



2025–26

Highlights



QUEENSLAND
Family & Child
Commission





The Commission acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the lands, seas and skies on which we walk, live and work. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 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.

Commissioner's introduction

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) has played a vital role in improving outcomes for children and families for over a decade, and this year was the most significant period of transformation in our history.

On 1 October 2025, the first phase of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* came into effect and signalled a fundamental shift in our role. As the regulator under the CSO Act, we are now entrusted not only with independently examining how systems protect children, but also with regulating the standards, practices and organisational cultures that help prevent abuse before it occurs. This profound shift in our responsibilities marks an important milestone in Queensland's approach to child safeguarding.

Becoming a regulator required more than new legislative powers—it required the Commission itself to evolve. During the year we undertook the largest organisational expansion in our history, procured the \$4 million Lighthouse case management system, expanded our engagement with communities and regulated organisations across Queensland, strengthened our governance and business systems, and established the operational capability needed to administer Queensland's new child safe organisations framework and Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Simultaneously, we continued our oversight role, monitoring the performance of Queensland's child protection, youth justice and family support systems, reviewing the deaths of children, undertaking research, advising government and communicating evidence that informed public policy and public debate. We published significant oversight reports examining school disciplinary absences, expenditure and market forces in residential care (*Buyer beware*), the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system (*Principle focus*), and the realisation of children's rights in Queensland (*Child Rights Report 2025*).

This work was undertaken in the context of the Queensland Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection, which brought unprecedented scrutiny to the child protection system while placing substantial demands on the Commission itself, and in the completion and release of *In Plain Sight: Review into Queensland's system response to child sexual abuse*, one of the most significant reviews in the Commission's history. The review demonstrated that child sexual abuse remains one of the most significant threats facing Queensland's children and challenged governments and institutions to move beyond responding to abuse after it occurs. It identified practical reforms to strengthen prevention, improve intelligence and information sharing, and build organisational cultures where children are safe by design. The Queensland Government's response accepted the need for substantial reform, announcing the establishment of the future Queensland Protection Commission and a new, integrated approach to child safeguarding. Few oversight reviews have had such immediate influence on the future direction of child safeguarding in Queensland, and I look forward to commencing the work to build a safer Queensland for our children.



Luke Twyford
Principal Commissioner

A snapshot of 2025-26



5

oversight reviews

completed and provided significant insight into statutory child protection systems and opportunities to influence systemic change.



37

formal recommendations

to government were made to improve systems for children and their families.



83

child lives reviewed

so that the Board could consider the deaths of children known to the child protection system.



452

child deaths recorded

in the Child Death Register.



2364

media reports



44

formal submissions

made to state and federal and international reviews and inquiries.



7

public hearings

were attended by Commissioners.

\$1,260,420

funded

to **15 partners** to build the capacity and capability of Queensland organisations ahead of the commencement of the CSO Act.



200

engagements

raised awareness of the CSO Act with **parents and carers, sector leads and peak and representative bodies**, through meetings, conferences, trade shows, community events, and presentations.



\$997,095

invested

to **support, connect and collaborate with organisations** to advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children.

Our why

We are a Commission focused on Queensland's most precious resources—its children and families. Currently, there are more than 5.7 million people living in Queensland and the state recorded a population growth rate of 1.73 per cent in the 12 months to 30 September 2025.

Approximately 29.8 per cent of Queenslanders are under 25. We know that of the 1.7 million young Queenslanders, approximately:

- **21 per cent** speak a language other than English
- **11 per cent** have a disability and **101,933** are active NDIS participants
- **8.3 per cent** identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **16 per cent** identify as a person with a mental health condition
- **25.4 per cent** are developmentally vulnerable
- **11,800** are educated via home education
- **23,229** received specialist homelessness services
- **more than 13,500** are in out-of-home care
- **300** were in detention and **16.8** were held in a police watch house on an average day.



Our people

Our workforce is comprised of **83.4 full-time equivalent staff** with a total headcount of 90. 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 remain 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.

Executive changes in 2025–26

This year marked the conclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner Natalie Lewis' six-year term.

Throughout her tenure, Natalie championed the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, challenged systems to better recognise the importance of culture and self-determination, and ensured the voices of children informed decisions affecting their lives. Her work advanced significant reforms through landmark reports, strengthened our evidence base on over-representation and child rights, and contributed to practical legislative change that improved outcomes for First Nations children and families.

This year we also farewelled Anne Edwards. During her time with the Commission Anne supported a number of significant initiatives, including the implementation of the Child Safe Organisations framework, work associated with the In Plain Sight taskforce, and our broader oversight functions. We thank Anne for her service during a period of considerable growth and change.

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)
- host 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.





Puppet Show

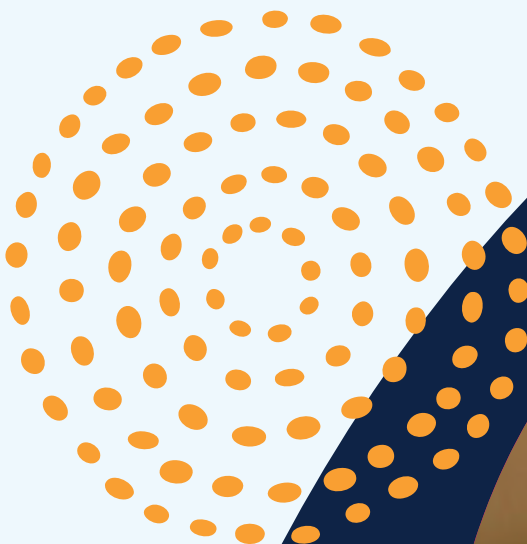
Shaping system performance in the best interests of children and their families

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.





Release of **In Plain Sight**: Review of system responses to child sexual abuse

The review

On 4 December 2024, **the Attorney-General referred a matter to the Child Death Review Board** and requested a review of system responses to child sexual abuse under section 29I of the FCC Act. The Board was asked to use the Ashley Paul Griffith matter as a case study to review system responses to child sexual abuse and make 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.

To conduct this review, the Board:

- established a dedicated team within the Commission
- received **494 documents in response to 49 information requests** issued to a range of Commonwealth and state government agencies, non-government organisations and private companies.
- commissioned research to identify best-practice approaches for protecting children from sexual abuse, identifying perpetrators and children at risk of abuse, and responding to allegations of abuse
- mapped different pieces of legislation to help understand the legislative framework operating during and subsequent to the time of offending, focusing on three key domains: sexual offending against children, early childhood education and care (ECEC), and working with children checks
- issued a public call for submissions, invited 51 organisations with a role in child sexual abuse prevention to contribute, and sought advice from our interstate counterparts, Australia's children's commissioners, advocates and guardians, on best-practice initiatives underway in their jurisdictions

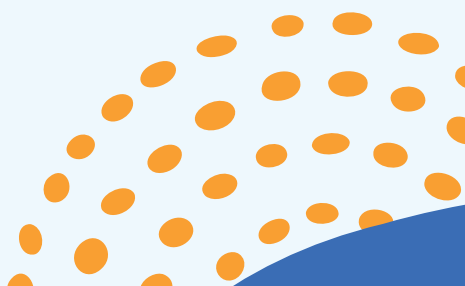
- documented the detailed chronology of the offender's movements based on court and public records, as well as information gathered under the Board's information access powers
- engaged with victim-survivors and their families and supported them to make submissions to the review to ensure that their perspectives and experiences were central to the Board's understanding of the case.

In Plain Sight report

In December 2025, the Board released *In Plain Sight: Review into system responses to child sexual abuse*. The **506 page report is the broadest review of Australia's response to child sexual exploitation since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse** and is the first to consider contemporary issues such as early childcare, online perpetration, the darknet and online exploitation material.

The report made **28 recommendations** to strengthen child safeguarding in Queensland. They focus on improving leadership; institutional and organisational practice; responses to victim-survivors; strengthening intelligence gathering and actioning; building community awareness around child sexual abuse; and reforming the criminal justice system.

Following its December 2025 release, *In Plain Sight* has become the Commission's most downloaded report with **over 13,595 downloads** of the full report, report chapters and associated research reports. It featured in over **920 media articles** in the month following its release and generated significant public debate and increased community awareness of what we should all do to prevent child sexual abuse.





I am up to episode 6. I have learnt so much. The word that sticks in my mind from Luke's comments throughout the episodes is 'vigilance'. An organisation can have beautiful policies and paperwork however there is no better mitigation strategy than 'eyes on' everyone near a child.

– Podcast listener

Podcast

To support the public dissemination of the incredibly important but detail-heavy content, **we released a seven-part podcast series**, the first of its kind in our history. Across seven episodes, the *In Plain Sight* podcast takes listeners through the insights, findings and recommendations of the review, from the lived experience of children and families, through the blind spots in systems, the decisions made by institutions and people, and ultimately toward what prevention and reform must look to properly safeguard the future.

Guests each episode offering their expert knowledge and perspectives include Principal Commissioner and Board Chair Luke Twyford, former Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson, Project Paradigm's Conrad Townson, former Taskforce Argus Detective Inspector Jon Rouse, advocates Amelia Ayris and Hetty Johnston, academic and clinical psychologist Dr Divna Haslam, and the Daniel Morcombe Foundation's Beth McNamara. The podcast's seven episodes had been viewed or listened to **over 5,300 times** by 30 June 2026.

Government response

On 16 June 2026 the Queensland Government response to *In Plain Sight: Review into system responses to child sexual abuse* was released, committing to a significant package of reforms aimed at strengthening Queensland's safeguarding system and preventing child sexual abuse across Queensland. The reforms respond directly to recommendations from the review and are designed to strengthen Queensland's ability to identify risks earlier, connect information more effectively and prevent harm before it occurs. Key reforms include:

- **establishment of the Queensland Protection Commission** as a dedicated safeguarding agency
- **creation of a Child Safeguarding Intelligence Hub** to support the identification of emerging risks and patterns of concerning behaviour, and opportunities for earlier intervention
- **creation of a Child Safeguarding Intelligence Network** to improve information sharing across government agencies and other entities with child safeguarding responsibilities
- **integration of child safeguarding functions**, including worker screening and reportable conduct oversight, to strengthen prevention and risk management

Together, these reforms are intended to **improve information sharing, strengthen accountability and support earlier identification of risks to children.**





Commission of Inquiry into the Child Safety System

A significant focus of our oversight of Queensland's child protection system during 2025–26 was supporting the Queensland Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety (the Inquiry).

The Inquiry commenced on 1 July 2025, marking a significant development in Queensland's child protection reform agenda. Over the course of the Inquiry, we dedicated significant resources to supporting its work. We responded to five Notices to Produce, providing **193 documents** totalling over **2400 pages** of evidence which supported the Inquiry to access a substantial body of independent evidence accumulated over many years of statutory oversight.

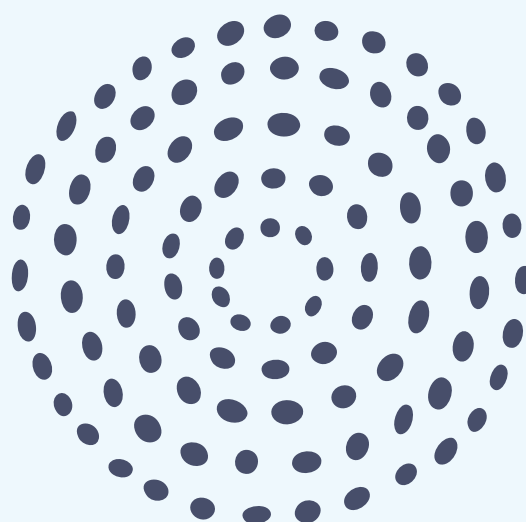
In addition, Commissioners Twyford and Lewis provided a combined **14 written statements and submissions** to the Inquiry, on a range of issues under their review including corporate parenting, the adequacy of complaints systems and incident reporting guidelines, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, and the economic implications of the system's increasing reliance on residential care. Commissioner Twyford's final submission, *Fixing the Foundations*, brought together our key evidence, systemic findings and recommendations regarding Queensland's child protection system. Commissioner Twyford was also called to give evidence to the Inquiry through a public hearing in February 2026, focused on corporate parenting, secure care, and the interaction between residential care and youth justice.

The Inquiry handed down its final report, *From pressure to purpose: Reforming child protection in Queensland*, on 22 May 2026.

Fixing the foundations

Fixing the foundations was our principal submission to the Inquiry and was published on 8 April 2026. Rather than focusing on individual operational issues or isolated policy changes, the report examined the underlying design of Queensland's child protection system and argued that meaningful improvement requires structural reform rather than incremental adjustment. The report begins from the premise that Queensland has invested heavily in child protection reform over several decades, yet many of the system's fundamental challenges have persisted.

To address these issues, the report proposed seven interconnected 'reset reforms' designed to rebuild the foundations of Queensland's child protection system. These reforms called for greater investment in keeping families together wherever it is safe to do so, improving the quality of child protection investigations and case management, guaranteeing the quality of places where children in care live, improving long-term outcomes for children in care, creating a system capable of continuous learning and improvement, reforming departmental structures to better support quality and performance, and strengthening independent oversight and accountability.



“

While all of your reports are exceptional, this one Buyer beware is written like none I've seen before – governments in child protection around the world will benefit. Most importantly, let's hope Queensland does too.

