

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

Select region

Viewing information for:

South West

ALL QLD



The story behind the latest data 2022-23

The South West region has had unprecedented demand for Child Safety. Unlike other regions, South West region reported high spikes in children (both First Nations and non-First Nations) entering out-of-home care – while most other regions remained steady. In 2022-23, the South West region had the highest rate of First Nations children entering out-of-home care per 1000 (18.5 per 1000 compared to 14.0 per 1000 statewide).

Stakeholders confirmed population growth, driven by more affordable housing, is the driver for the demand, coupled with few support services. Key areas of demand are Springfield, Ripley, Goondiwindi, Roma and Stanthorpe. Scaling up secondary and tertiary services within these areas is a priority, along with commencing delegated authority with 3 ATSCCOs – Kummara, Goolburri and Kambu.

The region wants to increase the number of short term orders under 2 years. Child Safety reports DCPL are reluctant to seek an order for 12 months and automatically seeks the maximum 2 years for a short term order. Child Safety prefers shorter term orders to ensure the focus remains on reunification and families promptly receive the support they need. A concerning issue raised by stakeholders was the practice of parents losing social housing and Centrelink payments immediately after their children are removed. Both inhibit successful reunification. QFCC seeks the Queensland Government Department of Housing to implement a moratorium on social housing evictions. At the same time, children are under a court assessment order or short term order. Successful reunification depends on stable housing (with an adequate number of bedrooms). If parents are forced into private accommodation

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

+99

South West

WORSENING

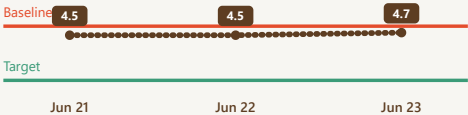
Disproportionality ratio

4.7

Progress towards eliminating over-representation

WORSENING

South West



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



Child Concern Reports (CCRs)



Select year

South West

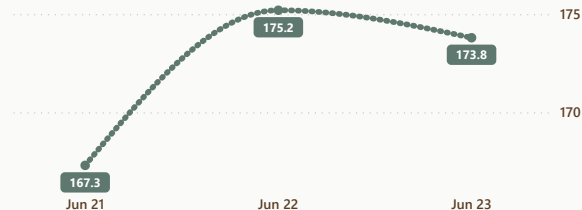
Jun 23

2,756

Number of Child Concern Reports

Rate per 1,000 First Nations children

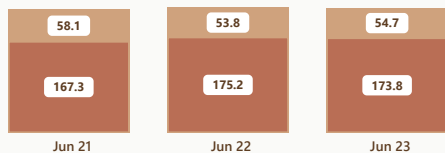
SW



Proportionality (rate per 1,000)

South West

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



Notifications



Select year

South West

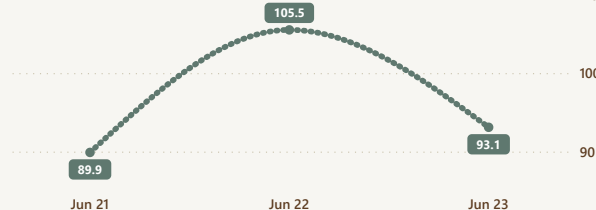
Jun 23

1,559

Number of Notifications

Rate per 1,000 First Nations children

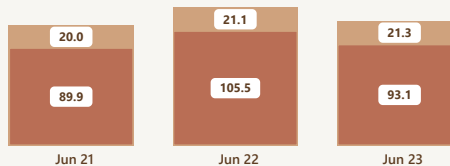
SW



Proportionality (rate per 1,000)

South West

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



Entry into out-of-home care



Select year

South West

Jun 23

1,366

Investigations finalised by 30 June

288

Children entered out-of-home care

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

SW



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

South West

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





BACK

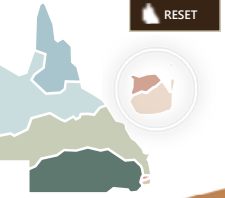
DURATION of placements in out-of-home care

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



Placement type



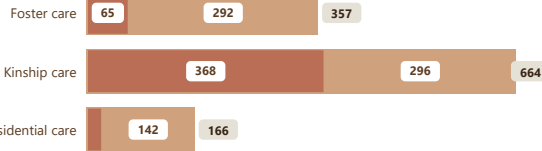
Number of First Nations children placed in out-of-home care

