

# Growing Up in Queensland

A story of child and  
family wellbeing



Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



## About this report

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government. Its purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children, young people and their families. Under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*, the QFCC has been charged to review and improve the systems that protect and safeguard Queensland's children, including the child protection and youth justice systems.

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## Acknowledgements

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

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

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

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

## Principal Commissioner's message

The child and family sector produces significant amounts of data and research on child safety and wellbeing; however, our ability to bring this information together into a single story is not always realised. Data about the sector is scattered across government portfolios, across organisations, and is generally focused on funding and process compliance.

Earlier this year, I set my team a challenge of collating available data against the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest Wellbeing Framework to try to present the story of what it is like 'Growing Up in Queensland'. By drawing on broader surveys, administrative data sources and public reporting, I believe I can better fulfill my legal role to 'promote and advocate for the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for children and young people'. The data also emphasises that the safety and wellbeing of children does not fit or fall into the responsibility of one Ministerial portfolio or level of government, and that it is directly linked to the wellbeing of children's broader families and communities.

This report presents the compilation of this data. It is not a report that is meant to be read from start to finish – but, instead, it is designed to put key data and evidence on clear issues affecting Queensland families into the hands of policy makers, decision makers and interested members of the community.

There are over 1.6 million children and young people in Queensland, and the lives of every one is shaped by the wellbeing of their families, their neighbourhoods and their communities. By bringing together evidence, the experiences of children, young people and families, and the insights of stakeholders, this report aims to provide high-impact analysis across the life domains that are important and necessary for each of us. The combination of data and case studies seeks to provide a source of information to inform and guide policy, planning, decision-making and practice.

We have invested in this project to ensure that, as a community, we maintain an objective view of what is happening in the lives of young Queenslanders and their families. This information will allow all levels of government to build on their hard work with a sharpened and renewed focus for the future.

The development of this report has been guided by both national and local leadership. It is underpinned by the research of ARACY and The Nest Wellbeing Framework. The framework's six domains are: being valued, loved and safe; having material basics; being healthy; learning; participating; and having a positive sense of identity and culture.

By incorporating measures of community and family wellbeing, the model used in this report provides the clearest and most comprehensive understanding of child and family wellbeing across all stages of child development. It is our hope that the report lays the foundation for planning and actions to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Queensland. Please use this data and information to inform your policies, programs and actions. Responding holistically is critical to improving our state.



**Luke Twyford**

Principal Commissioner  
Queensland Family and Child Commission

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## Introduction

The *Growing Up in Queensland: A story of child and family wellbeing* report seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of the wellbeing of Queensland children, young people and families. We have brought together key indicators and case studies to tell the many stories of Queensland children, young people and families.

We consider positive wellbeing is that a child and their family has everything they need to thrive and reach their fullest potential. This report aims to describe how young Queenslanders are faring across all aspects of wellbeing and compare it across regions and for specific groups. These descriptions and stories are an important resource to inform planning and decision-making for the services designed for children, young people and families.

Age definitions of childhood vary across Australia and internationally.<sup>1</sup> For this report, children are generally defined as being aged 0–11 years. We include both

adolescents and young adults in our definition of young people which covers the ages of 12–24 years.

Through this report we include data, at a regional level, against key indicators of the wellbeing of young Queenslanders. We have reported on the most recent data available for each indicator, as well as five-year trend data, where relevant, to explore important changes over time. We want to provide a clearer understanding of the distinct circumstances that our children, young people and families experience.

There are many stories within these pages and this report is not intended to be read from cover-to-cover. Instead, it is designed to be a resource for policy and decision makers to draw on at key times to build their evidence base for better outcomes. This report is also a resource for the community to understand more fully how they can contribute to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

## Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth Nest Wellbeing Framework

To monitor the wellbeing of Queensland children, this report uses the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest Wellbeing Framework. The Nest is Australia's principal national wellbeing framework for children and families. The Nest Wellbeing Framework captures factors that children, families and communities need to thrive across six critical life domains. The domains are:

1 Being valued, loved and safe

2 Having material basics

3 Being healthy

4 Being engaged in education

5 Participating in their communities

6 Having a positive sense of identity and culture

Each of these domains has a direct impact on childhood development, and family and community wellbeing forms part of an interconnected system around each Queensland child. For example, parents and carers play a significant and direct role in the development of a child, but levels of parental engagement can also significantly influence a child's development.<sup>2</sup> Where possible, we have attempted to capture this interconnectedness in our reporting in the hope that by measuring and reporting on these factors, we can identify where things are going well, where things need to change and where we can begin to have conversations to ensure that Queensland children and young people are getting the best possible start to life.

To have optimal wellbeing, a child or young person needs to be adequately supported in all six domains.

Each of these six domains are intrinsically linked and interconnected. A child cannot be healthy, for example, without a strong sense of being valued, loved and safe. Or a young person may struggle to participate in the community if they do not have a positive sense of identity or culture. Equally important is that it is not possible to separate the wellbeing of a child from the wellbeing of their family and community. A community that is safe is more likely to have children who are safe; and a community that has poor access to material basics is more likely to have children whose material basic needs are not met.

For this report we have interpreted the ARACY Nest Wellbeing Framework into domains and wellbeing goals. Each goal has indicators that are detailed within specific chapters.

Figure 1: The Nest Wellbeing Framework

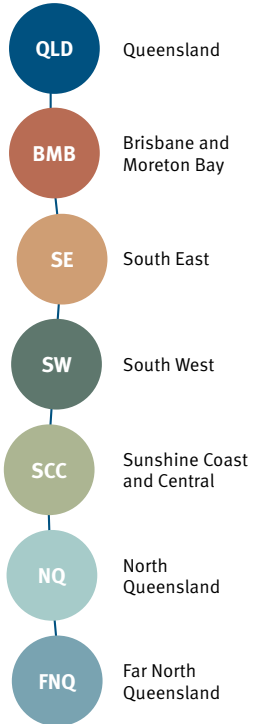


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Table 1: Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth Nest Wellbeing Framework domains and wellbeing goals

| Domain  | Wellbeing goals  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Children and young people are valued, loved and safe:</b><br/>For children and young people to feel valued, loved and safe, they must have positive relationships with their family and peers. This enables them to trust connections with adults in their life and have a sense of personal and community safety.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families meet the needs of their children and young people</li> <li>• Children and young people know they are important to others and feel valued</li> <li>• Families are safe places for children and young people</li> <li>• Communities are safe places for children and young people</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs:</b> Families must have sufficient material basics to meet their needs. This ensures that children and young people are living in secure, stable and suitable housing, with appropriate clothing, healthy food, clean water and with access to the resources they need to develop and grow, including technology.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and families have financial stability and money for necessities</li> <li>• Children, young people and families have adequate, secure, stable housing</li> <li>• Children, young people and their families have access to food, suitable and safe technology, transport and personal items</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Children, young people and their families are healthy:</b><br/>Children, young people and their families need good physical, emotional and mental health. All health needs must be met and appropriate health services provided, including preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional or mental health concerns.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newborns and infants are given the best start to life</li> <li>• Parents and carers are supported to maintain their own health</li> <li>• Children and young people have good physical health and receive appropriate support for their physical health needs</li> <li>• Children and young people have good mental health and receive appropriate support for their mental health needs</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Children and young people are engaged in education:</b><br/>Education is essential for children and young people's wellbeing; they should be engaged in education through both formal and informal experiences within school settings and, more broadly, at home and in the community. Families should value and support children and young people's education to help them to realise their full learning potential and provide appropriate learning support.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families are engaged with their children's learning</li> <li>• Children receive early childhood education and are ready to start school</li> <li>• Children and young people succeed at school</li> <li>• Young people successfully complete school and participate in further education and training</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Families, children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives:</b><br/>All families need opportunities to participate in activities with their peers, as well as opportunities to make contributions to their community. This includes opportunities for involvement in their community where they are able to have a voice, feel heard and be involved in decision-making processes that affect them.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities are positive places for children and young people</li> <li>• Children and young people can enjoy leisure and recreation activities</li> <li>• Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to and participate in the community</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Families, children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs:</b><br/>All children, young people and their families need a positive sense of identity and culture and to feel they are accepted at home and in their community. For this to occur, children and young people's identity should be respected and valued. They also need to feel safe and supported to be connected to their culture and to express their identity as well as their cultural and spiritual beliefs. Being connected to culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people drives confidence and wellbeing, and means having strong relationships with their family, community and the land.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel supported in their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing</li> <li>• Children, young people and their families feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs</li> </ul>   |

## Regions of Queensland



## Priority children, young people and families

For Queensland children and young people to thrive, both now and into their future, they need ongoing support from conception onwards from their families, their communities, systems and services.

Some groups of Queensland children and young people may not consistently receive the support they need to thrive due to challenges such as poverty, racism, violence and intergenerational trauma. This may be having a negative impact on their health, learning and development.

For these groups of children and young people, we need to look at their specific needs and the needs of their communities, and identify where stronger support may be needed for them and their families.

The experiences of these select groups of children and young people are amplified in this report using the following symbols to highlight findings related to the specific groups:



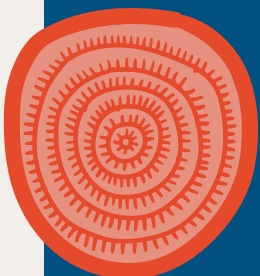
**Families involved with the child protection system**



**Children in out-of-home care and their carers**



**Families involved with the youth justice system**



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families are another priority cohort for our reporting. We acknowledge that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are safe and cared for within families, communities and cultures. There is evidence, however, that support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families could be improved. Closing the Gap indicators will be referenced, where available.



# Queensland and its people

## Queensland and its regions

Queensland has almost a quarter of the Australian landmass and is home to one-fifth of the Australian population. The Queensland landmass is significant, and is nearly five times the size of Japan, seven times the size of Great Britain and two and a half times the size of Texas.

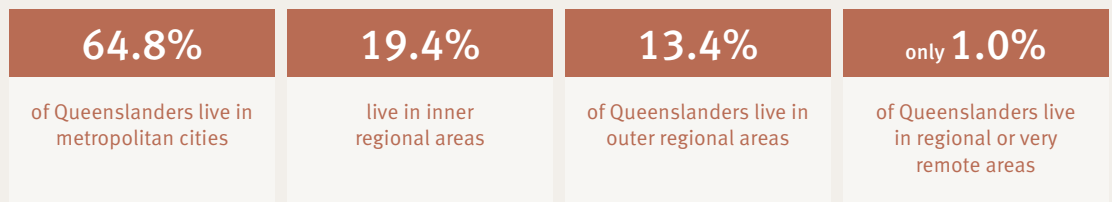
The environment and landscape of Queensland is diverse, including tropical islands, sandy beaches, flat river plains, mountainous terrain, dry deserts, rich agricultural belts and densely populated urban areas. A unique geographical feature for Queensland is the Great Barrier Reef, which follows along the North-Eastern coastline. Due to its size, there is significant variation in climate across the state. There is ample rainfall across the coastline, monsoon wet seasons in the tropical parts of the north and humid sub-tropical conditions along the southern coastline. Contrary to these conditions, there is low rainfall and a dry, hot climate for the inland and western parts of the state.

The major employment industries in Queensland are health care and social assistance, retail, construction, education and training and professional services. The major industries vary significantly across the state. For the metropolitan area of Brisbane and the southeast, the largest industries are professional services, retail, and health care and social assistance. For the central and western parts of the state, the major industries are agriculture, forestry and fishing, public administration, and health care and social assistance. For the northern parts of the state, the largest employers are mining, construction, and health care and social assistance.

For the purposes of our reporting, we have divided Queensland into six regions: Brisbane and Moreton Bay, the South East, the South West, Sunshine Coast and Central, North Queensland and Far North Queensland, with Brisbane recognised as a metropolitan centre and the state's capital.

## Population

As at 31 March 2023, the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated Queensland's population to be **5,418,453**, an increase of **5.1%** since the 2021 Census.<sup>3</sup>



In 2022, the estimated resident population of Queensland aged 0–24 years was **1,666,007**, which made up just under **one-third** of the total population.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2: Estimated resident population of Queensland children and young people in 2021, by age range

According to the 2021 Census count:

|  |                                       |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1,416,854  | 1,295,777                             | 864,448                                 |
| of the adult Queensland population is aged 25–44 years | of the population is aged 45–64 years | of the population is aged over 65 years |



Just **over half** (50.9%) of Queensland's children and young people lived in the Greater Brisbane area compared to **one third** (32.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

| 0–4 years | 5–9 years | 10–14 years | 15–19 years | 20–24 years | 0–24 years total |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 307,191   | 336,520   | 355,281     | 330,685     | 336,330     | 1,666,007        |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, unpublished data request, 2023

## Births in Queensland

In 2021, there were **64,111** births in Queensland, comprising **32,835** males (51.2%) and **31,276** females (48.8%). This was an increase of **7.8%** from 2020.

The total fertility rate in Queensland increased from **1.7** in 2020 to **1.8** in 2021.<sup>5</sup>

Between 2011 and 2021, the median age of Queensland mothers increased from **29.8** to **30.9** years, while the median age of Queensland fathers increased from **32.0** to **32.8** years.

## Deaths in Queensland

In 2021, there were **33,858** deaths registered in Queensland: **18,026** (53.2%) males and **15,832** (46.8%) females. This was an increase of **7.9%** death registrations compared to the previous year (31,367 deaths).<sup>6</sup>

Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, the deaths of **410** children and young people aged 0–18 years were registered in Queensland: **232** (56.9%) males and **176** (43.1%) females. This was an increase of **3.0%** on registrations in the previous year (398 deaths).

**70** of the children and young people who died in Queensland were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Most children (**259**) died by natural causes, but the other most common causes were sudden unexpected infant deaths (**44**), transport (**33**) and suicide (**20**). Of the children who died, **69** were known to the Department of Child Safety.

Figure 2: The composition of Queensland's two-parent families

## Families

Queensland had **563,327** two-parent families

**230,026** one-parent families

**551,069** couple families with no children

**22,230** other families.<sup>7</sup>

Of the two-parent families, **84.2%** were intact families, **10.7%** stepfamilies and **4.5%** blended families.<sup>8</sup>



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021.<sup>9</sup>

In 2021, of the one-parent families, around 46.0% (105,858) had no children under 15.

Around 54.0% had children under 15 (including dependent and non-dependent older children and students).



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

In 2022, the estimated resident population of Queenslanders aged 0–24 years who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 133,772.

Table 3 shows the breakdown by age.

Table 3: Estimated resident population of Queensland children and young people in 2022 who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (as a proportion of all children), by age range

| 0–4 years        | 5–9 years        | 10–14 years      | 15–19 years      | 20–24 years      | 0–24 years total         |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 29,436<br>(9.6%) | 27,231<br>(8.1%) | 27,526<br>(7.7%) | 26,037<br>(7.9%) | 23,542<br>(7.0%) | <b>133,772</b><br>(8.0%) |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, unpublished data request, 2023.

According to the 2021 Census, 18,490 (7.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people spoke an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language at home.

## Cultural diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **97,770** Queenslanders lived interstate and **34,773** lived overseas one year before the Census.

Just over **one in five** Queenslanders (1,170,334) were born overseas.

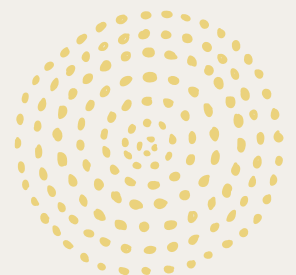


Table 4: Five most common countries of birth by region for Queenslanders born overseas

| QLD                                      | BMB                                      | SE                                       | SW                   | SCC                  | NQ                   | FNQ                      |
|--|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| New Zealand<br>4.0%                      | New Zealand<br>3.8%                      | New Zealand<br>6.8%                      | New Zealand<br>2.8%  | England<br>4.3%      | New Zealand<br>2.3%  | England<br>3.4%          |
| England<br>3.7%                          | England<br>3.8%                          | England<br>4.6%                          | England<br>2.3%      | New Zealand<br>3.2%  | England<br>2.1%      | New Zealand<br>2.4%      |
| India<br>1.4%                            | India<br>2.3%                            | South Africa<br>1.2%                     | India<br>1.2%        | South Africa<br>0.9% | Philippines<br>1.2%  | Papua New Guinea<br>1.1% |
| South Africa<br>1.0%                     | China, excluding SARs and Taiwan<br>2.1% | India<br>1.2%                            | Philippines<br>1.0%  | Philippines<br>0.7%  | India<br>0.7%        | Philippines<br>1.0%      |
| China, excluding SARs and Taiwan<br>1.1% | Philippines<br>1.2%                      | China, excluding SARs and Taiwan<br>1.1% | South Africa<br>0.5% | Germany<br>0.5%      | South Africa<br>0.7% | India<br>1.0%            |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, unpublished data request, 2023.

Table 5: Number of Queensland children and young people born overseas by country

| Country                  | Number of Queensland children and young people |
|--------------------------|--|
| New Zealand              | 82,676   |
| England                  | 34,866   |
| India                    | 12,066   |
| China                    | 10,101   |
| Philippines              | 9,349  |
| South Africa             | 9,237  |
| United States of America | 4,580  |
| Vietnam                  | 3,374  |
| South Korea              | 3,240  |
| Thailand                 | 3,224  |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, unpublished data request, 2023.

## Religion

More than **3.5 million** Queenslanders (45.7%) described themselves as being affiliated with a Christian religion.

**2.1 million** Queenslanders (40.7%) described themselves as having no religion in the 2021 Census.

**5.0% (258,850)** reported that they were affiliated with a non-Christian religion such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or 'Other Religion'.

Figure 3: Regional breakdown of Brisbane and Moreton Bay

## Regional breakdowns

# Brisbane and Moreton Bay

## Region

Brisbane and Moreton Bay extends from Caboolture to Brisbane City. The region also includes Redcliffe, South Brisbane and surrounding suburbs such as Inala, Forest Lake and Mount Gravatt.

### Population

The resident population of Brisbane and Moreton Bay is **1,795,096** persons, including **559,609** children.

**415,452**

23.6% of the population is aged 45–64 years

**252,086**

14.3% of the population is aged over 65 years



It is estimated that around **2.5%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population (43,062) identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Of the adult Brisbane and Moreton Bay population, **534,028** (30.3%) is aged 25–44 years.

**97.1%** of people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay live in metropolitan cities.

**2.9%** live in inner regional areas.

Less than **1.0%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population lives in outer regional, regional or very remote areas.

### Families

Brisbane and Moreton Bay has approximately **460,157** families.

**201,946**

(43.9%) two-parent families

**71,722**

(15.6%) one-parent families

**177,468**

(38.6%) couple families with no children

As at December 2022, **33,746** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **83,352** persons received Family Tax Benefit, a means-tested payment to parents to assist with the costs of raising children.

### Education

There are **1,064** early childhood education and care services, and **438** schools in Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

Almost **three-quarters** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population has completed year 12.

**17.7%** left school after year 10.

**3.6%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population did not go to school or had year 8 or below as their highest level of schooling.

**66.6%** (944,739) people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay have a higher education qualification, with almost **two in five** young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **28.7%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**3.8%**  
New Zealand

**3.8%**  
England

**2.3%**  
India

**2.1%**  
China excluding  
SARs and Taiwan

**1.2%**  
The Philippines

**19.7%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population (341,970) reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home. The most common languages were:

**4.5%**  
Chinese  
Languages

**3.2%**  
Indo Aryan  
Languages

**1.3%**  
Vietnamese

**1.1%**  
Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.9%**  
Spanish

**43.9%**  
of people in Brisbane and  
Moreton Bay described  
themselves as being affiliated  
with a Christian religion.

**41.6%**  
described themselves as  
having no religion.

**7.6%**  
reported that they were  
affiliated with a non-Christian  
religion such as Buddhism,  
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or  
'Other Religion'.

## Employment

**3.5%** (35,531) of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population of working age is unemployed.

Around **9.0%** of families in Brisbane and Moreton Bay with children under 15 years of age have no parent employed.

There are **6,070** people who are homeless in Brisbane and Moreton Bay, which is 35.2 people per 10,000.

**11.3%** of the Brisbane and Moreton Bay population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Figure 4: Regional breakdown of the South East

## Regional breakdowns

# South East

## Region

The South East includes Logan, Beaudesert and Gold Coast, and Bayside districts. This includes surrounding suburbs such as Browns Plains, Coomera, Beenleigh, Labrador and Mermaid Beach.

### Population

As at 30 June 2022, the estimated resident population of the South East was **1,205,362** persons, including **374,134** children and young people aged 0–24 years.

**290,335**

24.7% of the population is aged 45–64 years.

**193,975**

16.5% of the population is aged over 65 years.



It is estimated that around **3.0%** of the South East population (33,559) identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Of the adult South East population, **317,453** (27.0%) is aged 25–44 years.

**95.6%** of people in the South East live in metropolitan cities.

**4.0%** live in inner regional areas.

Less than **1.0%** of the South East population lives in outer regional, regional or very remote areas.

### Families

The South East has approximately **409,830** families.

**132,641**

(42.5%)  
two-parent families

**55,853**

(17.9%)  
one-parent families

**119,102**

(38.2%)  
couple families with no children

As at December 2022, **30,957** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **78,848** persons received Family Tax Benefit.

### Education

There are **672** early childhood education and care services, and **232** schools in the South East.

**64.1%** of the South East population has completed year 12.

**A quarter** left school after year 10.

Less than **4.0%** of the South East population did not go to school or had year 8 or below as their highest level of schooling.

**62.0%** (580,955) people in the South East have a higher education qualification, with **two in five** young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **27.9%** of the South East population was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**6.8%**  
New Zealand

**4.6%**  
England

**1.2%**  
South Africa

**1.2%**  
India

**1.1%**  
China excluding  
SARs and Taiwan

**14.6%** of the South East population (168,862) reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home, including:

**2.2%**  
Chinese  
Language

**1.8%**  
Indo Aryan  
Language

**0.8%**  
Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.6%**  
Spanish

**0.6%**  
Japanese

**44.3%**  
of people in the South  
East described themselves  
as being affiliated with a  
Christian religion.

**42.1%**  
described themselves as  
having no religion.

**5.4%**  
reported that they were  
affiliated with a non-Christian  
religion such as Buddhism,  
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or  
'Other Religion'.

## Employment

Less than **4.0%** (23,377) of the South East population of working age is unemployed.

Around **11.8%** of families in the South East with children under 15 years of age have no parent employed.

There are **3,751** people who are homeless in the South East, which is 32.4 people per 10,000.

**17.5%** of the South East population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Figure 5: Regional breakdown of the South West

## Regional breakdowns

# South West

## Region

The South West extends from Ipswich and Toowoomba out to Charleville. The region also includes Dalby, Roma and Mitchell.

### Population

As at 30 June 2022, the estimated resident population of the South West was **620,031** persons, including **201,308** children.

**290,335**

24.7% of the population is aged 45–64 years.

**102,289**

16.9% of the population is aged over 65 years.



It is estimated that around **5.9%** of the South West population (35,107) identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Of the adult South West population, **154,836** (25.6%) of the population is aged 25–44 years.

**32.8%** of people in the South West live in metropolitan cities.

**53.3%** live in inner regional areas.

**10.6%** live in outer regional areas.

**1.8%** live in regional areas.

**1.5%** live in very remote areas.

### Families

The South West has approximately **157,563** families.

**63,610**  
(40.4%)  
two-parent families

**28,416**  
(18.0%)  
one-parent families

**63,150**  
(40.1%)  
couple families with no children

As at December 2022, **19,152** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **46,304** persons received Family Tax Benefit.

### Education

There are **428** early childhood education and care services, and **355** schools in the South West.

**55.4%** of the South West population has completed year 12.

**Three in ten** left school after year 10.

**6.4%** of the South West population did not go to school or had year 8 or below as their highest level of schooling.

**272,663** people in the South West have a higher education qualification, with **37.8%** of young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **14.9%** of the South West population was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**2.8%**  
New Zealand

**2.3%**  
England

**1.2%**  
India

**1.0%**  
Philippines

**0.5%**  
South Africa

**8.9%** of the South West population (53,069) reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home, including:

**1.5%**  
Indo Aryan  
Language

**0.9%**  
Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.7%**  
Chinese  
Languages

**0.6%**  
Samoan

**0.3%**  
Malayalam

**305,683**  
people in the South West  
described themselves  
as being affiliated with a  
Christian religion.

**62,994**  
described themselves as  
having no religion.

**22,983**  
reported that they were  
affiliated with a non-Christian  
religion such as Buddhism,  
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or  
'Other Religion'.

## Employment

**5.6%** (17,499) of the South West population of working age is unemployed.

Around **14.4%** of families in the South West with children under 15 years of age have no parent employed.

There are **2,512** people who are homeless in the South West, which is 40.2 people per 10,000.

**33.4%** of the South West population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Figure 6: Regional breakdown of Sunshine Coast and Central

## Regional breakdowns

# Sunshine Coast and Central

## Region

The Sunshine Coast and Central region extends from the southern-most coastal town of Caloundra to Rockhampton and out to Birdsville. The region also includes Maroochydore, Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Emerald.

### Population

As at 30 June 2022, the estimated resident population of the Sunshine Coast and Central region was **941,463** persons, including **264,026** children and young people aged 0–24 years.

Of the adult Sunshine Coast and Central population:

**208,973** 22.7% is aged 25–44 years.

**247,878** 26.9% is aged 45–64 years.

**200,590** 21.8% is aged over 65 years.



It is estimated that around **4.4%** of the Sunshine Coast and Central population (40,228) identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**36.4%** of people in the Sunshine Coast and Central region live in metropolitan cities.

**54.7%** live in inner regional areas.

**6.6%** live in outer regional areas.

**1.2%** live in regional areas.

**1.2%** live in very remote areas.

### Families

The Sunshine Coast and Central region has approximately **248,644** families.

**91,028**  
(36.6%)  
two-parent families

**40,306**  
(16.2%)  
one-parent families

**114,196**  
(45.9%)  
couple families with no children

As at December 2022, **30,490** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **56,410** persons received Family Tax Benefit.

### Education

There are **513** early childhood education and care services, and **391** schools in the Sunshine Coast and Central region.

**More than half** (55.7%) of the Sunshine Coast and Central population has completed year 12.

Just over **three in ten** left school after year 10.

**5.1%** of the Sunshine Coast and Central population did not go to school or had year 8 or below as their highest level of schooling.

**60.0%** (450,539) people in the Sunshine Coast and Central region has a higher education qualification, with **35.25%** of young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **16.0%** of the Sunshine Coast and Central population was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**4.3%**

England

**3.2%**

New Zealand

**0.9%**

South Africa

**0.7%**

Philippines

**0.5%**

India

**5.5%** of the Sunshine Coast and Central population (50,310) reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English are:

**0.7%**

Indo Aryan  
Language

**0.6%**

Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.4%**

Chinese  
Languages

**0.3%**

German

**0.3%**

Afrikaans

**Almost half**

of the Sunshine Coast and Central population (217,429) described themselves as being affiliated with a Christian religion.

**167,016**

37.5% described themselves as having no religion.

**9,913**

2.2% reported that they were affiliated with a non-Christian religion such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or 'Other Religion'.

## Employment

**3.6%** (16,714) of the Sunshine Coast and Central population of working age is unemployed.

Around **12.3%** of families in the Sunshine Coast and Central with children under 15 years of age has no parent employed.

There are **4,200** people who are homeless in the Sunshine Coast and Central, which is 43.2 people per 10,000.

**25.6%** of the Sunshine Coast and Central population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Figure 7: Regional breakdown of North Queensland

## Regional breakdowns

# North Queensland

## Region

North Queensland extends from the north-eastern coast of Queensland, from Mackay to Townsville and out to Mount Isa. This region also includes Doomadgee, Mornington and Normanton.

### Population

As at 30 June 2022, the estimated resident population of North Queensland was **458,442** persons, including **148,152** children and young people aged 0–24 years.

Of the adult North Queensland population:

**123,535** 27.3% is aged 25–44 years.

**114,683** 25.4% is aged 45–64 years.

**65,495** 14.5% is aged over 65 years.



It is estimated that around **9.0%** (40,193) of the North Queensland population identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**0.0%** of people in North Queensland live in metropolitan cities.

**20.2%** live in inner regional areas.

**68.6%** live in outer regional areas.

**8.6%** live in regional areas.

**2.5%** live in very remote areas.

### Families

North Queensland has approximately **112,788** families.

**45,527**  
(40.4%)  
two-parent  
families

**19,164**  
(17.0%)  
one-parent  
families

**46,265**  
(41.0%)  
couple  
families with  
no children

As at December 2022, **10,185** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **26,670** persons received Family Tax Benefit.

### Education

There are **329** early childhood education and care services, and 231 schools in North Queensland.

**More than half** (190,294) of the North Queensland population has completed year 12.

**28.6%** left school after year 10.

**4.9%** of the North Queensland population did not go to school or had year 8 or lower as their highest level of schooling.

**59.0%** (211,798) people in North Queensland have a higher education qualification, with **36.8%** of young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **one in eight** persons in North Queensland was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**2.3%**  
New Zealand

**2.1%**  
England

**1.2%**  
Philippines

**0.7%**  
India

**0.7%**  
South Africa

**7.4%** (32,927) of the North Queensland population reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English are:

**1.1%**  
Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.7%**  
Indo Aryan  
Languages

**0.6%**  
Australian  
Indigenous  
Languages

**0.4%**  
Chinese  
Languages

**0.4%**  
Italian

**Almost half**  
of the North Queensland  
population (217,429) described  
themselves as being affiliated  
with a Christian religion.

**167,016**  
37.5% described  
themselves as having  
no religion.

**9,913**  
2.2% reported that they were  
affiliated with a non-Christian  
religion such as Buddhism,  
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or  
'Other Religion'.

## Employment

**2.7%** (7,111) of the North Queensland population of working age is unemployed.

Around **11.3%** of families in North Queensland with children under 15 years of age have no parent employed.

There are **2,882** people who are homeless in North Queensland, which is 61.0 people per 10,000.

**22.6%** of the North Queensland population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.

Figure 8: Regional breakdown of Far North Queensland

## Regional breakdowns

# Far North Queensland

## Region

Far North Queensland extends from the regional town of Innisfail to Cape York North and the Torres Strait Islands (Thursday Island). This region also includes Cairns, Edmonton, Atherton, Cooktown and Weipa.

### Population

As at 30 June 2022, the estimated resident population of Far North Queensland was **294,282** persons, including **89,304** children and young people aged 0–24 years.

Of the adult Far North Queensland population:

**74,567**

**78,132**

**48,214**



It is estimated that around **15.7%** of the Far North Queensland population (43,481) identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**0.0%** of people in Far North Queensland live in metropolitan cities.

**89.3%** almost 9 out of 10 live in outer regional areas.

**3.2%** live in regional areas.

**7.5%** live in very remote areas.

### Families

Far North Queensland has approximately **71,938** families.

**26,856**  
(37.3%)  
two-parent families

**14,010**  
(19.5%)  
one-parent families

**29,793**  
(41.4%)  
couple families with no children

As at December 2022, **6,495** persons were receiving carer allowance payments and **22,105** persons received Family Tax Benefit.

### Education

There are **220** early childhood education and care services, and **137** schools in Far North Queensland.

**57.3%** have completed year 12.

**26.5%** left school after year 10.

**5.0%** of the Far North Queensland population did not go to school or had year 8 or below as their highest level of schooling.

**61.5%** (142,372) people in Far North Queensland have a higher education qualification, with **36.8%** of young people aged 15–25 years having a higher education qualification.

## Cultural and linguistic diversity

According to the 2021 Census, **18.6%** of the Far North Queensland population was born overseas.

The top five countries of origin for this region are:

**3.4%**  
England

**2.4%**  
New Zealand

**1.1%**  
Papua New  
Guinea

**1.1%**  
Philippines

**1.0%**  
India

**15.9%** of the Far North Queensland population (45,357) reported in the 2021 Census that they spoke a language other than English at home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English are:

**4.9%**  
Australian  
Indigenous  
Languages

**1.4%**  
Indo Aryan  
Languages

**0.9%**  
Japanese

**0.9%**  
Southeast Asian  
Austronesian  
Languages

**0.8%**  
Italian

**129,580**  
people in Far North Queensland  
(45.3%) described themselves  
as being affiliated with a  
Christian religion.

**111,052**  
38.8% described  
themselves as having  
no religion.

**10,088**  
3.5% reported that they were  
affiliated with a non-Christian  
religion such as Buddhism,  
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or  
'Other Religion'.

## Employment

The number of unemployed persons in Far North Queensland is not available.

Around **16.7%** of families in Far North Queensland with children under 15 years of age have no parent employed.

There are **3,011** people who are homeless persons in Far North Queensland, which is 99.2 people per 10,000.

**33.9%** of the Far North Queensland population lives in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland.



Figure 9: How is life for children and young people growing up in Queensland?

## How is life for children and young people growing up in Queensland?

### Most Queensland children and young people have someone who supports them



#### Among primary aged children

**80%** have a grownup who listens to them and helps when they are upset

**72%** do fun things with their family

**74%** say other kids like to play with them

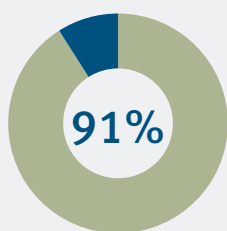


#### Among parents

**94%** support their child when they have worries or concerns

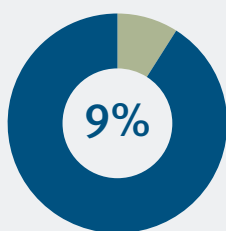
**90%** do fun things as a family

Most Queensland children and young people feel valued and loved; however, a small but growing cohort need more support to feel safe



feel safe at home

BUT



spent time away from home because they couldn't go back



#### Most babies have a healthy start to life

**88.5%** of mothers did not smoke during their pregnancy

**94.1%** of mothers did not drink alcohol during their pregnancy

**93.6%** of babies have a birthweight greater than 2,500g

There has been a sharp increase in the cost of living which is having a negative impact on children, young people and their families, contributing to family-level stress

#### Over the past 12 months



Food prices have increased by 7-8%



Utilities prices have increased by 12-14%



Brisbane rents have increased by 17.4%

**61%**

of parents and carers find it hard to pay for day-to-day expenses such as food and bills

**13,600**

of young Queenslanders say their family cannot afford their rent or mortgage

Many older children and parents face health challenges

ONLY

**53%**

of parents and carers rate their health as excellent or good

ONLY

**58%**

of children and young people rate their health as excellent or good



Health challenges include parental drug use and risky use of alcohol

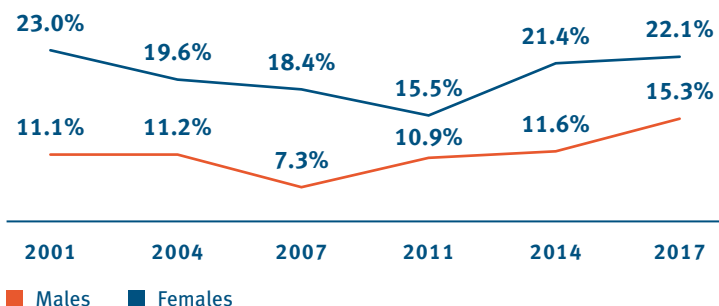
**42.2%**

reported risky drinking

**14.5%**

reported illicit use of drugs

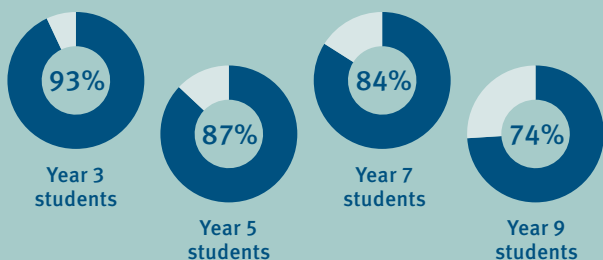
### Up to 2 in 5 young people experience high psychological distress



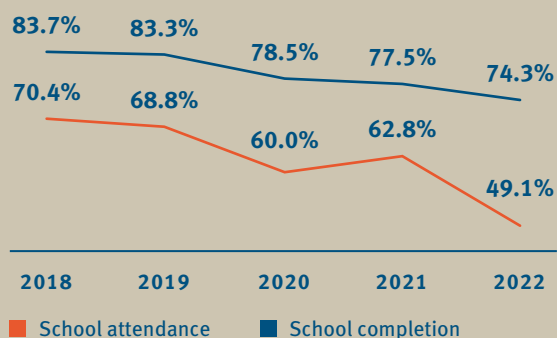
...while just over  
**1 in 10**  
access Medicare-funded  
psychological services

### Most children and young people are meeting academic standards...

National standards in numeracy, reading and writing are being met by at least:



### ...but rates of school attendance and completion have dropped...



...and young people are experiencing stress around their schooling and future goals.

**2 in 5 young people** are worried about school or study problems

### Many young people feel they do not have opportunities to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them...

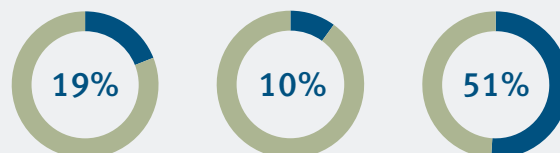
only  
**2 in 5**

young people feel they have a say on issues that matter to them

around  
**half**

agreed they had the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them

### ...and while a significant minority of young people hold spiritual and/or cultural beliefs...



have both spiritual and cultural beliefs, or just spiritual beliefs

have cultural beliefs

have no spiritual or cultural beliefs

...many experience discrimination and feel they are not safe and supported to express their identity and cultural and spiritual beliefs

Figure 10: How does life compare for children and young people growing up in out-of-home care in Queensland?

## How does life compare for children and young people growing up in out-of-home care in Queensland?

Most Queensland children and young people in out-of-home care have someone who cares for them...

**78.0%**   **68.0%**   **74.0%**

feel that people care about them

feel they can tell the person who looks after them when they're worried

feel at home



Parental drug use is a common contributor to children entering out-of-home care

**67.0%**

of households where there was a substantiated risk of harm to the children had a parent with a drug/alcohol problem

**20**

children

per week enter care due to parental methamphetamine use

Although placement changes are common...

Around

**1 in 4**

careleavers have experienced 4 or more placements

**44.0%**

moved house in the last year

...most feel safe within their placement...

**88.0%**

feel safe and secure

...and feel safer than they felt prior to entering care

Rates of disability are higher...

% children and young people living with disability:

4.0%

0-4 years

10.0%

5-14 years

8.0%

15-24 years

29.0%

0-17 years

Not living in care

Living in out-of-home care

The recent sharp increase in the cost of living is likely to disproportionately affect young people leaving out-of-home care as many report they are not confident around:

finding accommodation

**22.6%**

managing money

**15.6%**

finding and keeping a job

**18.9%**

... and although a large proportion rate their wellbeing positively...

