

Annual Report

Deaths of children  
and young people  
Queensland  
2021–22



Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



Queensland  
Government

## About this report

This report has been prepared under section 29 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (FCC Act). It describes information on the deaths of children and young people in Queensland registered in the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government. Its purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families. Under the FCC Act, the QFCC has been charged by government to review and improve the systems that protect and safeguard Queensland's children.

## Accessibility



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Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



31 October 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

In accordance with section 29(1) of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, I provide to you the Queensland Family and Child Commission's annual report analysing the deaths of Queensland children and young people.

The report analyses the deaths of all children and young people in Queensland registered in the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, with a particular focus on external (non-natural) causes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Twyford".

**Luke Twyford**  
*Principal Commissioner*  
Queensland Family and Child Commission

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# Acknowledgements

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the lands, seas and skies where we walk, live and work.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique peoples, 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 Elders past, present and emerging.

The QFCC acknowledges the special rights of children which are recorded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), guided by its four key principles: devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; respect for the views of the child; and non-discrimination.

The QFCC thanks the government and non-government agencies and individuals who contributed data and their expertise to the report. In particular, we express appreciation to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages; the Coroners Court of Queensland; Queensland Police Service; Queensland Health; Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs; the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS); Queensland Paediatric Quality Council; Queensland Ambulance Service; Queensland Treasury; and the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia. The Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation is also acknowledged as administrator of the National Coronial Information System.

The QFCC would like to acknowledge the contribution of data from other Australian and New Zealand agencies and committees which perform similar child death review functions. This data has been compiled for an interjurisdictional overview representing further steps towards developing a nationally comparable child death review dataset. The overview is available on our website at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications/child-death-reports-and-data](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications/child-death-reports-and-data).

This report may cause distress for some people. If you need help or support, please contact any of these services:

**Lifeline:**

Phone 13 11 14

**Beyond Blue:**

Phone 1300 22 4636

**Kids Helpline (for 5–25 year olds):**

Phone 1800 55 1800

# Principal Commissioner's message

Every child should be loved, safe and have their rights upheld.

The death of any child is a tragedy and each year too many Queensland children and young people's lives are prematurely cut short. In the 12-month period to 30 June 2022, the deaths of **410** children and young people aged 0–17 years were registered in Queensland. The loss of each of these children will have a long-lasting impact on their family, their friends, and our community.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission records information about the deaths of all these children in the Child Death Register. In operation since 2004, the Register currently contains over 8,000 records, capturing information about a child's demographics, cause and circumstances of death and, where known, certain characteristics or vulnerabilities. It is a critical resource allowing the QFCC to analyse trends and patterns in child mortality, including risk factors for death. We use this information to contribute to research, inform policy improvement and support community safety initiatives aimed at reducing the likelihood of child deaths.

In 2022 I was proud to launch ***Safer pathways through childhood***<sup>1</sup>, a framework providing a roadmap for the QFCC's child death prevention activities over the next 5 years. Under the Safer pathways framework, we will use a socio-ecological model to consider the factors that contribute to some groups of children being more likely to experience health inequity and adverse outcomes than others. Over the next 5 years, our child death prevention activities are focused on generating new insights into child mortality in Queensland and working collaboratively with stakeholders to identify better ways of preventing these deaths.

A key strategy to support child death and injury prevention is to make data held in the Register available for research, public education, policy development and program design. In 2021–22, we provided data and advice to a range of stakeholders on topics such as inclined sleep surfaces for infants, vehicle reversing aid technologies, the dangers of toppling furniture, quad bikes and helium balloon kits. We also participated in numerous advisory bodies that address matters such as improvements to child mortality data, both within Queensland and nationally; birth and death registration; road safety; sudden unexpected death in infancy; and suicide prevention. We continued to actively share information with the Department of Education to support young people affected by the suicide of a peer and contributed to several initiatives to improve infant sleep environments and reduce the risk of sudden infant death.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the dedication of those who work in roles associated with child death, including those responsible for maintaining the Queensland Child Death Register. The work they undertake in gathering and analysing information about child deaths enables us to better understand and communicate factors that increase their likelihood and gives us greater opportunities to prevent them.

These activities contribute to a future in which all Queensland's children and young people, no matter where they live or who they are, have the same opportunities to lead a full life and to reach their potential.



**Luke Twyford**

*Principal Commissioner*

Queensland Family and Child Commission

<sup>1</sup> [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/safer-pathways-through-childhood](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/safer-pathways-through-childhood)