South West

Filter by year

Jun 23

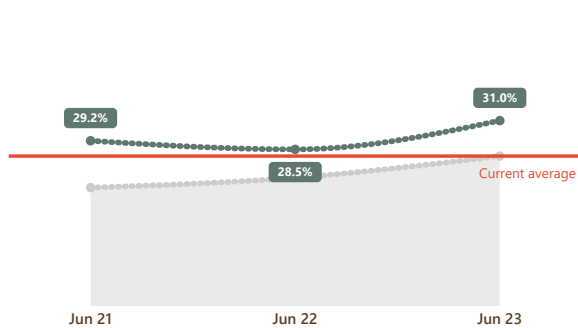
● Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer ● Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carer



Percentage of placements with First Nations kin

● SW

● QLD



Length of time

Filter by year

Jun 23

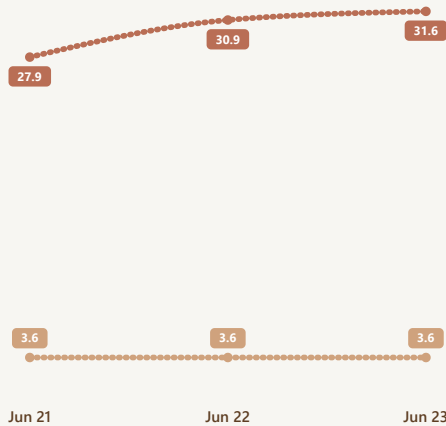
South West



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

South West

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



Long-term Guardianship order type



Filter by year

Jun 23

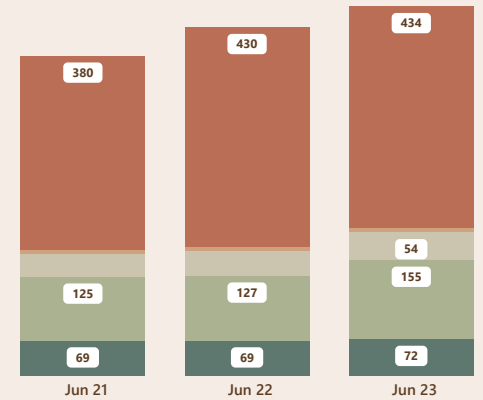
South West



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

South West

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





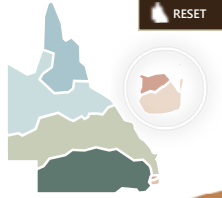
BACK

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

South West

Select year

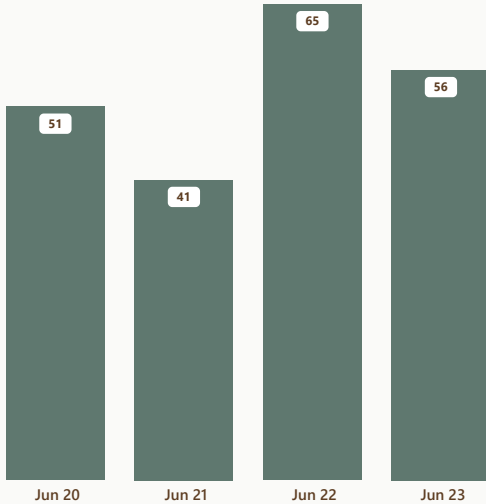
Jun 23

56

Children were reunified with their families

Reunifications

● SW



Aged out

South West

Select year

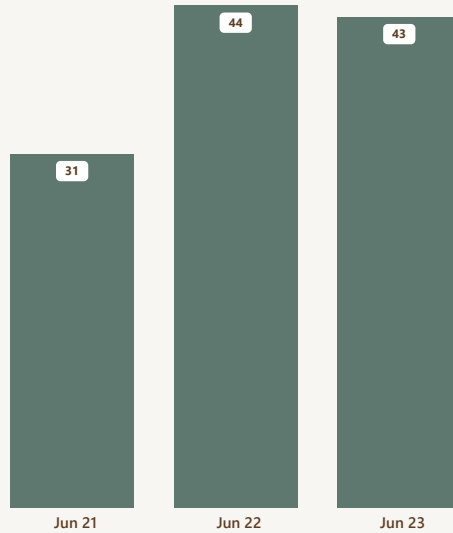
Jun 23

43

Children aged out of child protection

Number of First Nations children who aged out of child protection

● SW



Exits

South West

Select year

Jun 23

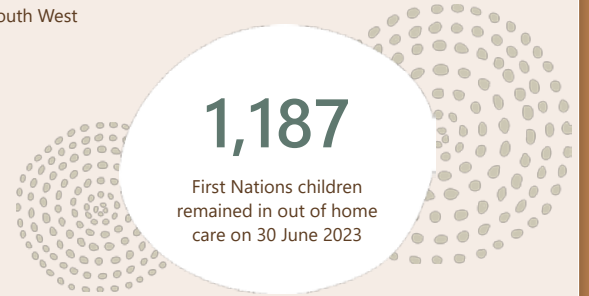
108

Reunified or aged out

72

LTG-O: First Nations kin

South West



Number of First Nations children remaining in out-of-home care
South West



In 2022-23, the South West region had the highest rate of First Nations children entering out-of-home care per 1000; 18.5 per 1000 compared to 14.0 per 1000 statewide.

