

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



Communication objective

This annual report describes our progress during 2017–18 towards achieving the long-term objectives of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), as published in our strategic plan.

In particular, the report focuses on our performance in relation to our strategic objectives, our financial position and our compliance with legislative requirements. It includes some of the main challenges affecting Queensland children and families and explains how we are helping to address these challenges. It also provides information on our forward plans.

To contain production costs, we have only used in-house resources to develop the report. Limited hard copies of the annual report have been produced, and recycled material has been used for report production.

An electronic copy of this report is available on the QFCC's website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/annual-report.

Contact for enquiries

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Reference: CS – D18/17824

07 September 2018

The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Leader of the House
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2017–18 and financial statements for the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is included in the appendices of this report.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Vardon
Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission



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Principal Commissioner's report

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), with our sector partners, is on a journey towards making Queensland a place where all children are more than safe.

We are approaching the halfway point of the ten-year journey of implementing recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report: *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*. The QFCC is responsible for leading 10 recommendations from this report, and I am pleased at the progress to date, with nine of the recommendations delivered and one on track for completion.

We committed to developing an evaluation framework to assess the implementation, outcomes and impacts of the reform program at relevant time points. Our implementation evaluation is well underway, with findings to be released later in 2018.

In October 2017, the QFCC welcomed Phillip Brooks to the role of Commissioner. Phillip is a descendant of the Bidjara Tribe, the Kairi Tribe, and the Ducabrook Clan. He has a strong focus on the QFCC's role in breaking down the barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. He is also committed to increasing decision-makers' knowledge and ability to effectively understand the needs of individual communities.

The last 12 months have been a busy time for the QFCC, as we continue to build strong alliances across the sector and with communities across Queensland. Hearing the voices of children is at the forefront of the wide range of programs and initiatives we are implementing to keep children happy, safe and well.

Our *Growing up in Queensland* project has delivered great success. As part of this project, we have visited over 40 locations across Queensland—as far north as the Torres Strait islands and as far west as Mt Isa—allowing children to have their say on what matters most to them. The insights from this research will be presented to decision-makers at the end of 2018.

A core role of the QFCC is to provide oversight of Queensland's child protection system. In 2017–18, we completed a comprehensive review of the blue card and foster care systems. All 137 recommendations were accepted by government.

Without strong collaboration across the sectors, we could not do our job. We continue to partner with child protection and family support services to implement our second *Strengthening our Sector* action plan. I would like to thank the organisations, departments, advisory groups and Queensland's children and young people for their invaluable insights, experience and advice. I also thank the commissioner, deputy commissioners and all QFCC staff for their continued efforts and determination to make this state the safest place for children growing up.

2017–18 has been a year of growth and reflection. In this annual report we look back on the reform journey to acknowledge the changes so far, and we look forward to keeping Queensland children more than safe in the coming years.

I encourage everyone in Queensland to read this report. We all play a role in protecting our children.



Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

About us

Our role

Children, young people and their families are at the heart of everything we do.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is dedicated to improving the child protection and family support system. Our vision is to work collaboratively to influence change, so Queensland is a safe place, where children, young people and their families thrive in supportive communities.

We are committed to achieving this vision and supporting the delivery of the government's Supporting Families Changing Futures child protection reform program. This program is focused on delivering the right services at the right time to support families and keep children safely at home. To realise this, we:

- **provide oversight** by monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the performance and outcomes of the child protection and family support systems, and by making sure reform initiatives are effectively evaluated
- **enable** sustainable improvements in services by working with our partners to strengthen the capability, capacity and culture of the child protection and family support system
- **educate** parents, families, communities and professionals about how they can keep children and young people safe, and about the services available to strengthen and support Queensland families.

We achieve this through partnering with government and non-government organisations.

Our legislation

The QFCC was established on 1 July 2014. This was part of the Queensland Government's response to the report of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI)—*Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection 2013*.

The *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (the Act) established the QFCC as a statutory body to:

- promote the safety, well-being and best interests of children and young people
- promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people
- improve the child protection system.

The Act also prescribes that two commissioners are appointed by the Governor in Council, one as principal commissioner and chief executive officer. At least one commissioner must be an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander.

Our commitment

We contribute to the government's objectives for the community¹ of 'building safe, caring and connected communities' by:

- promoting the safety, well-being and best interests of Queensland's children and young people
- working with government and non-government agencies to improve the child protection system.

In doing this, we have a strong focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

¹ Section 10 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* requires that the government prepares, and tables in the Legislative Assembly, a statement of its broad objectives for the community.

Our strategic plan

The QFCC's strategic plan 2017–2021

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017–2021

Every day, the Queensland Family and Child Commission works to improve the child protection and family support system.

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Our vision

We work collaboratively to influence change so Queensland is a safe place where children, young people and their families thrive in supportive communities.

Our purpose

To improve the quality of outcomes for children, young people and families.

Our commitment

The QFCC contributes to the Government's objective for the community of building safe, caring and connected communities by promoting the safety, well-being and best interests of Queensland's children and young people and working with government and non-government agencies to improve the child protection system.

This includes a strong focus on representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

Our values



qfcc.qld.gov.au | talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au

Our indicators of success

- Feedback from engagement with children, young people, families, and the sector indicates positive changes in frontline child protection and family support services and overall community connectedness.
- Queensland families and communities:
 - are aware of and understand the role of the child protection and family support system and the changes made as part of the reforms
 - are aware of the services and support available to parents to help them protect and care for their children and young people
 - access the services and support they require.
- Advice on the performance of the child protection system and impact of the reform agenda is used to inform improvements to the system.

Our risks

We inhibit our ability to influence and facilitate sustainable change if we do not:

- remain connected to children, young people, families and the community
- have effective stakeholder engagement and partnerships
- base our policy, practice and performance advice on evidence
- obtain information from fellow agencies to inform our work



We listen to children, young people and their families and actively seek and incorporate the perspectives and lived experiences of First Australians into our work.

We are culturally responsive. Through empowering and enabling our staff, we create an ethical, agile and highly capable team. In doing so, we gain the confidence of the community and the sector.

We check the system through reviews, research, and listening to children, families and communities, especially those who are most vulnerable.
 We work to educate the sector and the broader community about how to keep children safe and well.
 Our leadership and influence improves the child protection and family support system.
 We increase collaboration between Queensland communities and the service sector to provide the best support to keep our children and young people safe and well.

OBJECTIVES	Work closely with all Queenslanders to build safe, caring and connected communities that are well supported by quality frontline child protection and family support services.				
	Promote and advocate for the safety, well-being and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them.				
OPPORTUNITIES	Improve the child protection and family support system to ensure those most vulnerable are well cared for and able to thrive.				
STRATEGIES	Oversight the child protection & family support system	Review, evaluate & drive improvement to key systems, policies and programs	Support a strong, collaborative & capable services sector	Determine & communicate what works and will effect positive change	Educate families & communities
	Build on our oversight reputation by identifying and leading key own motion investigations of the child protection & family support system	Drive sustainable system improvements by using lessons learnt from reviews, inquiries and other evidence	Embed sector strengths and capability improvements across the state to ensure lasting change	Build stronger engagement with children, young people and their families with a greater presence across regional and rural Queensland communities	Develop sustainable self help and education programs to help keep kids safe, with a particular focus on e-safety



reach their full potential

We help children, young people and their families:



and keep safe and well.



Our performance

In the State Budget 2017–18 service delivery statements, the QFCC had one service area objective. This was to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people and the role of families and communities in protecting and caring for them. This is measured through the following service standard.

QFCC service standard	Notes	2017–18 target	2017–18 actual
Percentage increase in use of the <i>oneplace</i> Community Services Directory	1, 2	5%	55%

Notes:

1. This service standard reports on the number of sessions undertaken by people accessing the *oneplace* Community Services Directory. This was set up by the QFCC and the (then) Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and is an easily accessible directory of community services to help all Queensland families get to the right service at the right time. In doing so, it addresses a number of the QFCC’s statutory obligations, including by supporting families in taking responsibility and care for children, informing and educating the community about services, and analysing family support service availability.
2. The 2017–18 actual performance exceeded the target as a result of a campaign (starting in June) to promote *oneplace* as a help-seeking tool for families. Results exceeded expectations, with access of *oneplace* in June more than nine times the 2017–18 monthly average.

Our values

The QFCC has embraced the five Queensland public service values, which are: customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous, and empower people. These values guide our staff behaviour and the way we do business.

Machinery of government changes

As a result of machinery of government changes, the QFCC was transferred from the Premier and Minister for Trade to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice from 12 December 2017. There were no changes to the QFCC’s statutory functions.

Our operating environment

The QFCC operates in a complex environment influenced by multiple reform agendas and industry initiatives at the state and national level. We are actively involved in a number of these initiatives. We partner with agencies responsible for leading the initiatives, and lead and participate in oversight, governance and advisory groups to help create sustainable change across the sector.

Through our partnerships, particularly with the non-government sector, we support a responsive, sustainable service system that benefits children and families.

Child protection reforms

The QCPCOI report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, identified 10 recommendations for the QFCC to lead. The following table provides a summary of our progress in implementing the child protection reform recommendations:

QFCC update on implementing QCPCOI recommendations

Recommendation/status	Progress update on the QCPCOI recommendation
Promote and advocate to families and communities their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children. (Rec. 1.1)	The QFCC launched the <i>Talking Families</i> campaign in 2014. Promotional campaigns, undertaken through a range of mediums, have encouraged ‘help-seeking’ and uptake of early intervention support services. <i>Talking Families</i> Facebook now has more than 32,000 followers.
On track	<p>We released the <i>Talking Families</i> help-seeking campaign (phase 3) in June 2018, with a focus on parents of children up to four years of age and on bystanders. An updated Talking Families website was rolled out as part of phase 3.</p> <p>We launched an interactive <i>Travelling the Reform Roadmap</i> web page in mid-May to highlight the sector’s reform journey since the QCPCOI (in 2013).</p> <p>We released a digital advertising campaign for the <i>oneplace</i> Community Services Directory website in June to promote the directory as a help-seeking tool for Queensland families.</p> <p>We launched the <i>It’s all Relative</i> educational resource on Safer Internet Day on 6 February 2018 to deliver online safety tips. This was part of our <i>Out of the Dark</i> campaign and was designed to educate parents and carers about the risk of internet-related child sexual abuse.</p> <p>We launched a new digital campaign—<i>Seconds Count</i>—in December 2017 to raise awareness of child drowning/water safety. This featured Commonwealth Games medallist, Mitch Larkin.</p>

<p>Community Services Directory (Rec. 6.1)</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>The <i>oneplace</i> Community Services Directory was established on 15 November 2016. It currently provides a single point of access to information on more than 48,000 services across Queensland. In 2017–18, <i>oneplace</i> had 28,362 new visitors. The <i>oneplace</i> website was refurbished to improve usability in June 2018.</p>
<p>Advisory Council (Rec. 6.3)</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>We established the QFCC Advisory Council in November 2015 to help promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have for keeping children safe. It meets quarterly to provide insight into issues affecting children, families and the sector. It also provides guidance on the work of the QFCC.</p>
<p>Capacity building and governance strategy (Rec. 6.6)</p> <p>Workforce planning and development strategy (Rec. 10.7)</p> <p>Cultural change (Rec. 12.15)</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>Recommendations 6.6, 10.7 and 12.15 were brought together to form a single <i>Strengthening our Sector</i> strategy. The QFCC developed two action plans.</p> <p>The <i>First action plan 2016–17</i> set the foundations for strengthening the capacity and capability of the sector, and building a positive and collaborative culture across child and family practice.</p>
<p>Delivered</p>	<p>The <i>Second action plan 2017–19</i> is focused on building on these achievements to deliver a more sustainable and responsive child and family support system in Queensland.</p>
<p>Establishment of the QFCC (Rec. 12.3)</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>The QFCC was established on 1 July 2014. The principal commissioner, Cheryl Vardon, was appointed on 11 September 2015. A commissioner was appointed on 18 April 2016 and held the position until 3 March 2017. Phillip Brooks joined the QFCC as commissioner in October 2017.</p>
<p>Three-year rolling research program (Rec. 12.13)</p> <p>Delivered</p>	<p>The QFCC’s <i>2016–19 Research Agenda</i>, released in December 2016, provides a list of areas that have been identified by the sector as being in need of research. The QFCC is working in some of these areas and encourages others to consider these important areas for research. The Research Agenda lists areas of research need and the outcomes to be achieved. It is available on the QFCC’s website.</p>

Evaluation framework
(Rec. 12.14)

An evaluation framework has been developed to assess the implementation, outcomes and impacts of the child protection reform program.

Delivered

The QFCC will lead program level evaluations at multiple relevant time points. The implementation evaluation is underway. It focuses on facilitators and barriers to implementation, and on early indicators of progress towards outcomes. Findings are scheduled to be released later in 2018.

Resources and information
(Rec. 13.26)

The QFCC published a wide range of public resources in 2017–18 including:

Delivered

- *Talking Families* campaign-related resources
- *It's all Relative* online safety tips and strategies
- the *Seconds Count* water safety campaign.

The QFCC continues to provide research summaries and scans and links to research papers on its online Knowledge and Resource Hub. These resources make research more accessible for policy makers and practitioners and, through this, help translate research into practice.



Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

In May 2017, the government released *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families* (Our Way) and *Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families* (Changing Tracks).

The Our Way strategy represents a fundamental shift in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. It outlines a framework for transformational change that will occur over the next 20 years. It acknowledges the need to work in a different way to improve the life outcomes of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to set the right conditions so each child can reach their full potential and thrive.

Changing Tracks is the first action plan created to realise the Our Way strategy. It addresses areas of vulnerability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families across the eight well-being domains identified in Our Way.

The QFCC is the leader for one of the actions in the Changing Tracks action plan, which is:

- to analyse current investment in sector capacity and workforce capability to help inform future investment to build the child and family sector (action 6.6).

Implementation work on this action has begun.

The QFCC is also partnering with other agencies to support five other actions from Changing Tracks.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) presented its final report on 15 December 2017. Recommendations by the Royal Commission included having a national approach to child safe institutions and a national framework for child safety. It also identified 10 child safe standards to make institutions safe for children.

In the Queensland Government's response, the Premier acknowledged the QFCC's reports into the child protection system in Queensland and how they have underpinned fundamental and systemic changes to the child protection, foster care and blue card systems. Many of the Royal Commission's recommendations about working with children checks were considered in the QFCC's blue card system review, which is being implemented under the leadership of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

The QFCC has been assisting with the implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations in Queensland by providing advice to lead agencies about a model for child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme.

Under its *Strengthening our Sector Strategy 2016–19*, the QFCC provided leadership in creating child safe organisations. It did this by partnering with the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) to develop an industry framework that drives excellence in child safe and child friendly approaches across Queensland's community services industry.

Under the strategy's *Second action plan 2017–19*, the QFCC continues to work with the child and family sector to test and embed a child safe excellence framework.

Domestic and family violence prevention

The QFCC is strongly committed to supporting the prevention of domestic and family violence. The principal commissioner is a member of the Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence Interdepartmental CEO Committee.

In 2017–18, the QFCC provided submissions to:

- the Australian Senate’s Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and other Measures) Bill 2017* and the *Family Law Amendment (Parenting Management Hearings) Bill 2017*
- the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board, *2017–18 Annual Report* public forum
- the Queensland Parliament, regarding the Child Protection Amendment Bill 2017.

We also:

- developed an internal corporate standard—*Support for employees affected by domestic and family violence*. This provides information and a range of support options for employees affected by domestic and family violence
- rolled-out a domestic and family violence online training program (Recognise-Respond-Refer) to all staff.

Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan

2014–2019

The QFCC has three actions in the whole-of-government *Queensland Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2014–2019* and subsequent action plans. As the Queensland Mental Health Commission is currently renewing the strategic plan, the QFCC was not required to provide updates on its actions during 2017–18.

The remaining chapters in this annual report address the objectives and strategies outlined in the QFCC’s *Strategic Plan 2017–2021*.





Objective

Improve the child protection and family support system to ensure those who are most vulnerable are well cared for and able to thrive.

Systems reviews

In its oversight role, the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) focuses on systemically monitoring and reviewing the child protection system and reporting on it.

In 2017–18, we progressed or completed a number of systems reviews.

Blue card and foster care systems reviews

In September 2016, the Premier asked the QFCC to lead a comprehensive examination of the blue card and foster care systems in Queensland. We were asked to pay particular attention to the use of, and reliance on, working with children checks (blue cards) and other information in the assessment and approval of foster carers in Queensland.

Three reports were tabled in parliament by the Premier in September 2017. The reports made a range of recommendations to improve safeguards for children.

Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the foster care system

The *Review of the foster care system* found that Queensland's foster care system generally operates as intended and in line with relevant legislation. However, it identified opportunities to:

- build stakeholder and public confidence
- strengthen carer assessment, approval and renewal processes

- strengthen safeguards for children in care.

The review made 42 recommendations on these important issues. Implementing agencies have commenced work on 21 of them, with five recommendations already completed. The remaining 16 have planned starts and implementation plans.

The recommendations align with the Queensland Government's response to the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse*.

In line with recommendation 41 of the *Review of the foster care system*, the QFCC established the Reviews Strategic Oversight Group to oversee the ongoing implementation of all recommendations from the review. This group met twice in 2017–18.

Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the blue card system

The *Review of the blue card system* found that, while the system already provides strong safeguards for Queensland's children, there is scope to make those safeguards even more robust and to improve the system's efficiency. The review made 81 recommendations to strengthen and streamline the blue card system, with important areas of focus including:

- making extensive changes to legislation
- fully reviewing the funding arrangements supporting the blue card system
- effecting a significant change to the way people think about children's safety
- refocusing the system on child safe standards and clarifying and simplifying the obligations on organisations to manage risks.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is responsible for implementing the recommendations of the *Review of the blue card system*. It has established (in line with recommendation 78 of the review) a reference group made up of government and non-government members, including the QFCC. This group is responsible for overseeing the progress of the recommendations.

Blue Card and Foster Care Systems Review—Report on Term of Reference 5: Strengthening capacity across Queensland’s child protection system

The *Strengthening capacity across Queensland’s child protection system* report identified a number of capacity issues and pressure points in the child protection system. They fall into six broad categories: funding, staffing, court reforms, non-government services, greater collaboration across the system, and change management.

Some of these are within government agencies and structures, and others are within non-government organisations. Some are connected to longstanding issues and others to recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry.

The review made 14 recommendations. The Queensland Government accepted these and committed to increasing support for families and addressing pressures in the child protection system. Four recommendations have been completed and 10 are underway.

Post-implementation review of When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh—A report into Queensland’s children missing from out-of-home care

All 29 recommendations from the original *When a child is missing review* were implemented. The QFCC is currently undertaking a post-implementation review to identify whether changes made by agencies in response to the recommendations are operating as intended. The review is being undertaken collaboratively with the Queensland Police Service, the Office of the Public Guardian, Queensland Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. A report is scheduled for release in late 2018.

Recommendation 28 Supplementary Review: A report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulated home-based services

Following publication of the *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh—A report into Queensland’s children missing from out-of-home care*, the QFCC undertook a supplementary review (recommendation 28 of the report) into legislation, policies and practices for information sharing to protect all children in regulated service environments.

The supplementary review report, released in February 2017, focused specifically on those regulated services provided from home: foster and kinship care, family day care and stand-alone care services. It made 17 recommendations.

The QFCC convenes the Reviews Strategic Oversight Group, which works collaboratively with stakeholders to make sure the intent of the recommendations is met. Two recommendations have been completed and work on the remaining 15 has begun.

A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child

In March 2017, the QFCC provided a report to government—*A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child*. This detailed the QFCC’s analysis and findings after considering individual agency reviews. The report made one recommendation, which was that:

- the Queensland Government consider a revised external and independent model for reviewing the deaths of children known to the child protection system.

In September 2017, the QFCC provided a further report to the Premier. This outlined an implementation and transition proposal for a revised external and independent model. The report—*A systems review of individual agency findings following the death of a child— An implementation and transition plan*, is with the government for consideration.

Follow-up health check review (Health Check II)

In 2015, the Child Protection Reform Leaders Group² asked the QFCC to undertake a review. This was to:

- assess the impact of legislative changes on mandatory reporting³ and referral behaviours
- determine whether families are being referred to the right service at the right time, alleviating strain on tertiary child protection services.⁴

The report, *Changes to professional reporting and referral behaviours in the child and family support system from 2015–17*, was delivered in December 2015.

The follow-up health check review, currently underway, is assessing whether the changes are diverting concerns that do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention away from Child Safety services to more appropriate secondary support services. The follow-up health check review is considering the trends of mandatory reporting and referral behaviour in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families as well as across remote, regional and urban locations.

System review of 5 and 10 day investigations and assessments

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women assesses the timeframe for notifications of suspected harm to be commenced: within 24 hours, 5 or 10 days.

The QFCC is working with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to better understand why only 26% of investigations and assessments of 5 and 10 day notifications are commenced within the assessed timeframe. The review will:

- provide context and narrative as to why some notifications are not commenced within the assessed timeframe
- analyse the circumstances that exist when they are commenced within the required timeframes
- share lessons learned (including areas of systemic excellence)
- identify opportunities to improve the 5 and 10 day notification response system.

² The Child Protection Reform Leaders Group is made up of senior executives from government and non-government agencies representing the social services and child protection sectors. It provides a forum for coordinating the whole-of-government implementation of the child protection and family support reforms and resolving interagency issues as they arise.

³ Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for particular groups of people to report suspected cases of child harm and neglect to government authorities.

⁴ Tertiary child protection services are those provided by the statutory child protection agency.

Queensland's performance in achieving state and national child protection goals

Section 40 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* requires the QFCC to include the following information in its annual report:

- Queensland's performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system [(s40)(1)(a)(i)]
- Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions [(s40)(1)(a)(ii)]
- Queensland's progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system [(s40)(1)(a)(iii)].

Appendix D of this report provides an overview of Queensland's performance in relation to these three areas. We have used a range of national data sources to measure the performance of the child protection system. All data featured was the most current available as at 30 June 2018.

Evaluation

The QFCC has legislative responsibility for analysing and evaluating, at a systems level, the:

- policies and practices relevant to the child protection system
- performance of relevant agencies in delivering services.

We have lead responsibility for evaluating the child protection reform program at three distinct milestones of the 10-year reform program (that is being implemented in response to the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report).

At these milestones we assess implementation, outcomes and impacts. We also assist relevant agencies to evaluate how well their programs are working.

The QFCC seeks regular updates from departments with child protection responsibilities about their planned evaluation activities. We support them in this task by facilitating a Family and Child Evaluation Community of Practice (which has met regularly since 2014) and by publishing evaluation resources.

Reform program implementation evaluation

The QFCC is currently conducting an implementation evaluation of the Queensland Child Protection Reform Program. This will identify factors facilitating or impeding implementation and early indicators of progress towards outcomes of the reform program.

This evaluation has used various methods of collecting the perspectives of a range of stakeholders, including:

- a survey of a representative sample of 1703 community members to gauge community confidence and trust in the child protection system (August–December 2017)
- semi-structured interviews with 81 reform stakeholders, including Reform Leaders Group members, reform implementers and regional governance groups (September 2017–March 2018)
- a series of place-based studies in five locations (Thursday Island, Rockhampton, Roma, Redlands/Wynnum and Mount Isa/Cloncurry) involving a sample size of 202 participants to improve understanding of the local context, services available in the location and the factors influencing implementation of the reform program (October 2017–March 2018)
- a desktop review of agencies' routine evaluation and monitoring data and documents relating to the reform program (January–March 2018)
- a survey of 366 frontline workers to gather data about important aspects of the reform program such as service accessibility, workforce, information sharing and community confidence (January–February 2018).

