

A photograph of two young girls with brown hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. The girl in the foreground has her hair in two braids and is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The girl behind her is wearing a light blue t-shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

2024–25

# Highlights

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Every Queensland child is  
loved, respected and has  
their rights upheld



QUEENSLAND  
**Family & Child**  
Commission





We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as two unique peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, strengths and knowledge. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Queensland and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission recognises the rich and resilient cultures that continue to sustain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect the right to self-determination and the critical importance of continuing connection to kin, Country and culture in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise that self-determination, healing, dignity and respect are all fundamental elements needed to improve outcomes and relationships. As an agency, we are committed to embedding culturally safe and responsive design practices and delivery in our work.

The Commission acknowledges the special rights of children which are recorded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), guided by its four principles: the right of all children to survival and development; respect of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all decisions relating to children; the right of all children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them; and the right of all children to enjoy all rights of the UNCRC without discrimination of any kind.



# Commissioners' introduction

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) plays a vital role in improving outcomes for children and families across Queensland. Every report, review and piece of advice we provide contributes to creating safer, more supportive systems for young Queenslanders and their families.

In 2025, the Commission celebrated 10 years of operation. This milestone marked a decade of building influence, strengthening oversight, and shaping policy through evidence, lived experience, and collaboration. Our work has directly informed major reforms, including post-detention supports, dual-care models in residential care, foster care pilots, home visiting programs, re-engagement schools, and transparency around young people in watch houses.

A significant milestone was the establishment of the Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner (OATSICC), responding to longstanding calls for a dedicated, independent and empowered commissioner, aligning with national and state commitments under *Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children* and the Closing the Gap agreement.

OATSICC brings a unique value proposition: a distinct voice grounded in lived experience, cultural knowledge and systems insight. Acting as a bridge between civil society and government, between children and decision-makers, its strength lies in always beginning and ending with those most affected by policy and service decisions: children and young people themselves.

The year also marked a transformative moment for the Commission. With the passage of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (CSO Act), our mandate has expanded significantly. We are now responsible for overseeing the implementation of Child Safe Standards and a Reportable Conduct Scheme across Queensland. This has been matched by major investment—our annual budget has nearly doubled to \$23 million, and our Commission has grown from 50 to 80 staff, with further recruitment underway.



Luke Twyford – Principal Commissioner



Natalie Lewis – Commissioner

We launched a \$3 million Child Safeguarding Grants Program and began procurement of a \$3 million case management system to enhance our response to child harm and abuse. This expansion reflects a deep commitment to reform and leadership in child safeguarding. The Commission is evolving from an oversight body into a community-focused driver of systemic change, ensuring that organisations across the state uphold the highest standards of child safety.

# A **snapshot** of 2024–25



oversight  
reviews

**8** oversight reviews were completed and provided significant insight into statutory child protection systems and opportunities to influence systemic change.



formal  
recommendations

**13** formal recommendations to government were made to improve systems for children, young people and their families.



formal  
submissions

**43** formal submissions were made to state and federal reviews and inquiries.



**8000**  
voices

The voices of over **8000** Queenslanders were collected through a range of engagement and advocacy activities.



child deaths  
reviewed

The Child Death Review (Board) reviewed **70** deaths of children known to the child protection system.



**200**

professionals

More than **200** professionals participated in the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group Conference we hosted.



**\$950,000**  
invested in partnerships

We partnered with government agencies, non-government organisations and community stakeholders to **provide more than \$950,000** to support, connect and collaborate to advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children.





11  
public  
hearings

We appeared at **11** parliamentary hearings.



2862  
media  
reports

Our work featured in **2862** media reports, a **20** per cent increase from the previous year.



427  
child deaths  
recorded

Details of **427** child deaths were recorded in the Child Death Register. This register is an important resource as the data held informs policies, practices and interventions aimed at preventing future child deaths.



1000s  
kilometres travelled to  
meet Queenslanders

Commissioners and staff **travelled thousands of kilometres** to present at conferences, appear at hearings and inquiries, meet with stakeholders and ensure the voices of children, young people and families across the whole of Queensland were heard.



45  
requests for  
information

We made **45** requests or information under sections **35** and **29A** of our legislation.



1000s  
stakeholders engaged  
with

The Child Safe Organisations team engaged with hundreds of stakeholders including **59** bi-lateral meetings, seven events and conferences, nine networking/working groups and **11** webinars and presentations.



46  
grants awarded

We funded **46** grant applicants to build the capacity and capability of Queensland organisations ahead of the commencement of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*.





## Our **why**

We are a commission focused on Queensland's most precious resources – its children and families. Currently, there are more than 5.6 million people living in Queensland, including 1.36 million families. Approximately 31 per cent of Queenslanders are under the age of 25, and of these 5 per cent identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. In the past 12 months, the number of Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years has increased approximately 1.2 per cent to an estimated 1.7 million of which:

- > **20 per cent** speak a language other than English
- > **8 per cent** have a disability
- > **97,067** are active National Disability Insurance Scheme participants
- > **14 per cent** identify as a person with a mental health condition
- > **39 per cent** are developmentally vulnerable on one or more Australian Early Development Census domains
- > **10,048** are educated via home education
- > **42,355** were suspended or excluded from school
- > **20,762** aged 0–24 years received specialist homelessness services
- > **8208** households with children made up **32.5 per cent** of all Queensland social housing register applications
- > **99,870** are subject to a report to the child safety system
- > **7448** are found to have been neglected, harmed or in need of protection
- > **13,382** are in out-of-home care (OOHC)
- > **10,967** young offenders aged 10 to 17 years proceeded against by police
- > **317** young people were in detention
- > **33** young people were held in a police watch house on an average day
- > **6720** young people appeared in a youth justice court hearing.



# Our people

Our workforce is comprised of 68.92 full time equivalent staff with a total headcount of 74. Across policy, legal, data analysis, engagement, communications, governance, corporate services and leadership functions, our people bring expertise, integrity and purpose to everything they do. Each role contributes to our collective mission of promoting the safety, wellbeing and rights of Queensland's children and families.

Our staff lead rigorous reviews, produce evidence-informed recommendations and maintain a firm focus on outcomes for children. They must hold deep system knowledge while remaining alert to the lived experiences that shape the realities of children and families. This work demands both intellectual discipline and strategic agility to position us for the greatest influence and impact. Our data professionals play a vital role in transforming complex information into meaningful insights that highlight risks and guide service reforms. By upholding rigorous standards of accuracy, integrity, and ethical data use, they maintain trust in our stewardship of sensitive information.

Community and sector engagement staff build trust and partnerships with children, families, communities, service providers and government. These roles require cultural humility, emotional intelligence and the ability to listen while advocating boldly. The work of engaging First Nations communities, children with lived experience, and marginalised families demands sustained care and sensitivity.

Our legal, governance, corporate and administrative staff ensure we meet our statutory obligations and remains a trusted, transparent and responsive institution. These staff carry out essential compliance, finance, human resources, risk and operational functions with professionalism and precision—often behind the scenes but never without impact.

Together, the staff of the Commission form an organisation that strives to be both courageous and compassionate. Their work is often challenging—dealing with issues of vulnerability, harm and social injustice—but it is deeply important.



*Artwork by a child with a living  
experience of out-of-home care*

# Our **work**

The Commission is a statutory body charged with responsibility to review and improve the systems that protect and safeguard our children.

The *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (FCC Act) requires us to:

- promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people (s9)
- promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people (s9)
- improve the child protection system by providing oversight (s9)
- maintain a register of child deaths in Queensland and report on them annually to identify trends and inform prevention strategies (s25) and,
- host the Child Death Review Board (the Board) and support systemic reviews following the death of a child connected to the child protection system (s29F).

The *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (CSO Act) requires us to:

- promote the safety of children (s13)
- promote the prevention of child abuse (s13)
- promote the proper response to allegations of child abuse (s13)
- monitor the implementation and enforce compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle (s13)
- administer, monitor and enforce compliance with the reportable conduct scheme (s40).

Our work is guided by our six strategic priorities:

1. We shape system performance in the best interests of children and their families by producing rigorous analysis and evidence-based advice.
2. We advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children by collaborating with organisations, entities and individuals.
3. We increase opportunities for children and families to influence decisions that affect their lives.
4. We support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up strong in their identity, culture, and community, free from systemic racism and discrimination.
5. We ensure Queensland organisations meet their obligations to safeguard children and prevent abuse through the strategic use of our regulatory powers.
6. We exhibit excellence in governance, performance and organisational culture.







# Shaping system performance in the best interests of children and their families

We play a key role in overseeing Queensland's child protection system including the support and prevention services that help keep families safe. Our goal is to identify improvements to laws, policies, programs and services that lead to better outcomes, and to monitor reforms and recommendations to ensure continuous improvement.

Through our oversight and engagement work, we provide assurance to the community that government agencies and funded services are meeting their responsibilities. We present facts clearly and transparently to government, the sector and the community, and we contribute to decision-making processes by making submissions that promote evidence and elevate the voices of those with lived experience.

Our oversight and advocacy work plays a vital role in informing government decisions and driving long-term, systemic improvements, supported by strong, collaborative relationships with our stakeholders.

We aim for a future where government and the sector actively seek our advice, engage us early, and act on our recommendations to deliver measurable change for Queensland's children and families.



## System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Review

On 4 December 2024, the Attorney-General referred a matter to the Board and requested a review of system responses to child sexual abuse and recommendations for any necessary improvements to the laws, policies, procedures and practices across the early childhood education and care, police and the Blue Card systems, using the offending of Ashley Paul Griffith as a case study. This review was requested under section 29I of the FCC Act.



Key progress to 30 June 2025 included:

- establishing a specialised team within the Commission to support the operational delivery of the review, including stakeholder engagement, research coordination and analysis of systemic issues
- exercising the Board's powers (s29P of the FCC Act) 15 times to request information from government and non-government agencies to inform the review
- placing the voices of victim-survivors, their families, and the offender's former colleagues at the centre via submissions and interviews
- hosting an expert roundtable bringing together 28 specialists in child safeguarding, law, policing and trauma-informed practice
- commissioning four leading Australian research institutions to conduct in-depth studies of international best practice
- completing a detailed review of relevant legislative frameworks has been completed including analysis maps
- consulting with regulators, ombudsmen, and children's commissioners across Australia to gain insight into oversight models
- developing a comprehensive timeline of the offender's actions is in development
- inviting public submissions from organisations and individuals, particularly those with expertise in child safeguarding, to contribute further insights.

The work completed to date represents a critical foundation for identifying systemic weaknesses and designing reforms that ensure Queensland's institutions are safe for children. The Board remains committed to a trauma-aware, rigorous, and evidence-based review that places the safety, rights and voices of children, and their parents, at its core.

## Too little, too late

Our assessment of the Queensland Government's implementation of the Residential Care Roadmap (the Roadmap) was informed by extensive engagement across Queensland with child safety and frontline workers and with children living in residential care.

The assessment concluded that the Roadmap has not achieved its intended objectives to reform the residential care system, reduce the number of children living in residential care, and improve the standard of care provided to children. We will continue its engagement with young people in care throughout 2025–26.

**The report made one recommendation** that the new Minister for Child Safety to revisit the Residential Care Roadmap and publish a new, integrated strategy for improving the life outcomes for Queensland children in the OOHC system. This new strategy should be produced by incorporating the relevant election commitments, the Board recommendations, and the actions from the Residential Care Roadmap including my advice contained in this report.



Thank you for commissioning this important report and for continuing to advocate for the safety of children and young people.

