of the QFCC's *Research Agenda 2019–22*, we developed 8 research summaries:

- Alcohol and drug use during pregnancy
- Educational outcomes for children in contact with the child protection system
- Supporting education and training opportunities for young care leavers
- The effectiveness of digital mental health interventions for young people
- The extent and impact of alcohol and drug use by Australian young people
- The extent of infant mental health disorders
- The importance of culture, kinship systems and community
- Trend data on youth suicide in Queensland.

Major research completed by the QFCC this year included:

- ***Taking Lives – A Queensland study on parents who kill their children:*** In 2021–22, we concluded a project on children who are at risk of fatal assault or neglect by a parent—an act known as filicide. The research defined evidence-based red flags for children who died from fatal assault and neglect, using data from the Queensland Child Death Register and agency child death review reports. The research report *Final Report – A study of indicators of red flags for fatal child assault and neglect in Queensland* was released in June 2022. We also produced a summary of key risk factors for filicide: *Taking Lives – A Queensland study on parents who kill their children*, released in June 2022. Both documents contribute to the evidence base on risk factors and were provided to key stakeholders charged with responsibility for protecting children.
- ***Annual report on child deaths in Queensland:*** The QFCC's *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland 2020–21* was tabled in the Queensland Parliament on 17 February 2022. *Child deaths in Queensland* factsheets outlined the key findings including on drowning, deaths of children known to the child protection system and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality. The QFCC also published the annual Australia and New Zealand Child Death Statistics on behalf of the Australia and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group.

Improving access to our message

The QFCC is committed to building and maintaining strong connections with children, young people, families and other stakeholders. Providing the right information, to the right people, using the right channel is an important part of accessibility. In 2021–22, the QFCC adopted a new digital media strategy and opened a LinkedIn account that, with our Facebook and Instagram profiles has extended our reach to more Queenslanders.

In June 2022, we launched a new, user-friendly website, with refreshed QFCC branding. The website affords a fresh opportunity to connect with Queensland young people, families and partnering organisations. The website has several new features to connect target audiences with the information they need most. There is a dedicated 'youth' space, containing a guide to child protection, stories from young people and blogs written by QFCC youth advocates. The 'families' space is for parents and carers, containing videos and blogs and promoting the work of the *Families are first* initiative, celebrating First Nations families and communities. The new 'assistance' page has quick links to support services that are easily accessible, even on mobile devices.

The redeveloped website also provides a platform to showcase the good work achieved by the commission, our partners and the community. It will continue to provide easy access to QFCC publications, news and policy submissions.



Objective Three

Empower children, young people and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives

Empowering children and families to share their stories is critical – to ensure the accuracy and integrity of our work, and to let others know they are not alone in their experiences. To deliver this, we work to amplify the voices of Queensland children and their families by:

- engaging with children, young people and families in purposeful, ethical and inclusive ways
- gathering and using the perspectives of Queensland’s children and young people to inform and influence the decisions made by government.

This aligns with our responsibilities, under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* to engage with, and take account of, the views of children, young people and their families and uphold the rights of children to participate in decision-making that affects their lives.

Youth participation framework and model of participation

In October 2021, we published our Model of Participation and Youth Participation Quick Start Guide. These documents detail how the QFCC connects with, supports and amplifies the voices of young Queenslanders to influence change. We also released a new Youth Participation Framework of Practice in June 2022 with a commission-wide approach to youth participation best practice. While all our work seeks to enable the meaningful participation of children and young people, 3 key engagement mechanisms used in 2021–22 were the:

- *Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID* project
- *Families are first* initiative
- QFCC Youth Advisory Council.

Growing up in Queensland: Living through COVID

This survey of 1,542 Queenslanders aged 13–18 years was undertaken over a 4-week period in October 2021. *Living through COVID*¹⁷¹ aimed to:

- examine the impact of lockdowns
- collect the suggestions of young people about how government and community leaders could best communicate to them about the pandemic.

The survey found:¹⁷²

- Worst things about the COVID lockdowns were:
 - not seeing friends or family (33%)
 - remote learning (27%)
 - recreational impacts (13%).

- Best things about the COVID lockdowns were:
 - enhanced appreciation of personal freedom (45%)
 - enjoyment of home schooling (40%)
 - increased appreciation of friends (39%)
 - increased appreciation of schooling (28%)
 - increased closeness to family (27%).
- Suggested improvements to the government’s COVID communication were:
 - communication tailored to young people (13%)
 - being more reassuring and positive when providing information (12%)
 - provision of clear communication (11%).

Families are first

Families are first is a QFCC initiative that celebrates strong, proud, and thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It shows the strengths of everyday community members and the roles they play in their own families, extended families and the community. It provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families a platform to share their successes and challenges, which in turn challenges the often-negative perceptions in the wider community. Since the program began in 2016, it has collected 60 stories from participants from far north, north and south-east Queensland. These stories have been shared through our social media platforms and promoted online and through community radio. The *Families are first* web page and YouTube channel host 32 video stories.

During 2021–22, we have:

- established strong relationships with communities and key stakeholders including:
 - Elder groups, such as Inala Elders Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation and Cherbourg Elders
 - Brian Kerle and the Young Indigenous Basketball Academy
 - Triple A Murri Radio
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
 - Kurbingui Youth Development Ltd
 - QATSICPP
 - Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement.
- captured 8 stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families, and young people—these stories have been produced into 11 videos posted on QFCC social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube
- collaborated with QATSICPP to generate awareness of the family-led decision-making process in youth justice—stories were captured from staff from 3 community-controlled organisations and shared on QFCC social media platforms over 3 weeks
- developed a collaborative working relationship with Triple A Murri Radio to co-develop a project that allows young people’s voices to be heard—the 5-week pilot project called ‘An introduction to multimedia platforms as a form of storytelling’ provides young people with a basic understanding of technologies to create and share their stories (the first pilot project was delivered over 5 weeks from April 2022).

Young, Black and Proud scholarships

In 2021–22, through a partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service, the QFCC sponsored 17 Young, Black and Proud scholarships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under the age of 25, from a range of backgrounds were provided small scholarships (\$1,000–\$2,000) to follow their academic, arts and sports dreams.

Youth Advisory Council

The QFCC's Youth Advisory Council champions the voices of children and young people and provides youth perspectives and leadership to the QFCC.

The council meets regularly 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 important issues, then it designs and implements responses to address them.

The council has up to 25 members, with a current active membership of 21 young people aged between 14 and 25. Members, known as 'youth advocates', have diverse backgrounds and represent regional and metropolitan areas. In 2021–22, youth advocates contributed advice to:

- Mental Health Select Committee – 7 youth advocates participated in parliamentary hearings and provided input into the QFCC submission in February and March 2022
- ANROWS conference – 4 youth advocates co-designed and delivered a workshop around youth participation practice in February 2022
- Human Rights Commission Roundtable – 3 youth advocates and 2 youth researchers participated in February 2022
- Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce – 4 youth advocates provided input into the QFCC submission, and 6 youth advocates met with the taskforce
- Safer pathways through childhood strategy – 4 youth advocates consulted with the Child Death Prevention team
- YMCA Youth Parliament – youth advocates contributed to the Youth Acts tabled at this year's program.

The QFCC Commissioner, and 3 youth advocates attended the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program to connect with 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from across Queensland. They introduced the QFCC's work and led a discussion on the different concerns participants had for their communities. Feedback from this session will help inform future engagement activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

In recognition of the value of their contributions, the QFCC facilitates youth advocate participation in various internal and external opportunities including conferences, stakeholder events and media opportunities. Youth advocates also receive professional development and guidance during their tenure, particularly in relation to communication and advocacy skills. A current list of youth advocates can be found on our website.¹⁷³

Community engagement

Queensland Child Protection Week (5–11 September 2021)

The QFCC Principal Commissioner attended the *Queensland Child Protection Week Award* ceremony and presented the 2021 Regional Program Award to *Safe Connections – Early Years Linkages Project*. This project aims to improve outcomes for families in the Moreton region that are experiencing domestic and family violence and associated child protection issues. Details of award winners are available online.¹⁷⁴

NAIDOC community events (19–24 September 2021)

QFCC staff attended the Logan and Ipswich NAIDOC community events in September 2021 providing an opportunity to engage with children, their families and community through fun, family-based activities.

