

QFCC Community Perceptions Survey 2023

Summary of key findings



About the survey

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) has conducted a community perceptions survey annually since 2017.

In 2023, the survey focused on the community's knowledge and perceptions about:

- Confidence and trust in the child protection system
- Who they would report concerns about child safety to
- Supporting children and young people
- The role of children and young people in society
- Minimum age of incarceration
- Youth mental health

The full survey report can be found [here](#)



Method

We surveyed **3,154** people between 15 May and 7 June 2023. The survey was available online and offline methods (including over the phone). The average (median) time taken to complete the survey in the online mode was 7.7 minutes.



97%
Online

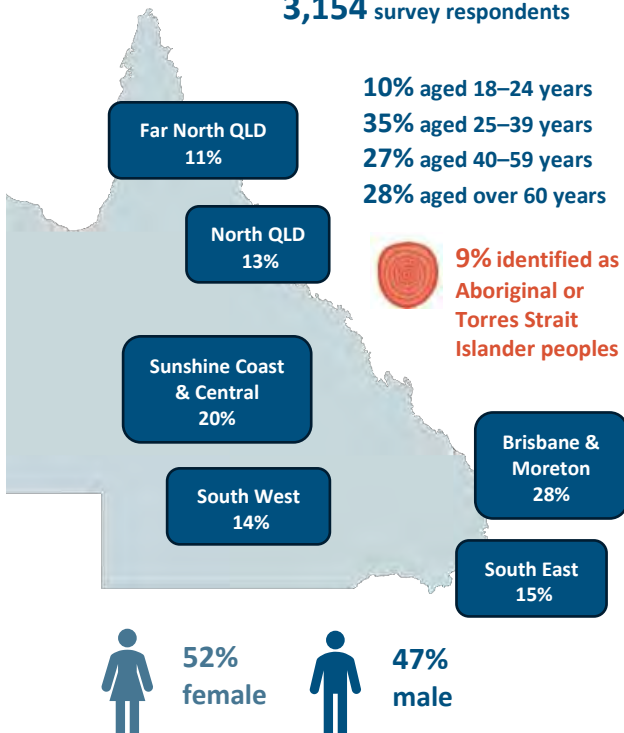


3%
Offline methods



Respondents

3,154 survey respondents

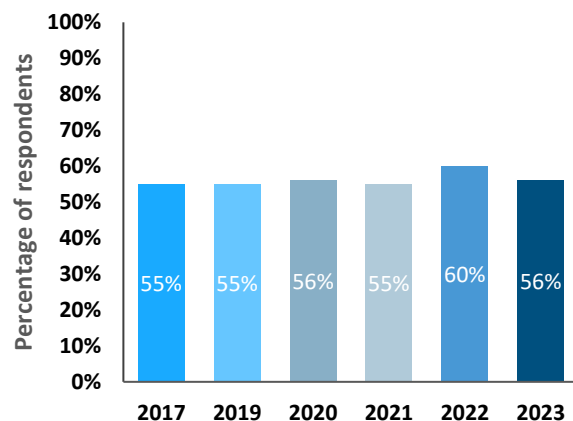


Key findings

Confidence and trust in the child protection system

There was a significant decrease in confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system in 2023 compared to 2022; reverting a statistically significant improvement noted in last year's findings.

Percentage of respondents who agreed that 'Overall, I have confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system', 2017-2023



The big issues facing parents and children in Queensland

In their own words, respondents told us that they were most concerned about cost-of-living pressures, poor behaviour/lack of discipline, and youth crime:



33% said cost of living was negatively impacting children, young people and families



20% lack of parental supervision



15% children's behavioural issues and **12%** youth crime



9% affordable housing/homelessness



9% too much social media and screen time



9% education quality and affordability



7% health & mental health services (access and affordability)

Reporting child safety concerns

2023 findings indicate that significantly more respondents would report a concern regarding a child's safety or wellbeing to a relevant government agency (e.g. Department of Community Services/ Department of Child Safety). Encouragingly, this increase has been observed year upon year since 2019. Multiple responses were permitted with the most common agencies being:



Police

57%



Government agencies with child protection responsibilities

56%

Protections and supports for children and young people

We asked about the supports, services and wellbeing mechanisms that children and young people have in their community.

Most respondents agreed that children and young people can access recreational, community or sporting activities, early childhood education and care, and the services they need to stay healthy (such as GPs).

About **6 in 10 (59%)** respondents agreed children and young people can access mental health services if needed and are supported to live safely with their families. A similar proportion agreed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are supported to connect with their culture (**59%**) and children and young people live in safe communities (**56%**).

Less than half (45%) of respondents agreed children and young people in their community are protected from abuse and neglect, which represented a significant decrease from findings in 2022 (**50%** recorded in 2022).