**69.0%**

feel happy

**64.0%**

feel calm

**68.0%**

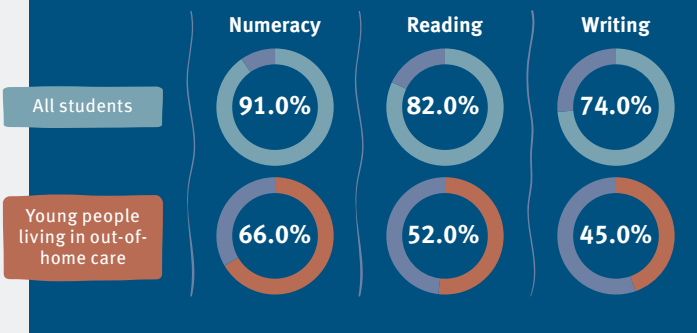
enjoyed their day

...poor mental health was reported by

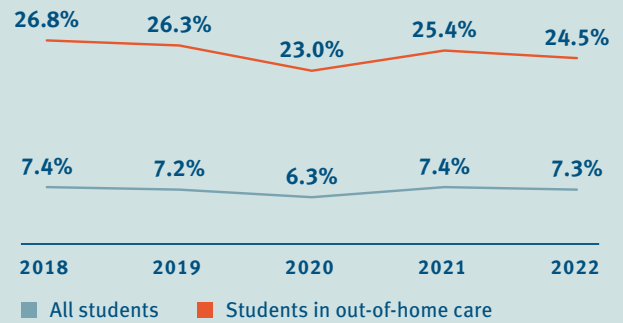
**1 in 4**

### While many are meeting academic standards, rates are lower than for those not in care

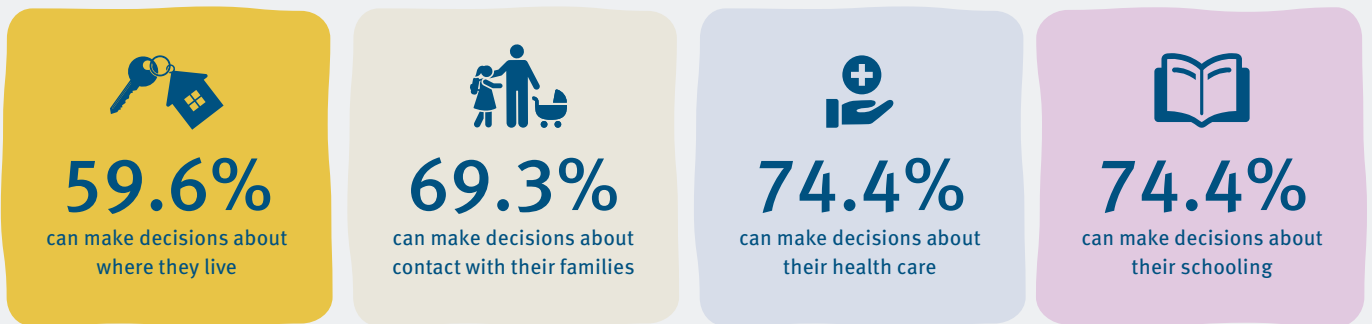
Percentage of students meeting national standards for:



### Students living in out-of-home care are much more likely to be suspended from school



### Many report that they do have opportunities to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them



**58.7%**

are supported to make decisions about what they will do when they exit care

The majority feel supported to follow their culture, however, more could be done to improve cultural support processes

**7 in 10**

agreed they were 'always' or 'most times' able to follow their culture where they lived

but only

**2 in 10**

were included in developing their cultural support plan

Figure 11: How does life compare for First Nations children and young people in Queensland?

## How does life compare for First Nations children and young people in Queensland?

### Most First Nations families are involved in family life and children are thriving

Among parent respondents to our survey

**91.0%** support their child when they have worries or concerns

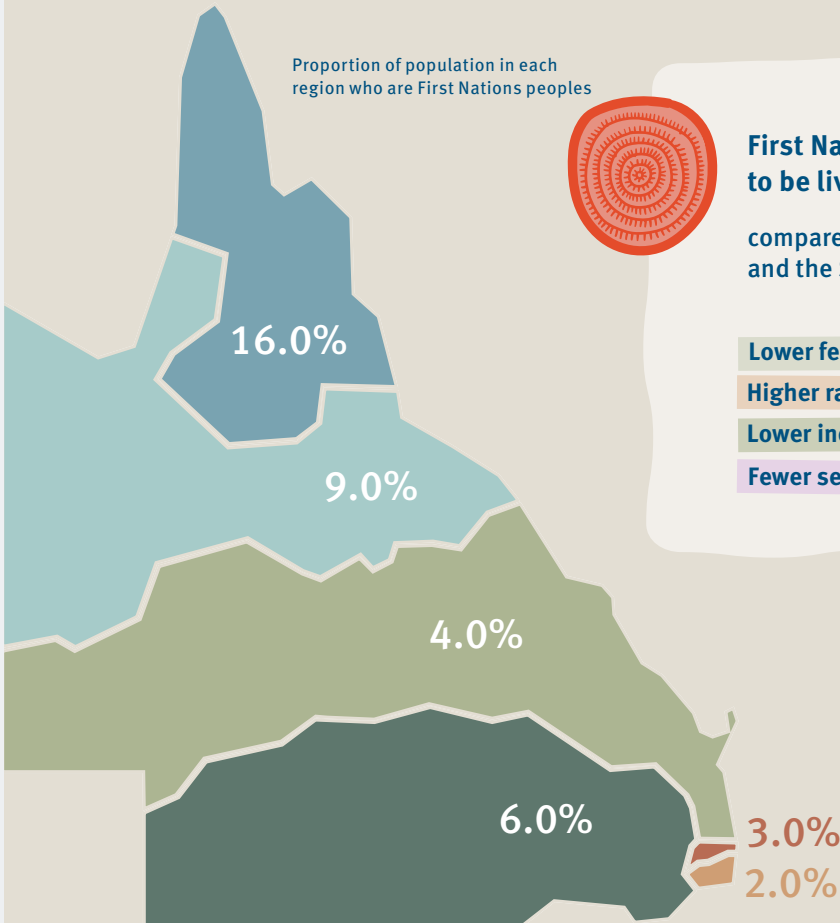
**93.0%** do fun things as family

Among young children

**97.0%** feel happy a lot or sometimes

**95.0%** feel proud a lot or sometimes

Proportion of population in each region who are First Nations peoples



### First Nations peoples are more likely to be living in regional areas

compared to Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South East, regional areas have:

- Lower feelings of community safety
- Higher rates of unemployment
- Lower incomes for families
- Fewer services

### Cost-of-living increases may disproportionately affect First Nations families

**61.0%** of non-Indigenous parents and carers find it hard to pay for day-to-day expenses such as food and bills

**76.0%** of First Nations parents and carers find it hard to pay for day-to-day expenses such as food and bills



While most babies have a healthy start to life, there is some variation in health behaviours which may reflect a lack of culturally appropriate support services

**56.2%** of mothers did not smoke during their pregnancy

**90.2%** of mothers did not drink alcohol during their pregnancy

**90.7%** of babies had a birthweight greater than 2,500g

**85.7%** of babies were born after 37 weeks gestation



First Nations children are twice as likely to be suspended from school

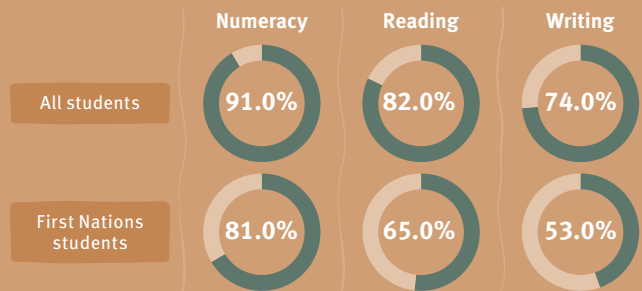
**7.3%**  
of Queensland students experienced a school disciplinary absence

VS

**14.0%**  
of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students experienced a school disciplinary absence

Although most First Nations young people are meeting academic standards, rates are lower than for all students

Percentage of students meeting national standards for:



Over the past 5 years there has been an increase in First Nations people in professional frontline roles working with children

The % of teachers who were First Nations peoples rose from **1.4% to 1.9%**

Experiences of discrimination are ongoing for First Nations peoples

**3 in 10** young people say they have been treated unfairly due to their race or cultural background

## Endnotes

- 1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). *Australia's children*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/summary>
- 2 Bronfenbrenner U (1977). *Toward an experimental ecology of human development*. *American Psychologist*, 32(7): 513-531.
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). *National, state and territory population*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/mar-2023>
- 4 Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2023). *Unpublished data request*.
- 5 Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2022). *Vital Statistics: Births*. <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/statistics/theme/population/vital-statistics/births>
- 6 Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2022). *Deaths, Queensland 2021*. <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/issues/3296/deaths-ql-2021.pdf>
- 7 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Queensland 2021 Census Community Profiles*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/3>
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Family blending*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/factsheetsfb?opendocument&navpos=450>
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Census of Population and Housing*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2021/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/household-surveys/census-population-and-housing>

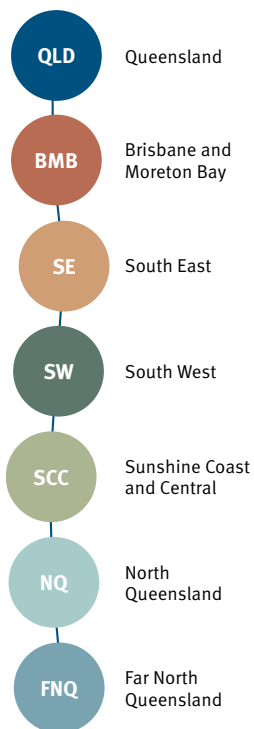


## Domain 1



Children, young people  
and families are  
***valued, loved,  
and safe***

Regions of Queensland



# Children, young people and families are valued, loved and safe

For children and young people to feel valued, loved and safe, they must have positive relationships with their family and peers. This enables them to trust connections with adults in their life and have a sense of personal and community safety. Being valued, loved and safe means that a child or young person grows up experiencing loving, trusting relationships either with their family or with other nurturing and safe adults in their lives. As children become older, positive connections with friends become an increasingly important source of social and emotional support. Growing up in a loving and safe environment, including a safe community, is critical for supporting children and young people’s development. Children and young people who know they are loved and that they are important to

the people in their lives are more likely to be confident and resilient and feel positive about their future.

When children are not safe at home, they need to be provided with an alternative safe and nurturing environment. Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights to be supported, to be loved and to have their safety needs met. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers state that for a child or young person living in out-of-home care, feeling loved and safe means living in an environment that cultivates a feeling of ‘home’, where they feel secure, know they are heard and understood, are supported and can learn and grow.<sup>10</sup>

The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children, young people and their families are valued, loved and safe.

Table 6: Domain 1 goals and indicators

| Domain   | Goal  | Indicator groupings  |
|--|---|--|
| Domain 1: Children, young people and families are valued, loved and safe | Goal 1.1: Families meet the needs of their children and young people                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 1.1.1: Children and young people have loving, trusting relationships with family and other adults</li> <li>• Indicator 1.1.2: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel cared for and have trusting relationships with adults</li> </ul>   |
|  | Goal 1.2: Children and young people feel they are important to others and feel valued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 1.2.1: Children and young people have supportive, trusting relationships with friends</li> <li>• Indicator 1.2.2: Children and young people feel positive about their future</li> </ul>   |
|  | Goal 1.3: Families are safe places for children and young people                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 1.3.1: Children and young people are not impacted by family conflict</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.2: Children and young people feel safe at home</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.3: Children and young people are protected from domestic and family violence</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.4: Where there are concerns about a child’s or young person’s safety, they can be cared for away from home</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.5: There are sufficient foster and kinship carers to accommodate children and young people in out-of-home care</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.6: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel safe and secure</li> <li>• Indicator 1.3.7: Children and young people are supported during parental imprisonment</li> </ul> |
|  | Goal 1.4: Communities are safe places for children and young people                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 1.4.1: Children and young people can access support services</li> <li>• Indicator 1.4.2: Children and young people do not experience bullying</li> <li>• Indicator 1.4.3: Children and young people feel safe in their community</li> <li>• Indicator 1.4.4: Children and young people are not victims of crime</li> <li>• Indicator 1.4.5: Few children and young people are involved with the youth justice system</li> <li>• Indicator 1.4.6: Children and young people’s deaths are prevented</li> </ul>  |

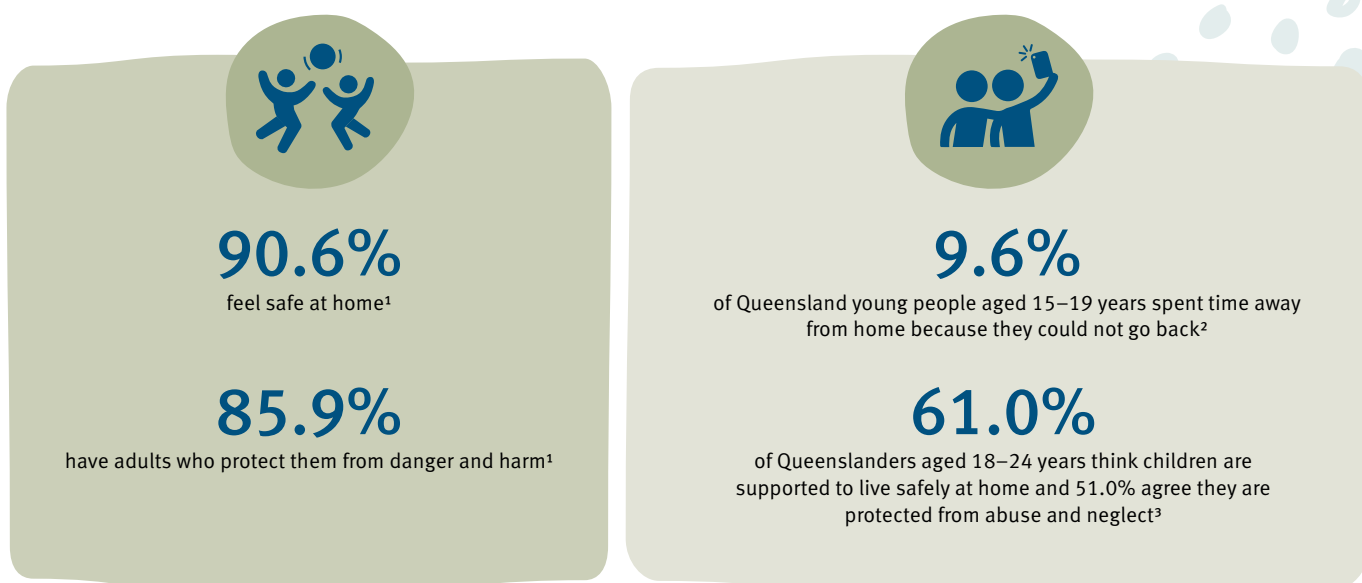
Figure 12: Queensland children's feelings of support



Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>11</sup><sup>2</sup> Rumble's Quest, unpublished data request, 2023.<sup>12</sup><sup>3</sup> Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 13: Children's feelings of safety



Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Rumble's Quest, unpublished data request, 2023.<sup>14</sup><sup>2</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>15</sup><sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>16</sup>

## Goal 1.1: Families meet the needs of their children

Families play a critical role in the development of children and young people. During challenging times, children and young people need family they can rely on to provide them with love, encouragement and support. Children and young people who have loving and trusting relationships with their families and who have their social and emotional needs met make friends more easily, perform better academically and have higher levels of wellbeing.

Children and young people in out-of-home care will often have their need for nurturing relationships met by other adults such as foster or kinship carers. Being placed with kinship carers or with siblings can assist in protecting children and young people's connections to their family and community and provide important family support. Children who are placed with siblings in out-of-home care experience greater placement stability<sup>17</sup> and better mental health.<sup>18</sup>

### CASE STUDY

#### YFS Step by Step Thriving Young Families

The Step by Step team at YFS in Logan supports strong and proud young families where children can thrive, learn and grow. Logan's young parents have high hopes and big dreams. Step by Step's multi-disciplinary team offers support, group activities, counselling and mentoring to help young parents identify their hopes and goals for the future and pursue their passions.

The team supported 126 young Logan families in 2022–23, including 145 young parents and 132 children. Parents most commonly sought support from the team to build parenting skills, improve social connections, stabilise housing and improve family relationships and child wellbeing.

Seeing the situations many young parents faced, the team identified the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to back young parents who are raising children while they are developing life skills themselves. The team's work provides individualised responses to each young family, providing practical support but also building their capacity, including developing parenting skills, life skills and resilience.

In partnership with the Charity of the Freemasons of Queensland, Hand Heart Pocket, the team



has implemented an integrated response that incorporates: six family workers, a First Nations family worker, a housing specialist, a connections coordinator, a counsellor, an education and employment mentor, and a peer worker. Over the past two years this integrated model has created strong outcomes for 190 families.

The team is directly informed by Logan's young parents. For example, they have been told by young parents that they felt isolated and that they do not have friends to support them. They have helped design peer connection opportunities including a Young Mums' Squad, a Young Dads' Squad as well as a Bump to Jump playgroup.

Their model fosters empowerment and potential-seeking by basing responses on each young person's goals, and by having a group of specialist workers available to help young people pursue specific aspirations such as housing, education or employment.

### Indicator 1.1.1: Children have loving, trusting relationships with family and other adults

Rates of reported positive family support are high and consistent across regions. Ninety-four per cent of Queensland parents agree they can support their child or young person when they have worries or concerns and four in five Queensland primary-aged children say they have a grown-up who listens to them and who helps when they are upset (Figure 14).

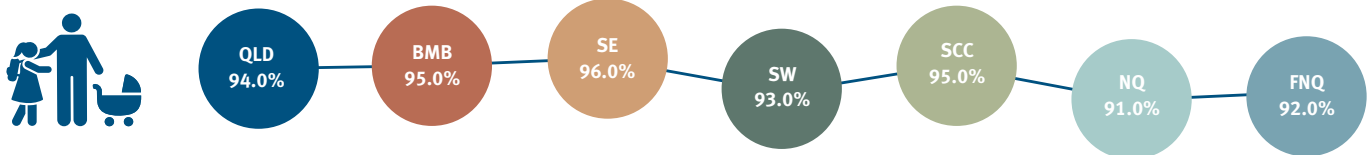
#### Key finding



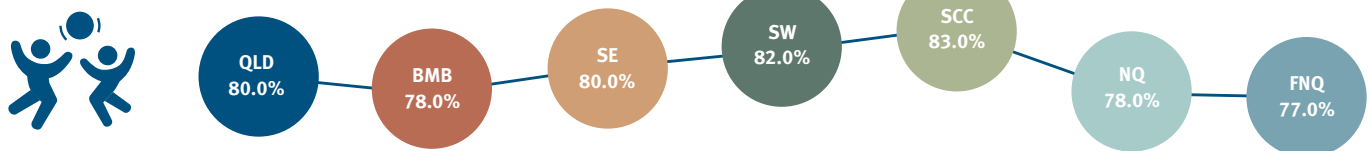
In Queensland, more than 80% of children and young people and 90% of parents and carers state they experience loving and trusting family relationships.

Figure 14: Regional variations in parents and children reporting supportive relationships

#### Parents agree they can support their child or young person when they have worries or concerns



#### Child has a grown-up who listens and helps when they feel upset

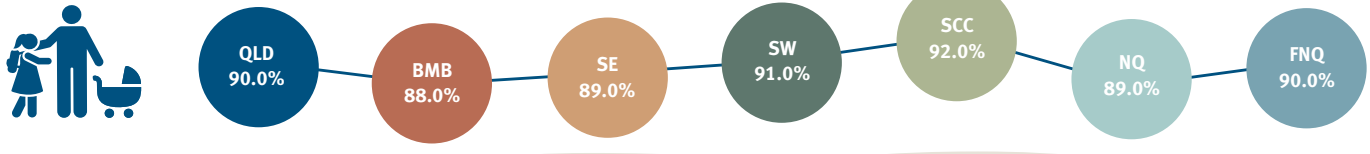


Source: Rumble's Quest<sup>19</sup>, unpublished data request, 2023 and Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>20</sup>

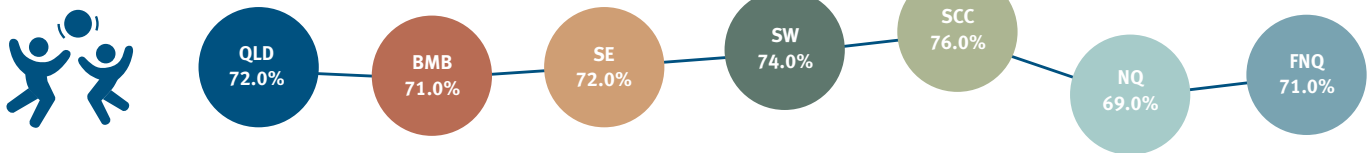
Approximately 90% of parents say they do fun things as a family and seven out of 10 children report they do fun things with their parents (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Regional variations in parents and children reporting fun family activities

#### Parents agree their family does fun things together



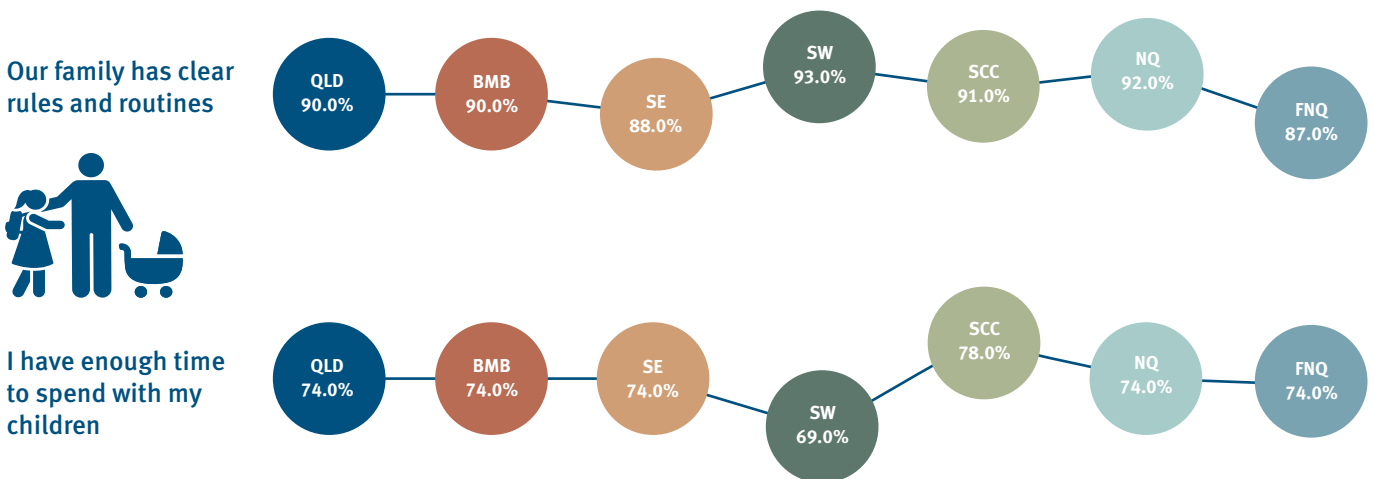
#### Child does fun things with their parents



Source: Rumble's Quest,<sup>21</sup> unpublished data request, 2023 and Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>22</sup>

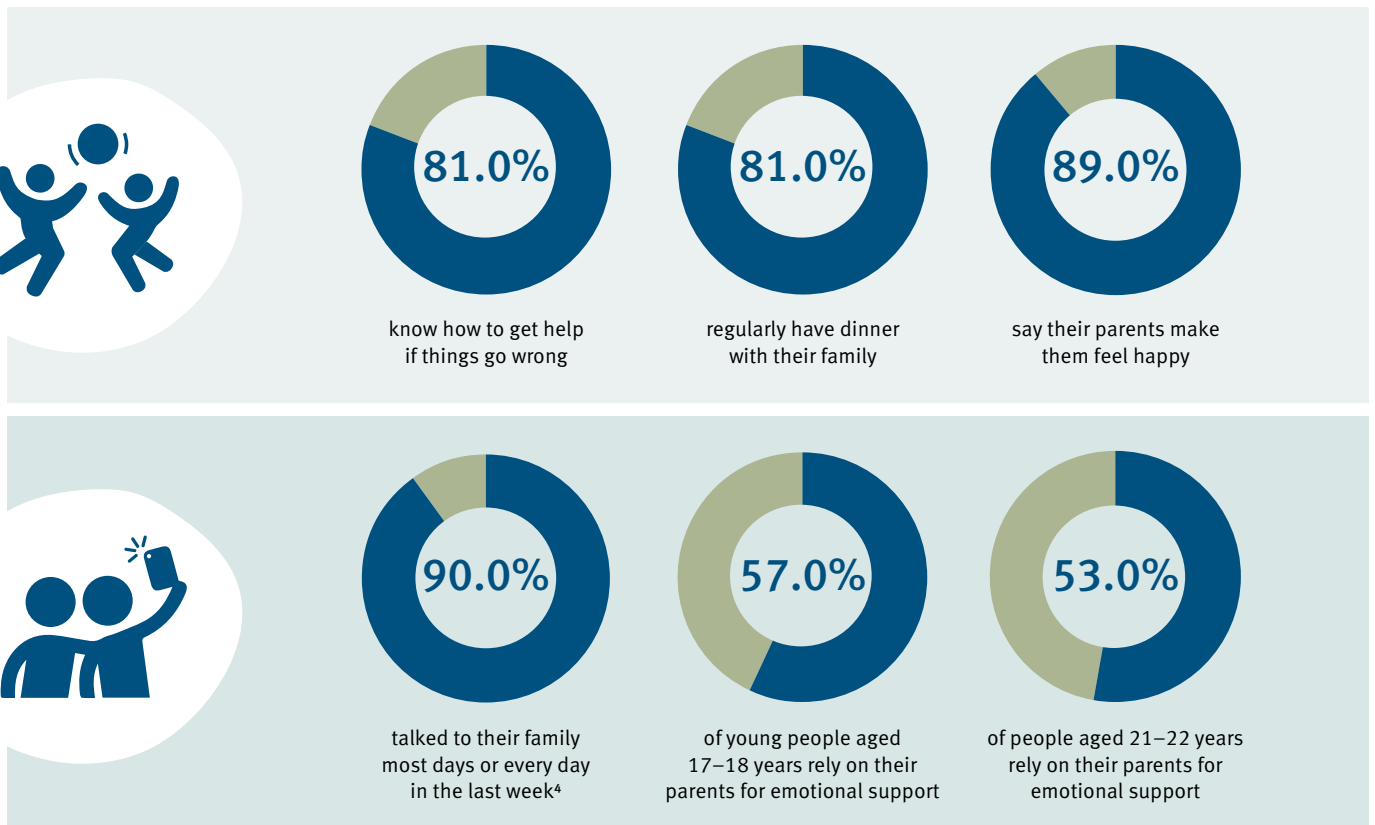
The QFCC’s Community Survey 2023 asked respondents with parent or carer responsibilities about their experiences of family relationships. Nine out of 10 respondents reported having clear rules and routines. Three-quarters of parents and carers reported they were satisfied with the amount of time they had available to spend with their children (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Queensland parents and carers’ descriptions of their family time



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>23</sup>

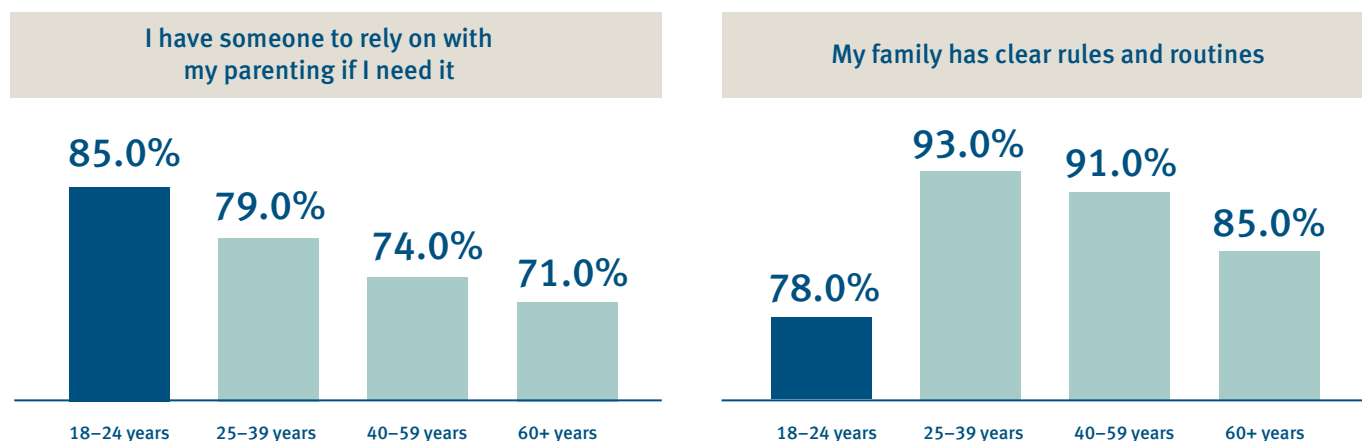
Figure 17: Additional indicators of children and young people’s experiences of being valued, loved and safe



Source: Rumble’s Quest,<sup>24</sup> unpublished data request, 2023 and Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2022.<sup>25</sup>

As shown in Figure 18, young people aged 18–24 with parent or carer responsibilities were the age group most likely to report having someone to rely on if they needed help with their parenting, but the least likely to report having clear rules and routines.

Figure 18: Age group comparison of Queensland parent and carer reports about the quality of their family relationships



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>26</sup>

### Indicator 1.1.2: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel cared for and have trusting relationships with adults

Out-of-home care (OOHC) is alternative accommodation for children and young people who are not able to live at home because they have experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect, or they are at risk of harm.

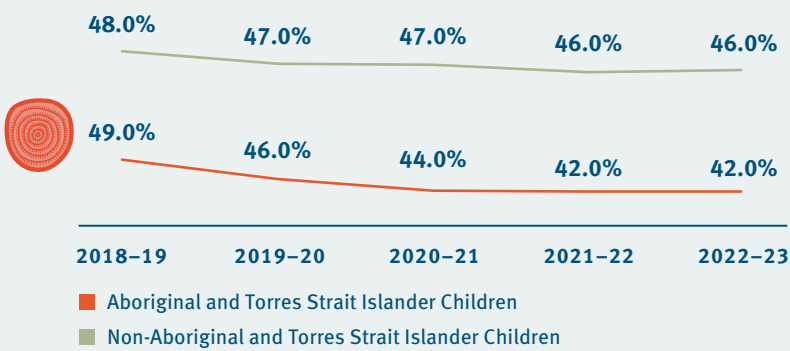


Figure 19: Children in care's feelings of value, love and safety



## Feeling valued, loved and safe in care

Only a minority of children living in out-of-home care live with family in a kinship care arrangement<sup>1</sup>



Children living in OOHC<sup>2</sup>

82.2%

have the privacy they need

89.2%

have the things they need to live comfortably

87.8%

feel safe and secure

73.6%

feel at home

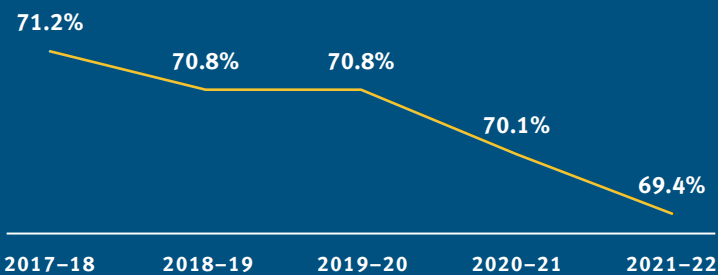
77.9%

feel that people care about them

67.8%

feel they can tell the person who looks after them when they're worried

Most children who have siblings are placed with at least one sibling when they enter care, but over the past 5 years the proportion of children living in OOHC placed with siblings has been gradually dropping.<sup>1</sup>



61.3%

say the people they are living with are important and special to them<sup>2</sup>

46.4%

say the family members they don't live with are special to them<sup>2</sup>

63.0%

feel happy about how often they see and talk to the family they don't live with<sup>2</sup>

More than **half** trust their siblings, family they live with or don't live with<sup>2</sup>

More than **2 in 5** trust a teacher, foster carer, or child safety officer<sup>2</sup>

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, administrative data, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.



Three common types of out-of-home care placements are:

**Foster care**  
where a child is placed in the home of a carer who is paid to care for them

**Kinship care**  
where a child is placed in the home of a family member or a person they already know

**Residential care**  
where a child is placed in a residential building with paid staff

Table 7 shows the proportion of children placed with siblings varies by placement type. Rates of placement with siblings were highest for those living in foster and kinship care and lowest for those in residential care. This pattern is replicated across all regions (Figure 20).

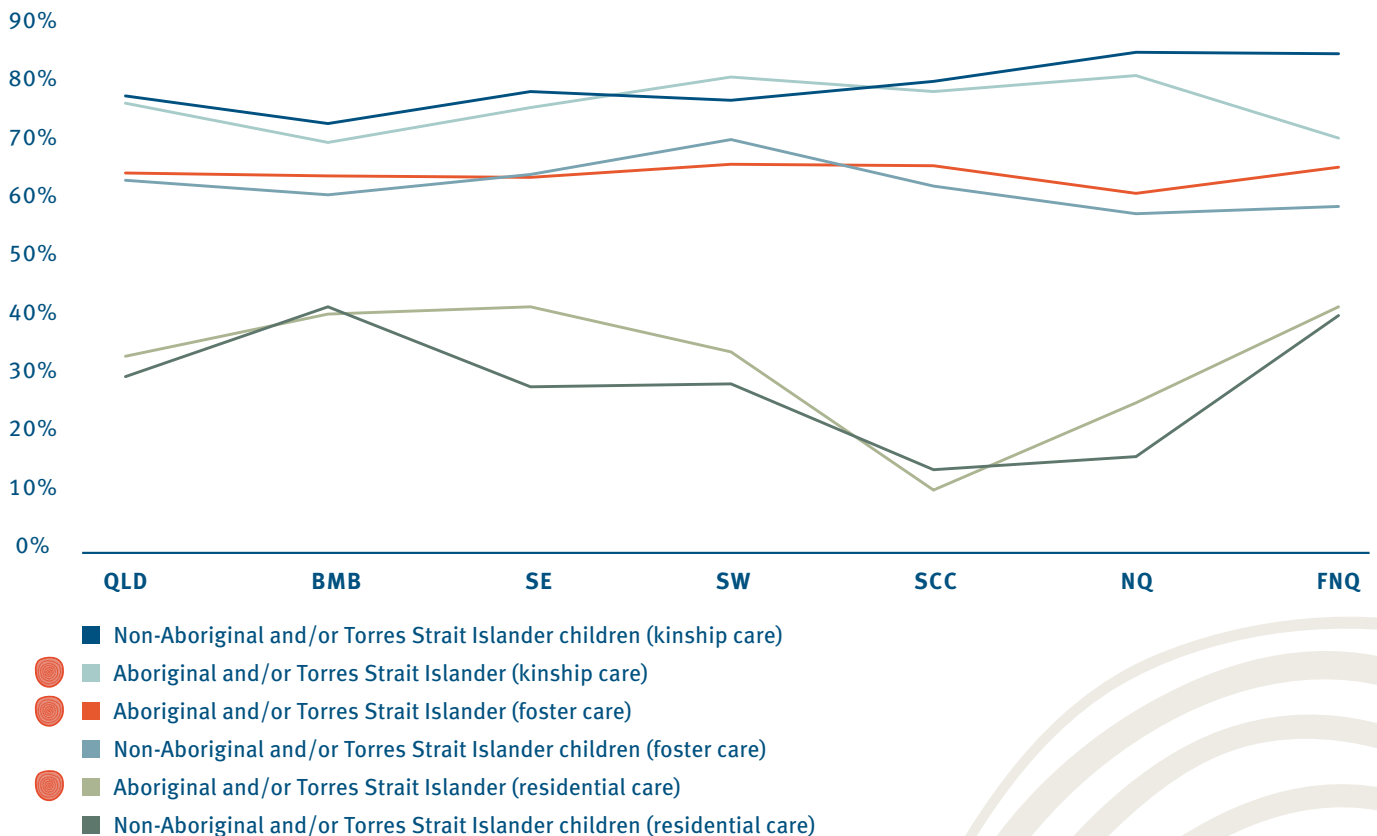


Table 7: Proportion of Queensland children in out-of-home care who were placed with a sibling in 2022 by placement type

|  | Kinship care | Foster care | Residential care |
|--|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children     | 78.7%        | 68.1%       | 40.4%            |
| Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children | 79.8%        | 67.0%       | 37.3%            |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 20: Proportion of Queensland children in out-of-home care who were placed with a sibling in 2022 by Child Safety region and placement type



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

## Goal 1.2: Children and young people feel they are important to others and feel valued

Relationships with friends become increasingly important as children grow up. Positive friendships can be a source of great support for children and young people and give them a sense of belonging. They can also build children’s self-esteem and social skills. Children and young people who feel valued are more likely to be confident, feel optimistic about the future and have a strong sense of self-identity.

### Key finding



The majority of Queensland children and young people report positive relationships with friends. Friends increasingly become sources of support for older children and young people.