Data analysis and synthesis is underway, with a final report expected in late 2018. The QFCC will also produce accessible summaries of the evaluation, such as summary reports, infographics and short videos/animations. This is to ensure the findings are available to stakeholders and the community.

Learnings from the implementation evaluation will inform our approach for conducting an outcomes evaluation and our ongoing evaluation agenda.

We are committed to culturally appropriate evaluative practice. Representatives from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak were members of our Evaluation Reference Group. The group supported us in developing the evaluation framework and the *Implementation Evaluation Plan*, and in identifying relevant stakeholders with whom to consult.

Before beginning the place-based studies, QFCC staff participated in cultural inductions with local elders or respected community members.

Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the evaluation was strong, with:

- 9.0% of community survey respondents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 13.6% of organisations whose staff participated in semi-structured interviews being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations⁵
- 34.5% of organisations whose staff participated in the place-based studies being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations
- 11.1% of frontline survey respondents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Evaluation capacity building

As part of its evaluation capacity building role, the QFCC developed the following evaluation resources in 2017–18:

- **Participatory evaluation approaches** fact sheet—to assist those planning to conduct a participatory evaluation on a program or an intervention
- **Theory of change** fact sheet—to outline six suggested steps for developing a theory of change to inform evaluation activities
- **Survey design and implementation** fact sheet—to highlight important steps involved in designing and administering surveys
- **Engaging children and young people in research and evaluation** fact sheet—to assist staff who are planning to engage children and young people as participants in research and evaluation, or as co-designers
- **Australasian Evaluation Society International Evaluation Conference 2017** notes taken by attendees of the conference—to highlight the main messages for the benefit of those unable to attend. The theme of the conference was ‘Evaluation Capital’, referring to two important ideas in evaluation: that evaluation is a durable asset for sound governance; and that evaluation practitioners and commissioners must be sensitive to the political context
- **International Conference for Realist Research, Evaluation and Synthesis 2017** notes taken by attendees of the conference—The theme of the conference was ‘From Promise to Practice’, and it reflected on whether realist evaluation practice had delivered on its promise to provide useful information for policy makers and program managers. Again, this resource was intended for the benefit of those unable to attend the conference.

The QFCC also supports evaluation across the sector by assisting agencies with scoping and commissioning their evaluations. We also deliver evaluation workshops on request.

⁵ Community Controlled Organisations are not-for-profit organisations based in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities. They are governed by boards elected by members of the local community, and they deliver services that build strength and empowerment.

The year ahead

In 2018–19, as part of our oversight objective, we will:

- continue to work with partners to develop a systemic monitoring framework for the child protection and family support system
- complete a review of the commencement timeframes for 5 and 10 day notification investigations and assessments
- finalise the follow-up health check review
- finalise the implementation evaluation of the child protection reform program, and commence planning for the outcomes evaluation
- continue to support relevant stakeholders in building their evaluation capacity through workshops, mentoring and advice, convening the Queensland Family and Child Evaluation Community of Practice, and producing or promoting evaluation resources
- present at the Australasian Evaluation Society Conference in Launceston, Tasmania in September 2018.



Objective

Work closely with all Queenslanders to build safe, caring and connected communities that are well supported by quality frontline child protection and family support services.

Partnering for success

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) believes everyone is responsible for helping Queensland children thrive and reach their full potential.

In improving outcomes for children and families we need to:

- know what works well (and not so well)
- recognise the challenges faced by children, families, communities and organisations
- work collaboratively to influence change.

To help achieve these aspirations, deliver meaningful system-wide change, and foster stronger community connections, the QFCC develops and maintains partnerships with a broad range of peak bodies, industry partners, communities, advisory groups, academics, and government and non-government organisations.

The QFCC partnering mechanisms for 2017–18 included:

- seeking guidance, insight and cooperation from the:
 - o Advisory Council
 - o Community Partnerships Group
 - o Youth Advisory Council
 - o Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group
- implementing the First Australians Transitions project
- facilitating implementation of the *Strengthening our Sector* strategy action plans.

These are all explained in the following pages.

Advisory Council

Under Part 4 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the principal commissioner may establish one or more advisory councils to advise on matters relating to the QFCC's functions.

In November 2015, the Queensland Family and Child Commission established an Advisory Council to:

- help promote the shared responsibility all Queenslanders have in keeping children safe
- provide insight into the issues affecting children, families and the sector
- provide guidance on the work of the QFCC.

During 2017–18, an independent review of the functioning and effectiveness of the Advisory Council was undertaken. The review identified a number of enhancements to the operating model.

The Advisory Council met three times in 2017–18. The membership is currently made up of:

Cheryl Vardon	Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner, QFCC (Chair)
Phillip Brooks	Commissioner, QFCC
Kay Ganley	(former) Chief Executive Officer, Charlton Brown
Detective Chief Superintendent Cameron Harsley APM	Executive Director, Operations Support, Crime and Corruption Commission
Anne Hollonds	Director, Australian Institute of Family Studies
Hetty Johnston AM	Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Bravehearts
Zoe Rathus AO	Senior Lecturer in Law, Griffith Law School
Professor Cindy Shannon	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Education), University of Queensland
Dr James Scott	Associate Professor, Conjoint Associate Professor, School of Medicine Central—Psychiatry—Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
Heather Watson	Director, McCullough Robertson

Community Partnerships Group

The Community Partnerships Group was established in November 2015 with peak body organisations to help the QFCC with its objective of improving the child protection system. It provides relevant diverse and independent views, advice and support to the principal commissioner and commissioner. The Community Partnerships Group has a particular focus on supporting a strong, collaborative and capable service sector, with three main areas of importance to the group:

- capability (leadership, culture and capacity building)
- advocacy (change initiatives)
- independence and interdependence (network based influence).

A review of the Community Partnerships Group was undertaken during the year. One outcome was the expansion of membership to include the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and CREATE Foundation⁶ representation. The Community Partnerships Group met three times in 2017–18. Its membership is currently made up of:

Cheryl Vardon	Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner, QFCC
Phillip Brooks	Commissioner, QFCC (Chair)
Belinda Drew	Chief Executive Officer, Community Services Industry Alliance
Mark Henley	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Council of Social Services
Natalie Lewis	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
Lindsay Wegener	Chief Executive Officer, PeakCare
Craig Hodges	Chief Executive Officer, Health and Community Services Workforce Council
Neil Wilmet	Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
Linda Allen	Acting State Coordinator, CREATE Foundation

⁶ The CREATE Foundation is the national peak consumer body supporting young consultants with out-of-home care experience in advocating for children and young people in care and transitioning from care.

Youth Advisory Council

In 2017–18, the QFCC established a Youth Advisory Council (the Council) to champion the voices of children and young people and to provide youth perspectives and leadership to the QFCC. The Council provides advice to the commissioners on what is important to children and young people in Queensland.

It is made up of 10 young people aged between 14 and 25. Members, known as ‘Youth Champions’, have diverse backgrounds and represent regional and metropolitan areas.

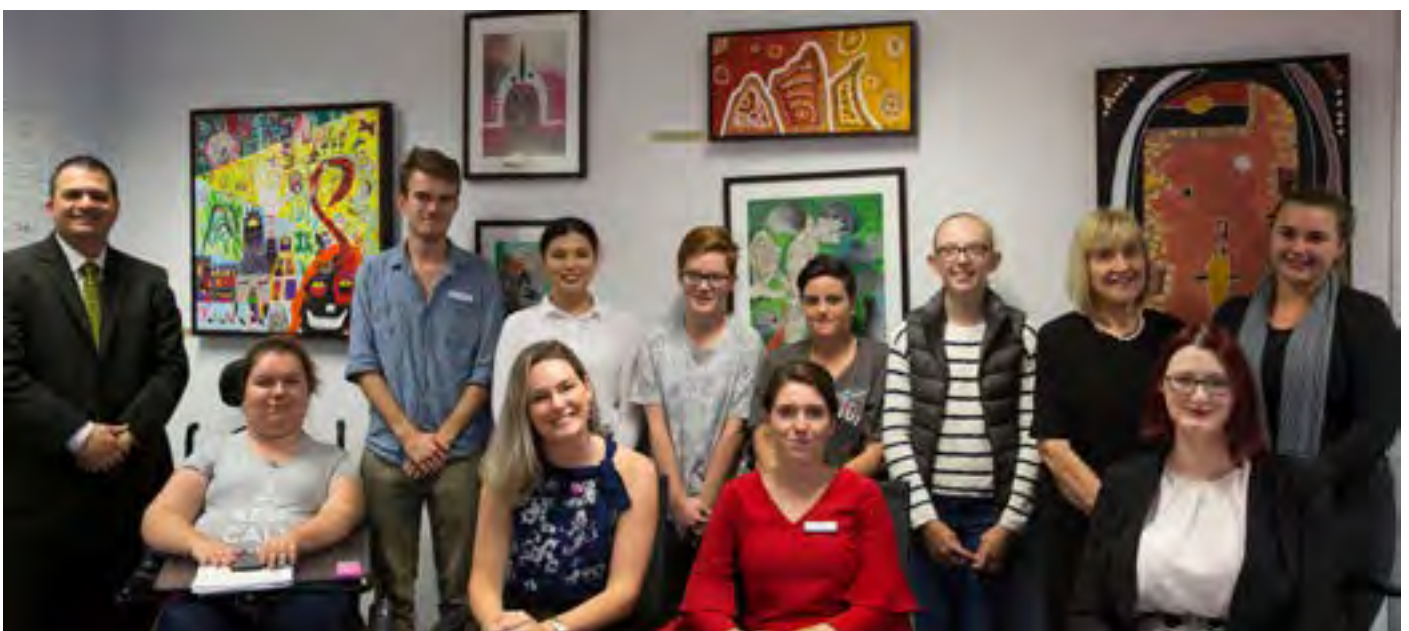
The Council has been an example of true youth participation from the beginning. The QFCC worked with a core group of Youth Champions to design the group and identify membership. The Council meets regularly to talk about issues affecting young people. It works with other young people to identify the main issues, then designs and implements a response to address these issues.

The Youth Champions have already supported the QFCC in giving Queensland children and young people a voice through our *Growing up in Queensland* initiative (which allows children to have their say on what matters most to them. The insights from this research will be presented to policy and decision-makers at the end of 2018.) The Council has also provided advice on the prevalence and impacts of online bullying as well as strategies to reduce it.

The Council met once in 2017–18. Its membership is currently made up of:

Chantel	Chantel is currently studying for a Bachelor of Education at Griffith University. She also works part time as a receptionist at Redland Legal. For the past two years, she has been the member of the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament for Redlands.
Caroline	Caroline is currently studying for a Bachelor of Psychological Science and Criminology. She is a strong advocate for children and young people living in out-of-home care as a result of her own journey in the care system for the majority of her life.
Charlotte	Charlotte works at YMCA Brisbane and is also the current program coordinator of the Queensland Youth Parliament. She was the youth member for Kallangur and the justice and legal affairs mentor on the Youth Parliament executive before becoming coordinator.
Taz	Taz is a Kalkadoon and Bwngcolman Brotherboy. He is passionate about his culture and wants to educate and encourage current and future generations in all walks of life. Taz has lived experience in out-of-home care.
Elloise	Elloise is currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Social Science, and has previously studied nursing. She is a young mum and is passionate about the participation of young people on a systemic level, as well as about making sure all young people have their voices heard.

Annika	Annika is a proud Torres Strait Islander who brings her cultural authority and leadership to give a voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people through her personal and professional networks. She is a research assistant at Griffith University working on the Farming 4 Care project, part of an Australian Research Council (ARC) linkage project.
Rosie	Rosie has held the role of junior ambassador for Children’s Week of Queensland for the past four years. Rosie is very passionate about the rights of young people, especially those children whose voices aren’t always heard.
Tom	Tom is studying politics and works for a domestic violence prevention program, R4Respect. In this role, he creates social media content for young people containing messages about warning signs, controlling attitudes and how to form non-violent, respectful relationships. Tom promotes recognition and understanding of the incredibly complex and difficult lives young people lead.
Levi	Levi currently attends the Ted Noffs Street University. He is passionate about helping people, in particular those people from the LGBTIQ+ community. It is important to Levi to support youth and raise awareness of the issues faced by LGBTIQ+ people.
Zoe	Zoe is passionate about music, poetry and helping people. She currently attends the Ted Noffs Street University and has work experience in the childcare industry. Zoe has been a youth leader with Teenlink Girls Camps, which has heightened her interest in supporting young people.



Youth Advisory Council inaugural meeting with speaker, Kathryn Lyons. Not in picture: Taz.

Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group

In 2018, the QFCC repositioned and expanded the membership of the previous Child Protection External Oversight Agencies Group to establish the Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group (the Group). The Group addresses sector-wide trends and issues. It brings together senior executives from lead agencies that have a role in overseeing trends and issues within the child and family support system.

Group membership consists of representatives from the:

- QFCC
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Queensland Ombudsman
- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Office of the Health Ombudsman
- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Director of Child Protection Litigation
- Coroners Court of Queensland.

Meetings are chaired by the QFCC and hosted on a quarterly basis.

First Australians Transitions Project

The QFCC's First Australians Transitions Project celebrates the successes and achievements of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are going through a period of transition in their lives. It also provides support to them.

During the year, the QFCC showcased the achievements of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through social media.

The QFCC partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) to deliver the Young, Black and Proud Scholarships program as part of our ongoing commitment to improving the lives of young people in Queensland. The program supports and celebrates the talents and strengths of young Indigenous people who exhibit outstanding promise, but who may lack the support and resources to fulfil their potential. In partnership with the QFCC, the program built on an existing ATSICHS initiative and was expanded to become a state-wide program.

Forty-four scholarships were awarded across three areas: education and training (primary, secondary and tertiary); the arts; and sports. We are promoting the stories of scholarship winners through social media to further highlight and bring awareness to these determined young people. Their stories of commitment and hard work position them as great role models for all Queenslanders.

The project supports the QFCC's engagement with First Australians, our response to the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care, and our contribution to the national Closing the Gap commitment.

Strengthening the child and family support sector

Every day, child and family support services strive to protect children and young people and keep them more than safe. To deliver the best possible services and results, and to improve the capability of its workforce, all of the relevant agencies need to work and plan collaboratively.

The QFCC is responsible, under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, for developing and reviewing workforce planning and development strategies.

We do this through our *Strengthening our Sector* strategy, which addresses the capacity building, governance, workforce planning and cultural change recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry's 2013 report.

We are now implementing the strategy's *Second action plan 2017–19*. This plan builds on the achievements and learnings of the *First action plan 2016–2017* and focuses on three outcome areas:

- strengthening the workforce—enhancing the ability of our sector workforce to meet the needs of children and families
- strengthening organisations—enhancing organisational capabilities and strengthening sector relationships
- strengthening the professional culture—building a proactive and positive culture in the way we work to support children and families.

We focus on the strengths of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities in all three outcome areas.

The plan also reflects the QFCC's responsibilities under important reform agendas such as the Queensland Government's:

- *Our Way generational strategy 2017–37* and the first Changing Tracks action plan
- *Partnering for the future: advancing Queensland's community services industry 2017–25*.

Outcome area 1—Strengthening the workforce

The child and family services sector is only as strong as its people. The staff need to have the right skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes in order to provide the best service to vulnerable children and their families.

Career promotion strategy

The QFCC has partnered with Gilimbaa (a creative agency specialising in communication) to begin developing a campaign to encourage people with a passion for helping others to consider a career in the child and family sector. The campaign will encourage people to ‘work where your story makes a difference’ and showcase the various career pathways and opportunities. The campaign, to be rolled out in 2018–19, is aimed at Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those with a lived experience of out-of-home care.

Minimum qualifications

In May 2017, the then Queensland Government committed to introducing minimum qualifications for residential care workers. The QFCC partnered with PeakCare and the then Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to support the implementation of minimum qualifications for the residential care workforce. An information paper on the types of Certificate IV qualifications approved and subsidised to be delivered in Queensland was produced. This was to make sure there is a consistent quality of care for those vulnerable children and young people living out of home.

Career and capability framework

During 2017–18, the QFCC continued to develop an industry-owned and shared *Career and capability framework*. It is a free and open resource for the child and family services sector, and it will support standardised and effective workforce planning, development and people management.

For the first time, the sector will have a framework that will provide a guide to the skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes employees need at all levels of their career journey. It will help to:

- identify workforce gaps
- guide recruitment, training and career development
- monitor and measure performance.

We also produced an interim user guide and held further consultations with the sector to prioritise the implementation approach, resources and tools needed to support sector uptake of the framework.

Cultural capability

Honouring, valuing and promoting the unique contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is critical to the well-being of children and families of these cultures. Doing this will position the sector to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and leaders to provide the services and supports that will deliver the desired outcomes.

In 2017–18, the QFCC partnered with the Health and Community Services Workforce Council on *Walking together: Workforce Planning for Cultural Impact*. This initiative supported the development of a cultural capability program for child and family stakeholders. This was to improve shared cultural understanding and ensure services are delivered in a culturally respectful and appropriate manner.

Outcome area 2—Strengthening our organisations

The QFCC is assisting the sector to be well-positioned to meet the needs of Queensland’s children and families and respond to changing environments, demands and reform.

Supporting successful community controlled organisations⁷

The QFCC and the child and family sector are working to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. We are also focused on improving the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. To these ends, we want to make sure there are strong, sustainable Community Controlled Organisations (CCOs), because they have a major role to play in this.

In 2017–18, the QFCC partnered with the Public Service Commission to consult with CCOs, government agencies, and regulatory and peak body stakeholders on barriers to (and opportunities for) achieving a sustainable child and family support system.

We presented our findings from our interactions with CCOs in Central Queensland to government and peak bodies in March 2018. Our teams are now expanding the process to include CCOs in urban, discrete and remote locations.

Capacity building investment analysis

The QFCC is committed to the long-term objectives laid out in the Queensland Government’s Our Way generational strategy 2017–2037 and is the leader for one of the actions in the Changing Tracks action plan, which is:

- to analyse current investment in sector capacity and workforce capability to help inform future investment to build the child and family sector (action 6.6).

In partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council, and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women, the QFCC has begun designing this project. The results will be available in 2018–19.

Industry development agenda

In 2017, the QFCC partnered with the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) to develop an industry maturity scorecard. This was to help organisations measure their business maturity in areas such as funding and financing, research and innovation, workforce, service integration, and governance.

In an ongoing partnership, we also developed a framework for excellence on child safe organisations. We conducted extensive engagement with the family and child sector, which led to publishing the *Laying Foundations for Industry Excellence* report.

⁷ Community Controlled Organisations are not-for-profit organisations based in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities. They are governed by boards elected by members of the local community, and they deliver services that build strength and empowerment.

Outcome area 3—Strengthening our professional culture

The QFCC is focused on building a positive and professional culture, where services work together to support Queensland children and families.

More than safe

More than safe is a commitment to making sure children, families and communities are cared for, protected, safe, and able to reach their full potential. The QFCC is promoting the role of the sector as a system for protecting children so that they are more than safe.

Place-based projects

Research shows the most effective way of solving complex social problems is by helping local communities to identify and lead their own solutions. The QFCC has partnered with the Queensland Council of Social Services to learn from and model community-led approaches across the sector.

Resources for professionals

The QFCC has begun a review of our *Information kit on child protection for professionals*. This is to make sure that information available to providers aligns with contemporary legislation, policy and practice and is culturally appropriate.

Leadership forums

The QFCC is delivering leadership forums that provide opportunities to share learnings and capitalise on achievements. We hosted an important leadership forum in 2017–18 with the CSIA to share findings of the *Laying Foundations for Industry Excellence* project. It involved stakeholders in the design and implementation of the business maturity scorecard and excellence framework for child safe organisations. Over sixty sector stakeholders attended, and approximately twenty participants indicated their interest in being allies in implementing the framework.



Connecting with children and young people

Under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the QFCC is responsible for engaging with, and taking account of, the views of children, young people and their families.

We recognise that children and young people should be involved in decisions affecting their lives. Research shows that this creates better outcomes for them and the community.

Our main mechanisms for this during 2017–18 included the:

- development of a *Youth Participation Strategy and Plan*
- *Growing Up in Queensland* initiative
- *Hear Me, See Me* art exhibition
- direct engagement through visits to schools and communities and collecting stories from children and young people.

Engaging with children and young people

Involving children and young people in our projects and work helps us to deliver real change for them and enables them to have a role in decisions that affect their lives.

The QFCC *Youth Participation Strategy* highlights opportunities for children and young people to be heard and to influence our work. The strategy was developed in consultation with Queensland young people and QFCC Youth Champions (members of our Youth Advisory Council).

Each year, in collaboration with young people, the QFCC develops a *Youth Participation Plan* to make sure we understand how to promote youth participation in our work. The aim of this plan is to improve the meaningful and genuine participation of children and young people in our everyday activities. It guides our executive leaders, managers and staff in seeking the views of children and young people across Queensland when working on projects.

Relevant activities in 2017–18 included:

- establishing a Youth Advisory Council to identify young people's perspectives and lived experiences. This is to inform the QFCC's work and provide advice to government
- actively involving children and young people in a number of QFCC projects, including formally, through the *Growing Up in Queensland* project and the *Join the Dots* redesign project, and informally, as part of a research forum on reducing youth suicide
- a number of projects or policy positions reflecting the voices of children and young people, including a youth detention options paper, the *Youth Participation Strategy*, the *Growing up in Queensland* project, the *Join the Dots* reporting tool and the joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police call-outs to residential care services
- promoting and celebrating the voices of young people through the *Hear Me, See Me* art exhibition
- building and sustaining relationships with youth-led groups including GForce, Ted Noffs, Headspace, R4Respect and the Queensland Youth Parliament.



QFCC Youth Participation Plan

Children and young people are heard and have the opportunity to influence change

The QFCC will engage with children and young people across Queensland, including First Australians, young people from refugee and culturally diverse backgrounds and young people with a disability. The QFCC promotes youth participation in areas, including child protection, youth justice, mental health, online safety and transition from care.

Objectives



Connect

Children and young people are valued and supported to connect and raise issues impacting on their safety and wellbeing



Respect

Children and young people are actively involved in the processes and decisions affecting them. Their views are represented in our work



Celebrate

Children's and young people's strengths, diversity, opinions and potential are promoted, valued and celebrated

Collective
Mutually beneficial
Empowered

Principles

Responsive
Equitable
Ethical

Actions

- Engage with groups and activities led by young people
- QFCC commissioners engage with young people to promote and advocate on key focus areas through multiple engagement channels such as schools, communities and advocacy agencies
- Capture the voices of children and young people across Queensland through multiple activities

- Establish and work with the QFCC Youth Champions to provide young people's perspectives in QFCC projects
- Involve children and young people in developing resources or projects to keep them safe and well
- Practise flexible engagement for children and young people's voices to be heard and responded to
- Utilise ethical processes in research projects involving children and young people

- Promote children's and young people's voices through storytelling, art, projects and social media
- Promote the participation and involvement of children and young people in activities or events through genuine partnership opportunities
- Promote the achievements and strengths of vulnerable children and young people, including First Australian youth
- Value and promote diversity through inclusive messaging and social media

Measures

- Number of engagements with youth-led groups
- Number of schools, communities and agencies visited by the QFCC commissioners to promote and advocate key areas
- Number of activities that capture the voices of children and young people
- Number of partnerships with young people that lead to a youth directed outcome

- Number of projects influenced by the Youth Champions
- Number of young people leading or participating in projects
- Number of First Australian young people leading or participating in projects
- Number of young people leading or participating in policy submissions
- Number of First Australian young people leading or participating in policy submissions
- Number of different ways the QFCC engages with young people
- Number of research projects that include an ethical decision-making process

- Number of activities promoting children's and young people's voices including social media content, online posts, storytelling and artwork
- Number of young people supported to participating in events or activities
- Number of projects and policy submissions that incorporate the views of children and young people captured through the QFCC's activities
- Number of young people engaged to specifically represent the views of diverse and minority groups
- Number of First Australian young people engaged

Children and young people work with the QFCC to influence change

Growing up in Queensland

The QFCC supports Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which refers to the right of all children and young people to have their voice heard in matters that affect them.