Yarning for change

In response to a Queensland Government 2020 election commitment, the QFCC is facilitating culturally appropriate community conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children about their interactions with the justice system. We began engaging with young people in Redcliffe, Logan, Caboolture, Ipswich, Inala and all 3 of the youth detention centres. Between March and June 2022, the project team commenced engagement in regional areas including Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Mt Isa. To date the QFCC has spoken with 89 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. A final report will be presented to the Attorney-General by September 2022, meeting the election commitment.

Talking Families

In 2021–22, we continued with *Talking Families*, a community education initiative designed to reduce stigma and instil confidence in parents about seeking support with the stresses of parenting. *Talking Families* was designed to assist parents to seek help early before problems escalate. 182 schools and services that signed on to the program were supported by their local Family and Child Connect service.

A survey of over 900 stakeholders, including parents, schools and services delivering the program, indicated that the needs of families had changed, and the program was no longer meeting requirements. In response, the QFCC closed *Talking Families* on 30 June 2022. The QFCC will work with parenting organisations in 2022–23 to deliver practical and relevant information to Queensland families.

oneplace community services directory

The *oneplace* website was an online directory of Queensland community services provided by the QFCC. It was implemented in 2015 in response to a recommendation of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. Usage of *oneplace* has declined over time, despite ongoing investment in promotion. Trend data suggests that Queenslanders are using other means to find local family support. In response, the QFCC closed *oneplace* on 30 June 2022.

Queensland parents and carers can continue to seek family and parenting support through the Queensland Government's Family and Child Connect program, which offers free, unlimited and confidential advice to families and connects them to practical support. Queenslanders can also continue to search for community services through a national database operated by not-for-profit Infoxchange, which includes all services formerly listed on *oneplace*. The QFCC will promote these initiatives throughout 2022–23.

Objective Four

Support, connect and collaborate with organisations that advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children

Improving child and family wellbeing throughout Queensland requires focus and effort that reaches across individual systems and portfolios. All stakeholders must work collaboratively to ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach to legislation, policy, funding and service delivery that benefits Queensland's children and families.

The QFCC is uniquely positioned to bring together diverse voices to contribute to key issues that impact on the wellbeing of children and their families. We work with other statutory agencies, peak bodies and our counterparts in other jurisdictions to achieve common outcomes and collective benefits. By employing a collaborative approach, we can maximise our impact and assist others to achieve common goals.

Working in partnership

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.

QFCC Advisory Council

In line with Part 4 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the Principal Commissioner established an advisory council to:

- help promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have for 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 3 times in 2021–22. Its membership currently comprises:

Luke Twyford (Jan–Jun 22)	Chief Executive Officer and Principal Commissioner, QFCC (Chair)
Natalie Lewis	Commissioner, QFCC
Kay Ganley	Former owner and Chief Executive Officer, Charlton Brown
Assistant Commissioner Cameron Harsley APM	Organisational Capability Command, Queensland Police Service
Hetty Johnston AM	Founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Bravehearts Inc
Zoe Rathus AO	Senior Lecturer in Law, Griffith Law School
Heather Watson	Director and Principal Lawyer, Watson Advisory & Consulting Pty Ltd
Dr Gerald Featherstone	Chief Executive Officer, Kummara Association

Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group

The Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group meets quarterly to discuss sector-wide trends and issues relating to children, young people and their families, with a focus on systemic and cross-agency oversight. The QFCC Principal Commissioner chairs the group, which comprises representatives from the following agencies:

- QFCC
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Office of the Health Ombudsman
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Coroners Court of Queensland
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Queensland Integrity Commission
- Office of Child Protection Litigation
- Queensland Magistrates Courts Service.

The Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group met in July 2021, when it was addressed by then-Deputy Under Treasurer Graham Fraine, and in November 2021, when it was addressed by Children's Court of Queensland President, Her Honour Judge Deborah Richards.

QFCC Community Partnerships Group

The QFCC also chairs the QFCC Community Partnerships Group, an advocacy alliance of non-government peak bodies and statutory bodies. This forum enables the QFCC to engage and partner with key stakeholders and system influencers to identify and discuss persistent and emerging strategic issues that impact on the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people. At its first meeting of 2022, the group discussed the upcoming public hearing of the *Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021*, where both our commissioners presented evidence.

By working collectively, the member agencies of the group strengthen their powers of advocacy, using their different roles and areas of influence. Meetings are held 4 times per year.

Other partners the QFCC worked with in 2021–22 include:

- Australia and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians
- Family and Child Connect
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Queensland Child Protection Week Committee
- Family Matters
- Queensland First Children and Families Board
- QATSICPP
- Queensland Council of Social Services
- Peak Care Queensland
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
- Queensland Equity Framework Partnership Governance Group
- Queensland Police Service (as part of Domestic and Family Violence Advisory Group)
- The Australian Child Rights Taskforce
- The Committee for Economic Development of Australia.

In addition to these formal groups, our staff attended a range of other events with our partners in 2021–22. These included the 2022 Qld Parliament's Flood Appeal Reception, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation's Dance for Daniel, the Office for Youth's Speak Out event, meet ups with yourtown and Kids Helpline, the PeakCare awards, National Reconciliation Week Launch and Breakfast, QCOSS 2022 State Budget Breakfast, and the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership Parliamentary Event.

The QFCC's child death prevention staff participated on several advisory bodies, such as the:

- Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group
- Queensland Government Births and Deaths Working Group
- Interim Queensland Suicide Prevention Network
- Queensland Paediatric Quality Council Steering Committee
- Infant Mortality Sub-committee
- Road Safety Research Network
- Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) Multiagency Advisory Group.

Collaborative projects

Projects delivered in partnership are summarised below.

Online safety—*Out of the Dark*

This initiative involves the collaboration of the QFCC with the Queensland Police Service Task Force Argos, the Department of Education, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, yourtown, Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation and Bravehearts.

Out of the Dark helps children, young people and adults to prevent, recognise and respond to online child sexual exploitation. It undertakes community education activities to raise awareness of the need for online safety, especially regarding online sexual grooming of children and young people. In May 2022, the QFCC hosted the Amplify Forum: Solutions for Online Safety, which focused on children's rights online and designing key messages and resources that promote healthy digital practices among young people. The forum was co-designed by QFCC youth advocates and featured guest speakers from Kids Helpline, eSafety and the Australian National University.

Children's Week

In 2021–22, the QFCC provided funding for Children's Rights Queensland, a not-for-profit organisation that delivers initiatives to raise awareness of children's rights, including providing a central coordination point for activities held during Children's Week. Children's Rights Queensland administered 79 small grants to community organisations across Queensland to run children's week events, commissioned and launched *The Right to Be Me* picture book, launched the Children's Rights Queensland ambassador program and delivered the Young Leaders Challenge.

Queensland Youth Week

The QFCC partnered with the Office of Youth to celebrate young people aged 12 to 25 and the positive contributions they make to Queensland. Our youth advocates were profiled throughout Youth Week in April 2022 on the QFCC's Instagram channel, with youth advocates sharing their experiences and issues that are important to them. The youth advocates also participated in a consultation session with the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and attended the Speak Out event with government ministers.

The Right to Be Me picture book

Volunteers from the QFCC, Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Mercy, Troocoo and Child Rights Foundation came together to pack calendars and *The Right to Be Me* children's picture book for every foster and kinship care home in Queensland. Delivering this book will help develop literacy skills, teach children about their rights and thank foster and kinship care families.

Mental health service access for young people

Among the recommendations of the 2020–21 Child Death Review Board Annual Report, was to 'develop and deliver youth-friendly messages to raise awareness about mental health services for children and young people, and about their right and ability to access these.' In response, the QFCC partnered with headspace to deliver a campaign about accessing services and the benefits of young people having a Medicare card.

We recognised headspace's leadership in youth mental health and rapport with young people and took advantage of their communication channels for this 4-week campaign in June 2022. The campaign reached one million young people. Those young people saw the social media advertisement, on average, 6 times with almost 8,000 reading a detailed blog about the benefits of a Medicare card to access support.

Triple A Radio multimedia program for young First Nations people

The QFCC collaborated with Triple A Radio to deliver a multimedia program for young First Nations people throughout June 2022. The Intro to Radio program provided young people, aged 13–18 years, a voice and different ways to tell their story.