– Brett Mickelberg, Minister for Transport and Main Roads

## Seatbelt and child restraint use in children 0–12 years

As part of our child death prevention work, the use of seatbelts and child restraints for children aged 0–12 who died while passengers in motor vehicle crashes in Queensland between 2004–23 was analysed. According to the Queensland Child Death Register, 123 children have died in road crashes over the last 20 years.

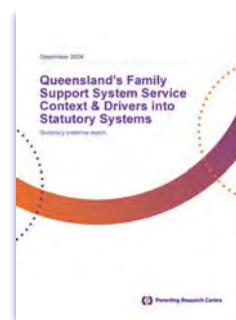


This analysis indicates a need for education campaigns designed to increase child seat and seatbelt use in Queensland, including improving access to affordable child restraints and better education within remote parts of Queensland and in First Nations communities.

The report received extensive national media coverage with the story appearing in 126 news items and reaching almost 2.3 million consumers.

## Queensland's family support system service context and drivers into statutory systems

We engaged the Parenting Research Centre to provide a summary review of the Queensland family support service system context to understand its efficacy in supporting families to prevent entry into child protection and youth justice systems. The report and associated literature review summarise evidence regarding best practice programs and approaches to family support services that are preventing families from entering statutory systems to highlight examples of such practices and programs that are already underway in Queensland.



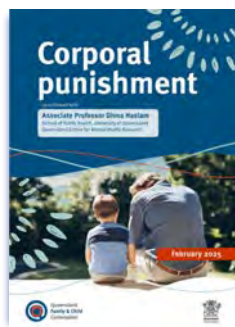
### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

The Child Safety Commission of Inquiry, which includes a dedicated focus on the residential care system, was partly informed by our work including the reports *A System that Cares* and the failings listed in *Too Little Too Late*.



## Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment remains lawful across Australia. We released a paper exploring corporal punishment against children, co-authored with Associate Professor Divna Haslam of the School of Public Health, University of Queensland, and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research.



The paper revealed that more than half of Australian parents use corporal punishment, with one in four believing it is necessary for raising children. However, corporal punishment is associated with significant long-term harm, including emotional and psychological damage, increased risks of mental health issues, poor academic performance, and future violent behaviours. It is also linked to a higher likelihood of children developing major depressive disorders and generalised anxiety disorders, particularly among girls.

Alongside legislative change, **we made one recommendation** for the Queensland Government to fund a comprehensive public health campaign to reduce corporal punishment.

## Roundtable with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in residential care

On 4 December 2024, we sponsored the CREATE Foundation to co-facilitate a roundtable, alongside Mullah Mara Together, with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and also had a lived experience of residential care in North Queensland. The roundtable aimed to learn more about the young people's views on how their residential care placements could feel more like 'home.' The report provides a summary of the insights, key learnings and themes gathered from the roundtable. This report sheds light on the experiences and needs of young people who have a strong connection to their community, particularly those who are from discrete communities in Far North Queensland.



## "Treat us like humans"

We partnered with Life Without Barriers to deliver on Child Safety's Roadmap action to "Formalise the Queensland Family and Child Commission Expert Panel on Residential Care—comprising 12 young people with lived experience in the system as a governing body—to inform the Ministerial Youth Advisory Board, monitor the implementation of this Roadmap, and hold regional forums that give young people in residential care opportunities to voice their experiences".



We hosted three workshops with Life Without Barriers in Brisbane, Mackay and Toowoomba, with 73 young people aged 14–24 years who are currently living in or have recently transitioned from residential care. Key themes identified across the three workshops were "choice and voice", "connection", and "safety" and feature in the summary report.

**So glad to be a part of this and to see the Commission continually standing up for children's rights.**

- Dr Divna Haslam, School of Public Health, University of Queensland, and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research.



## Regulation of home education

This paper looked at the experiences of children who are educated at home and included a data-matching exercise to identify home environments that have experienced domestic and family violence or suspected or substantiated child harm. The findings do not imply that home schooling presents a greater risk to children, but it does confirm that negative safety events are occurring in some households registered for home education. Our paper makes recommendations to government to strengthen oversight of the home-schooling system.

We completed this review in response to concerns raised by the Board about the regulatory oversight and support for children registered for home education in Queensland.

The associated Australian Broadcasting Corporation cross-platform exclusive reached more than one million consumers across Queensland, with Commissioner Twyford featuring in multiple media interviews.

## We made two recommendations that:

1. the Department of Education take immediate action to implement Recommendation 1 of the *Child Death Review Board Annual Report 2022-23* report to:
  - a. Initiate a regular process of data sharing with Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (former department name) to identify home-schooling students who may benefit from in-school support services
  - b. Pursue legislative changes to strengthen oversight of children registered for home education in Queensland, with a focus on upholding the child's rights, best interests, safety and wellbeing at all stages of a child's home education.
2. the Home Education Unit explores ways for children registered for home education to participate in decisions about their learning needs and have their views and wishes documented. The Home Education Unit could consider options such as those proposed by young people at our 2024 Youth Summit including online forums to hear from all students and meet their needs.



## Improving safety when young people ride e-scooters and e-bikes

This paper compiles the evidence around injuries and fatalities for children and young people resulting from e-scooters and e-bikes, risk factors, and how Queensland's road rules and laws surrounding their

use compares to other jurisdictions. Published under *Safer Pathways Through Childhood 2022-2027*, the paper makes recommendations to improve safety outcomes, including the introduction of a minimum age of 16 years to lawfully ride these devices in Queensland.

This insights paper is the first in a series on the causes and factors that contribute to child fatalities in Queensland. This is part of our role in managing Queensland's Child Death Register, which now holds 20 years of data.

## Annual monitoring of recommendations report

In December 2024, we completed its review into the implementation status of recommendations made to government by the Commission and the Board. The status of 209 recommendations originating from 17 system reviews released by the Commission and the Board from 2016 to 2024 were analysed.

As at 30 June 2025, we are monitoring 39 recommendations.

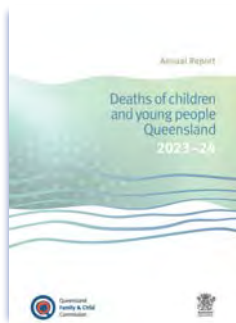




## Deaths of children and young people annual report

Tabled on 11 February 2025, this annual report reports on the deaths of 422 children registered in Queensland from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Natural causes accounted for 74 per cent of deaths, while transport deaths were the leading cause of non-natural causes of death (20 deaths), closely followed by suicide (19 deaths) and other non-intentional injuries (19 deaths).

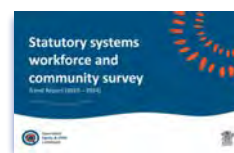
The report highlighted that some children are more vulnerable to experiencing adversity, including experiences that increase risk of death, than others. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are consistently over-represented in child mortality statistics (2.6 times the rate than for non-Indigenous children). Children known to Child Safety accounted for 13 per cent of all child deaths in the reporting period.



**The challenge of the change required is almost overwhelming, but it takes great people to continue the push. Thank you to the commission for the ongoing positive work.**

– Child protection professional

## Statutory systems workforce and community survey: trend report (2019–2024)



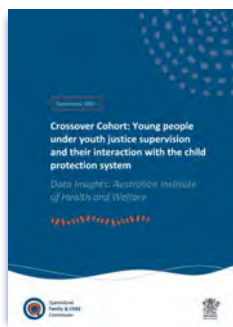
This year we took the opportunity to view the longitudinal changes in the views of the Queensland frontline workforce and the community. This trend report identified overarching trends observed in our annual Workforce and Community Perceptions surveys, since 2019. It shows positive trends over time in the workforce's responses around First Nations practices, including increasing understanding and application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, positive attitudes towards Delegated Authority, and improved cultural appropriateness within youth mental health services.

Frontline workers' views of the child protection and/or youth justice sector have become less positive over time across a range of factors, including commitment to the sector and their likelihood to recommend the sector as a place to work. Community trends show indicators of broader stress and negative influence that are subsequently impacting children and young people, including the ability of children, young people and the wider community to access the services they need to stay healthy (e.g. general practitioners, hospitals).

## Crossover cohort

This paper provides an in-depth analysis of Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data. The analysis looked at young people under youth justice supervision in 2022–23 and young people who have also had an interaction with the child protection system in the 10 years prior. The analysis revealed that 1863 of the 2557 Queensland young people had prior interaction with the child protection system (highest in the nation).

Having a care experience absolutely does not mean a child will have contact with the youth justice system, but what this information does show is that these systems are driven by instability and harm. The findings of the report underpin the need for stability and security to prevent children from entering the youth justice system.



## Child Death Review Board Annual Report

The Board's Annual Report 2023–24, tabled in Parliament on 10 February 2025, **included nine recommendations for government consideration.**

They related to mental health support for children in care, improved risk assessments of children with disability and chronic medical conditions, maintaining action on reducing family and domestic violence, and enhanced awareness of, and improved response to, the additional vulnerabilities of young and non-verbal children.



### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

QPS launched a public website to report on the number and circumstances of young people held in watch houses. The data is refreshed twice daily and aims to enhance transparency of the watch house system. This was recommended in our report *Who's responsible: Understanding why young people are being held longer in Queensland watch houses*. Our recommendation was for a single point of accountability for producing regular public reports on the number and circumstances of young people held in watch houses.

### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

The Queensland Government has committed to the design and development of Queensland's first secure care facility. This was influenced by recommendation three of the Board's Annual Report 2021–22 to develop a fit-for-purpose model that provides a continuum of care for children with high-risk behaviours.

## Monthly insights papers

Since September 2024, we have published monthly insights papers, each featuring a summary of contemporary Australian research, analysis and updates about child and family wellbeing. The insights from these papers prompt important reflections on how we prioritise our efforts and influence. The data presented provides a valuable evidence base for our review work, and we embed these findings across our activities.



## Providing **written submissions**

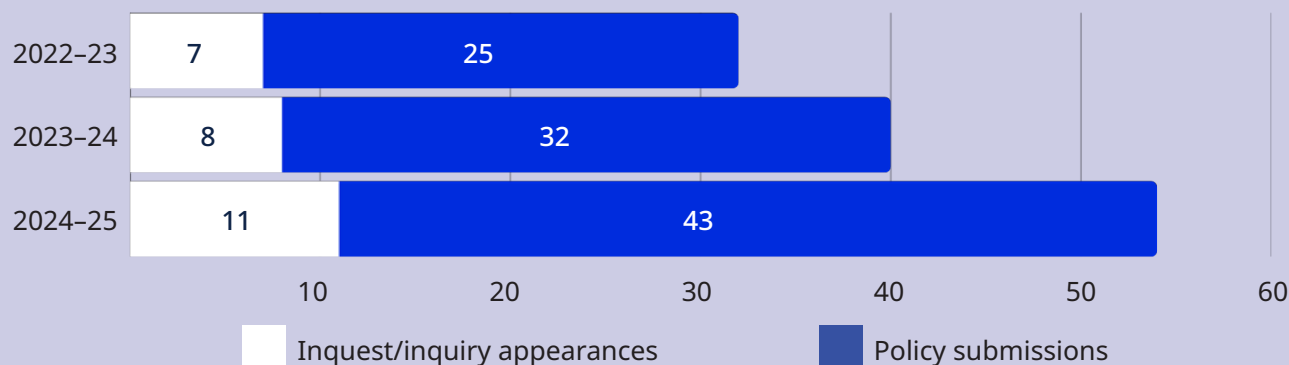
We contributed evidence-based advice and solutions to government on a broad range of policy and legislative issues impacting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and families. We advocated for children, young people and their families at public hearings and inquiries to champion the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and influence positive changes in legislation, policies and practices.

We produced **43 written submissions** providing advice to state, national and international reviews and inquiries. Our submissions were referenced in public reports or cited in Parliamentary speeches and contributed to the development or revision of legislation and policies. We responded to requests for information and advice from government stakeholders on a range of issues, including youth justice, residential care, use of gendered language and use of certain police powers.