## Indicator 1.2.1: Children and young people have supportive, trusting relationships with friends

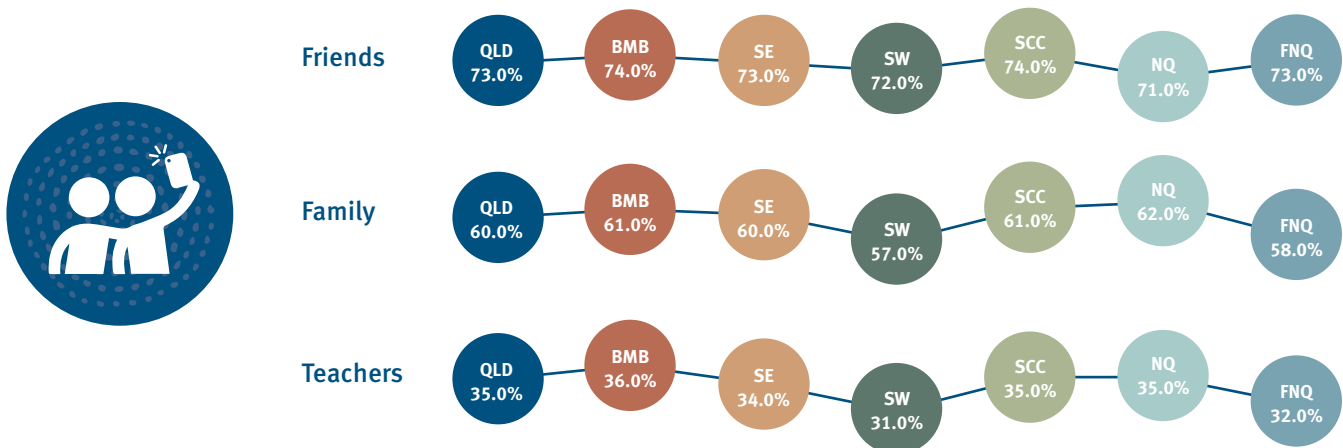
Figure 21: Primary school aged and middle school aged children reporting positive relationships with friends



Source: Rumble’s Quest,<sup>28</sup> unpublished data request, 2023 and Australian Child Wellbeing project, 2016.<sup>29</sup>

More young people nominate friends, ahead of family or parents, as sources of support for their important issues (Figure 22).<sup>30</sup>

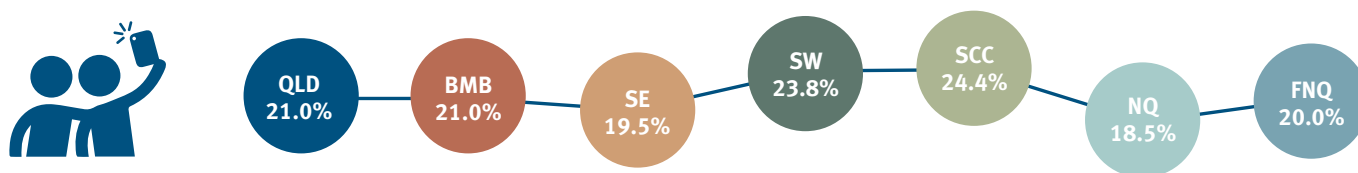
Figure 22: Regional variation in sources of support for Queensland young people aged 15–19 years



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the value of positive relationships, some Queensland young people face relationship challenges. One in five high school aged children reported that their relationships with family, friends or significant others were their biggest personal challenges (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who said relationships with family, friends or significant others were their biggest personal challenges



Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>32</sup>

### Indicator 1.2.2: Children and young people feel positive about their futures

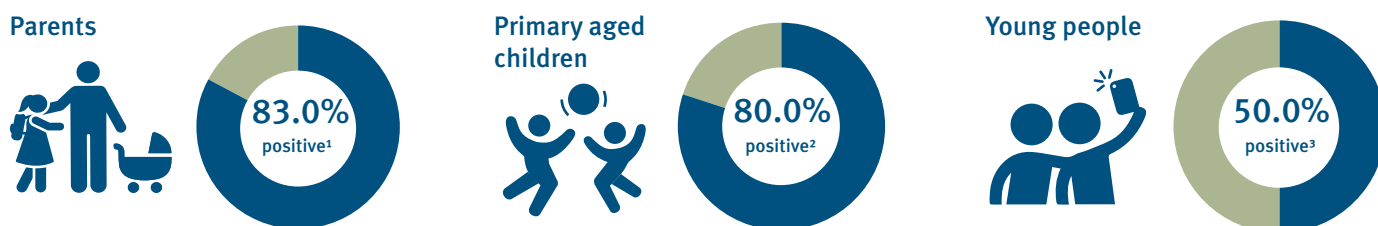
Four recent surveys undertaken by QFCC, Mission Australia and the Australian Child Wellbeing Project have used a similar question to ask children, young people and parents or carers whether they feel positive about their future (or their children’s future).<sup>33, 34, 35, 36, 37</sup> Findings suggest parents are the most positive about their children’s future and that children are more positive than young people (Figure 24).

#### Key finding

Most children and their parents are positive about children’s futures. Young people are less optimistic about the future than younger children.



Figure 24: A comparison of the percentage of children and young people who agreed they felt positive about their future and parents who feel positive about their children’s future



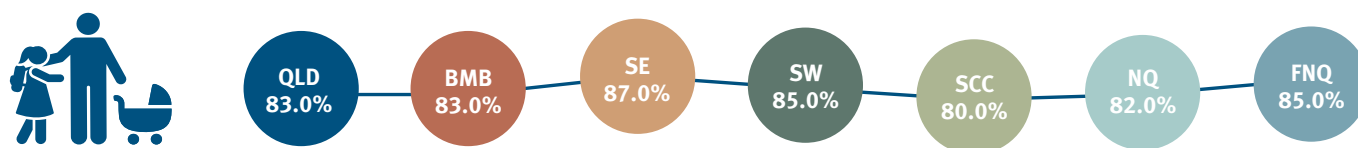
Source:

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

Figure 25: Regional comparison of the percentage of parents and carers who believe their children will have a good future



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>41</sup>

## Goal 1.3: Families are safe places for children and young people

Feeling safe and secure at home is essential for children and young people’s wellbeing. Being safe means being protected from conflict and harm and being provided with age-appropriate rules and boundaries to guide and support healthy development. Where children and young people cannot remain safely at home, they need access to safe alternative home environments.

### CASE STUDY

#### Brave foundation: supporting young parents

The Brave Foundation’s Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT) program matches an expecting or parenting young person with a professional mentor for 12 months. Mentors work with young people on setting goals that are important to them including educational and workforce participation, social connection, health and wellbeing and life and parenting skills. The program also provides support and help with referrals to additional services including financial or housing assistance, healthy relationships and applying for childcare.

19-year-old Hailey graduated from the SEPT program in June 2023. When she joined the program she was pregnant, living in rural Queensland and leaving a dangerous domestic violence relationship. She was struggling to find safe housing and support as she navigated pregnancy and her anxiety.

Hailey and her Brave virtual mentor worked together to create a pathway plan and set her goals. Her mentor provided Hailey with emotional and practical support as she worked towards these goals. Over six months, one of Hailey’s primary goals was to continue her education and obtain her Queensland



Certificate of Education (QCE). With the support of her mentor, she was able to enrol in distance education and successfully complete her QCE at the end of 2022.

She was also successful in leaving a violent relationship and obtaining safe, secure and independent housing. This was a crucial step in her journey toward independence as it allowed her to build a foundation of safety and security for herself in preparation for the arrival of her child.

She is now working towards developing and maintaining healthy boundaries within relationships, building connections in her new community, having her baby, providing a stable foundation for them and doing further study.

### Indicator 1.3.1: Children and young people are not impacted by family conflict

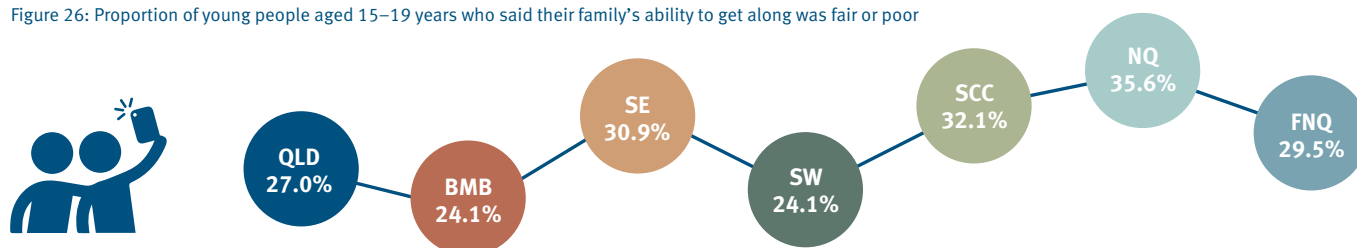
Seventeen per cent of Queensland young people are concerned about family conflict. More than one-quarter of Queensland young people said their family’s ability to get along was fair or poor.<sup>42</sup> There was some regional variation on this measure with more than one-third of young people in some regions reporting challenging family relationships.

#### Key finding



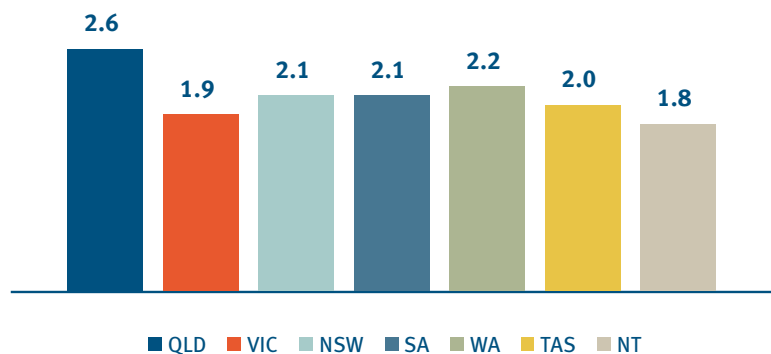
Conflict at home can be quite common for a significant minority of Queensland children and young people. In 2021, 12,367 Queensland children under 18 years experienced the divorce of their parents.

Figure 26: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who said their family’s ability to get along was fair or poor



Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>43</sup>

Figure 27: Rate of divorce per 1,000 population by state in 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Marriages and divorces Australia, 2022.<sup>44</sup>

In 2021, 12,367 Queensland children experienced the divorce of their parents, or 1.8 children per divorced couple with children.<sup>45</sup> Queensland had the highest divorce rate of all states and territories in 2021 with 2.6 divorces granted per 1,000 population (Figure 27).

Table 8: Indicators of children and young people’s experiences of being valued, loved and safe

| In 2021   | 49.8%   | 71.8%  | 12.2%   | 8.2%  | 17.6%  |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| 21,627 marriages were registered in Queensland and 13,475 divorces were granted. <sup>1</sup> | or 6,704 divorces in Queensland involved children. <sup>1</sup> | of primary aged children agree the people they know are good to each other. <sup>2</sup> | aged 17–18 years say their household’s ability to get along is fair or poor. <sup>3</sup> | aged 21–22 years say their household’s ability to get along is fair or poor. <sup>4</sup> | of Australian young people are concerned about family conflict. <sup>3</sup> |

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Marriages and divorces Australia, 2022.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Rumble’s Quest,<sup>47</sup> unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2022.<sup>49</sup>



### Indicator 1.3.2: Children and young people feel safe at home

Figure 28: Queensland children's feelings of safety



Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> Rumble's Quest, unpublished data request, 2023.<sup>50</sup>
- <sup>2</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>51</sup>
- <sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>52</sup>
- <sup>4</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Statutory systems workforce survey, 2023.<sup>53</sup>
- <sup>5</sup> Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>54</sup>

#### Key finding



**Most Queensland children and young people feel safe at home; however, around one in 10 do not always feel safe at home or feel that they need more support to feel safe.**

### Indicator 1.3.3: Children are protected from domestic and family violence

Figure 29: Are children and young people protected from family violence?

#### Key finding

While there is a growing number of services available to support parents and families, lifetime rates of exposure to domestic and family violence among Queensland children and young people are relatively high.

#### Are children and young people protected from domestic and family violence?

**43.8%** of people aged 16–24 years have been exposed to domestic and family violence<sup>1</sup>

**11.7%** of Queenslanders aged 15–19 years are concerned about emotional abuse and 7.5% have concerns about domestic and family violence. Rates of concern vary by region.<sup>2</sup>



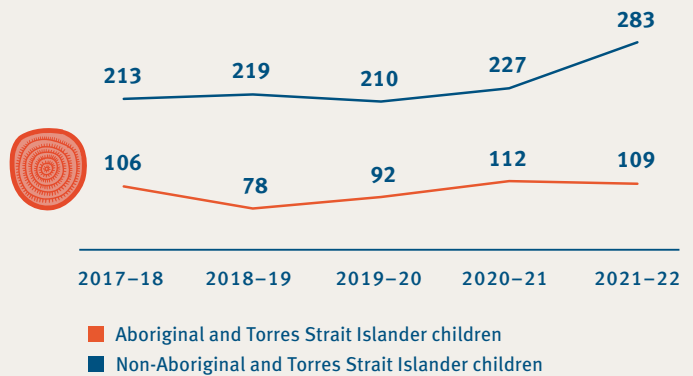
Regional comparison of rates of concern about domestic and family violence<sup>2</sup>



The number of domestic and family violence applications lodged at the Queensland Magistrates Courts where the victim was a juvenile is increasing, especially for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.<sup>3</sup>

Number of initiating domestic and family violence applications lodged at Queensland Magistrates Courts where the aggrieved (victim) was a juvenile aged 10–17 years by Indigenous status, 2017–18 to 2021–22<sup>3</sup>

**53.0%** of young people under youth justice supervision have experienced or been impacted by domestic and family violence<sup>4</sup>



In 2021–22 in Queensland, among children and young people accessing specialist homelessness services, experiences of family and domestic violence were reported by:



**140** children on care and protection orders  
**168** young people leaving out-of-home care<sup>5</sup>

Proportion of parents who felt confident they could access parenting support services<sup>6</sup>



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>55</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 2023.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey report, 2022.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Courts Performance & Reporting Unit, unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Youth Justice Census, 2022.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Specialist homelessness services annual report, 2021–22.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services, 2022.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Queensland Government Budget, 2022–23.<sup>62</sup>

**1,669**  
Young people aged 15–24 years in Queensland accessing specialist homelessness services reported experiences of family and domestic violence.<sup>5</sup>

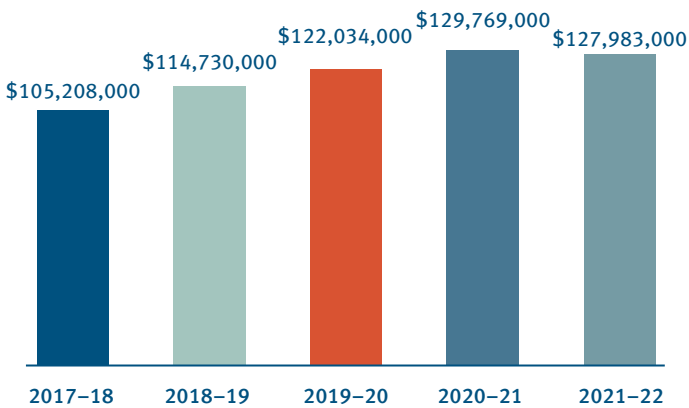
**21.9%** ▲  
In Queensland Government investment in intensive family support services since 2017–18.<sup>7</sup>

**\$420.2M**  
Over 4 years and \$92.2 million in 2022–23 Queensland budget to continue the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform.<sup>8</sup>



In 2021, within households where a child was found to be in need of protection, 51.0% had a parent with a history of being abused or neglected as a child and 52.0% of households had experienced two or more instances of domestic violence during the last 12 months.<sup>63</sup>

Figure 30: Queensland Government's annual investment in family support services, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Source: Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, Child protection data table 16A.33, 2023.<sup>64</sup>

Government investment in family support services is increasing. Since 2017–18, the Queensland Government's investment in intensive family support services has increased by 21.9%.<sup>65</sup>

The 2022–23 Queensland Budget included \$420.2 million over four years and \$92.2 million ongoing to continue the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform, a whole-of-government strategy that outlines focus areas and the activities to help families protect and care for their children and ensure that children and young people in care prosper. The reforms include early intervention for families with children and young people at risk of coming into contact with the child protection system; to deliver family wellbeing services that provide culturally responsive support services; and to continue the Family and Child Connect service to empower families to care for and protect their children at home.<sup>66</sup>



### Indicator 1.3.4: Where there are concerns about a child’s or young person’s safety, they can be cared for away from home

A key role for the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) is to protect children and young people who are not living in safe home environments. Over the past five years in Queensland, notifications, substantiated investigations, and the number of children living in out-of-home care have all increased.

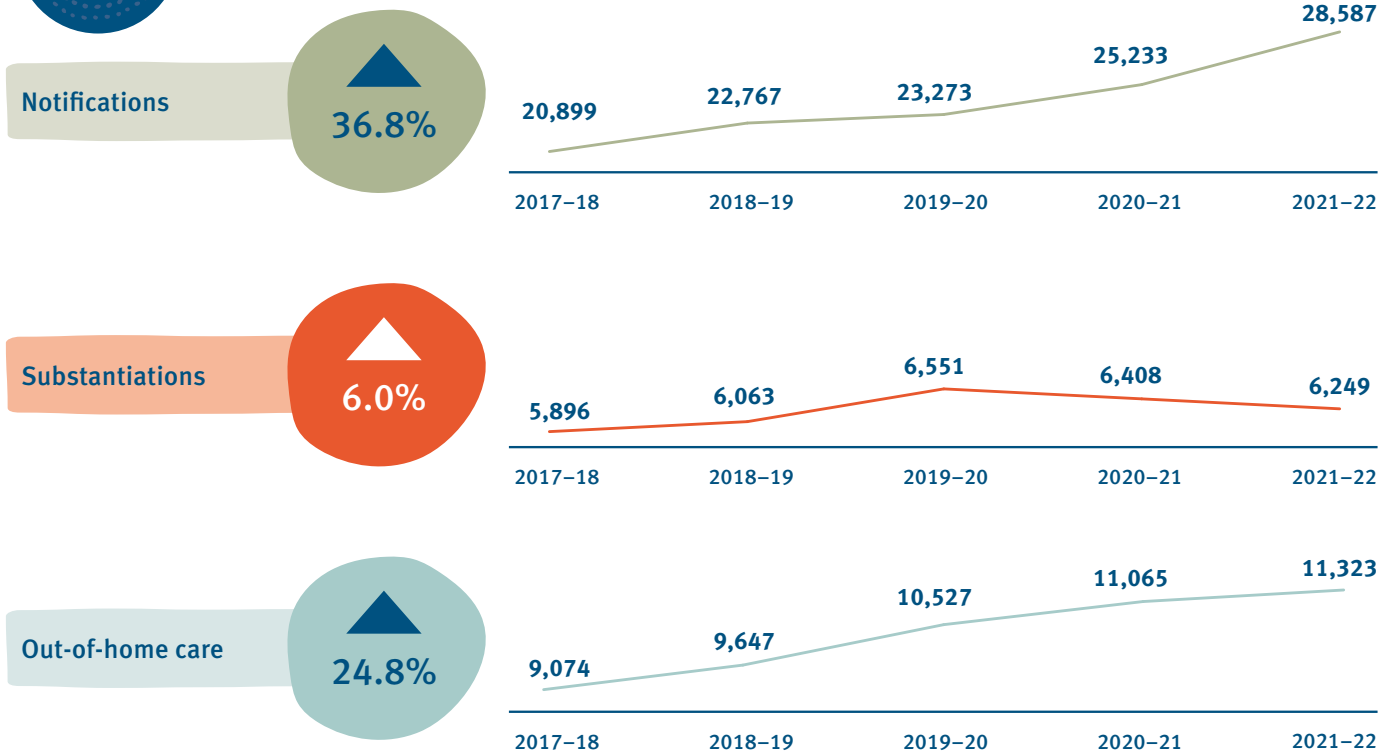
#### Key finding



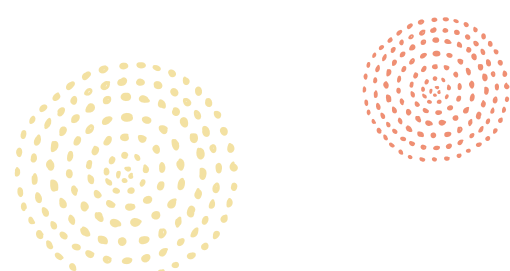
Over the past five years, a growing number of children and young people have required support and intervention from the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services due to concerns about their safety.



Figure 31: Number of notifications, substantiations and entries into out-of-home care, 2017–18 to 2021–22



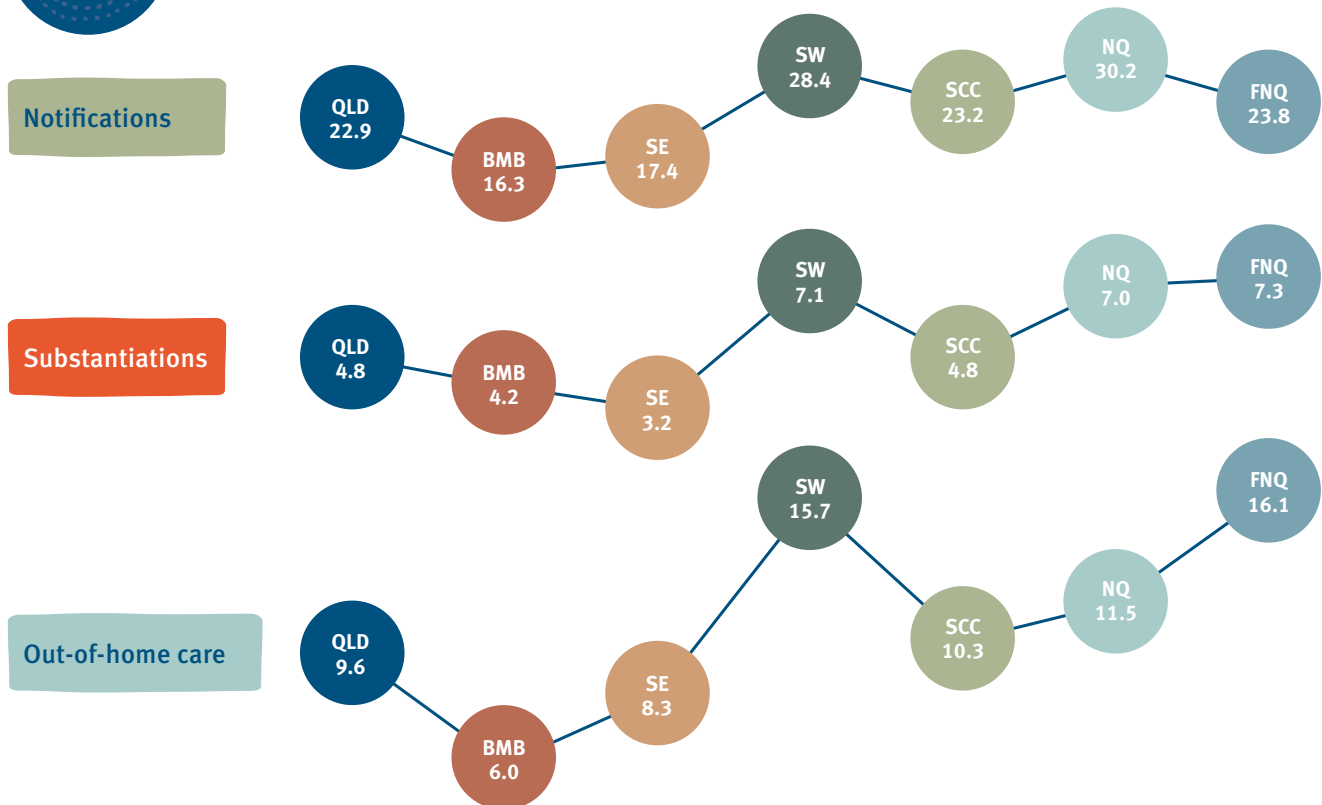
Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, administrative data, 2023.



The rates of children subject to notifications, substantiated investigations and living in out-of-home care vary by region, with rates highest among children and young people living in the South West, North Queensland and Far North Queensland.



Figure 32: Rates per 1,000 of children subject to a notification, children subject to a substantiation, and children living in out-of-home care by region, as at June 2022



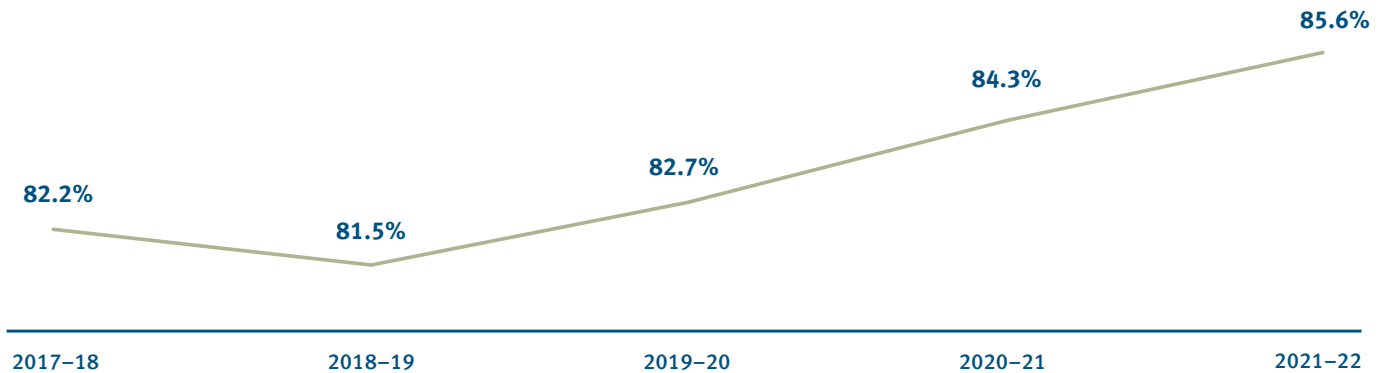
Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Queensland’s progress against Closing the Gap targets<sup>67</sup>

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Closing the Gap indicator</b> | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.   |
| <b>Closing the Gap target</b>    | By 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0–17 years old) in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.  |
| <b>Queensland data</b>           | In 2022, 45.5 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years were in out-of-home care at 30 June, an increase from 37.0 per 1,000 children in 2019 and 43.3 per 1,000 in 2021. |

The proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiated investigation who did not experience another substantiation within 12 months has grown over the past five years.

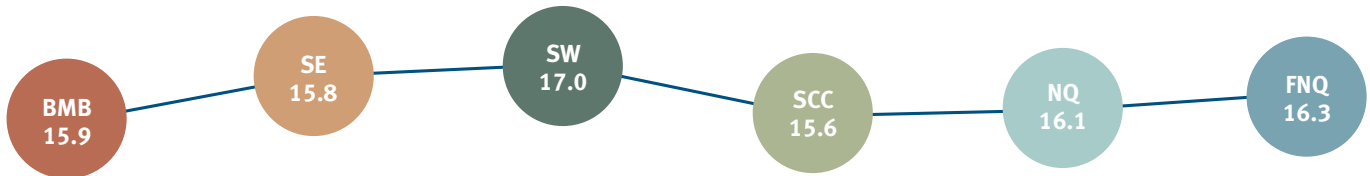
Figure 33: The number and rate of children who did not experience a further substantiation after their first substantiation, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

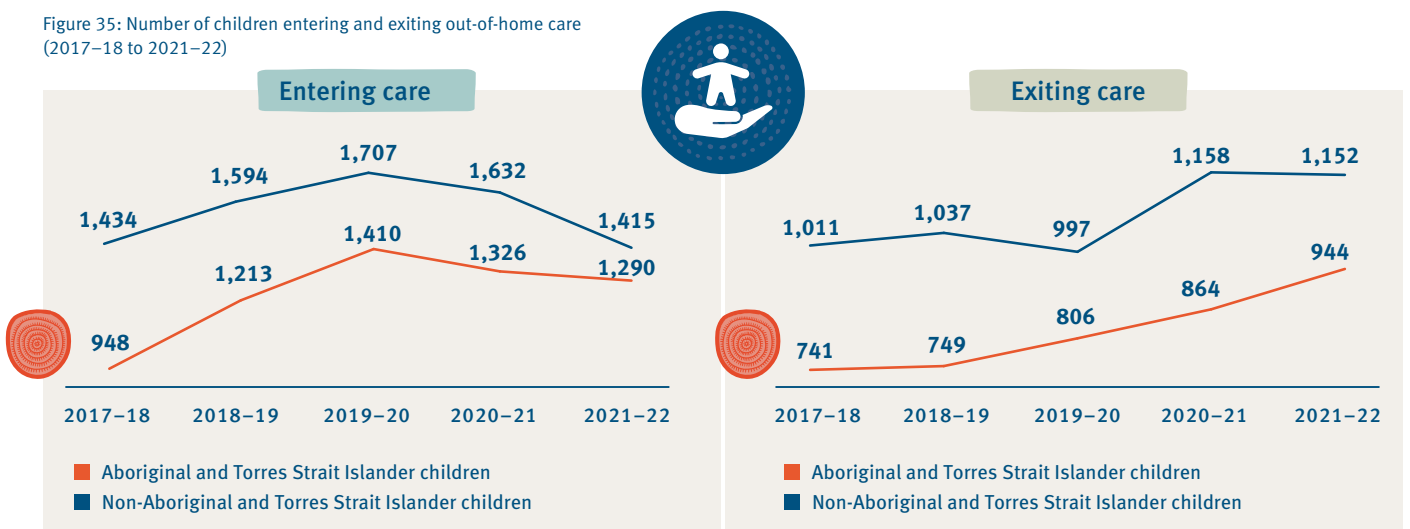
It is recommended that frontline Child Safety staff should hold caseloads of no more than 15.<sup>68</sup> While caseloads in most regions have dropped over the past five years, as shown in Figure 34, all remain above 15 with rates notably higher in North Queensland.

Figure 34: Caseload of Child Safety officers per region as at 30 June 2022



Over the past five years, while the number of children exiting care has been increasing (for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children), each year the number of children entering care is larger than the number exiting care (Figure 35).

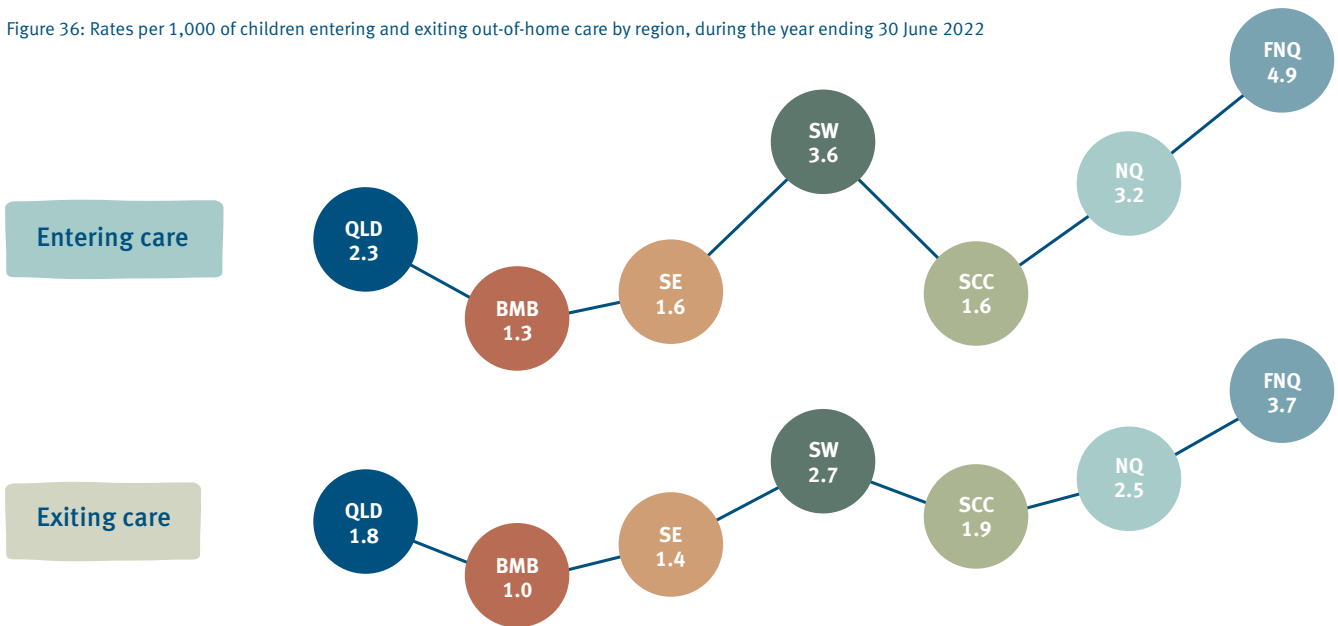
Figure 35: Number of children entering and exiting out-of-home care (2017–18 to 2021–22)



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 36 shows the rate per 1,000 Queensland children and young people entering and exiting out-of-home care by region during the year ending 30 June 2022. It shows a variation across regions.

Figure 36: Rates per 1,000 of children entering and exiting out-of-home care by region, during the year ending 30 June 2022



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.





### Indicator 1.3.5: There are sufficient foster and kinship carers to accommodate children and young people in out-of-home care

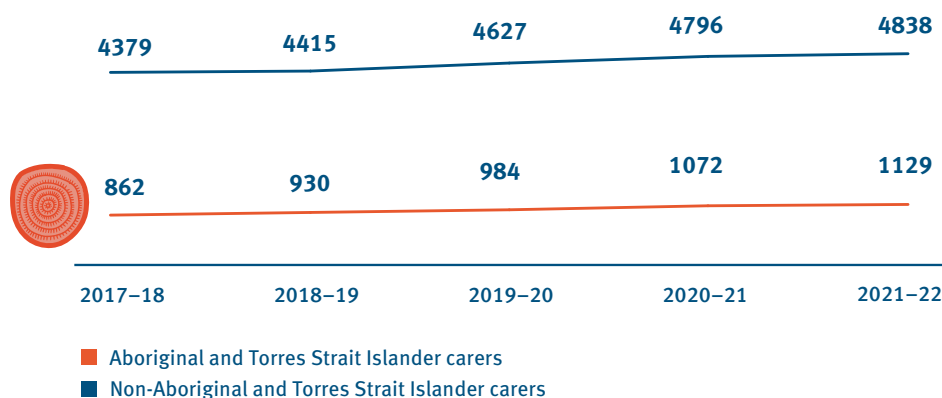
#### Key finding

While the number of Queensland foster and kinship carers has increased over the past five years, numbers have not kept pace with the growing number of children and young people living in out-of-home care.



Over the last five years, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers has increased by 31.0%, while the number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers has increased by 10.5%.

Figure 37: Number of carers 2017–18 to 2021–22



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.



While there has been an increase in carers in all regions, Brisbane and Moreton Bay and North Queensland have had the greatest increases (Table 9).

Table 9: Number of carers per region (2017–18 to 2021–22)

| Region                     | 30 Jun 18 | 30 Jun 19 | 30 Jun 20 | 30 Jun 21 | 30 Jun 22 | % Increase |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Brisbane and Moreton Bay   | 1,124     | 1,134     | 1,227     | 1,306     | 1,358     | 20.8%      |
| South East                 | 1,150     | 1,164     | 1,213     | 1,252     | 1,235     | 7.4%       |
| South West                 | 990       | 1,005     | 1,031     | 1,090     | 1,099     | 11.0%      |
| Sunshine Coast and Central | 932       | 969       | 1,012     | 1,040     | 1,058     | 13.5%      |
| North Queensland           | 532       | 544       | 589       | 605       | 642       | 20.7%      |
| Far North Queensland       | 512       | 528       | 539       | 575       | 575       | 12.3%      |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

As at 30 June 2022, there were 1.63 children in home-based care per carer family, which was an increase from 1.58 children per carer family as at 30 June 2018.



### Indicator 1.3.6: Children and young people in out-of-home care feel safe and secure

While the focus of child protection in Queensland is on ensuring the safety, belonging, wellbeing and cultural needs of children and young people are met, a charter of rights has been developed for parents involved in child protection matters.<sup>69</sup> A recent QFCC survey undertaken with parents of children with care experiences found:

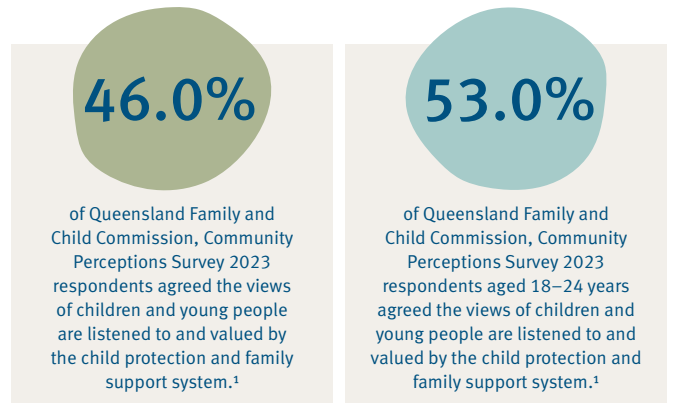
- 53.0% were provided with the best possible opportunities to have contact with their child
- 45.0% received family support services that helped their family
- 37.0% were able to maintain and strengthen their connections to language, family, community, Country, culture and spiritual practices and beliefs.<sup>70</sup>

### Key finding

Young people were far more likely to report feeling safe and secure after they had entered care rather than before entering care.



Figure 38: Indicators of young people and the community's perceptions of the child protection system



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>71</sup>

### Indicator 1.3.7: Children and young people are supported during parental imprisonment

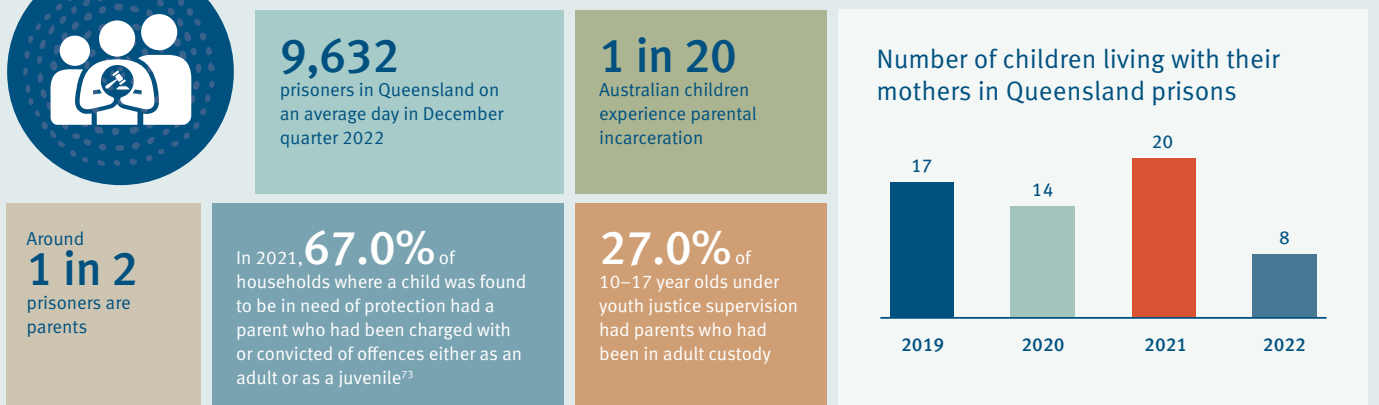
A significant number of Queensland children and young people are impacted by parental imprisonment over the course of their lifetime. The children of incarcerated parents are at an increased likelihood of experiencing homelessness, poorer health and educational outcomes and increased behavioural and emotional problems.<sup>72</sup>

### Key finding

Around 1 in 20 Australian children and young people are impacted each year by parental imprisonment. Experiences of parental imprisonment are more common among young people within the youth justice system.



Figure 39: The extent of parental imprisonment in Queensland and Australia



## CASE STUDY

### Innovative Queensland-based trial – the Transform Lives Program

The Transforming Corrections to Transform Lives (TCTL) Centre aims to support incarcerated mothers and their children to build safe, dignified and fulfilling lives, and in doing so, to break the cycle of disadvantage that impacts wellbeing across generations. Within the centre, the Transform Lives Program offers individually tailored support to address the specific challenges faced by mothers and their children. It spans several phases: support during the last six months of incarceration; immediate post-release support; and ongoing support for up to three years after release. Coaches work with mothers and their children, providing comprehensive case management, goal-setting support, individually tailored interventions, and support to access and navigate other programs, services and systems. The Transform Lives Program is being trialled from January 2024 through to June 2027 in Southeast Queensland and Townsville, providing opportunities for refinement and generating new knowledge for evidence-based programs.

The Program was co-created with mothers in correctional centres across Queensland, and in consultation with a diverse range of service providers, including representatives from the justice system, government agencies, and non-profit organisations. Cultural appropriateness

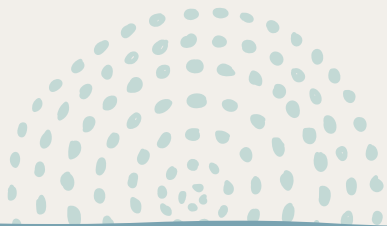


and inclusiveness for Australia's First Peoples is prioritised throughout, actioning principles of empowerment and self-determination (e.g. co-creation process, program design, research and evaluation methods and measures, and staffing).