The young people learned how to produce a radio show using storytelling, with a special focus on yarning about the history and culture of First Nations Peoples and finding songs that mean something to them. The 5-week program focused on the history and culture of how First Nations people have used storytelling as a powerful means of passing on knowledge and culture. It also taught the fundamental principles of radio, song selection to enhance stories and how to develop your own radio program.

Child death data

The QFCC maintains the Queensland Child Death Register containing data available for research, public education, policy development and program design. Access to the comprehensive dataset is available at no cost to researchers. In 2021–22, we responded to 21 requests from researchers and government agencies for detailed data from the register and we produced key factsheets on key matters including the deaths of children known to the child protection system and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality.

Over the year our child death data was made available to inform:

- suicide data – First Children and Families Board, Government Statistician's Office, Local Government Association and Local Thriving Communities (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)
- safety standards – ACCC in relation to infant sleep products, sleep aids, prams and toppling furniture
- infant safety – University of Sunshine Coast in relation to baby slings and strangulation hazards
- drowning data – Royal Lifesaving Society, Kidsafe and Queensland Building and Construction Commission
- interstate residents – for child death reporting in the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Victoria.

QFCC child death data was also used to make submissions in relation to:

- infant inclined products issues paper – ACCC
- helium balloon kits confidential discussion paper – ACCC
- toppling furniture assessment of regulatory options – ACCC
- vehicle reversing aid technologies regulatory impact statement – Department of Infrastructure
- quad bike safety regulations – Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

Our partnerships relating to child death include a crucial information sharing process with the Department of Education to inform student wellbeing policy development and support suicide postvention in affected schools. We have contributed to suicide prevention by:

- increasing awareness across government of trends and spikes in suicide numbers
- reporting on situational circumstances and risk factors affecting young people
- providing suicide data to government agencies to support development of mental health and wellbeing initiatives

During 2021–22, we concluded the migration of data into the new child death database Coda, developed a data dictionary and made system refinements to improve functionality in several areas.

Safer Pathways Through Childhood framework

The QFCC has developed a framework to set the direction of the QFCC's child death prevention activities for the next 5 years to 2027. The *Safer Pathways Through Childhood* framework is designed to maximise the impact of the QFCC's legislated child death prevention functions and direct its priorities for the future. It details how the QFCC will use its data and expertise on child deaths to uphold all children's rights to a full life and health equity. It is not intended as a state-wide strategy or to govern the work of other agencies.

To ensure the framework is supported by clear and tangible actions, the QFCC will identify specific prevention activities with stakeholders in an annual action plan. The framework was released in June 2022.

Child Death Review Board

The Child Death Review Board was established under legislation in 2020 to conduct systemic reviews following the death of a child connected to the child protection system, identify opportunities to improve the child protection system and prevent future deaths. The QFCC hosts the Board, with QFCC staff providing the corporate, secretariat and review coordination functions. The board comprises 12 members with relevant experience and skills and has 50% non-government members and 2 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members. It is chaired by Luke Twyford, Principal Commissioner of the QFCC.

In 2021–22, with the support of the QFCC secretariat team, the board:

- finalised research with the Queensland Paediatric Quality Council on sudden unexpected death in infancy and considered this research to inform its findings
- undertook a review of cases considered by the CDRB that involved domestic and family violence in the year prior to the child's death and commissioned a literature review of domestic and family violence responses and promising practices
- published a research paper on the prevalence and drivers of suicide among children known to the child protection system (commissioned in 2020–21)
- shared learnings with Queensland, inter-state and national stakeholders through presentations and conferences
- undertook an evaluation of the CDRB implementation and operations, with findings to inform updates to CDRB processes in 2022–23
- developed data framework and tools to help monitor and report on recurring issues observed across child death review cases
- continued to lead the Cross-Agency Reviews Group to identify emerging issues and share learnings from the new child death review model
- wrote to multiple government agencies to share findings from child death reviews and encouraging action to be taken by agencies in response
- delivered its inaugural annual report, tabled in Parliament on 17 February 2022.

The board's inaugural annual report highlighted several areas that required monitoring including:

- over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children amongst those who had died
- trends of great concern in relation to youth suicide, including females using more lethal means and younger children committing suicide
- multiple sudden unexpected deaths in infancy.

The board made 10 recommendations which were accepted or accepted in-principle by government, across 3 key areas:

- improved access to family support services and evaluation of their effectiveness in diverting families from needing child safety interventions
- more thorough assessments of a child's family protection history, previously observed exposure to harm, patterns of parental behaviour, cultural factors and health advice
- greater investment in suicide prevention and postvention across government and the sector—specifically to reduce the over-representation of suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children—to establish a shared understanding of the long-term impacts of childhood trauma and to improve access to mental health and suicide support in schools.

Objective Five

Build our capacity, capability and culture to achieve our vision

The QFCC maintains a culture of continuous improvement to our performance, processes, governance and internal systems, with the aim of achieving operational excellence. We understand the importance of having a diverse and inclusive workplace culture, and we also understand the need to foster excellence and expertise in our staff.

Our workforce profile

Our 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*. As at 30 June 2022, the QFCC employed 64 full-time equivalent staff. Our staff profile was 82% female and 18% male, with 8% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 4% identifying as having a disability (see Table 8).

Total employee expenses for 2021–22 was \$9.698 million.

Table 8: QFCC staff demographics

FTE		
Total FTE for Queensland Family and Child Commission	64.39 ¹⁷⁵	
Gender	Number (headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (calculated on headcount)
Woman	62	81.58
Man	14	18.42
Non-binary	0	0

Table 8: QFCC staff demographics

EEO Groups	Number ¹⁷⁶ (headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (calculated on headcount)
Women	62	81.58
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples	6	7.89
People with a disability	3	3.95
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Born overseas	11	14.47
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages or Australian South Sea Islander languages)	5	6.58
	Number (headcount)	Percentage of total Leadership Cohort (calculated on headcount)
Women in leadership roles ¹⁷⁷	6	54.55

Our performance

Service delivery statement

In the service delivery statements of the Queensland State Budget 2021–22, 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 standards:

Table 9: QFCC service standards and targets

QFCC service standard	Notes	2021–22 target	2021–22 actual
Percentage increase in searches on the <i>oneplace</i> Community services directory (Effectiveness measure)	1, 2, 3	5%	12%
Overall satisfaction with <i>oneplace</i> Community services directory user experience (Effectiveness measure)	1, 2, 3	70%	51%
Queensland Family and Child Commission expenditure per young Queenslanders (Efficiency measure)		<\$12.00	\$11.82

Notes:

1. The *oneplace* Community services directory is an easily accessible directory of several of the QFCC's statutory obligations, including supporting families to take responsibility and care for children and informing and educating the community about services.
2. Data highlights that although recent promotion has resulted in an increase in people accessing *oneplace*, they are not using the website to access services.
3. This service standard will be discontinued from 2022–23 as the QFCC will no longer be supporting the *oneplace* Community services directory.

Independent performance review

Section 41 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* requires the government to commission an independent review of the QFCC's performance. In 2021, an independent third party (ACIL Allen) was appointed to conduct the review and the report was tabled in the Queensland Parliament on 13 January 2022. The review concluded that the QFCC has performed its legislative functions well with some opportunities for improvement.

The review recommended minor changes to the Act and QFCC practice, including:

- working strategically with other agencies
- ensuring effective feedback between the Office of the Public Guardian and the QFCC
- revisiting the workforce development and planning function
- reassessing the child protection information material released by the QFCC
- streamlining or reallocating the research agenda and evaluation capability-building functions
- providing a clear portfolio of work that is the responsibility of the commissioner or consider appointing joint principal commissioners including one who is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- considering ways to further demonstrate achievements and outcomes
- engaging and collaborating with the sector in meaningful ways.

The review found that the QFCC was at a 'significant stage in the organisation life cycle. There is, therefore, a need for the QFCC to look forward to the next chapter.' In response to the review's recommendations, we undertook a process to modernise and realign our functions, organisational structure and operating model, to deliver on our legislative objectives more thoroughly. These organisational changes are summarised below.

Review of the QFCC's impact

Since 2014, we have undertaken several system reviews and presented over 200 recommendations to improve the child protection system that have been accepted fully or accepted in-principle by government. In 2021–22, we commissioned an independent assessment to determine whether the QFCC's reviews and recommendations were contributing to system improvement, and consequently whether the QFCC was influencing positive change. The QFCC commissioned this review to be transparent about the strengths and gaps in its performance and to inform how future reviews could be conducted.

