

MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



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QFCC inspires action for children and communities

On the 10th Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generation, the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) has encouraged all Queenslanders to commit to a renewed and respectful relationship with Australia's First Peoples.

The QFCC continues to play a lead role across the child protection and family support sector to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children in Queensland.

Recently appointed QFCC Commissioner Phillip Brooks said the National Apology delivered by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was a pivotal step forward for Australia.

"It was an important historical moment for all Australians," Mr Brooks said.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland have felt the effects of former government policies that led to the removal of children from their families, so it was a powerful moment to witness the healing and restoration brought about by the apology.

"As a proud descendant of the Bidjara Tribe, the Kairi Tribe and the Ducabrook Clan located at Springsure in Central Queensland, the apology is of great significance to me and my role at the QFCC."

As a QFCC Commissioner Mr Brooks provides expert leadership regarding law, policy and practice to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

"To me, advocacy means supporting or representing the views and best interests of others to influence change in systems and processes. I will continue to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as rights-holders, by listening to their voices, ideas and recommendations, and bringing this evidence forward to influence decision makers and stakeholders," he said.

"We respect and advocate for improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through all our work to keep children safe and support families to thrive.

"Alongside the Principal Commissioner Cheryl Vardon we aim to address the issue of disproportionate representation of Indigenous children in the child protection system."

According to the Productivity Commission report on government services, in the time directly preceding the National Apology 7,892 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were living in out-of-home care across Australia. Today, the number of children in out-of-home care has climbed to 17,664.

Closer to home, in Queensland the figures at the time of the National Apology were 1724 children living in out-of-home care. Today there are 3782.

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“These figures are staggering, he said.

“There has been a positive shift in the way Government, community and community organisations are working together to address this situation and we need to continue on this path.

“The QFCC works collaboratively to influence change so Queensland is a safe place for all children by developing and reviewing the child protection system.

“We work with peak Government agencies, the private sector and education providers and also host regular consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to receive feedback and talk about how we can improve the sector.”

Queensland was the first jurisdiction to deliver a commitment to address over-representation through the ‘Our Way’ generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, which QFCC is a key partner.

“Working together with Indigenous organisations to harness their knowledge helps provide better support for Indigenous children, families and communities.

“It’s important to recognise that children and families are best supported by their community and by people they can relate too and trust.” he said.

This year the QFCC is working to deliver a number of programs that listen and represent the voices of children and young people as well as gather and promote sector research to ultimately support and strengthen the community.

For more information on QFCC visit: <http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/>

The National Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples can viewed at: <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

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