

Background

This is the third progress report on the Review of System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Queensland Government has asked the Child Death Review Board (the Board) to review system responses to child sexual abuse in Queensland, using the offending of a convicted perpetrator as a case study.

The review will make recommendations for any improvements needed to the laws, policies, procedures and practices across the early childhood education and care, police and Blue Card systems. The Board is conducting the review under section 29I of the *Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (the Act). The terms of reference for the review can be found on our [website](#).

Progress overview

The Board is nearing the end of the analysis phase of its review and is beginning to form early recommendations based on the public submissions received, engagement with families, commissioned research, and engagement with the child safeguarding sector.

The Board has completed the following activities over the last two months:

- **Completed submissions period** – The Board received 39 submissions from victim-survivors, parents, carers, government and community frontline workers, and child safeguarding experts. The submissions period has now closed and the Board is reviewing the perspectives shared. These submissions are central to the review and will inform the findings and recommendations of the final report.
- **Expert Roundtable** – The Board held a second roundtable of experts to discuss system improvements needed to prevent, identify, and respond to child sexual abuse. This discussion explored contemporary challenges and best-practice in child sexual abuse prevention, which is a critical way the Board will deliver practical, realistic and achievable recommendations that work to improve children's safety.
- **Frontline operations** – The Board Chair received on-site briefings from the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, Queensland Police Service, and the Early Childhood Regulatory Authority to build understanding of how their systems operate to detect and respond to child sexual abuse. The Chair also visited childcare centres where abuse occurred.
- **National policy discussions** – The Board Chair has contributed to national discussions, including engagement with Australian Education Ministers and Attorneys-General on national prevention and response strategies. Commitments made at the national level to enact early childcare and working with children check policy reform are being monitored by and included in this review's consideration of the best policy, practices, and legislation to protect children.
- **Interstate consultation** – The Board Chair met with regulatory bodies in New South Wales and Victoria to understand their recent cases and discuss insights on best practice approaches. This has allowed the Board to build on lessons already learned in other jurisdictions and consider their relevance in the Queensland context. We have also received submissions from other Australian jurisdictions, which will inform the Board's view on recommendations relating to national policy and approaches.
- **Considered the outcomes of the Victorian review** – The Board notes the outcomes of the Victorian Government's Rapid Child Safety Review, which was completed in response to allegations of child sexual abuse in early childhood, education and care settings. Many of the areas reviewed in Victoria are being considered as part of this review. The Board notes the recommendations in the Victorian report are

limited to early childhood, education and care, whereas the Board’s recommendations are expected to assume a broader scope.

- **Released research on legal frameworks about child sexual abuse** – The Board commissioned Queensland law firm Marrawah Law to analyse the legal frameworks in place in Queensland that aim to protect children from sexual abuse across the early childhood education and care, police and Blue Card systems. The research report is available on our [website](#) to inform legal and policy reforms across Australia.

Recent alarming cases of child sexual abuse in Early childhood education and care are a critical reminder: that capacity of any one safeguarding mechanism or scheme to protect children in high-risk child-related settings is, in isolation, limited.

...a more holistic and integrated, rather than piecemeal, reform approach will assist to minimise unnecessary regulatory duplication. More importantly, such an approach will assist to maximise the interoperability of laws for more effective safeguarding.”

- Marrawah Law research report

Next steps

The Board will now finalise its analysis and findings and start to form recommendations. These early-draft recommendations will be tested with the sector to ensure they are realistic, feasible and effective when implemented in practice.

The Board will also start to develop a recommendations monitoring framework to track the government’s and sector’s progress towards improving the systems designed to keep children safe.

The review remains on track to be completed and presented to the Queensland Attorney-General in 2025.

For enquiries or further information:
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