– Sector leader

Buyer beware

Buyer beware: How economic forces are shaping Queensland's residential care market is our first focused economic analysis of the out of home care system. The report found that **by 2030**, Queensland was projected to require 5000 additional out-of-home care placements, with an estimated 4000 children expected to be in residential care due to declining foster care availability. This increased reliance on residential care is expected to significantly drive system costs, with 34 per cent of approximately 17,000 children in care placed in residential settings, in a **projected \$7 billion per annum** out-of-home care system.

The findings of this report pointed to opportunities to improve alignment between cost, quality, and child-centred care, and support longer-term planning and investment in the system to provide quality care for children now and in the future. The paper attracted extensive media coverage and was heavily referenced throughout the Inquiry's final report.



Queensland Child Rights Report 2025

The *Queensland Child Rights Report 2025* examines child safety, youth justice, health, education, cultural connection and youth participation as key focus areas for children's rights. The report finds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people remain dramatically over-represented in Queensland's child protection and youth justice systems, and identifies gaps in data collection on violence against children, inadequate independent oversight of permanency decisions for First Nations children, and ongoing inequities in housing, health, mental health, education and school disciplinary practices.



The report calls for action to address the factors that place some children and young people at greater risk of exclusion, harm or unequal treatment. A series of briefings were delivered to key departments focusing on the translation of findings into actionable system reform priorities, with emphasis on areas of systemic risk, disparity, and accountability gaps. The report was well received by key government stakeholders, prompting fruitful discussions focused on strengthening youth participation, improved data sharing, and ongoing collaboration opportunities.

“

Such a critical piece of work and raising the voice of young people is so fantastic!

– Webinar attendee



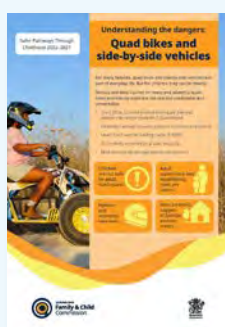
Protecting children from the dangers of heat in vehicles

Our *Protecting children from the dangers of heat in vehicles* insights paper **drew on more than 20 years of data from Queensland's Child Death Register**, and was part of our ongoing program of translating child death review findings into practical guidance for families, professionals and policymakers. The paper examined the circumstances surrounding heat-related child deaths in vehicles, identified common risk factors and misconceptions, and highlighted evidence-based strategies to prevent children from being left unattended or becoming trapped in vehicles. By combining analysis of child death data with contemporary research, the paper reinforced the importance of engineering, education and regulatory approaches to preventing these entirely avoidable tragedies.



Understanding the dangers: Quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles

Another insights paper drawing on Child Death Register data, *Understanding the dangers: Quad bikes and side-by-side vehicles* **examined the deaths of 23 Queensland children between 2004 and 2025**. It identified recurring risk factors and highlighted opportunities to strengthen child safety through improved supervision, safer vehicle use, consistent safety messaging and enhanced awareness. The paper informed our submission to Safe Work Australia's national consultation on improving the safety of quad bikes used in workplaces. By contributing evidence from child death reviews to a national policy process, we helped ensure that the experiences of Queensland children and families informed consideration of future safety reforms.



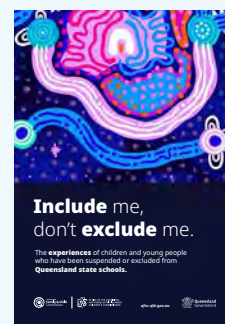
Monitoring the implementation of recommendations

Both the Board and the Commission make recommendations to government to drive meaningful, long-term change to improve safety, wellbeing and outcomes for children and young people across Queensland. Monitoring the implementation of these recommendations serves as a mechanism to track their progress, ensuring that they are translated from conceptual solutions into actionable strategies and measurable outcomes. In total, the Commission and the Board have made a combined **259 recommendations** to government since inception.



Include me, don't exclude me

Include me, don't exclude me: The experiences of children and young people who have been suspended or excluded from Queensland state schools explores the experiences of children, young people, and their families who have been affected by School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs). The report shows that First Nations students and students with a disability experience SDAs at twice the rate of all students, while those living in care receive SDAs at more than three times the rate. By amplifying their voices, **the report called for alternative, more effective approaches to school discipline that do not disrupt students' experiences of quality education.**





Child Death Review Board insights papers

The Child Death Review Board produced four insights papers during 2025–26 **to support system learning and improvement by examining recurring themes identified through its reviews.** The papers explored understanding parenting capacity, highlighting the distinction between parental willingness to engage and the practical capacity to provide safe and consistent care; timeliness and permanency in transfers of parental responsibility, examining delays in decision-making and permanency planning; fatal medical conditions secondary to neglect, identifying systemic failures in recognising and responding to children's health needs and the importance of coordinated interagency action; and recognising abuse beyond physical acts of domestic and family violence, strengthening understanding of coercive control, emotional abuse and other non-physical forms of violence. Together, these publications translated the Board's case review findings into practical lessons to strengthen child protection, interagency collaboration and outcomes for vulnerable children.



Deaths of children and young people annual report

Tabled on 19 December 2025, this annual report reports on the deaths of 427 children registered in Queensland from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Natural causes accounted for 76 per cent of deaths. **Suicide became the leading non-natural cause of death (24 deaths), closely followed by transport deaths (23 deaths) and drowning (10 deaths).**

The report shows that some children continued to be 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 (3.8 times the rate than for non-Indigenous children), and children known to Child Safety accounted for 13 per cent of all child deaths in the reporting period.



Child Death Review Board annual report

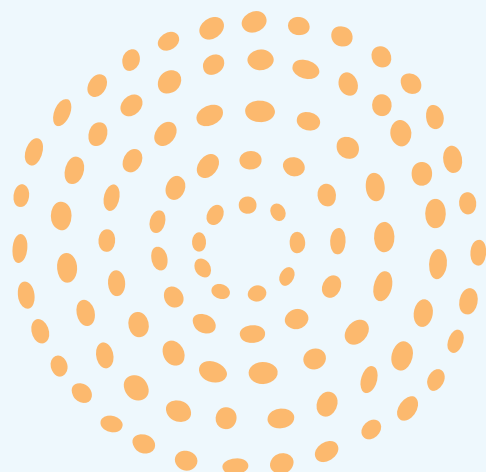
The Board's annual report 2024-25, tabled in Parliament on 19 December 2025, included **nine recommendations** for government action. They related to supporting mothers with unborn

children, supporting young parents with infants and children, finding a better path forward for teenagers with high-risk behaviours, identifying domestic and family violence in risk assessments, improving outcomes for children through interagency collaboration and information sharing, and addressing persistent gaps in supporting vulnerable families.



Sector insights papers

Since September 2024, we have published monthly Sector 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.





Artwork by a 16-year-old with a living experience
of out-of-home care, South East Queensland

Providing **written submissions**

Advocacy is a core part of our legislated role. We sit in a unique position—independent, evidence-based, connected to lived experience, and able to bring together insights from across systems. We have continued to use our voice aligned to our vision of influencing positive change by drawing on the evidence we hold, to make sure key issues for Queensland families remain firmly on the public agenda. Issues we have continued to speak to include the over-reliance on and misuse of residential care, the ineffectiveness of many statutory youth justice responses, the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in statutory systems, and the prevalence of preventable child deaths and of child sexual abuse.

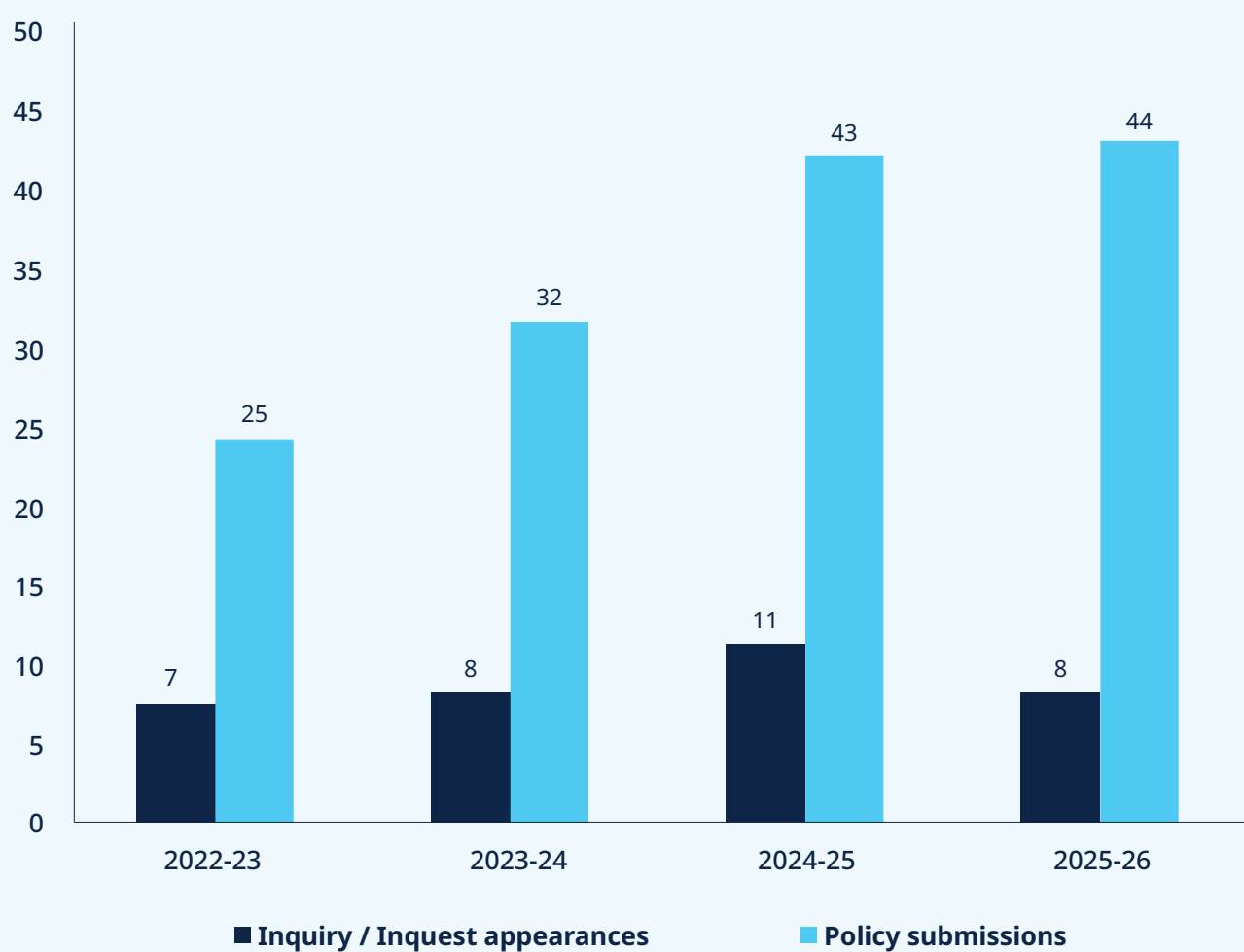
This year **we provided 44 written submissions to several state and federal committees and decision-making bodies.** These submissions spanned parliamentary and legislative inquiries, national and international policy shaping, and system stewardship and reform. We spoke to a range of topics impacting Queensland children, young people and their families including child safeguarding, youth justice, disability, early childhood education and care systems, transportation safety, victims' rights, housing, and domestic and family violence.

In addition to the extensive advice we provided to the Queensland Child Safety Commission of Inquiry, in 2025–26 we provided advice on the following matters:

- **Crime, law and youth justice** including Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2025, Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025, Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026, Criminal Code (Defence of Dwellings and Other Premises Castle Law) Amendment Bill 2026, Inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system, Criminal responses to image-based abuse consultation, Review of the Charter of Victims' Rights, *Review of Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009*, Performance of the Crime and Corruption Commission review, and Access to superannuation for victims of child sexual abuse inquiry.
- **Health, safety and disability** including National Disability Insurance Scheme (Integrity and Safeguarding) Bill 2025, Improving the safety of quad bikes used in the workplace review, Integrity of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Inquiry into the relationship between domestic, family and sexual violence victimisation and suicide, Draft Children's Online Privacy Code, Review of the Disability Discrimination Act, Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drug use in Australia, Review of child restraint requirements in the Australian Road Rules.
- **First Nations advocacy** including Inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- **Education and early childhood** including Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026, Inquiry into the factors driving educational attainment, Select Committee on Intergenerational Housing Inequity, Quality and safety of Australia's early childhood education and care system review.