The QFCC's *Growing Up in Queensland* project is gathering and documenting the concerns, aspirations and ideas of children and young people. It is also revealing what they think government, industry and decision-makers should do to build a strong society for future generations.

The project was developed and delivered in collaboration with the QFCC's Youth Advisory Council. It was initiated to broadly include youth voices in influencing policy, programs and initiatives across sectors—to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The QFCC is gathering evidence on three lines of inquiry:

- how children and young people experience life in their community
- their career aspirations and the supports and barriers that may affect their achievements
- their major concerns and what they think decision-makers should focus on.

The final report will provide insights for employers, business, government and service providers. This should help them in designing new initiatives, reviewing current practices and thinking ahead for future generations.

The project is unique in that it empowers a broad range of Queensland children and young people aged 4 to 18 years of age to participate in genuine conversations, to meaningfully and honestly reflect on their own experiences, and to personally express their concerns. The initiative will also generate new evidence about the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children in Queensland.

To date, the project has gathered the views, stories, needs and opinions of more than 5,000 Queensland children and young people.

Children and young people are contributing through:

- focus groups—being held with over 1000 young people aged 7 to 18 years from more than 40 locations across Queensland—as far north as the Torres Strait islands and as far west as Mt Isa
- an online survey for 13 to 18-year-olds
- responses to questions placed in libraries across the state
- multi-media responses from youth citizen journalists 7 to 18 years of age
- expressions through artwork for 4 to 6-year-olds.

The online survey included questions on bullying and online-bullying, with findings to be used to help inform the Queensland Government's Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce.



Campaign artwork for the *Growing up in Queensland* project.

Hear Me, See Me art exhibition

The QFCC invited children and young people between 5 and 18 years of age to create and submit artworks to share their vision and voice and celebrate the world they want to live in. They were asked to show, using any artistic medium, what the words ‘safety’, ‘love’, ‘joy’, ‘hope’, ‘trust’ and ‘family’ meant to them.

The inaugural *Hear Me, See Me* art exhibition of children’s perspectives and voices attracted more than 300 entries from across Queensland. The artworks were showcased in exhibitions in Brisbane during Child Protection Week in September 2017 and regionally during Children’s Week in October 2017.

More than 200 people attended the event. They included young artists, their families, art enthusiasts, and government, industry and community leaders. The artworks were later displayed in the foyers of several Queensland Government buildings.

The year ahead

In 2018–19, as part of our enable objective, we will:

- award the QFCC-sponsored Young, Black and Proud Scholarships
- continue to implement the second *Strengthening our Sector* action plan by coordinating streams of activity with sector partners, networks of professionals and service providers including:
 - o implementing the child and family support sector’s career promotion strategy (targeted at Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples)
 - o introducing implementation guides and tools to support organisational use and uptake of the *Career and capability framework*, with emphasis on recruitment
 - o using insights from the community controlled sector
 - o partnering with the child and family support sector to progress the industry development agenda
 - o supporting place-based responses to strengthen capability, capacity and culture across the sector
- report on the findings of the *Growing up in Queensland* initiative
- continue supporting youth-led initiatives, such as G-Force and Youth Advisory Council-led projects
- continue the *Families are First* initiative
- work with schools, communities and agencies to strengthen the child protection and family support system
- review the *2017–18 Youth Participation Plan* actions and, in collaboration with young people, develop the 2018–19 plan, to improve and promote youth participation in QFCC work activities.



Objective

Promote and advocate for the safety, well-being and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland, and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them.

Community Education

The education initiatives of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) are designed to encourage people to seek help. We do this by promoting awareness of early intervention support services and by educating the public about the child protection system.

In 2017–18, we provided a suite of community education campaigns addressing:

- help-seeking (seeking and accepting help). This focused on parents of children up to four years old and on bystanders (*Talking Families* campaign)
- awareness of, and access to, family support services by sector professionals and the community (through the *oneplace* Community Service Directory, a website that provides a single point of access to 48,000 services across Queensland)
- children’s online safety (*Out of the Dark* campaign)
- preventable child death (*Seconds Count* campaign)
- professionals’ awareness of the child protection and family support system reforms (*Travelling the Reform Roadmap* campaign).

Our ongoing work in community education and engagement campaigns align with the government’s commitment to keeping children more than safe.

Talking Families

Talking Families is a community education initiative designed by the QFCC to support parents, carers and families through challenging times. This is so they can find the right information at the right time to reduce the pressures on families. *Talking Families* also aims to demystify the child and family support sector.

In June 2017–18, following market testing with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families, the QFCC launched the third phase of *Talking Families*. The campaign continues to focus on the behaviour of:

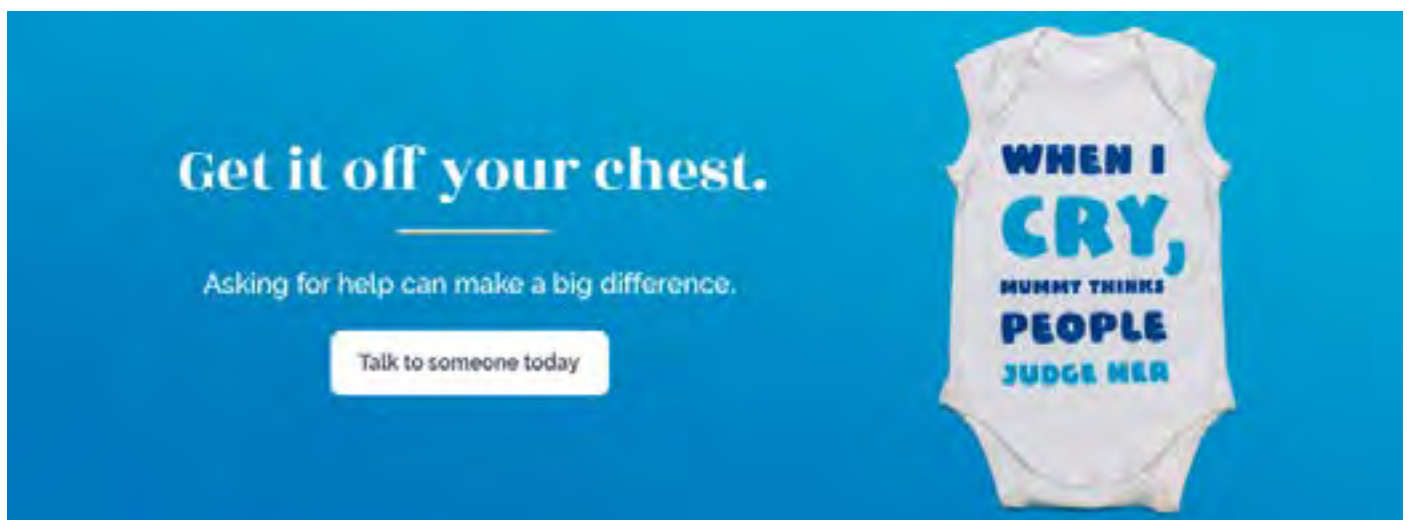
- parents, when it comes to seeking and accepting help
- families, social networks and the broader community, in offering help.

The ‘infant onesie’ campaign’s main message—that it is okay to ask for help—targeted geographical areas where there is a higher proportion of vulnerable parents who are less likely to seek help. An important objective of this campaign was to normalise parent help-seeking behaviour, and to encourage parents to seek support as early as possible.

The campaign strategy was primarily digital (social media advertising), with some outdoor advertising. An updated *Talking Families* website was rolled out as part of this phase, along with Facebook social media. We also produced articles for publication in social media, e-newsletters and network emails.

The *Talking Families* website, together with the *Talking Families* Facebook community, gives parents, carers and families tips on who to talk to and how to start conversations. It also provides real stories from parents, blog articles and information about where else to go for help.

In 2017–18, the ongoing *Talking Families* program of work had a social media reach of nearly 6.4 million through its Facebook page, and reached 30,033 users through its website.



Campaign artwork for *Talking Families*—‘infant onesie’

oneplace Community Services Directory

The *oneplace* Community Services Directory website provides a single point of access to over 48,000 services across Queensland. It was designed to help children, families and professionals find the right service.

In 2017–18, *oneplace* attracted over 28,000 new users, with more than 40,000 sessions activated. New visitors accounted for over 85% of the visitors.

Enhancements to *oneplace* during the year included:

- refurbishing the website
- clearly identifying support services specific to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Out of the Dark

The QFCC established the *Out of the Dark* initiative in 2016. This followed the release of the *Byrne Report on the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry*, which found that the threat to children from online predators has been increasingly growing.

Out of the Dark contributes to an important outcome of the *2009–2020 National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* (which is endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments). The outcome is to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly when using the internet.

The *Out of the Dark* community education initiative continues to address this, with a focus on the following offending behaviours:

- grooming
- sextortion
- sexual slavery and/or trafficking
- sexual exploitation
- peer-to-peer sexting
- child exploitation material.

It aims to prevent online child exploitation by educating children, young families and professionals on how to minimise harm, seek support, and keep young people safe online.

In 2017–18, the QFCC was involved in a number of online safety related awareness, advocacy and education initiatives.

We supported the internationally celebrated Safer Internet Day on 6 February 2018 and led the Queensland response. The theme was: 'Create, connect and share respect: A safer internet starts with you'. To share the message with Queensland government employees, we, in conjunction with the Public Service Commission, developed and posted a short corporate video on our website. It promoted Safer Internet Day and what it means for children to stay safe online.

We were recognised for the *Out of the Dark* Expo (an event held in March 2017 to raise awareness of, the risks of online activities for children and young people), receiving the Child Protection Week media and communications award.



Sunshine Coast Talking Families school event.

It's all Relative

The *It's all Relative* educational resource was launched on Safer Internet Day to deliver online safety tips for parents and carers about the risk of internet-related child sexual abuse. This included a social media campaign on the *Talking Families* Facebook page and our Instagram page. In addition, we had 1000 posters and 8500 brochures printed and distributed to carers and parents through our partner agencies PeakCare, Foster Care Queensland, Bravehearts, and various other family support not-for-profit organisations.

We also answered a series of Safer Internet Day answers to questions posed by the community during the QFCC Safer Internet Day Q&A Facebook event on our website. These answers were provided by a panel of online experts from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, the Queensland Police Service, the Department of Education and the QFCC.

Join the Dots

In consultation with more than 100 young people, and in collaboration with Bravehearts and the Queensland Police Service, we facilitated the redevelopment of the Bravehearts' online confidential reporting tool—*Join the Dots*.

This tool allows the community to safely and informally report any instances of suspected online sexual abuse or to raise concerns about children's online safety. It is targeted primarily at children and young people aged 8–16 and focuses on preventing grooming and child exploitation.

As part of this initiative, the QFCC facilitated the production of an animation video to engage and introduce young people to the reporting tool and to promote it as a safe place to go if they feel uneasy about content or an online situation.

We commissioned the conduct of Queensland-wide, youth-centred, qualitative research to understand the environment and opinions around the *Out of the Dark* topic. This research will be used to develop a campaign brand and messages to educate children, families and professionals about how to recognise internet child sexual abuse, prevent any risk or harm, and respond to the risk if it occurs.

In 2017–18, we also continued to:

- develop, as part of the Out of the Dark Steering Committee, an engagement strategy for a community education awareness campaign. This was to promote online safety messages and educate communities of the risks of online activities for children and young people
- work with the youth-led Out of the Dark Working Group to identify and initiate the development of online safety educational resources to prevent harm and protect the online safety and well-being of young Queenslanders
- collaborate with government departments and local organisations to identify what still needs to be done to help keep young people safe online.

Seconds Count campaign

The QFCC uses information from the child death register to highlight risk factors and causes of death, and to promote prevention messages to the community.

The register shows drowning is the second leading external (non-natural) cause of child deaths. In response to this, we developed the *Seconds Count* water safety and child drowning prevention campaign. The campaign targeted pool owners and parents of children under five years of age. Mitch Larkin, Olympic Games swimmer and Commonwealth Games gold medallist, featured in short videos. These were promoted through social media channels during the summer and again over the 2018 Easter school holiday period.

We also conducted digital advertising on Facebook, where 112,000 Facebook users were exposed to the campaign advertisements. Of these, 4784 viewers clicked the link in the advertisement that took them to the campaign video and other content on children's water safety.

Travelling the Reform Roadmap

The QFCC launched an interactive *Travelling the Reform Roadmap* web page in mid-May to highlight the sector's reform journey since the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (in 2013).

This roadmap was promoted through social media channels, using animation and interviews with the main stakeholders in the child and family support sector. In addition to visitors to the web page, approximately 10,000 sector employees have viewed the video through a LinkedIn advertising campaign. This was the highest number of views the platform has seen since the introduction of its sponsored video posts.

Families are First

Under legislation, the QFCC is required to promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities in protecting and caring for children and young people.

In 2017–18, we started the *Families are First* initiative to establish a strong evidence base and test important concepts. This was in order to better understand family and community responsibility in Queensland. The initiative will provide new evidence about the experience of families. It will initially focus on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and community-led approaches to:

- raising children who thrive
- overcoming challenges
- building resilience as the primary mechanism of a system for protecting children.

To date, the *Families are First* initiative has heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and families across Queensland. This information, about their strengths, achievements, challenges and aspirations, will form the base for continued community engagement in 2018–19.

Resources

2017–18 and made them available on our website. These included:

- the *Information kit on child protection for professionals*—to help in effectively navigating the child protection system. This kit consists of a range of fact sheets. It provides professionals with the information they need to work together effectively and to promote the safety, well-being and best interests of children and young people
- the Protecting Children online information module—to strengthen child protection knowledge and embed a positive culture across organisations. This is to improve outcomes for children and their families
- research summaries on topics such as reunification and rates of homelessness among young people in Queensland
- monthly scans providing short summaries of recently released research that could inform policy and practice
- over 400 information resources and links to research papers, reports and data (in the QFCC's Knowledge and Resource Hub).

During the year, feedback from government and non-government agencies via an online survey on QFCC-produced resources was very favourable. Typical feedback responses included:

- 'Very easy to read'
- 'Great explanation in a simple form for all the complex processes in child protection'
- 'Clear, concise and easy to read'
- 'Brilliant resources. So comprehensible, and yet written in very plain, clear language'.

In 2017–18, as part of the QFCC's child death prevention function, we produced fact sheets using data from the child death register. These fact sheets are listed under 'Number and rate of deaths of young people', later in this chapter.

Research

The QFCC is responsible for developing and coordinating a multi-disciplinary research program to inform policy and practice in the child protection system. We translate research knowledge into easily-usable information for policy makers and practitioners—to assist them in helping vulnerable Queensland children and families.

Our research program includes:

- promoting our *Research Agenda 2016–19*
- conducting Research in the Round forums, at which researchers present their research findings and their implications for policy and practice to influential government and non-government stakeholders
- conducting Regional Research Roundtables, where smaller groups explore place-based solutions to issues inspired by the latest research
- producing and distributing monthly research scans
- providing research summaries, which focus on identifying the implications of research for policy and practice
- publishing a Knowledge and Resource Hub on our website, providing easy access to important research papers and reports.

These are expanded upon in the following pages.



Research in the Round forum, Townsville.
Across the table (left to right): Professor Kerry Arabena, Mrs Rachel Atkinson, Mrs Florence Onus, Dr Lynore Geia, Mrs Dorothy Savage, and Mr Chris Congoo.

Research Agenda 2016–19

The QFCC has developed a rolling three-year research schedule, to build an evidence base for improved child protection practices. The *Research Agenda 2016–19* was developed in consultation with service providers, government agencies and academics to:

- identify areas of research need in the child protection and family support areas
- target the QFCC’s strategies in improving research and its use, to deliver better outcomes for Queensland children and families.

The *Research Agenda 2016–19* is available on the QFCC website.

Research in the Round forums

The QFCC has a lead role in making useful research accessible to policy makers and child protection practitioners. As part of this, we host regular research forums known as Research in the Round. These are designed to present relevant research findings to an audience of high-level policy makers, practitioners, members of the judiciary and other stakeholders and community members who are in a position to effect or influence change.

We use facilitated panel discussions to explore the implications of current research evidence for policy development and child safety practices.

The two Research in the Round forums in 2017–18 covered the themes of:

- Reducing youth suicide. This forum, conducted in February 2018, attracted more than 170 attendees and involved presentations by three leading researchers. It included an interactive panel discussion that explored ways to reduce youth suicide and more effectively incorporate youth suicide prevention into government policy and practice. The results of client feedback from those who attended this forum showed that:
 - o 93.55% of respondents rated the forum as good or very good

- o 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the forum was informative and useful
- o 77.42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the forum provided a valuable opportunity to network with other professionals
- o 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would attend another Research in the Round event.
- Family well-being and loss of identity. This forum, held in Townsville in June 2018, presented current research relating to various aspects of family well-being and loss of identity. It created significant interest in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Townsville and surrounding areas. The results of client feedback from those who attended this forum showed that:
 - o 88.0% of respondents rated the forum as good or very good
 - o 89.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the forum was informative and useful
 - o 82.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the forum provided a valuable opportunity to network with other professionals
 - o 90.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would attend another Research in the Round event.

Documents from these events (including research summaries provided by some of the presenters) have been made available on the QFCC website.

Regional Research Roundtables

Our inaugural Regional Research Roundtable (aimed at smaller groups than the Research in the Round events) was held at the University of the Sunshine Coast in April 2018. It addressed the issue of preventing homelessness for young people leaving care.

This roundtable brought together 23 people, including academics and representatives from state and local government and non-government organisations. They shared the latest research and discussed place-based solutions that do not rely on additional funding but rather explore ways of operating more effectively.

A number of opportunities are being considered by some of the attendees at the roundtable to improve support provided to young people leaving care on the Sunshine Coast.

Research scans

The QFCC's monthly Family and Child Research Scan provides a selection of research papers designed to inform child protection policy and practice. These papers are made available on our website. In 2017–18, we produced 12 Family and Child Research Scans.

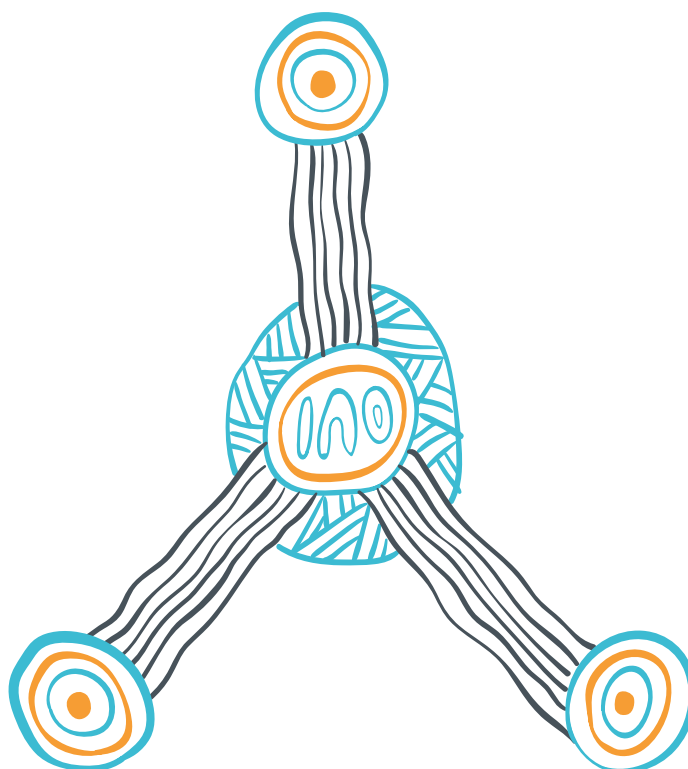
Research summaries

The QFCC provides short research summaries of contemporary findings. These are designed to make research more readily accessible to policy makers and practitioners. Importantly, the summaries identify the implications of the findings for policy and practice. In 2017–18, we produced 25 research summaries.

Online Knowledge and Resource Hub

The QFCC's online Knowledge and Resource Hub is a central, community-friendly collection for resources aimed at improving the quality of outcomes for children, young people and families. It currently includes resources developed by the QFCC, and links to research developed by other reputable sources.

The Knowledge and Resource Hub is publicly available on the QFCC website. In 2017–18 we uploaded 714 research summaries, monthly research scans and links to research papers and reports and data.



Child death prevention

The QFCC maintains the *Queensland Child Death Register*. We analyse information from the register and produce an annual report on the deaths of all children in Queensland.

This helps to improve understanding of risk factors and supports new policies and practices to reduce child deaths.

The register currently contains data for more than 6500 child deaths registered since 1 January 2004. It provides a valuable evidence base that is used to:

- develop safety and injury prevention activities
- monitor the effectiveness of prevention activities
- provide detailed child death data to researchers and government agencies.

The QFCC's *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland, 2016–17* was tabled in parliament on 12 April 2018.

Supporting child death prevention efforts

The QFCC's main strategy for child death and injury prevention is to make the data in the register available for research, public education, policy development and program design. Access to the comprehensive dataset is available at no cost to genuine researchers.⁸

In 2017–18, the QFCC responded to 27 requests for detailed data from the register, including:

- drowning data for the *Royal Life Saving National Drowning Report*
- fatal child injuries relating to mandatory toy standards banning small, high-powered magnets
- data on deaths from low-speed vehicle run-overs
- regional data on youth suicide
- drowning data by pool type to inform consideration of pool safety policies
- data on deaths of children whose usual residence was another Australian state or territory.

Initiatives to which the QFCC contributed information from the child death register include:

- two submissions with data on quad bike-related child deaths made to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission—for the review of national standards for quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles
- data on fatal assault and neglect cases provided to the Sentencing Advisory Council—forming the baseline dataset for the Council's review of imposed penalties for offences arising from the death of a child
- alerts of suspected suicide deaths provided to the Department of Education—to support suicide postvention⁹ in affected schools.

⁸ Genuine research is defined as research relating to childhood mortality or morbidity with a view to increasing knowledge of incidence, causes and risk factors. Genuine research includes policy and program initiatives to reduce child death or injury.

⁹ Postvention is support provided to people close to those who have suicided, as they may be at risk as a consequence.

Participation in state and national advisory groups

In 2017–18, the QFCC participated in the first ministerial water safety roundtable, which was chaired by the Honourable Grace Grace, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations. At the second roundtable, the principal commissioner presented QFCC research on child drowning risk and prevention approaches, and further outlined the QFCC's *Seconds Count* water safety campaign. Roundtable members distributed the QFCC's materials through their networks.

The QFCC's child death prevention staff participated in a number of advisory bodies including the:

- Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group, which aims to identify, address and decrease the number of deaths by sharing information on issues in review and reporting
- Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group, which provides an evidence base to support product safety policy decisions
- expert panel of the Queensland Health study—*A multi-incident analysis of suspected suicides*
- Queensland Advisory Group on Suicide Information and Data, which is an expert group on systemic issues, data and other relevant evidence
- Queensland Government Births and Deaths Working Group, which is a forum for discussing statistical and other issues about Queensland births and deaths
- Queensland implementation group for national initiatives to support education, health and social service professionals in fostering child and youth mental health
- Road Safety Research Network.

Activities to improve collection of child death information

The QFCC collaborated with the Queensland Paediatric Quality Council to improve data collection and processes relating to sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI). This work is being progressed through a working group being established by the Office of the State Coroner. As an outcome of the collaboration, from April 2018, all child death scene investigations will be led by a senior sergeant from the Queensland Police Service's Child Protection Investigation Unit.

We have allocated resources to moving historical child death data into the current database. This will allow for improved data quality and efficiencies in reporting on child deaths and responding to researcher requests.