The TCTL Centre is housed within the Griffith Criminology Institute at Griffith University. The TCTL Centre is working in close collaboration with Queensland Corrective Services and the broad work of the centre, including the program trial, is made possible by a philanthropic donation from the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

## Goal 1.4: Communities are safe places for children and young people

Safe communities provide children and young people with a sense of belonging. Communities extend children's support networks by providing a greater range of people they can go to when they need help. Being connected to a safe and friendly community can boost young people's confidence and support their active participation in the world. The majority of young people who come into contact with the youth justice system do not subsequently reoffend, meaning that diversionary approaches to youth crime are often the most appropriate for young offenders.



### CASE STUDY

#### Figure 4 Youth: community-based support for young people

Figure 4 Youth is an inclusive, multicultural youth centre in Currumbin, that supports a diverse range of young people and offers therapeutic-based programs through physical activities for people of all abilities. The program aims to empower youth, strengthen relationships, and inspire respect for self and others.

Figure 4 Youth has been actively volunteering with disadvantaged youth in their community for eight years. Through their youth centre, they provide relief to young people in need and aim to promote the control and prevention of behaviour that is harmful to youth and communities, through programs, education and support.

Figure 4 Youth's free programs include mentoring; leadership; empowerment; therapeutic-based; early-intervention; school suspension; preparation for high school; crime-prevention; life-skills for

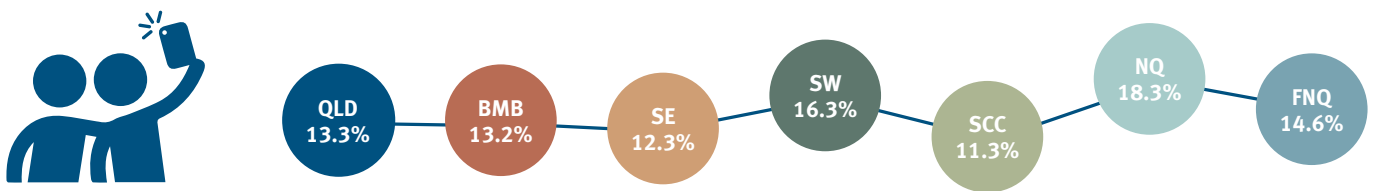


disengaged youth; Indigenous groups; music lessons; music production; Indigenous art; counselling and disability support. Boxing classes are offered for young people who are neurodivergent or have anxiety or depression, for anti-bullying programs, as well as regular boxing for fitness and competition.

Figure 4 Youth also do a lot of work in their community; helping elderly people, people with disabilities and those affected by natural disasters. When connecting young offenders in a safe environment with elderly and disadvantaged people, they can form bonds with people similar to those they have previously committed crimes against. They build empathy for these people and are less likely to commit crimes in the future. Their program has been effective in helping young people to re-engage in education, reducing young offender recidivism and creating a culture of caring in their community.

### Indicator 1.4.1: Children and young people can access support services

Figure 40: Regional comparison of the percentage of young people accessing community-based support services



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.<sup>74</sup>

#### Key finding

While parents, friends and other adults, such as teachers, are the most common sources of support for children and young people, many young people also access services available in their communities.

Table 10: Rates of young Queenslanders accessing support services

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>8.3%</b>   | <b>7.2%</b>  | <b>14.7%</b>   | <b>Every 69 seconds</b>                              | <b>2.4 million</b>   |
| of young Queenslanders sought support from community services (versus 9.1% of young Australians) <sup>1</sup> | of Queensland young people reported accessing phone helplines <sup>2</sup> | of Queensland young people reported accessing online support services <sup>2</sup> | a child contacted Kids Helpline in 2021 <sup>3</sup> | unique users of the Kids Helpline website in 2021 <sup>3</sup> |

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Your Town, Kids Helpline Insights Report, 2022.<sup>77</sup>

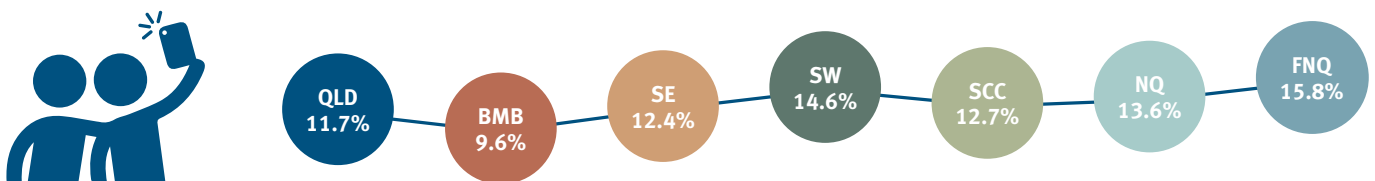
### Indicator 1.4.2: Children and young people do not experience bullying

In 2022, approximately 11.7% of young Queenslanders reported concern about bullying compared with 12.3% of young Australians.

#### Key finding

Young Queenslanders are concerned about bullying. Bullying is experienced by around one-third of Queensland children and young people.

Figure 41: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who were very or extremely concerned about bullying or emotional abuse

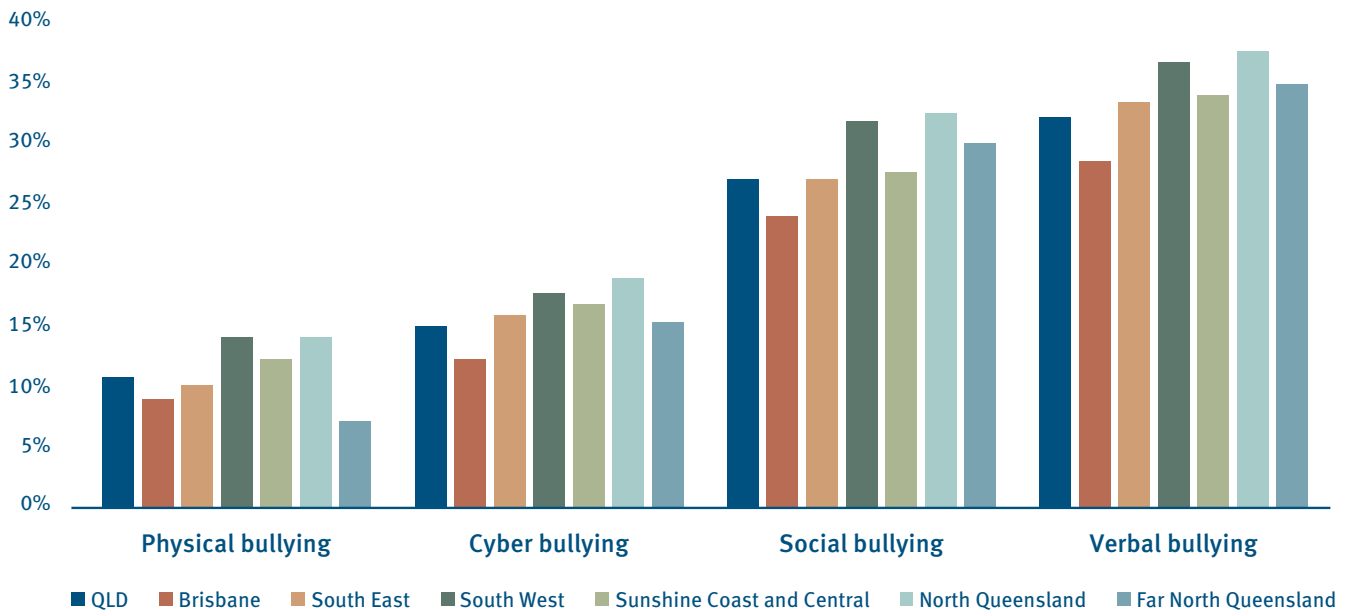


Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>78</sup>

One-third of Queensland children and young people experience bullying. In 2020, the most common form of bullying reported was verbal bullying (e.g. teasing, putting someone down or threatening to cause them harm), which was experienced by 32.0% young Queenslanders. The least common was physical bullying (e.g. hitting, pushing or breaking someone’s things) experienced by 10.5% of young people.<sup>79</sup>

## Indicator 1.4.2: Children and young people do not experience bullying

Figure 42: A regional comparison of reported rates of different types of bullying among Queensland young people



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Voices of Hope: Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.<sup>80</sup>

International evidence suggests that reported rates of bullying are higher in Australia than the average for member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>81</sup>

Table 11: International comparison of the proportion of young people who have experienced bullying

| Other students                   | OECD average | Australia |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| made fun of me                   | 13.7%        | 21.0%     |
| spread nasty rumours about me    | 10.5%        | 12.5%     |
| left me out of things on purpose | 8.7%         | 13.5%     |
| hit me or pushed me around       | 7.0%         | 9.2%      |

Source: OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, 2018.<sup>82</sup>



### Indicator 1.4.3: Children and young people feel safe in their community



Feelings of safety vary by Queensland region. Community members living in Brisbane, Moreton Bay or the South East reported feeling the safest and were slightly more likely to think their area was good for raising children. Crime rates were highest in North Queensland and Far North Queensland indicating the importance of additional services and supports.

Table 12: Community safety across Queensland

| Queensland                         |   |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 68.2%                              | 72.0%                                       | 83.0%   | 9,964                                      |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| Brisbane and Moreton Bay           |   |   |  |
| 67.2%                              | 82.0%                                       | 83.0%   | 8,320                                      |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| South East                         |   |   |  |
| 68.0%                              | 82.0%                                       | 88.0%   | 8,809                                      |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| South West                         |   |   |  |
| 70.4%                              | 65.0%                                       | 81.0%   | 10,217                                     |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| Sunshine Coast and Central         |   |   |  |
| 74.6%                              | 72.0%                                       | 82.0%   | 8,934                                      |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| North Queensland                   |   |   |  |
| 66.2%                              | 62.0%                                       | 81.0%   | 16,158                                     |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |
| Far North Queensland               |   |   |  |
| 64.7%                              | 51.0%                                       | 80.0%   | 17,469                                     |
| of children feel safe <sup>1</sup> | of community members feel safe <sup>2</sup> | believe it's a good area to raise children <sup>3</sup> | crime rate per 100,000 people <sup>4</sup> |

More than two-thirds (68.2%) of primary school-aged Queensland children feel safe in their neighbourhood.<sup>83</sup> More than 8 out of 10 parents and carers say their neighbourhoods are good places to bring up children. Seventy-two per cent of Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 respondents said they felt safe in their communities.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Rumble's Quest,<sup>84</sup> unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Queensland Government Statistician's Office, regional profile, 2023.

### Indicator 1.4.3: Children and young people feel safe in their community (cont.)



Although the total number of crimes committed was greatest in Brisbane and Moreton Bay, crime rates for violent and property offending were highest in North Queensland and Far North Queensland.

Figure 43: Regional differences in rates of violent and property offending



Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, regional profile, 2023.



Table 13: Number of offences recorded in each region in 2021–22

|  | QLD     | BMB     | SE      | SW     | SCC    | NQ     | FNQ    |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total number of offences                                       | 524,145 | 146,961 | 104,825 | 62,634 | 83,464 | 73,456 | 50,744 |
| Total number of offences against the person (violent offences) | 67,432  | 14,914  | 12,825  | 7,923  | 10,949 | 12,064 | 8,447  |
| Total number of property offences                              | 245,090 | 81,111  | 55,226  | 26,629 | 32,339 | 27,639 | 20,276 |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, regional profile, 2023.

Table 14: Indicators of children, the frontline workforce and the community's perceptions of community safety

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>3 out of 4</b>   | <b>4 out of 10</b>  | <b>56.0%</b>   | <b>35.0%</b>  |
| Australian children in years 6 and 8 feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day <sup>1</sup>                             | Australian children in years 6 and 8 feel safe in their neighbourhood during the evening <sup>1</sup> | of community members agree that children and young people live in safe communities <sup>2</sup>                            | of the workforce agree that children and young people live in safe communities <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>62.0%</b>  | <b>64.0%</b>  | <b>66.0%</b>   | <b>68.0%</b>  |
| of community members agreed that the community prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people <sup>2</sup> | of 18–24 year olds agree that children and young people are safe in their community <sup>2</sup>      | of 18–24 year olds agree that the community prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people <sup>2</sup> | of 18–24 year olds feel safe in their community <sup>2</sup>                                |

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Statutory systems workforce survey, 2023.<sup>89</sup>

### Indicator 1.4.4: Children and young people are not victims of crime

## Although most children and young people are not victims of crime, rates of victimisation are increasing

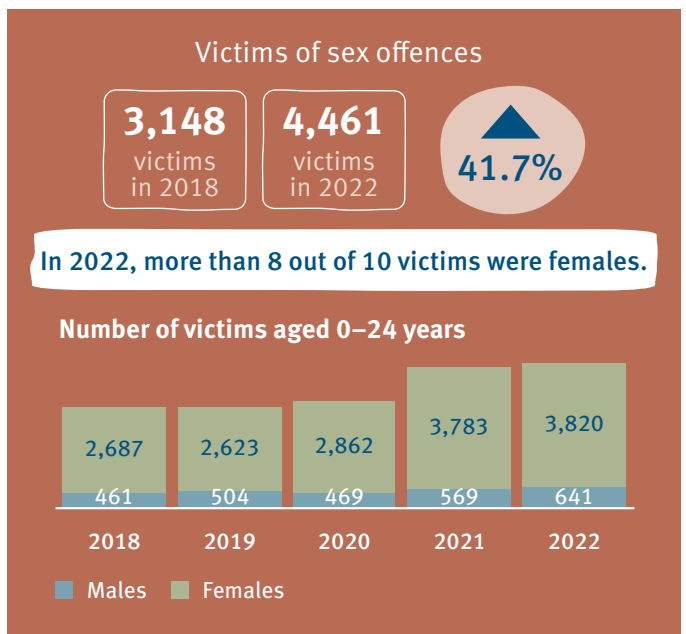
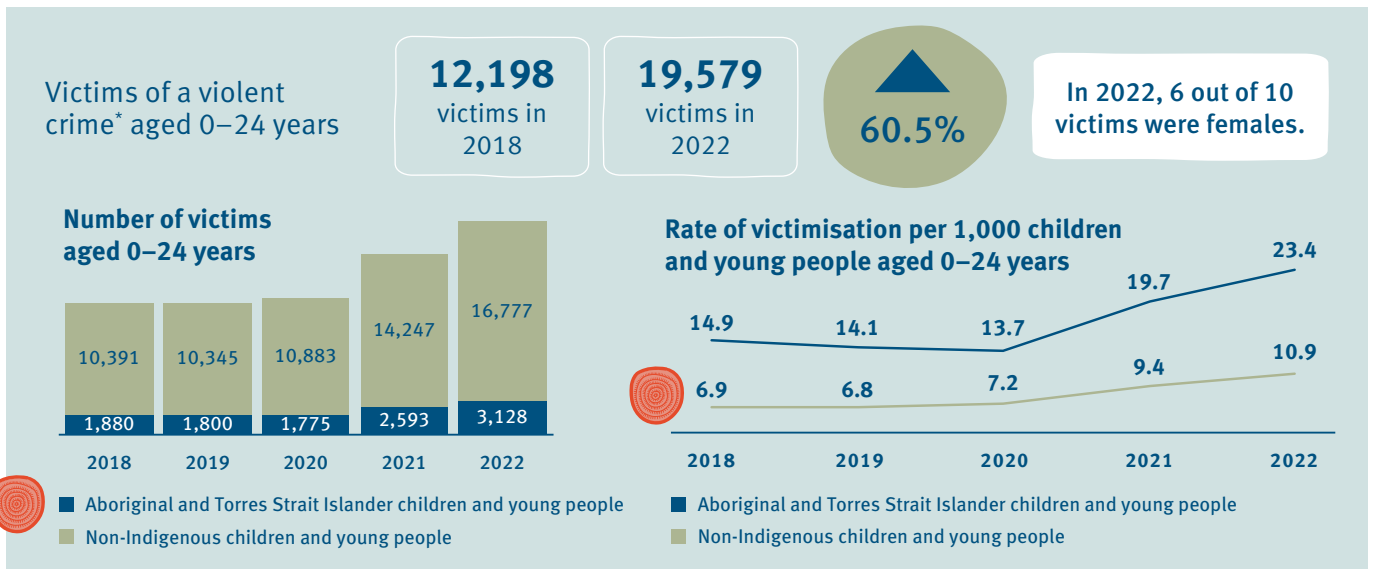
Figure 44: Rates of victimisation among children and young people

### Key findings

Around 1.0% of Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years experience violent victimisation\* each year.

The reported number of Queensland children and young people experiencing victimisation has increased over the past five years.

Rates of victimisation are higher for females and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.



\*Violent offences are reported more formally by police using the term 'offences against the person'. Source: Queensland Police Service, unpublished data request, 2023. Rates were calculated using Queensland Police Service, unpublished data in conjunction with estimated residential population data of Queensland 10–17 year olds supplied by Queensland Government Statistician's Office.



### Indicator 1.4.5: Few children and young people are involved with the youth justice system



#### Key findings

The number of Queensland young offenders aged 10–17 years remained stable over the past 12 months.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to be disproportionately represented in the youth crime data.

Rates of police cautions are increasing while the use of restorative justice conferences is decreasing.

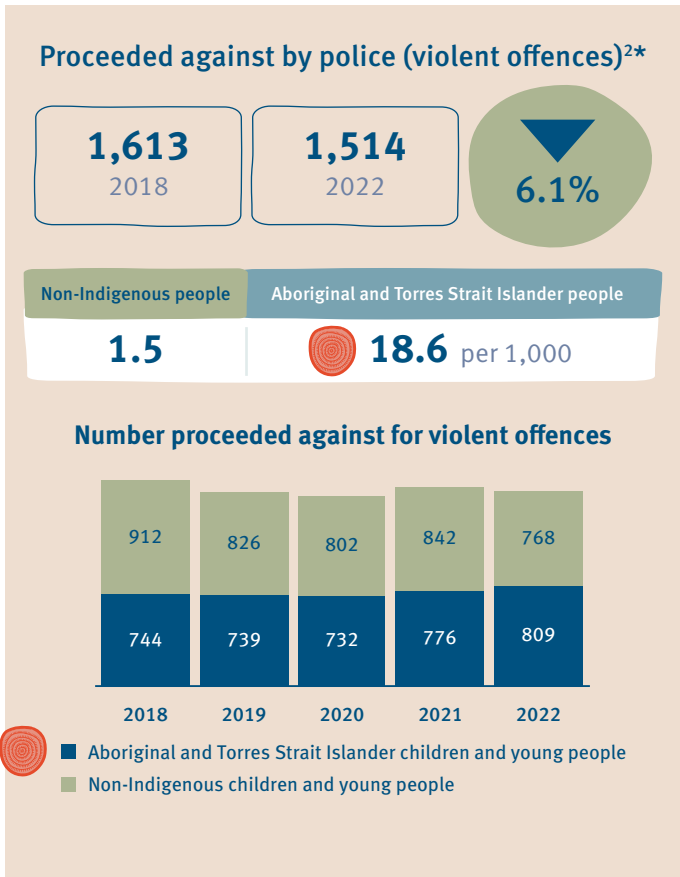
Fewer younger people are being proceeded against by the police.

## Young offenders are receiving appropriate responses from the criminal justice system

Figure 45: Criminal justice responses to young offenders



Sources: <sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, recorded crime- offenders, 2023.<sup>90</sup> <sup>2</sup> Queensland Police Service, unpublished data request, 2023. Rates were calculated using Queensland Police Service, unpublished data in conjunction with estimated residential population data of Queensland 10–17 year olds supplied by Queensland Government Statistician’s Office.



\*Violent offences are reported by police as offences against the person  
 Source: <sup>2</sup> Queensland Police Service, unpublished data request, 2023. Rates were calculated using Queensland Police Service, unpublished data in conjunction with estimated residential population data of Queensland 10–17 year olds supplied by Queensland Government Statistician’s Office.



**Indicator 1.4.5: Few children and young people are involved with the youth justice system**

**Rates of young people under community or corrective services' supervision are decreasing while rates of young people in youth detention are increasing. Post release return to supervision is common.**



**Key findings**

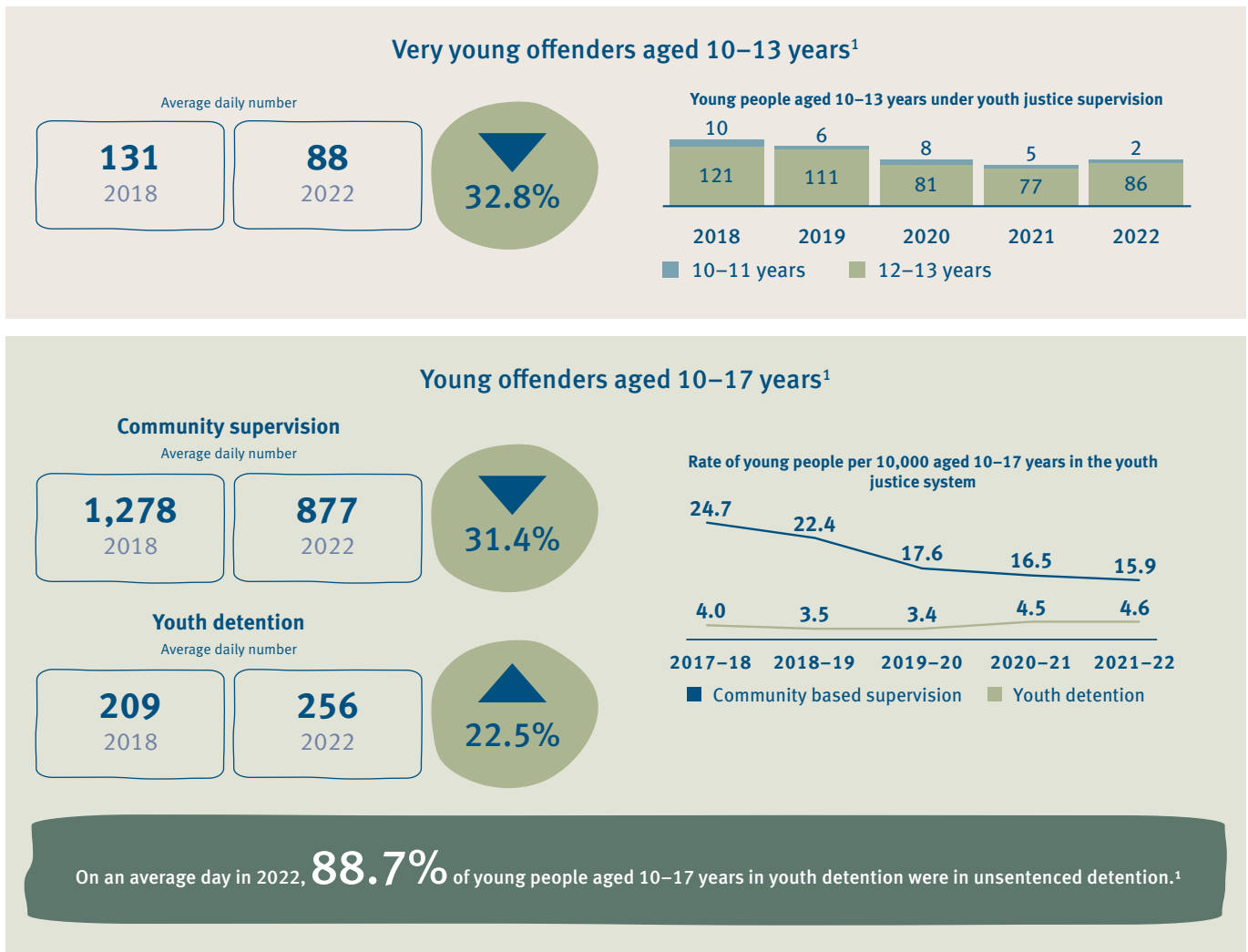
In Queensland over the past 5 years there has been reductions in:

- the number of very young offenders (10–13 years) under youth justice supervision
- the number of young people aged 10–17 years under community-based supervision
- the number of offenders and prisoners aged 18–24 years.

In Queensland over the past five years there has been:

- a 22.5% increase in the number of young people in youth detention
- around half of young people leaving detention or corrections will return within 12 months.

Figure 46: Rates of young people under community or corrective services' supervision



On an average day in 2022, **88.7%** of young people aged 10–17 years in youth detention were in unsentenced detention.<sup>1</sup>

### Offenders aged 18–24 years<sup>2</sup>

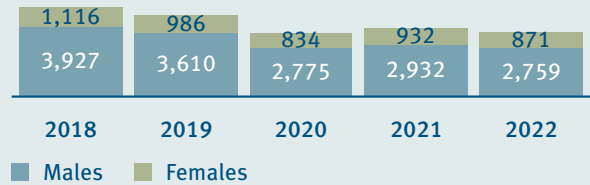
Average daily number

**5,043**  
2018

**3,630**  
2022

**28.0%**

Number of young people



On an average day in 2022, **24.0%** of offenders aged 18–24 years were female.

### Prisoners aged 18–24 years<sup>2</sup>

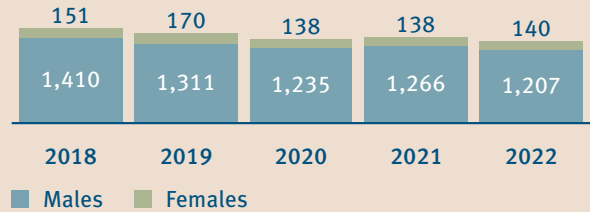
Average daily number

**1,561**  
2018

**1,347**  
2022

**13.7%**

Number of young people



On an average day in 2022, **10.4%** of prisoners aged 18–24 years were female.

**56.8%**

of Queensland young people aged 10–16 years released from sentenced supervision in 2019–20 returned within 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

**54.3%**


of young prisoners aged 18–24 years released in 2019–20 returned to prison with a new sentence within two years.<sup>2</sup>

**17.8%**

of young people aged 18–24 years discharged from community corrections in 2019–20 returned to community corrections with a new supervision order within two years.<sup>2</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>2</sup> Queensland Corrective Services, unpublished data request, 2023. Rates were calculated using unpublished data in conjunction with estimated residential population data of Queensland 10–17 year olds supplied by Queensland Government Statistician's Office. In November 2016, Queensland passed laws to transition 17 year olds from adult corrections to the youth detention system.

## Queensland’s progress against Closing the Gap targets<sup>91</sup>



|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Closing the Gap indicator</b> | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.   |
| <b>Closing the Gap target</b>    | By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10–17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.   |
| <b>Queensland data</b>           | In 2021–22, 40.9 per 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10–17 years were in detention on an average day. This rate is higher than the previous year (33.7 per 10,000 young people in 2020–21) but is lower than 41.2 per 10,000 young people in 2018–19. |



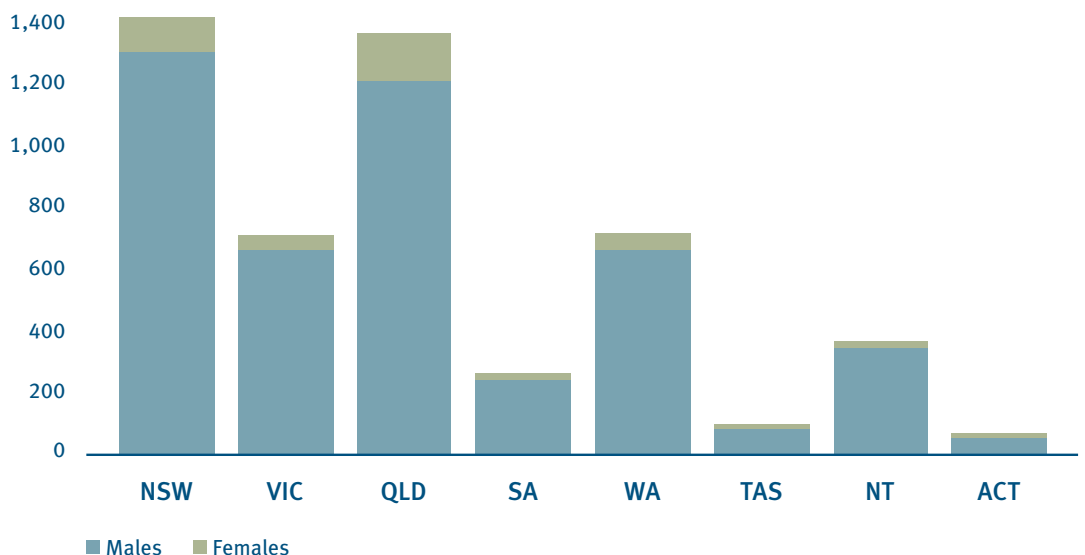
Table 15: Experiences of the youth justice system

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>36.0%</b>  | <b>19 offenders</b>  |
| respondents to the QFCC’s Community Survey 2023 agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the youth justice system. <sup>1</sup> | aged 18–24 years were being supervised by Queensland Corrective Services via electronic monitoring in 2022. <sup>2</sup> |

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>92</sup> <sup>2</sup> Queensland Corrective Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

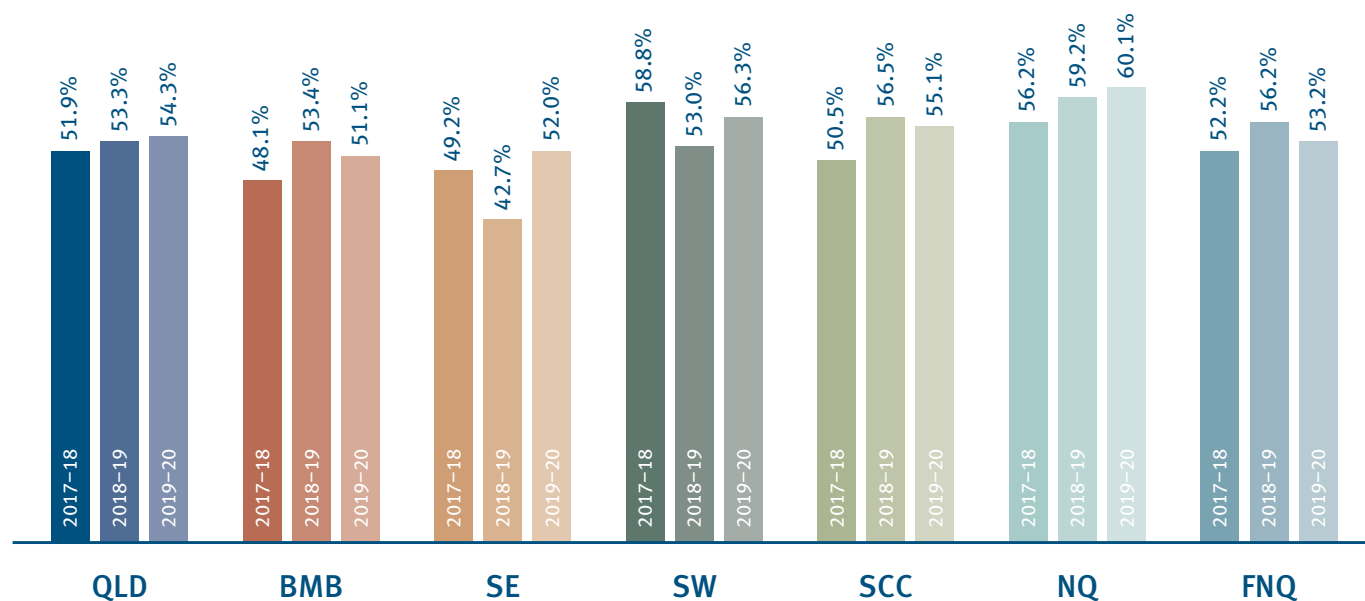
Compared to other Australian jurisdictions, as at 30 June 2022, Queensland had the second highest number of prisoners aged 18–24 years (Figure 47).

Figure 47: A comparison of the number of young people aged 18–24 years in prison across Australian jurisdictions as at 30 June 2022



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics: Prisoners in Australia, 2022.<sup>93</sup>

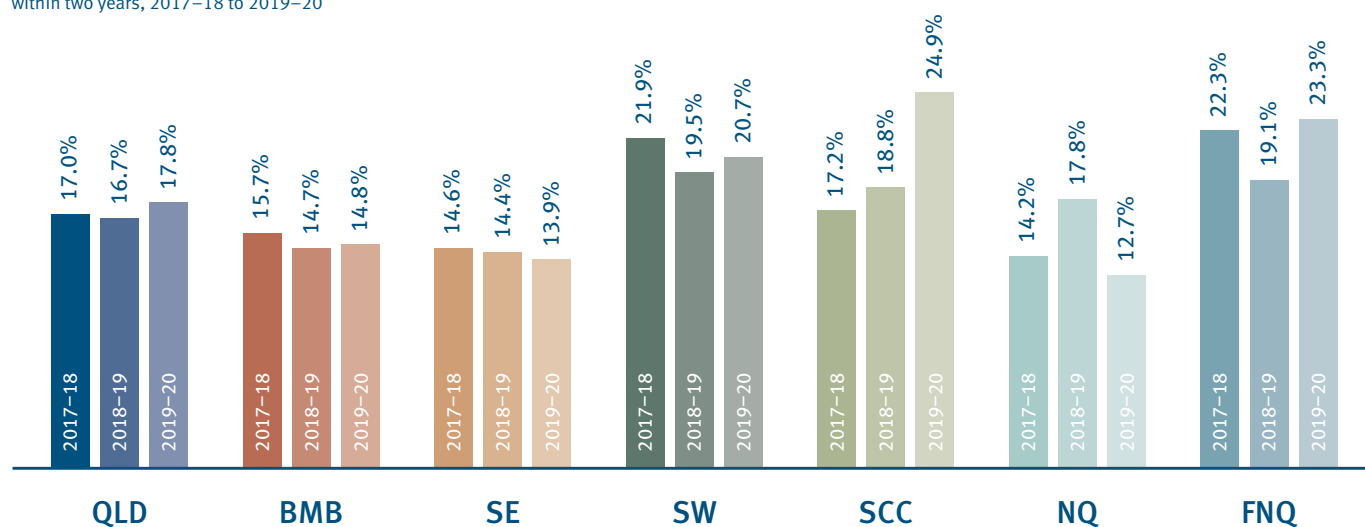
Figure 48: Percentage of sentenced prisoners aged 18–24 released from prison who returned to prison with a new sentence within two years, 2017–18 to 2019–20



Source: Queensland Corrective Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

Rates of returns to community correction facilities were lower for those under community corrections. Across Queensland, of those 18–24 years who were discharged from community corrections in 2019–20, only 17.8% returned to community corrections with a new supervision order within two years (Figure 49).

Figure 49: Percentage of offenders aged 18–24 discharged from community corrections who returned to community corrections with a new supervision order within two years, 2017–18 to 2019–20



Source: Queensland Corrective Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Indicator 1.4.6: Child and young people’s deaths are prevented

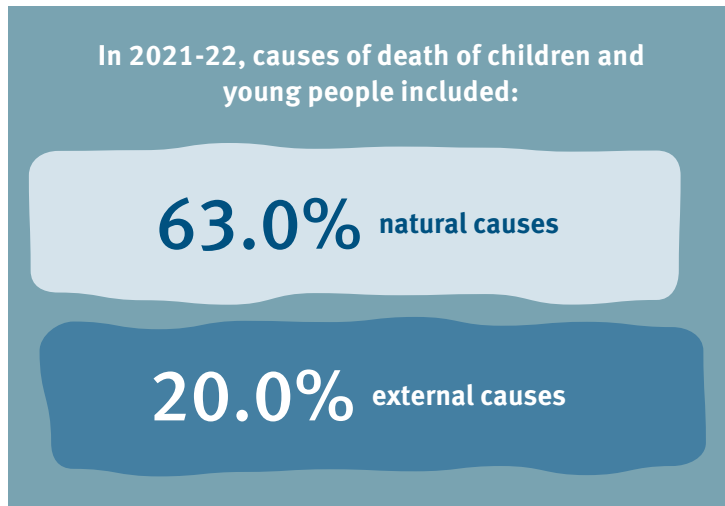
**Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, the deaths of 410 children and young people were registered in Queensland**

#### Key findings



Overall, child mortality rates have been decreasing since 2004, mainly driven by decreases in deaths by natural causes. Over the past two years, rates have begun to increase, largely driven by increases in transport deaths.

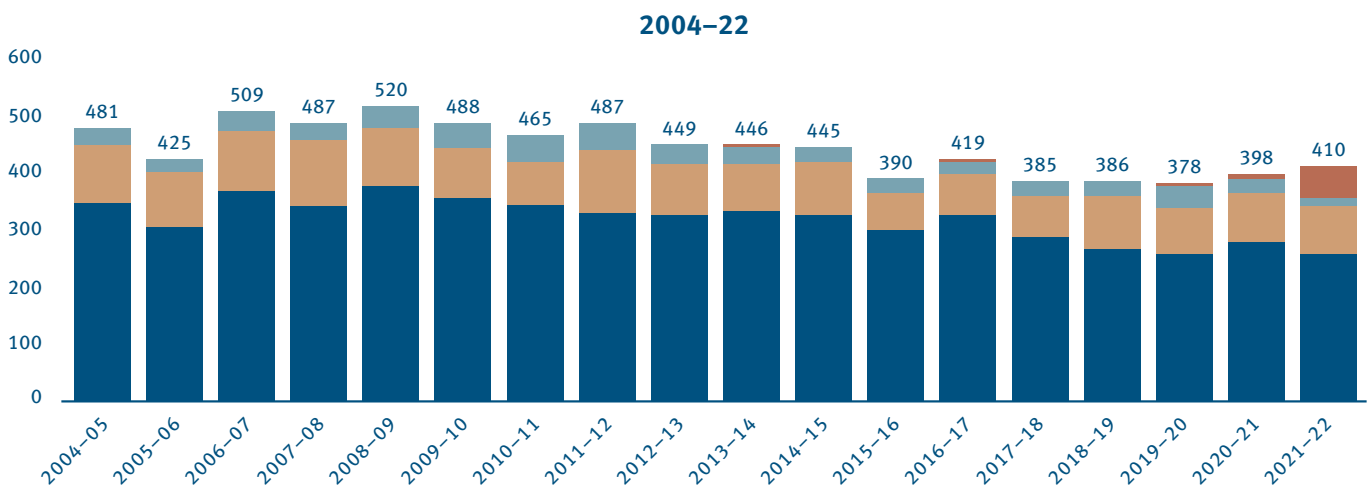
Figure 50: Rates of child death in Queensland



Child mortality rate over the last 5 years was **33.4 deaths** per 100,000 children aged 0–17 years

Infant mortality rate was **3.9 deaths** per 1,000 births

Queensland’s child mortality rate was the **second highest** in Australia



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission: Child Death Register data, 2023.

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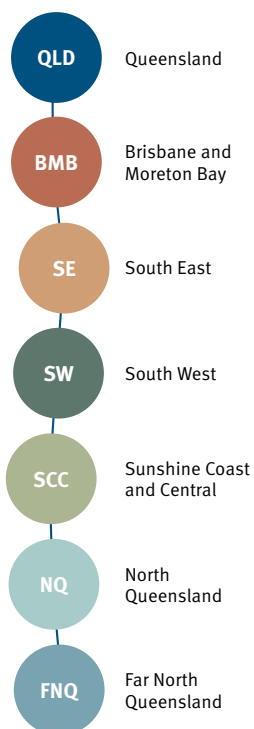


## Domain 2



Families have sufficient  
material basics to  
***meet their needs***

Regions of Queensland



# Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Having sufficient material basics to meet their needs means that families have a household income which is adequate to pay their living expenses and to provide their children with access to essential resources. These resources include access to suitable housing and transport, nutritious food, clothing, technology and items such as school supplies or sporting equipment. As young people become older, they too need employment opportunities to support the development of their own financial independence.

Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same material needs as other children and young people. They will also often have a greater need for support with their transition to independent living. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers highlighted that being assisted to prepare for life as independent individuals was an important priority for them.

Government policies around rates of family support payments and levels of investment in public housing and community infrastructure can significantly impact on the material wellbeing of children, young people and families. When families have access to sufficient material basics, their children are physically healthier, their social and emotional development is more likely to be on track and they do better at school. In households where families have an adequate income, children are less likely to be exposed to parental stress, poor parenting and family violence.

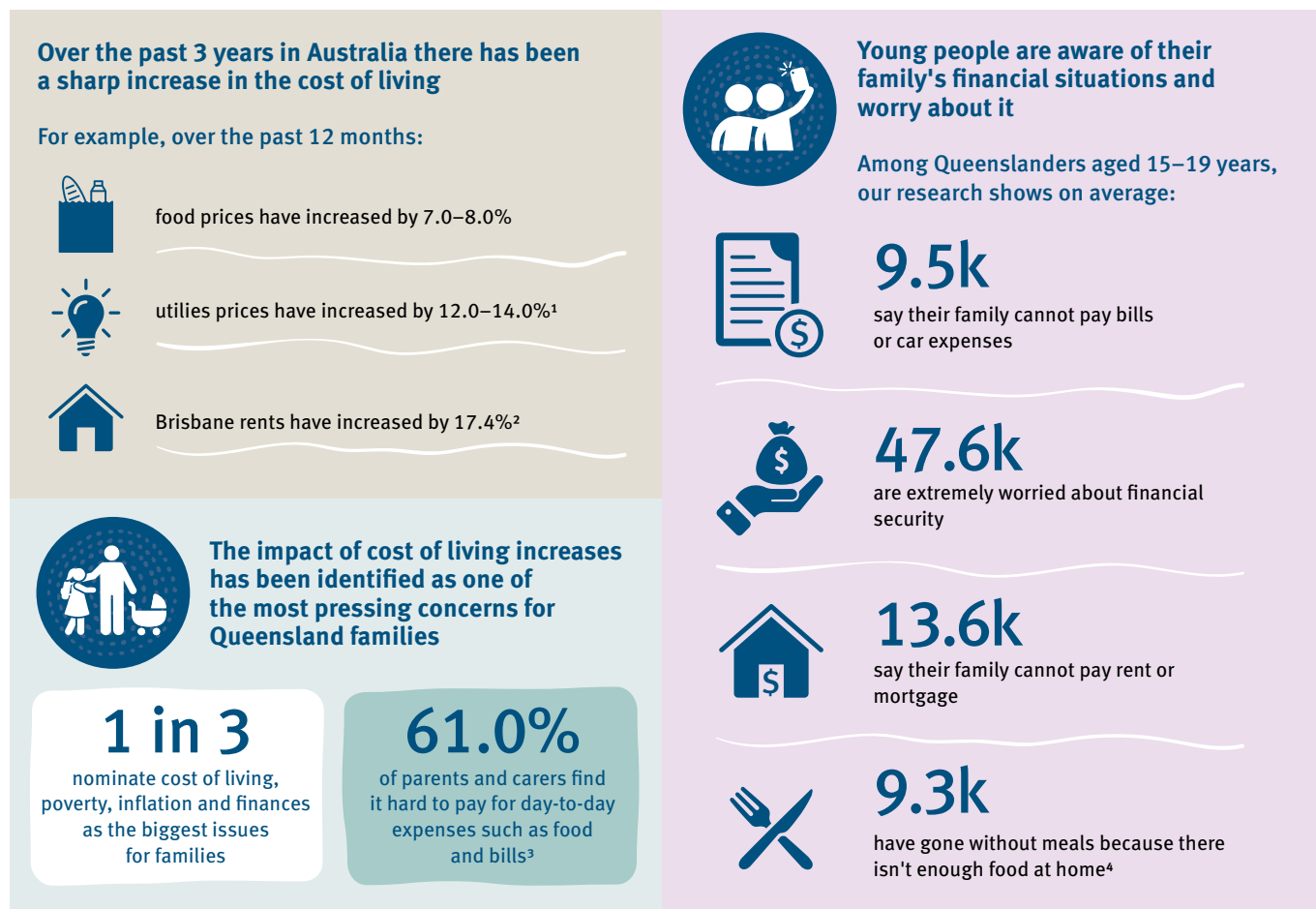
The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children and young people are valued, loved and safe.

Table 16: Domain 2 goals and indicators

| Domain   | Goal   | Indicator groupings  |
|--|--|--|
| Domain 2: Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs | Goal 2.1: Children, young people and families have financial stability and money for necessities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.1.1: Children and young people are not being raised in poverty</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.2: Parents and carers are employed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.3: Families can access family support payments when needed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.4: Families have sufficient income to be able to provide necessities for their children and young people</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.5: Young people are employed</li> <li>Indicator 2.1.6: Young people leaving care receive sufficient support to transition to adulthood</li> </ul> |
|  | Goal 2.2: Children, young people and families have adequate, secure, stable housing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.2.1: Home ownership and rent is affordable for families</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.2: Families and young people do not experience homelessness</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.3: Families and young people do not live in overcrowded homes</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.4: Families can access public and social housing when needed</li> <li>Indicator 2.2.5: Children and young people in out-of-home care experience a low number of placement changes</li> </ul>   |
|  | Goal 2.3: Children, young people and their families have access to food, suitable and safe technology, transport and personal items (clothing, school supplies, or sporting equipment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator 2.3.1: Children and young people have food security</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.2: Children and young people have access to suitable and safe communication and technology including access to the internet</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.3: Children, young people and their families have access to a vehicle or other suitable transport</li> <li>Indicator 2.3.4: Children and young people have access to essential personal items</li> </ul>  |

Figure 51: Cost of living changes and the impact on children, young people and families

## There has been a sharp increase in the cost of living which is having a negative impact on children, young people and families



Source:

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Employee households see biggest rise in living costs, 2023.<sup>94</sup><sup>2</sup> Residential Tenancies Authority, unpublished data request, 2023.<sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>95</sup><sup>4</sup> Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>96</sup>

## Goal 2.1: Children, young people and families have financial stability and money for necessities

Being financially stable and having money for necessities, such as food and housing, underpins most aspects of children and young people's wellbeing. Being financially stable means that families have an adequate household income, which may include being able to access family support payments when needed. Families where at least one parent is employed are less likely to live in poverty.



### CASE STUDY

#### Care Kits for Kids Queensland – supporting children in out-of-home care or in crisis

Care Kits for Kids Queensland volunteers, together with the wider community, have achieved Queensland-wide impacts making a real difference for children in need. Their Care Kits have helped over 7,100 Queensland children aged from 0 to 17 years living in out-of-home care or crisis since the not-for-profit charity began in 2018.

Care Kits are new backpacks containing enough new clothing (from baby sizes 000 to teen sizes 18 and beyond) for two days, toiletries, school supplies, books, toys and a handcrafted quilt or warm wrap. Many Care Kits also contain beautifully handcrafted clothing, hair accessories, bibs, burp-cloths and baby wraps. All are made by hundreds of crafters

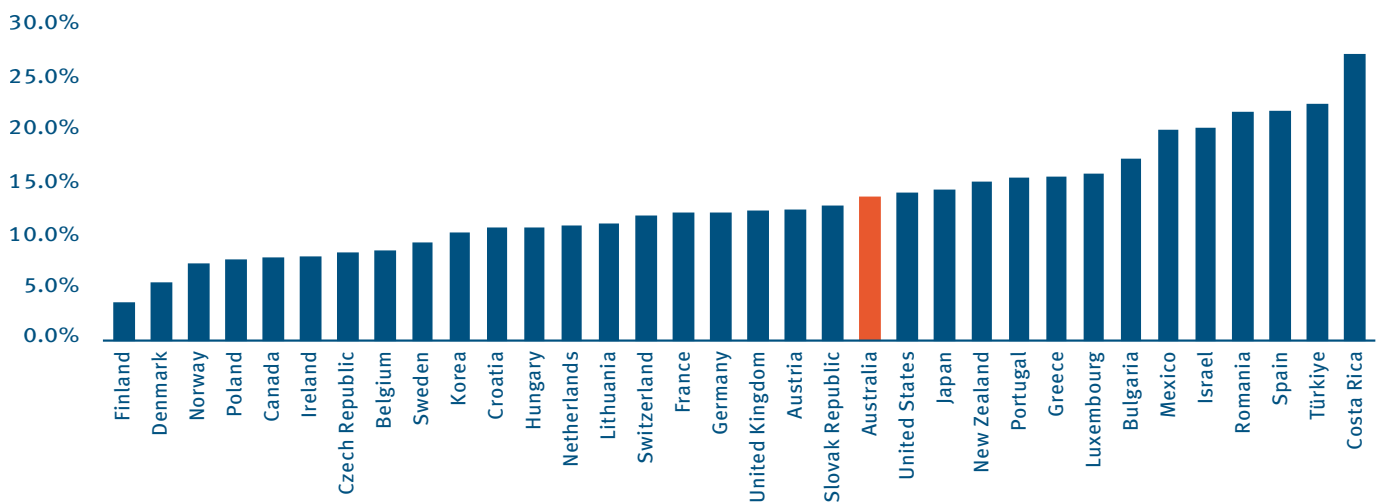
in Care Kits for Kids' sheds from donated textiles, or by many other community crafters. A covered journal is also included for school age children, with an encouraging insert in the front for favourite things and the Kids Helpline phone number. They aim to provide everything a child needs.

Demand for Care Kits has increased dramatically in 2023, as more children enter out-of-home or emergency care, or are domestic violence victims escaping with one parent, or are facing other traumatic challenges such as illness, fire, flood, refugee status, poverty and homelessness. In the first six months of 2023, Queensland volunteers have assisted over 2,000 children with Care Kits.

## Indicator 2.1.1: Children and young people are not being raised in poverty

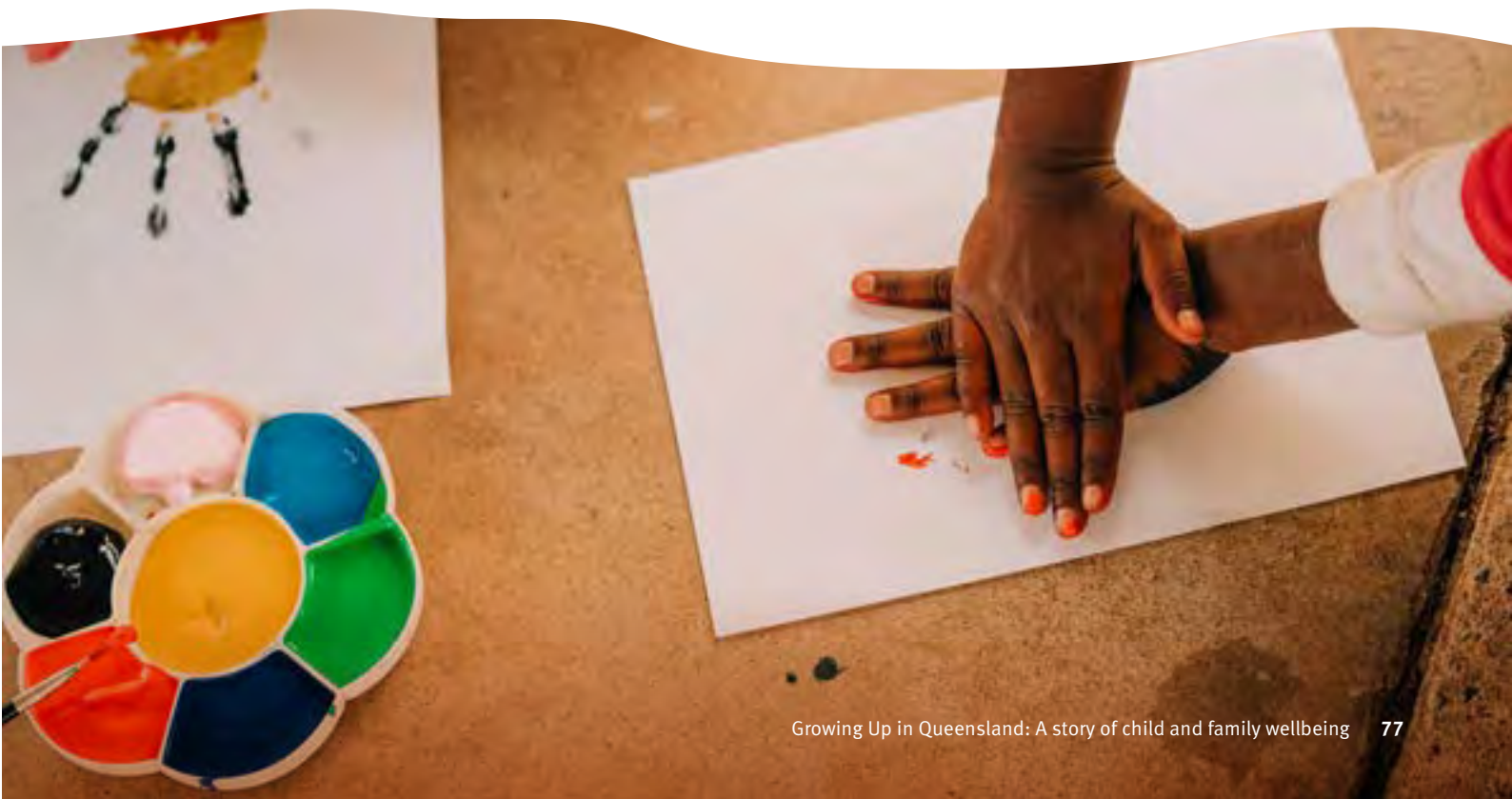
In 2020, the OECD estimated that 13.3% of Australian children and young people were living in poverty, meaning that their family's income was less than half of the national median income. Alternative estimates of poverty suggest that, on average, in 2019–20, one in six Australian children lived below the poverty line.<sup>97</sup>

Figure 52: An international comparison of rates of poverty for children and young people aged 0–17 years



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023.<sup>98</sup>

Relative to other states, Queensland has the third highest rate of poverty behind Tasmania and South Australia with more than one-fifth of the population living below the poverty line.<sup>99</sup>



## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

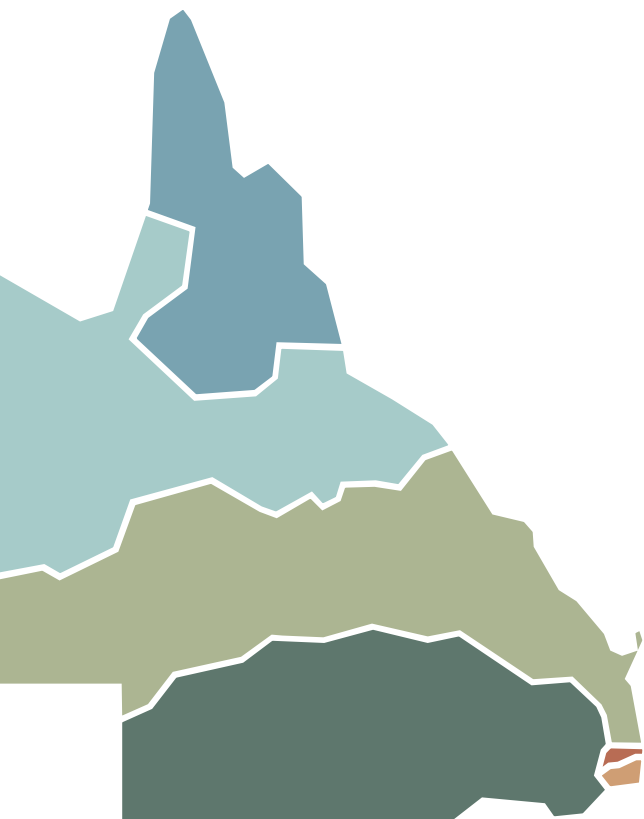


Table 17: Regional variations in socioeconomic disadvantage

| Queensland                               |                                    |  |   |  |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>20.0%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>11.4%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>59.3%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$2,024</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>6.1%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| Brisbane and Moreton Bay                 |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>11.3%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>9.0%</b><br>No parent employed  | <b>45.7%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$2,305</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>4.9%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| South East                               |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>17.5%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>11.8%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>64.1%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$1,969</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>6.2%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| South West                               |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>33.4%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>14.4%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>72.5%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$1,796</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>7.1%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| Sunshine Coast and Central               |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>25.6%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>12.3%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>64.9%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$1,744</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>6.4%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| North Queensland                         |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>22.6%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>11.3%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>59.0%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$2,104</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>6.0%</b><br>% families on a very low income |
| Far North Queensland                     |                                    |  |   |  |
| <b>33.9%</b><br>% of region in low SEIFA | <b>16.7%</b><br>No parent employed | <b>77.6%</b><br>Accessing family tax benefit | <b>\$1,774</b><br>Median weekly family income | <b>8.4%</b><br>% families on a very low income |

Overall, families were least likely to be experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage in Brisbane and Moreton Bay indicating the importance of additional services and supports in other regions.

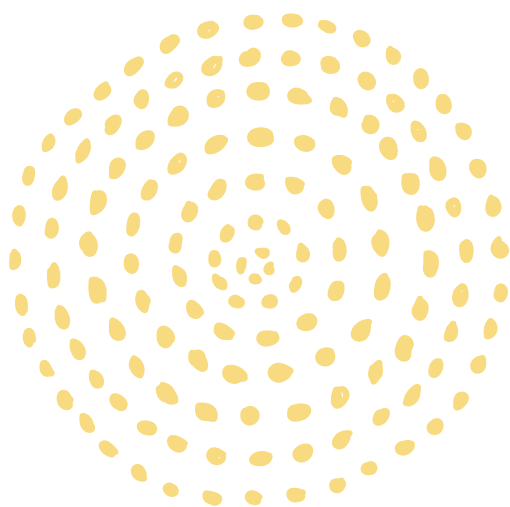
Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, custom regional profiles, 2023.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage based on information from the five-yearly Census. Across Queensland there is significant regional variation in terms of socioeconomic disadvantage. As shown in Table 17, one-third of people living in Far North Queensland and the South West were living in the most disadvantaged areas of Queensland compared with only 11.3% of people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

### Indicator 2.1.2: Parents and carers are employed

As at June 2023, 2.96 million Queenslanders (66.6%) were participating in the workforce, while 3.8% of Queenslanders (112,600) were unemployed.<sup>100</sup>

Almost 60,000 or 11.4% of Queensland families with children under 15 years of age had no parent employed. This includes one-parent families where the parent was either unemployed or not in the labour force or couple families where both parents were either unemployed or not in the labour force. Rates of parental unemployment were lowest in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and highest in Far North Queensland where one in six families had no employed parent (Table 17).



### Indicator 2.1.3: Families can access family support payments when needed

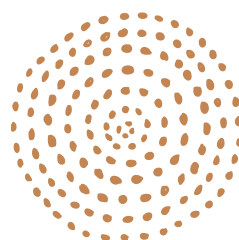
Family Tax Benefit is a means-tested payment to parents to assist with the costs of raising children. Across Queensland, almost six in ten families with children under 15 years were accessing this benefit in the December quarter of 2022. Rates were highest for parents in Far North Queensland and lowest for those in Brisbane and Moreton Bay (Table 17).

### Indicator 2.1.4: Families have sufficient income to be able to provide necessities for their children

The median family income in Queensland in 2021 was \$105,248 per year (\$2,024 per week). This is slightly lower than the average for Australia (\$2,120 per week). There was some regional variation across Queensland with median family incomes ranging from \$90,688 per year in Sunshine Coast and Central to \$119,860 in Brisbane and Moreton Bay (Table 17).

While many families have an adequate income, a significant number of Queensland children and young people live in families with very low incomes. According to the 2021 Census, almost 50,000 Queensland families had an annual income of less than \$33,800 (Table 17).<sup>1</sup>

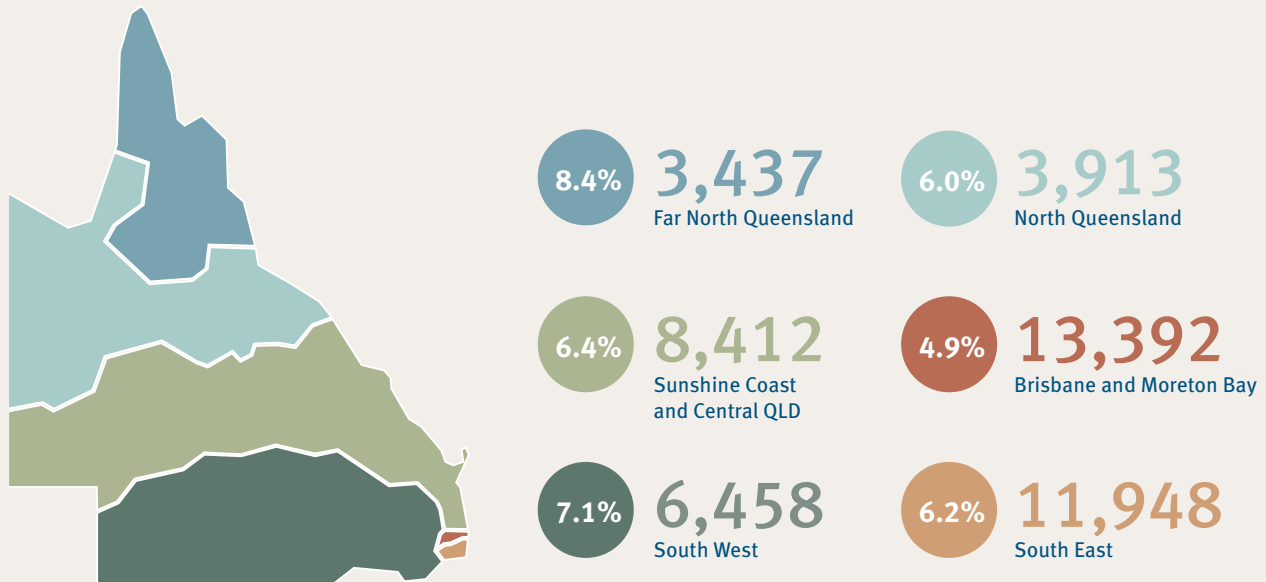
There was some regional variation across Queensland with only 4.9% of families in Brisbane and Moreton Bay compared to 8.4% of families in Far North Queensland on a very low income.



<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, the data were reporting on family income only refers to families who have children. We have excluded couple families with no children and other families from our analyses.

## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Figure 53: Number and percentage of families with children with an income of less than \$33,800 per year



Source: Queensland Government Statisticians Office, custom tables, 2023.

Children being raised in one-parent families are much more likely to experience a low household income than those in couple families. Only 1.6% of Queensland couple families had a household income of less than \$650 per week compared to 17.1% of Queensland one-parent families (Table 18).

Table 18: Number and percentage of families with children with an income of less than \$33,800 per year

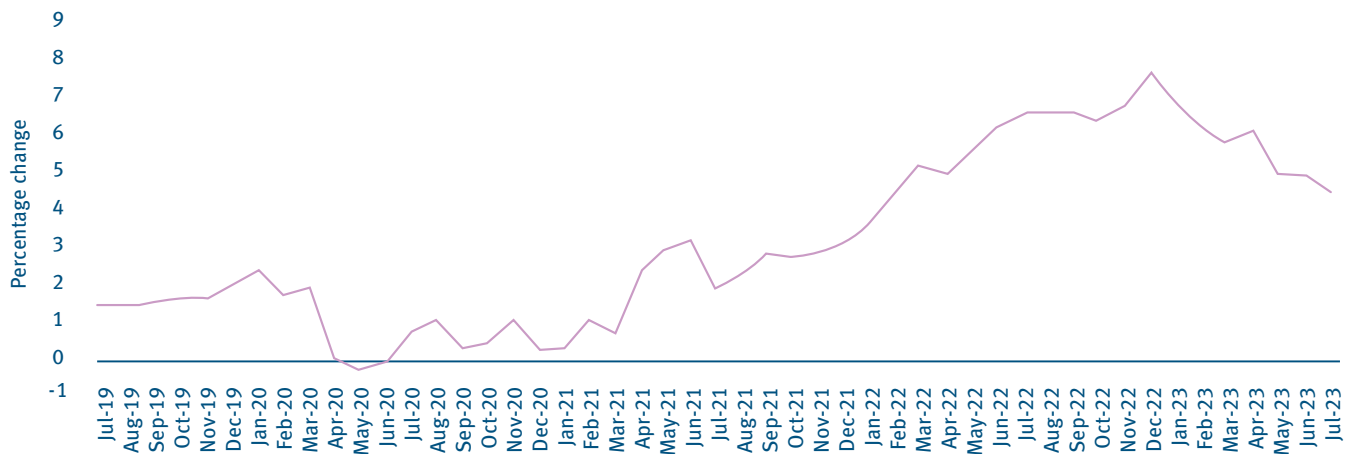


|   | AUS                | QLD               | BMB               | SE               | SW               | SCC              | NQ               | FNQ              |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Number and percentage of couple families with children with household income less than \$650 pw | 58,345<br>(2.0%)   | 9,284<br>(1.6%)   | 2,734<br>(1.4%)   | 2,436<br>(1.8%)  | 1,139<br>(1.8%)  | 1,308<br>(1.4%)  | 479<br>(1.1%)    | 597<br>(2.2%)    |
| Number and percentage of one-parent families with household income less than \$650 pw           | 183,449<br>(17.2%) | 39,281<br>(17.1%) | 10,658<br>(14.9%) | 9,512<br>(16.8%) | 5,319<br>(18.9%) | 7,104<br>(17.6%) | 3,434<br>(17.9%) | 2,840<br>(20.3%) |
| Total number and percentage of families with household income less than \$650 pw                | 241,794<br>(6.0%)  | 48,565<br>(6.1%)  | 13,392<br>(4.9%)  | 11,948<br>(6.2%) | 6,458<br>(7.1%)  | 8,412<br>(6.4%)  | 3,913<br>(6.0%)  | 3,437<br>(8.4%)  |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, custom tables, 2023.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures changes in the price of household goods and services. As shown in Figure 54, since April 2021, Australia has experienced a sharp increase in costs incurred by households. This will contribute to the financial burden faced by Australian children, young people and their families.

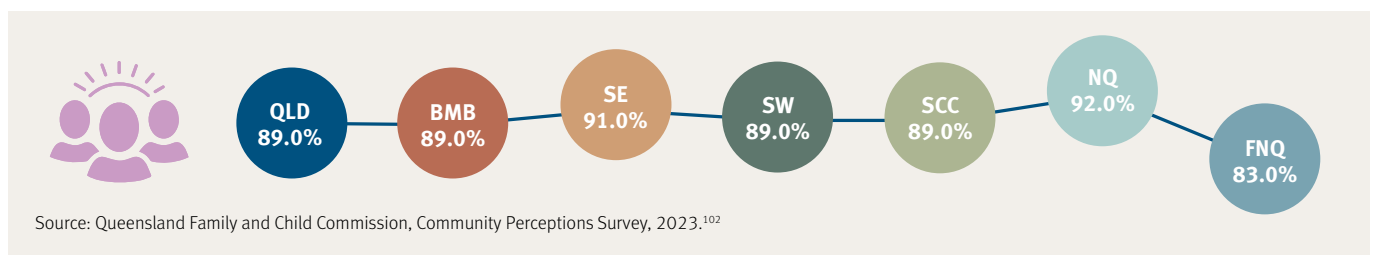
Figure 54: Australia's monthly CPI indicator, July 2019 to July 2023



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Consumer Price Index Indicator, 2023.<sup>101</sup>

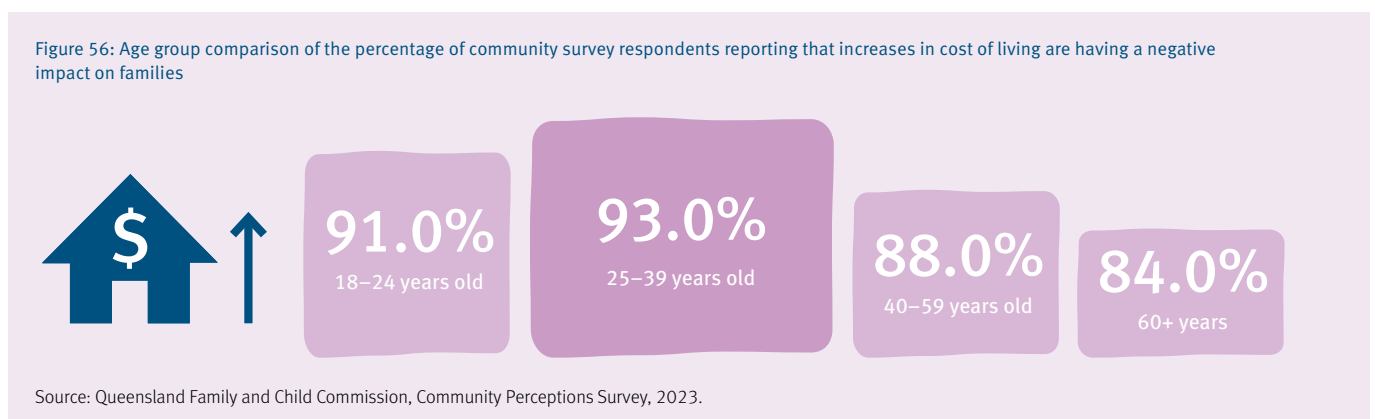
The QFCC's Community Survey 2023 asked community members about their perceptions of the cost of living increases. Almost nine out of 10 respondents agreed that cost of living increases were having a negative impact on children, young people and their families. As shown in Figure 55, along with respondents aged 25–39 years, young respondents aged 18–24 were most likely to agree that cost of living increases were having a negative impact.

Figure 55: Percentage of community survey respondents reporting that increases in cost of living are having a negative impact on families



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>102</sup>

Figure 56: Age group comparison of the percentage of community survey respondents reporting that increases in cost of living are having a negative impact on families



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.

Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 respondents were also asked what they thought were the biggest issues for parents and children in Queensland. The most common responses were the cost of living, poverty, inflation and finances which were identified by one-third of respondents. Additionally, almost one in 10 respondents raised concerns about housing affordability and homelessness.

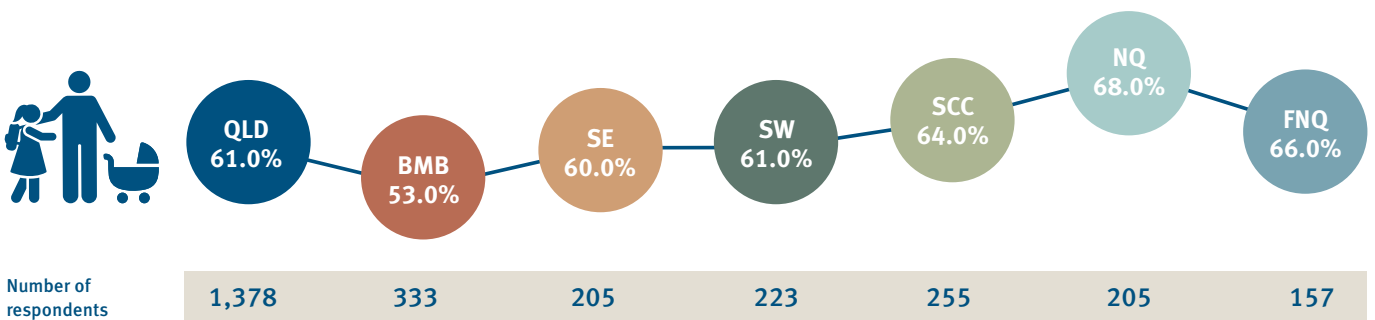
The survey also asked Queensland respondents with parent or carer responsibilities about challenges they may be experiencing around paying for day-to-day expenses such as food and bills.

*Cost of living, poverty, inflation and finances were the most common concerns for parents and children with 1 in 10 concerned about housing affordability and homelessness.*

More than six out of 10 agreed their family finds it hard to pay for these day-to-day expenses. As shown in Figure 57, rates of parents and carers experiencing difficulty paying for day-day expenses were highest in North Queensland and Far North Queensland and lowest in Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

Figure 57: Percentage of parents/carers reporting difficulties in paying for day-to-day expenses

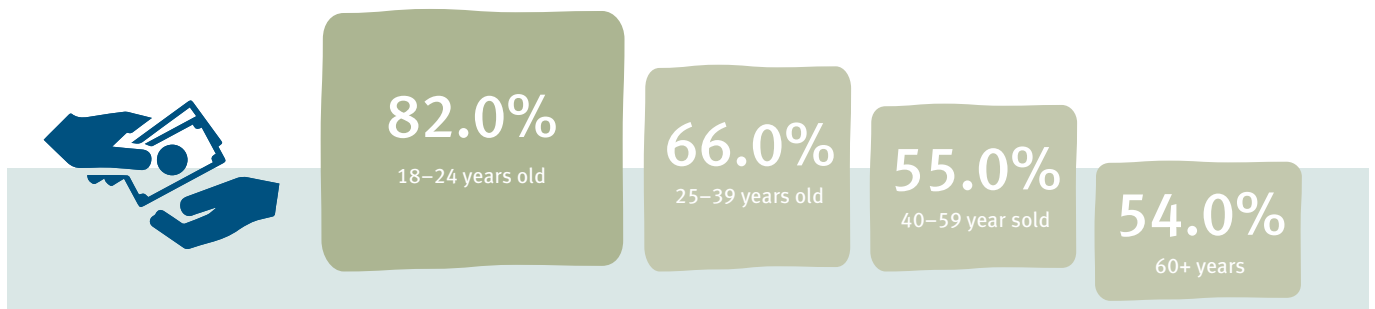
### Our family finds it hard to pay for day-to-day expenses such as food and bills



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>103</sup>

As shown in Figure 58, young people aged 18–24 with parent or carer responsibilities were the age group most likely to report having difficulty in paying for day-to-day expenses.

