

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Reference: [REDACTED]

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Foster, Kinship and Permanent Carers Payment Review,

I would like to express our appreciation for the important work your committee is undertaking in evaluating the carer payment system. It is encouraging to see this critical issue receiving the attention it deserves, particularly given the increasingly complex challenges faced by foster and kinship carers.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is committed to supporting a sustainable and effective child protection system that truly meets the needs of children, young people, and their carers across Queensland. There is critical need for reform and redesign to a responsive, modernised system that takes into account the evolving needs of both carers and the children they care for, highlighting the critical role family-based care plays in achieving better outcomes for children.

In 2023, I was requested by the then-Minister of Child Safety to provide independent oversight of the Department's review of the residential care system. During the review I visited a number of residential care homes, spoke to frontline workers, and had the honour of hearing directly from young people living in the out-of-home-care system. Their perspectives are captured in the QFCC's report, *I was raised by a checklist*.¹ During this review, I heard from Malakai, a young man with lived experience of the family and out-of-home care systems. Malakai shared his ideas for improvements in the care system including increased personal allowances for young people to engage in recreational activities, sports, hobbies, and interests, and to personalise their home. His speech highlighted the funding variance between family based and out-of-home care placements and how allowances can be better utilised to provide greater enrichment for the child to feel safe, loved, and valued in their placement. Malaki wrote the introduction to my oversight report, "*A System That Cares*" – QFCC's response to Child Safety's '*A roadmap for residential care in Queensland*', which called for bold and transformative reform of the child protection system. I have enclosed that report to assist in your review of carers allowances.

¹ Queensland Family and Child Commission (2023). *I was raised by a checklist*. [I was raised by a checklist - QFCC Review of Residential Care](#)

In the past year, the QFCC has published two additional reports providing essential data and analysis on the foster care system in Queensland, highlighting the need for reform in carer allowances and support. I have attached these reports, the *Demographic Insights Report* and the *Carer Allowances Insights Paper* to support your current review.

These reports highlight critical challenges facing the foster and kinship care system, particularly the rising financial strain on carers and the urgent need for greater support for family-based care. Despite the number of children entering care continuing to rise, the pool of available carers has stagnated, which exacerbates pressures on the already strained system.

In April 2024, the QFCC hosted the inaugural Youth Summit which provided a platform for young people to share their experiences and highlight issues important to them. Youth Advocate Caroline shared her experience as a carer for her younger siblings, and spoke to the gravity of providing a nurturing, family environment whilst balancing the costs and demands of being a carer. You can watch Caroline's full speech on the QFCC website: [Caroline | Queensland Family and Child Commission](#). I have included a transcript for your reference. Caroline's advocacy is a powerful reminder of the urgency of reform to better support foster and kinship carers to provide safe, supportive homes for children in their care.

I hope that the insights provided through these publications will assist in shaping the future of foster and kinship care and help ensure a system that can adequately support both carers and children in.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please don't hesitate to contact me directly on [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Luke Twyford
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

April 2025