The review sought to understand the contribution that completed recommendations had made to system improvements, the relevance of incomplete recommendations; and how future recommendations could have a greater effect on system change. The review considered 208 recommendations, finding 55% had been completed, 34% were still in progress and 3% had not commenced. Based on agency advice, a further 8% were listed as 'proposed to close' due to subsequent changes in policy positions or strategic reforms rendering recommendations no longer relevant.

Overall, the review found that 'the QFCC has played an important role in leading reforms across the system that supports children, young people, and families in Queensland' and that 'There continues to be a role for the QFCC in leading ongoing engagement with agencies and service providers to enhance the oversight of the child and family support system'. The review made 9 suggestions for improving the influence of the QFCC, all of which have been accepted.

New strategic plan

In 2021–22, we refreshed our strategic plan, to ensure a clear vision and strategic objectives for the future, based on a united approach and shared leadership. Throughout its development, we used a consultative process to engage staff and stakeholders on our purpose and our objectives for the future. The new strategic plan presents a vision that 'Every child is loved, respected and has their rights upheld.' This vision puts children and their best interests at the centre of all decision-making and will guide our future work. The strategic plan is accessible on our website.

New governance model

A major focus of the QFCC in 2022 has been to embed a 'one commission' governance model across the agency that emphasises transparency and shared accountability. The implementation of this new governance model has included:

- clear decision-making processes and greater staff participation, including at the highest level of our corporate governance body, our Executive Leadership Board
- a new briefing template to encourage collaboration and information sharing and reduce decision-making silos.

Internal policies and procedures

In 2021–22, the QFCC adopted and implemented a number of new policies and procedures to support staff during their employment with us. These included:

- adopting a new recruitment policy and procedure with a clearer expectation about the use of internal and external merit-based selection processes including a focus on positive performance management principles and greater referee input
- revising our financial and human resource delegations to support additional accountability and responsibility, tailored to our operating environment, for greater consistency in decision-making
- drafting a new individual employee grievance policy and procedure for the effective and timely resolution of employee grievances
- continuing our participation in the Career Pathways Service to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in leadership and decision-making roles
- increased reporting and oversight of performance and hours of work arrangements monitored through the Human Resources Strategic Sub-Committee and the Executive Leadership Board.

Workforce planning

As an equal opportunity employer, we value and respect the skills and insights of people who are diverse in gender, culture, age, life stage, sexual orientation and disability. We support inclusion and an environment that fosters cultural integrity. We strive to create a healthy and safe working environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination and violence.

Our workforce planning is regularly reviewed to make sure our workforce strategies and initiatives remain relevant and consider the needs of staff and the organisation. In 2021–22, we:

- offered broad and targeted health and wellbeing initiatives to support mental, physical, financial, and social wellbeing
- provided staff with a diverse range of on-the-job and external professional development opportunities to build leadership capability
- engaged all people managers in mandatory performance conversations training to strengthen engagement and help individuals and teams perform at their best
- addressed findings from the 2021 Working for Queensland Employee Opinion survey
- implemented a new 'one commission' governance model with clearer decision-making processes, and greater staff participation
- participated as a partner agency in the Public Service Commission's career pathways service to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in leadership and decision-making roles across the sector
- implemented a corporate communications strategy for increased communication and information sharing, including celebrating events and days of significance
- increased engagement with young people to influence the work of the QFCC
- developed a Journey with Us—resource library on our intranet to strengthen our organisational culture, and embed approaches and perspectives that help us respond to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- had several staff participate in the Public Safety and Integrity Agencies Leading Women's Network, which promotes a diverse and inclusive work environment and provides increased professional development and networking opportunities
- continued to promote and provide flexible work arrangements to optimise staff health and wellbeing, particularly during the pandemic
- refreshed our strategic plan, to ensure clear vision and strategic objectives for the future based on a united approach and articulation of a shared vision and values
- provided proactive professional support services to staff whose roles expose them to vicarious trauma
- delivered a Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid course and vicarious trauma training to staff who conduct engagement activities with children and young people and families who have a youth justice experience
- implemented a new workplace health and safety policy and procedure and individual employee grievance policy and procedures
- continued to fine-tune our organisational structure and governance arrangements to best support our strategic direction and work priorities.

Attraction and retention

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

- using strategies and initiatives from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy
- joining as a partner agency the Leading Women Network which aims to promote a diverse and inclusive work environment through the representation of women in all levels of workplaces—we conducted several professional development opportunities and networking events in 2021–22.

Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment

- No redundancy, early retirement or retrenchment packages were paid in 2021–22.

Queensland public service values

In 2021–22, the QFCC continued to embrace the Queensland public service values of *Customers first*, *Ideas into action*, *Unleash potential*, *Be courageous* and *Empower people*. These values help guide our staff's behaviour and the way we conduct business.



Customers first

- Know your customers
- Deliver what matters
- Make decisions with empathy



Ideas into action

- Challenge the norm and suggest solutions
- Encourage and embrace new ideas
- Work across boundaries



Unleash potential

- Expect greatness
- Lead and set clear expectations
- Seek, provide and act on feedback



Be courageous

- Own your actions, successes and mistakes
- Take calculated risks
- Act with transparency



Empower people

- Lead, empower and trust
- Play to everyone's strengths
- Develop yourself and those around you

Performance and development

The QFCC implemented several initiatives to support staff performance and development during 2021–22, such as:

- completing annual performance development plans to identify individual and organisational learning and development initiatives
- developing a new learning and development policy and delegations to provide a renewed focus on learning and development opportunities and devolving training budgets to program areas
- developing and launching a new performance and development template to focus on the positive performance principles and link to a range of resources to support meaningful performance and development conversations
- leadership training in effective performance conversations, which takes a strengths-based approach to empowering our employees through effective conversations
- providing mandatory online training on code of conduct, information privacy, right to information, bullying, domestic and family violence, and cultural capability
- encouraging staff to take up development opportunities offered by the Public Service Commission.

Careers Pathways Service

The QFCC partnered with the Public Service Commission for the Careers Pathways Service, available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who aspire toward leadership and decision-making roles. The service is designed to improve career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the Queensland public sector, by providing culturally safe development opportunities, networking events, formal training and mentor support.

A pool of cultural advisors (including 2 of our executives) will provide cultural support to participants, and support supervisors in building their cultural knowledge and understanding. The QFCC reached out to eligible employees for the first intake in August 2021, with 7 QFCC staff joining the initiative.

Flexible working arrangements

The QFCC provides flexible employment options to assist staff to blend work, family and life responsibilities and enhance staff wellbeing. Many opportunities are available to staff and are regularly promoted. Most of our staff work remotely from home in some capacity with staff taking advantage of flexible work arrangements as set out in the *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2019*, *Industrial Relations Act 2016* and the 2020 Queensland Government election commitments.

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, and staff are required to complete mandatory online code of conduct training.

Our performance and development framework and processes also address code of conduct expectations. Staff are encouraged to raise any workplace issues with their line manager, with local resolution the preferred option.

In 2021–22, we introduced our new individual employee grievance policy and procedure.

Our governance

In March 2022, we implemented a new governance model with clearer decision-making processes and greater staff participation. Under the revised framework, we operate several internal committees to help maintain effective governance, including:

Executive Leadership Board: as the commission's primary decision-making body, it comprises senior executives and senior officers (and human resource and finance representatives as advisors). It oversees QFCC performance against strategic objectives, financial performance, performance management, effective collaboration, risk management, innovation fostering, governance administration and organisational compliance.

Commissioners' Meeting: reviews the operations of the organisation by the commissioners.

Senior Executive Meeting: delivers greater connectivity between all areas of our business and advises on media/communication issues concerning children, young people and their families.

Budget Oversight Sub-committee: ensures the effective allocation and management of resources to achieve service delivery outcomes within a balanced budget.

Strategic Human Resources Sub-committee: provides an in-depth review of the QFCC's strategic human resources practices and operations.

Workforce Consultation Forum: provides a formal mechanism for staff to share their views on workplace issues, raise concerns and engage in two-way information sharing with the QFCC leadership.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

Established in 2018, the Audit and Risk Management Committee meets quarterly, with the chair and deputy chair positions held by members external to government. The committee oversees risk management, financial management, compliance and internal controls, and internal and external audit.

