

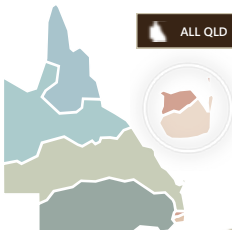
# Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland's statutory child protection system

Select region

Viewing information for:

North Queensland

ALL QLD



## The story behind the latest data 2022-23

The North Queensland region had a drastic increase in child concern reports (CCRs) for First Nations children in 2022-23. The region received almost 900 more CCRs, accounting for nearly half of the 2000 CCRs in the 2022-23 Queensland-wide increase. The driver behind the rise was police reports. Police made 3110 reports to Child Safety, accounting for 39% of all CCRs in the region. Typically, police account for 13% of CCRs for any given region. Stakeholders speculated that the increased spotlight on First Nations children and young people in conflict with the justice system, the increased police presence in the region, and police potentially being advised to report all matters to Child Safety are the reasons for the drastic increase in police reports.

As at 30 June 2023, 236.0 First Nations children per 1000 First Nations children were reported to Child Safety. There was a massive increase of 38 First Nations children per 1000 First Nations children in 12 months, significantly higher than the statewide rate of 165.0 First Nations children per 1000 First Nations children.

While more First Nations children were reported to Child Safety, notifications and substantiations were stable. Of the additional 2000 CCRs in 2022-23, only 24 more First Nations children were admitted to out of home care than in the preceding 12 months.

ATSICCOs and Child Safety reported many families are under strain due to housing shortages, cost of living crisis and children and young people in conflict with the law. Several stakeholders said some parents make the tough decision to report one of their children, who may have behaviour issues or addiction, to statutory officers to reduce the likeliness that the whole family/ siblings will

Change in the number of First Nations children in out-of-home care since the previous year

+86

North Queensland

WORSENING

## Disproportionality ratio

4.1

Progress towards eliminating over-representation

NO CHANGE

North Queensland



View the data...

Entry

Duration

Exit



BACK

# ENTRY into the child protection system

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) will report annually on whether the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering the child protection system is significantly less than the number exiting.

All data in this snapshot refers to **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children**, unless otherwise stated for comparison purposes.

Filter by single region

RESET



## Child Concern Reports (CCRs)



Select year

North Queensland

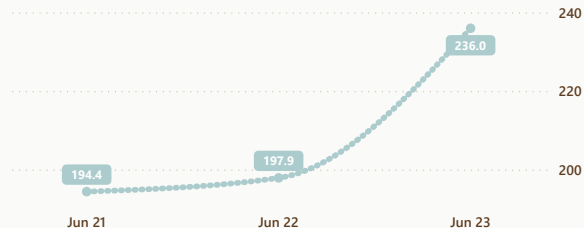
Jun 23

4,264

Number of Child Concern Reports

Rate per 1,000 First Nations children

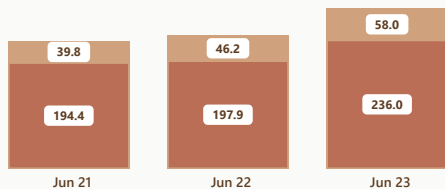
● NQ



Proportionality (rate per 1,000)

North Queensland

● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



## Notifications



Select year

North Queensland

Jun 23

1,920

Number of Notifications

Rate per 1,000 First Nations children

● NQ



Proportionality (rate per 1,000)

North Queensland

● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



## Entry into out-of-home care



Select year

North Queensland

Jun 23

2,119

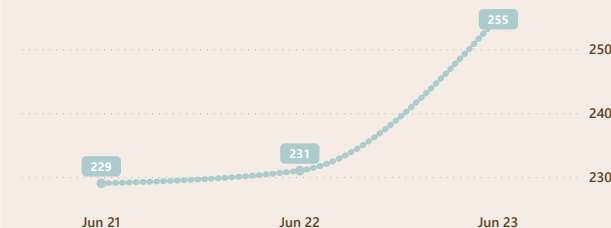
Investigations finalised by 30 June

255

Children entered out-of-home care

Number of First Nations children entering out-of-home care

● NQ



Proportionality (rate per 1,000) - children entering out-of-home care

North Queensland

● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children





BACK

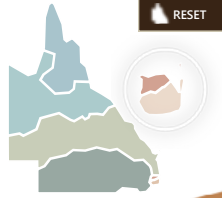
# DURATION of placements in out-of-home care

The QFCC expects to see:

- an increase in the placement of children and young people with kin and family
- a reduction of the length of time in care
- a reduction in the number of Long-term Guardianship orders granted to the Chief Executive.