We have also implemented a number of initiatives to inform research and prevention activities, particularly in relation to youth suicide. These include:

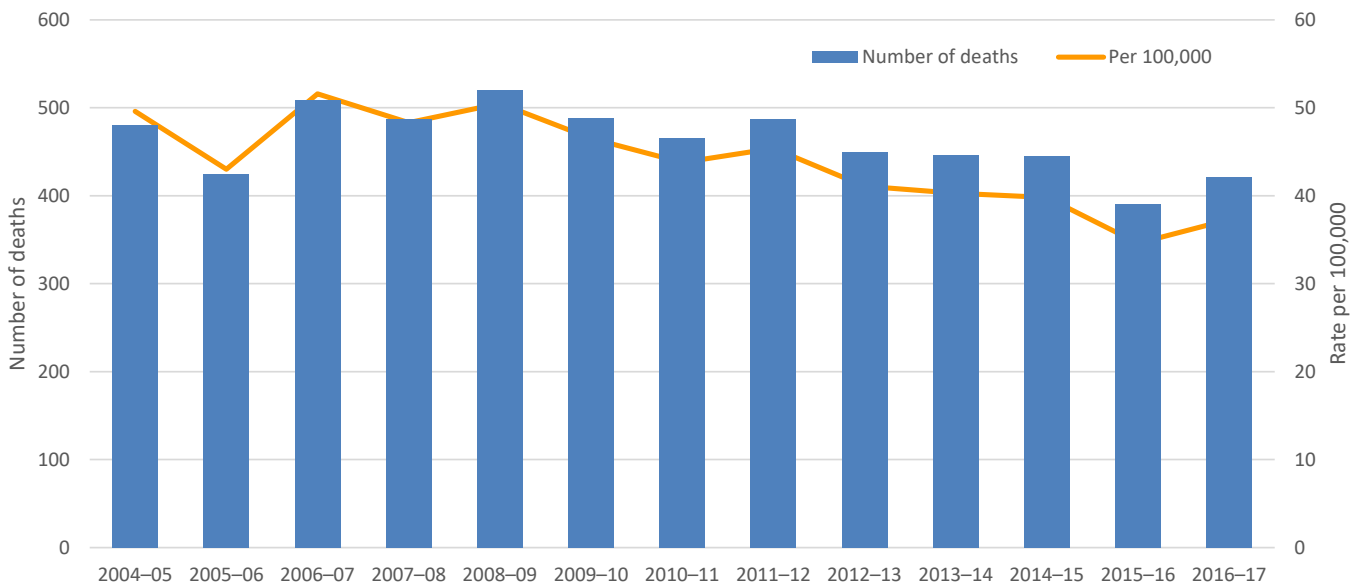
- advocating for the establishment of the working group mentioned above
- seeking additional information when a young person has recently received mental health services
- arranging to receive systems and practice review reports, chronologies and Child Death Case Review Panel reports from Child Safety.

Annual report on child deaths in Queensland

In April 2018, the QFCC published the Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland, 2016–17. This is the 13th annual report to be produced on child deaths in Queensland. The authorised electronic version of the annual report can be accessed on the Queensland Parliament website.

The following table shows the number and rate of child deaths in Queensland for each reporting period since 2004–05. Despite some year-to-year fluctuations, there has been a general reduction.

Number and rate of deaths of children and young people in Queensland



In summary, the 421 recorded Queensland child deaths in 2016–17 represent a 7.9% increase from a 13 year low in 2015–16 (390 deaths). The main findings include the following:

- 54.4% of the deaths registered in 2016–17 were male and 45.6% were female
- infant mortality in Queensland was 4.4 deaths per 1000 live births, up from 3.8 deaths per 1000 in 2015–16
- diseases and morbid conditions accounted for the majority of deaths (315 deaths or 75%)
- 17% of deaths were due to external (non-natural) causes—suicide, transport, drowning, fatal assault and neglect, or other, non-intentional injury
- suicide (21 deaths) replaced transport (14 deaths) as the leading external cause of death for the past three years. Nine of the 21 young people who died as a result of suicide were known to the child protection system in the 12 months prior to their death
- drowning deaths increased from nine to 19 to be the second leading external cause of death. This was the highest number since 2004. Eleven of the 19 children who drowned were aged 1–4 years (six drowned in swimming pools and five drowned in bathtubs). For all age cohorts, seven of the 19 children drowned in swimming pools, five in bathtubs, three in lakes/ponds and rural dams, two in objects containing water and one each at the beach and in a river or creek. Ten of the 19 children who drowned were known to the child protection system in the 12 months prior to their death
- five children are suspected or confirmed to have died from fatal assault or neglect in 2016–17, with four alleged to have been killed by a family member and one by a non-family member. Four of the five children who died due to fatal assault or neglect were known to the child protection system in the 12 months prior to their death
- in 2016–17, 57 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children died, an increase from 52 deaths in 2015–16. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous child mortality rates narrowed between 2007 and 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality, however, continues to be almost twice (1.9 times) the rate for non-Indigenous children. In terms of suicide, over the most recent three-year period, the suicide rate among Indigenous young people was three times the rate for non-Indigenous young people.

The QFCC published a number of fact sheets on the website relating to findings on:

- child deaths in Queensland (2016–17)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality (2016–17)
- youth suicide in Queensland
- recorded deaths of children known to the child protection system
- preventing the main causes of child deaths
- child drowning facts and figures
- water safety tips.

In 2017–18, the QFCC coordinated and published *Australian and New Zealand child death statistics 2015*, with the assistance of the other members of the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group.

Policy advice

The QFCC has a legislative function to provide leadership and give expert advice to relevant agencies about laws, policies, practices and services.

In doing so, we use evidence and networks to influence legislation and policy concerning the safety and well-being of Queensland children, young people and their families. We collect data and engage with various stakeholders, children and families to form positions and make recommendations.

We also make submissions to parliamentary committees, take part in hearings, give feedback to government agencies, and share information across the sector.

QFCC submissions

During the year, the QFCC provided submissions on a number of proposed Bills, including:

- *Working with Children Legislation (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2017*
- *Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2018*

- *Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2017* (discussion paper 1)
- *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003*
- *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and other Measures) Bill 2017* and the *Family Law Amendment (Parenting Management Hearings Bill 2017)*.

We also provided advice to inform inquiries and consultations, such as:

- representation at the Sentencing Advisory Council's expert panel discussion on sentencing for offences for child homicide and young offenders
- a submission to the Sentencing Advisory Council's Inquiry into penalties for criminal offences arising from the death of a child
- a submission to (and appearing before) Queensland's Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee's Inquiry into *Improving the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education relevant to the use of technology in Queensland state schools*
- a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on *The adequacy of existing offences in the Commonwealth Criminal Code and of state and territory criminal laws to capture cyber-bullying*
- representation on the Human Rights Commission's expert panel on violence against people with a disability
- representation on the Human Rights Commission's workshops and roundtables on the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- a submission to the Council of Australian Governments on refreshing the Closing the Gap agenda
- a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission on the review of the family law system
- a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on quad bike safety

- a submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission, outlining key QFCC activities, to inform reporting on Australia's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
- a submission to the National Children's Commissioner on the *Fourth Action Plan 2018–2020 of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–20*
- support to the Australian Human Rights Commission on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, by providing evidence through roundtables and submissions.

Twelve of the submissions included specific recommendations for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Advocacy for children and young people

The QFCC promotes and advocates for the safety and well-being of children and young people and for strengthening systems designed to protect them. We focus on hearing what children and young people say, and we use it to inform our advocacy work.

We have established ongoing relationships and joint initiatives with state-wide advocacy agencies including the CREATE Foundation, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, the Health and Community Services Workforce Council, the Queensland Council of Social Services, PeakCare and Bravehearts.

This is to make sure the voices of children and young people are heard, and also to identify and address the needs of their families.

Youth justice

The QFCC is responsible for promoting and advocating for the safety and well-being of children and young people in the youth justice system. Reducing young people's involvement in the youth justice system is a strategic area of our *Research Agenda 2016–19*.

We continue to advocate for children on youth justice issues, including the transition of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system, through representation on the Youth Justice Stakeholder Advisory Group.

We have been working to identify best practice approaches for youth detention oversight mechanisms.

In August 2017, in response to the findings of an independent review into Queensland's youth detention centres, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General asked the QFCC to deliver a paper identifying options for a new youth detention oversight model.

In March 2018, following an extensive review of existing models, we developed an options paper for an independent and child-focused youth detention oversight model for Queensland. This was *Options for youth detention oversight—A model for inspecting places of detention in Queensland*.

In developing this, we gathered information by consulting and by considering the outcomes of recent inquiries such as the *Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory*.

Out-of-home care

Police call-outs have been identified as the primary contributor to a young person's exposure to the criminal justice system. Following a request from GForce,¹⁰ (a CREATE Foundation working group), the QFCC led a cross-sector project of government, non-government and peak agencies to draft the *Joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police call-outs to residential care services*.

The purpose of the protocol is to improve responses to children living in residential care by addressing the issues that result in the unnecessary involvement of police. The project provided strategies to prevent police involvement where other responses are more appropriate. This includes promoting culturally responsive practice that recognises the impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of past government policies—including fear and distrust towards police and other people in authority.

Two workshops and a number of telephone interviews were held with young adults who had transitioned to independence after living in residential care, to seek their views and experiences on residential care and police call-outs.

The experiences of these young adults, represented through the *Young people's perspectives of residential care, including police call-outs* information paper, were used in developing the protocol and the *Criminalisation of children living in out-of-home care in Queensland* information paper.

The protocol was developed with a reference group¹¹ and a working group¹² and is scheduled to be released in late 2018.

¹⁰ GForce is a Queensland-based working group that represents all the major stakeholders in the out-of-home care sector.

¹¹ Reference group members are senior leaders from government and non-government agencies, peak bodies and advocacy groups for children living in residential care. They are responsible for strategic advice, direction and governance.

¹² Working group representatives include staff from residential care services and officer level government staff. They are focused on providing direction and feedback on challenges in residential care and on practical barriers to the implementation of the joint agency protocol.

The year ahead

In 2018–19, as part of our educate objective, we will:

- continue to advocate for children and young people by providing advice on laws, policies, systems and practice
- complete phase 3 of the *Talking Families* help-seeking campaign
- introduce the next phase of the *Out of the Dark* online safety awareness initiative
- continue to promote and advocate for a shared responsibility for improving the protection, safety and well-being of children and young people during their online interactions
- continue to develop resources to assist children and families to understand the child protection system and court processes
- continue promoting the *oneplace* directory as a help-seeking tool for Queensland families
- continue to promote practical prevention advice and messaging about child death and injury prevention
- continue to source and distribute research findings that increase community awareness of the prevalence and impact of online child abuse and exploitation
- conduct further research events, responding to sector priorities, with possible expansion of the forum to regional areas
- publish the *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, 2017–18*
- publish a new regional analysis of child mortality
- continue to respond to data requests, and support government and non-government agencies in developing responses intended to reduce the number of children and young people who die in Queensland each year.

Governance

Management and structure

Our executive

There were six permanent members of the Executive Group at 30 June 2018:

	<p>Cheryl has had a distinguished career as an educator and is recognised for her leadership in the protection of vulnerable children and young people. She has a sound track record of expertise in the translation of complex policies into strategies and outcomes.</p> <p>In 2016 and 2017, Cheryl led a series of reviews for the Queensland Government leading to practical reform measures to keep vulnerable children more than safe. She is an experienced reviewer of systems, using case studies and stories to influence policy and establish reforms.</p> <p>In previous roles, Cheryl has provided strategic analysis and advice on contested areas of public policy within highly regulated environments.</p> <p>Her breadth of experience has seen her conduct assignments and provide advice in policy development and strategy review, business development, leadership mentoring and community services.</p> <p>She has represented Australian governments, companies and organisations nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Her work in education and services for Indigenous children and young people received a Prime Minister’s Reconciliation Award.</p> <p>Cheryl has held many leadership, board and statutory roles, as a director-general, chief executive, commissioner and adjunct professor, in private, public and not-for-profit organisations. These have included education departments, children’s services departments, consumer affairs, a national charity, universities and tribunals.</p> <p>She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Managers and Leaders, a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators, a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member (Women for Media) of the Women’s Leadership Institute Australia.</p> <p>She was recently awarded an honorary doctorate (Doctor of the University) by Griffith University.</p> <p>Cheryl has held the role of Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) since October 2015.</p>
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Cheryl Vardon

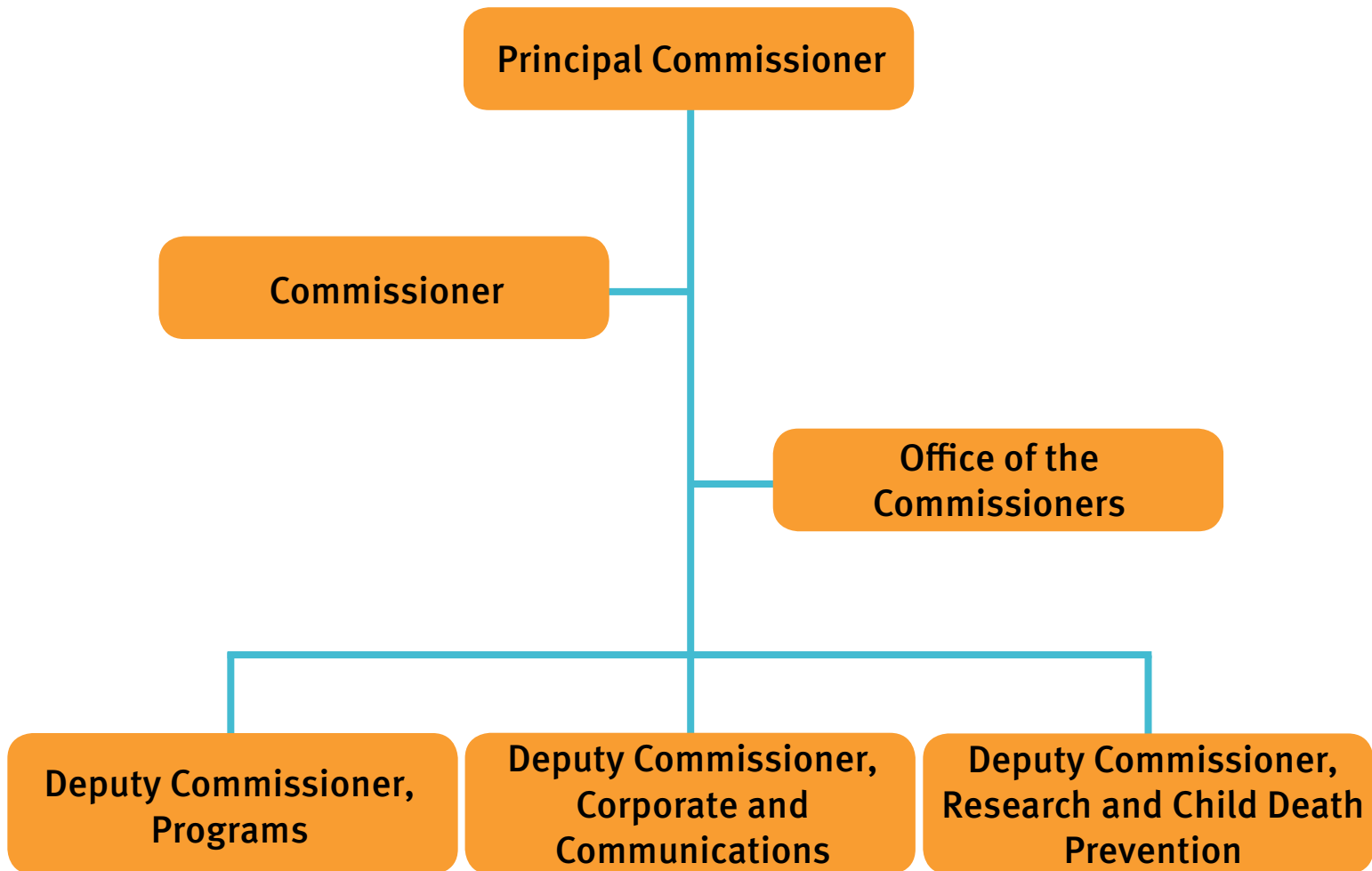
Chief Executive and
Principal Commissioner

Phillip Brooks Commissioner	<p>Phillip has had a career in the child, youth and family support portfolio in Queensland. He began working for the Queensland Government 18 years ago as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainee with the Queensland Police Service.</p> <p>Phillip is a descendant of the Bidjara Tribe (great grandfather), the Kairi Tribe (great grandmother), and the Ducabrook Clan, located at Springsure, Central Queensland.</p> <p>He is deeply invested in acting in ways that support and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to exercise their responsibilities and to heal, grow and prosper.</p> <p>As Commissioner, Phillip is responsible for the Sector Development and Community Education programs. He joined the QFCC in October 2017.</p>
Cheryl Leavy Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Death Prevention	<p>Cheryl has worked with the private sector and across state and federal governments in the health, taxation, education, and transport portfolios. She has served on several boards, including as a representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</p> <p>Cheryl has deep experience and expertise in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. She is a Kooma Traditional Owner, and her country is in southern inland Queensland, between Cunnamulla and St George.</p> <p>Cheryl joined the QFCC in June 2017.</p>
Natalie Conner Deputy Commissioner, Corporate and Communications	<p>Natalie has worked as a senior executive in the Queensland public service for over a decade and has broad experience in regional and head office environments. Her industry experience includes working with sectors as diverse as transport and parks, sport and racing.</p> <p>Prior to coming to the QFCC, Natalie worked in the social policy team responsible for child protection and domestic and family violence prevention in the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet.</p> <p>Natalie leads the Corporate and Communications area and chairs the Major Projects Board. She began working with the QFCC in October 2016.</p>

<p>Dr Leanne Gill</p> <p>Deputy Commissioner, Programs</p>	<p>Leanne has extensive experience as a public sector executive and leader, building teams and working with stakeholders to deliver innovative solutions to meet government priorities.</p> <p>She has worked in strategic change roles across the Queensland public service and tertiary education sectors. In doing so, she has drawn on her background in organisational development, talent management, capability development, performance management, applied research and performance evaluation. She has also worked as a university lecturer in the field.</p> <p>Leanne has been the Deputy Commissioner for Programs since September 2017. She is responsible for the QFCC’s oversight and evaluation of the sector.</p>
<p>Tracy Fogarty</p> <p>Director, Office of the Commissioners</p>	<p>Tracy has worked in a range of governance and program management roles in the Queensland public service for over a decade. She has provided professional executive support to a number of chief executives across a diverse range of portfolios.</p> <p>Tracy has been the Director of the Office of the Commissioners since June 2017. She started with the QFCC in April 2016.</p>

Our structure

The QFCC operates out of 53 Albert Street Brisbane and delivers its services through the structure outlined in the following organisational chart. Structural changes were undertaken during the year to best support strategic direction and future work priorities, and to align with the functions of the commissioner in s20 of the Family and Child Commission Act 2014.



Governance framework

As the QFCC is a relatively small agency, a number of staff committees have been established to help drive effective management and accountability in pursuit of strategic outcomes.

- The Executive Group meets fortnightly and is made up of the QFCC executives. This group oversees our performance relative to our strategic plan, financial performance and high level risk. It also addresses stakeholder engagement, partnership and development opportunities.
- The Leader Group is made up of the QFCC executive and managers and meets monthly. Meetings enable members to discuss strategic issues, provide updates on the progress of our important initiatives, identify opportunities to leverage off other projects or upcoming stakeholder interactions, and seek peer input into potential initiatives.
- The Major Projects Board provides governance of business performance. It oversees the QFCC's major projects, initiatives and finances and provides advice to the Executive Group.
- The Staff Advisory Group, established during 2017–18, is made up of the principal commissioner, commissioner and staff representatives. Meeting monthly, this group focuses on providing a safe, positive and professional working environment within the QFCC. One of its aims is to facilitate communication between the executive and the staff group about whole-of-QFCC matters.

Given our size, and in line with the Queensland Government's *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, a decision was previously made to not establish a formal audit committee but to delegate that responsibility to the Major Projects Board. However, based on advice from the Queensland Audit Office on best practice, we will be establishing a formal Audit and Risk Management Committee in the new financial year. This will be chaired by an independent external representative.

External scrutiny

The Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee held a public hearing on 11 June 2018 with regard to its oversight responsibilities of the QFCC. The final report has yet to be tabled in parliament.

Information and communications technology

Records management

The QFCC operates under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*. We maintain full and accurate records of our activities and operate within the standards and guidelines issued by the Queensland State Archivist.

We use the Hewlett-Packard Content Management (HPCM) application to meet our record keeping obligations. This software application has recently had a major upgrade. As part of the training provided to staff on the upgrade, we reaffirmed record keeping responsibilities for attendees and made updated record keeping fact sheets available.

Following the software upgrade, we introduced capability for staff to be able to remotely save records directly into HPCM from geographically disperse locations. We have also begun converting a number of hard copy records into digital format. We have managed our records in accordance with the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Financial performance

The QFCC is a statutory body under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* and for the purposes of the:

- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*.

Financial summary 2017–18

This summary provides an overview of the QFCC's financial performance for 2017–18 and a comparison with 2016–17. A detailed view of our financial performance for 2017–18 is provided in the financial statements included in this annual report.

We are committed to maintaining fiscal responsibility while meeting our objectives.

Financial results

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2017–18 \$'000	Actual 2016–17 \$'000
Income from continuing operations		
Grants and other contributions	12,451	13,561
Other revenue	123	871
Total income from continuing operations	12,574	14,432
Expenses from continuing operations		
Employee expenses	8,015	9,174
Supplies and services	4,226	4,550
Depreciation and amortisation	279	270
Other expenses	115	77
Total expenses from continuing operations	12,635	14,071
Operating result from continuing operations	(61)	361

In 2017–18, the QFCC received total revenue of \$12.574 million in comparison to \$14.432 million in 2016–17. The QFCC maintained a sound net asset position in the 2017–18 financial year.

Financial position

Queensland Family and Child Commission	Actual 2017–18 \$'000	Actual 2016–17 \$'000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,137	1,834
Receivables	305	361
Other current assets	112	1
Total current assets	2,554	2,196
Non-current assets		
Plant and equipment	342	388
Intangible assets	528	753
Total non-current assets	870	1,141
Total assets	3,424	3,337
Current liabilities		
Payables	1,021	832
Accrued employee benefits	312	353
Total liabilities	1,333	1,185
Net assets	2,091	2,152
Accumulated surplus	464	525
Contributed equity	1,627	1,627
Total equity	2,091	2,152

Further information

As required by annual reporting guidelines, information relating to consultancies engaged by the QFCC in 2017–18 is published online through the government's Open Data website (<https://data.qld.gov.au/>).

Our workforce

The QFCC's workforce is employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*, with the exception of the principal commissioner and commissioner, who are employed under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2018, the QFCC employed 58.7 full time equivalent staff, with total employee expenses for the year of \$8,015 million. Our staff profile was:

- 83% female and 17% male
- 10.9% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 1.6% identified as having a disability.

Strategic Workforce Plan

Our *Strategic Workforce Plan* is regularly reviewed to make sure our workforce strategies and initiatives remain relevant and consider the needs of our staff and the organisation. Focus areas include:

- developing initiatives to strengthen the culture of the organisation
- developing and implementing innovative (internal and external) development programs and support tools that leverage off whole-of-government initiatives to build leadership and people management capabilities
- refining workforce practices to support organisational efficiency and effectiveness
- implementing a range of health and well-being initiatives to support the needs of our staff
- continuing to improve our information and communication technology to support an agile and mobile workforce
- enhancing information sharing and working collaboratively across the QFCC
- incorporating findings from the 2017 *Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey*.

We have continued to fine-tune our organisational structure and governance arrangements to best support our strategic direction and future work priorities.