We provided advice on the following matters:

- Crime, law and youth justice including Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024, QPS Watch house review, Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Inquiry into the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025, Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, Family Law Amendment Bill 2024, and Inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system.
- OOHC including Transition to Independent Living Allowance, National Out of Home Care Standards Review and Foster, Kinship and Permanent Carers Payment Review.
- Child protection including Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024 and Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.
- Health, safety and disability, including the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Consultation Draft, National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People, Disability Standards for Education, Rescheduling of highly caustic hydroxide agents in the Poisons Standard, and Inquiry into e-mobilitysSafety and use in Queensland.
- First Nations advocacy including Truth and Justice Commission Bill 2024 and Informing the Agenda of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.
- Housing including National Housing and Homelessness Plan Bill 2024.
- Online safety including Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 and Phase 2 Industry Codes.

Figure 1: Increase in contributions to public policy and inquiries since 2022–23



## Providing **clear advice** to policy makers

In 2024–25, we provided evidence at **11 parliamentary hearings**:

- **Inquiry into the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 – Public hearing:** On 17 July 2024, Commissioner Twyford and Commissioner Lewis appeared before the committee to voice their overall support for the proposed Bill. Commissioner Lewis raised two concerns relating to the Bill – the retention of the requirement for adult household members to obtain a Blue Card for the purposes of a kinship care placement, and the delay likely to be caused by the proposal to turn off the auto commencement provisions.
- **Inquiry into the Child Safe Organisations Bill – Public hearing:** On 19 July 2024, Commissioner Twyford presented to the committee, alongside Commission Executive Directors Anne Edwards and Christopher Smith, and provided his support for the Bill. Commissioner Twyford's address spoke to the need to implement a model for Child Safe Standards and a Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- **Estimates – Department of Justice and Attorney-General Associated Statutory Bodies – Public hearing:** On 26 July 2024, Commissioner Twyford spoke to the committee about the support young Queenslanders need when they encounter the youth justice system and when leaving detention. This was an opportunity to advocate for better, more effective youth justice responses in Queensland.
- **Making Queensland Safer Bill – Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee (JICS Committee) – Public hearing:** On 2 December 2024, Commissioner Twyford and Commissioner Lewis appeared before the JICS Committee to present the opportunities that exist through the education, health, mental health, housing, and child safety portfolios in the youth justice space. Commissioner Twyford emphasised that the single biggest source of successful crime prevention for children is parents and families.
- **Inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system – Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee – Public hearing:** On 3 February 2025, Commissioner Lewis joined fellow Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates at the Inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system. Commissioner Lewis focused on the noticeable absence of the direct participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as part of the hearing and reiterated the importance of providing the opportunity for young people to share their insights and perspectives that are often hidden in the blind spots of decision makers and "subject matter experts".
- **Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission – JICS Committee – Public hearing:** On 13 March 2025, Commissioner Twyford and Commissioner Lewis responded to questions relating to the work of the Commission, including Blue Card recommendations, the Review, use of watch houses and the Pocket Guide to Sexual Abuse: How to help a friend.



➤ **Inquiry into the Youth Justice (Monitoring Devices) Amendment Bill 2025 – JICS Committee – Public hearing:** On 17 March 2025, Commissioner Twyford called for an independently run and holistic evaluation during his appearance before the JICS Committee to discuss the proposed extension of the electronic monitoring trial. Commissioner Twyford reiterated his support for the extension of the trial period providing it was undertaken with consideration to broader factors influencing young people's interactions with the justice system.

➤ **Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025 – Education, Arts and Communities Committee – Public hearing:** On 11 April 2025, Commissioner Twyford and Commissioner Lewis appeared before the Education, Arts and Communities Committee. Commissioner Lewis highlighted the systemic overuse of school disciplinary absences, disproportionately affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and those living in OOHC. Commissioner Lewis emphasised that the over-representation of First Nations children in exclusionary discipline practices reflects structural inequality and undermines their right to education. These practices disproportionately impact the most marginalised children, disrupting their learning, sense of belonging, and long-term educational outcomes. Commissioner Twyford spoke to the importance of records and transfer notes when children change schools to help teachers and education staff to be properly aware of a child's life and their home circumstances and therefore be more responsive to their needs.

**I truly value your leadership and thank you for your continued leadership in advancing reform across Queensland's child protection and youth justice systems. Your recent appearance before the Justice, Integrity, and Community Safety Committee and the release of the Proactive Policy Map reflect a clear commitment to transparency and systemic thinking.**

- Dr Lisa J. Griffiths, CEO, OzChild

➤ **Inquiry into the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025 – JICS Committee – Public hearing:** On 8 May 2025, Commissioner Twyford and Commissioner Lewis appeared before the JICS Committee. Commissioner Twyford focused on the need for a holistic transformation of the youth justice system as opposed to a piece-by-piece approach. Commissioner Lewis spoke of the ineffectiveness of deterrent sentencing in relation to children's brain development, and the importance of objective oversight over any reform.

➤ **Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 – Education, Arts and Communities Committee – Public hearing:** On 9 June 2025, Commissioner Twyford stressed that reforms must not only enhance practice and improve safety but must also centre the voices of children and young people. Commissioner Twyford welcomed the Committee's focus on improving protective measures like Police Protection Directions and Electronic Monitoring Devices while also highlighting the need for clear communication of their limitations, and the importance of ensuring they are not seen as standalone tools, but form part of a broader, integrated safety response.

➤ **Inquiry into Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 – JICS Committee – Public hearing:** On 18 June 2025, Commissioner Twyford spoke about the manner in which the Bill implements recommendations from our 2017 review into the Blue Card scheme, and expressed full support for any legal amendment that recognises the harm that occurs when vulnerable children are preyed upon.

We also provided evidence and advice to:

- **Inspector of Detention Services - annual inspection of Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and Brisbane Youth Detention Centre:** In May 2025, we provided a written submission about the impacts on children of each centre's daily regime and processes relating to admission and orientation; the provision of religious, spiritual and cultural support at the centre; and management and service delivery to First Nations children at the centre.
- **Coroners Court of Queensland:** The Board received, and responded to, six information requests (Form 25 – Requests for information). These requests related to the deaths of five children and included requests for the Board's review reports and supporting documentation, such as chronologies and timelines.
- **The Board and secretariat:** The Commission provided confidential child death information that is needed to allow the Board to perform its functions. In addition, two tailored data were provided for thematic reviews on child protection cases in relation to school engagement and behaviour issues; housing instability and family and domestic violence.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

The Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 was passed by parliament, removing the requirement for kinship carers and adult household members to hold a Blue Card to care for family. This change affirms the primacy of safety for each child in every decision and acknowledges the critical role that cultural continuity plays in achieving safety for First Nations children, and has been the subject of various Blue Card recommendations dating back to 2017.

## Monitoring and reporting on child deaths

We are responsible for maintaining and reporting on the Queensland Child Death Register, which records the deaths of all children and young people under the age of 18 in Queensland. We are responsible for several functions relating to child deaths in Queensland including maintaining the register, researching the risk factors associated with child deaths and making recommendations to prevent such deaths occurring, and preparing an Annual Report on child deaths.

Preliminary data for the 2024–25 report indicates a 1.1 per cent increase in child deaths (427 recorded deaths compared with 422 recorded in 2023–24). The number of child deaths from natural causes was 319, while the number from external causes (such as transport incidents or non-intentional injury-related deaths) was 68. According to preliminary data, 87 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child deaths have been recorded, compared to 91 deaths in total in 2023–24.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPACT

The Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program within Children's Health Queensland is working on initiatives to improve identification of sepsis and the responsible pathogen on cause of death certificates and autopsy reports. This work was influenced by the five key areas outlined in the *Queensland paediatric sepsis mortality study* we conducted in partnership with the Program, in February 2024.

Table 1: Deaths of children and young people, 2020-21 to 2024-25

| Deaths of children and young people                               | 2020-21    | 2021-22    | 2022-23    | 2023-24    | 2024-25 <sup>1</sup><br>(preliminary<br>as at June<br>2025) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>By cause of death<sup>2</sup></b>                              |            |            |            |            |                                                             |
| Natural causes (e.g. disease)                                     | 280        | 272        | 335        | 324        | 319                                                         |
| Transport                                                         | 31         | 33         | 28         | 20         | 23                                                          |
| Drowning                                                          | 10         | 10         | 10         | 10         | 10                                                          |
| Other non-intentional injury                                      | 14         | 20         | 7          | 19         | 7                                                           |
| Suicide                                                           | 30         | 22         | 20         | 19         | 24                                                          |
| Fatal assault and neglect                                         | 3          | 10         | 5          | 2          | 4                                                           |
| Unexplained cause - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Undetermined | 30         | 32         | 33         | 21         | 9                                                           |
| Cause pending autopsy or coronial <sup>3</sup>                    | 0          | 2          | 1          | 2          | 25                                                          |
| <b>Total</b>                                                      | <b>398</b> | <b>410</b> | <b>447</b> | <b>422</b> | <b>427</b>                                                  |
| <b>By Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status</b>            |            |            |            |            |                                                             |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander                          | 73         | 71         | 94         | 91         | 87                                                          |
| Non-Indigenous                                                    | 325        | 339        | 353        | 331        | 340                                                         |
| <b>Known to the child protection system</b>                       |            |            |            |            |                                                             |
| No involvement or ongoing intervention                            | 32         | 26         | 35         | 22         | 20                                                          |
| Open intake event                                                 | 2          | 1          | 5          | 2          | 4                                                           |
| Investigation and Assessment                                      | 8          | 25         | 16         | 22         | 20                                                          |
| Child Protection Order                                            | 4          | 12         | 9          | 4          | 10                                                          |
| Open Intervention with Parental Agreement                         | 5          | 4          | 5          | 2          | 1                                                           |
| Support Service Case                                              | 2          | 1          | 1          | 0          | 1                                                           |
| Other child protection status                                     | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 0                                                           |
| <b>Total</b>                                                      | <b>53</b>  | <b>69</b>  | <b>72</b>  | <b>53</b>  | <b>56</b>                                                   |

<sup>1</sup> By 31 October each year, the Principal Commissioner must prepare and give to the Minister a report about information contained in the register and child death prevention activities. Data reported in this report may differ from data reported in the child death annual report where further information about the classification of death becomes available.

<sup>2</sup> Deaths by cause of death are subject to change as new information is received.

<sup>3</sup> Causes of death are often not available until the outcomes of autopsy and coronial investigations are final. For this reason, some deaths are reported as 'cause pending'. Final outcomes are usually available within 1-2 years, at which point the Queensland Child Death Register is updated to reflect the official cause.

Note: 29 infant deaths were recorded in the research category sudden unexpected deaths in infancy in 2024-25.



Raising expectations position paper

This position paper presents a synthesis report of our submissions to three key Commonwealth reviews: the National Out-of Home Standards Review, the Foster, Kinship, and Permanent Carers Payment Review, and the Transition to Independent Living Allowance Review Committee. The submissions highlight the critical responsibility of the State in assuming the role of a parent when a child enters the care system, and for a carer to provide a safe, nurturing environment.



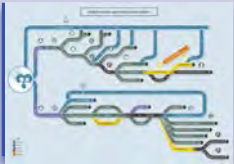
Growing Up in Queensland discussion paper

This paper builds on the foundations of the 2024 Growing Up in Queensland report and seeks input on how we monitor wellbeing using the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth Nest Wellbeing Framework to inform the 2026 report. The discussion paper mapped the Nest Framework to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to confirm the association of the models. We wanted to hear from those who rely on this data, including researchers, policymakers, service providers and advocates to inform their work and influence.



