

Appendix D—Performance of the Queensland child protection system

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

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

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

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

Queensland’s performance against national goals

National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indicator 1—Substantiated child protection cases

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

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

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

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

Indicator 2—Children in out-of-home care

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

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

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Qld Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	37.0	38.0	40.0	40.5	41.5
Qld non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.8
Aus Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	48.0	51.0	52.0	56.0	59.0
Aus non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.6	8.7

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

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

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

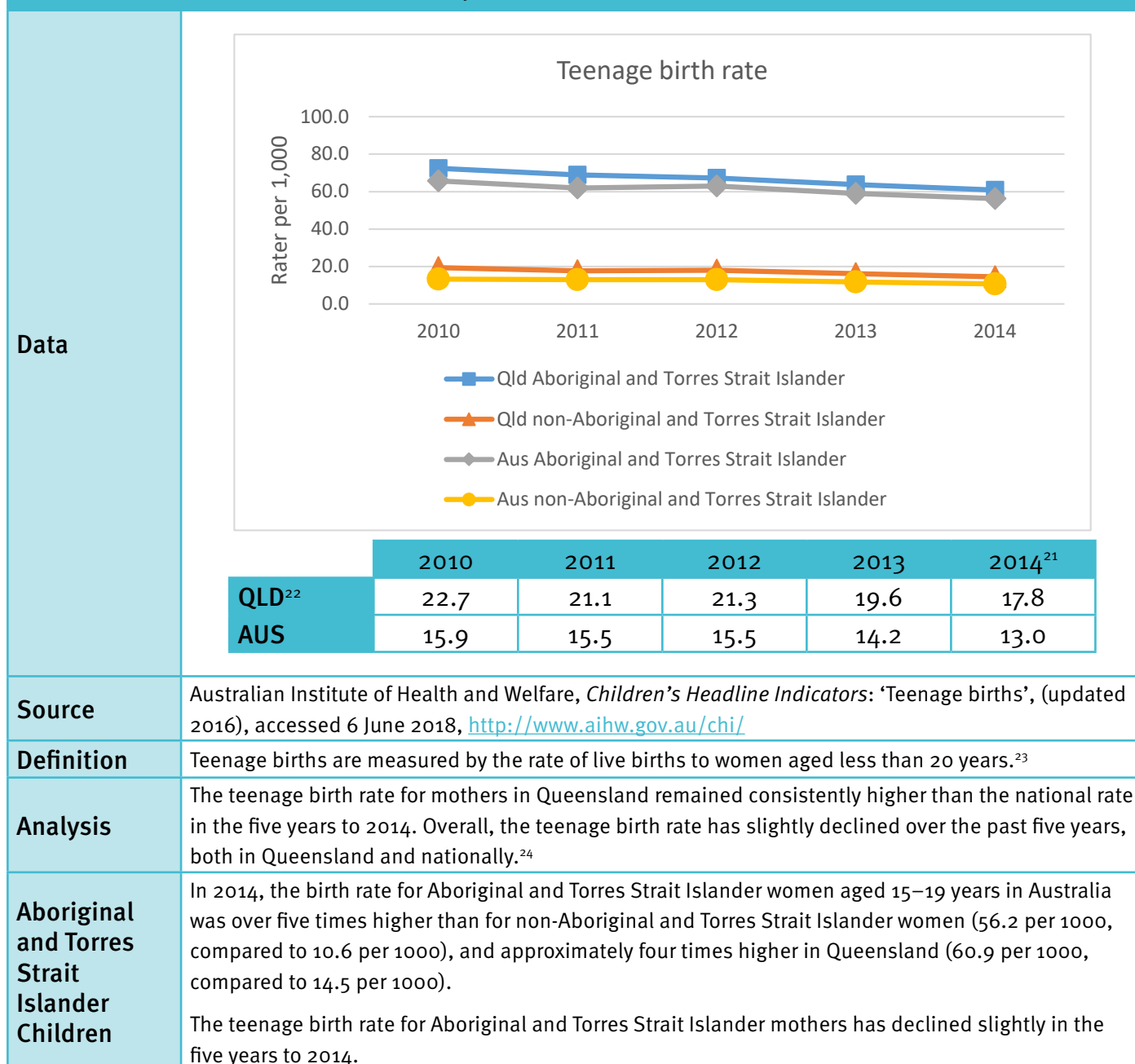
Between 2013 and 2017, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, both in Queensland and nationally, was consistently higher than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

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

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

Indicator 3—Teenage births

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



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

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

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

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

Indicator 4—Infants born of low birth weight

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



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

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

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

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

Indicator 5—Child homicide

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Queensland's performance against state goals