Figure 1: Number of written submissions and inquiry/inquest hearing appearances



Providing **clear advice** to policy makers

In 2025–26, we provided evidence at seven public hearings and inquiries, and one coronial inquest:

- **Coronial inquest:** On 8 July 2025, Commissioner Twyford, in his role of Board Chair, gave evidence at the coronial inquest regarding the death of a child in care. The inquest considered the circumstances leading up to the death, including the appropriateness of the residential placements and support services provided by Child Safety in the months leading up to his death.
- **Inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland – Public hearing:** On 27 August 2025, Commissioner Twyford appeared before the committee to speak to our Insights paper, *Improving safety when young people ride e-scooters and e-bikes*. Commissioner Twyford acknowledged the difficult task of balancing safety, transport equity, town amenity, and the regulation of emerging technologies.
- **Inquiry into the Youth Justice (Electronic Monitoring) Amendment Bill 2025 – Public hearing:** On 14 January 2026, Commissioners Twyford and Lewis appeared before the committee. Commissioner Twyford emphasised that the youth justice system needs to be viewed as a whole system and that, if electronic monitoring is implemented by suitably qualified and trained decision-makers for clearly articulated rehabilitative purposes it may assist a young person to change their behaviour, and keep children out of detention. Commissioner Lewis advised that she does not support electronic monitoring for children.
- **Quality and safety of Australia's early childhood education and care system – Public hearing:** On 23 February 2026, Commissioner Twyford appeared before the committee to speak to the *In Plain Sight* recommendations, particularly that when an investigation is underway in an early childcare service, all parents using the centre are made aware, and that organisations engage in risk discussions in a naturally open and transparent way.
- **Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety System: Youth justice and corporate parenting hearings – Public hearing:** On 25 February 2026, Commissioner Twyford appeared before Mr Paul Anastassiou KC in Toowoomba. Commissioner Twyford responded to questions pertaining to under what circumstances secure care may be implemented, the role of the state in parenting, and the common difficulties of leading reform in child protection portfolios.
- **Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission – Public hearing:** On 25 March 2026, Commissioners Twyford and Lewis appeared before the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee as part of its oversight of the Commission. The Committee asked questions regarding the recommendations from the *Too little, too late* report, the Commissioners' views of youth justice including young people being held in watchhouses for extended periods, and a proposed secure care facility in Queensland.
- **Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 – Public hearing:** On 25 May 2026, Commissioner Twyford appeared before the committee to reiterate his support for the amendments that recognise education and training centres within youth detention centres and approved re-engagement programs as valid options for the continuity of compulsory education. He spoke to re-engagement as being an important contributor to safety.
- **Select Committee on Intergenerational Housing Inequity – Public hearing:** On 10 June 2026, Commissioner Twyford appeared before the committee highlighting the safety and wellbeing impacts of unstable housing on Queensland children and families, including its contribution to the deaths of children. Commissioner Twyford highlighted the pressures faced by foster and kinship carers, suggesting tax, superannuation and other incentives could significantly reduce the financial burden faced by those willing to open their homes to others.



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 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 2025–26 report indicates a 5.8 per cent increase in child deaths (452 deaths recorded, up from 427 in 2024–25). The number of child deaths from natural causes was 312, while the number from external causes such as transport incidents or non-intentional injury-related deaths was 94. According to preliminary data, 102 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child deaths have been recorded, compared to 88 deaths in 2024–25.

Table 1: Preliminary data from Child Death Register 2025–26

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
All deaths of children aged 0 - 17	410	446	422	427	452
Natural causes	272	336	325	328	312
External causes	95	73	73	69	94
Transport	33	28	20	23	33
Drowning	10	10	10	10	9
Other non-intentional injury	20	7	21	8	11
Suicide	22	20	19	24	28
Fatal assault and neglect	10	8	3	4	13
Unexplained causes	41	37	24	26	14
Cause of death pending	2	0	0	4	32
Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)					
Sudden unexpected infant deaths	44	40	27	29	33
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child deaths					
Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or Torres Strait Islander	71	94	92	88	102
Non-Indigenous	339	352	330	339	350
Known to the child protection system					
No involvement or ongoing intervention	26	35	21	20	38
Open intake event	1	5	2	6	16
Investigation and Assessment	25	16	23	19	27
Child Protection Order	12	9	4	9	7
Open Child Intervention with Parental Agreement	4	5	2	1	2
Support Service Case	1	1	1	2	0
Other child protection status	0	1	0	0	1
Total known to the child protection system	69	72	53	57	91

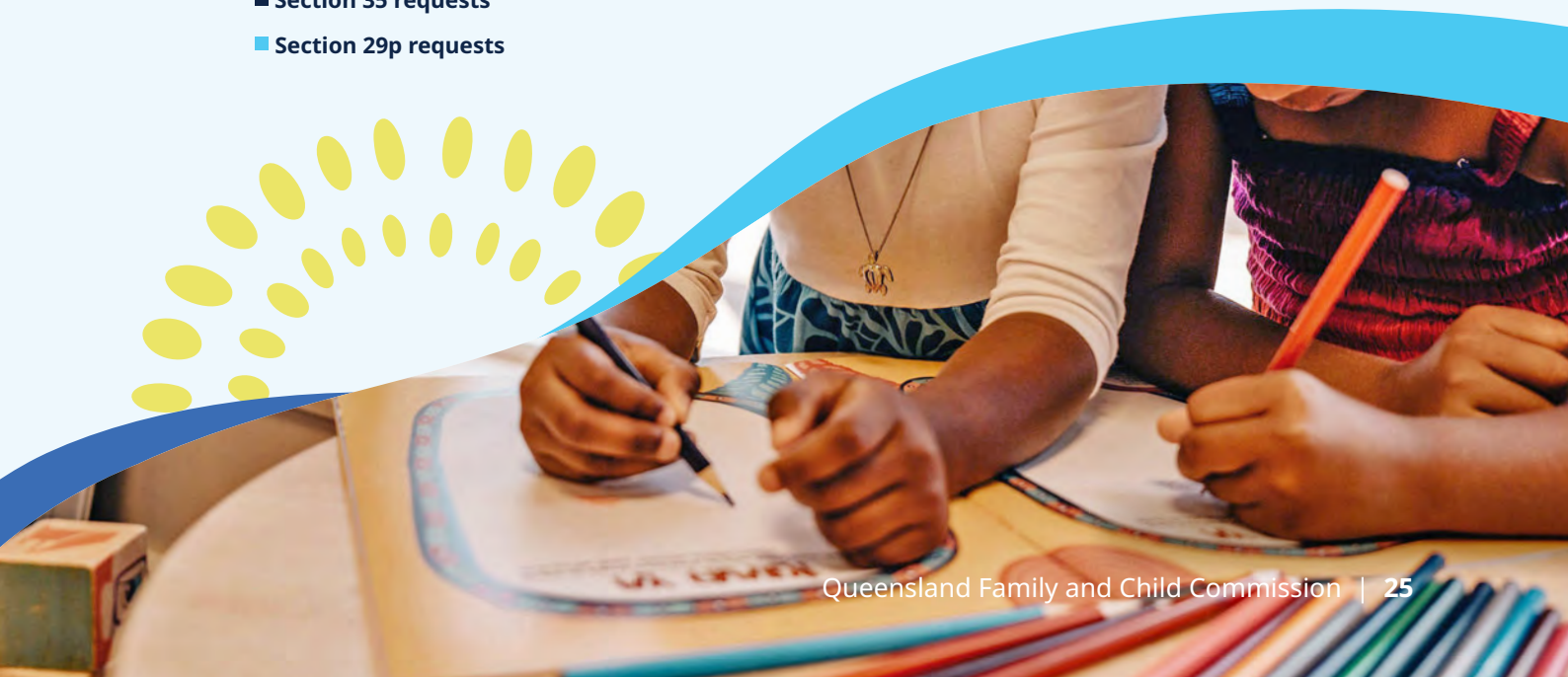
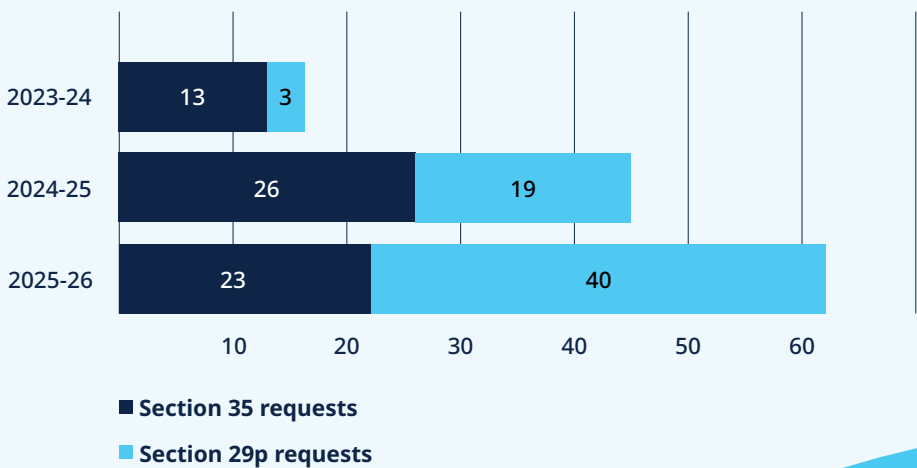
Information gathering

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 2025–26, we issued **23 section 35 requests for information**. While this was slightly lower than the 26 requests issued in 2024–25, it represents a sustained increase in our use of statutory powers, with information requests now occurring at almost twice the level seen prior to 2024–25.

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. In 2025–26, **the Board issued 40 section 29 information requests**. While overall this is a 14.3 per cent increase from the 35 requests made the previous year, it shows a significant change in how the power was used. Requests supporting the Board’s usual child death review program increased by 666.7 per cent from 2024–25 (3 requests) to 2025–26 (23 requests). Requests associated with the *In Plain Sight: System Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* review decreased from 32 to 17, a reduction of 46.9 per cent, as the review progressed from evidence gathering towards analysis, finalisation and publication.

Figure 2: Requests for information under the FCC Act



Media impact

During 2025–26 we completed a significant redevelopment of our public website to support our expanded role as Queensland's child safeguarding regulator. The new site was launched in April 2026, designed to ensure regulatory information was clear, easy to navigate and readily accessible, while providing a more user-centred experience for organisations, workers and the broader community. New content, guidance materials and digital resources were developed to support organisations in understanding and meeting their obligations under the Child Safe Organisations Act, and information architecture and search functionality was enhanced to enable users to quickly locate relevant advice and resources.

In 2025–26 our website attracted **more than 927,000 views**, representing a **182 per cent** increase from the previous period. Following the passage of the CSO Act in September 2024, our website traffic has grown almost **500 per cent**, and our Child Safe Organisations information and implementation resources are our most frequently accessed content.

Our social media channels also continued to expand their reach in 2025–26.

LinkedIn followers increased by **37.1 per cent**, strengthening the Commission's engagement with professionals working across child protection, education, health and community services.

Our Meta channels (Facebook and Instagram) have shown the greatest performance, recording a combined reach of more than eight million over the period. This is approximately an **83.5 per cent** increase in reach compared with last year.

Between May 2025 and April 2026, the Commission featured in **2364** mainstream and social media reports. While this represented a 17.4 per cent decrease from 2024–25, it remained almost four times higher than the Commission's media profile in 2022–23 and was comparable with 2023–24 levels. Importantly, **98 per cent** of all media coverage was assessed as positive or very positive, with no negative coverage recorded during the reporting period. More than **80 per cent** of all coverage related to our research, reviews and reports, up from 76 per cent last year and 51 per cent in 2023–24.

Child commissioner raises concerns about Qld's proposed \$50m secure care model

By Aisling Brennan ABC Southern Qld State and Territory Government

Posted 25 Feb 2026 at 7:17pm



RADIO NATIONAL BREAKFAST

Senate childcare inquiry told child abuse is more prevalent than we realise

Tue 24 Feb 2026 at 7:05am

Play 7m

Child commissioner raises concerns about Qld's proposed \$50m secure care model



Child commissioner raises concerns about the secure care model in state care. (ABC News: Lucas Hill)

You questioned whether secure care would provide a child who was at risk of detention to get the support they

It would be my hope secure care would be provided because of a deep understanding of that children's needs and not provided because of offending," Mr Ford replied.

THE AUSTRALIAN

HOME NATION WORLD BUSINESS WEALTH COMMENTARY HEALTH SPORT CULTURE VIDEO

System failed to stop pedophile Ashley Griffith despite 18 opportunities

By MACKENZIE SCOTT

Listen to this article
4 min



Ashley Paul Griffith pleaded guilty to more than 300 charges.

Updated 7:02pm December 08, 2025

Make us preferred on Google

Ashley Paul Griffith, was fired by five childcare centres for suspicious behaviour while working with young hundreds of abuse charges.

The government's "In Plain Sight" report found the inaction of childcare centres allowed a predatory pedophile to move between Queensland and NSW undetected.

The report, with a raft of recommendations, called on the state government to implement a conduct scheme to make it a requirement for childcare workers and volunteers, and better reporting mechanisms for those who feared a child was being abused.

The report also highlighted the case of a man who had been living with 91 girls in Queensland, NSW and Italy in childcare centres, and then posting child

Child exploitation in the community

The report also highlighted some defining events between 2009 and 2019. These included five children being disclosed to his next employer; five children being privately recorded by childcare centres; and five children being inadequately investigated or connect

Advancing the rights, safety and wellbeing of children through collaboration



The Commission recognises that lasting improvements in the lives of children cannot be achieved by one organisation acting alone. Throughout 2025–26, we strengthened partnerships across government, the community sector, academia and statutory agencies to support evidence-informed decision-making, improve system coordination and promote shared accountability for children’s safety and wellbeing. By bringing together diverse expertise, lived experience and system leadership, we continued to influence reforms.

Collaboration also means working directly with children, young people and communities to ensure their experiences shape policy and reform. Throughout 2025–26, we continued to engage children, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, peak bodies and community organisations to inform our oversight, reporting and advocacy. These partnerships strengthened our understanding of the issues affecting children and ensured that lived experience remained central to our work.

Leading national and sector conversations

In 2025–26, we played a prominent leadership role in national and state discussions on child safety, child protection, youth justice and children’s rights through **more than 60 conference presentations and panel discussions**.