Proactive policy map

We released our proactive policy map which maps current government reforms and initiatives against the key intervention points in Queensland’s child protection and youth justice systems. The map helps identify where government investment is going, and where we should focus our attention. We also sought stakeholder input into this piece and received reflections regarding its usefulness as a tool to support sector transformation.



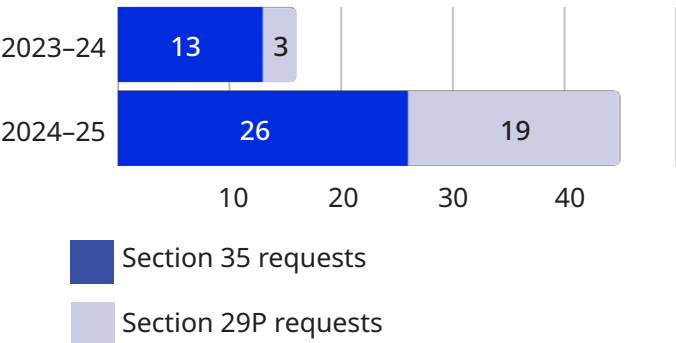
Information gathering

A key tool in our regulatory function is our ability to compel transparency and accountability through formal information requests. Under section 35 of the FCC Act, we can require government departments and agencies to provide information relevant to the performance and safety of systems impacting children. This power is critical to ensuring that oversight is not dependent on voluntary disclosure but backed by a legislative mandate to obtain accurate and timely data and evidence.

In recent years, we have significantly increased the number of section 35 information requests issued, reflecting our commitment to evidence-informed regulation. In 2024–25, we issued 26 s35 requests, double the number from the year before.

Pursuant to section 29P of the FCC Act, the Board Chair is able to request information to support the Board to carry out its reviews. The Chair used s29P information request powers, to inform the Board’s usual review work on three occasions in 2024–25 and 16 times to request information related to the Review.

Figure 2: Requests for information under the FCC Act



## Media impact

Our website attracted more than 328,000 views over the period, representing a significant increase from 156,000 in the previous period, with CSO content recorded as the most frequently consumed content.

We achieved a 55.5 per cent growth in our LinkedIn following, which means we are strengthening out connections with professionals across the child and family support sector.

Our Meta channels (Facebook and Instagram) have shown the greatest performance, recording a combined reach of more than 4.8 million over the period. This is approximately 80 per cent increase in reach compared with last year.

Between May 2024 and April 2025, we featured in 2862 media reports, a 20 per cent increase from the previous year. Our coverage over the period was overwhelmingly positive, with 98 per cent of all analysed mentions being positive or very positive, an increase from 93 per cent from the previous year.

In this period, 75 per cent of our coverage was driven by proactive media engagement, an increase of 51 per cent from the previous year.







# Advancing the rights, safety and wellbeing of children through collaboration

Creating better outcomes for Queensland's children and families takes shared effort across all systems and sectors. The Commission is uniquely positioned to bring together diverse voices to address key issues—but meaningful change depends on the attention, input and action of our partners. Collaboration in our work is therefore central to our success.

All stakeholders must work together to align legislation, policy, funding and service delivery in ways that truly benefit children and families. The systems we oversee are complex, and many experts across Queensland are already working to reduce risks to children. We value this expertise and actively partner with those closest to the issues, recognising they are often best placed to drive change. Ultimately, the Commission will be most effective when the evidence we collect and generate reaches the right people—those who can translate insights into action, implement meaningful change, and enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

The Commission helps organisations strengthen their policies and practices to better protect children and support them to thrive. We also work with statutory agencies, peak bodies and our counterparts in other jurisdictions to pursue shared objectives and deliver greater impact through collaboration.

We aim for a future where agencies committed to children's safety and wellbeing work together to improve outcomes. Agencies will proactively engage with us to shape practical, impactful advice. Our partners will share in our success as we publish and share information that invites participation, fosters influence, and amplifies our collective impact for Queensland's children and families.



## Funding and sponsorship agreements

We invested \$959,299.55 (representing 4.4% of our total budget) to:

- support and celebrate the talents and strengths of young First Nations people by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service's (ATSICHS) Young, Black and Proud Scholarships (\$200,000)
- inspire, equip, and empower the next generation to take action by supporting Deadly Indigenous Youth Doing Good's (DIYDG) Grounded Together initiative and DIYDG Wellbeing Camp (\$200,000)
- promote the importance of children's rights with children, parents, and the wider community by supporting Children's Rights Queensland initiatives (\$166,000)
- support wellbeing and improving the experience and futures of sibling carers in the child protection system by supporting PeakCare's Sibling Carers Campaign (\$65,000)
- improve outcomes for children and young people in rural and remote Queensland by enhancing child sexual exploitation literacy by supporting Project Paradigm's Capable Communities initiative (\$43,200)
- develop a mental health strategy focused on children in OOHC by supporting the Mental Health Strategy for Maltreatment Healing research initiative (PeakCare and Australian Catholic University) (\$40,653)
- promote child protection awareness and community engagement by supporting Queensland Child Protection Week Committee (\$98,000)
- celebrate and recognise Queenslanders making valuable contributions by supporting Awards Australia's Community Achievement and Young Achiever Awards (\$47,196)
- inspire and empower a generation of bold, creative, and entrepreneurial individuals by supporting Australian School of Entrepreneurship's Young Leaders Summits (\$23,000)
- provide opportunities for the views of young people with lived experience of the residential care system to be amplified by supporting the CREATE Foundation to host Residential Care Expert Advisory Council workshops (\$20,966)
- bringing together sector leaders and community members to focus on early childhood education and child protection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families by supporting SNAICC's National Conference (\$20,000)
- support various community groups across Queensland to hold NAIDOC Week community events (\$9409)
- fill the gap in current narratives surrounding parenting by holding the premiere screening of Parent TV's Seen film screening (\$6292)
- support young people affected by domestic and family violence by supporting Youth Summit speaker Ruby's not-for-profit initiative, Kids of Purple (\$7129) and amplify their lived experiences by supporting Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre's Unanswered Calls screening (\$15,000)
- celebrate the unity and determination across the sector and broader community to continue efforts in keeping children safe by supporting the Daniel Morcombe Foundation's Dance for Daniel 2025 (\$5454)
- support advocacy through the 'My Identity Connection' school-based program for First Nations students by supporting Seleena Blackley's attendance at the National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition Dream Design Summit (\$2000)



“ We have recently had our first case study feedback demonstrating positive outcomes and impact regarding a 14-year-old young person with a prolific history of going missing and absent from their care placement (on average 5 nights per week). The placement manager reported that the Toolkit was implemented as a practice tool by the staff team towards the end of June and as at 12th September the young person had gone for 8 weeks without an absence or episode of missing. Since implementation the young person is now enrolled in school, is attending regular therapy sessions, has experienced and overall improvement in health and a significant reduction in substance use, and importantly now attends and participates in her care stakeholder meetings.

– Project Paradigm, speaking about the impact of the Safe and Sound in Queensland: Enhancing safety for young people who go missing from care toolkit







**My son had newfound confidence after seeing his artwork displayed and then going up on stage and everyone clapping for him and he got a trophy!**

- Proud parent talking about the impact of the Commission Art Competition, hosted by CREATE Foundation



**As 2024 comes to a close, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support of DIYDG. This year has been a testament to the power of community, resilience, and shared purpose. Together, we've navigated challenges and celebrated key milestones, all of which would not have been possible without your belief and support in our work... With your ongoing partnership, we know we can reach even greater heights and make an even deeper impact. Thank you for standing with us.**

- DIYDG



## Cross-sector **conferences and panels**

In 2024–25, we shared evidence and insights by speaking at over 30 conferences and panels to raise awareness and drive reform across child protection, youth justice, and family wellbeing in Queensland and nationally. The Commissioners' involvement spanned conferences, summits, webinars, and community forums, with contributions focused on elevating First Nations voices, promoting child rights, improving systems of care, and driving national conversations on justice, safety, and inclusion. These appearances underscored the Commission's commitment to collaboration, learning, and advocacy.

Key highlights included:

- Commissioner Lewis sharing platforms with national and international leaders on Indigenous rights, domestic and family violence, and youth justice reform
- Commissioner Twyford's active advocacy on sibling carers, youth justice collaboration, and digital child safety
- engagements with lived-experience advocates, such as young people Alice, Grace, Caroline, and Nel, who played pivotal roles in shaping discussions and advancing systemic insights
- participation in forums hosted by diverse stakeholders—ranging from PeakCare, Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak to national organisations like the Justice Reform Initiative and the National Children's Commissioner
- presentations spanned topics from neuroscience in clinical care to ending the use of watch houses for children, and from OOHC to Indigenous self-determination.



## Advice and leadership

The Commission participates in several high-level forums led by the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, including the Residential Care Advisory Group, the Safer Children, Safer Communities Taskforce, and the Queensland First Children and Families Board. These bodies focus on improving child protection and family services across Queensland.

**In the youth justice and crime space,** Commission contributions include to the Youth Justice Oversight Stakeholder Meeting, as well as several QPS-led groups: the Watch House Stakeholder Group, the Domestic and Family Violence Advisory Group, and the Community Crime Reference Committee chaired by the Crime and Corruption Commission.

**We contribute to the health and wellbeing advocacy** through cross-agency engagement, including meetings hosted by the Queensland Mental Health Commission and the Mount Isa Lead Health Management Committee (Queensland Health).

**We engage in national and cross-jurisdictional coordination efforts** under the Safe and Supported Framework include participation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group, the Implementation Coordination Committee, the Senior Oversight Committee, the Shared Decision-Making Committee, and the Accountability and Data Working Group. These groups are led by SNAICC, the Department of Social Services, and the Queensland Children and Families Secretariat.

**We also engage with justice and legal oversight forums** such as the Blue Card Services Review Implementation Reference Group, the Justice Policy Partnership Executive Governance Group, and the Implementation Oversight Group for Safe Children and Strong Communities. It contributes to the National Strategic Partnership on Child Sexual Exploitation, co-led by UNSW and Integrated Family and Youth Services.



**Supporting First Nations leadership and advocacy,** the Commission participates in the First Nations Ambassadors for Change (Public Sector Commission), the First Nations Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates Caucus, the Indigenous Human Rights Network, and the Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group. Commissioner Lewis plays a leading role in OATSICC and child rights advocacy nationally.

**To maintain strong connections with sector stakeholders,** the Commission engages with organisations like the Women in Government Network and attends consultation sessions such as the PeakCare Sector Voices Roadshow. We also hosted the Creating Connections: Improving Relational Practice for the Child Protection System roundtable.

**The Commission is active on national and international platforms,** including the Australia and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians Association and the Community Services Ministers Meeting, led by SNAICC.

**The Commission leads Australian child death prevention efforts** by hosting the 2025 Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group made up of specialist teams responsible for child death reviews in each jurisdiction. This group is a collaboration of all state and territory child death review teams across Australia and New Zealand. It was established to develop nationally and internationally comparable child death statistics, to better understand and prevent child deaths.





## Community engagement

As part of our strategic commitment to listening, learning, and building trust with communities, the Commission participated in a range of initiatives across Queensland. Our presence at the LUMINOUS Lantern Parade demonstrated support for cultural diversity and inclusion, while our involvement in the Eagleby South State School project celebrated the power of child-led design and innovation. Engagements such as the visit to Jabiru Community College and participation in CREATE Foundation's Transition to Adulthood Month reinforced our focus on young people's voices and transitions to independence. Similarly, Commissioner Lewis's involvement in the 'Connections for Change' Networking Event aligned with our goal to elevate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth leadership and ensure culturally informed policy influence. Finally, participation in the Queensland Community Impact Awards affirmed our commitment to recognising and learning from those delivering frontline impact, strengthening our connection to the communities we serve and the systems we seek to influence.