Percentage of respondents who agreed with statements about supports, services and protections for children and young people, 2023

| In my community, children, and young people... | 2023 results |
|--|--------------|
| Can access sporting, recreational or community activities | 77% |
| Can access early childhood education and care, such as kindergarten | 76% |
| Can access the services they need to stay healthy, such as GPs and hospitals | 71% |
| Can access the services they need for healthy teeth, such as dentists | 66% |
| Have support to stay engaged in learning at school or TAFE | 66% |
| Can access disability services if needed | 66% |
| Can access NDIS supports if needed | 63% |
| Can access mental health services if needed | 59% |
| Are supported to connect with their culture (ATSI children / youth) | 59% |
| Live in safe communities | 56% |
| Are supported to live safely at home with their families | 55% |
| Are protected from abuse and neglect | 45% |

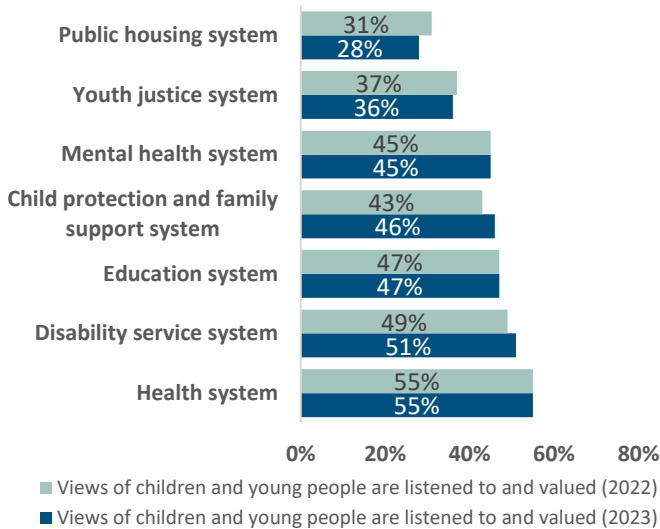
The role of children and young people in society

We asked respondents to rate how well they thought various systems were listening to and valuing the views of children and young people.

Respondents felt that the health system and disability service system were the most likely to act in the best interests of children and young people, which was consistent with findings in 2022.

Around 4 in 10 (46%) respondents disagreed that the public housing system listens to and values the views of children. Respondents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or as culturally and linguistically diverse also consistently provided higher than average levels of agreement (agreed/strongly agreed) regarding all systems.

Percentage of respondents who agreed with statements about how systems view of children and young people are listened to and valued, 2022-2023



Prioritisation, safety and inclusion of children and young people

We asked respondents about the prioritisation, safety and inclusion of children and young people. **Less than half** of respondents agreed that:



the Queensland Government prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (46%)



that young people have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them (46%)



are portrayed fairly in the media (47%)

More than 6 in 10 (66%) respondents agreed that the involvement of young people in public life positively contributes to social cohesion.

Minimum age of incarceration

When asked to nominate the minimum age a child should be able to be incarcerated (that is, held in a police watchhouse or placed in youth detention), More than 7 in 10 respondents said age 12 years or older, and almost half said an age 14 years or older. Fewer than 1 in 10 respondents provided a response that was lower than the current minimum age of criminal responsibility in Queensland (10 years old).



Youth mental health

We asked all respondents about the accessibility, affordability, and timeliness of youth mental health services in their area. We also asked whether services were culturally appropriate.

Only 50% of respondents said they had access to mental health services in their area.

Out of the respondents who could access youth mental health services, 46% agreed they were culturally appropriate; 33% felt they were affordable; and just 27% said the service was timely (that is, the services had enough capacity to meet demand without waitlists).

We asked young people (under 26 years of age) and those with parenting responsibilities some more questions about their experiences trying to access youth mental health services.

About 3 in 10 respondents who were under 26 or had parenting responsibilities had tried to access youth mental health services in the past 3 years.

Of these, 69% had experienced barriers, including:



Long waitlists
76%



Cost of services
53%



Unsure how to obtain referral
20%



Lack of services in area
20%



Unaware of services in area
18%



First Nations respondents

Compared to the overall sample, respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (n=273) were:

- More likely to agree they had overall confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system (60% versus 56% overall)
- Less likely to report a concern to police (45% versus 57% overall)
- More likely to agree that children and young people within their community...



are supported to connect with their culture (73% versus 58% overall)



can access NDIS supports if needed (73% versus 62% overall)



can access the services they need for healthy teeth (74% versus 65% overall)

- More likely to state that services available were not culturally appropriate (26% versus 9% among those who do not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- More likely to disagree that youth mental health services in their area were culturally appropriate (22% versus 15% among those who do not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- More likely to have tried to access youth mental health services in the last three years (38% versus 27% overall)
- More likely to agree with the statement 'I am satisfied with the amount of time I have available to spend with my children' (86% versus 72% those who do not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- More likely to highlight housing affordability and homelessness as one of the biggest issues for parents and children in Queensland (13% versus 9% among those who do not identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)



Parent/carer respondents

Compared to the overall sample, respondent who were responsible for the care of a child aged 0–17 years (n=1,161) were:

- More likely to agree they had overall confidence and trust in the Queensland child protection system (61% versus 56% overall)
- More likely to agree that youth mental health services are...



Accessible (services are available in the area) (55% versus 47% overall)



Culturally appropriate (51% versus 43% overall)



Affordable (36% versus 31% overall)



Timely (31% versus 24% overall)

- More likely to agree that there is sufficient oversight of the Queensland child protection system (56% versus 39% overall) and Queensland youth justice system (57% versus 37% overall)
- More likely to agree that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the health system (59% versus 55% overall)
- More likely to agree that cost of living is having a negative impact on children, young people and their families (92% versus 87% for those without responsibility for children)
- More likely to consider becoming a foster or kinship carer (53% versus 41% overall) and would take in a friend's child in a time of emergency (94% versus 88% overall)
- More likely to agree that the Queensland Government prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (51% versus 44% for those without responsibility for children) and that young people have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them (50% versus 44% for those without responsibility for children)