The committee's purpose is to provide independent assurance and advice to the Principal Commissioner on the QFCC's:

- risk and compliance management frameworks
- accountability responsibilities as prescribed in the:
 - *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
 - *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*
 - *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*.

The committee's responsibilities and achievements in 2021–22 included:

- reviewing and monitoring the corporate and operational risk registers
- monitoring risk mitigation controls of QFCC major projects
- monitoring of the register of previous (internal and external) audit recommendations
- reviewing and endorsing the annual audit plan for the upcoming financial year.

Remuneration for external members is \$500 (Chair) and \$300 (Deputy Chair) per meeting.

As at 30 June 2022, there were 4 standing members and 4 regular observers of the Audit and Risk Management committee. The committee met 4 times in 2021–22.

Standing members

Heather Watson	Director and Principal Lawyer, Watson Advisory and Consulting Pty Ltd (Chair)
Peter Dowling AM	Accountant and experienced company director (Deputy Chair)
Jaime Blackburn	Executive Director, Child Death Prevention
Tony King	Senior Executive Director, Office of the Commissioners

Regular observers

Jacqueline Thornley	Director, Queensland Audit Office
Linda Holm	A/Manager, Audit Services, Corporate Administration Agency
Lyle Gerbich	Director, Corporate Services, QFCC
Luke Twyford	QFCC Principal Commissioner

Risk management

Overseen by the Audit and Risk Management Committee, the QFCC strategic and operational risk registers are formally reviewed twice a year, with teams providing operational updates. The QFCC's Corporate Services area maintains the strategic and operational risk registers and the QFCC Risk Management Framework. A number of strategic risks and opportunities were identified in our strategic plan.

Strategic risks

- An inability to source high-quality data outcomes—reduces our capacity to effectively monitor the impact of the child and family support system, restricting our ability to drive improvements and build a culture of accountability.
- Failure to include the voices of young Queenslanders in our decisions—diminishes our ability to influence change.
- Ineffective partnering with stakeholders—limits opportunities to facilitate sustainable system change.

Strategic opportunities

- Extend our capability and influence to provide stronger oversight over the systems responsible for the safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children and young people.
- Expand engagement with young Queenslanders from all backgrounds and geographical locations to further inform decisions impacting their lives.
- Reaffirm the role and responsibilities of family, community, government and service providers in protecting children's rights.
- Position the QFCC as an authoritative source of advice and expertise on issues impacting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Engage with non-government service providers to enhance our oversight of the child and family support system.

Internal audit

In 2021–22, the Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) undertook internal audit assessments in accordance with the 2021–23 internal audit plan. Audits of QFCC governance and delegation functions were completed and presented to senior management. A third audit on staff training and development and performance planning and review was commenced in June 2022, with the final report expected in August 2022.

The objective of the governance audit was to assess whether the QFCC has appropriate policies, procedures and processes in place to comply, to the extent applicable, with governance requirements. The CAA auditor determined that there was a reasonable framework in place for the management of our governance.

The objective of the delegations audit was to assess whether the QFCC has appropriate policies, procedures and processes in place to comply with Queensland Government requirements for defining and managing delegations. The CAA auditor determined that the application of QFCC delegations were compliant.

The QFCC's internal audit plan for the period 2022–24 was reviewed by the CAA internal audit manager and was endorsed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee in May 2022.

External audit

Each year the QAO performs an audit assessment of the design and implementation of QFCC internal controls. This includes an interim and final audit.

The QAO final 2021 audit was completed in August 2021 and focused on financial statements and transaction testing. No control deficiencies or other financial reporting issues were identified through the audit. The final audit report was presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee at their August 2021 meeting. At the exit meeting, the QAO provided positive comments on the QFCC's working papers and reconciliations.

In May 2022, the QAO released their interim audit report 2022 to the QFCC. The interim audit undertook substantive testing over expenditure, payroll and journals. No unresolved internal control deficiencies or financial reporting issues were identified.

All internal and external audit reports were presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration.

Human Rights Act 2019

The QFCC received no complaints under the *Human Rights Act 2019* in 2021–22.

QFCC staff undertake annual mandatory online training on human rights for public sector employees. In April 2022, staff attended a workshop on ‘the rights of the child’ to increase our understanding of how we can apply a child rights lens to our work and our progress in applying child rights.

External scrutiny

Pursuant to the Queensland Legislative Assembly Standing Rules and Orders (SO 194A), the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has responsibility to perform the following functions in relation to the QFCC:

- monitor and review the performance by the entity of the entity’s functions
- report to the Legislative Assembly on any matter concerning the entity, the entity’s functions or the performance of the entity’s functions that the committee considers should be drawn to the Legislative Assembly’s attention
- examine the annual report of the entity tabled in the Legislative Assembly and, if appropriate, comment on any aspect of the report
- report to the Legislative Assembly any changes to the functions, structures and procedures of the entity that the committee considers desirable for the more effective operation of the entity or the Act which establishes the entity.

The committee held its oversight hearing on 28 March 2022. At the hearing, the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner briefed the committee on: the QFCC’s activities, the independent review of the QFCC, the rise in the incidence of youth suicide, the continued over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in statutory systems, domestic and family violence, the use of school disciplinary absences and the incidence of harm in care.

Information systems and record keeping

The QFCC operates under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. It maintains full and accurate records of its activities in accordance with the Queensland Government Records Governance Policy.

We use a Micro Focus Content Management application to meet our record-keeping governance obligations.

The QFCC information technology systems were successfully transitioned into government in September 2021 with infrastructure managed by Citec and service management contracted to the CAA.

A primary driver of the transition was having information technology support by a government agency with superior knowledge of security requirements. Improved Wi-Fi coverage and resilience with a dedicated internet connection and automatic remote access connection to the office were also benefits of the transition.



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*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*.

Financial summary 2021–22

This summary provides an overview of the QFCC's financial performance for 2021–22 as well as a comparison with 2020–21.

A detailed view of the financial performance for 2021–22 is provided in the financial statements included in this annual report.

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

Financial results

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2021–22 \$'000	Actual 2020–21 \$'000
Income from continuing operations		
Grants and other contributions	14,073	13,687
Other revenue	37	34
Total income from continuing operations	14,110	13,721
Employee expenses	9,698	9,663
Supplies and services	3,459	3,638
Depreciation and amortisation	33	68
Other expenses	292	165
Total expenses from continuing operations	13,482	13,534
Operating result from continuing operations	628	187

In 2021–22, the QFCC received total revenue of \$14.073 million in comparison to \$13.687 million in 2020–21. The QFCC maintained a sound net asset position in the 2021–22 financial year.

Financial position

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2021–22 \$'000	Actual 2020–21 \$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,654	3,233
Receivables	436	258
Prepayments	47	130
Total current assets	4,137	3,621
Non-current assets		
Plant and equipment	18	23
Intangible assets	–	29
Total non-current assets	18	52
Total assets	4,155	3,673
Current liabilities		
Payables	533	441
Accrued employee benefits	260	498
Total liabilities	793	939
Net assets	3,362	2,734
Equity		
Contributed equity	2,427	2,427
Accumulated surplus	935	307
Total equity	3,362	2,734

Further information

As required by annual reporting guidelines, information relating to consultancies engaged by the QFCC in 2021–22 is published online through the government's Open Data website.