## Supporting **research**

This year we advanced a number of significant research partnerships, with an investment of \$438,706, representing 1.7 per cent of the total budget. This is a 489 per cent increase on 2023–24 and reflects our continued advancement as a sector leader in commissioning high-impact research to inform evidence-based policy and practice. It also highlights the breadth of specialist expertise engaged to support the System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Review.

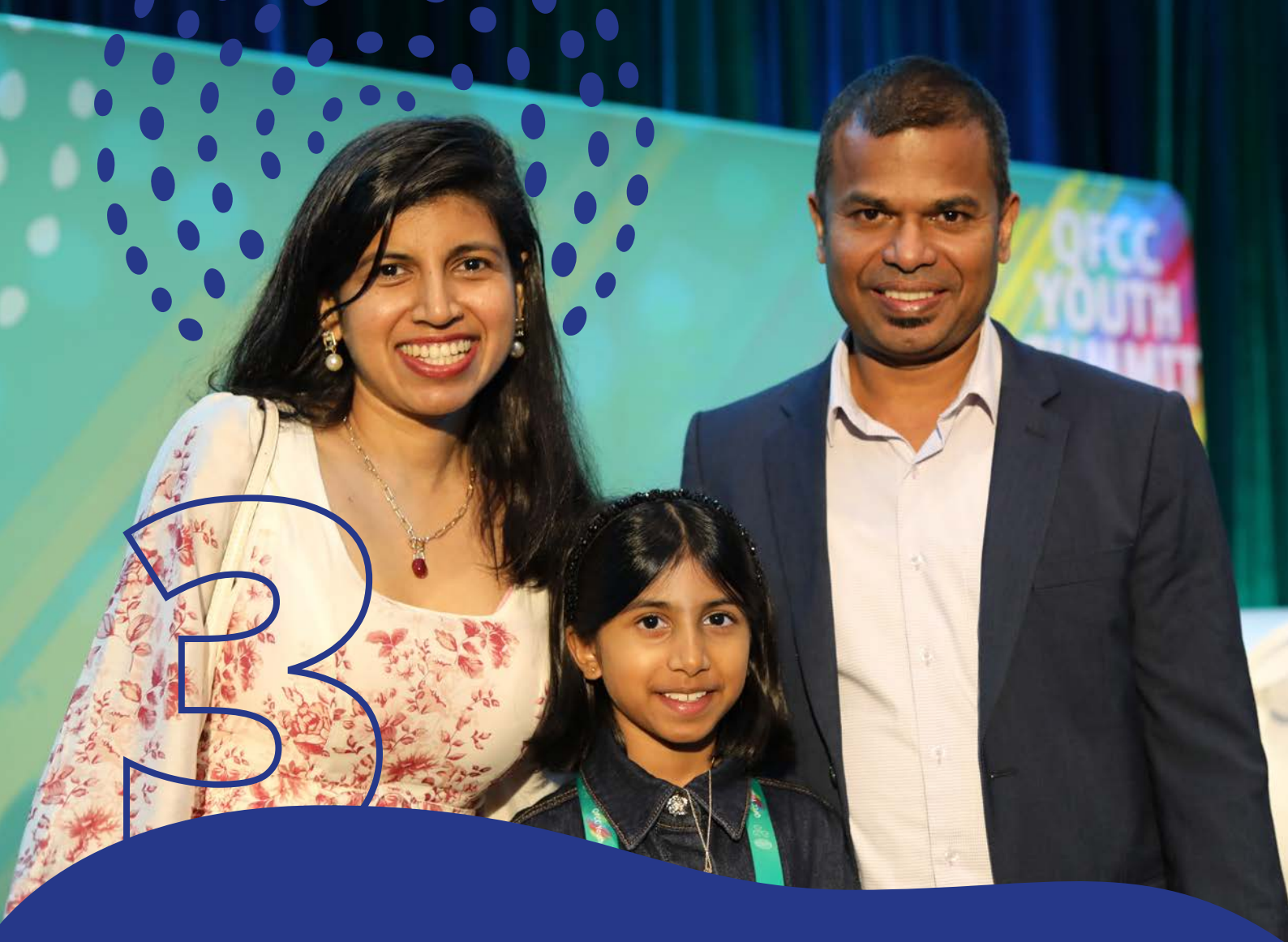
We invested in research focused on:

- better protecting children from violence in the home (Associate Professor Divna Haslam, School of Public Health, University of Queensland, and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research)
- addressing the disparity between the mental health care needs and service provision for children and young people who have experienced childhood maltreatment (Australian Catholic University, in partnership with PeakCare)
- promoting connection to culture to reduce suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention)
- best practice for safeguarding children from sexual abuse and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (Australian Institute of Family Studies, Griffith University, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of New South Wales and Marrawah Law and Advisory)
- supporting women in their transition to parenthood to support thriving families (Medical Research Future Fund)
- contributing to sector understanding of the efficacy of the Queensland family services sector in preventing entry into child protection and youth justice systems (Parenting Research Centre)
- continuing to upskill clinicians on death certification processes if sepsis is a known cause or contributor to death (Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program, Children's Health Queensland)



*Artwork by a child with a living experience of out-of-home care*





## **Increasing opportunities** for children and families to influence decisions

All children and families have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Children and young people play an important role in shaping Queensland's future, and better outcomes are achieved when they and the people close to them—parents, carers, siblings, and extended family—are part of the decision-making process. Every family deserves to be heard, and we place strong emphasis on understanding the experience of parenting.

One of the greatest opportunities that we have is to hear directly from young Queenslanders, and to use what we hear to advocate for change. When we take time to listen to what young people have to say, the opportunities and potential are boundless. This year we centred the voices of children and young people in much of our work, and invested in opportunities that gave them the floor, where the adults in the room were the ones listening, listening to the collective power that exists when adults prioritise what truly matters.

In 2024–25 some of the children and young people we heard from included:

- **35** young people spoke on a range of topics at the second annual Youth Summit
- **120** young people shared their experiences as part of six residential care expert advisory council meetings
- **300** young Queenslanders registered to attend the Young Leaders Summits run in partnership with the Australian School of Entrepreneurship
- **135** First Nations leaders and young people participated in the Bandarran Marra'Gu Gathering Strength Summit
- **20** young Queenslanders who were announced as semi-finalists of the Commission-sponsored 2025 Young Achiever Awards
- **15** children and young people had their views about child rights captured to inform ongoing child rights monitoring.

## Residential Care Expert Advisory Council **workshops**

A priority for us in 2024–25 was ensuring that the experiences of young people living in Queensland's residential care system were heard and used to inform decision-making. This commitment was made by Commissioner Twyford in his role overseeing the residential care system review.

During the reporting period, we engaged directly with 120 young people through six sessions held in Brisbane, Mackay, Toowoomba, Cairns, Caboolture and Kingaroy. Insights from these engagements were consolidated into five reports, each capturing the perspectives of children and young people with lived experience of residential care. These reports provide an evidence base to inform government, guide sector practice and strengthen accountability for improving outcomes in the residential care system.



**It's always powerful to hear directly from young people living in residential care. Who could have greater insight on this topic?**

- Sector professional talking about the Caboolture residential care expert advisory council





# 2025 Youth Summit

Our 2025 Youth Summit was more than an event, it was a powerful moment of truth, courage and connection. It was also a resounding success, with 300 sector leaders, practitioners, advocates and young people coming together to commit to a shared goal: listening to and learning from young Queensland people to shape a better future.

The Summit was sold out. Thirty-five extraordinary young people travelled from 31 different communities across the state, some from as far as Mabuiag Island, Bamaga, Rockhampton, Emerald, Gympie and Warwick, covering nearly 7000 kilometres in total. The longest single journey spanned 2660 kilometres. Their commitment to show up and speak out is a profound reminder of why elevating youth voice matters. It takes effort. It takes courage. And it takes adults who are not only willing to listen, but to also act.

Throughout the day, these young leaders took the stage to speak directly to decision-makers about the changes they want to see in the systems, services and policies that have, and still do, impact their lives. They did not just deliver speeches, they delivered impact. They challenged assumptions, brought lived experience to the forefront, and connected deeply with those in the room.

Their insights were not only heard, they shifted thinking and inspired action. Commissioner Twyford, Commissioner Lewis, Dr Robyn Littlewood (CEO, Health and Wellbeing Queensland), Bob Gee (former-Director-General, Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support), Sarah Parrot (CEO, Hand Heart Pocket) and Mena Waller (COO, Cancer Council Queensland) responded in turn, each in awe of the profound power and potential implications of the words they had just heard.



**It's such a powerful reminder that true listening isn't passive—it's active, humble, and transformative. When young people are given space to speak, and we genuinely listen, we begin to reimagine what's possible. Oliver's words are a gift: a call to see young people not through the lens of what they've been through, but what they're reaching for. Thank you for sharing this, and for continuing to centre lived experience as a guide for systems change.**

- Sector professional

**35**  
YOUNG  
QUEENSLAND  
SPEAKERS







I wish to acknowledge the Commission for their ongoing commitment to empowering young voices and driving meaningful change. Their dedication to advocacy and policy development is invaluable, and I greatly appreciate the platform they provide for discussions on important social issues.

- Parent of a 2025 Youth Summit speaker



7000KM  
TRAVELLED  
BY YOUNG  
SPEAKERS

9  
YOUNGEST  
SPEAKER  
AGE



39%  
YOUNG  
SPEAKERS FROM  
REGIONAL  
LOCATIONS

It was an honour to attend, and we valued the opportunity to hear directly from young people about their ideas for change. We commend the Commission for organising the Summit and for bringing together a mix of organisations that share our passion for, and commitment to, supporting young people.

- Sector professional

She never speaks at home. I didn't know she felt that strongly.

- Parent of a 2025 Youth Summit speaker

22%  
YOUNG  
SPEAKERS  
FROM RURAL  
LOCATIONS



29%  
YOUNG  
SPEAKERS  
UNDER 18





## Statutory systems **workforce survey** 2025

Since 2018 we have surveyed the child protection, youth justice and family support workforces to understand how the system's services are being delivered and received. Findings from these surveys produce evidence to inform system reviews, strategic policy, advocacy and system monitoring and performance reporting. The evidence is promoted externally and provides important information for decision-makers about whether systems are meeting set objectives.

In 2025, 205 frontline child protection, youth justice and family support workers completed the survey. Of these, 102 were from government agencies (50%) and 103 from non-government organisations (50%), representing a higher proportion of government employees compared to previous year (39%). Nineteen respondents identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (9%) and 25 were from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (12%). Most respondents primarily worked in the child protection sector (71%), with the remaining respondents working in youth justice (10%), residential care (11%) and across multiple sectors (9%).

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had a clear understanding of their role (90%) and felt supported by colleagues (64%). However, 56 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed that their workload was manageable, and 64 per cent disagreed overall that they are able to spend enough time with children, young people and their families to do their job well.

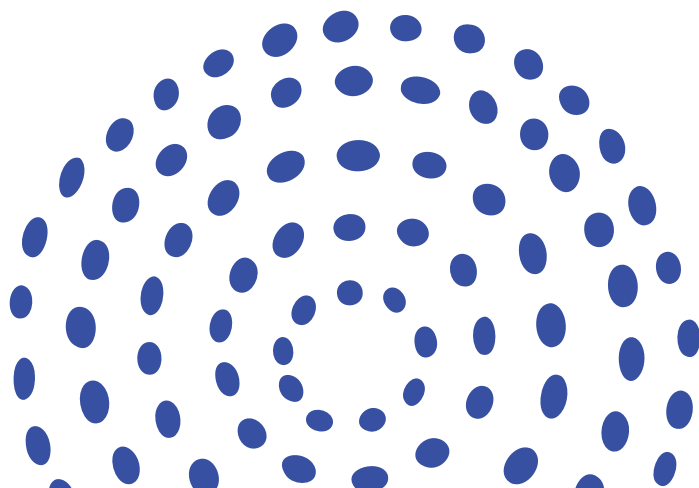
Aligning with the upcoming roll-out of the CSO Act, the survey asked respondents for the first time to indicate their awareness of the Queensland Child Safe Standards. A total of 81 per cent of respondents were aware of the Queensland Child Safe Standards, and 12 per cent indicated they were not. The remaining six per cent were not sure.