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Filter by single region



RESET

## Placement type



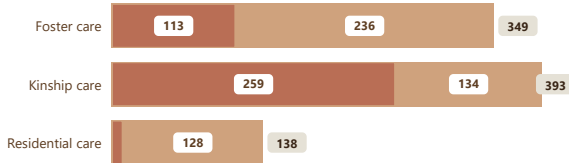
Number of First Nations children placed in out-of-home care

North Queensland

Filter by year

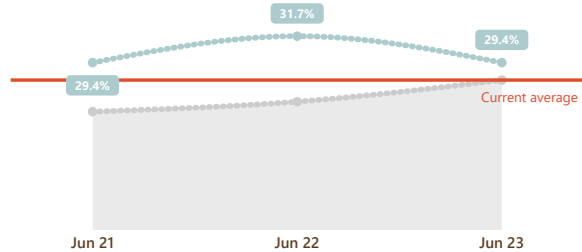
Jun 23

● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer



Percentage of placements with First Nations kin

● NQ ● QLD



## Length of time

Filter by year

Jun 23

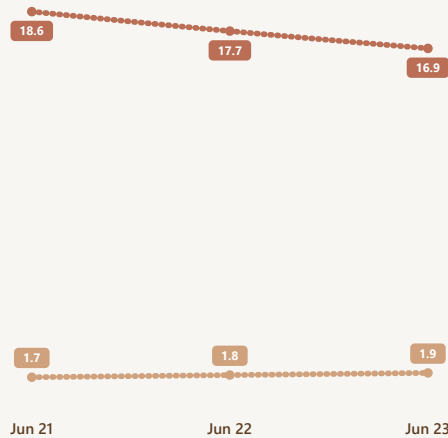
North Queensland

318 < 2 years  
266 2-5 years  
296 5+ years

Children in out-of-home care for 5+ years (rate per 1,000)

North Queensland

● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



## Long-term Guardianship order type



Filter by year

Jun 23

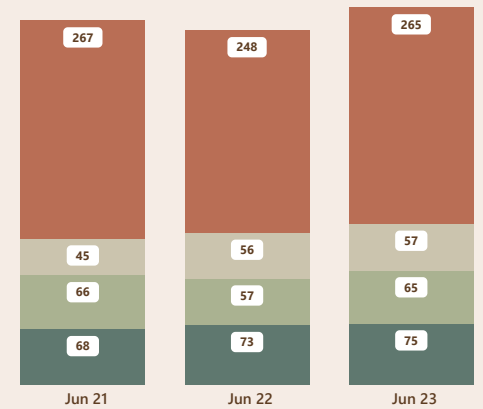
North Queensland

137 To other carer types  
330 To Chief Executive

Number of First Nations children under Long-term Guardianship order/Permanent care orders

North Queensland

● Other - First Natio... ● Chief Executive - ... ● Other - Non First ... ● Other - Foster ... ● Chief Executiv...





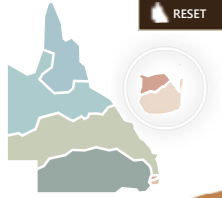
BACK

# EXITS from the child protection system

The QFCC expects to see a focus on the reunification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with family, and eventually exits to exceed entries into the statutory child protection system.

All data in this snapshot refers to **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children**, unless otherwise stated for comparison purposes.