A major focus of Commissioner Twyford’s engagement was advancing national conversations on the prevention of child sexual abuse and strengthening Australia’s child safeguarding system, including presenting the findings of the *In Plain Sight* to national audiences, highlighting opportunities to improve early identification of abuse, strengthen organisational accountability and build more effective safeguarding systems. This included the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation Stakeholder Operational Meeting, the Youth, Technology and Virtual Communities Conference, and the Parliamentary Friends Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, bringing together law enforcement, regulators, policy makers, researchers and advocacy organisations to address emerging risks facing children in both physical and online environments.

Commissioner Lewis continued to provide national leadership on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Through keynote addresses and expert panels, she advocated for reforms that strengthen children’s rights, embed First Nations voices in decision-making and improve outcomes across child protection, youth justice and disability systems. Her contributions reinforced the importance of self-determination, culturally safe services, and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children remain connected to family, culture and Country.

Beyond formal presentations, we also participated in a range of community and sector events, including the Commission also maintained a strong presence at community and sector events, such as the Queensland P&C Conference, the Inspiring Journeys Summit, the Leading Reform Summit and the launch of Project Paradigm Australia’s child sexual abuse prevention resources. These events provide important opportunities for us to engage directly with parents, educators, young people, service providers and community leaders.



Funding and sponsorship agreements

In 2025–26 we invested **\$997,095** (representing 4 per cent of our total budget) in strategic sponsorships and partnerships to enable us to build capability across sectors, extend the reach and accessibility of child safeguarding messages and resources, and to engage more effectively with children, families and communities.

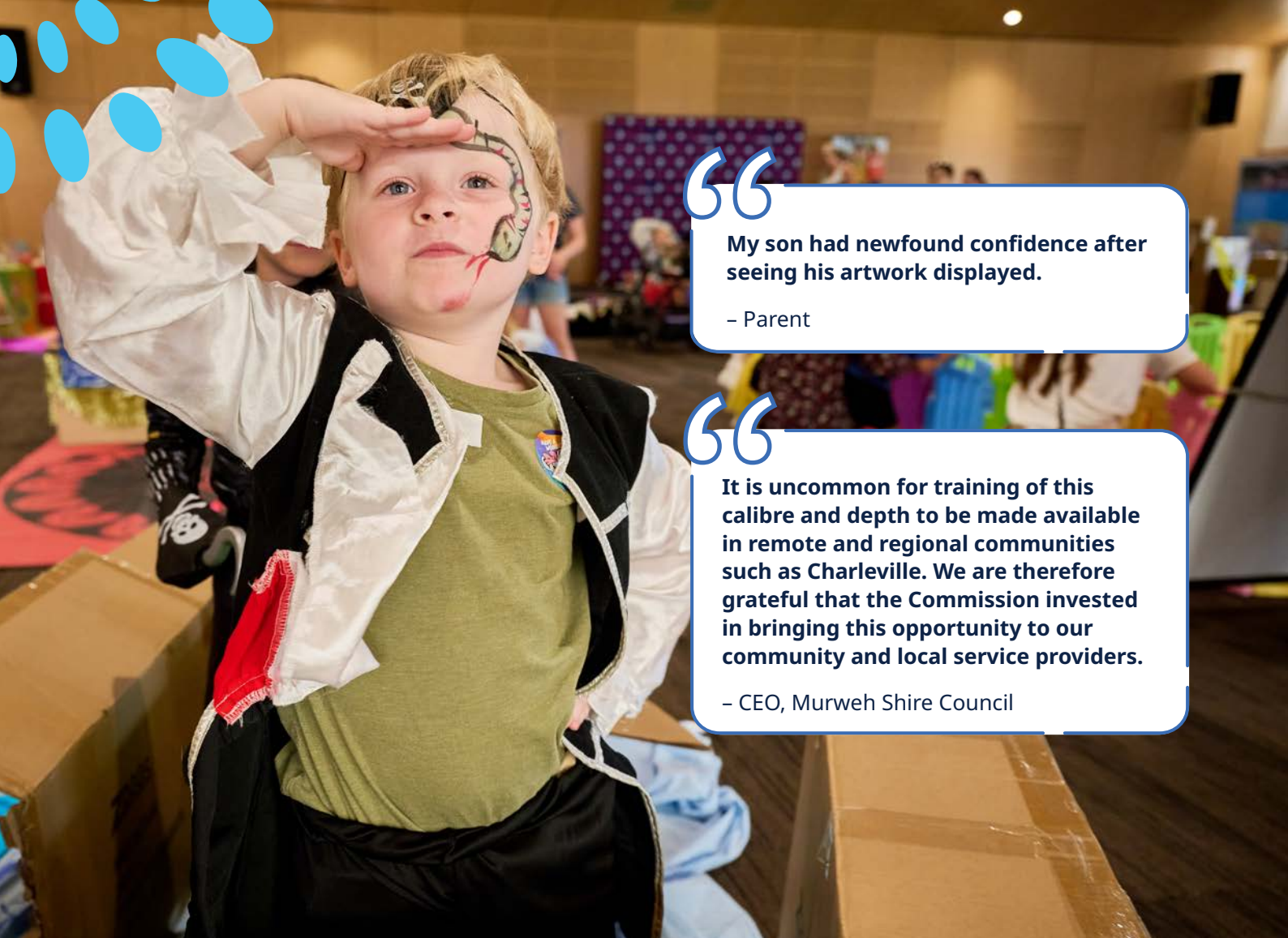
Projects we supported through our funding and sponsorship agreements this year included:

- **Project Paradigm’s Capable Communities initiative**, to build understanding and awareness of child sexual exploitation in regional communities through the delivery of workshops across western Queensland for professionals, carers and community members
- **Children’s Week 2025 delivered by Children’s Rights Queensland**, which saw over 200 events take place across Queensland, a grants program to support grassroots organisations to deliver local celebrations and projects, an awards ceremony to recognise the work of children’s rights champions, and the launch of *The ABC of Children’s Rights*, a picture book developed with help from seed funding we provided about the rights included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- **Deadly Indigenous Youth Doing Good’s Good Vibrations Program**, fostering the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander future leaders through weekly peer support sessions, cultural connection activities, and an annual wellbeing camp
- **ATSICHS Brisbane’s Young Black and Proud scholarship program**, supporting young First Nations people aged 25 and under to pursue their goals in sport, the arts and academics
- **PeakCare’s Sibling Carer Initiative**, advocating for reform to ensure sibling carers are recognised and supported within the child protection system
- **Queensland Child Protection Week, delivered by Act for Kids**, including sponsorship of the Commitment to Child Safe Organisational Principles Award and the development and distribution of a children’s book focused on children’s safety, to be launched as part of its 40th anniversary in September 2026
- **Play Matters community-based events** aimed at promoting childhood development, enhancing family engagement and strengthening community connections
- **CREATE Foundation’s art workshops and showcases** for children in out-of-home care
- **Daniel Morcombe Foundation’s Day for Daniel** and collaborative child safety initiatives with the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation.



We are particularly grateful for the support provided by QFCC in funding the sibling carer project. This investment has enabled a deeper understanding of the experiences of sibling carers and has directly informed the evidence and insights presented in this submission.

– PeakCare



“

My son had newfound confidence after seeing his artwork displayed.

– Parent

“

It is uncommon for training of this calibre and depth to be made available in remote and regional communities such as Charleville. We are therefore grateful that the Commission invested in bringing this opportunity to our community and local service providers.

– CEO, Murweh Shire Council





The Child Death Register as a public resource

The Queensland Child Death Register is one of Australia's most comprehensive sources of information about the circumstances surrounding child deaths, and has documented over 9800 child deaths in its 21 years of operation.

As custodian of the Register, we share our data and expertise to ensure its value extends well beyond the Commission, helping learn from children's deaths and improve the safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children. This includes providing carefully-governed access to the Register's data for governments, health services, researchers, regulators, coroners and national agencies undertaking research, policy development, service improvement and public safety initiatives.

This year we responded to **43 requests** for child death data from researchers, partner organisations, government agencies and community groups — a **48 per cent** increase on the previous year. The Register informed a broad range of work across Queensland and Australia, including:

- **strengthening health and clinical practice** in reducing sudden unexpected deaths in infancy, sepsis-related child deaths, nutritional deficiency deaths, and local prevention priorities based on regional child death analysis
- **advancing research** into suicide, safe sleeping practices, and sudden infant deaths
- **improving product and injury safety** by contributing to reviews of child vehicle restraints, e-bikes and e-scooters, and drowning prevention
- **supporting government and public policy** by assisting coronial investigations and supporting interstate child death review bodies.

Throughout the year, we also:

- refreshed our Safer Pathways Through Childhood research agenda to strengthen collaboration with universities, government agencies and research institutes
- progressed our work to strengthen how fatal child assault and neglect deaths are identified, classified and reviewed, through an independent review and consultation with researchers and practitioners
- participated in the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group's annual meeting, including focussed discussions with interjurisdictional counterparts on fatal neglect definitions, e-mobility devices, and youth suicide
- collaborated with members of the Australian and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group to present information on child mortality from all jurisdictions in the paper *Australian child death statistics 2023*, which we published in March 2026.

Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates

We are part of the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates (ANZCCGA) network, providing opportunities for members to advocate collectively for systemic improvements to the safety and rights of children and young people, and support cross-jurisdictional connection shared learnings.

In 2025–26, the group met three times to discuss key issues affecting children and young people. These included discussing the findings and recommendations of *In Plain Sight: System responses to child sexual abuse*, eSafety's Age-Restricted Material Codes and the findings of the 2025 UN Youth Ambassador's Listening Tour.

Strengthening research through collaboration

In 2025–26, we **adopted a new research strategy** that brings together researchers, governments, service providers and communities to strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice.

Our research investment focused on issues where stronger evidence can drive meaningful system reform. During the year this included:

- **Maltreatment Mental Health Framework for Healing and Recovery**, delivered in partnership with the Australian Catholic University — to bring together research evidence, practitioner expertise and the lived experiences of children, young people and caregivers to develop a framework for responding to the complex mental health impacts of childhood maltreatment.
- **Paediatric Post Sepsis Care: Enhancing Research Innovation and Health Outcomes through Partnerships and Translation**, in partnership with Queensland Health and academic researchers from Queensland University of Technology — to improve understanding of the longer-term impacts of paediatric sepsis and strengthen health pathways for survivors, families and those affected by bereavement.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child suicide prevention**, in partnership with the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention at Griffith University — to link child death, health and mental health data to better understand service pathways, help-seeking experiences and opportunities for earlier intervention.



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 2025–26 some of the children and young people we heard from included:

- **20 young people with lived experience of the child protection system** shared their experiences with Commissioner Paul Anastassiou ahead of the formal opening of the Child Safety Commission of Inquiry
- **28 young speakers** presented their experiences and ideas for change at our third annual Youth Summit
- **more than 400 young Queenslanders** attended the Youth Leaders Summits in Bundaberg and Gympie, run in partnership with the Australian School of Entrepreneurship
- **44 children aged three to 14** took to the stage at the 2025 Childhood Summit in Logan to share their perspectives on issues including racism, mental health, addiction, and respect for elders.

Putting children's voices at the centre of reform: induction of Commissioner Anastassiou

One of our most significant contributions during the year was ensuring that the voices of children were heard at the very beginning of the Commission of Inquiry. On the afternoon before the Inquiry's formal opening, **we organised for Commissioner Paul Anastassiou KC to spend several hours meeting with 20 children and young people** with lived experience of Queensland's child protection system. The purpose of the session was to

provide the Commissioner with a first-hand understanding of the experiences, perspectives and aspirations of the children whose lives would be most affected by the Inquiry's work.

The importance of the session was evident the following day, when Commissioner Anastassiou referred directly to the themes raised by the children in his opening address. Their messages about safety, relationships, stability, trust and being listened to helped frame the Inquiry's work and reinforced that its purpose was ultimately to improve the lives of Queensland children and young people.

2026 Youth Summit

Our third annual Youth Summit was held on 10 April 2026, marking the start of Queensland Youth Week. The popular event brought together almost **300 leaders, decision-makers, advocates and young people** united by a shared goal: hearing directly from young Queenslanders to help shape a better future.

Across the day, **28 young speakers shared their lived experiences** alongside practical ideas for change with decision-makers and frontline professionals. Centred around six key life domains, sessions explored key areas shaping children's and young people's lives, from feeling valued, safe and supported, to participation, material basics, and identity and culture.