Respondents working in a non-government organisation were more aware than those working in a government organisation of the Queensland Child Safe Standards. Among those aware of the Queensland Child Safe Standards, 44 per cent considered themselves very familiar with the standards and 54 per cent considered themselves somewhat familiar.

## Community **perceptions** **survey** 2025

In addition to longstanding areas of interest, the 2025 survey explored a range of new topics related to family life and Queensland Child Safe Standards. These included parent engagement with their child's academic, sporting and social life; parent support for their child learning about their culture, spiritual beliefs and identity; parent perceptions of their children's ability to cope with school pressures; perceptions about children, young people and their families leading a healthy lifestyle; and awareness and support of Queensland Child Safe Standards.

Concerns were raised regarding cost of living, poverty, inflation and finances. Close to one in five respondents considered housing affordability and homelessness (23%), crime and youth crime (17%), and education concerns such as poor education and affordability (17%) as key issues for parents and children in Queensland. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents were aware of the Queensland Child Safe Standards while 54 per cent were not. Nineteen per cent of respondents were unsure whether they knew of the Queensland Child Safe Standards.



## Young Achiever Awards

Our sponsorship of the Young Achiever Awards is an opportunity to support young people's advocacy agendas and leadership journeys. We sponsored two awards to the value of \$28,000 in the following categories:

**Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award** – acknowledges a young person who is working towards protecting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, whilst demonstrating leadership in this space.

This award was presented to Jess Stone. Jess is a passionate advocate for child safety and youth rights. Drawing from her own lived experience, Jess has contributed to policy reform at both state and international levels.

**First Nations Youth Advocacy Award** – celebrates young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders advocating for First Nations children and young people, their families and communities, in the areas of health and emotional wellbeing; safety and home environment; learning, skills and economic empowerment; and culture and connection.

This award was presented to Jarib Branfield-Bradshaw. A proud Aboriginal leader and Youth Support Officer from Cunnamulla, Jarib is the founder of the Neighbourhood Centre, a grassroots initiative providing food, crisis response, and cultural reconnection for over 200 young people. His advocacy is grounded in walking alongside those experiencing homelessness, family violence and disengagement.



## Community Achievement Award

Our sponsorship of the Queensland Family and Child Commission Dedicated to Supporting Young Queenslanders Award is a testament to our unwavering commitment to recognising and celebrating individuals or organisations that share this vision and actively work towards empowering and uplifting young Queenslanders. In 2024 we sponsored one award to the value of \$19,196.

This award was presented to Formally Ever After – Tammy Robinson who has transformed the lives of over 6000 young Queenslanders by providing donated formal wear and financial support to cover the cost of attending school formals. The program operates across Logan, Brisbane, Gold Coast, and remote areas, empowering students from disadvantaged backgrounds to feel confident, proud, and included.



## Youth Advocates

Youth Advocates are young people casually employed to share their views and experiences to shape the work of the Commission and our stakeholders. Youth Advocates amplify the lived experiences, diversity, challenges and proposed solutions of young people. Their involvement in influencing government policies and initiatives ensures relevance, effectiveness and sustainability for all young people. During the past year, the Youth Advocates were empowered and supported to participate in many opportunities to influence policies, projects and initiatives that directly impact their lives, their families and communities.

In 2024–25 we funded over 577 hours of youth participation across many programs of work including:

- Normalisation of excessive alcohol consumption – Youth Advocate and Youth Summit speaker, Siobhan, was interviewed on Australian Broadcasting Corporation to talk further about her Youth Summit topic – Australia’s culture and normalisation of excessive alcohol consumption.
- No More: National rally against violence – Youth Advocate and Youth Summit speaker, Priya, was a keynote speaker at the rally hosted on the Gold Coast by What Were You Wearing? Priya spoke about her reflections on gendered violence and sexual assault.
- Harnessing neuroscience and operationalising resilience in clinical practice – 2024 Youth Summit speaker Alice participated in a panel discussion, sharing her valuable insights and lived experience with health care services in Queensland, emphasising the importance of consultation, collaboration, and being seen beyond her illness.
- Domestic Discipline consultation – At the request of the Queensland Law Reform Commission to support youth participation in their Review of particular criminal defences – Domestic Discipline, eight youth advocates aged 14–17 years were supported

to share their insights into domestic discipline at a 90-minute hybrid consultation co-designed with a Youth Advocate and delivered in September 2025.

- Key Assets staff forum – Youth Advocate Caroline discussed the challenges faced by sibling carers who provide essential support and care for their brothers and sisters.
- Exploring multifactorial approaches to youth suicidality – Grace’s presentation during session one of the 2025 Australia and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group Conference, focused on suicide and domestic and family violence risk factors and prevention. This presentation provided an evidence-based lived experience perspective on youth suicide, and addressed what can be done by clinical and non-clinical services and academia to support young people beyond short-term band-aid solutions.

Youth Advocates contributed their thoughts and experiences on a range of topics in the way of Amplify Blogs which are hosted on our website. These included:

- *Stacking your shoes* written by Youth Advocate Judas about the pivotal moment that they realised their mental health differed from others.
- *I wonder...* written by Youth Advocate Seleena who shared how questioning her ‘I don’t know’ responses led to new discoveries.
- *Living with Chronic Illness: The Isolation You Don’t See* outlining Youth Advocate Caroline’s experience with Stage 4 Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome.
- *The need for better Family Support Services for sibling carers* presents Youth Advocate Caroline’s experience as a sibling carer.
- *Connection to Identity* written by Youth Advocate Seleena who reflected on her identity as a Kalkutungu woman.

The voices of young people, including Youth Advocates, were also featured in a range of Commission submissions and reports.



## Mapping Youth Advisory Councils across Queensland

As part of our ongoing commitment to amplifying the voices of children and young people, we compiled a comprehensive directory of 137 advisory councils, leadership teams, and support services across Queensland. This resource, published on our Youth Space website, is designed to strengthen connections between the sector and young people, ensuring their perspectives are embedded in decision-making processes. It also reflects our strategic intent to build enduring pathways for young people to shape the systems that impact their lives, driving positive and lasting change for them, their families, and communities.



*Artwork by a child with a living experience of out-of-home care*





# Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up strong

We recognise the rich and resilient cultures that continue to sustain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect the right to self-determination and demonstrate leadership in recognising the critical importance of continuing connection to kin, Country and culture in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise that healing, dignity and respect are all fundamental elements needed to improve outcomes and relationships.

We recognise the significant disparities and challenges experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. First Nations children and young people continue to be disproportionately represented in statutory child protection and youth justice systems in Queensland and across Australia.

We aim for a future where the drivers of over-representation in statutory systems no longer exist, and harmful influences on First Nations children are dismantled. Self-determination, healing, dignity and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will underpin government and society. Our culture will reflect the values of the communities we serve.



**The scholarship supported me by getting my weapons and my gear for karate and also getting my passport so I can travel with my karate team.**

- Jacelle, 2024 Young, Black and Proud scholarship recipient

## Young, Black and Proud Scholarships

The 2024 Young, Black and Proud Scholarships, delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane, supported and celebrated the talents and strengths of young First Nations people to pursue their artistic, sporting and academic potential. It aligns our priority to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up strong in their identity, culture, and community, free from systemic racism and discrimination.

To be eligible, applicants must be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 25 years or younger, live in Queensland, require support with school, university, arts, or sporting. This year was the first time that the scholarship was open Queensland-wide, with an incredible 228 applications received from across the state.

On 19 October 2024, Commissioner Lewis and staff attended the awards presentation where 125 scholarships were awarded, 88 of which were awarded to recipients from regional Queensland. This year there was a record 225 applications received from right across Queensland.





# Bandarran Marra'Gu

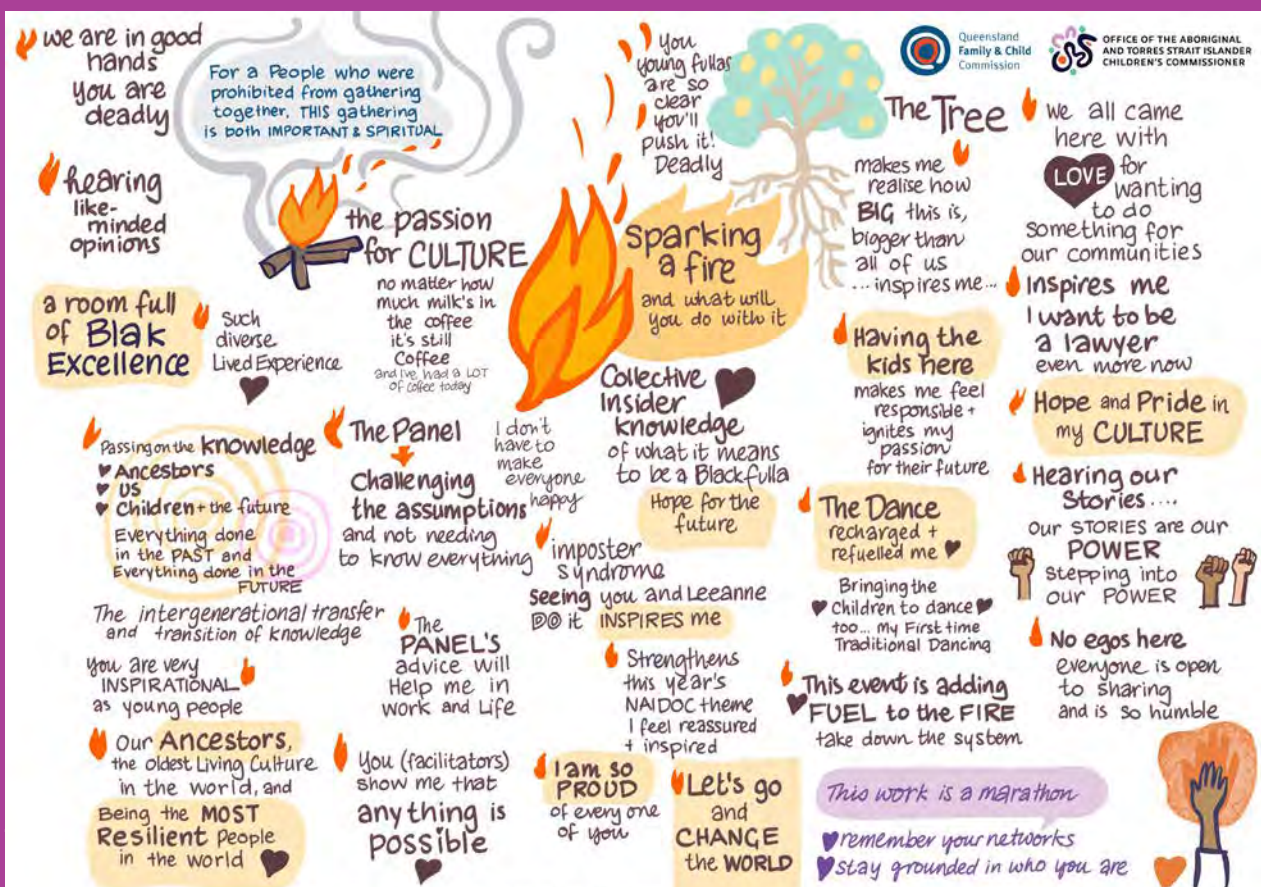
## - Gathering Strength Youth Summit

In May 2025, the Bandarran Marra'Gu - Gathering Strength Summit brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, Elders, and community leaders to centre a conversation about truth, healing, and self-determination in Queensland. It was a two day event, with one day being a dedicated Youth Summit. Held on Yuggera and Turrbal Country in Magan-djin (Brisbane), the summits created culturally grounded and community-led spaces for truth-telling about the ongoing harms of colonisation, racism, and systemic exclusion, particularly within child protection, education, and youth justice systems.