Filter by single region



## Reunifications

North Queensland

Select year

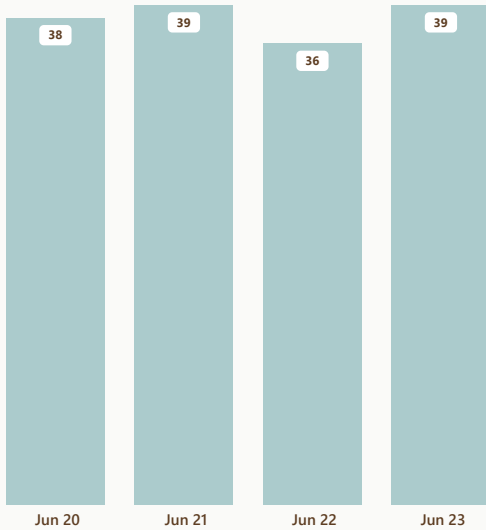
Jun 23

39

Children were reunified with their families

Reunifications

● NQ



## Aged out

North Queensland

Select year

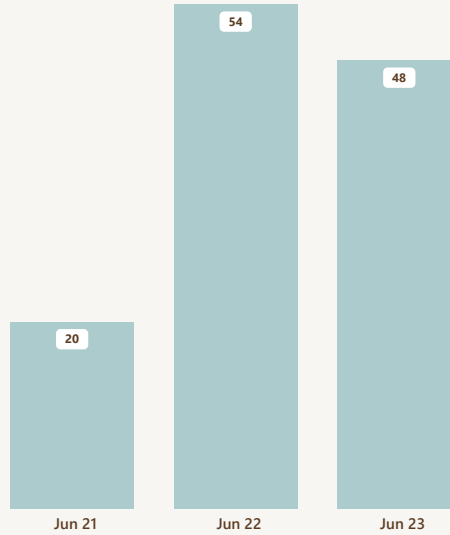
Jun 23

48

Children aged out of child protection

Number of First Nations children who aged out of child protection

● NQ



## Exits

North Queensland

Select year

Jun 23

84

Reunified or aged out

75

LTG-O: First Nations kin

North Queensland

880

First Nations children remained in out of home care on 30 June 2023

Number of First Nations children remaining in out-of-home care  
North Queensland



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In the more regional and remote areas, limited universal and secondary services are a significant barrier for families who are struggling or have complex needs. ATSICCOs called for block funding (with greater flexibility for services to determine the right mix) and higher loadings for regional and remote locations (to account for time and cost associated with travel time). ATSICCOs stated that a high reporting burden for programs, such as Family Wellbeing Services, based on outputs rather than outcomes, detracts from the successes.

Barriers to reducing over-representation:

- housing pressures, especially for larger families or people with disability
- very high vacancy rates in Child Safety Service Centres and Family Wellbeing Services
- geographical barriers, and high cost of service delivery – universal, secondary and tertiary services
- increase access to and use of illicit drugs
- lack of active efforts across all 5 elements of the ATSICPP across the continuum of care
- lack of brokerage funding to keep families together
- lack of appropriate family contact spaces.

Lack of foster and kinship placements outside of major centres such as Townsville meant many children, particularly from the Gulf region, were flown directly to a residential service in Townsville. Mt Isa has no available foster or kinship carers, and there needs to be more assessors and, more generally, a workforce to address the shortage. The data confirms an increased reliance on residential care for placements; in 2022-23, 37 more First Nations children were in residential care compared to the previous 12 months. Conversely, placement with First Nation kin decreased by 2%. ATSICCOs reported this is due to under-resourced finding kin teams and higher kinship carer placement breakdown due to a lack of ongoing support by Child Safety. ATSICCOs also noted families do not trust Child Safety, and many are unwilling to provide information for genograms. ATSICCOs called for greater involvement in genograms, more culturally appropriate kinship carer assessors, and removing Blue Cards for kinship carers. All stakeholders noted that Blue Cards bring shame to communities, and many people are reluctant to apply for a Blue Card.

ATSICCOs reported children and young people need to be made aware of or engaged with their case plans. The high turnover of Child Safety staff impacts the quality of the case plans, including the cultural support plan. ATSICCOs feel the over-reliance on Cultural Practice Advisors within Child Safety may be risky, especially when the Advisors are from different communities than their clients. For example, Advisors in Townsville may have few connections to families from the Gulf region.

ATSICCOs called for increased training and support for ATSICCOs to deliver family group meetings to ensure self-determination from intake through to reunification. The region's Family Participation Program operates only in the intake and assessment, and its reach is limited due to the large geographic areas the service needs to cover. Active efforts are across the application of the Child Protection Act, and Child Safety should only make decisions with the family's participation.

Child Safety reports fewer First Nations children were reunified as the children and families are more complex. The region was undertaking a 'deep dive' into each child and young person from Doomadgee or Mornington Island but is currently placed elsewhere (such as Mt Isa, Townsville, etc.). The examination, with the support of the Aboriginal communities, will consider why those children and young people are not within a community-based placement and if reunification is an option.

ATSICCOs report it is harder for those children removed from the community to be placed in residential care or a foster carer in a major centre find it hard to re-integrate back into community life. Supporting children and young people in navigating their roles and responsibilities is crucial. For many First Nations, the lack of cultural connection while removed from their community (due to inadequate support) can impact their cultural standing. Stakeholders called for dedicated family contact houses to provide an environment where children and their families can spend quality time together (rather than within a meeting room at the local Child Safety Service Centre).