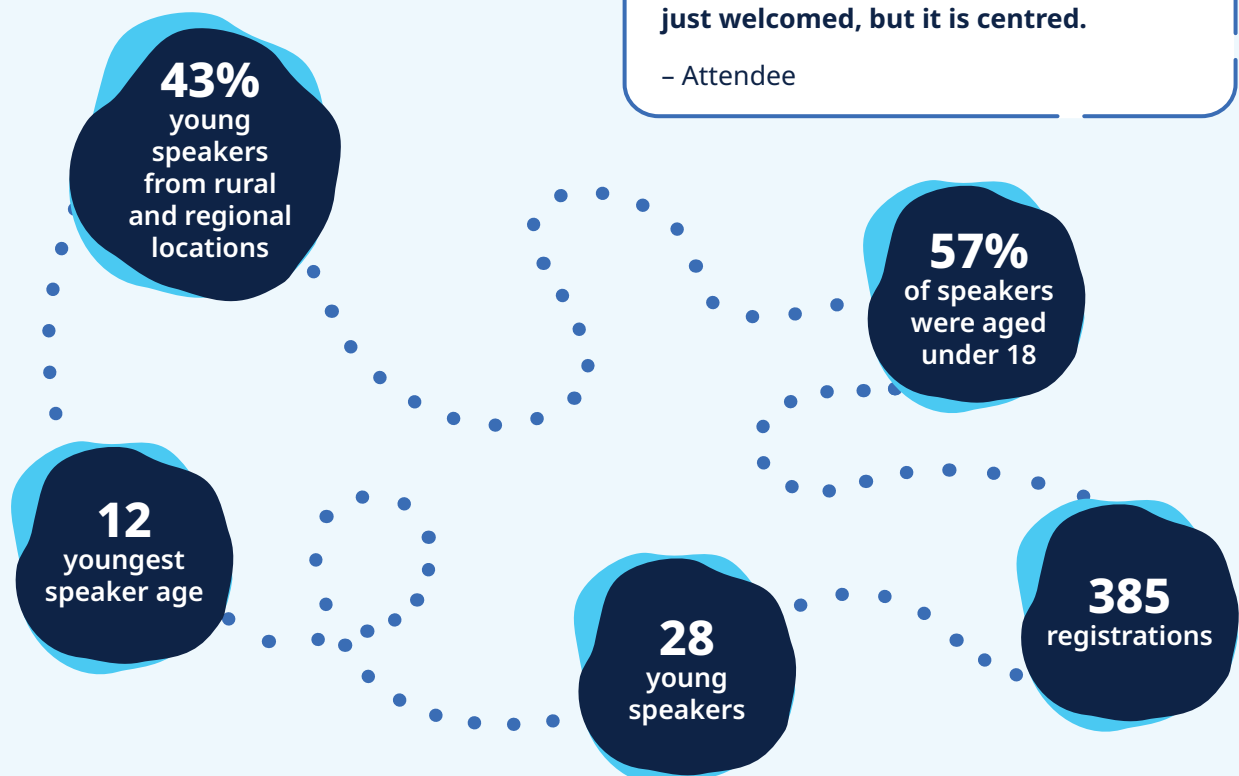
Speakers highlighted the importance of consistent care and early intervention, the realities of mental health and invisible illness, barriers faced in education and remote communities, and the need for genuine inclusion in decisions that affect young people. Access to housing, healthcare and financial security also featured strongly, alongside powerful reflections on culture, connection and belonging.

Our young speakers did not just share their experiences and ideas, but came armed with solutions – and solutions aimed at improving things not for themselves, but for other children and young people. Reflection speakers this year included Commissioners Twyford and Lewis, Hon Amanda Camm (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence), Kate Connors (Victims Commissioner), Aimee McVeigh (CEO, Queensland Council of Social Service), Katherine Hayes (CEO, Youth Advocacy Centre), Peta Bryant (Deputy Director General, Queensland Health). We were also lucky enough to have returning alumni Ruby as co-MC and Amelia as a keynote speaker. Feedback from attendees, speakers and their families has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting this as the most engaging summit to date.



Youth Summit was an empowering experience. It was one of the few spaces where youth lived experience are not just welcomed, but it is centred.

– Attendee





“
Thanks so much for the opportunity to speak at the Youth Summit and making it such a well-run and safe space for everyone. I can only guess at the amount of effort everyone had to put in, so thank you again.
- Attendee



2025 Youth Summit

On 4 September 2025, we were thrilled to receive the Queensland Child Protection Week Youth Participation Award for our 2025 Youth Summit. The award recognises the involvement of young people in the planning of a local activity to promote child protection. Commission staff were joined on stage by summit speakers Peter, Jess and Oli as well as Tionne from the Australian School of Entrepreneurship to accept the award. In her acceptance speech, Jess spoke about the power of the Summit – *When decision-makers truly listen, they create stronger policies, safer programs, and more impactful change.*



The incredible work undertaken by the young people who spoke at our Summit in April 2025 has continued post-summit. Ruby has been working on developing and promoting her Kids of Purple website, which provides support for young Queenslanders experiencing domestic and family violence. Jess attended the 2025 World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Annual Summit in Switzerland to share her ideas about global challenges. Caroline met with The Honourable Paul Anastassiou KC, Commissioner of the Child Safety Commission of Inquiry to speak about her experience as a sibling carer and growing up in out-of-home care. Teanna has launched her own YouTube channel and website providing education to young people about e-safety. These are only four examples of young people's impact and achievements, with many other achievements captured in our *2025 Youth Summit impact report*, released in 2025–26 and outlining the advocacy journeys of these young people to date.

2025 Childhood Summit — Through Their Eyes

We were proud to sponsor the 2025 Childhood Summit: Through Their Eyes. The biennial event, led by the Australian Institute of Play, provides a platform for children aged three to 14 living in the Logan region, to speak directly to their community leaders about matters impacting them and their peers. Framed by the question, 'How are the children doing?' — a traditional Maasai greeting which gauges the health of a community through the wellbeing of its children — the summit invited adults to pause and listen to the expertise of children and young people. **Forty-four children aged three to 14** took to the microphone across two days to share their perspectives on issues including racism, mental health, addiction, and respect for elders. Their insights were powerful, thought-provoking, and deeply grounded in compassion and community.



I cannot begin to express the depth of my gratitude for your generous support. Without it, the magic that unfolded over the two days of the Childhood Summit would have never been realised. For the 58 children involved and their families, their lives are much richer, stronger and trusting. They have a new benchmark, that there is a community of adults who will authentically show-up and listen, who care and take notice, who are invested in growing children's agency and citizenship.

– Attendee

Young Leaders Summits — Gympie and Bundaberg

In partnership with the Australian School of Entrepreneurship, the Commission hosted two Young Leaders Summits in 2025–26. Bringing together **more than 400** young participants from local schools across Gympie and Bundaberg, the summits focused on interactive team-building activities, discussions on leadership and problem-solving, and keynote speeches from local leaders and business owners. The events inspired and empowered entrepreneurial young leaders, providing them with the tools and connections to positively impact their communities.

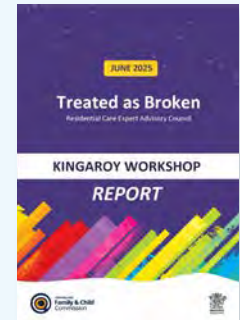


Incredible to see so many young leaders thinking deeply about community issues and solutions. Programs like this truly make a difference.

– Summit attendee

Residential Care Expert Advisory Council

Throughout 2025–26, we worked in partnership with Life Without Barriers to support the Residential Care Expert Advisory Council, providing a structured mechanism for children and young people with lived experience of residential care to directly inform the Commission's oversight and advice.



During 2025–26, the Commission published *I became my own carer and Treated as broken*, reflecting its ongoing commitment to partnering with children and young people with lived experience of residential care. These reports add to a growing body of evidence developed through the Residential Care Expert Advisory Council, supporting the Commission's independent oversight of residential care reform and providing valuable insight into the experiences, priorities and concerns of children and young people to inform system improvement.



Supporting young people to advocate

Joint advocacy in Federal Parliament

Commissioner Twyford was proud to attend the Parliamentary Friends Against Abuse and Exploitation event with Amelia, a young advocate whose courage and commitment continue to drive important conversations about protecting children. The event brought together parliamentarians, survivors, advocates and sector leaders to reinforce the shared responsibility of preventing child sexual abuse and supporting children who have experienced harm.

Queensland Kids Partnership — support for young people on Intergenerational Stewardship Table

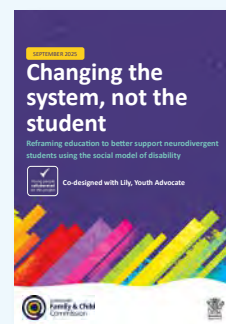
We supported two young people to participate in the Intergenerational Stewardship Table, an initiative established by Queensland Kids Partnership to bring together children, young people and senior leaders to collaboratively address issues affecting Queensland's future. The purpose of the Table is to take up collective leadership to shift the conditions young Queenslanders grow up in. In April 2026, the Queensland Kids Partnership brought together more than 60 Queenslanders aged 14 to 67 to put intergenerational leadership into action with the first collective gathering. We are proud to sponsor Rhea and Claudia to be a part of this incredible initiative.

Meeting with National Children's Commissioner

We were pleased to support newly appointed National Children's Commissioner Deb Tsorbaris during her visit to Queensland by facilitating opportunities to engage directly with children and young people with lived experience of residential care, as well as senior Queensland Government officials and sector leaders. These conversations provided valuable insights into the experiences of children in care, current reform priorities and opportunities to strengthen safeguarding and oversight across jurisdictions. Supporting these connections reflects our commitment to ensuring the voices of children inform national discussions and to fostering collaboration between governments and the child and family sector to improve outcomes for children.

Youth-led insights paper — Changing the system, not the student

Following Lily's speech at the 2025 Youth Summit, Commissioner Twyford invited Lily to co-design an insights paper with our Analysis, Insights and Reporting team. The result of this collaboration is *Changing the system, not the student: Reframing education to better support neurodivergent students using the social model of disability*. Lily's speech provided the foundation for this report, which also incorporates key insights from fellow youth advocates Gefion, Ameya and Stella to demonstrate the prevalence and urgency of these challenges. This insight review identifies key issues affecting the rights and needs of neurodivergent children, young people, and their families, in accessing education in Queensland. Embedding these approaches in policy and practice is a critical step towards removing structural barriers to create environments where all children and young people are valued and supported to thrive.



This is incredible! I hope this is a tool that can begin to be used to 'positively agitate' a system that desperately needs change.

– Sector leader



Queensland Kids
Partnership

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 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 Dakota McSpadden, a lived-experience advocate whose own journey through homelessness, out-of-home care, and complex encounters with Queensland's health and child safety systems now informs practice improvements at every level of those systems. Her advocacy consistently centres trauma-informed care as standard practice, lived-experience workers in the system, and early intervention that keeps families together.

Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award, First Nations – 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 Taeg Twist, a proud Birri Gubba Birriah and Ngāti Whātua 2Spirit from Waibene in the Zenadth Kes. Taeg is a multidisciplinary creative, advocate, and emerging leader whose work bridges First Nations LGBTQIA2S+ health, storytelling, and systems change. Taeg uses performance, advocacy, and community leadership to create culturally powerful spaces where First Nations young people can see themselves reflected, celebrated, and heard.



Dakota McSpadden, 2026 Queensland Family and Child Commission Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award recipient

Taeg Twist, 2026 Queensland Family and Child Commission Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award for First Nations People recipient

Community Achievement Awards

Our sponsorship of the Community Achievement Awards helps recognise and celebrate individuals and organisations that actively work towards empowering and uplifting young Queenslanders. We sponsored two awards in the following categories:

Dedicated to Supporting Young Queenslanders Award – presented to Zane Nonol, a passionate youth mentor transforming the lives of at-risk and Indigenous young people. Through his volunteer work with PCYC and Goondiwindi basketball, and his programs including the Youth Drop-in and After Dark sessions, he removes barriers to participation through building trust, boosting self-esteem, and promoting social inclusion among diverse cultural groups, offering positive alternatives to crime and social disconnection.

Dedicated to Improving Safety of Children Award – presented to Project Paradigm for their work in driving systemic change to protect children from sexual exploitation across Queensland and beyond. Through trauma-informed training, advocacy, and resource development, the team builds community capacity to recognise, prevent, and respond to child sexual abuse and exploitation. Their initiatives, such as the Shifting the Paradigm webinar series, training workshops, and It's Never Too Early prevention campaign, have reached over 7,000 professionals, 3.2 million parents and carers, and 6.1 million children.



Zane Nonol, 2025 Queensland Family and Child Commission Dedicated to Supporting Young Queenslanders Award recipient

Project Paradigm, 2025 Queensland Family and Child Commission Dedicated to Improving Safety of Children Award recipient

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.

Establishing a strategic direction for **First Nations oversight**

During 2025–26, Commissioner Lewis developed and launched the *Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner* (OATSICC) strategic plan, establishing the first dedicated strategic framework for the Office and providing a clear expression of its purpose, priorities and distinct approach to oversight. As a formal sub-strategy of the Commission's strategic plan, the document articulates how the Commission staff that report to Commissioner Lewis will exercise statutory functions while embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing across their work. A central objective of the strategy was to strengthen self-determination through greater functional autonomy.

Our Journey, Our Story

During 2025–26, Commissioner Lewis commissioned a bespoke artwork to represent the identity, values and way of working of the Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner (OATSICC). Rather than creating a visual brand, the artwork was developed to capture the principles that guide the team's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities, and to provide a lasting expression of its purpose and legacy.

Released on the eighteenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *Our Journey, Our Story* was created by acclaimed First Nations artist Rachael Sarra in collaboration with young people. The artwork reflects OATSICC's commitment to placing children at the centre of decision-making, grounding its work in cultural authority and lived experience, and remaining accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

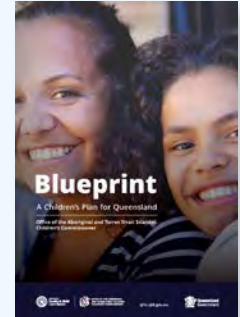


Blueprint:

A children's plan for Queensland

Commissioner Lewis released a *Blueprint: A children's plan for Queensland*, outlining a practical roadmap for smarter investment, stronger coordination, and child-centred decision-making to ensure every child can thrive.