Appendix A

Glossary of acronyms and initialisms

ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
ARRs	Annual Report Requirements
ATSICPP	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
CAA	Corporate Administration Agency
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DCYJMA	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
FAA	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i>
FPMS	<i>Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019</i>
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FY	Financial year
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
QAO	Queensland Audit Office
QATSICPP	Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
QCOSS	Queensland Council of Social Service
QFCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission
TQKP	Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership
UN	United Nations

Appendix B

Annual report compliance checklist

Summary of requirements		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant minister/s 	ARRs—section 7	p. i
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of contents 	ARRs—section 9.1	p. 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glossary 		p. 57
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public availability 	ARRs—section 9.2	Inside front cover
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter service statement 	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs—section 9.3	Inside front cover
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright notice 	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs—section 9.4	Inside front cover
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information licensing 	<i>Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture—Information Licensing</i> ARRs—section 9.5	Inside front cover
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory information 	ARRs—section 10	pp. 2–10
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's objectives for the community and whole-of government plans/specific initiatives 	ARRs—section 11.1	p. 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency objectives and performance indicators 	ARRs—section 11.2	p. 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency service areas and service standards 	ARRs—section 11.3	p. 46
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of financial performance 	ARRs—section 12.1	pp. 54–55
Governance – management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structure 	ARRs—section 13.1	p. 5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive management 	ARRs—section 13.2	p. 5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) 	ARRs—section 13.3	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector Ethics 	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs—section 13.4	p. 50
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights 	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs—section 13.5	p. 53
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland public service values 	ARRs—section 13.6	p. 49

Summary of requirements		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance – risk management and accountability	• Risk management	ARRs—section 14.1	p. 52
	• Audit committee	ARRs—section 14.2	p. 51
	• Internal audit	ARRs—section 14.3	p. 52
	• External scrutiny	ARRs—section 14.4	p. 53
	• Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs—section 14.5	p. 53
	• Information Security attestation	ARRs—section 14.6	N/A
Governance – human resources	• Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs—section 15.1	pp. 48–49
	• Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	<i>Directive No.04/18 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs—section 15.2	p. 49
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	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 38, 39 and 46 ARRs—section 17.1	pp. 60–92
	• Independent Auditor’s report	FAA—section 62 FPMS—section 46 ARRs—section 17.2	pp. 93–95

FAA *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
 FPMS *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*
 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 2022

Queensland Family and Child Commission Financial Statements 2021-22

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Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the year ended 30 June 2022

	Notes	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
Grants and other contributions	3.	14,073	13,687
Other revenue		37	34
Total Income from Continuing Operations		14,110	13,721
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	9,698	9,663
Supplies and services	5.	3,459	3,638
Depreciation and amortisation		33	68
Other expenses	6.	292	165
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		13,482	13,534
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		628	187
Total Comprehensive Income		628	187

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2022

	Notes	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,654	3,233
Receivables	7.	436	258
Prepayments		47	130
Total Current Assets		4,137	3,621
Non Current Assets			
Plant and equipment		18	23
Intangible assets	8.	-	29
Total Non Current Assets		18	52
Total Assets		4,155	3,673
Current Liabilities			
Payables	9.	533	441
Accrued employee benefits	10.	260	498
Total Current Liabilities		793	939
Total Liabilities		793	939
Net Assets		3,362	2,734
Equity			
Contributed equity		2,427	2,427
Accumulated surplus		935	307
Total Equity		3,362	2,734

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

for the year ended 30 June 2022

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2020	120	2,427	2,547
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	187	-	187
Balance as at 30 June 2021	307	2,427	2,734
Balance as at 1 July 2021	307	2,427	2,734
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	628	-	628
Balance as at 30 June 2022	935	2,427	3,362

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities		
<i>Inflows:</i>		
Grants and other contributions	13,989	13,628
GST input tax credits from ATO	358	482
GST collected from customers	7	13
Other revenue	37	34
<i>Outflows:</i>		
Employee expenses	(10,085)	(9,687)
Supplies and services	(3,218)	(4,035)
GST paid to suppliers	(382)	(414)
GST remitted to ATO	(6)	(13)
Other	(279)	(161)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	421	(153)
Cash flows from investing activities		
<i>Outflows:</i>		
Payments for plant and equipment	-	(8)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	-	(8)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	421	(161)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	3,233	3,394
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3,654	3,233

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 30 June 2022

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

Reconciliation of Operating Result to Net Cash provided by Operating Activities

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Operating surplus/(deficit)	628	187
Depreciation and amortisation expense	33	68
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(155)	(108)
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	(23)	69
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	83	39
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable	92	(496)
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	(238)	88
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	421	(153)

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

Section 1: About the 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: Other Expenses

Section 3: Notes about our Financial Position

- Note 7: Receivables
- Note 8: Intangible Assets
- Note 9: Payables
- Note 10: Accrued Employee Benefits

Section 4: Notes about Risks and Other Accounting Uncertainties

- Note 11: Commitments
- Note 12: Contingencies
- Note 13: Financial Risk Disclosures
- Note 14: Events Occurring After Balance Date
- Note 15: Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

Section 5: Notes on our Performance compared to Budget

- Note 16: Budgetary Reporting Disclosures and Significant Financial Impacts from COVID-19

Section 6: Other Information

- Note 17: Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures
- Note 18: Taxation
- Note 19: Insurance
- Note 20: Accounting Estimates and Judgements
- Note 21: First Year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Accounting Policy
- Note 22: Climate Risk Disclosures

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

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 influences change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families. The QFCC reviews and improves the systems that protect and safeguard Queensland's children.

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

Level 8, 63 George 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

The QFCC has prepared these financial statements in compliance with section 39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*. The financial statements comply with Queensland Treasury's Minimum Reporting Requirements for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2021.

The 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 21.

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 2020-21 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 2021-22

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation (cont'd)

Presentation (cont'd)

Current / Non-Current Classification (cont'd)

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.

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.

Shared Service Provider

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 Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner and the Senior Executive Director at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

2. Objectives of the QFCC

The QFCC has the following objectives:

- Ensuring systems are accountable for the impact they have on children and families
- Raising awareness and advocate for children and their families
- Empower Queensland children, young people and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives
- Support, connect and collaborate with organisations that advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children
- Build our capacity, capability and culture to achieve our vision

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
3. Grants and Contributions		
Grants received from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General	14,073	13,678
Grants received from the Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia	-	9
Total	14,073	13,687

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

3. Grants and Contributions (cont'd)

Accounting Policy - Grants and Contributions

Grants, contributions and donations revenue arise from non-exchange transactions where the QFCC does not directly give approximately equal value to the grantor.

Where the grant agreement is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations for the QFCC to transfer goods or services to a third-party on the grantor's behalf, the transaction is accounted for under AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. In this case, revenue is initially deferred (as a contract liability) and recognised as or when the performance obligations are satisfied.

Otherwise, the grant is accounted for under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, whereby revenue is recognised upon receipt of the grant funding, except for special purpose capital grants received to construct non-financial assets to be controlled by the department. Special purpose capital grants are recognised as unearned revenue when received, and subsequently recognised progressively as revenue as the department satisfies its obligations under the grant through construction of the asset.

The QFCC received grant funding from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General during the 2021-22 financial year. The funding has been recognised as revenue on receipt under AASB 1058 as the QFCC's obligations are not sufficiently specific.

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
4. Employee Expenses		
Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries	7,066	7,220
Employer superannuation contributions	953	949
Annual leave levy	753	715
Long service leave levy	186	188
Employee Related Expenses		
Payroll tax	436	442
Other employee related expenses	304	149
Total	9,698	9,663
	2022	2021
Full-Time Equivalent Employees *	63	63

* FTE data as at 30 June 2022 (based upon the fortnight ending 1 July 2022).

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

4. Employee Expenses (cont'd)

Accounting Policy - Wages and Salaries

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

Accounting Policy - Sick Leave

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

Accounting Policy - Annual Leave

Under the Queensland Government's Annual Leave Central Scheme (ALCS), 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 defined benefit plan (the former QSuper defined benefit categories now administered by the Government Division of the Australian Retirement Trust) 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 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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

4. Employee Expenses (cont'd)

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.

Key management personnel and remuneration disclosures

Key management personnel and remuneration disclosures are detailed in Note 17.

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
5. Supplies and Services		
Building services *	949	905
Administration costs	164	110
Contractors and consultants	979	1,599
Corporate services provider costs	614	488
Advertising and promotions	218	110
Minor plant and equipment	130	37
Other supplies and services	405	389
Total	3,459	3,638

Office accommodation

* Payments for non-specialised commercial office accommodation under the Queensland Government Accommodation Office (QGAO) framework arise from non-lease arrangements with the Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW), who has substantive substitution rights over the assets used within these schemes. Building Services includes office rental payments to DEPW of \$757k (2021 - \$728k) and these are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
6. Other Expenses		
Insurance premiums (QGIF)	5	4
External audit fees *	23	22
Sponsorships paid	127	82
Return of Grant	114	30
Trustee/Board Fees	23	27
Total	292	165

* Total audit fees quoted in the Queensland Audit Office's plan for 2021-22 is \$23,000 (2020-21: \$22,500).