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

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

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

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

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

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

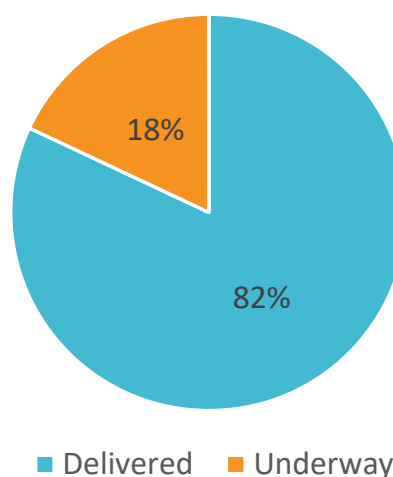
Domain 1: Sharing responsibility for the safety and well-being of Queensland children

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

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

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

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



³⁶ Six of these recommendations were accepted in principle.

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

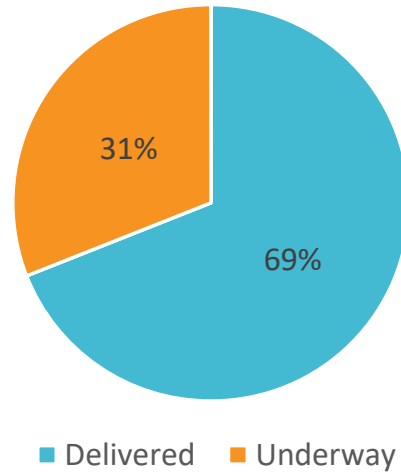
Domain 2: Supporting Queensland families earlier

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

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

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

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



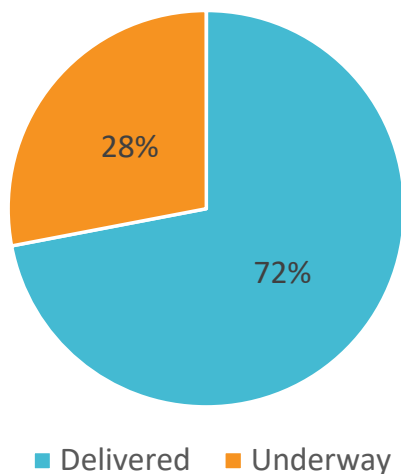
Domain 3: Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system

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

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

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

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



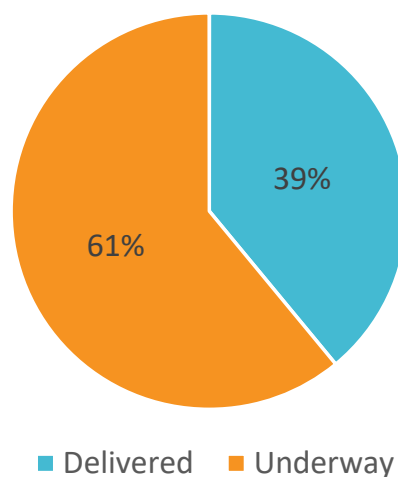
Domain 4: Improving out-of-home care and post-care experiences for Queensland children and young people

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

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

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

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



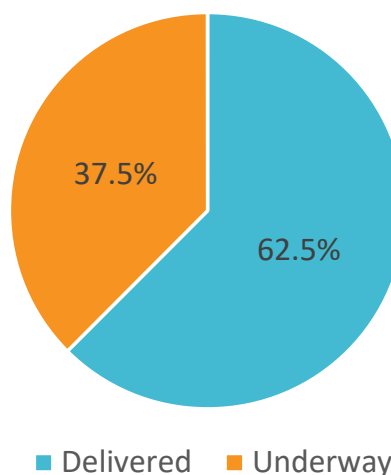
Domain 5: Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

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

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

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

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



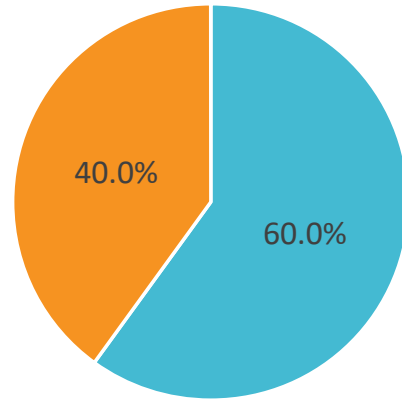
Domain 6: Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations

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

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

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

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



■ Delivered ■ Underway

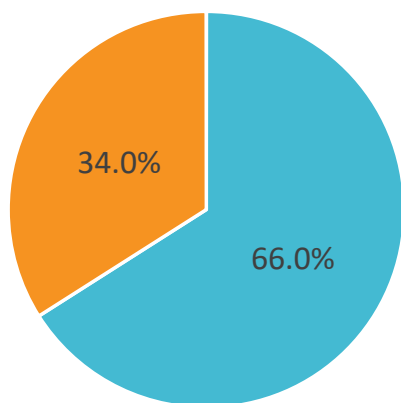
Domain 7: Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system

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

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

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

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



■ Delivered ■ Underway

Queensland's performance over time in comparison to other jurisdictions

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

The effectiveness indicators are:

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

The outcome indicators are:

1. improved safety
2. improved education.

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

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

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

Effectiveness indicator 1—Response times

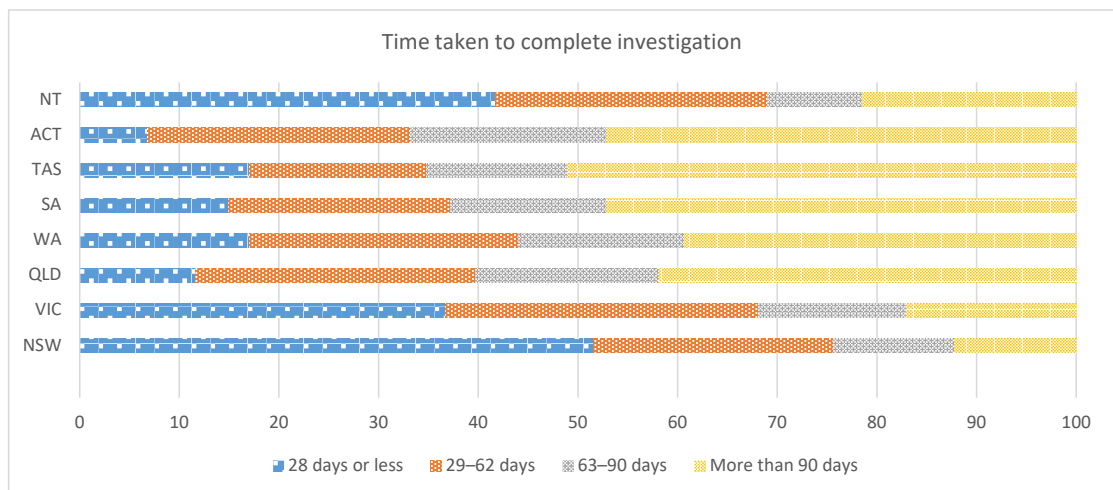
The ROGS defines response time by two measures: response time to commence investigations and response time to complete investigations.⁴⁰ The time taken to commence an investigation is measured by the number of days between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an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