Attraction and retention

The QFCC has implemented a number of initiatives to attract and retain an inclusive, diverse and capable workforce including:

- making changes to our organisational structure to provide greater efficiency to meet our legislative mandate
- further strengthening our ability to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees using strategies and initiatives from the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy* we introduced during the year
- using mechanisms to listen to staff, in order to drive improved business practices and a positive organisational culture.

Separation rate

During 2017–18, our permanent separation rate was 2.08%. No QFCC employees received a redundancy package.

Performance management framework

We implemented a number of initiatives to support employee performance management, induction, staff development, talent management and recognition during 2017–18. These included:

- a performance management and development framework, which captures individual staff profiles, strengths, past experiences and expertise, and the environment that brings out the best for the employee
- enhancement of our leadership capability to drive higher levels of organisational performance through:
 - information sharing and networking—through the Leader Group monthly meetings
 - development and networking opportunities—through participation in inter-agency community of practice forums
- continued coaching of staff in agile project management to support a culture of proactive and meaningful information sharing
- mandatory online training:
 - code of conduct
 - information privacy
 - Right to Information
 - bullying
 - domestic and family violence
 - *Walk with Us* (cultural capability).

We encourage our leaders to take up development opportunities offered by the Public Service Commission. Development opportunities are identified through individual performance and development planning processes. A diverse range of online professional development opportunities is made available for all staff.

Supporting staff well-being

The QFCC offered a number of health and well-being initiatives to support staff including:

- a flu vaccination program
- formal and informal professional support for staff who deal with sensitive child-related information—to boost resilience and provide peer support
- ongoing access to and promotion of an employee assistance program, which provides professional, confidential counselling, coaching and support to employees and their immediate family for a broad range of work and life issues
- a range of seminars to help staff build financial security
- a range of physical and mental initiatives to promote employee health and well-being.

Being a child safe organisation

To honour our commitment to being a child safe organisation, the QFCC makes sure our policies, practices and actions promote the best interests of children. A *Child and youth risk management strategy* has been developed to further strengthen our commitment.

The principal commissioner has made a directive under Part 6 of the *Public Service Act 2008* requiring all persons seeking to be engaged by the QFCC to undergo a working with children (blue card) check. Possession of a blue card or positive exemption card at all times is a mandatory requirement for engagement in child-related employment in the QFCC.

QFCC staff also received training to further increase their understanding of child abuse, covering topics including:

- types of harm
- sexualised behaviour
- impacts of trauma on children
- recognising and responding to grooming
- child safe frameworks
- responding to disclosures.

Flexible working arrangements

The QFCC is committed to providing flexible employment options to assist staff to effectively blend work, family and life responsibilities. Many opportunities are available to staff and are promoted through recruitment and selection processes, employee induction, policies and fact sheets.

Flexible work practices are given due consideration and approved by the delegate, taking into consideration the personal circumstances and needs of the employee and the impact on service delivery and operational needs of the organisation.

Code of conduct

QFCC staff are covered by the single code of conduct established for the Queensland Public Service. Code of conduct principles and their associated set of values form part of induction training for new staff. As mentioned earlier, all staff are required to complete mandatory online code of conduct training. The QFCC performance and development framework and processes also address code of conduct expectations.

QFCC staff are encouraged to raise any workplace issues they experience with their line manager, with local resolution the preferred option for resolution. A complaints management corporate standard and fact sheets on harassment and bullying outline avenues if local resolution is not successful.

Cultural capability

The QFCC's *Cultural Capability Employee Development Program* outlines a process for staff to build skills and confidence in delivering services to, and on behalf of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. We designed a five-step *Journey with Us* training program to allow QFCC staff to move towards cultural capability in a meaningful, practical and sensitive way.

The QFCC's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2017–19* was launched in September 2017. This plan demonstrates how we will bring to life our goal of becoming a culturally capable organisation. It feeds into the Queensland Government's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework*.

We made a commitment in our cultural capability action plan to develop and implement a QFCC *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy*. This supports the Queensland Government's framework of building cultural capability to improve economic participation.

The QFCC has established a First Australians' staff network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to build capacity across the QFCC and to provide internal guidance and advice on issues such as cultural protocols. As part of the QFCC's work practices, staff commit to including First Australians' perspectives in order to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The year ahead

In 2018–19, as part of our governance responsibilities, the QFCC will:

- establish a formal Audit and Risk Management Committee
- continue converting hard copy records into digital format
- seek to identify internal and external professional development opportunities for staff from information captured through our performance and development planning process, the Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey results and other staff engagement mechanisms
- provide a range of health and well-being initiatives
- seek opportunities to partner with other agencies to offer professional development (such as mentoring)
- continue our commitment to and rollout of ongoing cultural capability initiatives under our *Journey with Us* program, to support the needs of our staff and organisation
- complete training in child safe practices for all staff and implement a new policy.



Appendix A—Glossary of acronyms

AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ATSICHS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
CCO	Community Controlled Organisation
CSIA	Community Services Industry Alliance
QCPCOI	Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry
QFCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission
ROGS	<i>Report on Government Services</i>

Appendix B—Annual report compliance checklist

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual Report reference
Letter of compliance	A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant minister/s	ARRs—section 7	Letter to Attorney-General, p. 3
Accessibility	Table of contents Glossary	ARRs—section 9.1	p. 4 p. 64
	Public availability	ARRs—section 9.2	Page after cover
	Interpreter service statement	Queensland Government Language Services Policy ARRs—section 9.3	QFCC is not a participating statutory body
	Copyright notice	Copyright Act 1968 ARRs—section 9.4	Page after cover
	Information licensing	QGEA—Information Licensing ARRs—section 9.5	Page after cover
General information	Introductory information	ARRs—section 10.1	pp. 5–14
	Machinery of government changes	ARRs—section 31 and 32	p. 9
	Agency role and main functions	ARRs—section 10.2	p. 6
	Operating environment	ARRs—section 10.3	p. 10
Non-financial performance	Government’s objectives for the community	ARRs—section 11.1	p. 6
	Other whole-of-government plans/ specific initiatives	ARRs—section 11.2	pp. 10–14
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs—section 11.3	p. 8
	Agency service areas and service standards	ARRs—section 11.4	p. 9
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs—section 12.1	pp. 57–58
Governance—management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs—section 13.1	p. 55
	Executive management	ARRs—section 13.2	pp. 52–54
	Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs—section 13.3	N/A
	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i>	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs—section 13.4	p. 61
Financial performance	Queensland public service values	ARRs—section 13.5	p. 9

Governance— risk management and accountability	Risk management	ARRs—section 14.1	p. 56
	Audit committee	ARRs—section 14.2	N/A
	Internal audit	ARRs—section 14.3	p. 56
	External scrutiny	ARRs—section 15.4	p. 56
	Information systems and record keeping	ARRs—section 14.5	p. 56
Governance— human resources	Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs—section 15.1	pp. 59–60
	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	<i>Directive No.11/12 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> <i>Directive No.16/16 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment (from 20 May 2016)</i> ARRs—section 15.2	p. 59
Open data	Statement advising publication of records	ARRs—section 16	p. 58
	Consultancies	ARRs—section 33.1	Nil
	Overseas travel	ARRs—section 33.2	Nil
	Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs—section 33.3	N/A
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	FAA—section 62 FPMS—sections 42, 43 and 50 ARRs—section 17.1	pp. 67–98
	Independent auditor’s report	FAA—section 62 FPMS—section 50 ARRs—section 17.2	pp. 99–100

FAA—*Financial Accountability Act 2009*

FPMS—*Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*

ARRs—Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies

QGEA—Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture

Appendix C—Financial statements

Queensland Family and Child Commission

Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2018

Queensland Family and Child Commission
Financial Statements 2017-18

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Notes To and Forming Part of the Financial Statements	8-31
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Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**

for the year ended 30 June 2018

	Notes	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
Grants and other contributions	3.	12,451	13,561
Other revenue		123	87
Total Income from Continuing Operations		12,574	14,432
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	4.	8,015	9,174
Supplies and services	5.	4,226	4,550
Depreciation and amortisation	6.	279	270
Other expenses	7.	115	77
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		12,835	14,071
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		(61)	361
Total Comprehensive Income		(61)	381

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
as at 30 June 2018

	Notes	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		2,137	1,834
Receivables	8.	306	361
Prepayments		112	1
Total Current Assets		2,554	2,196
Non Current Assets			
Plant and equipment	9.	342	588
Intangible assets	10.	528	753
Total Non Current Assets		870	1,141
Total Assets		3,424	3,337
Current Liabilities			
Payables	11.	1,021	832
Accrued employee benefits	12.	312	353
Total Current Liabilities		1,333	1,185
Total Liabilities		1,333	1,185
Net Assets		2,091	2,152
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		464	525
Contributed equity		1,627	1,627
Total Equity		2,091	2,152

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**

for the year ended 30 June 2018

	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2016	165	1,627	1,792
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	361	-	361
Balance as at 30 June 2017	525	1,627	2,152
Balance as at 1 July 2017	525	1,627	2,152
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	(61)	-	(61)
Balance as at 30 June 2018	464	1,627	2,091

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 30 June 2018

	Notes	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
<i>Inflows</i>			
Grants and other contributions		12,451	13,299
GST input tax credits from ATO		433	482
GST collected from customers		10	3
Interest receipts		62	54
Other revenue		126	817
<i>Outflows</i>			
Employee expenses		(7,985)	(5,233)
Supplies and services		(4,149)	(4,302)
GST paid to suppliers		(520)	(452)
GST remitted to ATO		(10)	13
Other		(115)	(77)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		303	588
Cash flows from investing activities			
<i>Outflows</i>			
Payments for plant and equipment		-	(68)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		-	(68)
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		303	520
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,834	1,314
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		2,137	1,834

The accompanying notes form part of these statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**

for the year ended 30 June 2018

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW**Reconciliation of Operating Result to Net Cash provided by Operating Activities**

	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Operating surplus	(51)	361
Depreciation and amortisation expense	270	270
Gain on recognition of previously expensed asset	(8)	-
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities</i>		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	144	(204)
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	(89)	30
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(111)	21
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable	189	227
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	(41)	72
Increase/(decrease) in advances received from Queensland Treasury	-	(189)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	303	588

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

Section 1: About QFCC and this Financial Report

Note 1 Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

Note 2 Objectives of the QFCC

Section 2: Notes about our Financial Performance

Note 3 Grants and Other Contributions

Note 4 Employee Expenses

Note 5 Supplies and Services

Note 6 Depreciation and Amortisation

Note 7 Other Expenses

Section 3: Notes about our Financial Position

Note 8 Receivables

Note 9 Plant and Equipment

Note 10 Intangible Assets

Note 11 Payables

Note 12 Accrued Employee Benefits

Section 4: Notes about Risks and Other Accounting Uncertainties

Note 13 Commitments for Expenditure

Note 14 Contingencies

Note 15 Financial Instrument Categories

Note 16 Events Occurring After Balance Date

Note 17 Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

Section 5: Other Information

Note 18 Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures

Note 19 Taxation

Note 20 Insurance

Note 21 Accounting Estimates and Judgements

Note 22 Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation

General Information

This financial report covers the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC). It has no controlled entities.

The QFCC is a statutory body established on 1 July 2014 as part of the Queensland Government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (Carmody Inquiry). The QFCC provides oversight of Queensland's child protection system to ensure government and non-government agencies are delivering best practice services for the families and children of Queensland.

The head office and principal place of business of the QFCC is:

Level 22, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane

A description of the nature of the QFCC's operations and its principal activities are included in the notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*.

These financial statements are general purpose financial statements and have been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations. In addition, the financial statements comply with Queensland Treasury's Financial Reporting Requirements for the year ending 30 June 2018 and other authoritative pronouncements.

With respect to compliance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, the QFCC has applied those requirements applicable to not-for-profit entities, as the QFCC is a not-for-profit entity.

Currency and Rounding

Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Comparatives

Comparative information reflects the audited 2016-17 financial statements unless restated where necessary to be consistent with disclosures in the current reporting period.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

1. Basis of Financial Statement Preparation (cont'd)

Current / Non-Current Classification

Assets and liabilities are classified as either 'current' or 'non-current' in the Statement of Financial Position and associated notes.

Assets are classified as 'current' where their carrying amount is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting date. Liabilities are classified as 'current' when they are due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting date, or the QFCC does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement to beyond 12 months after the reporting date. All other assets and liabilities are classified as non-current.

Basis of Measurement

The historical cost convention is used unless otherwise stated.

The Reporting Entity

The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity of the QFCC.

Implementation of the Shared Service Initiative

The Corporate Administration Agency (CAA) provides the QFCC with corporate services under the 'Shared Services Provider' model. The fees and terms of the services are agreed through a Service Level Agreement, negotiated annually and include:

- Financial Services
- Human Resources Recruitment and Payroll
- Information Systems and Support
- Internal Audit Services

Authorization of Financial Statements for Issue

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Principal Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, Corporate at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

2. Objectives of the QFCC

The QFCC has the following objectives:

- Work closely with all Queenslanders to build safe, caring and connected communities who are well supported by quality frontline child protection and family support services
- Promote and advocate for the safety, wellbeing and best interests of all children and young people in Queensland and the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for them
- Improve the child protection and family support system to ensure those most vulnerable are well cared for and able to thrive.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
3. Grants and Other Contributions		
Grants received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet	6,226	13,311
Grants received from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General	6,225	-
Grants received from the former Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	-	250
Total	12,451	13,561

Grants and Contributions

Grants, contributions and donations are non-reciprocal in nature and do not require any goods or services to be provided in return. Corresponding revenue is recognised in the year in which the QFCC obtains control over the grant/contribution/donation (control is generally obtained at the time of receipt).

4. Employee Expenses

Employee Benefits

Wages and salaries	5,983	6,701
Employer superannuation contributions	787	594
Annual leave levy	598	688
Long service leave levy	125	145
Redundancies	-	215

Employee Related Expenses

Payroll tax	351	392
Fringe Benefit Tax	16	14
Workers' compensation premium	55	44
Other employee related expenses	120	82

Total	8,015	9,174
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Number of Full-Time Equivalent Employees	69	65
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Wages and Salaries

Wages and salaries due but unpaid at reporting date are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at the current salary rates. As the QFCC expects such liabilities to be wholly settled within 12 months of reporting date, the liabilities are recognised at undiscounted amounts.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

4. Employee Expenses (contd)

Sick Leave

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods. Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised. As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

Annual Leave

The Queensland Government's Annual Leave Central Scheme (ALCS) became operational on 30 June 2006 for departments, commercialised business units and shared service providers. Under this scheme, a levy is made on the QFCC to cover the cost of employees' annual leave (including leave loading and on-costs). The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for annual leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears.

Long Service Leave

Under the Queensland Government's Long Service Leave Scheme (LSLS), a levy is made on the QFCC to cover the cost of employees' long service leave. The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for long service leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears.

Superannuation

Post-employment benefits for superannuation are provided through defined contribution (accumulation) plans or the Queensland Government's QSuper defined benefit plan as determined by the employee's conditions of employment.

Defined Contribution Plans - Contributions are made to eligible complying superannuation funds based on the rates specified in the relevant enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) or other conditions of employment. Contributions are expensed when they are paid or become payable following completion of the employee's service each pay period.

The liability for defined benefits is held on a whole of Government basis and reported in these financial statements pursuant to *AASB 1049 Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*. The amount of contributions for defined benefit plan obligations is based upon the rates determined on the advice of the State Actuary. Contributions are paid by the QFCC at the specified rate following completion of the employee's service each pay period. The QFCC's obligations are limited to those contributions paid.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

4. Employee Expenses (cont'd)

Workers' Compensation Premiums

The QFCC pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation. Workers' compensation insurance is a consequence of employing employees, but is not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. It is not considered an employee benefit and is recognised separately as employee related expenses.

Key management personnel and remuneration disclosures are detailed in Note 18.

	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
5. Supplies and Services		
Building services	986	882
Administration costs	95	280
Contractors and consultants	1,636	1,792
Corporate services provider costs	637	689
Telecommunications	57	58
Advertising and promotions	392	317
Travel	171	232
Minor plant and equipment	8	71
Repairs and maintenance	1	1
Professional services	7	29
Minor capital works	-	9
Other supplies and services	236	190
Total	4,226	4,550

6. Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation and amortisation were incurred in respect of:

Depreciation Expense - Plant and Equipment	54	45
Amortisation Expense	225	225
Total	279	270

Depreciation Expense

Depreciation on property, plant and equipment is calculated on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the net cost of each depreciable asset progressively over its estimated useful life to the QFCC.

The following depreciation rate was used:

Class	Rate
Plant and equipment	10.33%

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

6. Depreciation and Amortisation (contd)

Amortization Expense

All intangible assets of the QFCC have finite useful lives and are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful life to the QFCC. Straight line amortisation is used reflecting the expected consumption of economic benefits on a progressive basis over the intangible's useful life. The residual value of all the QFCC's intangible assets is zero.

For each class of intangible assets the following amortisation rates were used:

Class	Rate	
Intangibles		
Software internally generated		14%
Software purchased		14%
	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000

7. Other Expenses

Insurance premiums (QGFH)	4	4
External audit fees*	30	22
Sponsorships paid	81	51
Total	115	77

* Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2017-18 financial statements are estimated to be \$21,975 (2016-17: \$19,000). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.

8. Receivables

Trade debtors	-	72
GST receivable	160	72
Annual leave reimbursements	135	170
Long service leave reimbursement	10	40
Other receivables	-	1
Total	305	361

Receivables

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of sale or service delivery (i.e. the agreed purchase/contract price). Settlement of these amounts is required within 30 days from the date the invoice is received.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically with a provision being made for impairment as required.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

9. Plant and Equipment

	Total	
	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
Plant and Equipment at cost	507	493
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(165)	(105)
Carrying amount at 30 June	342	388

Reconciliation of carrying amount:

	Plant and Equipment		Work in Progress		Total	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	388	220	-	145	388	365
Acquisitions	0	68	-	-	0	68
Transfers between classes	-	145	-	(145)	-	-
Depreciation Expense	(54)	(45)	-	-	(54)	(45)
Carrying amount at 30 June	342	388	-	-	342	388

Recognition and Acquisition

Recognition Threshold

Expenditure on plant and equipment is capitalised to the extent that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and the asset can be reliably separated and measured.

In addition, expenditure is only capitalised if it increases the service potential or useful life of the existing asset. Maintenance expenditure that merely restores original service potential (arising from ordinary wear and tear etc.) is expensed.

Items with a total value of less than \$5,000 are treated as an expense in the year of acquisition.

Cost of Acquisition

Historical cost is used for the initial recording of all property, plant and equipment acquisitions. Historical cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the assets ready for use, including architectural fees and engineering design fees.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

9. Plant and Equipment (contd)

Measurement using Historical Cost

Historical Cost

Plant and equipment is measured at historical cost in accordance with Non-Current Asset Policies. The carrying amounts for such plant and equipment is not materially different from their fair value.

Impairment

Impairment

All non-current physical assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No significant indicators of impairment were present at reporting date.

10. Intangible Assets	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Software Purchased At cost:		
Gross	433	433
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(219)	(157)
	<u>214</u>	<u>276</u>
Software Internally Generated At cost:		
Gross	1,148	1,148
Less: Accumulated amortisation	(832)	(669)
	<u>314</u>	<u>477</u>
Carrying amount at 30 June	<u>528</u>	<u>753</u>

Intangible Assets - Balances and Reconciliation of Carrying Amounts

	Software Purchased		Software Internally Generated		Total	
	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	276	338	477	641	753	979
Amortisation expense	(52)	(62)	(163)	(164)	(224)	(228)
Carrying amount at 30 June	214	276	314	477	528	753

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

10. Intangible Assets (contd)

Intangible Assets

Intangible assets of the QFCC comprise of purchased and internally generated software. Intangible assets with a historical cost or other value equal to or greater than \$100,000 are recognised in the financial statements. Items with a lesser value are expensed. Any training costs are expensed as incurred.

There is no active market for the QFCC's intangible assets. As such, the assets are recognised and carried at historical cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Expenditure on research activities relating to internally generated intangible assets is recognised as an expense in the period in which it is incurred. Research and development expensed during the period is included in 'supplies and services expenses'.

Costs associated with internal development of computer software are capitalised and amortised under the amortisation policy below.

No intangible assets have been classified as held for sale or form part of a disposal group held for sale.

Impairment

All intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. No significant indicators of impairment were present at reporting date.

	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
11. Payables		
Trade creditors	965	753
Other payables	58	79
Total	1,021	832

Payables

Trade creditors are recognised upon receipt of the goods or services ordered and are measured at the agreed purchase/contract price, gross of applicable trade and other discounts. Amounts owing are unsecured and are generally settled on 30 day terms.

12. Accrued Employee Benefits

Current

Salaries and wages outstanding	123	136
Annual leave levy payable	155	177
Long service leave levy payable	34	37
Total	312	350

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

12. Accrued Employee Benefits (contd)

Accrued Employee Benefits

No provision for annual leave or long service leave is recognised in the QFCC's financial statements as the liability is held on a whole-of-Government basis and reported in those financial statements pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

2018
\$'000

2017
\$'000

13. Commitments for Expenditure

(a) Non-Cancellable Operating Lease

Commitments under operating leases at reporting date (inclusive of non-recoverable GST input tax credits) are payable as follows:

Not later than one year	957	881
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	894
Total	957	1,775

Operating Leases

Operating lease payments are representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred.

Operating leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office accommodation. Lease payments are generally fixed, but with inflation escalation clauses on which contingent rentals are determined.

(b) Other Expenditure Commitments

The other material expenditure commitments of the QFCC (inclusive of non-recoverable GST input tax credits) contracted for at reporting date but not recognised in the accounts are payable as follows:

Not later than one year	857	698
Later than one year and not later than five years	579	363
Total	1,436	1,061

14. Contingencies

There were no other known contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2018.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

15. Financial Instrument Categories

The QFCC has the following categories of financial assets and financial liabilities

Category	Note	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		2,137	1,534
Financial assets measured at amortised cost			
Receivables	8.	305	361
Total		2,442	2,195
Financial Liabilities			
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost			
Payables	11.	1,021	832
Total		1,021	832

No financial assets or liabilities have been offset against each other nor have they been presented on a net basis in the Statement of Financial Position.

No financial assets have been renegotiated to prevent them from being past due or impaired.

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the QFCC becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

The QFCC does not enter into transactions for speculative purposes, nor for hedging. No financial assets or liabilities are classified at fair value through profit or loss.

16. Events Occurring After Balance Date

No event has occurred after balance date that has a material effect on these financial statements.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

17. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

At the date of authorisation of the financial report, the expected impacts of new or amended Australian Accounting Standards issued but with future commencement dates are set out below.

AASB 15 - Revenue from Contracts with Customers and AASB 1058 - Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

AASB 15 and AASB 1058 will first apply to the QFCC in the financial statements for 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively.

The QFCC has commenced analysing the new revenue recognition requirements under these standards but is yet to form a conclusion about the full impact on its financial reporting obligations. Potential future impacts identifiable at the date of this report include:

- Grants received to construct non-financial assets controlled by the QFCC will be initially recognised as unearned revenue and subsequently recognised progressively as grant revenue as the QFCC satisfies its performance obligations under the grant. At present, such grants are recognised as revenue upfront.
- Under the new standards, other grants presently recognised as revenue upfront may be eligible to be recognised as revenue progressively as the associated performance obligations are satisfied, but only if the associated performance obligations are enforceable and sufficiently specific. The QFCC is yet to evaluate the existing grant arrangements with the Department Justice and Attorney-General as to whether revenue from these grants are eligible to be deferred under the new requirements.
- Grants that are not enforceable and/or not sufficiently specific will not qualify for deferral, and continue to be recognised as revenue at the point of initial control. The QFCC receives several grants for which there are no sufficiently specific performance obligations - these grants are expected to continue being recognised as revenue upfront assuming no change to the current grant arrangements.
- The QFCC does not currently have any revenue contracts with a material impact for the period after 1 July 2018 but will monitor the impact of any such contracts subsequently entered into before the new standards take effect.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

17. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective (contd)

AASB 9 Financial Instruments and AASB 2014-7 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (December 2014)

These standards will first apply to the QFCC from its financial statements for 2018-19. The main impacts of these standards on the QFCC are that they will change the requirements for the classification, measurement, impairment and disclosures associated with the QFCC's financial assets. AASB 9 will introduce different criteria for whether financial assets can be measured at amortised cost or fair value.