Figure 58: Age group comparison of the percentage of parents/carers reporting difficulties in paying for day-to-day expenses

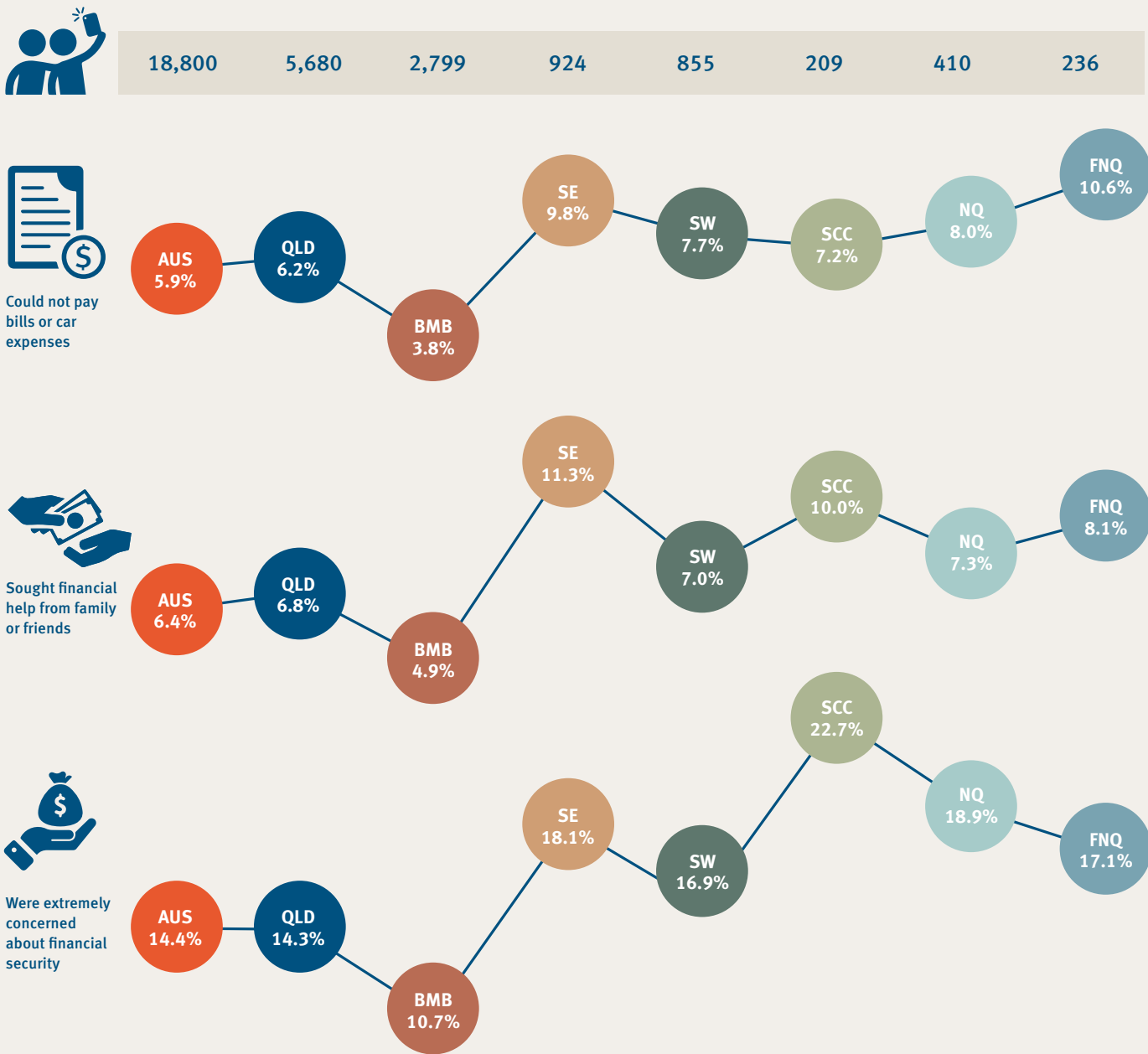


Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>104</sup>

Financial concerns do not just affect parents and carers. Young people are also affected and worry. Almost six per cent of young Queenslanders reported that they or their families were unable to afford bills or car expenses, 6.4% had sought financial help from family or friends and 14.4% were extremely worried about financial security. Rates of concern varied by region and were lowest for young people living in Brisbane and Moreton Bay (Figure 59).<sup>105</sup>

Figure 59: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years experiencing financial difficulty and/or were extremely/very concerned about financial security by region

### People in region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey



Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>106</sup>

Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs



**Among young Queenslanders**  
**2.3%**  
 had received support or assistance from a charity

**And a further**  
**2.3%**  
 stated that they had needed support or assistance, but did not receive it.





**Australia-wide**  
**2.6%**  
 young people received support or assistance from a charity

**And a further**  
**2.7%**  
 stated that they had needed support or assistance, but did not receive it.<sup>107</sup>

A recent Australian survey of young people aged 17–18 years and 21–22 years, found that reported rates of financial difficulties were high (Table 19). On most measures of financial difficulty, more 21–22 years old reported concerns than those in the younger age group (17–18 years old).<sup>108</sup>

Table 19: Proportion of Australian young people aged 17–18 and 21–22 experiencing financial difficulties



| <b>In the past 12 months</b>  | <b>17–18 years</b> | <b>21–22 years</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
|  I found it difficult to meet the cost of living | <b>4.8%</b>        | <b>10.6%</b>       |
|  I couldn't pay electricity or gas bills on time | <b>0.6%</b>        | <b>2.7%</b>        |
| <b>\$\$</b> I had to ask family or friends for money  | <b>14.1%</b>       | <b>16.8%</b>       |
|  I had to borrow money just to live on           | <b>2.2%</b>        | <b>5.9%</b>        |
|  I sold something because I needed money         | <b>7.2%</b>        | <b>12.2%</b>       |

Source: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2022.<sup>109</sup>



### Indicator 2.1.5: Young people are employed

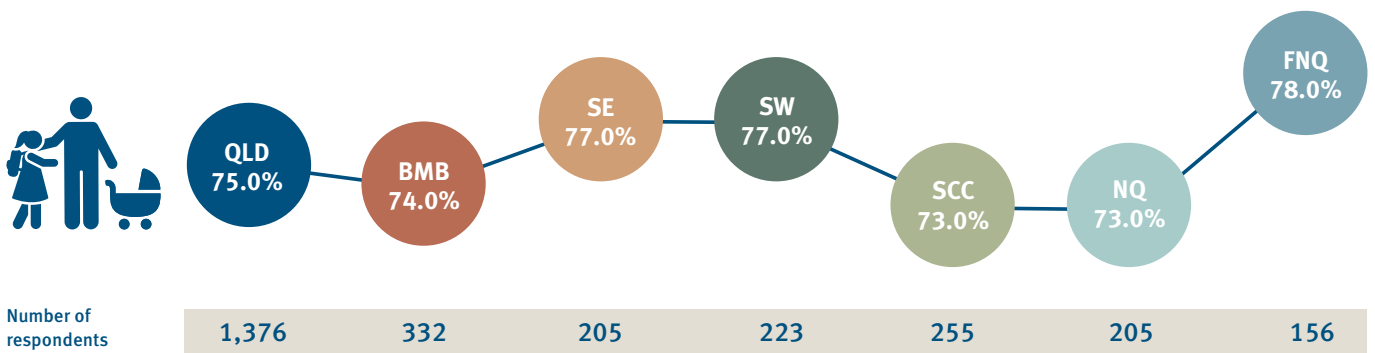
As young people become older, they require employment opportunities to support the development of their own financial independence. In 2022, most young Queenslanders (77.9%) aged 15–24 years were undertaking some work or study, or a combination of both and a further 11.7% were engaged in part-time work or study. Around 65,100 young people (10.0%) were not engaged in either study or employment. Apart from a temporary increase in 2020, the proportion of young Queenslanders not engaged in study or employment has dropped since 2018 although Queensland’s rate remains higher than that of all other states (with the exception of the Northern Territory) (Figure 60).<sup>110</sup>

*In 2022, most young Queenslanders (77.9%) aged 15–24 years were undertaking some work or study, or a combination of both.*

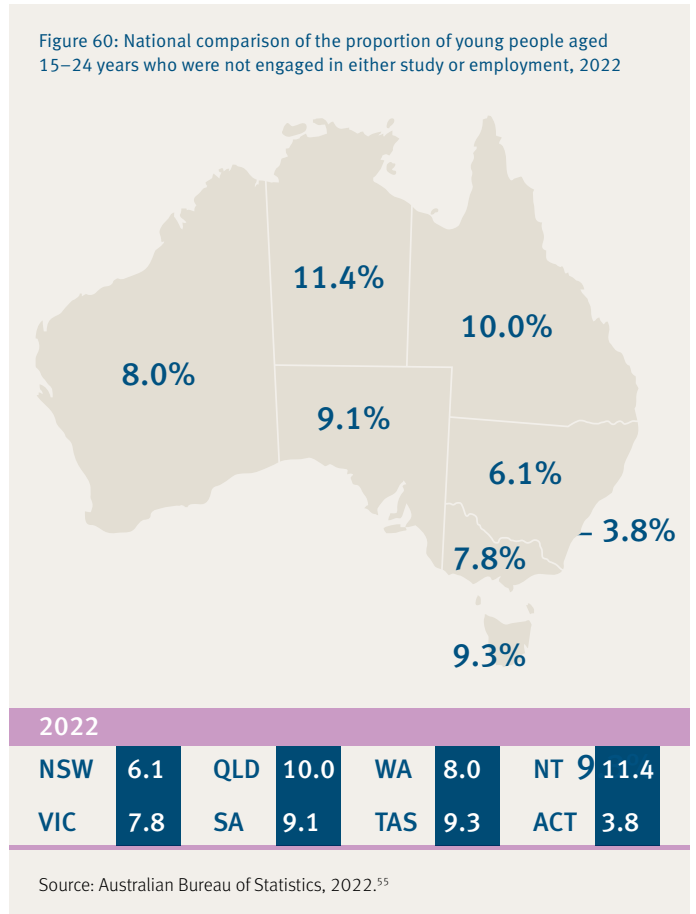
The Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 asked Queensland respondents with parent or carer responsibilities whether they thought there would be job opportunities for their children when they are older. Most (75%) agreed there would be job opportunities for their children. This finding was fairly consistent across regions.

Figure 61: Regional comparison of the percentage of parents/carers agreeing there would be job opportunities for their children when they are older

### Parents/carers agree there would be job opportunities for their children when they are older



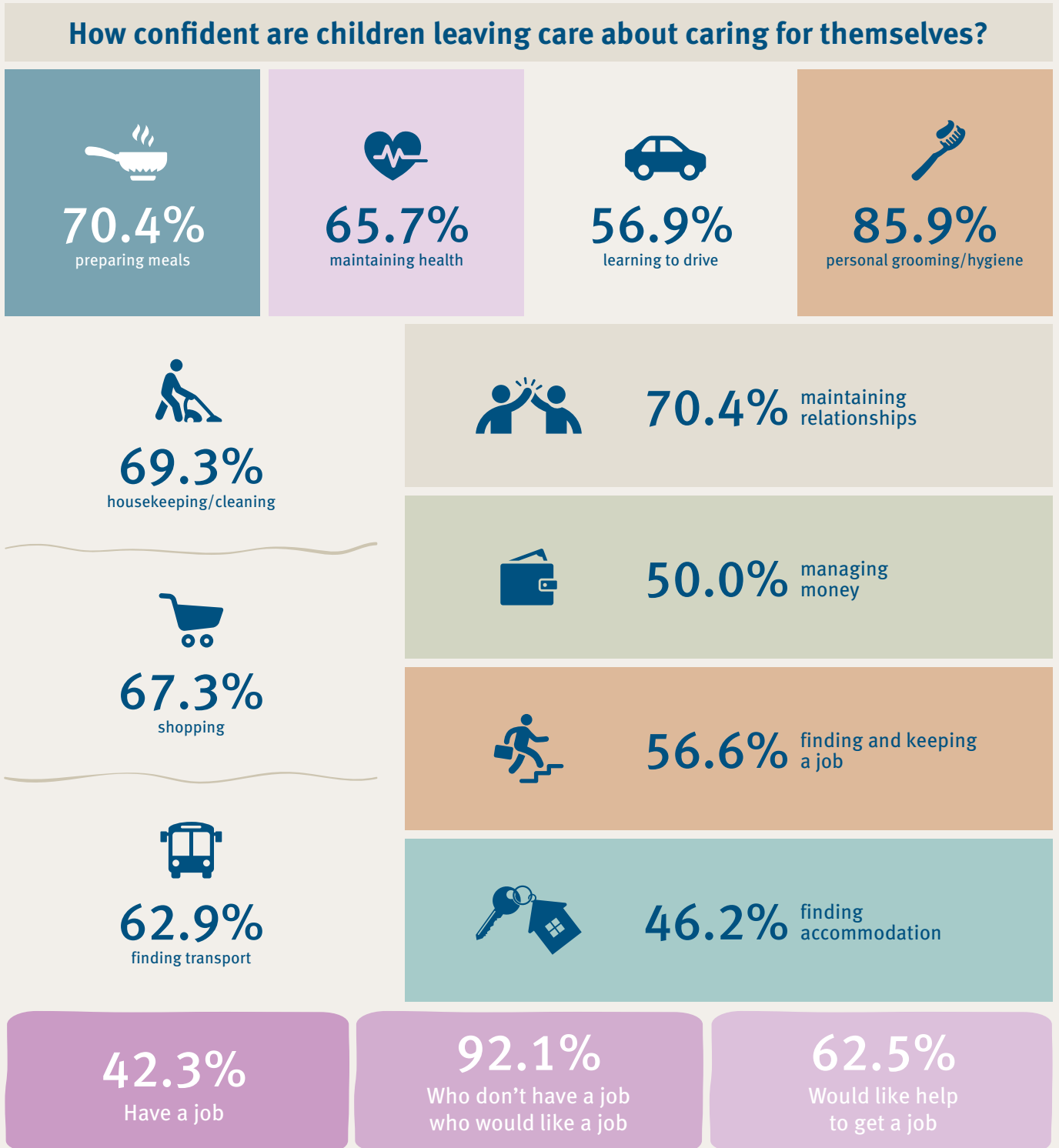
Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>111</sup>





### Indicator 2.1.6: Young people leaving care receive sufficient support to transition to adulthood

Figure 62: Challenges for young people leaving care



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Rates of confidence in independent living skills among young people leaving out-of-home care varied, depending on the skill. More than eight out of 10 children and young people living in care were confident they could look after their personal grooming and hygiene, seven out of 10 were confident they could prepare meals, and do housekeeping, cleaning and shopping. They were less confident about finding and keeping a job, managing money and finding accommodation (Figure 62). More information is needed to understand how increases in cost of living are impacting young people transitioning from care.

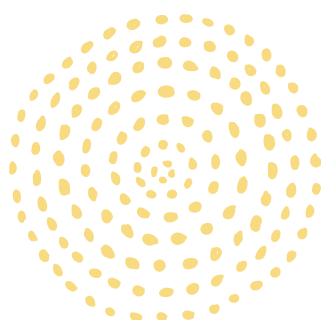
Two in five young people in care reported that they were employed. Of those without a job, almost all reported that they wanted a job, and almost two-thirds indicated that they needed support in getting a job (Figure 62).

More than half of foster and kinship carers felt always or mostly satisfied with their inclusion in the transition to adulthood process, and the young person's inclusion in the process. Around one-third reported being always or mostly satisfied with the outcome provided, the follow up, and the review process (Figure 62).

Table 20: Rates of carers who felt always or mostly satisfied with support in the transition to adulthood process

| Support in the transition to adulthood process | Percentage of carers who felt always or mostly satisfied |
|--|--|
| Their inclusion in the process                 | 54.0%  |
| The young person's inclusion in the process    | 54.0%  |
| The process itself                             | 41.0%  |
| The outcome provided                           | 39.0%  |
| The follow up                                  | 36.0%  |
| The review process                             | 34.0%  |

Source: Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022.<sup>112</sup>

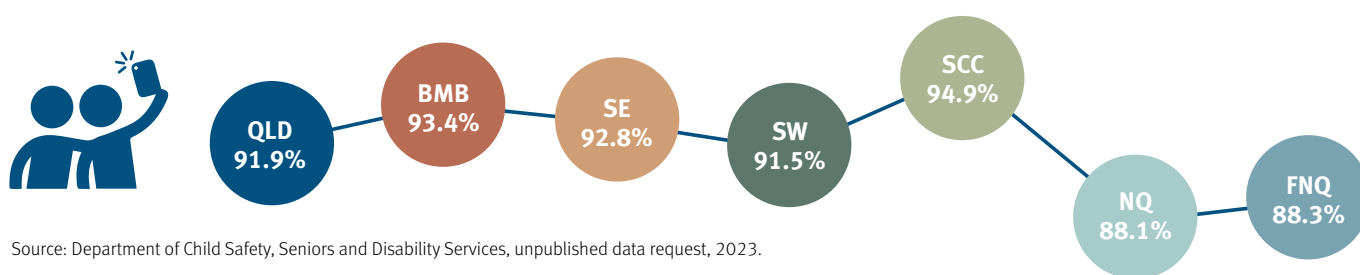


## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Fifty-two per cent of child protection and family support workers agreed that young people attending their organisation making the transition from out-of-home care to independent living could access appropriate transition services when they needed them.<sup>113</sup>

As shown in Figure 63, most young people aged 15 years or over participate in their transition to independence planning although there is some variation across regions.

Figure 63: Percentage of young people aged 15 years or over subject to a child protection order who participate in their transition to adulthood planning by region



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.



## Goal 2.2: Children, young people and their families have adequate, secure and stable housing

Access to adequate, secure and stable housing is important for the health and wellbeing of children and young people. A safe home acts as a secure base, which allows children and young people to establish routines and confidently engage with the wider community.<sup>114</sup>

Access to adequate, secure and stable housing supports parental mental health and family stability. It is also associated with children attending fewer schools and having better educational performance and higher rates of school completion.<sup>115</sup> By contrast, housing instability has been shown to negatively impact children's health, development and school performance.<sup>116</sup>

While overcrowding does not always lead to negative outcomes, there is evidence to suggest that it can have a range of negative effects including lack of privacy, excessive noise and family and financial strain.<sup>117</sup>

Many children and young people in out-of-home care experience multiple placements. Like stable housing, placement stability affects the stability of a child or young person's relationships, their stability in schooling and their participation in their community for example through activities such as sports.<sup>118</sup>

### CASE STUDY

#### Regional Youth Engagement Service – reconnecting young people with education, training or employment

The Queensland Department of Education has established the Regional Youth Engagement Service (RYES) to assist disengaged young people reconnect with education, training or employment. The RYES enlists a wide range of professionals including guidance officers, youth support workers, Indigenous liaison officers and teachers and provides a range of supports including general guidance and assessment, pathways planning, behaviour management support and referrals to other agencies.

RYES recently worked with the family of a student in the North Queensland region who was experiencing multiple challenges which impacted upon the student's ability to regularly attend school. The education regional office learned of this attendance concern through regular data review and quickly stepped in to ensure the RYES made contact with the young person.

Through this connection, the RYES identified that broad case management, beyond a narrow education focus, would deliver the best ongoing support for the student and their family. The RYES worked with the family to identify their support needs and prioritise the necessary inter-agency connections.

Stability of housing was the most pressing concern for the family. The RYES connected with Red Cross for immediate support. While this housing support was occurring, the RYES worked internally with the guidance officer to ensure the young person was receiving education support by using Learning@Home materials. This supported consistency of learning and a connection to education, while acknowledging the very real pressures that were impacting on attendance in the classroom.

With improvement in housing, the RYES then supported the family with transportation concerns to ensure the young person could get to school. This mix of housing, education and transportation support led to the young person achieving a significant lift in attendance and engaging positively with schooling.

### Indicator 2.2.1: Home ownership and rent is affordable for families

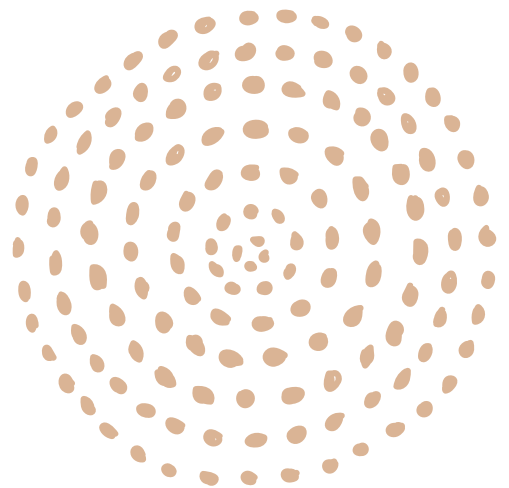
Sharp increases in housing affordability affect housing stability. The most recently available data from the Census indicates that, in 2021, in the majority of regions, median rental payments were 20.0% or less of median family incomes (Table 21). In 2021, 58.2% of renter households had rent payments less than or equal to 30.0% of their household income, while 32.3% had rent payments greater than 30.0% of the household income (the remainder were unable to be determined).

In 2021, 75.7% of owner-with-mortgage households had mortgage payments less than or equal to 30.0% of their household income, while 11.9% had rent payments greater than 30.0% of the household income (the remainder were unable to be determined).<sup>119</sup>

Table 21: A regional comparison of median family income, median weekly rent and median monthly mortgage payments based on 2021 Census data

|   | AUS     | QLD     | BMB     | SE      | SW      | SCC     | NQ      | FNQ     |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Median weekly family income                                       | \$2,120 | \$2,024 | \$2,305 | \$1,969 | \$1,796 | \$1,744 | \$2,104 | \$1,774 |
| Median weekly rent  | \$375   | \$365   | \$402   | \$414   | \$304   | \$341   | \$298   | \$300   |
| Median weekly rent as a percentage of median weekly family income | 17.7%   | 18.0%   | 17.4%   | 21.0%   | 16.9%   | 19.6%   | 14.2%   | 16.9%   |
| Median monthly mortgage payment                                   | \$1,863 | \$1,733 | \$1,964 | \$1,870 | \$1,501 | \$1,610 | \$1,573 | \$1,538 |

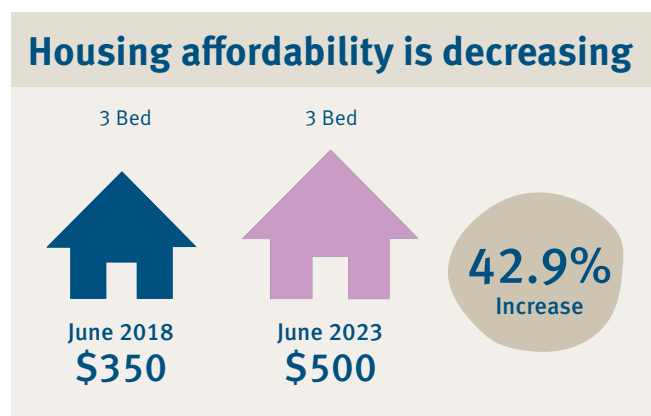
Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, custom tables, 2023.



However, housing affordability across Queensland is decreasing. In June 2018, the median weekly rent for a 3-bedroom house in Queensland was \$350. In June 2023 it was \$500, an increase of 42.9%.<sup>120</sup> Rents are increasing at a rate that far exceeds increases in wages or family support payments.

Table 22 and Figure 64 demonstrate increases in median rent prices between 2017 and 2022 across Queensland regions. Over the past five years, every region has experienced at least a 28.2% increase in rent with the sharpest increase being 50.0% in North Queensland. Over the past 12 months, the greatest increase has been in the South West, with rental increases of almost 20.0%.<sup>121</sup>

Figure 64: Increase in median rent price in Queensland, 2018 and 2023



Source: Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority, 2023.

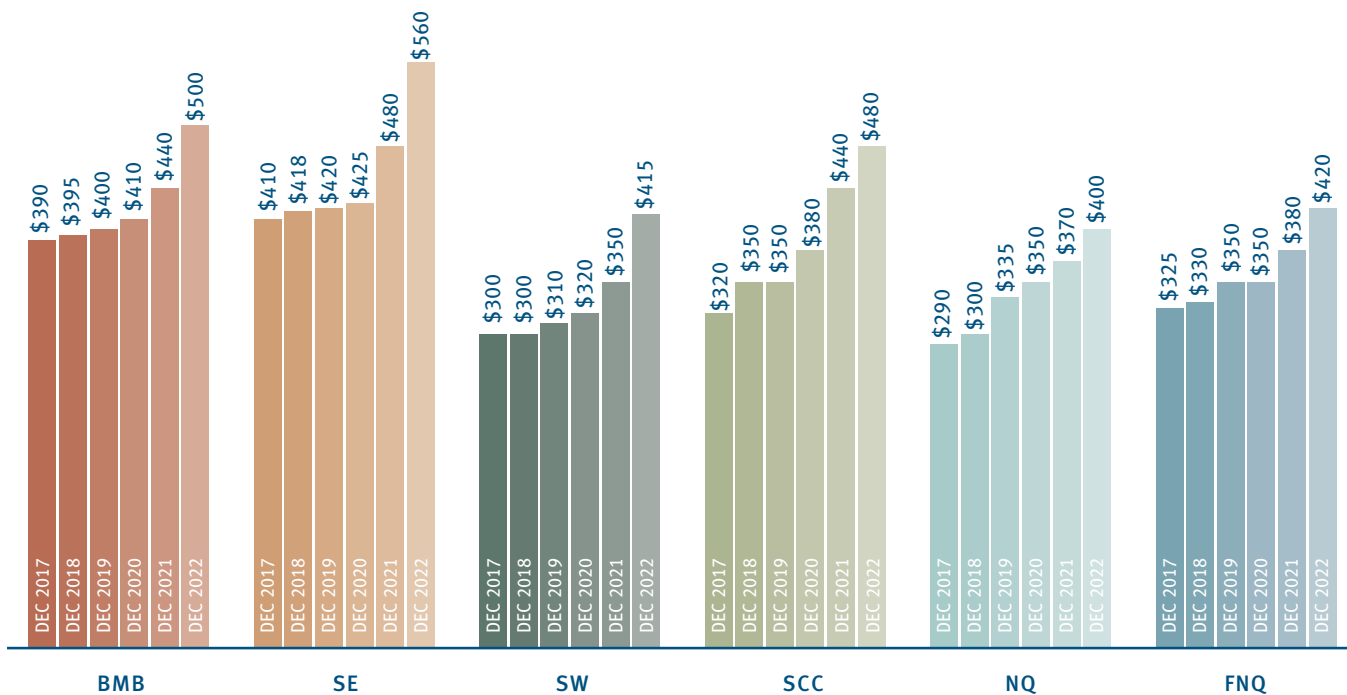
Table 22: Regional increases in median rents between December 2017 and December 2022 with 1 year and 5 years percentage increases

| Region | Dec 17 | Dec 18 | Dec 19 | Dec 20 | Dec 21 | Dec 22 | 1 year increase<br>Dec 21–Dec 22 | 5 year increase<br>Dec 21–Dec 22 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| BMB    | \$390  | \$395  | \$400  | \$410  | \$440  | \$500  | 13.6%                            | 28.2%                            |
| SE     | \$410  | \$418  | \$420  | \$425  | \$480  | \$560  | 16.7%                            | 36.6%                            |
| SW     | \$300  | \$300  | \$310  | \$320  | \$350  | \$415  | 18.6%                            | 38.3%                            |
| SCC    | \$320  | \$350  | \$350  | \$380  | \$440  | \$480  | 9.1%                             | 50.0%                            |
| NQ     | \$290  | \$300  | \$335  | \$350  | \$370  | \$400  | 8.1%                             | 37.9%                            |
| FNQ    | \$325  | \$330  | \$350  | \$350  | \$380  | \$420  | 10.5%                            | 29.2%                            |

Source: Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority. Rental Tenancies Authority median rents quarterly data mapped to Queensland Family and Child Commission identified regions, 2023.

## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Figure 65: Regional increases in median rents between December 2017 and December 2022



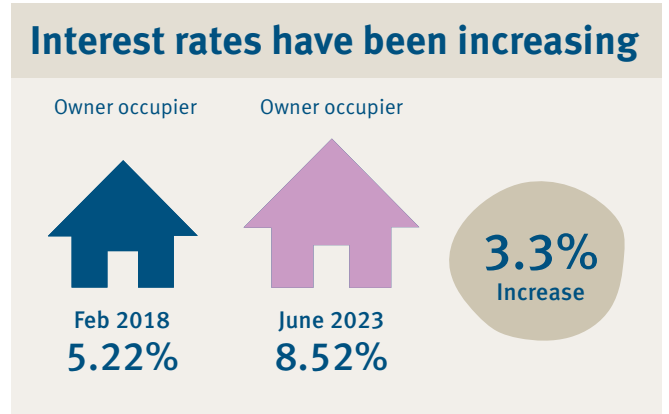
Source: Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority. Rental Tenancies Authority median rents quarterly data mapped to Queensland Family and Child Commission identified regions, 2023.



Interest rates have similarly been increasing. In February 2018, the standard interest rate for an owner-occupied property was 5.22%, rising to 8.52% by June 2023.<sup>122</sup> This means that Census data on housing is not reflective of the current financial situation faced by many families.

In 2021, Queensland had 230,030 one-parent families, 80.0% of which were living in female-led households. Figure 66 shows that compared with other Queensland households, one-parent families are more likely to rent and less likely to own their own home. They would also be more vulnerable to increases in rental prices and interest rates.

Figure 66: Increase in interest rates in Queensland, 2018 and 2023

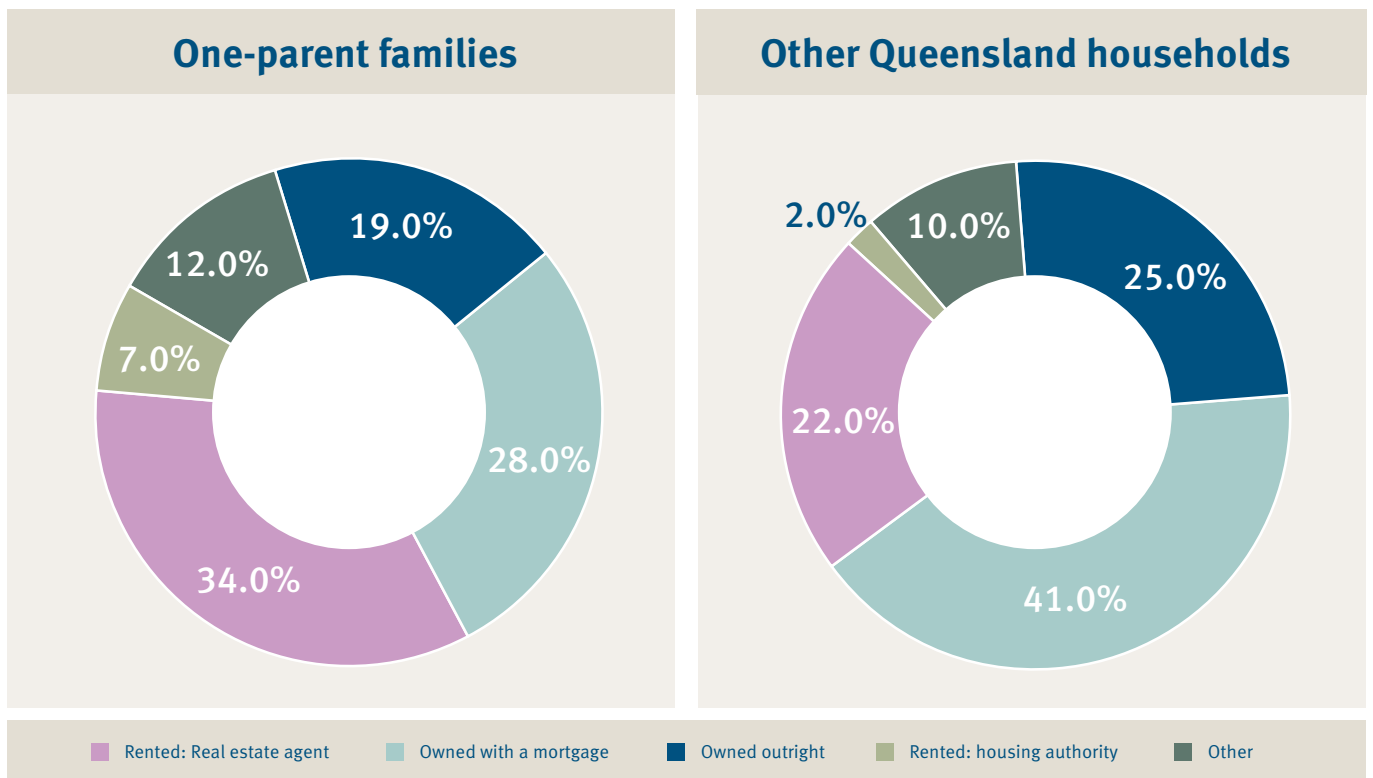


Source: Reserve Bank of Australia, Statistical Tables, 2023.



Compared with other Queensland households, one-parent families are more likely to rent and less likely to own their own home, making them more vulnerable to increases in rental prices and interest rates.

Figure 67: The proportion of one-parent families compared to other Queensland household types who are renting or who own their own property

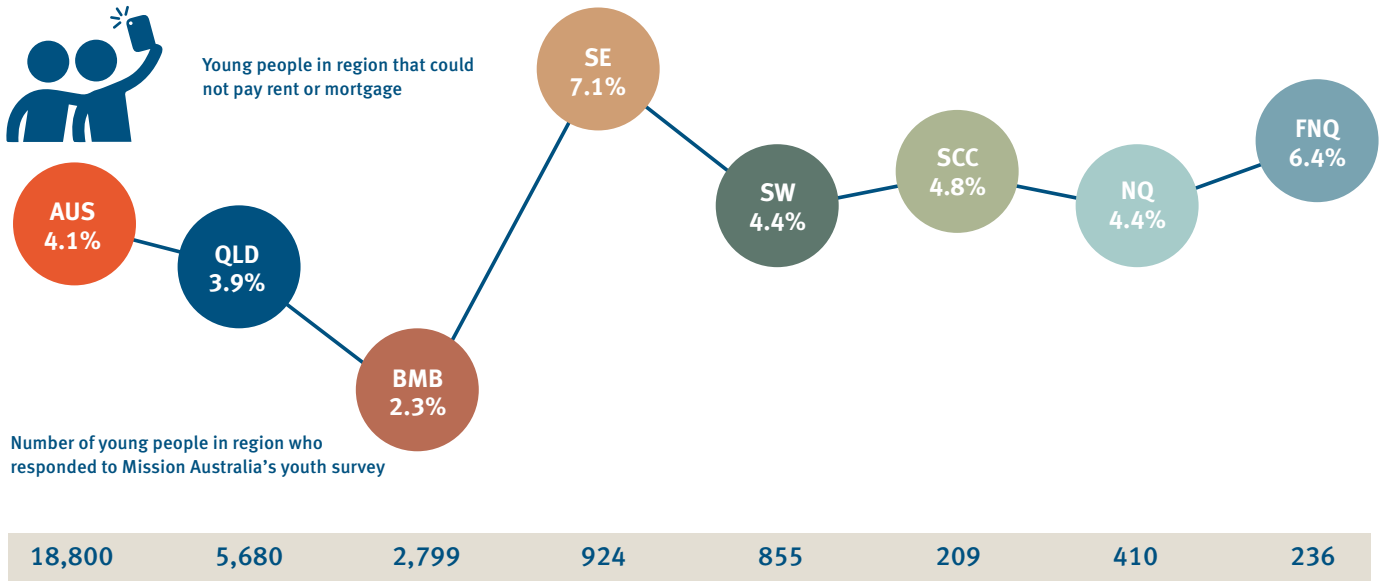


Source: Queensland Government Statisticians Office, Custom report - Household tenure by lone parent status and sex, 2023.

## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

In 2022, 4.0% of young Queenslanders reported that they or their families could not afford their rent or mortgage. Rates of concern were higher among young people living in Far North Queensland and the South East.

Figure 68: Number and percentage of young people aged 15–19 who reported they or their family could not afford to pay rent or a mortgage



Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>123</sup>

Lower rates of financial difficulties were reported in another survey of young people in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children.<sup>2</sup> Rates of concerns were higher for the older cohort, presumably as they are more likely to have taken on their own financial responsibilities (Figure 69).<sup>124</sup>

Figure 69: Number and percentage of Australian young people who reported they could not afford to pay rent or mortgage on time



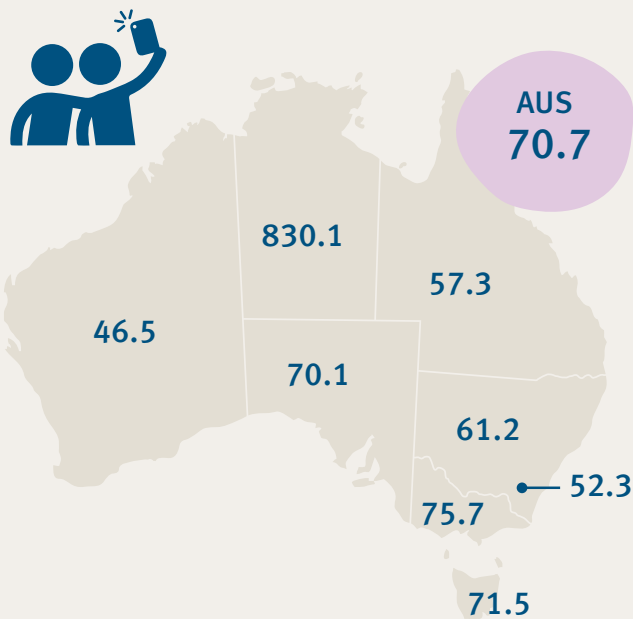
<sup>2</sup> This survey asked a slightly different question and asked young people if they personally had problems paying for housing rather than the Mission Australia youth survey, which asked about problems experienced by either young people or their families.

## Indicator 2.2.2: Families and young people do not experience homelessness

Approximately 8,291 young Queenslanders aged 0–24 years were homeless on Census night in 2021.<sup>126</sup> Children and young people made up more than one-third (37.0%) of Queensland’s homeless population. In 2021, Queensland’s rates of homelessness among 12–24 years old were slightly lower than the average for Australia – 57.3 per 10,000 were reported as homeless on Census night (Figure 70). While many jurisdictions have seen a drop in youth homelessness since 2006, Queensland’s rate has stayed around the same.

Approximately  
**8,291**  
of young Queenslanders  
aged 0–24 years were  
homeless on Census  
night in 2021

Figure 70: Rate per 10,000 population of homeless young people aged 12–24 years across Australian jurisdictions, 2021



2021

|     |      |     |       |     |      |     |      |
|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|------|
| NSW | 61.2 | QLD | 830.1 | WA  | 46.5 | NT  | 9    |
| VIC | 75.7 | SA  | 70.1  | TAS | 71.5 | ACT | 52.3 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021.<sup>127</sup>



Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs



A state-wide survey of young people aged 10–17 years under youth justice supervision found that three in 10 young people were living in unstable and/or unsuitable accommodation.<sup>128</sup>

Table 30 shows more detail about where families classified as homeless were living on Census night in 2021. Across Queensland, a small number of families (1,532) were raising children and young people in caravans, cabins, houseboats, improvised homes or tents.

Table 23: Number of family households living in 'other dwellings', which includes caravan, cabin, houseboat and improvised homes

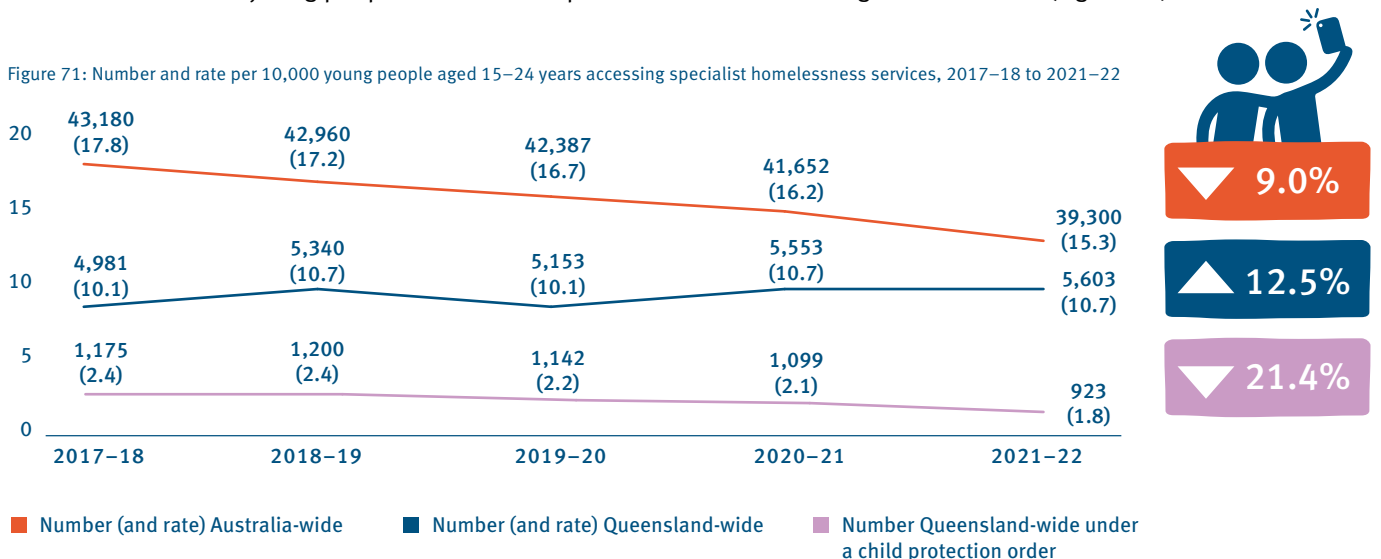


|  | AUS   | QLD   | BMB | SE  | SW  | SCC | NQ  | FNQ |
|--|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Couple family with children living in other dwelling | 4,540 | 837   | 104 | 81  | 114 | 223 | 99  | 90  |
| One-parent family living in other dwelling           | 3,172 | 695   | 127 | 116 | 55  | 205 | 52  | 99  |
| Total families                                       | 7,712 | 1,532 | 231 | 197 | 169 | 428 | 151 | 189 |

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, custom tables, 2023.

