

Background

The Queensland Government has asked the Child Death Review Board to review system responses to child sexual abuse in Queensland, using the case of a convicted perpetrator Ashley Paul Griffith as a case study. The review will make recommendations for any improvements needed to the laws, policies, procedures and practices across the early childhood education and care, police and Blue Card systems.

The matter was referred to the Board in December 2024. The Board examines how systems interact with children in Queensland and recommends improvements to better protect children's safety. The Board was asked to complete this review, given it holds the necessary powers under the law and because its membership has extensive experience, knowledge and skills in child safety, child abuse prevention and investigations. The Board will complete the review under section 29I of the *Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

The terms of reference were released in January 2025, which require the Board to:

1. establish a timeline of conduct by the offender
2. examine the legislative framework, policies and procedures that operated during the time of offending
3. identify the context of child sexual offending in Queensland
4. identify best practice for protecting children from sexual abuse
5. seek and consider the views of people directly impacted by the offender's behaviour
6. analyse the legislative and policy framework in place to protect children from child sexual abuse
7. examine the responses of the early childhood education and care, police and Blue Card systems.

The review is now underway. This report details the progress to date, and the next planned actions.

Progress Overview

Since the review commenced, the Board has:

- established a dedicated team within the Queensland Family and Child Commission to support the Board to undertake this review
- issued 12 information requests to a range of Commonwealth and State Government agencies, non-government organisations and private companies, using the Board's information access powers under s29P of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
- received four responses to the information requests, with the responses to the remaining eight requests expected by 2 April 2025
- 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, with further analysis being undertaken to examine changes over

time, focusing on three key domains: sexual offending against children, early childhood education and care, and working with children checks

- designed and implemented an engagement approach and invited people directly impacted by the offender's behaviour (referred to as impacted parties in the terms of reference) to contribute submissions about their experience
- approached several leading experts to assist guide and inform the review, including attending expert roundtable meetings scheduled for later in 2025
- invited 51 organisations with a role in child sexual abuse prevention to contribute submissions
- sought advice from Australia's children's commissioners, advocates and guardians on best-practice initiatives underway in their jurisdictions
- commenced documenting 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
- received a research report from the authors of the renowned Australian Child Maltreatment Study about the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Queensland.

Key highlights

A team of **7** staff established to provide dedicated support

12 information requests issued to relevant entities

5 research institutions engaged to contribute knowledge to the review

25 pieces of legislation identified in initial mapping

51 organisations invited to commence submission preparation

Advice sought from **12** children's and families' commissioners, advocates and guardians

Future Actions

In the coming months, the Board will:

- engage with and support impacted people to make submissions to the review, ensuring that the voices of victim-survivors, their families and former colleagues of the offender are central to our understanding of this case and the issues under the review's terms of reference
- review responses to the detailed information requests, noting we anticipate a significant number of documents will be received relating to the offender's employment, complaints about his behaviour, the regulation of early childhood education and care, and government's progress in implementing legislative protections focused on child sexual abuse
- receive the initial research outputs from academic leaders engaged to assist the review
- formally invite public submissions on the policy, practice and program issues we are exploring
- release the next progress report, expected in May 2025.

For enquiries or further information:

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