The QFCC has commenced reviewing the measurement of its financial assets against the new AASB 9 classification and measurement requirements. However, as the classification of financial assets at the date of initial application of the new standard will depend on the facts and circumstances existing at that date, the QFCC's true position can only be established at that time.

Another impact of AASB 9 relates to calculating impairment losses for the QFCC's receivables. Assuming no substantial change in the nature of the QFCC's receivables, as they don't include a significant financing component, impairment losses will be determined according to the amount of lifetime expected credit losses. On initial adoption of AASB 9, the QFCC will need to determine the expected credit losses for its receivables by comparing the credit risk at that time to the credit risk that existed when those receivables were initially recognised. Under this standard this will require ongoing assessment.

The QFCC will not need to restate comparative figures for financial instruments on adopting AASB 9 from 2018-19. However, changed disclosure requirements will apply from that time. A number of one-off disclosures will be required in the 2018-19 financial statements to explain the impact of adopting AASB 9. Assuming no change in the types of financial instruments that the QFCC enters into, the most likely ongoing disclosure impacts are expected to relate to the credit risk of financial assets subject to impairment.

AASB 16 - Leases

This standard will first apply to the QFCC in its financial statements for 2019-20. When applied, the standard supersedes AASB 117 Leases, AASB Interpretation 4 Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease, AASB Interpretation 115 Operating Leases – Incentives and AASB Interpretation 127 Evaluating the Substance of Transactions Involving the Legal Form of a Lease.

Impact for Lessees

Unlike AASB 117 Leases, AASB 16 introduces a single lease accounting model for lessees. Lessees will be required to recognise a right-of-use asset (representing rights to use the underlying leased asset) and a liability (representing the obligation to make lease payments) for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying assets are of low value.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

17. Future Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective (contd)

AASB 16 - Leases (contd)

In effect, the majority of operating leases (as defined by the current AASB 117) will be reported on the Statement of Financial Position under AASB 16. There will be a significant increase in assets and liabilities for agencies that lease assets. The impact on the reported assets and liabilities would be largely a proportion to the scale of the agency's leasing activities.

The right-of-use asset will be initially recognised at cost, consisting of the initial amount of the associated lease liability plus any lease payments made to the lessor at or before the effective date, less any lease incentive received, the initial estimate of restoration costs and any initial direct costs incurred by the lessee. The right-of-use asset will give rise to a depreciation expense.

The lease liability will be initially recognised at an amount equal to the present value of the lease payments during the lease term that are not yet paid. Current operating lease rental payments will no longer be expensed in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. They will be apportioned between a reduction in the recognised lease liability and the implicit finance charge (the effective rate of interest) in the lease. The finance cost will also be recognised as an expense.

AASB 16 allows a 'cumulative approach' rather than full retrospective application to recognising existing operating leases. If a lessee chooses to apply the 'cumulative approach', it does not need to restate comparative information. Instead, the cumulative effect of applying the standard is recognised as an adjustment to the opening balance of accumulated surplus (or other component) of equity, as appropriate, at the date of initial application. The QFCC will await further guidance from Queensland Treasury on the transitional accounting method to be applied.

The QFCC has not yet quantified the impact on the Statement of Comprehensive Income or the Statement of Financial Position of applying AASB 16 to its current operating leases, including the extent of additional disclosure required. Refer to (a) Non-Cancellable Operating Leases with Note 13 Commitments for Expenditure, which show the value of lease commitments currently measured under AASB 117.

All other Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations with future effective dates are either not applicable to the QFCC's activities, or have no material impact on the QFCC.

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

16. Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures

Details of Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the QFCC during 2017-18.

Position	Position Responsibility
Principal Commissioner	The role provides strategic and cross sectoral leadership and direction to government and non-government agencies to promote laws, policies, practices and services that build the capacity of the sector and the child protection workforce and drive the achievement of the child protection system. The role is responsible for providing expert advice on current research and child protection practice to improve the safety and well-being of children and young people, build the capacity and improve the performance of the child protection system.
Commissioner	The role supports the Principal Commissioner to provide strategic direction and leadership to develop and deliver integrated strategies designed to build capability and capacity and improve the culture of the child protection and family support system. The role has a strong focus on collaboration, partnerships and networks across the sector and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
Deputy Commissioner - Corporate	The role provides strategic leadership and direction to teams responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enabling and managing capacity and capability within the business - strategic and agency performance reporting - corporate support (HR, ICT, Finance, Facilities, Legal and Procurement); - governance and risk (Corporate and Projects)

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

18. Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (contd)

Details of Key Management Personnel

Position	Position Responsibility
Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Death Prevention	<p>The role provides strategic leadership and direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leading the QFCC's research function to manage the development and implementation of mandated responsibilities relating to research projects, - maintaining a register of all child deaths in Queensland, identifying prevention priorities and sharing information with key stakeholders - providing leadership with the development of evidence based policies and practices that improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
Deputy Commissioner, Programs	<p>The role provides strategic direction and leadership to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drive the implementation of oversight and evaluation strategies that effectively monitor, review and report on the adequacy of the child protection and family support system in Queensland, - collaborate and lead integrated strategies and community education campaigns, and - coordinate a multi-disciplinary team of communication, marketing, promotion, education, culture, capability, oversight, audit and evaluation specialists to deliver an integrated work program.
Director, Office of the Commissioners	<p>The role provides strategic and operational support to the Commissioners and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provides detailed briefings to the Commissioners and external stakeholders on policy and program initiatives to support the achievement of strategic objectives - coordinates the delivery of multi-disciplinary projects of a substantial and complex nature including child protection reforms and other high profile initiatives to drive quality achievements within timeframes and budgets and - maintains detailed knowledge of progress across the QFCC program of work and provides high-level information and advice to the Commissioners about issues and risks

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

16. Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (contd)

Remuneration Policies

Remuneration for the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner are set by the Governor in Council in accordance with Division 3, *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. The remuneration and other terms of employment for the other key executive management personnel are in accordance with directives issued under the *Public Service Act 2008* by the Public Service Commission Chief Executive or the Minister responsible for public sector industrial relations.

Remuneration packages for key management personnel comprises the following components:

- Short term employee benefits which include
 - salaries, allowances and leave entitlements earned and expensed for the entire year or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position
 - non-monetary benefits - consisting of provision of a vehicle together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit
- Long term employee expenses include amounts expensed in respect of long service leave entitlements earned
- Post-employment expenses include amounts expensed in respect of employer superannuation obligations
- Termination benefits are not provided for within individual contracts of employment. Contracts of employment provide only for notice periods or payment in lieu of notice on termination, regardless of the reason for termination
- Performance bonuses are not paid

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

18. Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (contd)

KMP Remuneration Expense

1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Principal Commissioner	248	0	5	27	-	280
Commissioner (from 13 October 2017)	168	6	2	15	-	191
Deputy Commissioner, Corporate	153	6	3	15	-	177
Deputy Commissioner, Research and Child Health Prevention	207	7	4	22	-	240
Deputy Commissioner, Programs (from 7 September 2017)	74	5	1	6	-	86
Director, Office of the Commissioners	135	1	3	16	-	155
Total Remuneration	985	25	19	101	-	1130

1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017

Position	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Principal Commissioner	248	3	5	25	-	279
Commissioner	144	3	3	15	-	165
Deputy Commissioner	12	3	0	1	-	16
Assistant Commissioner, Advocacy, Policy and Sector Development	146	3	3	18	-	167
Assistant Commissioner, Oversight, Evaluation and Community Education	83	3	2	14	-	99
Director, Office of the Commissioners	12	3	0	1	-	16
Chief Operating Officer (Blue Care)	128	3	3	12	-	146
Chief Operating Officer (Operations)	55	3	1	6	-	65
Total Remuneration	925	0	17	86	-	930

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

18. Key Management Personnel (KMP) Disclosures (cont'd)

Related Party Transactions

Transactions with people/entities related to KMP

The QFCC did not enter into any transactions with people or entities related to Key Management Personnel during the audit period.

Transactions with other Queensland Government-controlled entities

The QFCC transacts with other Queensland Government controlled entities consistent with normal day-to-day business operations provided under normal commercial terms and conditions.

19. Taxation

The QFCC is a state body as defined under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 and is exempt from Commonwealth taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST). FBT and GST are the only Commonwealth taxes accounted for by the QFCC. GST credits receivable from and GST payable to the ATO are recognised under Note 8 - Receivables.

20. Insurance

The QFCC's non-current physical assets and other risks are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund with premiums being paid on a risk assessment basis. In addition, the QFCC pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation.

21. Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of financial statements necessarily requires the determination and use of certain critical accounting estimates, assumptions, and management judgements that have the potential to cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Such estimates, judgements and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in future periods as relevant.

Estimates and assumptions that have a potential significant effect are outlined in Note 6 - Depreciation and Amortisation.

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

22. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures

This section discloses the QFCC's original published budgeted figures for 2017-18 compared to actual results, with explanations of major variances, in respect of the QFCC's Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows.

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Comprehensive Income

	Variance Notes	Original Budget 2018 \$'000	Actual 2018 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Income from Continuing Operations					
Grants and other contributions		12,451	12,451	-	0%
Other revenue	1	50	123	73	147%
Total Income from Continuing Operations		12,501	12,574	73	1%
Expenses from Continuing Operations					
Employee expenses	2	7,809	8,015	206	3%
Supplies and services	2	4,396	4,226	(170)	(4%)
Depreciation and amortisation		275	279	4	1%
Other expenses	3	21	115	94	440%
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		12,501	12,635	134	1%
Total Comprehensive Income		-	(61)	(61)	100%

QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

22. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (cont'd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Financial Position

		Original			
		Budget	Actual	Variance	Variance
	Variance	2018	2018		% of Budget
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	
Current Assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	4	1 877	2 137	260	14%
Receivables	5	188	305	117	62%
Other	6	27	12	90	408%
Total Current Assets		2,087	2,554	467	22%
Non-Current Assets					
Plant and equipment		275	342	67	24%
Intangible assets		1 319	528	(791)	(63%)
Total Non-Current Assets		1,594	870	(724)	(45%)
Total Assets		3,681	3,424	(257)	(7%)
Current Liabilities					
Payables	4	794	1 021	227	29%
Accrued employee benefits		290	312	16	5%
Total Current Liabilities		1,090	1,333	(243)	(22%)
Total Liabilities		1,090	1,333	(243)	(22%)
Net Assets		2,591	2,091	(500)	(19%)
Total Equity		2,591	2,091	(500)	(19%)

Queensland Family and Child Commission
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

22. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Budget to Actual Comparison - Statement of Cash Flows

	Variance Notes	Original Budget 2018 \$'000	Actual 2018 \$'000	Variance \$'000	Variance % of Budget
Cash flows from operating activities					
<i>Inflows</i>					
Grants and other contributions		12,451	12,451	—	0%
GST input tax credits from ATO		329	433	104	32%
GST collected from customers		—	10	10	100%
Interest receipts		50	62	12	23%
Other		—	126	126	100%
<i>Outflows</i>					
Employee expenses		(7,831)	(7,985)	(154)	(2%)
Supplies and services		(4,306)	(4,149)	248	6%
GST paid to suppliers		(330)	(520)	(190)	(58%)
GST remitted to ATO		—	(10)	(10)	(100%)
Other		(21)	(115)	(94)	(448%)
Net cash provided by operating activities		282	303	21	7%
Cash flows from investing activities		(800)	—	800	100%
Net increase in cash held		282	303	21	7%
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		1,555	1,834	239	(85%)
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		1,877	2,137	260	14%

Queensland Family and Child Commission

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

22. Budgetary Reporting Disclosures (contd)

Explanations of Major Variances

Statement of Comprehensive Income

1. An increase in Other revenue is due to funding received from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for the Youth Detention Oversight project (\$51,000); additional interest income (\$12,000) and other small amounts (\$10,000).
2. An increase in Employee expenses is due to short-term temporary staff required for project work primarily funded by a reduction in Supplies and services.
3. An increase in Other expenses is primarily due to sponsorship initiatives (\$60,000); and other small movements (\$14,000).

Statement of Financial Position

4. An increase in Cash and Payables is driven by timing of payments (operational expenses recognised but not paid) as at 30 June 2018.
5. An increase in Receivables is due to the higher than previously estimated Annual Leave Central Scheme claims (\$65,000) and GST receivable (\$56,000).
6. An increase in Other relates to prepayments held at 30 June 2018.

CERTIFICATE OF THE QUEENSLAND FAMILY AND CHILD COMMISSION

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to s 62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), section 43 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with s 62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that, in our opinion:

(i) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and

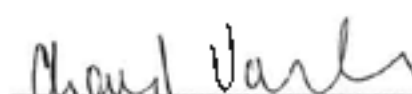
(ii) the financial statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission for the financial year ended 30 June 2018 and of the financial position of the office at the end of that year; and

(iii) these assertions are based on an appropriate system of internal controls and risk management processes being effective, in all material respects, with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.



Natalie Conner
Deputy Commissioner, Corporate
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date 29.08.18



Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

Date 29/8/18



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Accountable Officer of the Queensland Family and Child Commissioner

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Queensland Family and Child Commissioner

In my opinion, the financial report

- a) gives a true and fair view of the entity's financial position as at 30 June 2018, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended
- b) complies with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and Australian Accounting Standards

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including summaries of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the management certificate.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards* which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

I am independent of the entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the entity for the financial report

The Accountable Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and Australian Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as the Accountable Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Accountable Officer is also responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the entity or to otherwise cease operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the entity.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the entity's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. I base my conclusions on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with s 40 of the Auditor-General Act 2009, for the year ended 30 June 2018:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required.
- b) In my opinion, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.



John Welsh
as delegate of the Auditor-General

31 August 2018

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane

Appendix D—Performance of the Queensland child protection system

Queensland’s performance in achieving state and national child protection goals

Section 40 of the Family and Child Commission Act 2014 requires the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) to include information on the following in its annual report:

- Queensland’s performance in relation to achieving state and national goals relating to the child protection system [(s40)(1)(a)(i)]
- Queensland’s performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions [(s40)(1)(a)(ii)]
- Queensland’s progress in reducing the number of, and improving the outcomes for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system [(s40)(1)(a)(iii)].

This section provides an overview of Queensland’s performance in relation to these three areas. A range of national data sources has been used to measure the performance of the child protection system.¹³ All data featured in this report was the most current available as at 30 June 2018.

Queensland’s performance against national goals

National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020

The *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020* (the National Framework) outlines national goals for Australia’s child protection system.¹⁴ The National Framework is a long-term program of change promoting a unified approach to child protection in Australia. It shifts the focus of protecting children from a statutory response to abuse and neglect to a more holistic view, where the safety and well-being of children is the collective responsibility of families, communities and governments.

Australia’s progress on the National Framework is measured against a series of outcomes and performance indicators that support the high-level goal of ensuring Australia’s children and young people are safe and well.¹⁵ The six supporting outcomes address the following complementary areas:

1. Children live in safe and supportive families and communities.
2. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.
3. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed.
4. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and well-being.

¹³ Sources include: Productivity Commission’s *Report on Government Services 2018*; *Children’s Headline Indicators 2016* by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; *Australian and New Zealand Child Death Statistics 2015* by the Queensland Family and Child Commission; and data from the *Australian Demographic Statistics* (September 2017) by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

¹⁴ The National Framework was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments on 30 April 2009.

¹⁵ Council of Australian Governments, 2009, *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children*, p. 11.

5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are supported and safe in their families and communities.
6. Child sexual abuse and exploitation are prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

The third *Three Year Action Plan 2015–18* (Third Action Plan) to implement the National Framework places strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention. As the indicators to measure outcomes for the Third Action Plan have not yet been released, the QFCC has used indicators from the second *Three Year Action Plan 2012–2015* (Second Action Plan) to measure Queensland’s progress.

Under the Second Action Plan, eight indicators are used to measure progress towards the high-level goal that children and young people are safe and well:

1. Substantiated child protection cases
2. Children in out-of-home care
3. Teenage births
4. Infants born of low birth weight
5. Child homicide
6. Early childhood development
7. Child social and emotional well-being
8. Family economic situation.

Queensland’s performance in relation to achieving national goals has been examined against the first five of these indicators only.¹⁶ Data has been sourced from a number of publications and brought together to present a picture of the safety and well-being of children in Queensland compared with the national average.

Data is presented in graphs, with definitions and analysis included. Information specifically relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is included where possible.

The data used to provide comparisons between Queensland and other jurisdictions is not always directly comparable, as it has been drawn from a variety of sources. The sources may adopt different data definitions, reference periods or population figures. Please note the caveats provided.

Implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

On 15 December 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its final report, including 409 recommendations. The Queensland Government released its response to the Royal Commission’s report on 15 June 2018, observing that some of the recommendations have already been implemented in Queensland and work has commenced on others. The government accepted or accepted in principle 244 of the 409 recommendations.

Commitments from the Queensland Government include introducing a reportable conduct scheme; establishing a truth, health and reconciliation taskforce; and strengthening services to people who have experienced abuse.

As part of monitoring Queensland’s performance in relation to achieving state and national child protection system goals, future reports may include discussion of the Royal Commission recommendations the QFCC is responsible for implementing.

¹⁶ Data to support Indicator 6 (early childhood development) has not been updated since the QFCC last reported on this measure in its 2016 *Performance of the Queensland Child Protection System* report. This data has therefore not been reported again here. The data source to measure Indicator 7 (child social and emotional well-being) is currently pending the implementation of an Australian Bureau of Statistics data source and is therefore not yet reportable. The data for Indicator 8 (family economic situation) is not currently available as a measure for each jurisdiction, therefore, Queensland’s performance cannot be measured, and the indicator is not included in this report.

Indicator 1—Substantiated child protection cases

Rate of children aged 0–17 (per 1000) subject to a substantiation, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2012–13 to 2016–17

Data																			
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012–13</th> <th>2013–14</th> <th>2014–15</th> <th>2015–16</th> <th>2016–17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>QLD¹⁷</td> <td>6.5</td> <td>6.0</td> <td>5.2</td> <td>5.0</td> <td>5.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUS</td> <td>7.8</td> <td>7.8</td> <td>8.0</td> <td>8.5</td> <td>9.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	QLD ¹⁷	6.5	6.0	5.2	5.0	5.0	AUS	7.8	7.8	8.0	8.5	9.0
	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17														
QLD ¹⁷	6.5	6.0	5.2	5.0	5.0														
AUS	7.8	7.8	8.0	8.5	9.0														
Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.1.																		
Definition	<p>Substantiated child protection cases are measured as the rate of children aged 0–17 years subject to a child protection substantiation. Substantiations of notifications occur when an investigation has concluded and there is reasonable cause to believe that a child had been, was being, or was likely to be, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.</p> <p>Substantiations may also include cases where there is no suitable caregiver, such as children who have been abandoned or whose parents are deceased.¹⁸</p>																		
Analysis	Since 2012–13, the rate of Queensland children subject to a substantiation has been consistently lower than the national average. In 2016–17, Queensland children were subject to a substantiation at a rate of 5.0 per 1000 children, while the national rate of children subject to a substantiation was 1.8 times higher at 9.0 per 1000.																		
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	<p>Between 2012–13 and 2016–17, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a substantiation, both in Queensland and nationally, was consistently higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</p> <p>The rate of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a substantiation slowly declined between 2012–13 and 2015–16, before slightly increasing in 2016–17. Conversely, the national rate has steadily increased since 2012–13.</p>																		

¹⁷ This table is a measure of the rate of substantiation for all children inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children who do not identify and children whose cultural status is unknown.

¹⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017, *Child Protection Australia 2015–16*, Child Welfare Series No. 66. Canberra, p. 20.

Indicator 2—Children in out-of-home care

Rate of children aged 0–17 (per 1000) who were in out-of-home care as at 30 June 2017, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2013–2017

Data					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
QLD ¹⁹	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.8
AUS	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.6	8.7

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
QLD ¹⁹	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.8
AUS	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.6	8.7

Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.2.
Definition	Out-of-home care is defined as overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. This includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight child care services. ²⁰
Analysis	As at 30 June 2017, there were 47,915 children in out-of-home care across Australia, a rate of 8.7 per 1000 children aged 0–17 years. The national rate of children in out-of-home care has grown steadily over the past five years, up from 7.8 per 1000 in 2013. The rate of children living in out-of-home care in Queensland has remained relatively stable between 2013 and 2017 and has been consistently lower than the national average, at a rate of 7.8 per 1000 children at 30 June 2017.

¹⁹ This table is a measure of the rate of out-of-home care for all children inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children who do not identify and children whose cultural status is unknown.

²⁰ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.37.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

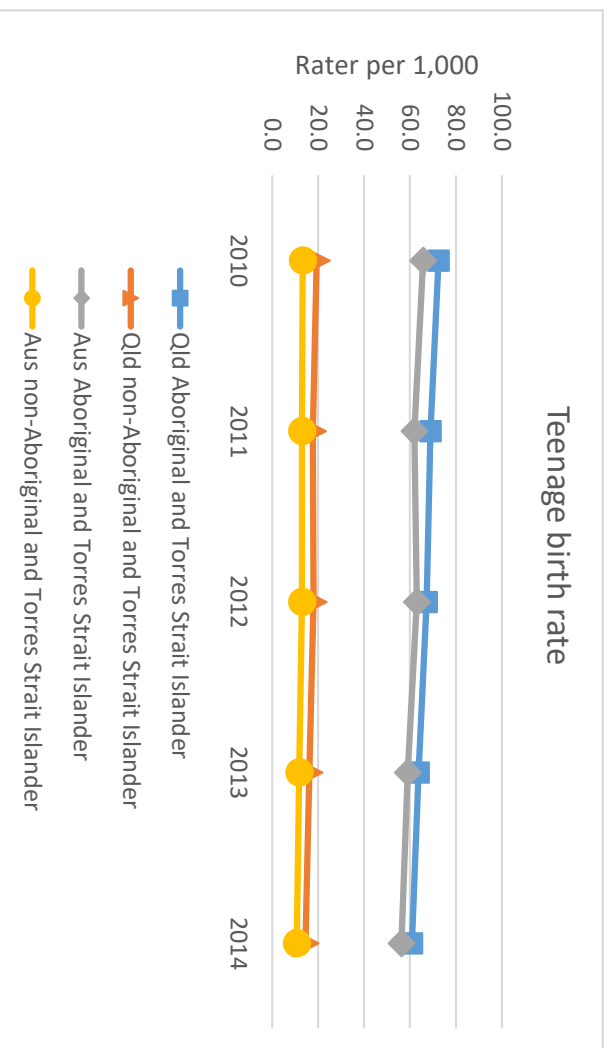
Between 2013 and 2017, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, both in Queensland and nationally, was consistently higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

As at 30 June 2017, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were over eight times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (41.7 per 1000, compared to 4.8 per 1000).

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 10 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, as at 30 June 2017 (58.7 per 1000, compared to 5.8 per 1000).