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
7. Receivables		
Trade debtors	6	-
GST receivable	109	86
Annual leave reimbursements	206	132
Long service leave reimbursement	115	40
Total	436	258

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 invoice date.

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 the QFCC's impairment assessment.

No impairment losses have been recognised for receivables in 2021-22.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

8. Intangible Assets	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Software Purchased: At cost		
Gross	433	433
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(433)	(404)
	-	29

Intangible Assets - Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amounts

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Software Purchased		
Carrying amount at 1 July	29	91
Amortisation expense	(29)	(62)
Carrying amount at 30 June	-	29

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.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

8. Intangible Assets (cont'd)

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.

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
9. Payables		
Trade creditors	434	285
Other payables	99	156
Total	533	441

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.

	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
10. Accrued Employee Benefits		
<u>Current</u>		
Salaries and wages outstanding	-	268
Annual leave levy payable	200	184
Paid Parental Leave	7	-
Long service leave levy payable	53	46
Total	260	498

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

10. Accrued Employee Benefits (cont'd)

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*.

11. Commitments

(a) Office Accommodation

The Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) provides the QFCC with access to office accommodation under government-wide frameworks. From 1 July 2019, these arrangements are now categorised as procurement of services rather than as leases because DEPW has substantive substitution rights over the assets. The related service expenses are included in Note 5.

(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:

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
Not later than one year	1,457	1,466
Later than one year and not later than five years	3,073	3,306
Total	4,530	4,772

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

12. Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities as at 30 June 2022.

13. Financial Risk Disclosures

Financial Instrument Categories

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the statement of financial position when the QFCC becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. No financial assets and financial liabilities have been offset and presented net in the Statement of Financial Position.

The QFCC has no financial assets/liabilities recognised at fair value.

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

Category	Note	2022 \$'000	2021 \$'000
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,654	3,233
Financial assets at amortised cost:			
Receivables	7.	436	258
Total financial assets		4,090	3,491
Financial Liabilities			
Financial liabilities at amortised cost:			
Payables	9.	533	441
Total financial liabilities at amortised cost		533	441

Financial risk management

The activities undertaken by the QFCC do not expose it to any material credit, liquidity or market risk.

14. Events Occurring After Balance Date

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

15. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

At the date of authorisation of the financial report, there are no Australian accounting standards and interpretations with future effective dates that are applicable to the QFCC's activities or have no material impact on the QFCC.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

16. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures and Significant Financial Impacts from COVID-19

This section contains explanations of major variances between the QFCC's actual 2021-22 financial results and the original budget presented to Parliament.

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Comprehensive Income

		2022	2022	
	Variance	Actual	Original	Budget
	Notes	\$'000	budget	variance
			\$'000	\$'000
Income from Continuing Operations				
Grants and other contributions	1.	14,073	13,758	315
Other revenue		37	30	7
Total Income from Continuing Operations		14,110	13,788	322
Expenses from Continuing Operations				
Employee expenses	2.	9,698	10,439	(741)
Supplies and services	3.	3,459	3,129	330
Depreciation and amortisation	4.	33	146	(113)
Other expenses	5.	292	74	218
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		13,482	13,788	(306)
Total Comprehensive Income		628	-	628

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

16. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures and Significant Financial Impacts from COVID-19 (cont'd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Financial Position

		2022	2022	
	Variance	Actual	Original	Budget
	Notes	\$'000	Budget	Variance
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Current Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	6.	3,654	2,624	(1,030)
Receivables	7.	436	319	(117)
Other		47	-	(47)
Total Current Assets		4,137	2,943	(1,194)
Non-Current Assets				
Plant and equipment		18	12	(6)
Intangible assets	8.	-	572	572
Total Non-Current Assets		18	584	566
Total Assets		4,155	3,527	(628)
Current Liabilities				
Payables		533	569	36
Accrued employee benefits	9.	260	410	150
Total Current Liabilities		793	979	186
Total Liabilities		793	979	186
Net Assets		3,362	2,548	(814)

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

16. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures and Significant Financial Impacts from COVID-19 (cont'd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Cash Flows

		2022	2022	
	Variance	Actual	Original	Budget
	Notes	\$'000	Budget	Variance
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Cash flows from operating activities				
<i>Inflows:</i>				
Grants and other contributions	10.	13,989	13,758	231
GST input tax credits from ATO		358	-	358
GST collected from customers		7	-	7
Interest receipts		-	30	(30)
Other		37	150	(113)
<i>Outflows:</i>				
Employee expenses	11.	(10,085)	(10,439)	354
Supplies and services		(3,218)	(3,442)	224
GST paid to suppliers		(382)	-	(382)
GST remitted to ATO		(6)	-	(6)
Other		(279)	(74)	(205)
Net cash (used in) operating activities		421	(17)	438
Net increase in cash held		421	(17)	438
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		3,233	2,641	592
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		3,654	2,624	1,030

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

16. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures and Significant Financial Impacts from COVID-19 (cont'd)

This section contains explanations of major variances between the QFCC's actual 2021-22 financial results and the original budget presented to Parliament.

Explanations of Major Variances

Statement of Comprehensive Income

1. Additional supplementary funding received for enterprise bargaining agreement increases.
2. Delays in filling vacant positions, staff on extended leave or secondment to other government agencies and scaling back of initiatives associated with ceasing limited life funding have contributed to lower salary costs.
3. Supplies and services vary each year as projects are developed. Some contract labour used to cover for short term needs.
4. Depreciation and amortisation expenses have decreased following the issuance of IFRIC's agenda decision on Configuration or Customisation Costs in a Cloud Computing Arrangement in April 2021. The QFCC has changed its accounting policy for certain cloud computing and software-as-a-service (SaaS) costs. This impacted amortisation.
5. The increase in other expenses is primarily due to the funding agreement with Children's Rights Queensland.

Statement of Financial Position

6. The increase in Cash and cash equivalents is primarily due to a higher balance at the beginning of the financial year, coupled with additional funding received for enterprise bargaining agreement increases and delays in filling vacant positions, staff on extended leave or secondment to other government agencies and scaling back of initiatives associated with ceasing limited life funding have contributed to lower salary costs.
7. The increase in Receivables is mainly due to the budget being based on historical data for Annual Leave and Long service leave reimbursements, with higher leave taken in the current year.
8. Previously capitalised software costs relating to the Child Death Register has been recognised as an expense via a prior year adjustment. The change in the accounting treatment followed the IFRIC's Interpretations Committee published agenda decision in April 2021, outlining the accounting treatment.
9. The decrease in Accrued Employee Benefits is predominantly due to the timing of the pay period, with the budget based on historical data.

Statement of Cash Flows

10. The variance in Grants and Other Contributions is due to additional supplementary funding received for enterprise bargaining agreement increases.
11. The increase is due to delays in filling vacant positions, staff on extended leave or secondment to other government agencies and scaling back of initiatives associated with ceasing limited life funding have contributed to lower salary costs.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. 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 2021-22 and 2020-21.

Position	Position Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner	<p>As the Chief Executive Officer 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 child protection and family 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> <p>This role is also the Chair of the independent Child Death Review Board.</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>
Senior Executive Director	<p>The role leads the agency corporate services, policy, communications and education and community engagement activities. It is responsible for making sure that the QFCC has the appropriate controls, administrative, legal and corporate governance arrangements, media and corporate communications, reporting procedures, and people oriented systems in place to effectively support the operations of the QFCC in line with key legislative and policy obligations.</p>
Executive Director, Child Death Prevention	<p>The role leads child death prevention and the Child Death Review Board secretariat functions.</p> <p>The role oversees the QFCC maintaining a register on all child deaths in Queensland to inform prevention activities and make available better information on risk factors and causes of death.</p>

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

Details of Key Management Personnel (cont'd)

Position	Position Responsibility
Executive Director, Oversight	The role provides leadership to the systemic oversight of Queensland's child protection and family support systems to assess whether the systems are reliable, sustainable and productive. The role also drives activities to influence policy and practice to address the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection and family support systems.
Director Oversight	<p>The role strategically leads and develops the QFCC's strategic response to our mandated oversight and evaluation functions then monitors strategy implementation.</p> <p>The role provides comprehensive and authoritative advice and recommendations to the Executive Director, Oversight, Executive Leadership Board and government and non-government stakeholders. The role also leads the development of reports on the findings and recommendations of oversight and evaluations of the child protection system.</p>
Director Corporate Services	<p>The role oversees the effective and quality delivery of the corporate services functions of the QFCC.</p> <p>These functions include finance, human resources, governance, business and facilities support services, information and communication technology and contracts and procurement. The role also leads and manages the development, implementation and monitoring of risk management, planning processes and provides integrated organisation performance advice to support the Executive Leadership Board in setting, steering and reviewing the Commission's strategic direction.</p>