The Blueprint also sets a clear direction for working across different levels of government, recognising the roles of local, state and federal governments. It aligns with the national reform agenda, including initiatives like Closing the Gap and Safe and supported: *The national framework for protecting Australia's children 2021–2031*, ensuring that policies support ongoing national goals.



Advancing national leadership for **First Nations children**

Throughout 2025–26, Commissioner Lewis continued to provide national leadership on the rights, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, ensuring Queensland's experience informed national policy discussions and reform.

Throughout the year she represented Queensland in national and state discussions on child protection, youth justice, children's rights and implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including:

- participating in a national panel hosted by the Australian Childhood Foundation to advocate for the establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People's Commissioner, highlighting the need for a strong, independent voice to promote and protect the rights of First Nations children across Australia
- joining the opening plenary of the Reintegration Puzzle Conference in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), where First Nations Children's Commissioners reflected on the need to move beyond punitive approaches to children in contact with youth justice systems
- providing advice to parliamentary and government inquiries examining the impacts of racism, hate and discrimination on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- contributing evidence and policy advice to major reform processes including the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland's Child Safety System, advocating for stronger alignment between child protection reform, youth justice reform and Closing the Gap commitments.

Highlighting the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in statutory systems

Throughout 2025–26, the Commission continued to advocate for a Queensland where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up connected to family, culture and Country, and where systems recognise and uphold their rights.

We do this by ensuring that the voices, experiences and aspirations of First Nations children and communities informed oversight, policy reform and public advocacy. Central to this work was our commitment to promoting the accountability of government systems for improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We continued to work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations and leaders, recognising that sustainable change is achieved through genuine partnership and community-led solutions. The Office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner continued to provide oversight of the child protection, education and youth justice systems, ensuring government reforms remain focused on improving outcomes for First Nations children.

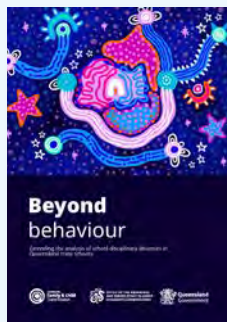
During the year, we released several significant reports examining the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Queensland's statutory systems.



Beyond behaviour

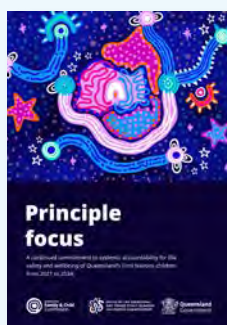
Building on last year's *Include me, don't exclude me: The experiences of children and young people who have been suspended or excluded from Queensland state schools*, the *Beyond behaviour* report analyses the disproportionate rate at which First Nations children, children with disability, and children living in out-of-home care are suspended or excluded from Queensland state schools. The report also found that children experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage faced even higher rates of school disciplinary absence.

Importantly, *Beyond behaviour* begins examining the link between school exclusion and poverty, finding that seven of the ten Queensland schools with the highest proportion of students receiving an SDA were located in areas with the lowest socio-economic scores.



Principle focus 2026

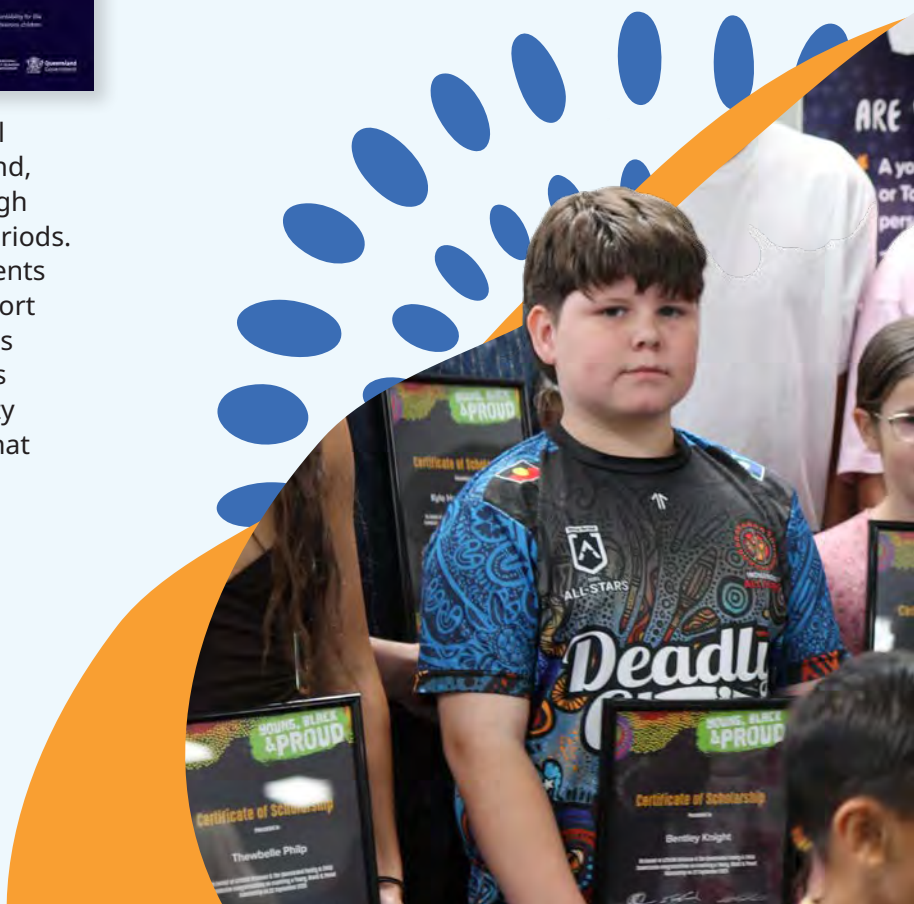
In May 2026 we released *Principle focus: A continued commitment to systemic accountability for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's First Nations children*. The report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children now account for almost half of all children in out-of-home care in Queensland, are entering care at disproportionately high rates, and remaining in care for longer periods. It also found that residential care placements continue to increase significantly. The report emphasised that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is a key safeguard for children's rights, safety and cultural connection, and reinforced that stronger implementation of the Principle is essential to achieving lasting change.



Commission of Inquiry: advocating for stronger implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

Throughout the Commission of Inquiry, Commissioner Lewis drew on our oversight work, evidence and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and communities to advocate for reforms that strengthen children's connection to family, culture and Country and improve the accountability of the child protection system.

This included through the release of three public statements during the Inquiry: one relating to adoption, one on secure care, and one urging governments to protect and fully implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. The latter was a joint statement released by Commissioner Lewis in conjunction with Sue-Anne Hunter (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner), Catherine Liddle (Chief Executive Officer, SNAICC — National Voice for our Children), and Phillip Brooks (Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)).



Young, Black and Proud scholarships

The Young, Black and Proud Scholarship program, delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane, supports and celebrates the talents and strengths of young First Nations people to pursue their artistic, sporting and academic potential.

In September 2025, the statewide program **awarded 69 scholarships ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000 to young First Nations athletes, artists and scholars**, with 298 individual young people and groups submitting applications — the highest number ever received. The 2025 round awarded 12 academic scholarships, 18 art scholarships and 39 sport scholarships to recipients from across Queensland.

2026 marks ten years of the scholarship program, with over 400 First Nations children and young people being supported over its lifetime. Applications for the 2026 round closed in May, with scholarships to be announced in September 2026.

“

It means everything, really... It means a lot culturally as well. Everything, like the burden that we carry as well, but also the enjoyment that we carry, the love, the kinship, the family that we carry, that's what I love about our culture. And that's what I love about this scholarship, bringing young people together today, seeing everyone's achievements.

– Young, Black and Proud scholarship recipient





Artwork by a 20-year-old with a lived experience of out-of-home care

Improving understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child suicide

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to experience disproportionately high rates of suicide, with mortality rates more than three times those of non-Indigenous children. Improving outcomes requires a stronger evidence base to understand children's experiences, the services they access, and the opportunities for earlier intervention.

During 2025–26, we continued our partnership with the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, Griffith University, supporting a multi-year research project led by Dr Amanda Gibson. We are providing in-kind support through access to child death review data and specialist expertise to strengthen understanding of the pathways leading to suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland. During the year, we supported the linkage of child death review data with Queensland Health hospital and mental health datasets, creating a richer evidence base to examine children's interactions with services prior to their deaths. As the research progresses, it will explore how cultural connection may strengthen resilience, influence help-seeking behaviours and buffer the impacts of racism and other risk factors on suicidality. The findings from this research will contribute to improved policy, service design and suicide prevention initiatives, supporting culturally informed approaches that better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.



Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to build capability around the Child Safe Organisations system

Supporting culturally safe practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was another major investment priority for us this year. The Universal Principle requires organisations working with children to uphold cultural safety as a core element of child safeguarding. Our Child Safeguarding Grants Program included a category that provided funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and led organisations to deliver projects that would increase understanding and capability in implementing the Universal Principle.

Through this grant funding we supported:

- **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)** to develop a First Nations toolkit, implementation resources and webinar program to assist organisations in embedding the Universal Principle
- **Reconciliation Queensland** to create culturally grounded training, resources and cross-sector networks to strengthen organisational understanding of cultural safety, self-determination and the rights of First Nations children
- **Gympie and District Women's Health Centre** who partnered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and community members to co-design the *Safe Words, Safe Conversations* resource kit, providing culturally appropriate language and practical tools for frontline workers across health, community and child protection services.

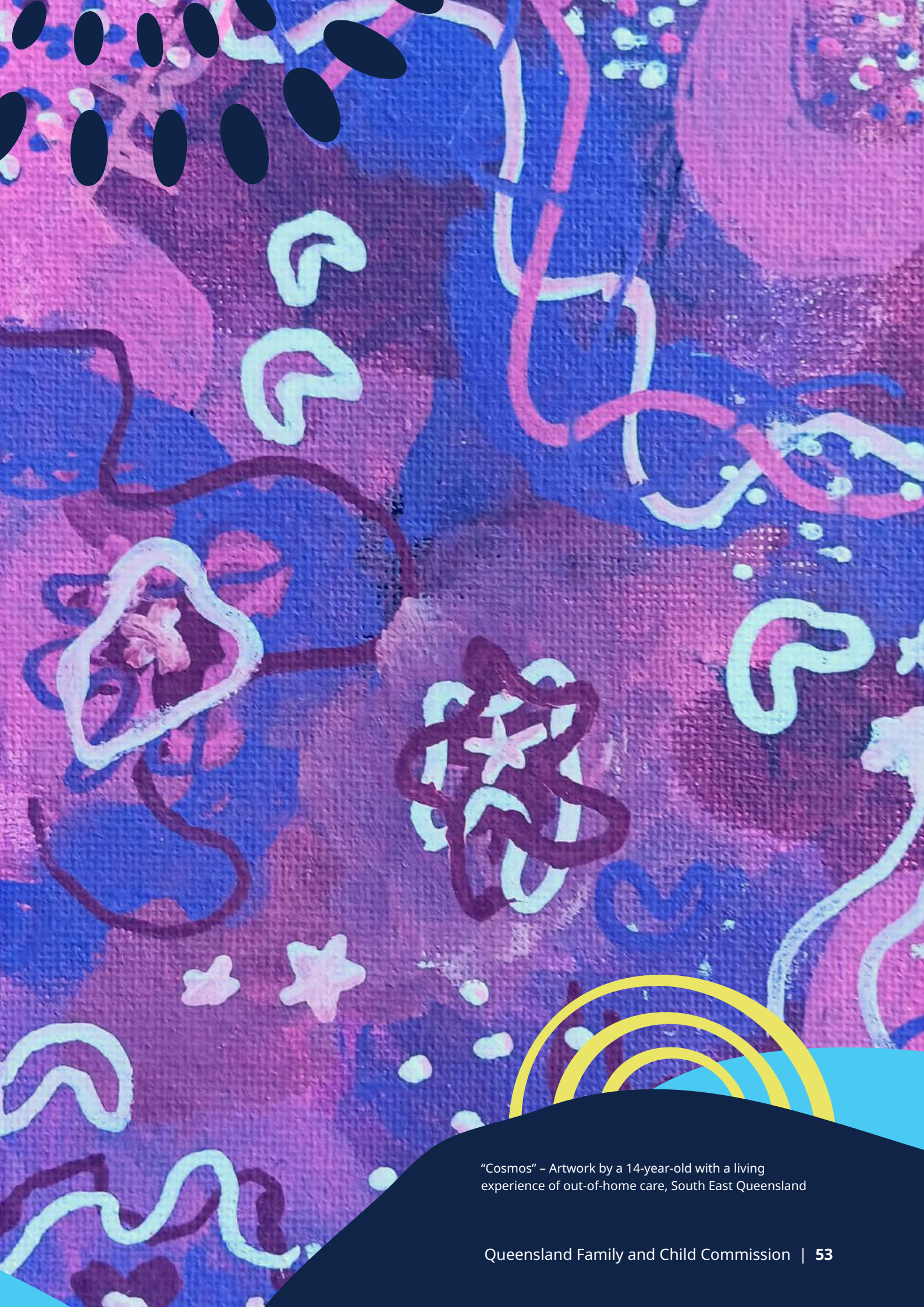
Supporting **NAIDOC Week** across Queensland

Our NAIDOC sponsorship program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led events to celebrate NAIDOC Week across Queensland. NAIDOC Week is one of Australia's most significant national celebrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and this year we provided \$12,770 in sponsorship funding to support NAIDOC celebrations delivered by organisations including Logan Elders, Wan'diny, Kalwun Development Corporation, Koobara Kindy, Hymba Yumba Independent School and the Roma NAIDOC Committee.