Indicator 3—Teenage births

Age-specific birth rate for women aged 15–19 years (births per 1000 females), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010–2014



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ²¹
QLD²²	22.7	21.1	21.3	19.6	17.8
AUS	15.9	15.5	15.5	14.2	13.0

Source	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, <i>Children's Headline Indicators: 'Teenage births'</i> , (updated 2016), accessed 6 June 2018, http://www.aihw.gov.au/chi/
Definition	Teenage births are measured by the rate of live births to women aged less than 20 years. ²³
Analysis	The teenage birth rate for mothers in Queensland remained consistently higher than the national rate in the five years to 2014. Overall, the teenage birth rate has slightly declined over the past five years, both in Queensland and nationally. ²⁴
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	In 2014, the birth rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 15–19 years in Australia was over five times higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (56.2 per 1000, compared to 10.6 per 1000), and approximately four times higher in Queensland (60.9 per 1000, compared to 14.5 per 1000). The teenage birth rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers has declined slightly in the five years to 2014.

²¹ The most recent data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare at the time of writing is 2014.

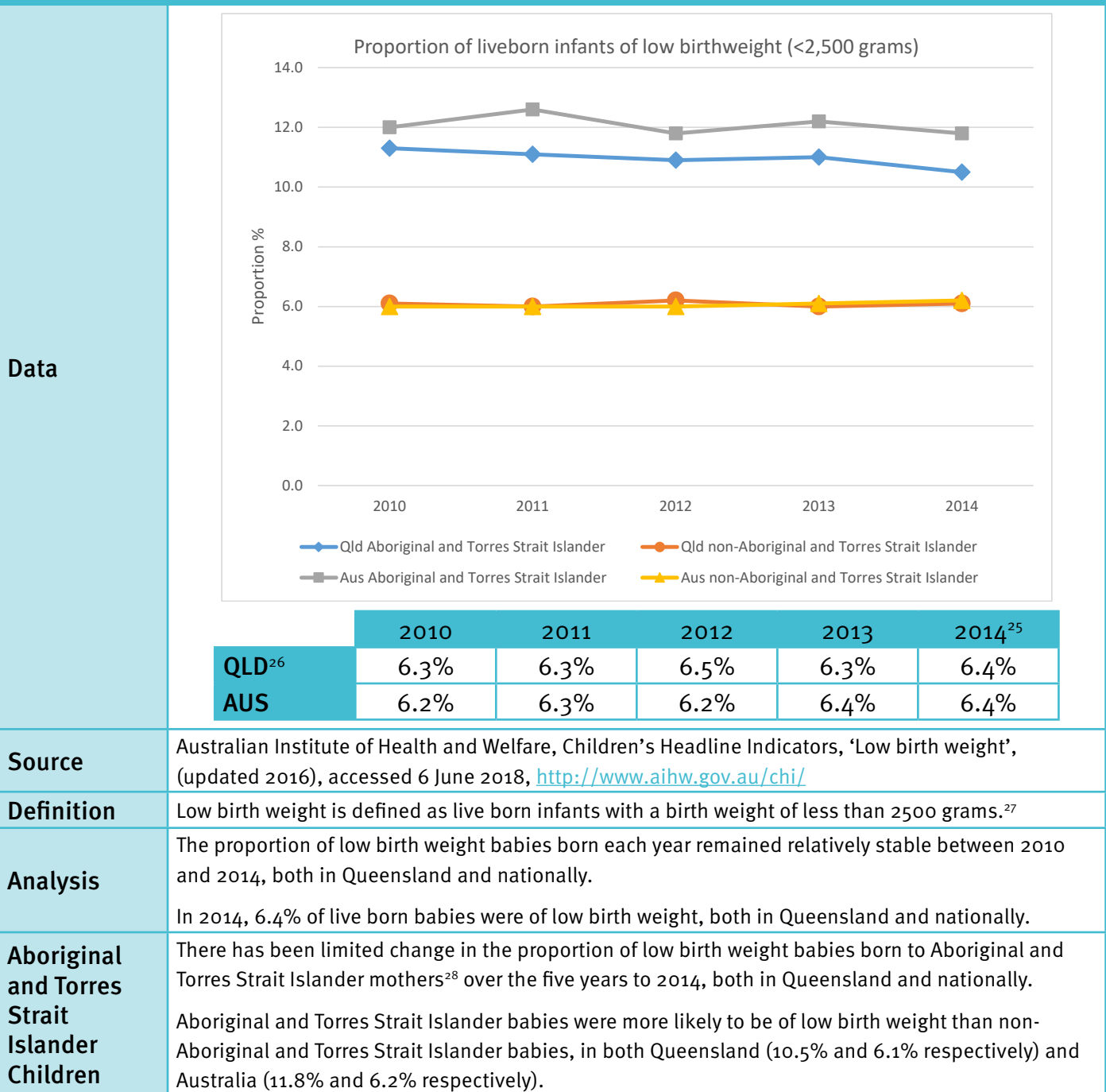
²² This table is a measure of the teenage birth rate for all females aged 15–19 years inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, females who do not identify and females whose cultural status is unknown.

²³ Rates are calculated using the population of females aged 15–19 years. Due to the small number of births occurring among women under 15 years of age, births to mothers aged under 15 years are included in the numerator but not the denominator (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, 'Teenage births', *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpaac/>).

²⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018, *Teenage mothers in Australia 2015*, Australian Government, Canberra. No comparable updated data was presented in this report for the individual states and territories.

Indicator 4—Infants born of low birth weight

Live born infants born with birth weight of less than 2500 grams (proportion of all live births), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2010–2014



²⁵ The most recent data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare at the time of writing is 2014.

²⁶ This table is a measure of the low birth rate for all infants inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants, infants who do not identify and infants whose cultural status is unknown.

²⁷ The World Health Organization defines low birth weight as less than 2500 grams. Stillbirths, miscarriages and terminations are excluded from this measure (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, ‘Low birth weight’, *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/>).

²⁸ Data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births relates to babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers only, and excludes babies born to non-Aboriginal mothers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers. Therefore, the information is not based on the total count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, ‘NFPAC Indicator 0.4’, *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children, Supplementary Tables & Resources*, accessed 9 August 2017, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/nfpac/supplementary/>).

Indicator 5—Child homicide

While a reduction in child homicide rates represents an indicator of progress under the National Framework, no national data has been released on this measure since February 2015.²⁹ As this data has previously been reported by the QFCC in its *Performance of the Queensland Child Protection System 2016 report*, these figures have not been reported again here.

As part of its child death register functions, the QFCC reports annually on the deaths of all children and young people aged 0–17 years in Queensland, and classifies these deaths according to cause, demographic information and other relevant factors. The QFCC works closely with relevant agencies in other jurisdictions to produce an overview of child death statistics across Australia and New Zealand. This has been used here to provide a proxy measure in the absence of current national homicide data.³⁰

Rate of deaths per 100,000 of the population as a result of fatal assault or neglect in Queensland and Australia, 2013–2015



²⁹ Australian Institute of Criminology 2015, *Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

³⁰ Queensland Family and Child Commission 2017, *Australian and New Zealand Child Death Statistics 2015*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, accessed 7 June 2018, <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/knowledge-and-resource-hub/australian-and-new-zealand-child-death-statistics-2015>.

³¹ The rates of child homicide are reported per 100,000 of the population, compared with per 1000 as used for other measures included in this report. This aligns with rates as reported in all QFCC child death publications.

³² This report is a supplementary chapter to the QFCC *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland, 2016–17*. Data is also sourced from the same reports produced in the previous two years.

³³ Queensland Family and Child Commission 2016, *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people, Queensland, 2015–16*, p. 59.

<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The rate of child death from assault or neglect in Queensland was consistently higher than the national average between 2013 and 2015. In 2015, the rate of fatalities among children and young people in Queensland was 1.1 per 100,000 of the population, compared to 0.7 per 100,000 nationally.</p> <p>However, a number of factors must be taken into account in interpreting this data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National rates of fatal assault and neglect have been calculated using the information provided by individual states and territories in each reporting year.³⁴ 2. Caution must be exercised when making comparisons and interpreting rates due to the small number of deaths analysed, especially at jurisdictional level. 3. The high rate of fatal assault and neglect for Queensland in 2014 is due, in part, to a single incident involving multiple fatalities. 4. States and territories differ in approaches to classifying a death as fatal assault or neglect. In some jurisdictions, cause of death is pending until an official cause is determined. In Queensland, the fatal assault and neglect category includes suspicious deaths where information available to the QFCC indicates a homicide investigation was initiated, or where an alleged perpetrator was charged, or the alleged perpetrator is known but deceased.
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</p>	<p>No data is currently available to compare the rate of death from fatal assault and neglect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at a national level.</p> <p>However, the QFCC's Australian and New Zealand Child Deaths Statistics 2015 report indicates that the rate of death (from all causes) in Queensland was almost twice as high for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (66.1 per 100,000) as it was for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (35.5 per 100,000). Queensland had the fourth highest rate of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in 2015, behind the Northern Territory (112.3 per 100,000), Western Australia (85.9 per 100,000) and South Australia (80.5 per 100,000).³⁵</p>

³⁴ In 2013, Western Australia did not provide any data to contribute to the national total. In addition, an actual figure of deaths from assault or neglect in Victoria was not provided (reported as less than five deaths). As such, in calculating the national total, the number of deaths in Victoria was estimated as four.

³⁵ Jurisdictions may experience difficulty with the collection of child death data regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status. This may result in an undercount in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander death rates, limiting the comparability of the data.

Queensland's performance against state goals

Queensland's state goals in relation to child protection are primarily captured in the government's *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform agenda. This resulted from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI).

In June 2013, the QCPCOI released its final report, providing 121 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Queensland Government.³⁶ The QCPCOI provided a roadmap that proposed the reforms be implemented over a ten-year period.³⁷

A number of actions were prioritised for delivery in the planning and early rollout phases. These included:

- creating governance and program management arrangements
- making early legislative amendments to establish the systems and structures to support the implementation of the reform program.

Implementation is currently focused on a gradual rollout of reform strategies and trials. This allows for non-government organisations to build their capacity and workforce capability to effectively deliver the new service models. It enables reform strategies to be trialled in identified locations and adjusted as needed. It also means specific characteristics and needs of rural and regional communities can be considered, and an adaptive management approach can be taken.

The following summary provides an overview of the current status of the implementation of the QCPCOI recommendations as at 30 June 2018.

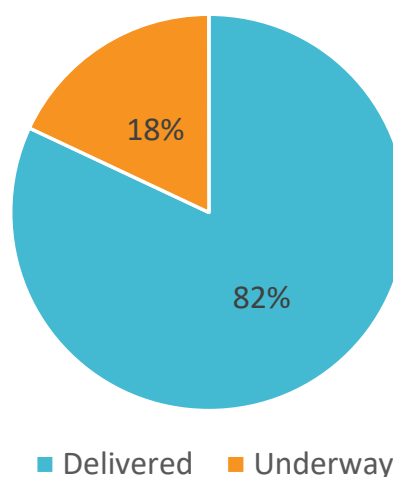
Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and well-being of Queensland children

The strategic objective of Domain 1 is: Government and non-government agencies work in partnership to deliver effective and efficient services and support. This will be achieved by:

- promoting to families and communities their responsibility for protecting and caring for their own children
- establishing central governance arrangements that provide for cross-sectoral leadership and responsibility for the protection and care of children
- establishing regional governance arrangements to facilitate strong collaboration and coordination of services at the local level.

There are 11 recommendations divided across four work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 9 recommendations (82%) have been delivered
- 2 recommendations (18%) are underway.



³⁶ Six of these recommendations were accepted in principle.

³⁷ Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, 2013, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, State of Queensland.

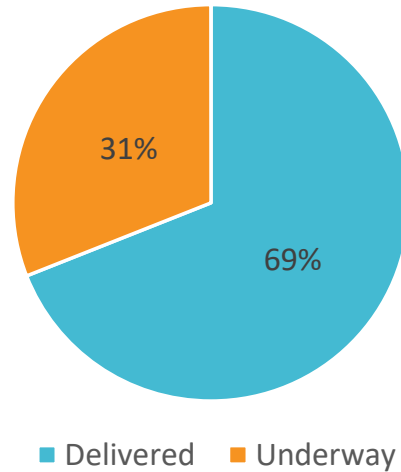
Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier

The strategic objective of Domain 2 is: Vulnerable children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities. This will be achieved by:

- introducing a new community-based intake gateway (dual pathway)
- building the capacity of the family support services sector (both government and non-government)
- ensuring families who have a child with a disability are adequately supported in continuing to care for their child.

There are 16 recommendations divided across four work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 11 recommendations (69%) have been delivered
- 5 recommendations (31%) are underway.



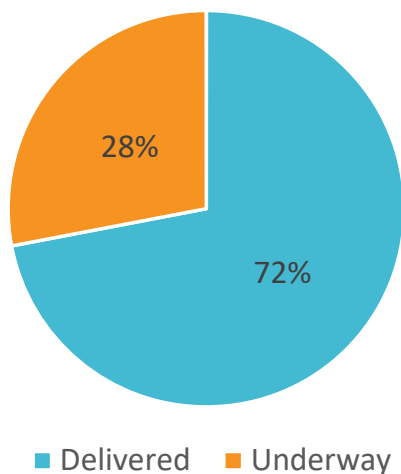
Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system

The strategic objective of Domain 3 is: Child protection practice is focused on engaging with families earlier, and on keeping children safely at home where appropriate. This will be achieved by:

- introducing a new child protection practice framework (with supporting policies and procedures) that is strengths-based and focused on engaging with families
- strengthening the voices of children and families in the court system and, more broadly, in the best interest of the child.

There are 18 recommendations divided across three work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 13 recommendations (72%) have been delivered
- 5 recommendations (28%) are underway.



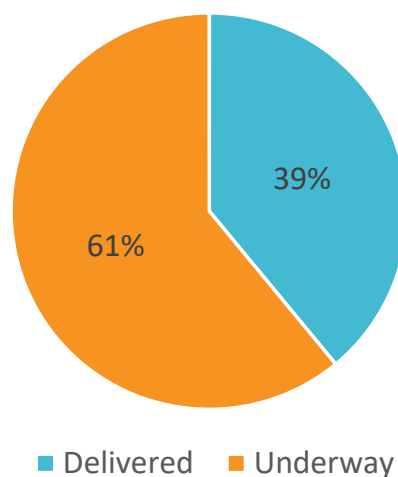
Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people

The strategic objectives of Domain 4 are: Children and young people in care are protected, cared for, and supported to reach their full potential; and young people leaving care have high prospects, are ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and feel connected to their culture and community. This will be achieved by:

- strengthening and expanding existing health and therapeutic services to children and young people
- ensuring best match of children and young people to carers and models of care
- enhancing placement stability for children and young people
- building the capacity of the non-government sector to better support and train carers
- strengthening transition planning to better equip young people when they leave care, and providing post-care support.

There are 18 recommendations divided across 10 work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 7 recommendations (39%) have been delivered
- 11 recommendations (61%) are underway.



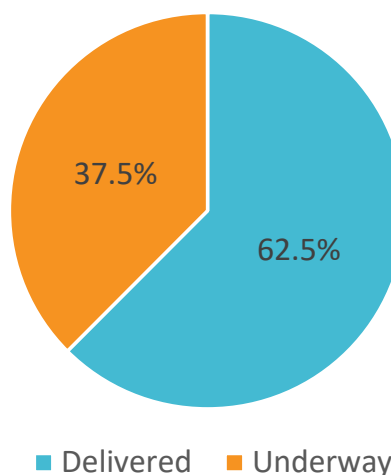
Domain 5: Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

The strategic objective of Domain 5 is: Indigenous children and young people are safe and supported in their communities as part of a culturally responsive and capable system. This will be achieved by:

- building the capacity of the family support sector for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and redesigning existing program delivery to increase access to existing services
- providing increased training and support to carers and staff, and streamlining our carer assessment processes where appropriate
- changing our practice to better meet the requirements and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- working to better support children and families in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

There are 16 recommendations divided across nine work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 10 recommendations (62.5%) have been delivered
- 6 recommendations (37.5%) are underway.



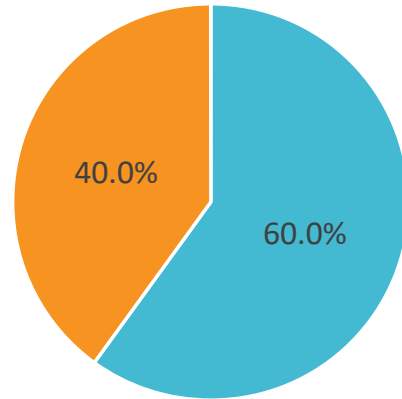
Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations

The strategic objective of Domain 6 is: A client-focused workforce that is appropriately skilled, motivated and supported. This will be achieved by:

- strengthening the capacity and capability of the child protection workforce and service organisations, and establishing a positive culture
- enhancing legal services and advice provided to child protection workers in the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

There are 10 recommendations divided across five work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 6 recommendations (60%) have been delivered
- 4 recommendations (40%) are underway.



■ Delivered ■ Underway

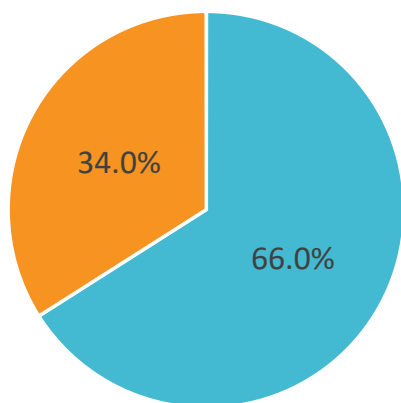
Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system

The strategic objective of Domain 7 is: The child and family support system is efficient, accountable, and informed by a culture of learning. This will be achieved by:

- improving court processes and efficiencies
- increasing accountability and transparency and reducing duplication and red tape
- reviewing our legislation.

There are 32 recommendations divided across 10 work packages in this domain. As at 30 June 2018:

- 21 recommendations (66%) have been delivered
- 11 recommendations (34%) are underway.



■ Delivered ■ Underway

Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions

Queensland's performance has been compared to other jurisdictions using the Productivity Commission's 2018 *Report on Government Services* (ROGS). The ROGS provides a framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services.³⁸ Data is available and generally comparable³⁹ for six of the seven effectiveness indicators and for both of the outcome indicators. These are analysed in this section.

The effectiveness indicators are:

1. response times
2. substantiation rate
3. stability of placement
4. children aged under 12 years in home-based care
5. placement maintains connections
6. children with current documented case plans.

The outcome indicators are:

1. improved safety
2. improved education.

In interpreting the following results, it should be noted that considerable legislative, policy and practice differences exist between jurisdictions. Comparisons are necessarily limited as a result.

³⁸ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.6. *The child protection services performance indicator framework* was considered to include the most appropriate indicators to compare performance across jurisdictions because of the specific focus on child protection, regularity of reporting, and continued work towards additional outcome measurement.

³⁹ Data to support the 'safety in out-of-home care' effectiveness indicator is not comparable due to differences across jurisdictions in policies, practices and reporting methods.

Effectiveness indicator 1—Response times

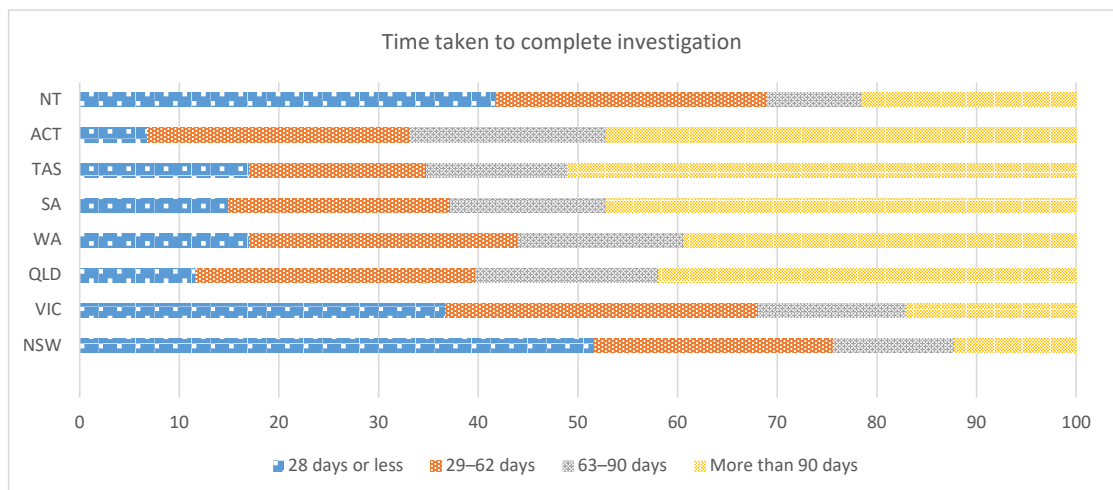
The ROGS defines response time by two measures: response time to commence investigations and response time to complete investigations.⁴⁰ The time taken to commence an investigation is measured by the number of days between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is subsequently commenced. The length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation indicates promptness in responding to child protection concerns.

In Queensland, an investigation is not considered commenced until the child is sighted or, in the case of an unborn child, the pregnant woman is interviewed. Prior to sighting the child (or interviewing the pregnant woman), child safety officers begin actively working on the case, reviewing the child protection history of the child and family and determining who will be involved in the investigation process. This may include making contact with other agencies such as police, schools and hospitals.⁴¹

Data reported for this measure is not comparable across jurisdictions as jurisdictions count notifications at different points in response to a report, and have different policies and protocols governing the type of response to a notification.⁴²

Proportion of investigations finalised, by time taken to complete investigation, Australian states and territories, 2012–13 to 2016–17

Data



		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17
QLD	less than 28 days	27.0%	26.5%	21.3%	16.1%	11.6%
	29 to 62 days	33.8%	35.7%	36.3%	32.7%	28.1%
	63 to 90 days	17.5%	17.0%	18.0%	19.3%	18.4%
	90+ days	21.8%	20.9%	24.4%	31.9%	41.9%
AUS	less than 28 days	36.4%	45.8%	38.2%	40.7%	39.1%
	29 to 62 days	23.8%	25.7%	25.8%	26.4%	26.2%
	63 to 90 days	13.4%	12.8%	13.5%	13.5%	13.9%
	90+ days	26.4%	15.7%	22.5%	19.4%	20.8%

⁴⁰ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.10.

⁴¹ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.9, explanatory notes.

⁴² Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.9, explanatory notes.

Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.10.
Definition	<p>The proportion of investigations completed within specified time periods is measured by the number of days between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is completed (that is, the date an investigation outcome is determined).</p> <p>A higher and increasing proportion of investigations completed in shorter time periods is desirable. The length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation indicates effectiveness in conducting investigations in a timely manner.⁴³</p> <p>Caution should be exercised when interpreting results, as jurisdictions count notifications at different points in response to a report and have different policies and protocols covering the type of response to a notification.</p>
Analysis	<p>In 2016–17, Queensland completed 11.6% of investigations within 28 days, which was substantially lower than the national average of 39.1%. Moreover, the proportion of investigations completed within this timeframe has been on a steady downward trend since 2012–13, falling from 27%.</p> <p>The majority of investigations in Queensland took more than 90 days to complete (41.9%). Overall, the average length of time to complete an investigation has been steadily increasing since 2012–13.</p> <p>The QFCC will continue to monitor Queensland's performance in relation to time taken to complete investigations in 2018 and beyond.</p>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.

⁴³ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.10.