The South West region has experienced significant growth in demand for service over the past year. This has resulted in an increase in children (both First Nations and non-First Nations) in out-of-home care. Stakeholders confirmed high levels of population growth, an increase in the number of statistical locations of disadvantage and lack of access to early intervention and support services as reasons behind this.

Key areas of demand due to population growth are Springfield and Ripley. Ipswich is the fastest growing city in Queensland. Warwick, Stanthorpe and the far South West (Roma to Goondiwindi). have seen an increase in demand due to disadvantage. Scaling up secondary and tertiary services within these areas is a priority, along with commencing delegated authority with 3 ATSICCOs–, Goolburri, Kambu and Kummara.

The region is keen to reduce the time children spend in out of home care and would like to see Child Protection Orders made for shorter periods (12 months). Long and multiple interim periods while order applications are before the Childrens Court are also adding to the overall time children spend in out of home care.

The preference for swiftly made orders over shorter periods of time is to ensure child safety and families maintain a sharp focus on reunification. Access to physical and emotional supports is a key element of successful reunification and the longer a child is in out of home care, the more likely their parent is to lose their social housing and Centrelink payments. Successful reunification depends on stable housing (with an adequate number of bedrooms). If parents are forced into private accommodation or smaller social housing away from their child's placement, it increases stress on the family and limits parents' ability to engage with support services to address risk factors (such as alcohol and other drug services, mental health, etc.). QFCC seeks the Queensland Government Department of Housing to implement a moratorium on social housing evictions for a period of six months after children are placed in out of home care.

Barriers to reducing over-representation:

- population growth and limited services in growth corridors
- waitlists for Family Wellbeing Services and Family Participation Program
- risk-averse approach to short term orders and reunification
- lengthy delays and multiple adjournments resulting in matters being before Childrens Court for long periods before orders are made
- loss of financial support and housing when children are removed (impacting reunification)
- staff vacancies – recruitment and retention.

The region has steadily increased out-of-home care placements with First Nations kin. In 2022-23, with the support of Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Company (Goolburri), 54 more First Nations children were placed with First Nations kin than in the previous 12 months. The region had one of the highest placement rates with First Nations kin (31% compared to a statewide average of 27.9%). Goolburri delivers a foster and kinship service that is in accordance with the ATSICPP and supports First Nation kin to care for family. Goolburri provides wrap-around support to kinship carers, including respite, to reduce placement breakdown. Goolburri undertakes extended kinship mapping and assesses multiple family members as kinship carers to provide alternative family carers for respite or if there is a placement breakdown. Contingency planning is a crucial feature of Goolburri's highly successful kinship care model.

The South West region has also increased placements with First Nations residential care providers. Child Safety has contracted a number of new providers, which are not community-controlled organisations, but for-profit businesses owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Like all placements, the focus must remain on keeping First Nations children and young people connected to kin, community, and culture. Child Safety should assess all placements accordingly. The QFCC notes at the time of examination, none of the new services were licenced by Child Safety.

Despite the increasing demand, South West had a concerted focus on reunification. In 2022-23, the region had the largest number of attempts to reunify children and the largest number of successful reunification (65 attempts and 61 were successful), a significant increase compared to 2021-22 (41 attempts and 37 were successful). Child Safety believes this is due to a strong focus on reunification and a belief that successful reunification starts from Day 1 (the day the child comes into care). Maintaining consistent, natural and wherever safe, unsupervised contact between children and their families is essential.

The Child Safety region has used contracted providers to support reunification through parent coaching and in home support packages.

When reunification is not viable, the region supports kinship carers to take on long term guardianship orders. As at 30 June 2023, 135 First Nations children were on long term guardianship orders to kinship carers or foster carers. While permanency and stability have benefits for children, keeping First Nations children connected to First Nations kin and culture is critical. Based on Child Safety data, only 53% of First Nations children on long term guardianship orders to First Nation kin. QFCC will continue to explore the trend towards long term guardianship to other to ensure the focus remains that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland grow up safe and cared for in family, community, and culture.