The Commission partnered with Yoora Maltha to deliver the Bandarran Marra'Gu - Gathering Strength Youth Summit. Based on a peer-to-peer model the Youth Summit elevated the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Through storytelling, cultural practice, and peer-led dialogue, young people asserted their right to be heard and to drive the solutions affecting their lives, reaffirming the centrality of cultural identity, belonging, and intergenerational care to their wellbeing and future.

The full Summit built on this foundation and was co-hosted by the Commission, the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Australian Human Rights Commission. It brought together over 100 community members from across Queensland. The outcome was a strong, unified Gathering Strength Statement, developed and endorsed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates. The Statement called for urgent and meaningful reform across the child protection and youth justice systems, and called on the government to uphold its commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It called for governments to move beyond consultation towards power-sharing, to recognise cultural authority in decision-making, and to prioritise community-controlled, healing-informed, and rights-based responses.

Together, the summits affirmed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold the solutions to the challenges they face. They called on governments and institutions to listen deeply, and act in partnership grounded in truth, driven by justice, and committed to healing and sovereignty.



## Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) partnership

We are committed to supporting, connecting with, and collaborating alongside organisations that advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of First Nations children, and that translate child rights principles into practical guidance. We particularly acknowledge those initiatives that set benchmarks for others to follow, such as DIYDG's Growing Our Way initiative, which demonstrates leadership and innovation in embedding child rights into practice.

Funding DIYDG's Growing Our Way initiative supports the achievement of our strategic objectives. This initiative includes 'Grounded Together', a two-day open referral service delivery program and the annual 'Wellbeing Camp'. The DIYDG Wellbeing Camp aims to:

- enhance the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of young people
- strengthen cultural identity and pride
- develop leadership and facilitation skills among participants
- foster positive peer relationships and a supportive community network
- provide a safe space for sharing stories, experiences, and knowledge.

In September 2024, Commissioner Twyford travelled to Tully in Far North Queensland to participate in DIYDG's Wellbeing Camp. Although young participants did not quite get the full camp experience planned due to the wet weather, it was a powerful and positive experience for the young attendees who participated in collaboration and cultural connection building activities. The event was renamed 'camp resilience' as a nod to the unplanned turn of events that all participants took in their stride to ensure the experience remained fruitful and positive.

## Hymba Yumba Year 13 pilot

In 2024, Hymba Yumba introduced the new Year 13 (Y13) program which seeks to improve educational outcomes and transitions for First Nations students from school into higher education, training or employment. Specifically, Y13 guides, supports and coaches past students who are finding life beyond Year 12 overwhelming or challenging. Through Y13, Hymba Yumba offers a gateway to the school community for students, coupled with expert support to develop work readiness, build resilience and positively adapt to change. For many, a chosen pathway does not go as planned and students may need support to identify and prepare for alternative options.

As a result of Y13, the following outcomes have been achieved in 2024:

- More than 23 per cent of jarjum engaged in 2024 have secured school-based traineeships
- 15 jarjum have completed work experience placements
- Over 15 per cent of jarjum engaged in 2024 are now employed in an after-school job
- Nearly 74 per cent of jarjum who graduated in 2023 are currently employed
- More than 23 per cent of jarjum who graduated in 2023 are currently studying.





## Principle Focus

In 2024–25, a key priority was consolidating and extending our critical oversight role as it pertains to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families who are in contact with either the youth justice or child protection systems. Identifying systemic issues, advocating for improvements and monitoring the impact of those changes is a critical function of a contemporary children's commission.

The disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the statutory child protection system continued to be one of the most significant social policy issues in Queensland during this reporting period. There were significant reforms and investment, but as highlighted in the Productivity Commission Report on Closing the Gap, there was no clear mechanism of accountability or capacity to examine the impact of those reforms, particularly at a regional and local level.

In response, we continued to deliver Principle Focus, a program that monitors and analyses the underlying dynamics and drivers of over-representation in Queensland's child protection system. The program extended beyond simply identifying challenges, instead highlighting opportunities to strengthen practice and system responses. It also provided a platform to showcase and promote examples of excellence, with the aim of embedding these approaches as standard practice across the sector.

## Reframing the Relationship Plan 2024–2027



The Reframing the Relationship Plan represents an important opportunity to further strengthen the Commission's commitment to improving the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. Through the plan, the Commission is working in partnership with First Nations leaders, organisations and communities to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central to decision-making processes. This approach acknowledges that lasting reform can only be achieved when the perspectives and lived experiences of First Nations peoples guide the policies, programs and services that affect them.

The plan also reflects the Commission's strategic priority to eliminate systemic racism within Queensland's child protection and youth justice systems. By addressing the structural inequalities that drive over-representation and poor outcomes, the Commission seeks to create environments where First Nations children can thrive in their culture, feel safe in their homes and communities, and have the same opportunities as their peers to succeed.

In practice, this means embedding cultural knowledge and perspectives into all areas of the Commission's work, fostering genuine partnerships with community-controlled organisations, and holding systems accountable for delivering culturally safe, equitable outcomes. The plan provides a clear pathway for translating this vision into tangible action, setting the foundation for systemic change that is responsive, just and inclusive.

This plan is designed to be a living document and will support the Commission to strengthen our cultural capability as a necessary foundation for a reframed relationship.

## Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

In September 2024, the Commission welcomed the passage of Blue Card amendments, including the removal of the requirement for kinship carers and adult household members to hold a Blue Card in order to care for family. This reform affirms the principle that every decision must prioritise the safety and wellbeing of each child, while also recognising the critical role cultural continuity plays in achieving safety for First Nations children.

The amendments reflect long-standing calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, communities and organisations, who have consistently highlighted how previous requirements created unnecessary barriers to children remaining safely within kinship care. By strengthening opportunities for children to stay connected to family, culture and Country, the reform helps to address the over-representation of First Nations children in the child protection system.

This change also represented a significant policy milestone for the Commission, responding directly to recommendations we have made about the Blue Card system since 2017. It reinforces the importance of designing systems that are both child-safe and culturally safe, and that embed flexibility and fairness without compromising protection. The Commission will continue to monitor the implementation of these reforms to ensure that the intended benefits are realised in practice and that children, families and carers experience the full impact of these improvements.



## NAIDOC Week

In July 2024, the Commission celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements as part of NAIDOC Week. The year's theme was 'Keep the Fire Burning: Blak, Loud and Proud', honouring the strength of First Nations leadership and the importance of keeping the fire burning in the pursuit of justice, truth and hope.

The Commission provided \$9409 to sponsor various community groups across the state to hold NAIDOC week events in their communities. Commission staff supported the events to setting up and participating in community engagement activities in locations including Logan, Brisbane and the Gold Coast.





## **Ensuring** Queensland organisations meet their **safeguarding obligations**

Keeping children safe is at the heart of what we do. We oversee the CSO Act, making sure organisations embed the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle and have systems in place to respond to reports of child harm and abuse by their employees.

We have enforcement powers to ensure organisations meet their responsibilities. We can share critical information to reduce risk, and take action when standards are not met. By monitoring compliance and addressing failures, we strengthen Queensland's capacity to prevent harm and protect children. While our focus is on prevention, education and collaboration, we will act decisively when children's safety is at risk. We are committed to using every tool available to ensure children in Queensland are safe, protected and supported.

## Legislative **reform** in 2024–25

On 11 September 2024, the Child Safe Organisations Bill and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill were both passed in Parliament. The passage of these two pieces of legislation represents a significant milestone for Queensland, marking a crucial step towards ensuring that every child is safe and supported in environments that prioritise their wellbeing. Together, they strengthen the framework for safeguarding children by embedding accountability, oversight, and consistent standards across systems of care. Protecting children requires multiple tools and processes to prevent, detect, and respond to child sexual exploitation and abuse, and these reforms provide a stronger foundation for that protection. Child Safe Standards and a Reportable Conduct Scheme are vital to strengthening Queensland's existing child safety regulations and practices to better protect children.

Since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse handed down its expert findings, Australian governments have worked to develop solutions to keep our children safer. For several years, we have been part of effective advocacy for the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The passage of this legislation is a significant milestone in the journey to better protect children, and we are eager to lead the implementation of these important protections. We have been entrusted with the important responsibility of leading the implementation of this scheme, a role that highlights the significant trust the government has placed in us.

The high-level key timeframes and milestones are as follows.

*Table 2: Key timeframes and milestones for Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme implementation*

| Timeframe    | Milestone                                                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 2024 | Establishment activities for the Commission as the oversight body                 |
| January 2025 | Preparation for commencement                                                      |
| April 2025   | Education and capacity building commences                                         |
| October 2025 | Phased introduction of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle commences |
| July 2026    | Phased introduction of the Reportable Conduct Scheme commences                    |
| July 2027    | Full implementation of the CSO system achieved                                    |



# Leading the implementation of the **Child Safe Organisation system**

## Community and sector engagement

Throughout the development and implementation of the CSO Act we have led sustained community and sector engagement. This included:

- extensive consultation with child and family sector leaders and advocacy groups over several years
- publication of resources and timelines on our website
- internal readiness activities to ensure staff are aware of our obligations.

We will maintain a sharp focus on engaging with the community and sector as implementation progresses. This will involve listening to feedback, sharing updates, and continuing to promote tools and resources that help organisations meet their obligations under the new legislation.

Between 1 March 2025 and 30 June 2025, the CSO team received 93 public contacts, 80 per cent of which were general enquiries regarding the CSO system. An additional six contacts related to child safety concerns, and another six were requested for presentations or guidance from the CSO team. As the CSO Act has not yet commenced, individuals who raised complaints related to child safety concerns were referred to Child Safety Services and/or the QPS, consistent with current reporting pathways.

CSO-related social media posts (to 30 June 2025) have had a reach of 2,628,092 across LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

## Our regulatory philosophy

Ahead of the commencement of the CSO system, we published our intentions as the schemes oversight body. This document outlines our approach to our regulatory functions and powers under the CSO Act. It sets out how we will raise awareness, build capability, and where necessary, use our powers to ensure compliance in a proportionate, risk-based, and transparent manner.



Our regulatory approach confirms that we believe that the best outcomes for children occur when organisations:

1. understand their legal and ethical responsibilities
2. have the capability to meet the Child Safe Standards
3. are held accountable when risk or harm is not appropriately dealt with.

Our regulatory approach will be proactive, educative and escalatory. We will use our information-sharing powers proactively to protect children from risk of harm. Our regulatory approach aligns to the Queensland Government Regulator Performance Framework.

## Guidance for implementing the Child Safe Standards

We launched comprehensive guidelines and a shorter Quick Reference Guide to assist organisations to understand and implement Queensland's Child Safe Standards. These guidelines provide detailed information about:

- the 10 Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle
- how to embed these standards into policies and practice
- the documentation and actions required to demonstrate compliance under the new laws.

Making these resources publicly available represents a significant milestone in our work to support, enable, and empower organisations and sectors to become more child safe.