Increasing numbers of Queensland young people are accessing specialist homelessness services in contrast to the Australia-wide trend, which has been decreasing. However, in the past five years there has been a 21.4% decrease in young people under a child protection order accessing these services (Figure 71).<sup>129</sup>

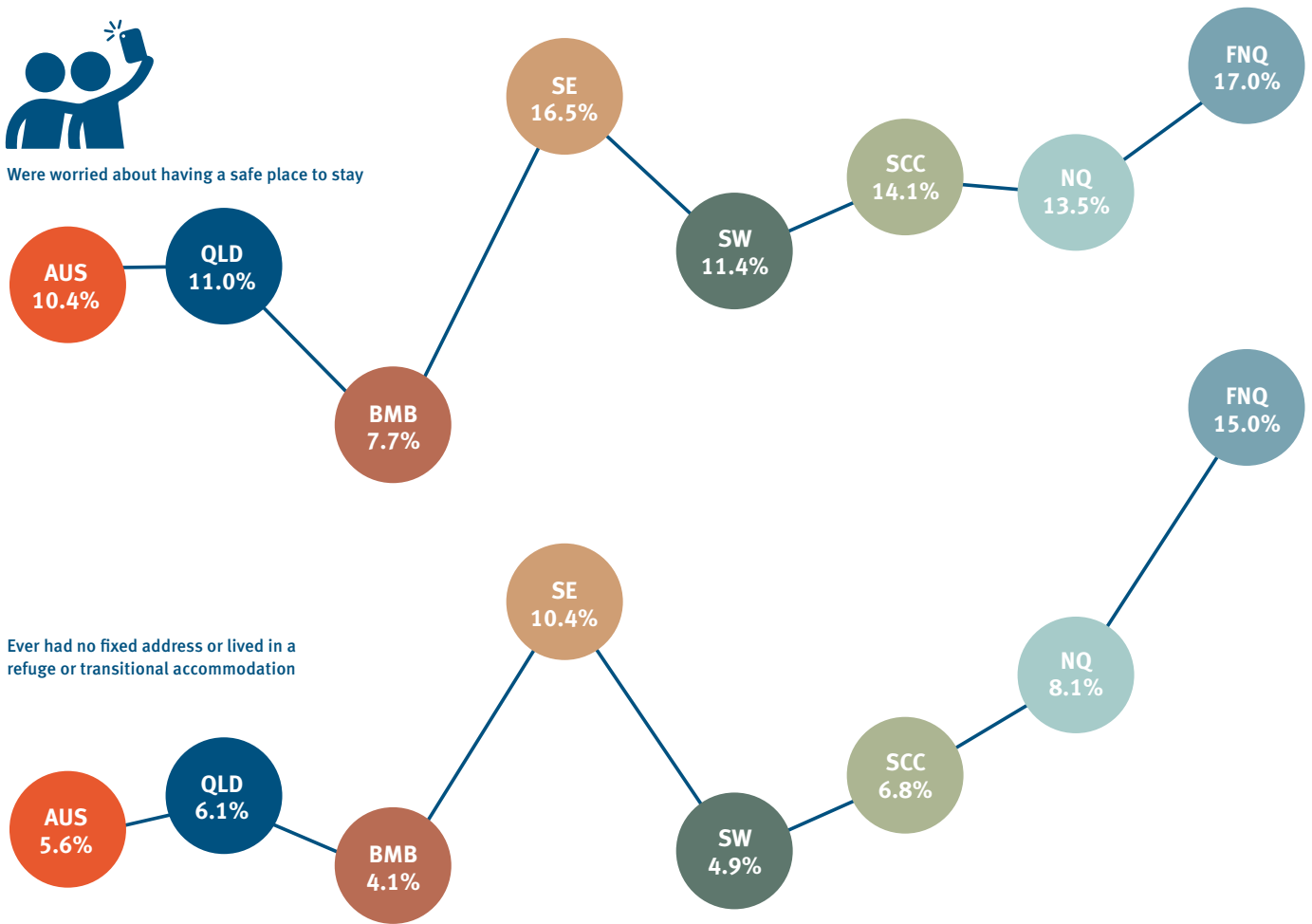
Figure 71: Number and rate per 10,000 young people aged 15–24 years accessing specialist homelessness services, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Source: Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers Survey 2022 Report, 2022.<sup>130</sup>

Worries about housing affect many young people. More than one in 10 Queensland young people were worried about having a safe place to stay (many more in the South East and Far North Queensland). Across Queensland, 6.1% of young people had, at some time, no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation, but for young people from Far North Queensland, this had been the experience for 15.0% (Figure 72).

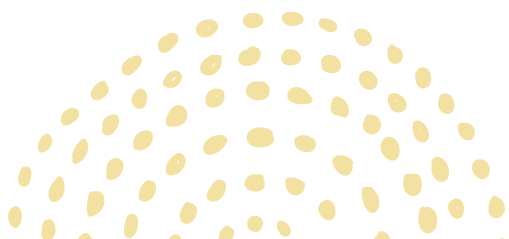
Figure 72: Percentage of young people aged 15–19 years who had experiences with unsafe or unstable accommodation



Number of young people in region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey

|        |       |       |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>131</sup>



### Indicator: 2.2.3 Families and young people do not live in overcrowded homes

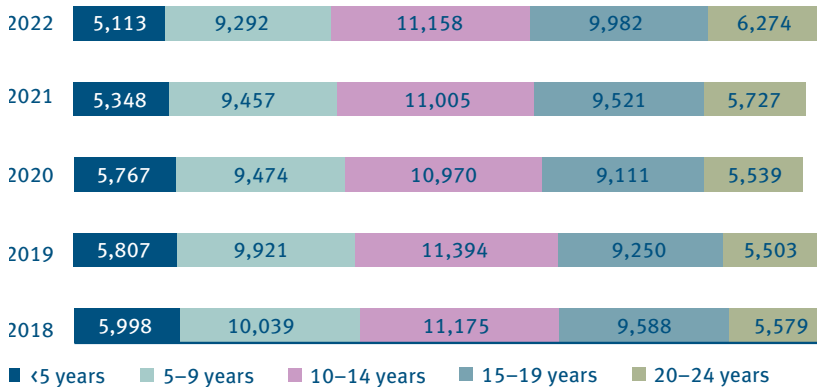
Approximately 4,321 young Queenslanders aged 0–24 years were living in severely crowded dwellings on Census night in 2021.<sup>132</sup> Children and young people made up 55.1% of Queensland’s population living in severely crowded dwellings. Queensland’s rate of people aged 12–24 years living in overcrowded dwellings was slightly lower than the Australian average (Figure 73).



### Indicator: 2.2.4 Families can access public rental housing when needed

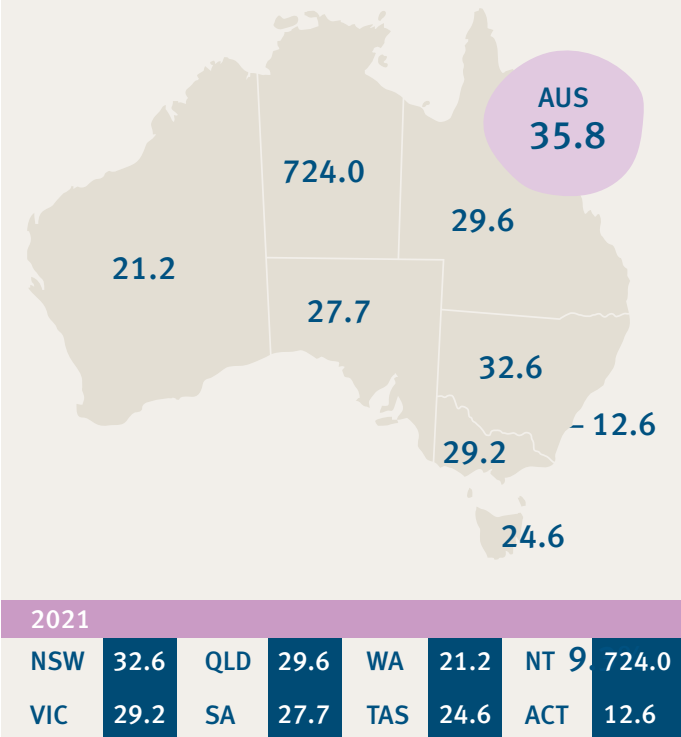
As at 30 June 2022, there were 41,819 children and young people living in public housing in Queensland. As shown in Figure 74, the number of children and young people aged 0–24 years living in public housing in Queensland has been relatively consistent over the past five years.

Figure 74: Number of children and young people aged 0–24 years living in public housing in Queensland, 2018-22



Source: Queensland Department of Housing, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 73: Rate per 10,000 population of young people aged 12–24 years living in overcrowded dwellings across Australian jurisdictions, 2021

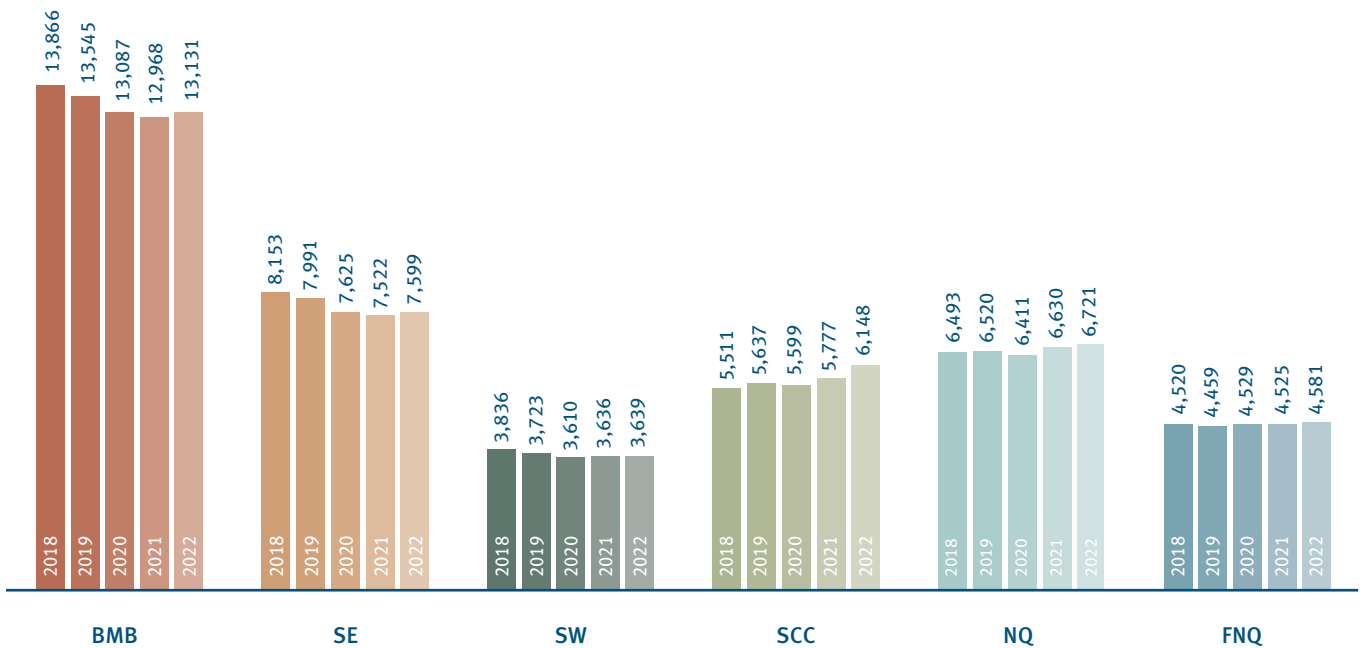


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021.<sup>133</sup>

The number of children and young people living in public housing in Queensland has been consistent over past five years

Figure 75 compares the number of children and young people living in public housing across different regions. In most regions over the past five years the numbers have stayed around the same or slightly decreased, with the exception of North Queensland and Sunshine Coast and Central where there has been a slight increase since 2020.

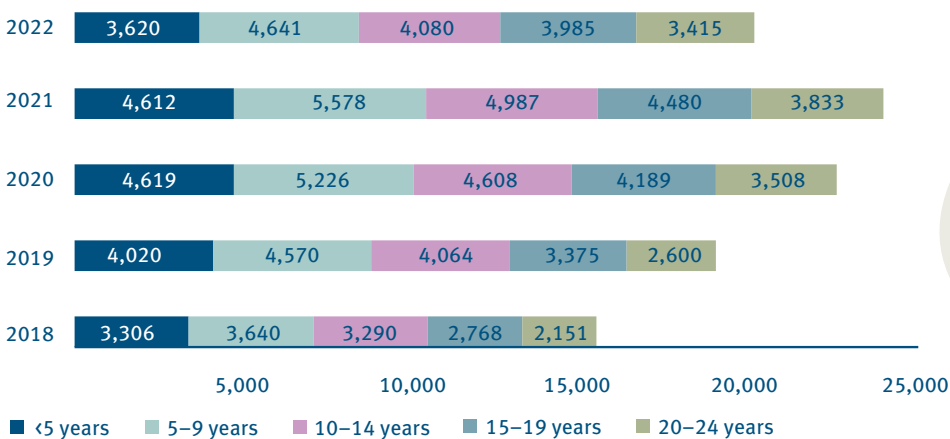
Figure 75: Regional comparison of the number of children and young people aged 0–24 years living in public housing, 2018–2022



Source: Queensland Department of Housing, unpublished data request, 2023.

As at 30 June 2022, there were 19,741 children and young people on the Queensland housing register. These are people who have been approved for public housing but not yet received an offer of housing. As shown in Figure 76, the number of children and young people aged 0–24 years on the Queensland housing register grew sharply between 2018 and 2021 but then dropped below 20,000 in 2022.

Figure 76: Number of children and young people aged 0–24 years on the Queensland public housing register, 2018–2022



Source: Queensland Department of Housing, unpublished data request, 2023.

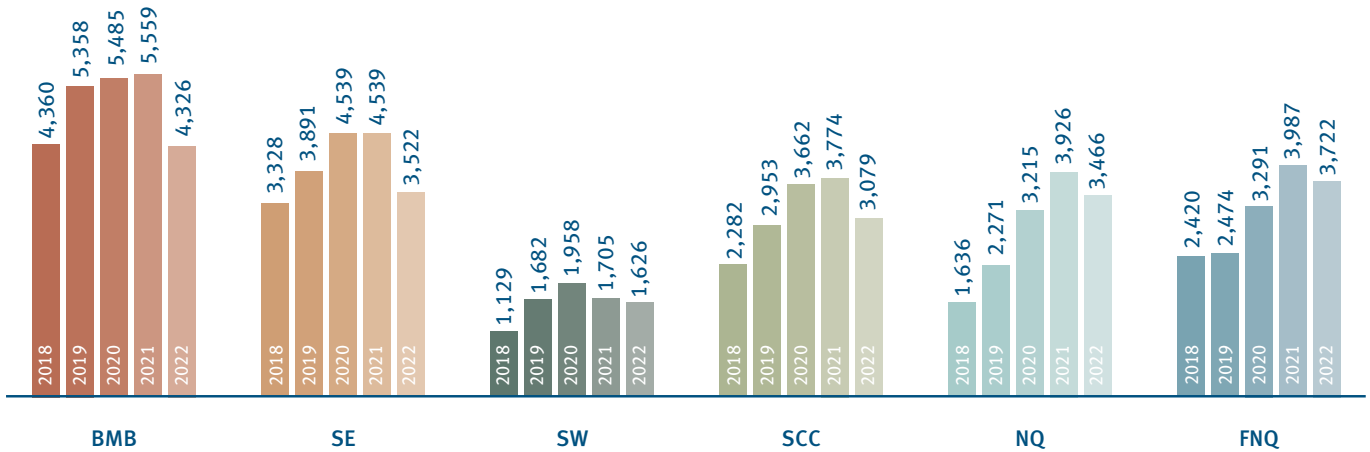
**19,741**  
children and young people  
were on the Queensland  
public housing register  
in 2022



Figure 77 compares the number of children and young people on the Queensland housing register across regions. With the exception of 2022 when numbers dropped, there has been a steady increase in the number of children and young people aged 0–24 years on the public housing register across all regions over the past five years.

**What do young people think?**  
 Of the people aged 18–24 years who responded to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023, only 37.0% agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the public housing system.

Figure 77: Number of 0–24 year olds on the Queensland public housing register per region, 2018–22



Source: Queensland Department of Housing, unpublished data request, 2023.

Only 28.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the public housing system.<sup>134</sup>



**Indicator 2.2.5: Children and young people in out-of-home care experience a low number of placement changes**

In 2021–22, 2,096 Queensland children and young people exited out-of-home care. Of that group, 522 children (24.9%) had experienced four or more placements while they were living in out-of-home care (Table 24).<sup>135</sup>

Table 24: The number of children leaving out-of-home care with four or more placements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

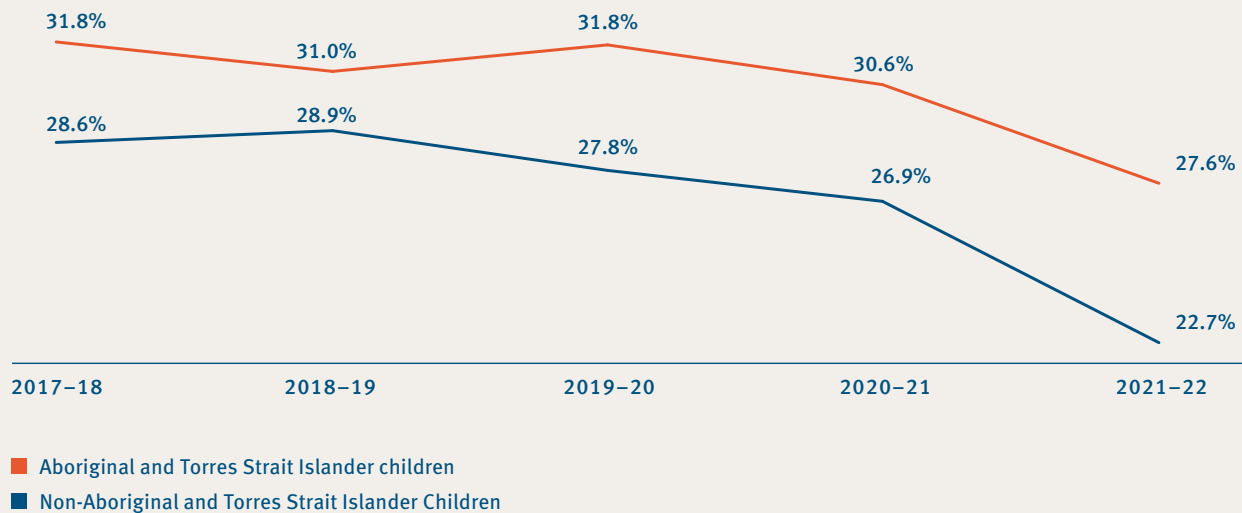
| Number of children  | 2017–18 | 2018–19 | 2019–20 | 2020–21 | 2021–22 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Leaving out-of-home care who have experienced four or more placements while in care – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children <sup>136</sup>     | 236     | 232     | 256     | 264     | 261     |
| Leaving out-of-home care who have experienced four or more placements while in care – non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children <sup>137</sup> | 289     | 300     | 277     | 311     | 261     |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, 'Our Performance' dashboard, 2023.<sup>138</sup>



Since 2017–18, the proportion of children and young people exiting out-of-home care who have experienced four or more placements has dropped for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, as shown in Figure 78.

Figure 78: Proportion of children and young people exiting out-of-home care who have experienced four or more placements while in care



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, 'Our Performance' dashboard, 2023. <sup>139</sup>

Among respondents to the Life in Care survey, less than half (44.5%) reported moving house in the past year. Of those that moved, almost half (47.2%) were happy to move, three in 10 (31.9%) reported they were unhappy and one in five (20.8%) reported they were unsure.<sup>140</sup>





#### CASE STUDY

### One Place Team and Street Team – outreach and support for young people

One Place and Street Team are programs run by Silky Oaks Children’s Haven. Silky Oaks has been working with young people, families, and communities for over 80 years, supporting them to thrive by providing a range of high-quality services. For the past 13 years, One Place and Street Teams have supported some of the most vulnerable and disengaged young people in the South East, by promoting their safety and wellbeing and supporting crucial goals in their best interest.

One Place provides safe overnight emergency accommodation and support for up to four complex young people on Child Protection Orders or Care Agreements, under the care of the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services. Young people who visit One Place are either unwilling or unable to stay in traditional placement options. At One Place they are provided with homemade dinners, an opportunity to shower, wash their clothes, have a safe bed for the night and can speak to support workers about their concerns, goals and needs, seek advice or just have a friendly conversation. Young people can also

seek linkages to cultural and community connections as well as assistance to build upon family and kin relationships. Additional supports include being provided with mobile phones, phone credit, go cards, toiletries and clothing. One Place is more than just safe and secure emergency accommodation, it is the ‘One Place’ that young people have said they feel welcomed and supported practically and emotionally.

Street Team is an assertive outreach service, delivered by enthusiastic workers who seek out and connect with young people who are struggling with a lack of community, homelessness, health, and personal issues. This service is designed to help improve their safety and overall wellbeing.

Silky Oaks’ Street Team and the One Place Team work from the same location, providing a supportive wrap around service to benefit their clients.

## Goal 2.3: Children, young people and their families have access to food, suitable and safe technology, transport, and personal items (clothing, school supplies or sporting equipment)

In addition to stable housing, children and young people need other material items, such as access to food, safe technology, transport, clothing and personal items. A lack of consistent access to food (food insecurity) is associated with childhood behaviour problems, mental health problems and poor academic outcomes.<sup>141</sup>

A lack of accessibility to affordable transport can be a barrier to education and employment opportunities for young people.<sup>142</sup> Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to the internet has become increasingly important for children and young people, particularly in terms of their ability to access online

school. A lack of internet connection prevents young people from connecting online, and in the event of school closures, can mean they are unable to access an education.<sup>143</sup>

Children in out-of-home care face additional barriers in accessing these items. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers agreed that children living in out-of-home care need the same resources and equipment as their peers (for example, personal hygiene items, clothing, school uniform and books and sporting gear) and reasonable processes to support their participation in school activities, camps and other extra-curricular activities.

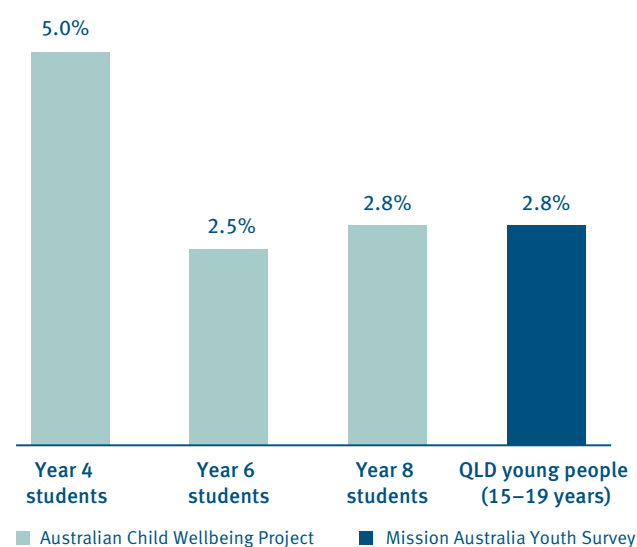
*Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to the internet has become increasingly important for children and young people, particularly in terms of their ability to access online school.*

### Indicator 2.3.1: Children and young people have food security

Around half a million Australian households struggle to meet their food needs on any given day due to being unable to afford food. This means that adults and/or their children are eating less than they need, or they go hungry or skip meals.<sup>144</sup>

Two recent surveys have asked Australian children and young people to report on their experiences of having insufficient food (Figure 79). The findings suggest that having insufficient food is experienced by a significant portion of young Queenslanders. Reported rates of having insufficient food were higher for younger children (year 4 students) than for older children and young people.<sup>145</sup>

Figure 79: A comparison of the percentage of children and young people reporting they had gone without meals or who often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home



### Indicator 2.3.2: Children and young people have access to suitable and safe communication and technology, including access to the internet

In 2016, 83.7% of Queensland households were able to access the internet from home. There was considerable variation within the state: in Far North Queensland, only 69.2% of households were able to access the internet.<sup>146</sup> The 2021 Census did not include a question about internet access in households due to increased mobile internet usage on personal devices outside the home.

Australian households with children tend to have higher rates of internet access than those without children – estimates indicate rates of around 97.0% coverage compared to 82.0% respectively. Households located in major cities are more likely to have internet access at home (88.0%) than those in remote or very remote parts of Australia (77.0%).<sup>147 148</sup>

Recent measures of digital inclusion (assessed in terms of access, affordability and digital ability) indicate that couples with children are the most ‘digitally inclusive’ household type in Australia. One-parent families have higher rates of digital inclusion than the average household but are not as high as couple families.<sup>149</sup>

Approximately 8 out of 10 children and young people living in out-of-home care (79.8%) reported having access to wi-fi.<sup>150</sup>





### Indicator 2.3.3: Children, young people and their families have access to a vehicle or other suitable transport

Australia-wide, the majority of households (91.3%) have at least one vehicle. In 2021, of those households that did not own a car, 28.2% were family households.<sup>151</sup>

Rates of car ownership vary across regions, with rates lowest in Far North Queensland (Table 25). Low rates of car ownership may compound transport issues as there are fewer or no public transport options in remote areas.

#### What do parents and carers think?

The Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 asked parents/carers whether getting to school and work is easy. Around 8 out of 10 respondents agreed, but there was some regional variation.

Table 25: A comparison of car ownership rates across Queensland regions

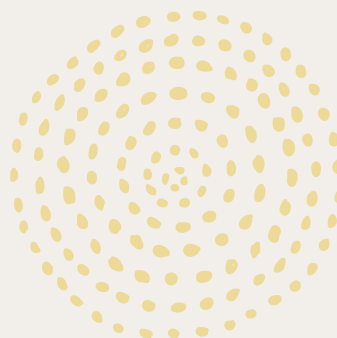
|   | AUS     | QLD     | BMB    | SE     | SW     | SCC    | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Number of dwellings with no motor vehicle     | 673,969 | 106,309 | 45,452 | 19,209 | 10,157 | 15,749 | 8,216 | 7,284 |
| Percentage of dwellings with no motor vehicle | 8.7%    | 5.7%    | 7.1%   | 4.7%   | 4.7%   | 4.6%   | 5.2%  | 7.2%  |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021.<sup>152</sup>

Table 26: Percentage of community survey respondents reporting that getting to school is easy

|                                    | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of respondents              | 1,377 | 333   | 205   | 223   | 255   | 205   | 157   |
| Getting to school and work is easy | 81.0% | 83.0% | 83.0% | 77.0% | 79.0% | 83.0% | 82.0% |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>153</sup>



## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Across Queensland, one in 10 young people identified that a lack of transport was a barrier to their work and study goals (10.6%) and they found travelling around their community hard to do (10.9%). There was regional variation, with young people in the South East and Far North Queensland most likely to report lack of transport as a barrier while those in the Sunshine Coast and Central were most likely to report difficulties in travelling around their communities.



Table 27: Barriers identified by subsample of young people aged 15–19 years who were currently studying and who said they had barriers to achieving post school study/work goals

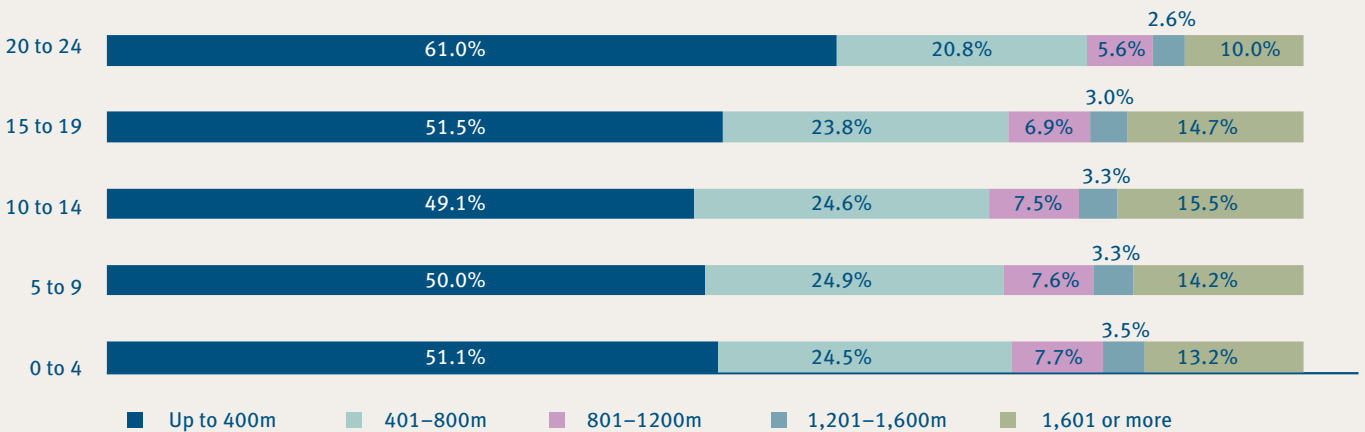
|  | AUS   | QLD   | BMB  | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Who identified they had barriers to their work and study goals and nominated lack of transport | 11.4% | 10.6% | 7.4% | 15.1% | 12.6% | 9.8%  | 15.4% | 12.4% |
| Who found travelling around their community hard to do (e.g. using footpaths)                  | 11.2% | 10.9% | 9.1% | 13.1% | 11.3% | 14.8% | 13.4% | 13.6% |

Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>154</sup>

The Department of Transport and Main Roads collects data on walking distance to the closest public transport stop for people living in South East Queensland (including the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba).

Figure 80 shows that more than half of children and young people aged 0–24 years in South East Queensland live within 400 m of a public transport stop. Rates are slightly higher for young people aged 20–24 years: 61.0% of this age group live within 400m of a public transport stop.

Figure 80: Distance from a public transport stop for children and young people aged 0–24 years living in South East Queensland<sup>3</sup>



Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> 2021 population by Meshblock from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and distributed evenly to Land-use Urban Planning and Transport Accessibility Indicators (LUPTAI) nodes within each MB. LUPTAI accessibility scores at a node level scores for walk to closest public transport stop. Public transport stops = 2020 SEQ LUPTAI Model (Sep 2020 General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data).



# 3.5%

of young people aged 15–19 years could not afford school supplies or to go on school excursions.

## Indicator 2.3.4: Children and young people have access to essential personal items

Surveys of young people suggest that a small, yet significant, proportion of young Queenslanders are not able to afford items essential for their education or health, for example 3.5% of young people aged 15–19 years could not afford school supplies or to go on school excursions. Rates were higher for those living in the South East and Far North Queensland (Table 28).

Table 28: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who experienced financial barriers to school activities

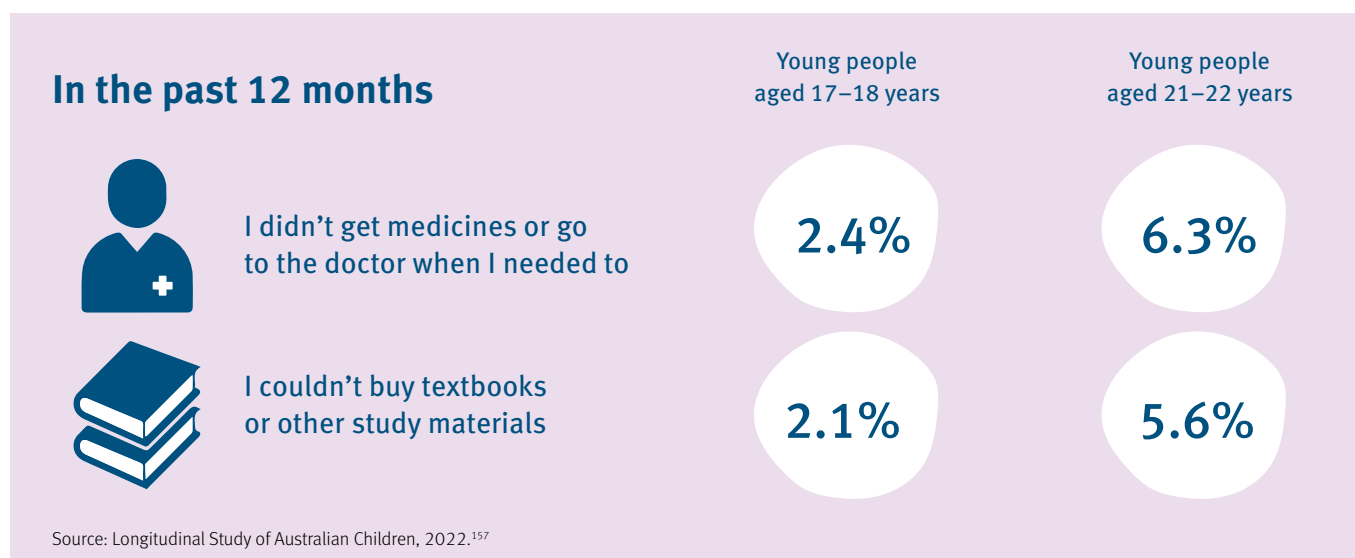


|   | AUS    | QLD   | BMB   | SE   | SW   | SCC  | NQ   | FNQ  |
|---|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| In region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey | 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924  | 855  | 209  | 410  | 236  |
| Could not afford school supplies or go on school excursions | 3.5%   | 3.5%  | 1.8%  | 6.6% | 3.7% | 4.8% | 4.4% | 5.1% |

Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>155</sup>

Rates of financial barriers to accessing health services and study materials were higher for young adults aged 21–22 than for those aged 17–18 years (Figure 81).<sup>156</sup>

Figure 81: Proportion of Australian young people experiencing financial barriers to education and health services



## Families have sufficient material basics to meet their needs

Overall, almost nine in 10 children and young people (89.2%) who responded to the Life in Care survey reported always, or most of the time, having the things they need to live comfortably in their current placement, including having medication, toiletries and underwear (Table 29).

Table 29: Percentage of respondents to the Life in Care survey reporting access to personal items

|   |   |   |  |                             |
|---|---|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 89.2%   | 88.4%                                       | 88.2%   | 87.8%                                    | 85.6%                       |
| have the things they need to live comfortably | have access to medication when they need it | have access to toiletries when they need them | have access to underwear, socks and bras | have access to tampons/pads |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Just under one in five children and young people in care (18.2%) reported having had problems getting things they needed for school, and of that group, more than three in five (61.1%) reported having missed school or school activities because of it.

## Endnotes

- 94 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Employee households see biggest rise in living costs*. <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/employee-households-see-biggest-rise-living-costs>
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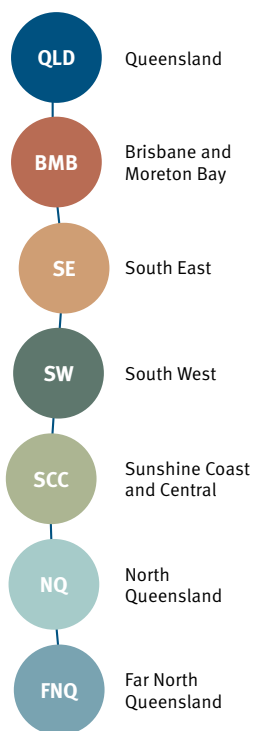


## Domain 3



Children, young people  
and their families  
***are healthy***

Regions of Queensland



## Children, young people and their families are healthy

Being healthy means that children, young people and their parents or carers have good physical and emotional wellbeing. For children to be healthy, they need to grow up in healthy, supportive and nurturing environments. Healthy environments include having access to timely and supportive health care services. Parents and carers play a critical role in providing the care young children need to be happy and healthy and to grow and develop well, so supporting the health of parents and carers also promotes the health of children and young people.

Children and young people entering out-of-home care often have unmet health needs, including undiagnosed and untreated psychological, physical and developmental issues, which can

impact on other areas of their life such as education and their ability to make lasting relationships. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers identified a set of important health priorities for children in out-of-home care including comprehensive health checks and the universal provision of mental health services.<sup>158</sup>

Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults. They are better able to cope with adversity and the challenges of everyday life, have healthier immune systems, feel a sense of personal wellbeing, and interact with their surroundings in ways that promote successful development.<sup>159</sup>

The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children, young people and their parents are healthy.

Table 30: Domain 3 goals and indicators

| Domain  | Goal   | Indicator groupings  |
|---|--|--|
| Domain 3: Children, young people and their families are healthy | <b>Goal 3.1:</b> Newborns and infants are given the best start to life   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 3.1.1: Women have healthy pregnancies</li> <li>• Indicator 3.1.2: The number of births to women aged under 20 years is low</li> <li>• Indicator 3.1.3: Babies are healthy at birth</li> <li>• Indicator 3.1.4: Newborns and infants have the best start to life</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>Goal 3.2:</b> Parents and carers are supported to maintain their own health   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 3.2.1: Parents and carers have good physical and mental health and levels of parental substance use are low</li> <li>• Indicator 3.2.2: Parents and carers facing health challenges receive support</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>Goal 3.3:</b> Children and young people have good physical health and receive appropriate support for their physical health needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 3.3.1: Children and young people have good physical health</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.2: Children are immunised</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.3: Children and young people with disability have their support needs met</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.4: Children and young people have healthy teeth</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.5: Young people avoid smoking, drinking and using other drugs</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.6: Children and young people lead a healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.7: Children and young people receive appropriate and timely support for their health needs</li> <li>• Indicator 3.3.8: Rates of non-preventable child deaths are reducing</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>Goal 3.4:</b> Children and young people have good mental health and receive appropriate support for their mental health needs     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 3.4.1: Children and young people have high levels of wellbeing and good mental health</li> <li>• Indicator 3.4.2: Children and young people receive appropriate support for their mental and emotional health needs</li> <li>• Indicator 3.4.3: Young people with eating disorders receive treatment</li> </ul>   |

Figure 82: Health outcomes for Queensland children, young people and families

## Health outcomes for Queensland children, young people and families

### Most Queensland women have healthy pregnancies and most babies are born healthy



#### Among Queensland mothers

**96.4%** attended five or more antenatal visits<sup>1</sup>  
**88.5%** did not smoke during their pregnancy<sup>2</sup>  
**94.1%** did not drink alcohol during their pregnancy<sup>2</sup>

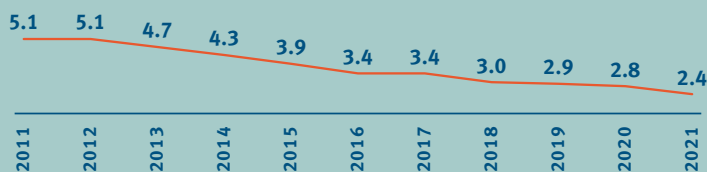


#### Among Queensland babies

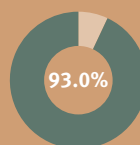
**91.3%** were born after 37 weeks' gestation<sup>2</sup>  
**93.6%** had a birthweight greater than 2,500g<sup>2</sup>

### Rates of pregnancies among younger women are falling<sup>1</sup>

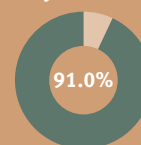
Percentage of women who gave birth in Queensland under 20 years



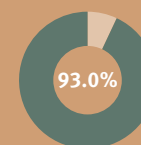
### Most Queensland children are fully immunised<sup>3</sup>



1 year olds



2 year olds



5 year olds

### Many children, young people and parents have health challenges



#### Among parents

Only **53.0%** of two-parent families and 38.0% of one-parent families rate their health as excellent or good.<sup>1</sup>



#### Among children and young people

**128,200** were living with a disability<sup>4</sup>  
 only **58.1%** rate their health as excellent or good<sup>5</sup>  
**26.0%** were overweight or obese<sup>6</sup>

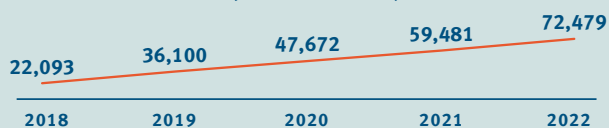
### Drug and alcohol use is reported by a significant proportion of parents

**42.2%**  
reported risky drinking<sup>7</sup>

**14.5%**  
reported illicit use of drugs<sup>7</sup>

### A growing number of children are accessing NDIS supports<sup>9</sup>

Number of Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years with an NDIS plan



### Patterns of drug and alcohol use among young people are changing

**1/3–2/3**  
have tried e-cigarettes

In the past 10 years, rates of daily tobacco smoking have dropped from **4.4%** to **1.7%**<sup>4</sup>

Between 2007 and 2019, the rate of young people abstaining from alcohol increased from **39.0%** to **73.0%**<sup>8</sup>



Sources: <sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2022. <sup>2</sup> Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>3</sup> Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Immunisation Register, 2023. <sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022. <sup>5</sup> Mission Australia Youth Survey, 2022. <sup>6</sup> Queensland Health, Preventative Health Survey, 2022. <sup>7</sup> National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 2019. <sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023. <sup>9</sup> National Disability Insurance Agency, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Goal 3.1: Newborns and infants are given the best start to life

The early days of a child’s life (from conception to two years) are foundational for shaping their development and wellbeing and can have a lifelong impact on their physical and mental health. Given the importance of a healthy prenatal environment, promoting children’s good health needs to consider the health needs of both mothers and babies during pregnancy.