We also welcomed Aunty Margaret and Uncle Laurie to share their stories, culture and truth with staff, providing an opportunity to deepen cultural understanding and reinforce our ongoing commitment to learning from and working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

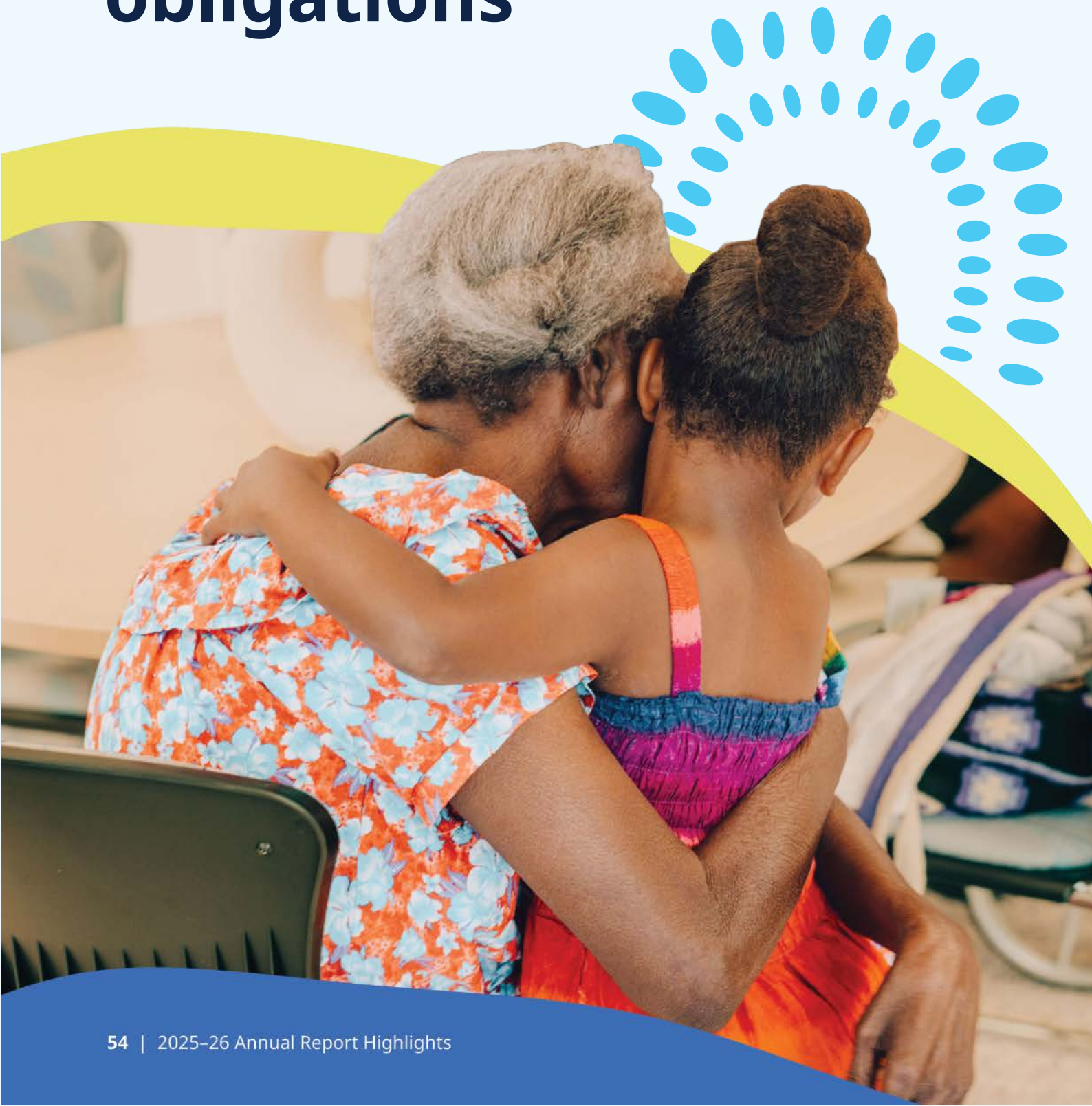


**THE NEXT GENERATION:
STRENGTH, VISION & LEGACY**
6-13 JULY 2025



"Cosmos" – Artwork by a 14-year-old with a living experience of out-of-home care, South East Queensland

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.

Becoming a regulator

The Commission is the regulator of the Child Safe Organisations system, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Child Safe Standards, Universal Principle and Reportable Conduct Scheme statewide.

Becoming a regulator required more than new legislative powers — it also necessitated establishing systems, capability, culture and infrastructure to enable this work, including:

- building workforce capability, including through a dedicated recruitment program and specialist training on interviewing children
- learning from our counterparts across Australia – we convened an Interjurisdictional Child Safe Organisations Forum to share implementation experience and regulatory practice
- developing technology and information systems – this year we implemented Lighthouse, our regulatory case management system for intake, assessment, monitoring, compliance and information management activities
- strengthening our partnerships with regulators to ensure coordinated oversight – through the Collaborative Regulators Network, representatives from more than 14 regulatory and safeguarding agencies worked together to develop shared approaches to information sharing, reporting, triage, assessment and regulatory practice.

Our Regulatory Approach

While our preferred approach is one of prevention, education, guidance and collaboration, effective regulation requires the ability to act when children's safety is at risk.

Our *Regulatory Approach*, published on our website, outlines our graduated model of regulatory action — a structured approach that recognises the need to balance education and enforcement, prioritising support and capability building



Enquiries

In September 2025, the Commission established a coordinated Enquiries function to provide a consistent first point of contact for members of the public and regulated entities. Between 15 September 2025 and 30 June 2026, we received **1118 enquiries** from the public. Of these:

- **30 per cent** (333 enquiries) related to the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and were referred to our Regulatory teams
- **18 per cent** (203 enquiries) related to the reportable conduct scheme, including regulatory capture and implementation and were referred to our Regulatory teams
- **10 per cent** (115 enquiries) related to individual concerns, including perceived inaction by the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, and were triaged and referred to the appropriate complaint or support pathways
- **48 per cent** (533 enquiries) were resolved at first point of contact, supporting timely access to information

Of all enquiries, 46 per cent (510 enquiries) were made over the phone, 32 per cent (353 enquiries) via email, six enquiries via letter and 22 per cent (249 enquiries) through our online form and social media.

Commencing regulatory operations

On 1 October 2025, the first phase of the Child Safe Organisations Act came into effect and we commenced our role as the system regulator.

By April 2026, implementation of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle was underway across all sectors required to comply with the CSO Act.

Across 2025–26, we:

- responded to **311** Child Safe Standards-related contacts from organisations and the community
- undertook targeted follow-up with organisations requiring additional information or support to demonstrate compliance
- commenced proactive compliance engagements with **28** organisations across Queensland
- assessed evidence provided by participating organisations against the Child Safe Standards
- published **eight** sector insights reports, sharing lessons, emerging themes and good practice to support continuous improvement across child safe sectors.



Supporting Queensland to become child safe

Raising awareness and building capability across organisations, sectors, and the wider Queensland community has been the focus of a broad-based coordinated education and engagement plan across 2025-26. These areas of activity work in partnership to increase Queensland's understanding of the Child Safe Organisations system and its critical importance in strengthening our child safeguarding across all the places children live, grow, learn, and play.

Raising the Standards campaign

Alongside our sector-based education and engagement activities, our public communications activities across 2025-26 included a heavy focus on raising awareness across the Queensland community of the introduction of the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme. This included our *Raising the Standards* advertising campaign, in market for 13 weeks from May to August 2025.

The campaign was aimed at increasing community awareness and understanding of the Child Safe Standards, and ran across multiple platforms including TV, radio, and social media. The campaign achieved more than 27 million impressions across all channels and performed better than the industry benchmark in almost every channel.

Market research conducted before and after the campaign's successful deployment indicates a significant increase in awareness of the Standards – from 27 per cent of those surveyed before the campaign, to 58 per cent of those surveyed in October and November 2025. A third survey in April and May 2026 found a further growth in awareness, to 67 per cent of participants, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Commission's ongoing education and capacity building work within the sector and our communications activities aimed at the broader community.

Contributed to a
16% increase
in awareness of
the CSO Act over a
six-month period



Building sector readiness

Throughout 2025–26, we worked collaboratively alongside regulators, government agencies, peak bodies and leaders to help raise awareness of Queensland's child safeguarding reforms and build the capacity of in-scope sectors to become child safe.

Across the year we engaged with every sector with obligations under the system through a tailored program of communication, education and partnership activities including presentations, conferences, workshops, webinars, community information sessions, sector forums, leadership roundtables and targeted meetings.

As part of this program we delivered more than 200 sector engagements across Queensland, including:

- **in the education sector** – working with the Department of Education, the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, Independent Schools Queensland, TAFE Queensland and P&C Queensland, delivering presentations, workshops and forums for school leaders, compliance officers and education providers
- **in the early childhood education and care sector** – working through the Early Childhood Regulatory Authority and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, supporting providers to understand both governance responsibilities and day-to-day safeguarding practice
- **across the child protection sector** – with the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, and with non-government providers delivering family support, foster care, residential care and placement services
- **with religious organisations and multicultural communities** – working with Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Ethnic Communities Council Queensland, Multicultural Australia and Settlement Services International to support culturally appropriate implementation

- **across the community services, disability and health sectors** – working with the Queensland Council of Social Service, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission, Queensland Health, Primary Health Networks and professional bodies to provide practical implementation support through disability expos, sector webinars, health roundtables and targeted communications.

Similar approaches were undertaken across sport and recreation, justice and detention services, transport providers, government entities and accommodation and residential services, recognising that safeguarding responsibilities extend wherever children participate in organised activities or receive services.

Attracted more than **665,000** views of child safeguarding webpages



“

My team think of me as quiet and that I like everything being planned. They were really surprised when I started this like everyone else ‘one gem, one gem’ but then I grabbed a handful of the colours and pressed them in.

– 17-year-old artist

“Don’t have to be perfect” – Artwork by a 17-year-old with a living experience of out-of-home care.

Preparing for the Reportable Conduct Scheme

On 16 October 2025, the government announced that the Scheme would be rolled out in full on 1 July 2026, replacing the multi-year staged implementation originally planned. This necessitated an accelerated program of work to prepare in-scope sectors and organisations for the Scheme’s commencement.

Reportable Conduct Scheme guideline

In February 2026 we published our Guide to Queensland’s Reportable Conduct Scheme, which:

- outlines responsibilities under the CSO Act
- provides step-by-step guidance on receiving and managing allegations
- explains the roles of reporting entities as well as regulators and the Commission in administering the Scheme
- offers practical tools and examples to help organisations build a pro-reporting culture as they work to implement the Scheme.



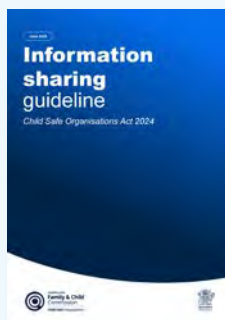
Free webinar program

In May and June 2026 we ran a series of free public webinars on the introduction of the Scheme. Intended as an introduction to the Scheme’s obligations for organisations working to implement it from 1 July 2026, the webinars saw **over 2500** registrations and is available as an on-demand recording on our website.



Information sharing guideline

Information sharing sits at the heart of the Child Safe Organisations system. To support this work, we developed an information sharing guideline for in-scope organisations and regulators.



This resource provides practical guidance on information sharing to both meet obligations under the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme and to safeguard children wherever they are. It explains:

- the principles to be applied to decisions about disclosing information in a child-focused, proactive, timely and collaborative way, what kinds of information can be shared.
- how to use information sharing powers to support concurrent and complex investigations.
- the protections that exist in the CSO Act to give entities the confidence to share information.
- limitations on information sharing and how laws about privacy, human rights and right to information apply to relevant safeguarding information.



The way you have rolled out the Child Safe Organisations legislation has been excellent. The resources and information on your website are excellent. You couldn't have done a better job.

– Sector professional

Video resources

To support organisations and the community to build understanding of the Child Safe Standards, this year we developed and published a series of brief video resources outlining each Standard. These videos support our scenario discussion guide and Quick Reference Guide to the Standards and can be integrated into organisations' own learning programs.

We also published an on-demand webinar about the Child Safe Organisations system. The 50-minute presentation examines the background to the system's introduction and examines what the CSO Act means in practice, including the Child Safe Standards, the Universal Principle, and the Reportable Conduct Scheme and how they work together to prioritise children's safety.

Over 15,300
views of our pre-recorded webinars and short video resources

Scenario discussion guide

Implementing the Child Safe Standards fully means building a child safe culture in every organisation, where every worker understands their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. To help organisations initiate these conversations we developed our scenario discussion guide.

Designed to be worked through collectively, the guide includes brief videos on each of the Standards and discussion prompts to help organisations examine their existing processes and practices and identify actions to strengthen their focus on safeguarding on a day-to-day basis.



