

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Reference: [REDACTED]

Education, Arts and Communities Committee
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Chair and Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Education, Arts and Communities Committee on 9 June 2025 and contribute to the consideration of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*. During this appearance, I undertook to provide you with further information in response to a question from a member.

Question on Notice raised by the Member for Mansfield:

The interagency model is being used in other states (e.g. TAS) — what are your thoughts around hearing the voices of children and the use of the interagency model?

The member specifically referenced the inter-agency mode utilised in Tasmania. Tasmania has implemented several interagency models designed to improve outcomes for children and families. These include the Inter-Agency Support Team program - a whole-of-government initiative that delivers timely and coordinated responses for children and young people with multiple and complex needs - and the Sure Start Interagency Care Team Model which seeks to streamline access to supports for children in care by fostering collaboration across agencies.

Interagency models can be strengthened by actively listening to those with lived experience and ensuring their voices shape both policy and practice. It is crucial to balance the benefits of interagency collaboration with the practical demands of frontline service delivery.

In my experience, gaps in information sharing and agency coordination are regularly cited as issues in inquest, reviews and audits resulting in continuous improvements being made. This is often because frontline workers do not have all of the relevant information that is held by relevant agencies within the system. In high-volume frontline work, finding the time for comprehensive, effective inter-agency collaboration and coordination is extremely limited. It is essential therefore to identify and engage models that are both effective on the ground and responsive to emergent needs, while also enabling meaningful collaboration between services and active participation of the individuals, children, or families - the recipients of the service.

In Queensland, the *Responding to sexual assault and child sexual abuse: Queensland Government Interagency Guidelines for responding to children, young people and adults who have experienced sexual assault or child sexual abuse*¹ (the Guidelines) may provide insight as to how a similar model could be implemented in the domestic and family violence space. The Guidelines contain principles pertaining to child and youth specific practice principles and are informed by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Insights should be drawn from existing multidisciplinary, interagency models of care, such as the Sexual Assault Response Team in Townsville which aims to provide a holistic, trauma-informed service to victim-survivors of sexual assault across the Townsville region.²

Effective interagency response models

In designing multi-agency groups and meetings system owners (i.e. agency heads) must be clear on the problem they are addressing. The need for case coordination, information sharing, and shared planning happens and occurs in individual cases, within geographic locations and across systems. Multi-agency working must occur at the operational, tactical and strategic levels of portfolio systems.

- a. At the operational level: there is a need for all frontline workers working with an individual family to meet and exchange intelligence, plans, and responsibilities. Models that include the family (and their support network) and non-government providers in this approach – such as family-led decision making models and care team arrangements - are effective bringing unity and efficiency to how government responds holistically to the group but require intensive time and logistical support for the frontline workforce. Models that only involve government frontline workers achieve good outcomes but are not as impactful as when the family is personally involved.
- b. At the tactical level: there are many forms of regional and site-specific department liaison officers working together on a regular basis to review cases, share intelligence and plan joint actions. These models involve representatives with sufficient case knowledge meeting to 'go over' at-risk cases or escalate and triage cases for joint response. These do not always involve the frontline workers involved with the family and are efficient for government (when the liaison officers and representatives are informed and empowered) but not always impactful on specific cases.
- c. At the strategic level: there are departments working together to commission and review programs and services and system operations. These may use individual cases to identify system problems in real time and can be useful for escalation of cases where traditional departmental interventions are not being successful. Models I have seen that are

¹ Queensland Government. (2023). *Responding to sexual assault and child sexual abuse: Queensland Government Interagency Guidelines for responding to children, young people and adults who have experienced sexual assault or child sexual abuse*. <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/924faa15-d282-48f0-a8e8-73950b1/interagency-guidelines-responding-sexual-assault-child-sexual-abuse.pdf?ETag=8273e87f1f8e6a4c860ecdf3e556030>

² Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (2023). *\$2.8 million boost to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in North Queensland*. <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/98726>



successful are designed to escalate cases to very senior public servants from relevant departments when the frontline workforce cannot resolve the presenting issues for a client – for example the police, residential care workforce, mental health provider and child safety are unable to prevent a child from self-harming. These strategic bodies are often able to authorise and fund alternative service responses that may not be available to frontline workers.

Input from victim-survivors, and children and young people

An effective interagency response must involve the perspectives of children and young people as members of their families and communities, and as recipients of service delivery in their own right. The Commission has developed the www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/youth/model-of-participation to guide organisations in embedding these voices across all levels of service delivery and policy development. This model emphasises ongoing, meaningful engagement with children and young people, upholding their right to be heard and to influence the decisions that shape their lives. Service design is most effective when it is developed with insights from lived and living experience – with input from victim-survivors, children, and families. Authentic engagement ensures that systems remain connected to the experiences of those they are intended to support.

Effective interagency models must be culturally safe, locally led, and underpinned by genuine community partnerships. This includes moving beyond consultation to ensure that all children, families, and communities are active co-designers and decision-makers in the development and delivery of support systems. While the experiences of other jurisdictions provide valuable insight, any interagency model of service delivery in Queensland must be tailored to its distinct context. Our state spans remote, rural, regional, and urban communities, and is enriched by a diverse cultural landscape, most notably the deep-rooted presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose languages, traditions, and connection to Country are fundamental to community wellbeing. These differences significantly influence how children and families interact with systems and access support.

Amplifying young person perspectives

The Commission’s Strategic Plan includes specific objectives to “Empower children and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives”. Their stories offer unique perspectives which help to ground reforms in the realities faced by children, young people, carers, families, and frontline workers. These experiences reveal both the challenges and opportunities for meaningful change within the child protection and youth justice systems.

Meaningful, lasting change requires a coordinated and sustained commitment from government, service providers, and the broader community. In the context of domestic and family violence, it is especially critical that children’s voices are heard when they feel safest and most empowered to speak. Youth Advocate Ruby spoke at the 2024 QFCC Youth Summit, and again in April of this year at the 2025 Summit about her experiences of domestic violence throughout her childhood. As a child, she struggled to find resources appropriate for her age



and situation, which motivated her to create the not-for-profit organisation Kids of Purple; a dedicated website offering age-appropriate support and information. Ruby has since secured government funding for the website and a promotional campaign to help other children access these essential resources. You can watch Ruby's speeches here: www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/ruby.

Unanswered Calls – film screening

The Commission recently sponsored the Queensland launch of Unanswered Calls, a powerful short film by Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre. The film amplifies the voices of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence. It tells of their attempts to seek support being overlooked, diminished, or insufficient; their stories tell of feeling dismissed for being too young or not visibly harmed. It reflects their experiences of service responses focused on adults, sidelining those who witnessed the trauma firsthand, sometimes with near-fatal consequences.

The launch event brought together representatives from key sectors, Health, Education, Police, Child Safety, and Justice, along with non-government organisations, statutory bodies, youth advocates, and victim-survivors. Their presence signalled a clear and united message: Queensland could improve by delivering sophisticated, coordinated, and youth-informed response to domestic and family violence.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for children and families across Queensland. I look forward to further conversations on this important topic. If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me directly on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Luke Twyford
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

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