Published in June 2025, the Quick Reference Guide was downloaded 2878 times while the Guidelines have been downloaded 4826 times (as at 30 June 2025).



## Self-Assessment Tool

Our Self-Assessment Tool was officially launched alongside the guidelines. This tool enables organisations to reflect on their current child safety policies and practices, identify strengths, and develop action plans to align with legislative obligations. Key features of the tool include:

- practical guidance on aligning policies and procedures with the Child Safe Standards
- customisable reflection and action planning sections
- a focus on supporting organisations of all sizes and types.

The self-assessment tool is designed to recognise that every organisation's path to being truly child safe will look different. It encourages a thoughtful, strengths-based approach to continuous improvement. Our own self-assessment process using the tool is underway, ensuring the organisation leads by example in embedding the standards into its work and culture.

Published in April 2025, the self-assessment tool has been downloaded 3475 times (as at 30 June 2025), indicating significant public and sector interest in preparing for the commencement of the CSO system.





## Child Safeguarding Grants Program

We established a capacity building grants round as part of the broader implementation strategy for the CSO Act. This is designed to support organisations across Queensland to build their capability to comply with the new Child Safe Standards.

Resources to support capacity-building activities will commence from July 2025, with 12 months of funded support activities scheduled to be delivered by the end of the 2025–26 financial year. This phased approach reflects a careful and considered implementation strategy, allowing organisations sufficient time to prepare and adapt their policies and practices. The Commission acknowledges the significant responsibility entrusted to it by government and is committed to ensuring organisations are well supported through funding, resources, and tailored engagement activities.

We funded \$3,585,703 to 46 partners to build the capacity and capability of Queensland organisations ahead of the commencement of the CSO Act. Of these:

- **18 organisations were awarded a total of \$1,313,573** to extend the reach and impact of existing programs and services that already deliver child safeguarding readiness and training programs or services.
- **23 organisations were awarded a total of \$1,889,401** who demonstrated initiatives that enhance child safeguarding across a range of sectors.
- **Five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and led were organisations were awarded a total of \$382,729** to support the implementation of the Universal Principle and build the capacity of organisations/ sectors to uphold cultural safety.

## 'Raising the Standards' campaign

Our 'Raising the Standards' campaign launched in June 2025 to increase community and sector awareness of Child Safe Standards and encourage organisations to take action ahead in preparation for the legislation coming into effect. The campaign concept featured Queensland children role playing as professionals, including teachers, coaches and music tutors and placed in organisational settings to promote the standards. The campaign placed children at the centre of the message and communicated the call to action in an engaging and memorable way. We will continue to promote these messages through various platforms, including social media, sector engagement forums, and partnerships with key organisations.



**We're raising  
Child Safe Standards  
for Queensland kids.**



Authorised by the Queensland Government, William Street, Brisbane.

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Authorised by the Queensland Government, William Street, Brisbane.





## Exhibiting **governance, performance and organisational** culture

We are committed to embedding a culture of continuous improvement. Robust corporate governance and efficient systems form the foundation of the Commission's effectiveness, ensuring transparency, compliance and ethical decision-making. As a small organisation undergoing significant transformation and growth, each individual's contributions significantly shape organisational culture and effectiveness.

The scale of the Commission necessitates a balance between interpersonal collaboration and structured operational processes to maintain agility and sustainability. For the Commission to operate efficiently, strategic outsourcing and external partnerships are essential, requiring staff to shift from direct implementation to skilled facilitation of external expertise. Additionally, the Commission must prioritise workforce wellbeing, as exposure to distressing subject matter poses emotional and psychological challenges.

# Strategic architecture framework





## Oversight framework

In June 2025, we released our 2025–26 Oversight Forward Workplan (the 2025–26 Workplan), in alignment with our broader 2023–2027 Oversight Framework. The 2025–26

Workplan set our systemic oversight priorities to ensure transparency and is deliberately agile in nature.

The Commission uses a four-staged approach to scope and design its oversight work, applying an escalating approach based on the evidence and facts obtained in the earlier stages. The most intensive reviews, discovery and examination reviews, include dedicated resources and delivery against a formal project methodology. Our monitoring activities are deliberately agile and inform the need for deeper reviews.

The Commission becomes aware of review opportunities in several ways, mostly by means of working closely with our advisory councils, strategic partners, agencies, youth advocates, young people and families, and the public. Issues may also be identified through data monitoring and review activities. Consultation with a range of stakeholders including government and non-government agencies, peak bodies, the community, and young people, guide the design and conduct of our review work.

In 2024–25, two emerging priorities significantly influenced our oversight work: the lack of government action on the Residential Care Roadmap and the referral of the Systems Response to Child Sexual Abuse Review. As a result, some reviews from the 2024–25 Workplan were adjusted or re-scoped. This demonstrates the strength of our flexible, evidence-driven approach: we adapt quickly to urgent challenges, redirect resources to where they are needed most, and remain committed to ensuring our oversight produces tangible improvements in safety, wellbeing, and outcomes for Queensland’s children and families.



## Our organisational governance

### Advisory Council

Under Part 4 of the FCC Act, the Principal Commissioner convenes an Advisory Council to provide strategic guidance on the Commission’s work. The Council plays a vital role in promoting the shared responsibility all Queenslanders hold in keeping children safe, offering insight into the issues affecting children, families, and the child and family support sector, and providing guidance to strengthen the Commission’s priorities and initiatives.

The Advisory Council brings together more than 30 leaders in child and family policy and practice from across Queensland, including both individual members and representatives from government and non-government agencies. In 2024–25, the Council met twice—on 24 September 2024 and 24 February 2025—providing an important platform for collaboration, shared learning, and advancing opportunities to improve the rights, safety, and wellbeing of Queensland’s children and families.

The Advisory Council's current membership includes individual members and representatives from the following agencies:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
- Australian Catholic University
- Bravehearts
- Brisbane Youth Service
- Children's Rights Queensland
- Daniel Morcombe Foundation
- Kummara
- Micah Projects
- Thriving Queensland Kids Partnerships
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- PeakCare Queensland Inc.
- Q Shelter
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak
- Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation
- Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service
- Health and Wellbeing Queensland
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Queensland Council of Social Service
- Queensland Foster and Kinship Care
- Queensland University of Technology
- yourtown

## Residential Care **Expert Advisory Council**

In 2024–25, Commissioner Twyford established a lived experience expert panel to assist with the residential care review. This panel included 12 young Queenslanders from across the State who had spent time in Queensland residential care homes. This group met five times, including an all-day workshop in Brisbane, and four online meetings to review the government's Residential Care Roadmap.

## Supporting the **Child Death Review Board**

Since July 2020, the Commission has hosted the Board, which undertakes a system review following the death of a child in the child protection system. The Board works to keep systems accountable by making recommendations to government and non-government agencies about legislative, policy and practice improvements. In 2024–25, the Board met five times to discuss child death reviews and invited researchers and experts to share contemporary advice and best practice on issues affecting Queensland children and families. The Board also held two extraordinary meetings in December 2024 to discuss the proposed approach to the review.

This year the Board has continued to refine its collective review approach to its review work, in which cases that demonstrate a particular system issue/s are considered together. This approach gives added weight to demonstrating the existence and impact of a system issue, as well as allowing for more cases to be considered within one collective review.



## Recruitment

In 2024–25, we worked to attract, develop and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the community we serve, by:

- partnering with the public sector's Careers Pathways Service to improve career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, by providing culturally safe development opportunities, networking events, formal training and mentor support
- partnering with other agencies to facilitate the Leading Women Network to promote the representation of women in all levels, including through professional development opportunities and networking events
- amending our recruitment processes and implemented new directives brought about by changes to the *Public Sector Act 2022*
- carrying out recruitment activities to support the CSO Act's initial implementation phase.

## 2024–2026 Policy Futures Graduate Program

As part of the 2024–2026 Policy Futures Graduate Program, the Commission hosted three graduates over the course of 2024–25. Run by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the program is designed to build policy capability across the Queensland public sector by providing graduates diverse, hands-on experience in policy development and strategic engagement.

Each graduate completed a minimum six-month rotation with the Government Relations and Performance team, contributing to a broad range of policy priorities. Their work included conducting interjurisdictional policy scans, supporting the development of formal submissions on legislative and policy reform, preparing Ministerial and agency correspondence, and participating in sector events.



## Professional **development**

We invested over \$144,000 in the development and upskilling of our staff, including the delivery of:

- vicarious trauma training
- management coaching
- performance conversations program
- youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health first aid
- media training
- persuasive writing for government.

To strengthen the Commission's work in promoting the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people, staff have been invited to enrol in the Bond University's Safeguarding vulnerable people micro-credential, which closely aligns with the Commission's expanding safeguarding responsibilities in oversight, influence and system leadership. The training explores the principles and practical application of safeguarding across a range of contexts. It offers foundational insights into preventing harm, understanding risk, and creating safe environments, particularly for children, young people and adults experiencing vulnerability. This training is compulsory for all CSO staff.



Artwork by a child with a living experience of out-of-home care



# Looking **ahead**

2025–26 is going to be a monumental year for the Commission, and for the safety and wellbeing of children across Queensland.

The Board will deliver the System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Review and make recommendations for any improvements needed to the laws, policies, procedures and practices across the early childhood education and care, police and Blue Card systems. The review remains on track to be provided to the Queensland Attorney-General in 2025. The Board will also develop a recommendation monitoring framework to track government and sector progress towards improving the systems designed to keep children safe.

The best outcomes for children and young people occur when organisations understand their responsibilities, have capacity to meet them, and are held accountable when risk or harm isn't dealt with appropriately. As we prepare for the roll-out of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle in October 2025, the Commission will maintain a sharp focus on engaging with the community and sector as implementation progresses. This will involve listening to feedback, sharing updates, and continuing to promote tools and resources that help organisations meet their obligations under the new legislation. We will also lay the foundation of a graduated model of regulation in readiness for the commencement of the Reportable Conduct Scheme on 1 July 2026.

We will also focus will be on working cooperatively with organisations to support their compliance, particularly in the early stages of implementation.

We will continue to actively participate in the Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety by providing evidence and working with the government towards transformational reform of Queensland's child protection system.

Looking ahead, our focus is clear: too many Queensland children remain in residential care, too many young people are in detention, and too many families are facing trauma from suicide, violence, and addiction. These urgent issues demand sustained and focused action. Our vision remains: that all Queensland children are loved, respected, and have their rights upheld. Through analysis, advice, advocacy and action, we will continue to drive meaningful change and strengthen the systems that children and families rely on.



## In the year ahead, **we will:**

- finalise the System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Review, delivering findings that integrate lived experience, research and data to guide evidence-informed reforms
- deliver high-impact oversight and monitoring activities aligned with the 2023–2027 Oversight Forward Workplan, including thematic reviews and targeted system assessments that track trends, measure reform progress, and inform policy decisions
- commencing the regulation of Phase 1 and 2 sector organisations to ensure they meet the Child Safe Standards under the CSO Act, including by undertaking significant community awareness campaigns and working with sector partners and preparing for the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- advance child safeguarding across systems and sectors by empowering organisations and regulators to embed best practice, by supporting the development of education resources, building leadership capability, and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement
- finalise and release the Queensland Blueprint for Children and Young People, providing a coordinated, whole-of-government framework to improve outcomes across health, education, safety, culture and wellbeing
- continue to foster and invest in long-term, trusted relationships with community organisations, research institutions, and statutory agencies through regular communication, shared resources, and joint initiatives that deliver tangible reform
- strengthen pathways for engagement by creating and expanding opportunities for children, young people and families to engage directly with policy and decision-makers, including through the Commission of Inquiry
- review and update internal governance, risk and policy frameworks to align with current state and federal legislation, based on our growth and new legal responsibilities.





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