“

While the Standards align with the National Principles, the QFCC guidance brings a strong practical lens, using real-world scenarios to test how systems operate in practice.

– Sector professional

**Over
74,000**

downloads of Child
Safe Organisations
resources



Child Safeguarding Grants program

Our Child Safeguarding Grants Program is part of our Child Safe Organisations Investment Strategy. Since 2024, we have partnered with 60 organisations, and distributed more than **\$4.8 million**, to reach every corner of Queensland — from Mabuiag Island to the Gold Coast, from Emerald to the Sunshine Coast.



Successful grant recipients from round one in 2024-25 delivered funded projects throughout 2025-26. These included:

- RedCity Roar Basketball Inc and Life Education Queensland co-designed a practical guide capturing the views of young athletes on how sporting clubs can be child safe. The guide aims to translate legal requirements into practical action at club level, with a clear roadmap to meet their safeguarding obligations.
- Family Day Care Queensland developed and delivered free, tailored training contextualised to home-based care, providing practical training to family day care educators.
- PeakCare developed a capability framework to support child, youth and family sector organisations in guiding their approach to implementing safeguarding practices that span the entirety of their workforce.
- Independent Schools Queensland developed training to support school to implement the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Designed for school leaders and risk, compliance and HR managers, Independent Schools Queensland created a dedicated eLearning module for school governing bodies to complement existing child safeguarding training.
- Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) and the Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit partnered to deliver From Knowing to Doing: Building Safeguarding Capability in Community Youth Serving Organisations, a pilot project supporting community organisations to strengthen child safety knowledge, leadership, and practice.
- Outback Independent Living's Child Safeguarding Workshop series focused on building sector knowledge and capabilities required to sustain organisations across Central West Queensland to centre children's safety in their organisations.

Following the success of round one, the second grant round opened in August 2025 and funded **15** grant projects valued at **\$1,260,420** (excluding GST) to strengthen implementation of the Child Safe Standards, the Universal Principle and the Reportable Conduct Scheme across Queensland, including:

- ChildSafe Australia's development of sector-specific tools and training to strengthen reportable conduct systems and governance
- Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Lady Gowrie Queensland and Independent Schools Queensland projects and initiatives to support schools and early childhood services with governance resources, policy templates, professional development roadshows and implementation tools to enable consistent child safe practice
- QCOSS' development of a pilot program to move organisations beyond compliance and embed safeguarding as an organisational culture
- Impact Care Services' sector-specific workshops and practical toolkits for faith communities, family support organisations and care networks
- Blackley Group Pty Ltd's culturally responsive safeguarding resources and training tailored to Queensland's diverse school communities

- St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland's development of governance resources, reporting pathways and community engagement tools to build safeguarding capability throughout its extensive volunteer network
- Outback Independent Living's safeguarding capability building across more than 30 organisations in Central West Queensland
- Anglicare Southern Queensland's expanded child safe and Reportable Conduct Scheme training and development of culturally appropriate resources for diverse communities
- Queensland Baptists' workshops combining legislative requirements with cultural awareness and trauma-informed practice, supporting churches and their community partners to strengthen child safeguarding while reducing duplication of effort across the sector.



Excelling in 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

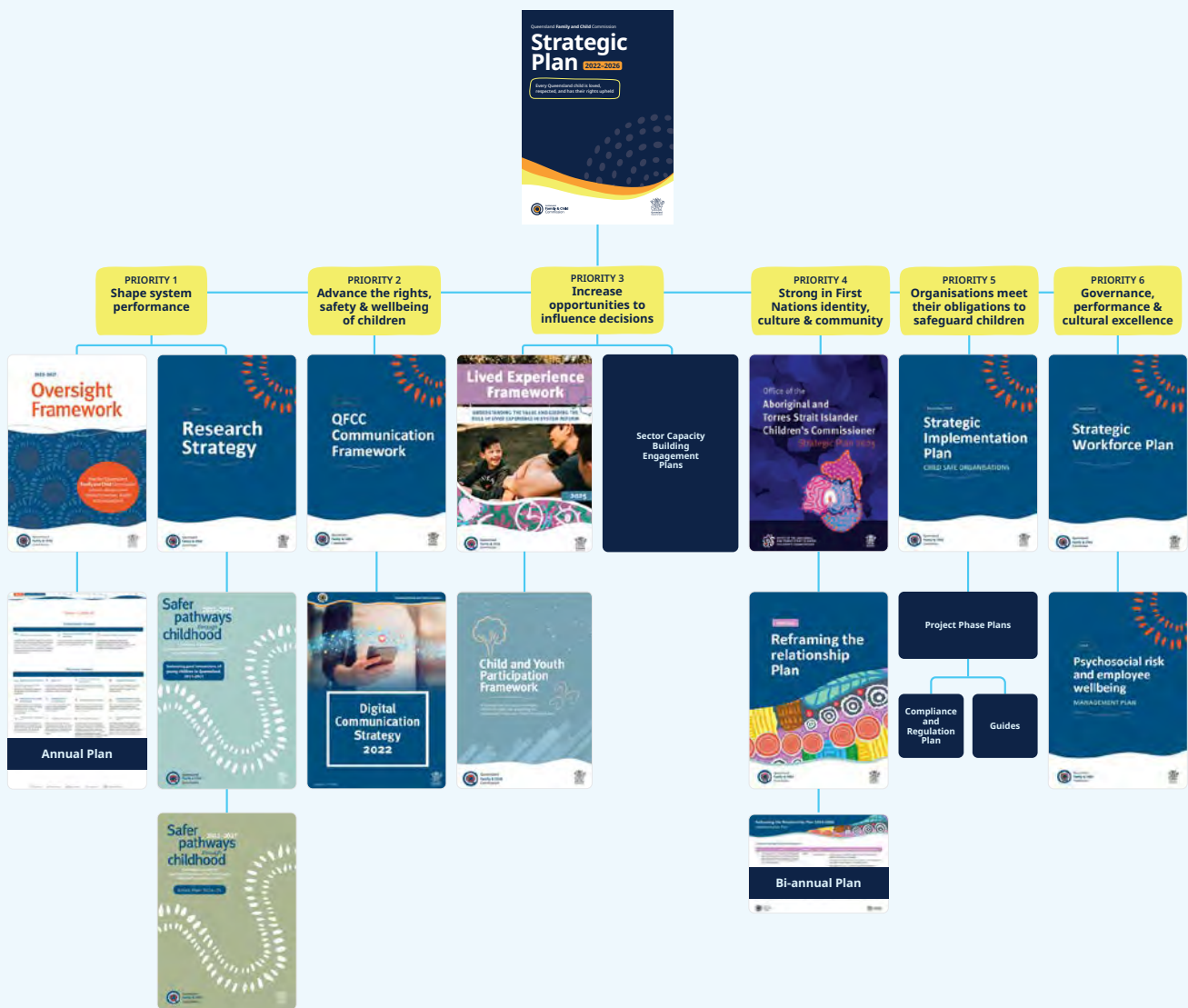
to maintain agility and sustainability. For the Commission to operate efficiently, strategic outsourcing and external partnerships are essential, requiring staff to shift from direct implementation to skilled facilitation of external expertise. Additionally, the Commission must prioritise workforce wellbeing, as exposure to distressing subject matter poses emotional and psychological challenges.





Strategic architecture framework

During 2025–26, we continued to strengthen and mature our strategic architecture. Collectively, these frameworks form our *Strategic operating framework* — an integrated architecture that provides consistent methodologies for delivering oversight, regulation, research, child death prevention, child and youth participation, and First Nations leadership.

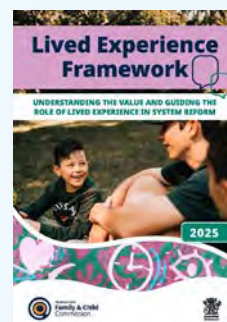


Lived experience framework

We published our *Lived experience framework* in July 2025 to support government agencies, service providers and community organisations seeking to embed lived experience through inclusive, trauma-informed and responsive practices.

The role and value of lived experience is vital to creating more effective, responsive systems in Queensland. People with lived experience offer unique insights that are instrumental in shaping policies and practices that are both relevant and sustainable. Their perspectives ensure that reforms address real-world challenges and meet the needs of those directly affected.

By amplifying the voices of those with lived experience and enabling collaboration, we can build inclusive, fair, and just systems that break cycles of disadvantage and better support the children, young people, and families that need it most.



Artwork by a 16-year-old with a living experience of out-of-home care, South East Queensland

Supporting our new regulatory functions

In commencing our role as the regulator of the Child Safe Organisations system this year, we developed a suite of delegations, instruments of appointment and authorisations to support the lawful exercise of our new powers. This included establishing appropriate authorisations for officers exercising statutory powers under the CSO Act, including powers to enter premises, inspect records, require information, seize evidence and undertake other compliance and enforcement activities.

Recognising that the exercise of coercive statutory powers carries significant responsibility, we also invested in decision-making protocols, operational guidance, templates, recordkeeping requirements, quality assurance processes and staff training to promote procedural fairness, accountability and consistency in regulatory practice. Together with our broader governance and policy reforms, these arrangements establish a strong foundation for the fair, transparent and effective administration of Queensland's Child Safe Organisations regulatory system.

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.

During 2025–26, the Secretariat coordinated Board meetings, supported the Cross Agency Review Group, prepared briefing materials and evidence, and developed thematic reviews examining systemic issues arising from child deaths. The Secretariat also strengthened the Board's approach to thematic oversight by developing a forward program of reviews and associated terms of reference, supporting deeper analysis of recurring systemic issues and emerging risks. During the year, the Attorney-General appointed Ms Sharon Cavanagh-Luskin as Deputy Chair of the Board.

Recruitment

This year, the Commission experienced our most significant workforce growth since our establishment in 2014, increasing core staffing by 24 FTE from **65 to 89 FTE** during 2025–26.

This growth was enabled through 22 recruitment processes and the commencement of 24 new employees, significantly expanding organisational capability and service delivery capacity.

Recruitment focused on building specialist capability across regulatory operations, policy, education, investigations and corporate support functions to enable delivery of our expanded statutory responsibilities.



Graduate programs

As part of the 2024–2026 Policy Futures Graduate Program, we hosted **two** graduates over the course of 2025–26. 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.

This year our Child Death Prevention team and the OATSICC also hosted **two** Griffith University students on placement.

Professional development

This year we increased our investment in the development and upskilling of our workforce from approximately **\$2,827** to **\$3,743** per employee. This supported our significant transformation resulting from the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and introduction of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Staff participated in specialist learning across multiple areas including:

- regulation
- investigations
- administrative decision-making
- child safeguarding
- trauma-informed practice
- information management and digital systems
- leadership, governance, and contemporary public administration.

Professional conferences and sector forums also enabled staff to remain informed of emerging research, legislative developments and leading practice from across Australia.

We continued to strengthen our focus on inclusion, cultural capability and respectful workplace behaviours. In partnership with SBS Inclusion, we introduced three new eLearning programs designed to build workforce capability and awareness. Staff also took part in cultural safety training provided by AbStarr Consulting.

This year we commenced implementation of the CSO Act, Connect, Prevent eLearning program to prevent and respond to sexual harassment as part of a public sector-wide directive.

Looking ahead

With Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme in effect from 1 July 2026, we will continue supporting organisations through this transition while exercising independent, intelligence-informed and proportionate regulatory oversight. This work continues alongside our capacity building and engagement program helping organisations to embed child safe practices, strengthening regulatory capability and driving continuous improvement across Queensland's child-serving sectors.

In June 2026, the Queensland Government announced the formation of the Queensland Protection Commission in response to the recommendations of our In Plain Sight review of system responses to child sexual abuse.

The proposed Commission will bring together the regulation of the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme, our existing oversight functions, a new safeguarding intelligence hub and network, and worker screening functions currently administered by Queensland Worker Screening Services, including blue, yellow and white card functions.

Centralising and colocating these functions in one agency will improve the connection and use of safeguarding information, helping identify patterns and emerging risks that may not be visible within individual organisations or agencies. This will support earlier and better-coordinated action, strengthen the capability of organisations to keep children and vulnerable people safe, and improve accountability across the safeguarding and worker screening systems.

The establishment of the new Commission, and its functions and powers, is dependent on legislation which is yet to be passed by Queensland Parliament, but envisions the new Commission to commence operations in February 2027.

Embarking on this next phase of our journey will therefore be a major priority in 2026-27 and we look forward to working with our partners in the Department of Justice and in Queensland Worker Screening Services to build a safer Queensland.







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

- continue delivering our ambitious *Oversight forward workplan*, with a strong focus on informing and assessing implementation of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry reforms.
- complete the implementation of our Lighthouse regulatory case management system, further strengthening our ability to manage regulatory matters, share information securely, identify emerging risks and support consistent, evidence-based decision-making.
- finalise and release the next **Growing Up In Queensland** report on the safety, wellbeing and life outcomes of young Queenslanders.
- maintain opportunities for participation through initiatives such as the Youth Summit and continue embedding lived experience in our work, to promote the right of children and families to influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- continue our Safer Pathways Through Childhood series with insights papers examining the evidence and identifying prevention priorities for child deaths from transport incidents, fire and smoke inhalation, and accidental poisoning.
- strengthen governance, performance, workforce capability and organisational culture to support our expanding responsibilities, providing a strong foundation for the successful establishment of the Queensland Protection Commission and the continued delivery of high-quality services for Queensland children and families.