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

Details of Key Management Personnel (cont'd)

Position	Position Responsibility
Director Advocacy, Media & Engagement	<p>The role leads the advocacy program for the Commissioners in partnership with internal teams including Policy, Research, Oversight and the Commissioners.</p> <p>It leads the delivery of media and public relations which are responsive to the needs of the Commissioners and Executive Leadership Board. It also develops, leads, implements and maintains the Advocacy Blueprint for the Commissioners; and provides advice on media strategies to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Queensland.</p>
Director Child Death Review Board Secretariat	<p>The role provides leadership and oversight of the Child Death Review Board secretariat functions.</p> <p>The role manages whole-of-system reviews undertaken by the CDRB and provides high-quality, expert advice to the chair and members. It is also responsible for preparing and publishing findings, reports and briefs on behalf of the CDRB.</p>
Director, Research & Policy	<p>This role provides leadership for the QFCC's strategic policy and research functions, creating an evidence base for improving systems and practice with a focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people within the child protection and youth justice systems.</p>

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

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 vehicle parking together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit.
- Long term employee expenses including amounts expensed in respect of long service leave entitlements earned.
- Post-employment expenses including amounts expensed in respect of employer superannuation obligations.
- Termination benefits are in accordance with government industrial instruments and individual contract of employment arrangements.
- Performance bonuses are not paid.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

Remuneration Expense

The following disclosures focus on the expenses incurred by the QFCC attributable to non-Ministerial KMP during the respective reporting periods. The amounts disclosed are determined on the same basis as expenses recognised in the statement of comprehensive income.

1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022

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
Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner (from 01/07/21 to 24/12/21)	151	3	4	13	-	171
Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner (from 31/01/22 to 30/06/22)	127	-	3	15	-	145
Commissioner	201	6	5	21	-	233
Senior Executive Director	201	6	5	22	-	234
Executive Director, Child Death Prevention	170	6	4	18	-	198
Executive Director, Oversight	190	7	5	20	-	222
Director Oversight (from 01/07/21 to 17/06/22)	150	7	4	19	-	180
Director Corporate Services	168	1	4	20	-	193
Director Advocacy, Media & Engagement	140	4	3	17	-	164
Director Child Death Review Board Secretariat	152	4	4	18	-	178
Director, Research & Policy (from 07/02/22 to 30/06/22)	60	2	2	7	-	71
Total Remuneration	1,710	46	43	190	-	1,989

- Following the implementation of a new governance model, the Executive Leadership Board was established in March 2022 to replace the Executive Group. The Executive Leadership Board membership now includes the senior executives and all QFCC Directors.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

KMP Remuneration Expense (cont'd)

1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021

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
Chief Executive Officer & Principal Commissioner	286	1	7	26	-	320
Commissioner	221	3	5	22	-	251
Deputy Commissioner (from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021)	149	2	4	16	42	213
Executive Director, Child Death Prevention	190	3	4	20	-	217
Executive Director, Oversight	185	4	4	19	-	212
Executive Director, Corporate and Communications (from 20 December 2020) (Acting)	106	2	2	10	-	120
Total Remuneration	1,137	15	26	113	42	1,333

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

17. Key Management Personnel (KMP) and Related Party Disclosures (cont'd)

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.

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

The QFCC received services from CAA (Note 1) totalling \$206k and has an operating lease from DEPW for commercial office accommodation (Note 5) totalling \$757k.

18. 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 7 - Receivables.

19. 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.

20. 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.

The QFCC has not recognised any balances that could potentially have a significant effect on these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

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

Accounting standards applied for the first time

No new accounting standards or interpretations that apply to the QFCC for the first time in 2021-22 had any material impact on the financial statements.

Following the issuance of IFRIC's agenda decision on Configuration or Customisation Costs in a Cloud Computing Arrangement in April 2021, the QFCC has changed its accounting policy for certain cloud computing and software-as-a-service (SaaS) costs. The effects of this change is detailed in Note 21-1 below.

Accounting Standards Early Adopted

No Australian Accounting Standards have been early adopted for 2021-22.

21-1. Configuration or customisation costs in a cloud computing arrangement

1. Summary of change in accounting policy

The QFCC changed its accounting policies in 2021-22 after completing a full analysis of the QFCC's previously capitalised software in response to the IFRIC agenda decision released in March 2021.

The QFCC's new accounting policy now considers where the software code resides, whether it is identifiable and whether the QFCC has the power to both obtain economic benefits from the software and restrict the access of others to those benefits. Configuration or customisation costs that do not qualify for recognition as an intangible asset are further assessed as to the appropriate timing of expense recognition, using the following criteria:

a) Where the configuration or customisation is considered a distinct (i.e. separately identifiable) service from the subsequent access to the cloud software, the costs are expensed when the configuration or customisation services are received. This is typically the case when the vendor providing the services is different from the vendor providing access to the software.

b) Where the configuration or customisation is not a distinct service from the QFCC's right to access the software, the costs are expensed over the period of access on a straight-line basis. A prepayment asset is recognised when the payment is made upfront. This is usually the case when the same vendor is providing both the configuration or customisation services and the access to the cloud software.

Any software that qualifies as an intangible asset is recognised and accounted for in accordance with the QFCC's existing accounting policies on software assets in Note 8, which have not changed.

The standard requires that any change should be applied retrospectively with an adjustment of comparative opening balances at 1 July 2020. However, the relevant intangibles (Child Death Register) were only recognised in 2020-21 financial year, and hence we have restated our prior year balances to reflect the new accounting policy in line with AASB 108.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2021-22

21. First Year Application of New Accounting Standards or Change in Accounting Policy (cont'd)

21-1. Configuration or customisation costs in a cloud computing arrangement (cont'd)

2. Impact of changes

As a result of the change in accounting policy, \$754k of capitalised software intangible assets were expensed in 2020-21, with a \$29k reduction to the reported amortisation expense for the same year. In the Statement of Cash flows, payments for capitalised configuration and customisation costs in 2020-21 previously reported as "Payments for intangibles" have been reclassified to "Supplies and services" under cash outflows from operating activities.

The net impacts are summarised in the table below.

	\$'000
<i>Balances as at 30 June 2021</i>	
Intangible assets	(754)
Accumulated surplus	754
<i>Expenses for 2020-21</i>	
Depreciation and amortisation	(29)
Supplies and services	641
Employee expenses	113
<i>Cash outflows for 2020-21</i>	
Supplies and services (outflows from operating activities)	754
Payments for intangibles (outflows from investing activities)	(754)

22. Climate Risk Disclosures

The QFCC has not identified any material climate related risks relevant to the financial report at the reporting date. The QFCC continues to monitor the emergence of such risks under the Queensland Government's Climate Transition Strategy, and Climate Action Plan 2030.

**Queensland Family and Child Commission
Management Certificate
for the year ended 30 June 2022**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s.62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), s.39 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* 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 2022 and of the financial position of the office at the end of that year.

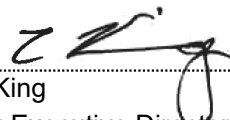
We acknowledge responsibility under s.7 and s.11 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* for the establishment and maintenance, in all material respects, of an appropriate and effective system of internal controls and risk management processes with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.



.....
Luke Twyford
Chief Executive Officer & Principal
Commissioner

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 16/8/2022



.....
Tony King
Senior Executive Director

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date: 16/8/2022

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 the Queensland and Family 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 2022, 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 2019 and Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, 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 Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the Auditor 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 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 2019 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. This is not done for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls, but allows me to express an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements.
- 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 Principal Commission 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 2022:

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

Prescribed requirements scope

The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, any other Act and the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the entity's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.



Carolyn Dougherty
as delegate of the Auditor-General

18 August 2022

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane



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- 177 Women in Leadership Roles are considered those positions that are Senior Officer and equivalent and above.