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

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

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

Data



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

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

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

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

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

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

Effectiveness indicator 2—Substantiation rate

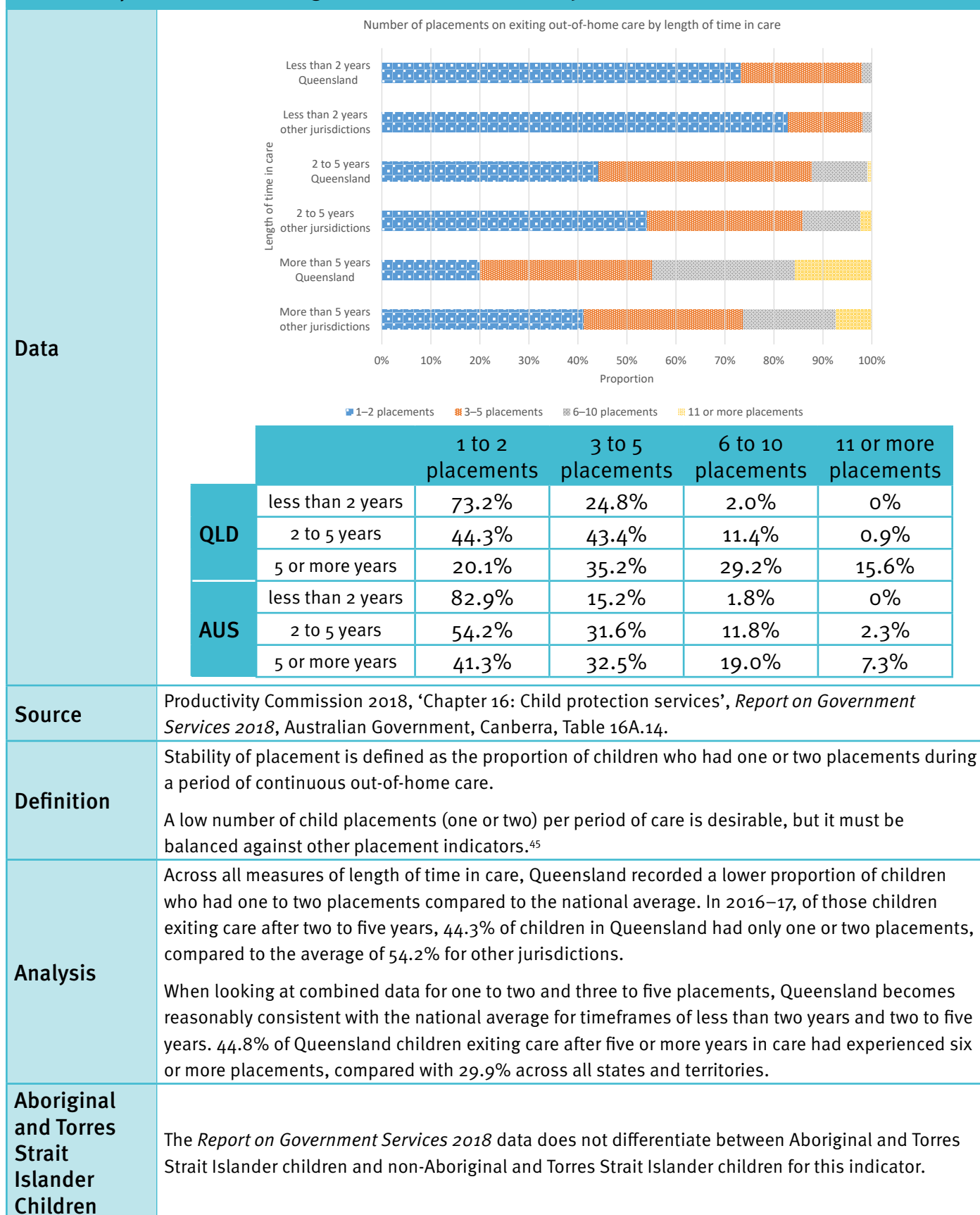
Proportion of finalised investigations substantiated, Australian states and territories, 2012–13 to 2016–17

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

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

Effectiveness indicator 3—Stability of placement

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



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

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

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

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

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

Effectiveness indicator 5—Placement maintains connections

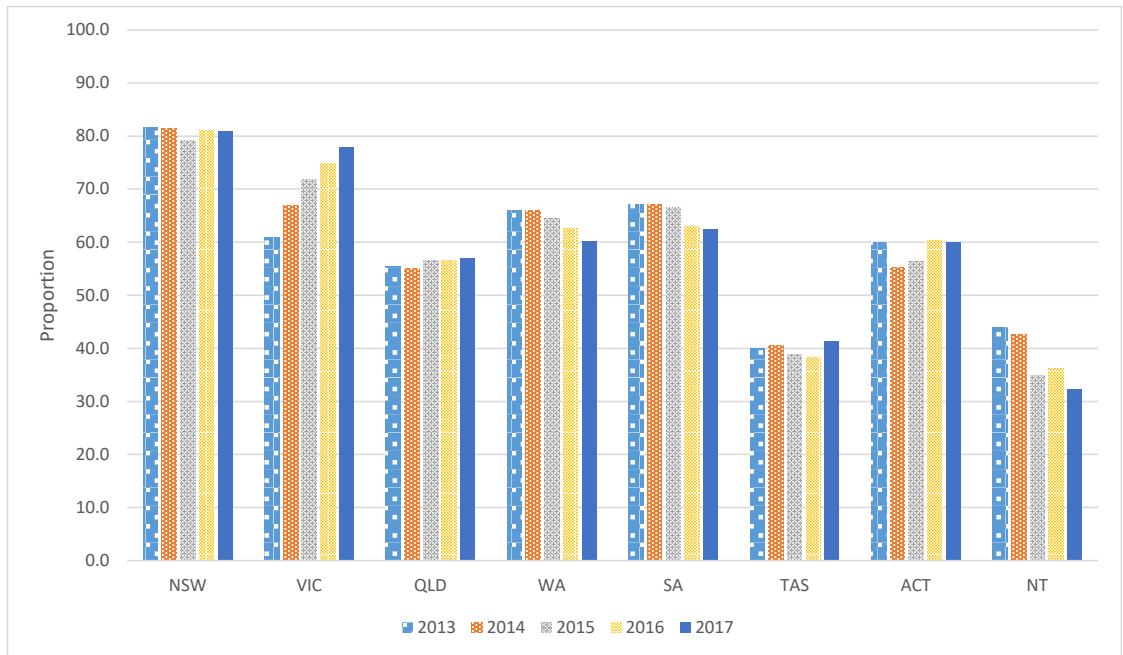
Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, 2013–2017