Effectiveness indicator 2—Substantiation rate

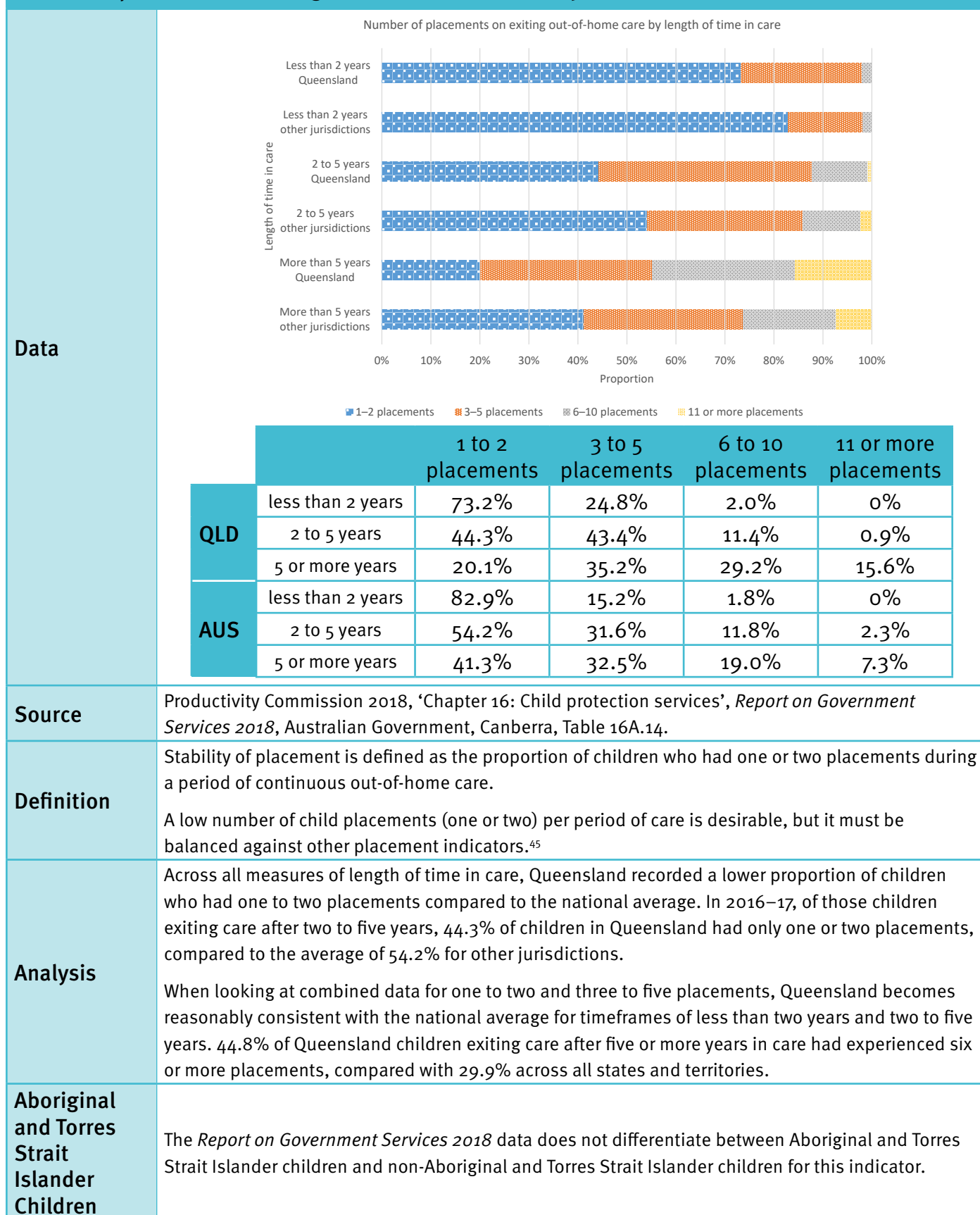
Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Australian states and territories, 2012–13 to 2016–17

Data	Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated																																																																								
	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017																																																																				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012–13</th> <th>2013–14</th> <th>2014–15</th> <th>2015–16</th> <th>2016–17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NSW</td> <td>50.0%</td> <td>40.0%</td> <td>35.0%</td> <td>38.0%</td> <td>38.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VIC</td> <td>58.0%</td> <td>60.0%</td> <td>58.0%</td> <td>55.0%</td> <td>55.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>QLD</td> <td>36.6%</td> <td>36.1%</td> <td>33.5%</td> <td>33.3%</td> <td>32.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WA</td> <td>30.0%</td> <td>30.0%</td> <td>32.0%</td> <td>43.0%</td> <td>48.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SA</td> <td>48.0%</td> <td>48.0%</td> <td>48.0%</td> <td>48.0%</td> <td>48.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TAS</td> <td>58.0%</td> <td>60.0%</td> <td>70.0%</td> <td>70.0%</td> <td>73.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ACT</td> <td>38.0%</td> <td>38.0%</td> <td>40.0%</td> <td>28.0%</td> <td>28.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NT</td> <td>45.0%</td> <td>45.0%</td> <td>38.0%</td> <td>35.0%</td> <td>38.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	NSW	50.0%	40.0%	35.0%	38.0%	38.0%	VIC	58.0%	60.0%	58.0%	55.0%	55.0%	QLD	36.6%	36.1%	33.5%	33.3%	32.4%	WA	30.0%	30.0%	32.0%	43.0%	48.0%	SA	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	TAS	58.0%	60.0%	70.0%	70.0%	73.3%	ACT	38.0%	38.0%	40.0%	28.0%	28.0%	NT	45.0%	45.0%	38.0%	35.0%	38.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012–13</th> <th>2013–14</th> <th>2014–15</th> <th>2015–16</th> <th>2016–17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>QLD</td> <td>36.6%</td> <td>36.1%</td> <td>33.5%</td> <td>33.3%</td> <td>32.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUS</td> <td>47.3%</td> <td>42.7%</td> <td>40.1%</td> <td>40.3%</td> <td>41.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	QLD	36.6%	36.1%	33.5%	33.3%	32.4%	AUS	47.3%	42.7%	40.1%	40.3%	41.6%
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Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.11.																																																																								
Definition	Substantiation rate is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where abuse or neglect, or risk of abuse or neglect, was confirmed. The substantiation rate provides an indication of the extent to which services were targeted to those at greatest risk, thereby avoiding the human and financial costs of an investigation where no abuse or neglect had occurred or was at risk of occurring. Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable. ⁴⁴																																																																								
Analysis	In 2016–17, 32.4% of investigations finalised in Queensland were substantiated. This substantiation rate is substantially lower than the national average of 41.6%, and lower than all other states and territories, with the exception of the Australian Capital Territory (27.9%). Queensland's rate of substantiation has remained relatively steady over the past five years, with a slight decline in the last three reporting periods.																																																																								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.																																																																								

⁴⁴ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.13.

Effectiveness indicator 3—Stability of placement

Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting out-of-home care during the year, by number of placements and length of time in care, 2016–17



⁴⁵ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.16.

Effectiveness indicator 4—Children aged under 12 years in home-based care

Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement 2013–2017

Data	Children under 12 years in out-of-home care in a home-based placement							
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017			
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	QLD	98.1%	97.7%	97.6%	97.6%	97.6%		
AUS	96.5%	97.6%	97.4%	97.4%	97.3%			
Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.17.							
Definition	Children aged under 12 years in home-based care is defined as the number of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care. A high or increasing rate is desirable. ⁴⁶							
Analysis	At 30 June 2017, the proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care nationally who were placed in home-based care was 97.3%. Queensland's proportion of children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care is comparable to the national figures. Queensland's performance for this indicator has remained consistently high, measuring between 97.6% and 98.1% over the last five years.							
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	At 30 June 2017, proportions of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care were similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in both Queensland (97.1% and 97.9% respectively) and Australia (96.5% and 97.8% respectively). These numbers have been consistent across available time series data.							

⁴⁶ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.18.

Effectiveness indicator 5—Placement maintains connections

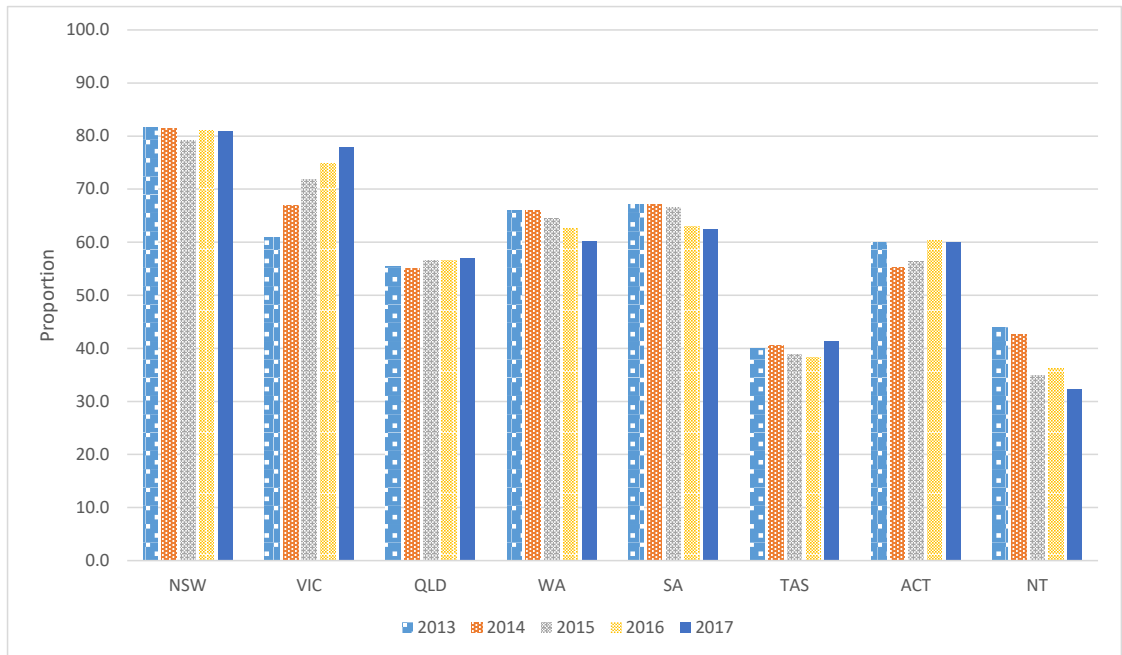
Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, 2013–2017

Data						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
	NSW	55.0	55.0	50.0	51.0	51.0
	VIC	50.0	50.0	55.0	56.0	58.0
	QLD	37.2	40.4	42.9	44.3	44.6
	WA	45.0	49.0	49.0	49.0	49.0
	SA	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0
	TAS	28.0	28.0	28.0	28.0	37.0
	ACT	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0	52.0
	NT	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3
	QLD	37.2%	40.4%	42.9%	44.3%	44.6%
	AUS	47.7%	48.5%	47.3%	48.7%	49.5%
Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.19.					
Definition	This refers to the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child. ⁴⁷					
Analysis	<p>At 30 June 2017, the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin in Queensland was 44.6%, slightly lower than the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin nationally (49.5%).</p> <p>Queensland's proportion of children placed with relatives or kin has steadily increased since 2013, from 37.2%.</p>					
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	<p>At 30 June 2017, 50.1% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care nationally were placed with relatives or kin. This number was marginally higher than the proportion of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with relatives or kin (49.2%).</p> <p>The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with relatives or kin in Queensland has consistently risen since 2013. However, Queensland continues to measure below the national average. At 30 June 2017, Queensland had the third lowest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with relatives or kin at 44.6%, ahead only of the Northern Territory (5.3%) and Tasmania (37%).</p>					

⁴⁷ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, pp. 16.18–16.19.

Proportion of children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, 2013–2017

Data



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
QLD	55.5%	55.1%	56.5%	56.6%	57.0%
AUS	68.8%	68.7%	67.1%	67.9%	67.6%

Source

Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.20.

Definition

All Australian states and territories have adopted a hierarchy of placement options when placing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care. Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care placed with the child's extended family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.⁴⁸

Analysis

Compared with other states and territories, Queensland's performance regarding children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is relatively poor.

It must be noted that the *Report on Government Services 2018* definition of compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is not in strict accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Therefore, Queensland's results are not directly comparable with the national average and the data should be interpreted with caution.

As at 30 June 2017, 57% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care in Queensland were placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principle. This is lower than the national proportion of 67.6%.

Nationally, the proportion of children placed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle has decreased slightly over the past five years. In comparison, while consistently lower than the national average, Queensland's proportion has increased from 55.5% to 57%.

⁴⁸ The measure 'placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle' should be interpreted with care. This is a proxy measure, reporting the placement outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, rather than compliance with the principle (that is, the process of determining placement options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children). (from Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16A.18–16.19).

Effectiveness indicator 6—Children with current case plans

Proportion of children with documented current case plans, 2013–14 to 2016–17

Data								
	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17				
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	QLD	97.1%	97.1%	96.6%	96.2%			
	AUS ⁴⁹	82.1%	86.6%	86.3%	85.3%			
Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.21.							
Definition	<p>A case plan is an individualised, dynamic written plan (or support agreement) developed between a family and an agency on the basis of an assessment process. A current documented case plan is one that has been approved and/or reviewed within the previous 12 months.⁵⁰</p> <p>Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time, but not comparable across jurisdictions, as policies and legislation vary regarding timeframes within which a case plan must be prepared.⁵¹</p>							
Analysis	<p>Nationally, 85.3% of the children required to have a current documented case plan had a plan at 30 June 2017.</p> <p>The proportion of children with a current documented case plan in Queensland has remained relatively stable between 2013–14 and 2016–17 (97.1% to 96.2%), decreasing slowly, but remaining consistently higher than the national average.</p>							
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	<p>As at 30 June 2017 in Queensland, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a current documented case plan was slightly higher than that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (96.8% and 95.8% respectively) but was lower nationally (83.6% and 86.4% respectively).</p> <p>The proportion of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with a current documented case plan was higher than the national average (96.8% and 83.6% respectively).</p>							

⁴⁹ Data is not available for South Australia due to systems changes in the case management and data reporting system. Data is not available for the Northern Territory due to recording issues. Data is not available for Victoria for the 2012–13 reporting period.

⁵⁰ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.21.

⁵¹ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.21, explanatory notes.

Outcome indicator 1—Improved safety

Proportion of children aged 0–17 who were the subject of a substantiated investigation, who were also the subject of a re-substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2012–13 to 2015–16

Data								
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	9.1%	3.0%	7.4%	5.5%	7.1%	8.1%	6.1%	7.7%
	15.4%	14.3%	17.8%	17.2%	15.1%	23.5%	16.3%	22.6%
	■ 3 months	■ 12 months						
		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16			
	QLD 3 months	8.6%	7.4%	7.1%	7.4%			
	QLD 12 months	19.8%	18.2%	17.1%	17.8%			
Source	Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> , Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.35.							
Definition⁵²	<p>Substantiation rate after a prior substantiation is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were then the subject of a further substantiation within the following 3 or 12 months.</p> <p>Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but not comparable across jurisdictions. The year reported relates to the year of the initial substantiation.</p>							
Analysis	<p>The proportion of children in Queensland subject to a substantiated investigation who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation decreased between 2012–13 and 2014–15, for both re-substantiations within 3 months (8.6% to 7.1%) and within 12 months (19.8% to 17.1%). It then slightly increased in 2015–16 (7.4% and 17.8% for re-substantiations within 3 and 12 months respectively).</p> <p>As at 30 June 2016, compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland had the fourth highest proportion of re-substantiations within 3 months at 7.4% (national range 3% to 9.1%) and the third highest proportion of re-substantiations within 12 months at 17.8% (national range 14.3% to 23.5%).</p>							
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.							

⁵² Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.28.

Proportion of children aged 0–17 who were the subject of an unsubstantiated investigation, who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months

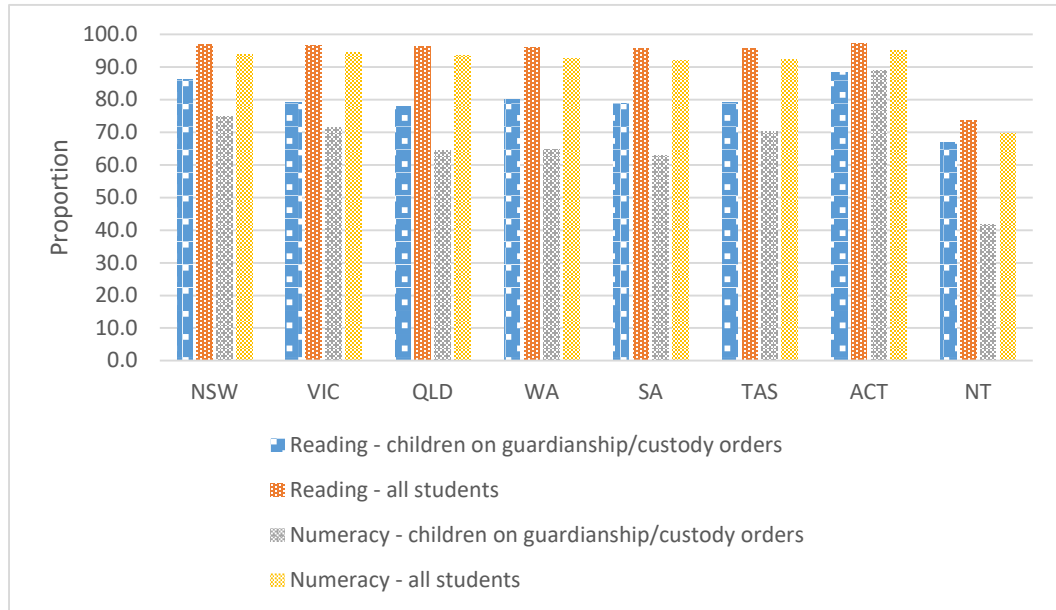
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	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16												
QLD 3 months	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%												
QLD 12 months	11.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.1%												
<p>Source</p>	<p>Productivity Commission 2018, ‘Chapter 16: Child protection services’, <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i>, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.34.</p>															
<p>Definition⁵³</p>	<p>Substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within three or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate.</p> <p>Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but not comparable across jurisdictions. The year reported relates to the year of the initial substantiation.</p>															
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The proportion of children in Queensland subject to an initial decision not to substantiate who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation decreased between 2012–13 and 2015–16, for both substantiations within three months (4.2% to 3.8%) and within 12 months (11.6% to 10.1%).</p> <p>As at 30 June 2017, compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland had the equal second lowest proportion of substantiations (after an initial decision not to substantiate) within three months at 3.8% (national range 3% to 7.2%) and the second lowest proportion of substantiations within 12 months at 10.1% (national range 9.5% to 15.9%).</p>															
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</p>	<p>The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.</p>															

⁵³ Productivity Commission 2018, ‘Chapter 16: Child protection services’, *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.28.

Outcome indicator 2—Improved education

Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level, 2013

Data⁵⁴



	2013	2014	2015
QLD reading (children on orders)	78.0%	71.6%	75.5%
QLD reading (all students)	96.2%	92.8%	93.8%
QLD numeracy (children on orders)	64.5%	69.1%	76.7%
QLD numeracy (all students)	93.6%	93.1%	95.5%

Source

Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.36.

Definition

Improved education is defined as the proportion of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy in Year 5, compared with all children. A high or increasing rate of children on guardianship and custody orders achieving at or above national minimum standards in reading and numeracy is desirable.⁵⁵

The availability of NAPLAN data for government and non-government school students varies across jurisdictions. Queensland includes government and non-government schools.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Data reported for this measure is complete for the reporting period of 2013 only. For 2014 and 2015 reporting periods, only Queensland and South Australia have available data.

⁵⁵ Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.31.

⁵⁶ For 2013 data: Queensland includes government and non-government schools; New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory include government, Catholic and Independent schools; Western Australia and Tasmania include government schools only; and the Northern Territory includes government and Christian schools. This should be considered when interpreting the results, along with other contextual factors (from Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.36, explanatory notes).

Analysis	<p>In 2015 in Queensland, the proportion of children at or above the national minimum standards for Year 5 reading and numeracy was substantially lower among children in care (75.5% and 76.7% respectively) compared to all children (93.8% and 95.5% respectively). The proportion of children in care in Queensland at or above national benchmarks has fallen since 2013 for reading (from 78% to 75.5%) but risen for numeracy (64.5% to 76.7%).</p> <p>In comparison to other jurisdictions, based on available data from 2013, Queensland had the second lowest proportion of children in care achieving the national benchmark for reading (national range from 66.7% to 88.2%) and the third lowest proportion for numeracy (national range from 41.7% to 88.9%).⁵⁷</p>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children	<p>The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.</p>

⁵⁷ When interpreting NAPLAN data, it is important to take into account student participation rates. Children exempted from NAPLAN testing are recorded as not having met the national minimum standards in reading and numeracy. Experimental data indicates that children on guardianship and custody orders are exempted from NAPLAN testing at substantially higher rates than the general student population, which might contribute to poorer reported NAPLAN results for children on orders, compared with the general student population (from Productivity Commission 2018, 'Chapter 16: Child protection services', *Report on Government Services 2018*, Australian Government, Canberra, p. 16.31).

Assessment summary

In assessing Queensland's performance over time in comparison with other jurisdictions, the QFCC considers performance to be:

- 'good' when Queensland data was better than the national totals or the majority of states and territories
- 'satisfactory' when Queensland data was on par with national totals or the majority of states and territories
- 'requires improvement' when Queensland data was below par compared to national totals or the majority of states.

Overall, the most recent publicly available national child protection data suggests that Queensland's performance is variable, being good in some areas and requiring improvement in others. The following table summarises the main results for each measure, the supporting data, and our assessment of the acceptability of these results.

Queensland's performance on these indicators is expected to be affected over the coming years by the continued implementation of the reform agenda—most notably, the considerable investment in developing the secondary support system. The QFCC will continue to examine and appraise Queensland's performance in these areas in comparison to other states and territories, as part of our oversight role.

Summary of main results and QFCC assessment by measure

Measure	Main result (2017–18)	Supporting data	Assessment
Response time to complete investigations	Fewer investigations completed within 28 days in Queensland.	11.6% of investigations completed within 28 days in Queensland compared to 39.1% nationally.	Requires improvement
Stability of placement	Queensland children in care for five or more years are more likely to have experienced between six or more placements, and less likely to have had only one or two placements than children elsewhere in Australia.	44.8% of Queensland children exiting care after five years or more had experienced six or more placements (compared to 26.3% of children in all other jurisdictions), while 20.1% had experienced one or two placements (compared to 41.3% of children in all other jurisdictions) in 2016–17.	Requires improvement
Children aged under 12 years in home-based care	The majority of Queensland children aged under 12 years are in home-based care.	97.6% of Queensland children aged under 12 years were in home-based care in 2017, compared to 97.3% nationally.	Satisfactory
Placement with relatives or kin	Slightly fewer children in out-of-home care are placed with relatives or kin in Queensland.	44.6% of Queensland children in out-of-home care are placed with relatives or kin in 2017, compared to 49.5% nationally.	Requires improvement
Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle	Fewer Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care are placed with relatives, kin or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.	57% of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are placed in accordance with the placement principle, compared to 67.6% nationally.	Requires improvement
Children with current case plans	The majority of children in Queensland have a current case plan—more, percentage-wise than the national figure.	96.2% of Queensland children requiring a case plan have a current one in 2016–17, compared to 85.3% nationally.	Good

<p>Improved safety</p>	<p>Compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland has the fourth highest proportion of re-substantiations within three months and the third highest proportion of re-substantiations within 12 months.</p> <p>Compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland has the equal second lowest proportion of substantiations (after an initial decision not to substantiate) within three months and the second lowest proportion of substantiations (after an initial decision not to substantiate) within 12 months.</p>	<p>7.4% of Queensland children subject to a substantiation were subject to re-substantiation within three months (national range 3% to 9.1%) and 17.8% within 12 months (national range 14.3% to 23.5%) in 2016–17.</p> <p>3.8% of Queensland children subject to an initial decision not to substantiate were subject to a substantiation within three months (national range 3% to 7.2%) and 10.1% within 12 months (national range 9.5% to 15.9%), in 2016–17.</p>	<p>Requires Improvement</p>
<p>Improved education</p>	<p>Fewer children in care in Queensland are achieving the national minimum standards for Year 5 reading and numeracy.</p>	<p>75.5% of Queensland children in care reached the national benchmarks for reading in 2015, compared to 93.8% of all Queensland children.</p> <p>76.7% of Queensland children in care reached the national benchmarks for numeracy in 2015, compared to 95.5% of all Queensland children.</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>