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

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

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

Data



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

Source

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

Definition

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

Analysis

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

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

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

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

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

Effectiveness indicator 6—Children with current case plans

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

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

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

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

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

Outcome indicator 1—Improved safety

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

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

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

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

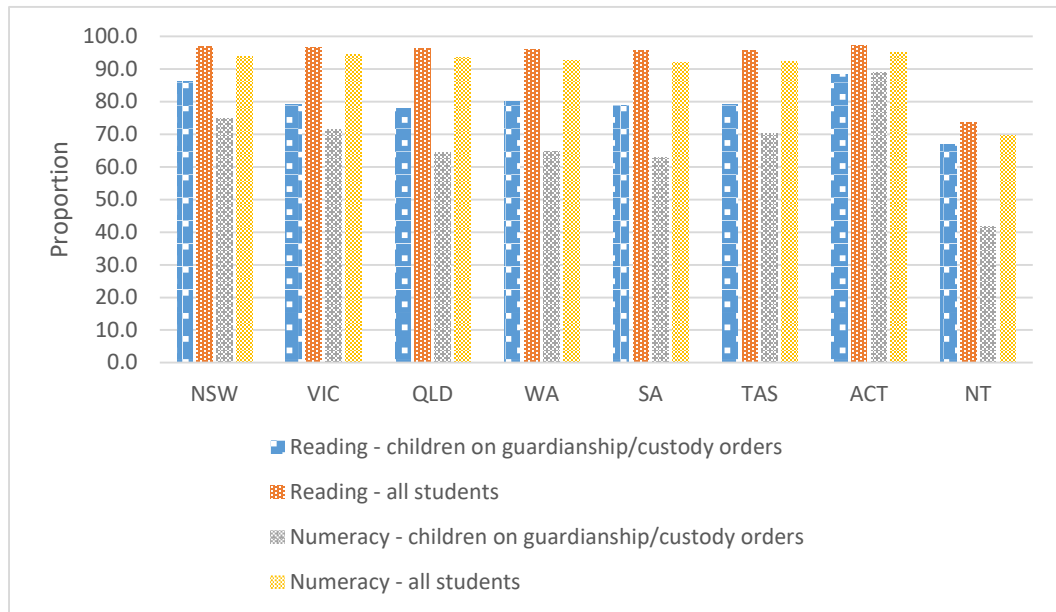
<p>Data</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012–13</th> <th>2013–14</th> <th>2014–15</th> <th>2015–16</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>QLD 3 months</td> <td>4.2%</td> <td>3.7%</td> <td>4.1%</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>QLD 12 months</td> <td>11.6%</td> <td>10.6%</td> <td>10.6%</td> <td>10.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	QLD 3 months	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%	QLD 12 months	11.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.1%
	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16												
QLD 3 months	4.2%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%												
QLD 12 months	11.6%	10.6%	10.6%	10.1%												
<p>Source</p>	<p>Productivity Commission 2018, ‘Chapter 16: Child protection services’, <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i>, Australian Government, Canberra, Table 16A.34.</p>															
<p>Definition⁵³</p>	<p>Substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate is defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within three or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate.</p> <p>Data reported for these measures is comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but not comparable across jurisdictions. The year reported relates to the year of the initial substantiation.</p>															
<p>Analysis</p>	<p>The proportion of children in Queensland subject to an initial decision not to substantiate who were the subject of a subsequent substantiation decreased between 2012–13 and 2015–16, for both substantiations within three months (4.2% to 3.8%) and within 12 months (11.6% to 10.1%).</p> <p>As at 30 June 2017, compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland had the equal second lowest proportion of substantiations (after an initial decision not to substantiate) within three months at 3.8% (national range 3% to 7.2%) and the second lowest proportion of substantiations within 12 months at 10.1% (national range 9.5% to 15.9%).</p>															
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children</p>	<p>The <i>Report on Government Services 2018</i> data does not differentiate between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for this indicator.</p>															

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

Outcome indicator 2—Improved education

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

Data⁵⁴



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

Source

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

Definition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Assessment summary

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

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

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

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

Summary of main results and QFCC assessment by measure

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

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