While many young parents provide loving and nurturing care to their babies, mothers who give birth under the age of 20 years are vulnerable and may need support to achieve the best outcomes both for their babies and for themselves.

On many measures of early health and development, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies fare less well than non-Indigenous mothers and babies. Understanding this disparity requires further investigation of the contributing causal factors including system and service-level factors.

Exclusive breastfeeding,<sup>161</sup> immunisation and timely care during illness also contribute to the healthy growth and development of infants and young children. Birth registration helps to ensure that children can access school and health services, and later on can enrol to vote, open a bank account and enter the job market.

Overall, the highest rates of healthy behaviours during pregnancy and healthier birth outcomes were found for pregnant women and babies in Brisbane and Moreton Bay, the South East and the South West, indicating the importance of additional services and supports in other regions

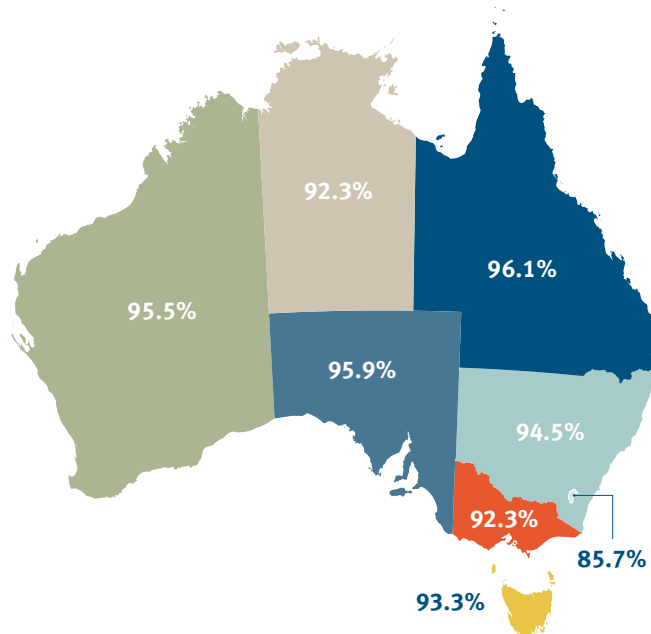
Table 31: Regional variations in health behaviours during pregnancy

| Brisbane and Moreton Bay   |                                |                 |                 |                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 7.5%                       | 7.4%                           | 1.2%            | 4.7%            | 8.1%                 |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |
| South East                 |                                |                 |                 |                      |
| 10.4%                      | 6.1%                           | 2.0%            | 4.8%            | 8.8%                 |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |
| South West                 |                                |                 |                 |                      |
| 14.5%                      | 4.0%                           | 4.0%            | 5.5%            | 9.2%                 |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |
| Sunshine Coast and Central |                                |                 |                 |                      |
| 13.0%                      | 3.5%                           | 3.0%            | 4.8%            | 7.9%                 |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |
| North Queensland           |                                |                 |                 |                      |
| 16.5%                      | 5.2%                           | 3.3%            | 5.9%            | 10.1%                |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |
| Far North Queensland       |                                |                 |                 |                      |
| 20.4%                      | 7.5%                           | 4.4%            | 6.0%            | 10.5%                |
| Smoking                    | Use of alcohol before 20 weeks | Births under 20 | Low birthweight | Born before 37 weeks |

### Indicator 3.1.1: Women have healthy pregnancies

The proportion of Queensland women attending five or more antenatal appointments each year is steadily growing. By comparison with other states and territories (Figure 83), Queensland has one of the highest rates of women attending five or more antenatal appointments. Within Queensland, rates are slightly higher for non-Indigenous women than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. There is also regional variation as shown in Table 32.

Figure 83: A comparison of the percentage of women across Australian jurisdictions who attended 5 or more antenatal visits in 2021



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National perinatal data collection annual update, 2021.<sup>162</sup>

Table 32: Number and proportion of mothers who attended 5 or more antenatal visits during pregnancy in 2021

| Australia | Queensland | Aboriginal/<br>Torres Strait<br>Islander status         | Brisbane and<br>Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine<br>Coast and<br>Central | North<br>Queensland | Far North<br>Queensland |
|-----------|------------|---|-----------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 94.3%     | 96.1%      | Aboriginal and Torres<br>Strait Islander mothers        | 91.2%                       | 90.4%      | 93.9%      | 88.4%                            | 87.2%               | 93.9%                   |
|           |            | Non-Aboriginal and<br>Torres Strait Islander<br>mothers | 98.0%                       | 94.7%      | 97.9%      | 96.9%                            | 98.5%               | 98.4%                   |

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

Most Queensland women do not drink or smoke during their pregnancies; however, more Queensland mothers smoke during their pregnancy than the average for Australia. Comparative data on rates of drinking alcohol is not available at the national level. There is regional variation within Queensland, with rates of smoking highest among women living outside of Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South East. For Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander mothers, rates of drinking alcohol were highest for women living in North Queensland and Far North Queensland, while for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, rates were highest in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South East (Table 33).

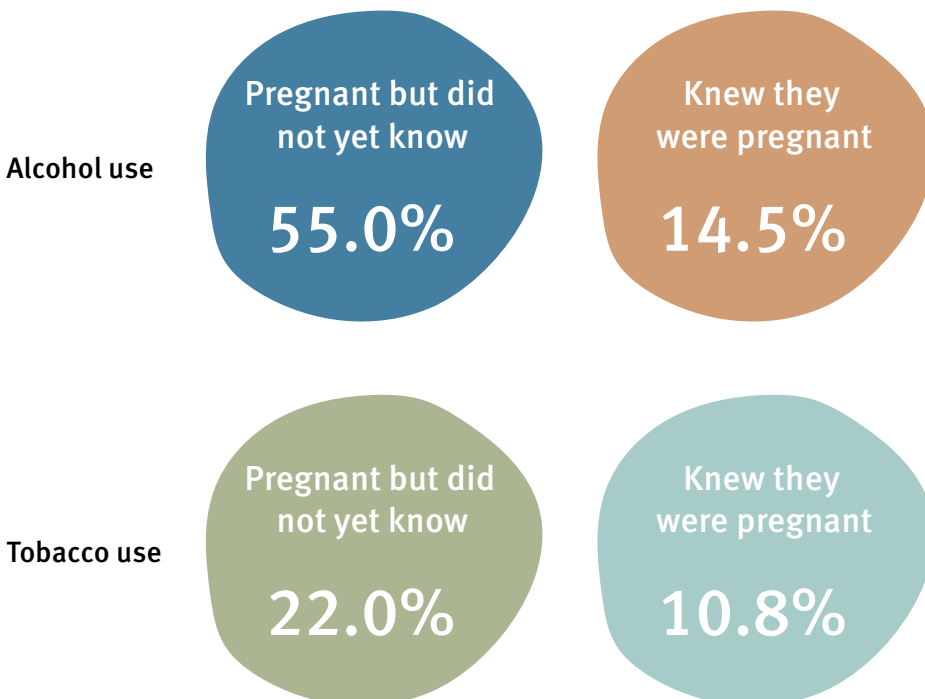
Table 33: Number and proportion of mothers who smoked or who drank alcohol during pregnancy in 2021

| Variable                | Australia | Queensland | Aboriginal/<br>Torres Strait<br>Islander status   | Brisbane and<br>Moreton Bay | South<br>East | South<br>West | Sunshine<br>Coast and<br>Central | North<br>Queensland | Far North<br>Queensland |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Smoked at any stage     | 8.6%      | 11.5%      | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers     | 37.5%                       | 35.4%         | 42.2%         | 42.7%                            | 51.3%               | 48.9%                   |
|                         |           |            | Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers | 6.4%                        | 9.3%          | 11.6%         | 10.7%                            | 10.2%               | 9.8%                    |
| Alcohol before 20 weeks | N/A       | 5.9%       | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers     | 8.1%                        | 6.3%          | 7.7%          | 7.3%                             | 13.7%               | 13.2%                   |
|                         |           |            | Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers | 7.4%                        | 6.1%          | 3.6%          | 3.2%                             | 3.7%                | 5.4%                    |
| Alcohol after 20 weeks  | N/A       | 0.9%       | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers     | 2.1%                        | 1.4%          | 2.1%          | 2.8%                             | 5.6%                | 3.5%                    |
|                         |           |            | Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers | 0.9%                        | 0.8%          | 0.4%          | 0.6%                             | 0.5%                | 0.6%                    |

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

A recent Australian self-report study found rates of tobacco and alcohol use were relatively high among women who were pregnant, but did not yet know, but were lower for women who had found out they were pregnant (Figure 84). Twice as many breastfeeding women abstained from alcohol in 2019 compared to 2007 (49.0% and 25.0% respectively).<sup>163</sup>

Figure 84: Australian women reporting on their use of alcohol and tobacco while pregnant



Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 2019.<sup>164</sup>

### Indicator 3.1.2: The number of births to women aged under 20 years is low

The proportion of women giving birth under 20 years has dropped in every state and territory in Australia since 2011 (Table 34).<sup>165</sup>

Table 34: Proportion of women who gave birth aged under 20 years by state and territory of birth, 2011–21


|      | New South Wales | Victoria | Queensland | Western Australia | South Australia | Tasmania | Australian Capital Territory | Northern Territory | Australia |
|------|-----------------|----------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 2011 | 3.2             | 2.5      | 5.1        | 4.3               | 4.0             | 6.1      | 2.3                          | 9.3                | 3.7       |
| 2012 | 3.1             | 2.3      | 5.1        | 4.0               | 3.9             | 6.1      | 2.2                          | 9.7                | 3.6       |
| 2013 | 3.0             | 2.3      | 4.7        | 3.6               | 3.3             | 5.5      | 1.9                          | 7.9                | 3.3       |
| 2014 | 2.7             | 2.0      | 4.3        | 3.1               | 3.1             | 5.1      | 1.7                          | 8.0                | 3.0       |
| 2015 | 2.5             | 1.6      | 3.9        | 2.8               | 2.8             | 4.4      | 1.3                          | 7.4                | 2.7       |
| 2016 | 2.2             | 1.5      | 3.4        | 2.4               | 2.4             | 4.3      | 1.1                          | 6.1                | 2.4       |
| 2017 | 2.0             | 1.4      | 3.4        | 2.1               | 2.1             | 3.7      | 1.2                          | 5.9                | 2.2       |
| 2018 | 1.9             | 1.2      | 3.0        | 1.9               | 1.9             | 3.3      | 1.1                          | 6.0                | 2.0       |
| 2019 | 1.7             | 1.2      | 2.9        | 1.6               | 1.6             | 3.0      | 1.5                          | 5.9                | 1.9       |
| 2020 | 1.6             | 1.0      | 2.8        | 1.8               | 1.8             | 2.6      | 0.9                          | 5.0                | 1.8       |
| 2021 | 1.4             | 0.8      | 2.4        | 1.4               | 1.4             | 1.8      | 0.8                          | 5.3                | 1.5       |

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's mothers and babies, 2022.<sup>166</sup>

In 2021, 2.4% of Queensland women who gave birth were under 20 years of age. Only the Northern Territory had higher rates of births to women under 20 years than Queensland (Table 35).<sup>167</sup>

Rates of women giving birth under age 20 were highest in Far North Queensland where 4.4% of all births were to women aged under 20 years. One in eight Aboriginal and Torres Islander mothers in this region gave birth under 20 years (Table 35).

Table 35: Proportion of women who gave birth aged under 20 years by Queensland region, 2021

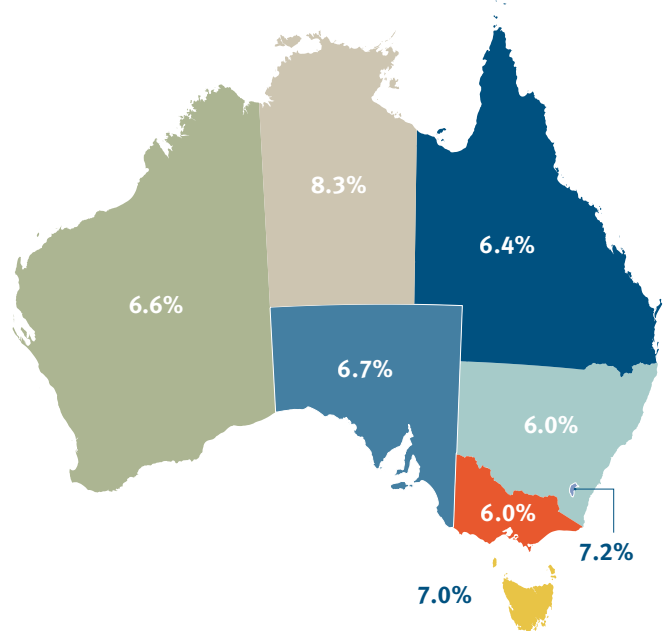
| Variable                               | Australia | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status  | Queensland   | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|--|-----------|--|--------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Percentage of births to women under 20 | 1.5%      | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women  | 483 (10.4%)  | 59 (8.0%)                | 60 (9.5%)  | 83 (11.4%) | 71 (10.2%)                 | 96 (10.7%)       | 114 (12.0%)          |
|  |           | Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women  | 994 (1.7%)   | 190 (0.9%)               | 231 (1.7%) | 224 (3.2%) | 213 (2.4%)                 | 95 (1.9%)        | 41 (1.6%)            |
|  |           | All women  | 1,477 (2.4%) | 249 (1.2%)               | 291 (2.0%) | 307 (4.0%) | 284 (3.0%)                 | 191 (3.3%)       | 155 (4.4%)           |

A state-wide survey of young people aged 10–17 years under youth justice supervision found that 7.0% (around 112 young people) were current or expectant parents. This includes those who were biological parents (even if not actively parenting), an expectant mother or father or a young person who was responsible for a child in a parent-like role or making decisions about a child's upbringing.<sup>168</sup>

### Indicator 3.1.3: Babies are healthy at birth

In 2021, 63,383 babies were born in Queensland.<sup>169</sup> Of those, 5,541 were born before 37 weeks and just over 4,000 were born with a low birthweight (less than 2,500g). By comparison with other states and territories (Figure 85), Queensland’s rates of low birthweight babies were just above the average for Australia (6.4% versus 6.3%). Within Queensland, rates were slightly higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women than for non-Indigenous women. There is also regional variation as shown in Table 36.

Figure 85: Proportion of live babies with low birthweight (less than 2,500g) by state and territory of birth, 2021



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National perinatal data collection annual update, 2021.<sup>170</sup>



Table 36: Proportion of babies who were born before 37 weeks gestation or who had a low birthweight in 2021

| Variable                       | Australia | Queensland | Aboriginal/<br>Torres Strait<br>Islander status | Brisbane and<br>Moreton Bay | South<br>East | South<br>West | Sunshine<br>Coast and<br>Central | North<br>Queensland | Far North<br>Queensland |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Born before 37 weeks gestation | 8.1%      | 8.7%       | Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander               | 14.6%                       | 12.5%         | 12.8%         | 13.7%                            | 15.5%               | 15.8%                   |
|                                |           |            | Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander           | 7.8%                        | 8.7%          | 8.8%          | 7.5%                             | 9.1%                | 8.5%                    |
| Birth-weight less than 2,500 g | 6.2%      | 6.4%       | Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander               | 8.4%                        | 7.0%          | 9.3%          | 10.1%                            | 10.3%               | 10.1%                   |
|                                |           |            | Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander           | 4.5%                        | 4.7%          | 5.2%          | 4.4%                             | 5.1%                | 4.4%                    |
| Birth-weight less than 1,500 g | 0.9%      | 1.0%       | Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander               | 1.4%                        | 1.1%          | 1.7%          | 2.2%                             | 1.3%                | 2.1%                    |
|                                |           |            | Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander           | 0.7%                        | 0.6%          | 0.7%          | 0.6%                             | 1.0%                | 0.7%                    |

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

## Queensland's progress against Closing the Gap targets.<sup>171</sup>



**Closing the Gap indicator** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong

**Closing the Gap target** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91.0%.

**Queensland data** In 2020, 89.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies were born with a healthy birthweight.

**What does the Growing Up In Queensland report tell us?** Table 53 shows that some Queensland regions (Brisbane and Moreton Bay and South East) have met or exceeded this Closing the Gap target while others are still making progress towards this goal.



### Indicator 3.1.4 Newborns and infants have the best start to life

Australia-wide, in 2020–21, almost three quarters of babies (73.8%) at six months, and half (51.1%) at 12 months were still being at least partially breastfed. The most recent Queensland data indicates that rates were lower for Queensland babies (Figure 86) although this is older data from 2014.

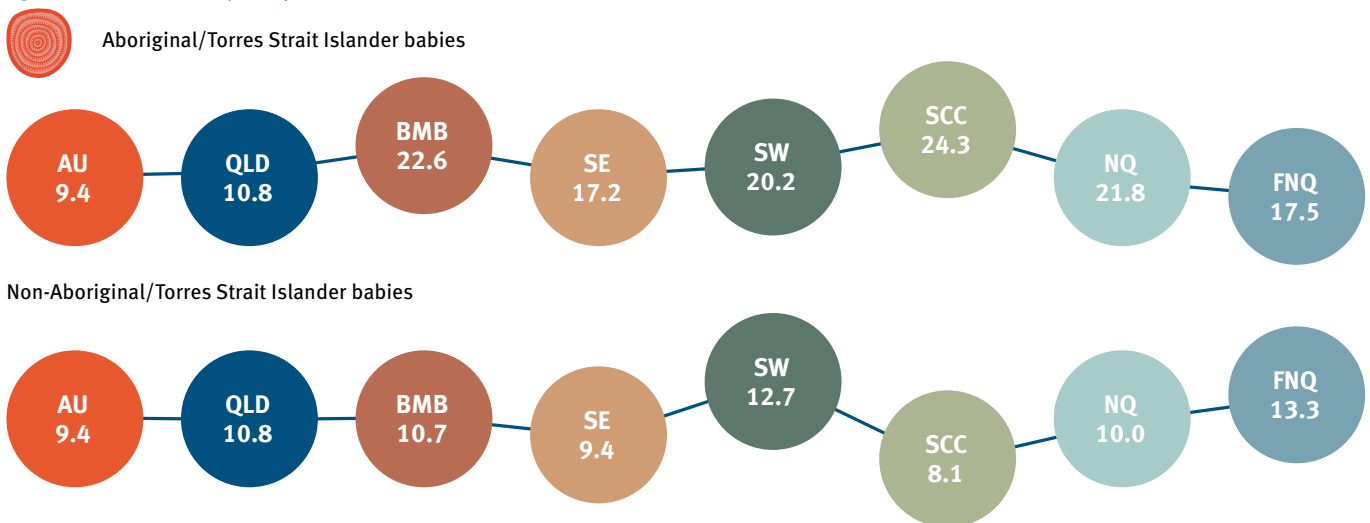
Figure 86: Breastfeeding prevalence for Queensland babies in 2014



Source: Chief Health Officer’s Report, 2018.<sup>172 173</sup>

As shown in Figure 87, the perinatal death rate varies across regions and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies.

Figure 87: Perinatal mortality rates per 1,000 births, 2021



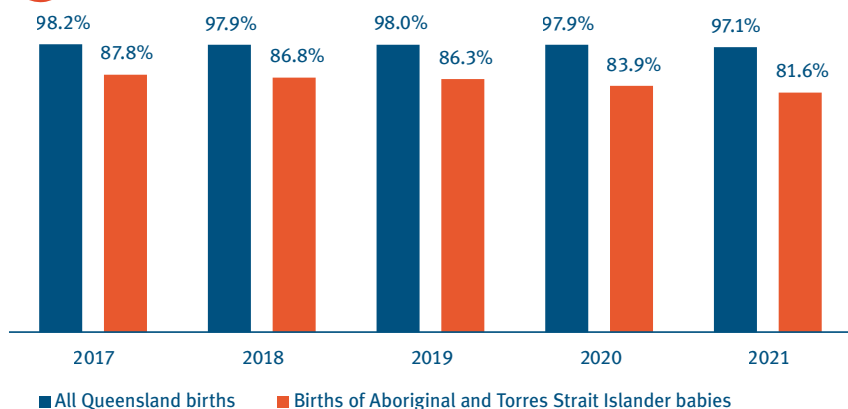
Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023 and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National perinatal data collection annual update, 2021.<sup>174</sup>

In 2020, Queensland had the third highest infant mortality rate after Tasmania and the Northern Territory.<sup>175</sup> Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022, the infant mortality rate in Queensland was 3.9 per 1,000 births.<sup>176</sup>

Between 2017 and 2022 most Queensland births were registered although registration rates were markedly lower for births of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



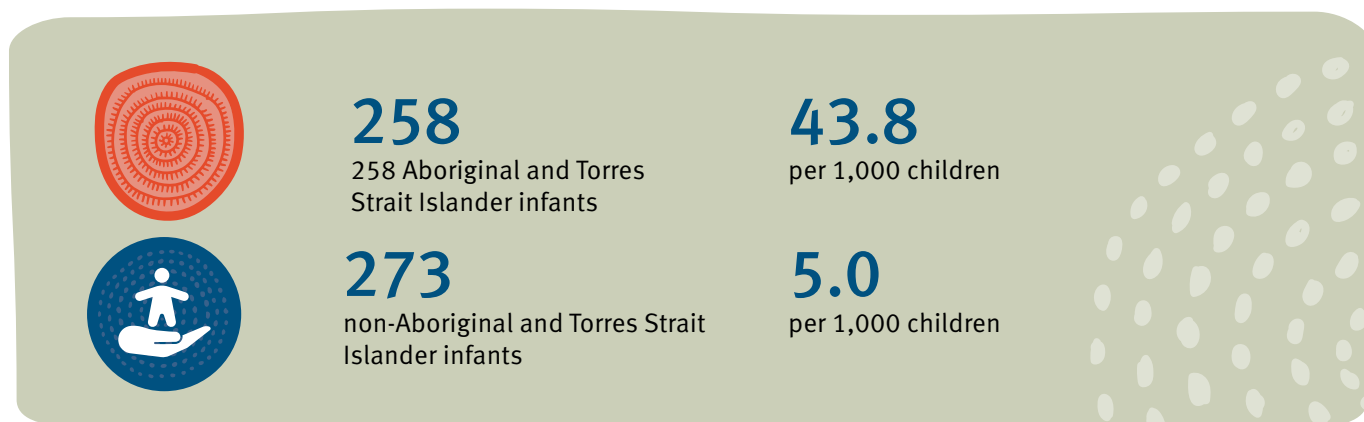
Figure 88: Percentage of Queensland births that were registered 2017–21



Source: Department of Justice and Attorney General, unpublished data request, 2023.

In 2021–22, 531 Queensland children aged under one year entered out-of-home care.

Figure 89: Infants (<1 year) entering out-of-home care in year ending 30 June 2022



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, unpublished data request, 2023.

Community child health services deliver a comprehensive range of support for families with children aged nine years and under.<sup>177</sup> With the exception of 2022, the number of community health services delivered in Queensland has been steadily increasing since 2018 (Table 37).



Table 37: Number of community child health occasions of service (children aged 0–9 years), 2018–22

|               | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Under 5 years | 44,741 | 45,563 | 51,364 | 54,240 | 42,633 |
| Ages 5 to 9   | 1,510  | 2,283  | 4,515  | 5,442  | 4,563  |
| Total         | 46,251 | 47,846 | 55,879 | 59,682 | 47,196 |

Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.



## CASE STUDY

### Bump: supporting young parents

Bump is a 26-week one-on-one mentoring program for women under 25 years of age who are pregnant or parenting. It is held every Thursday morning from 9.30am–12.30pm at The Family Place, with breaks over school holidays. Bump runs during term two and three and half of term four with a big graduation celebration held mid-November. Bump's aim is to empower young mothers to be resilient, capable and connected, which will increase their confidence and capacity as a parent in their community. Bump is an evidence-based mentoring program with a focus on holistic wellbeing. Each week the program unpacks topics like mental health, healthy relationships, financial support, brain development, early literacy, budget cooking, health/fitness, jewellery making, tie dye, first aid etc. They also attend external excursions like picnic in the park, smash rooms, Dressed for Success and putt putt.

The program is supported by fully trained mentors. These mentors are volunteers from the community who complete two days of quality, evidence-based

training that upskills them to be effective and caring mentors. This also allows space for mentors to increase their confidence and capacity to engage in their own community or workplace. These mentors get matched with a mum, who they support throughout the program. They provide a non-judgmental ear, sounding board and practical support. The mentoring relationship creates opportunities for a positive adult relationship to form between the mums. The power of having a supportive, positive sounding board to bounce ideas and challenges off, and an ear to listen for 3 hours each week, supports young mums learning to navigate the world. It creates space for a safe, healthy relationship with an experienced mum where valuable skills can be shared.


2023 is the third year consecutively that Bump has been run, with amazing outcomes for the mums and mentors alike. Some mentors have gone on to further study in the community sector or other disciplines.

## Goal 3.2: Parents and carers are supported to maintain their own health

Parents or carers with a physical or mental health condition, those experiencing challenges with substance use, and those with disability can face health challenges that may place extra pressure on their parenting, affecting parenting quality and effectiveness.<sup>178 179</sup> Given the important role played by parents and caregivers in promoting children's health and wellbeing, ensuring parent and caregiver healthcare needs including their mental health needs are met, is essential for promoting children's healthy growth and development. There is evidence that parental drug use is a common concern in cases where Child Safety intervention is initiated,<sup>180</sup> highlighting the importance of appropriate and timely support for parents experiencing these challenges.

### Indicator 3.2.1: Parents and carers have good physical and mental health and levels of parental substance use are low

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that being a parent was hard work.<sup>181</sup>



**What do young people think?**

Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023, 85.0% agreed that being a parent is hard work.

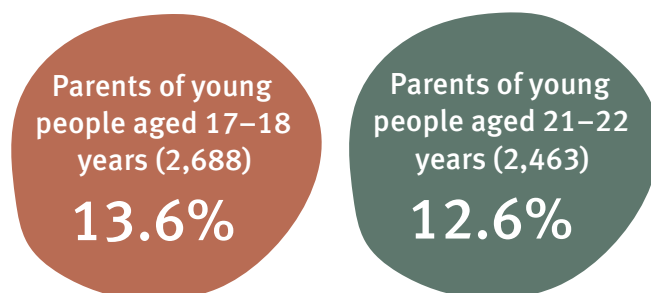
Two surveys of parents and carers have found around half of Australian parents rate their health as good or excellent;<sup>182 183</sup> this means that a significant proportion of parents and carers experience health challenges. A higher proportion of parents in two-parent families (53.0%) rated their health as excellent or good than parents in one-parent families (38.0%).<sup>184</sup>

In 2018, it was estimated that 18.7% of Australian families with one or more children living at home had one or both parents with disability.<sup>185</sup>

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (the Kessler scale) gives a simple measure of psychological distress based on a person's self-reported level of nervousness, agitation, psychological fatigue and depression in the past four weeks.<sup>186</sup> In 2020, among Australian parents who were living with children aged 0–14 years, 17.0% reported high levels of psychological distress.<sup>187</sup> A second survey found one in eight parents of young Australian adults experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.<sup>188</sup>



Figure 90: Estimated proportion of Australian parents reporting high levels of psychological distress indicating a high or very high likelihood of having a mental illness



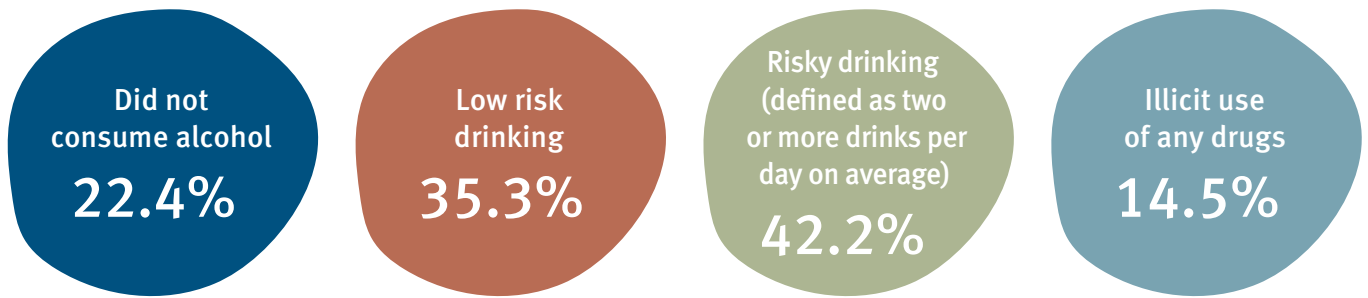
Source: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2022.<sup>189</sup>

Rates of psychological distress have been found to be higher for parents in one-parent families by comparison with couple families (35.6% and 14.8% respectively).<sup>190</sup> In 2020–21, over one quarter (28.7%) of people living in one-parent family households with dependent children reported having had an anxiety disorder in the past 12 months.<sup>191</sup> In 2021, 65.0% of households where a child was found to be in need of protection had a parent with a mental health problem.<sup>192</sup>

While the majority of Queensland parents either do not drink or do not drink at risky levels, in 2019, 42.2% parents of children aged 0–14 years reported drinking alcohol at risky levels (lifetime or single occasion risk). Fourteen per cent of parents identified they had used an illicit drug in the past 12 months.<sup>193</sup>

Figure 91: Estimated proportion of parents with children and young people aged 0–14, who drank alcohol at risky levels or who have used illicit drugs<sup>194</sup>

Australian parents



Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey, 2019.<sup>195</sup>



Methamphetamine use is increasingly contributing to Child Safety concerns in Queensland:

- Between 2018–19 and 2020–21, methamphetamine use rose from being a major factor in 32.0% of Child Safety cases to 39.0%.
- Between 2006–07 and 2020–21, the proportion of households substantiated for harm or risk of harm to a child which had a parent with a current or past drug/alcohol problem rose from around 50.0% to 67.0%.

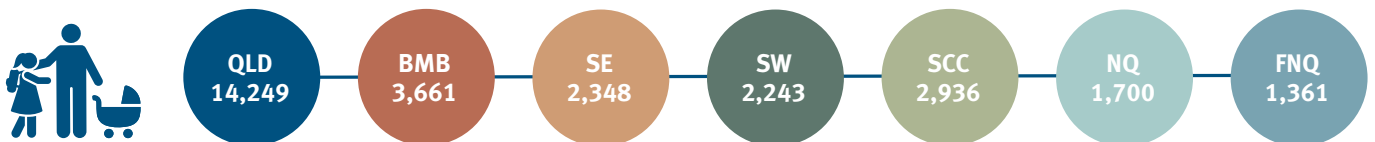
In 2020–21, approximately 20 children needed to be taken into some form of departmental care each week as a result of parental methamphetamine use.<sup>196</sup>

### Indicator 3.2.2: Parents and carers facing health challenges receive support

In 2021–22, 13.6% of Queenslanders receiving mental health treatment and 18.5% of those receiving alcohol and drug treatment were parents of a child aged 0–17 years (Figure 92).

Figure 92: Number of Queensland parents receiving treatment for their mental health and alcohol and drug needs across regions

Parents receiving mental health treatment



Parents receiving alcohol and drug treatment



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Goal 3.3: Children and young people have good physical health and receive appropriate support for their health needs

Good physical health during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood is associated with many benefits. Healthy children and young people are more likely to have more energy, avoid illnesses, succeed at school and feel good about themselves. Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults and are less likely to experience chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental health disorders.

Many factors contribute to good physical health during childhood and adolescence including eating nutritious foods, exercising, and getting enough sleep. The early use of alcohol and other substances can negatively impact young people's health and is associated with mental health issues including depression and anxiety and an increased risk of illness, accident and injury.

Young people entering the child protection system commonly have undiagnosed and untreated physical and developmental issues. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers suggested that children living in out-of-home care should have access to comprehensive health checks and assessments.<sup>197</sup>

#### CASE STUDY

##### Pioneering pilot of GPs in schools: GP service at St George State High School

Students at St George State High School in Western Queensland can access a General Practitioner (GP) at school one day per week as part of the Queensland Department of Education's GPs in Schools Pilot. Providing students with access to a GP at school at no cost to them or their families removes the barriers some students face to accessing timely and appropriate healthcare.

The GP service is available at the school every Thursday, with two doctors from the local St George Medical Centre providing healthcare to students – Dr Karen Benn and Dr Ben Brimblecombe. Dr Brimblecombe, who is an ex-St George State High School student, says a highlight of working at the school is *'the closer interaction with students who may otherwise not come to see us – bringing services to people instead of making people stop their lives to come to us.'*



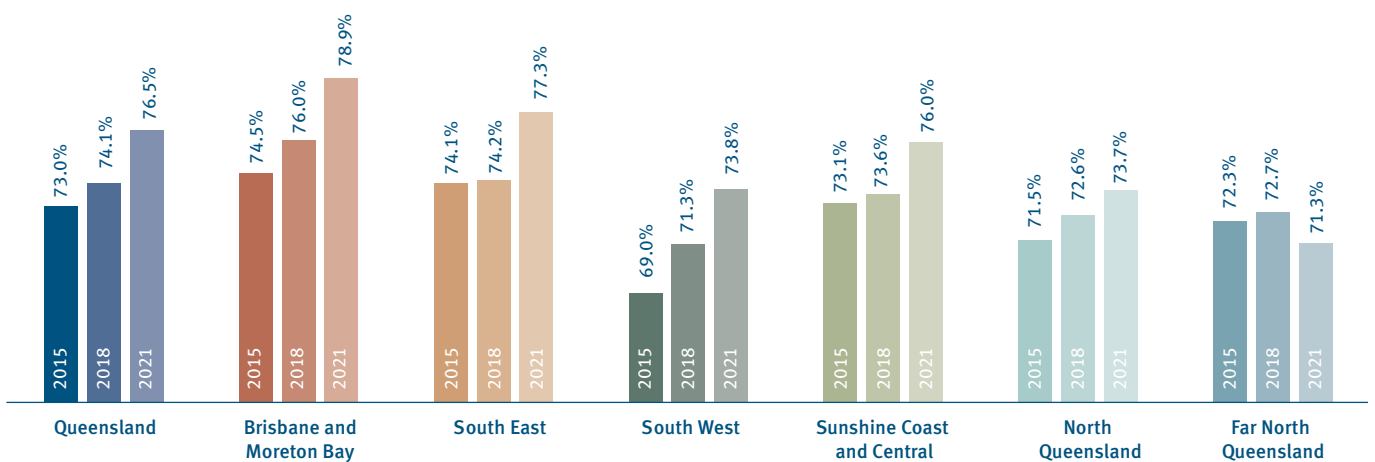
**Photo:** St George State High School GP clinic, including two students and (from left to right) Principal Mr Thomas McKenna and GPs Dr Ben Brimblecombe and Dr Karen Benn.

Highlighting the benefits of providing a GP service at his school, Principal Mr Thomas McKenna says he has seen a reduction in the stigma students feel about seeing a GP, with students now comfortable to access the service. Students at the school agree, reporting they feel safe attending the school-based GP clinic and that having the doctors there every week encourages them to get health matters seen to that they might otherwise ignore. With bookings for GP appointments at the school increasing, Mr McKenna says the service is now an integral aspect of the school's approach to providing students with a holistic education.

### Indicator 3.3.1: Children and young people have good physical health

The percentage of Queensland children in their first year of school assessed as being developmentally on track in terms of physical health and wellbeing has been gradually increasing since 2015 in every region except for Far North Queensland (Figure 93).

Figure 93: Percentage of children in their first year of school assessed as developmentally on track in terms of physical health and wellbeing



Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2015–21.

In the 2021 Census, the most commonly reported long-term health conditions among Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years were asthma, mental health conditions and diabetes (Figure 94).

Figure 94: Most common health conditions experienced by Queensland children and young people in 2021

Number (%) of Queensland children and young people affected



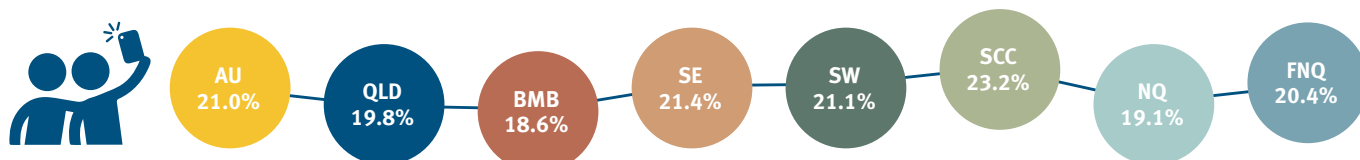
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Queensland community profile, 2021.<sup>198</sup>

Approximately one in five young Queenslanders nominated physical health as the issue of greatest personal concern to young people and 59.8% rated their overall health as good, very good or excellent (Figure 95).

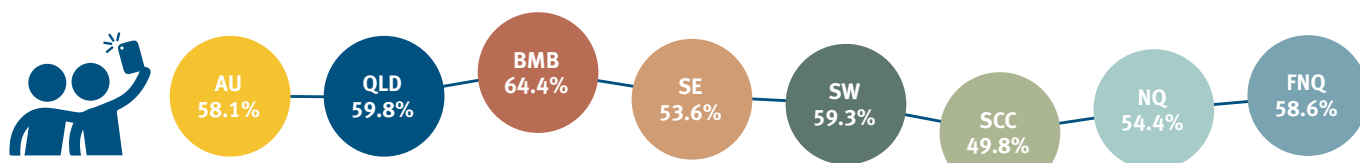
Figure 95: Percentage of young people aged 15–19 years who nominate health issues as their greatest personal concern

## Young people's views on health

Percentage who nominate physical health as the issue of greatest personal concern to young people



Percentage who rated their overall health and wellbeing as good, very good or excellent



Number of respondents

|        |       |       |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

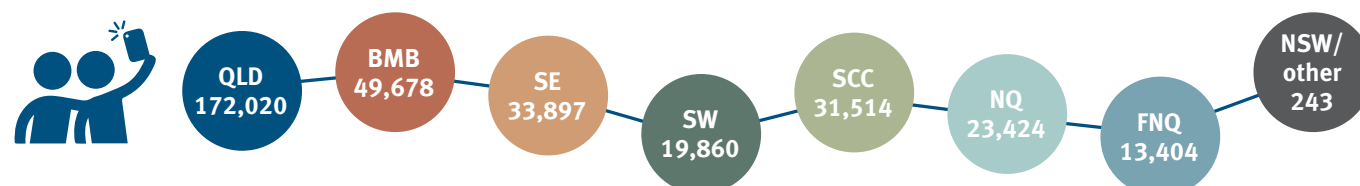
Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>199</sup>

Fourteen per cent of young people living out-of-home care were worried about their health, and of that group, two-thirds had seen someone about it.<sup>200</sup>

In 2022, there were 172,020 ambulance callouts for children and young people aged 0–24 years. The average response time for Queensland was 19.3 minutes with some variation in response times across regions (Figure 96).

Figure 96: Total number of ambulance callouts for children and young people aged 0–24 years and mean response time in 2022

Total number of callouts



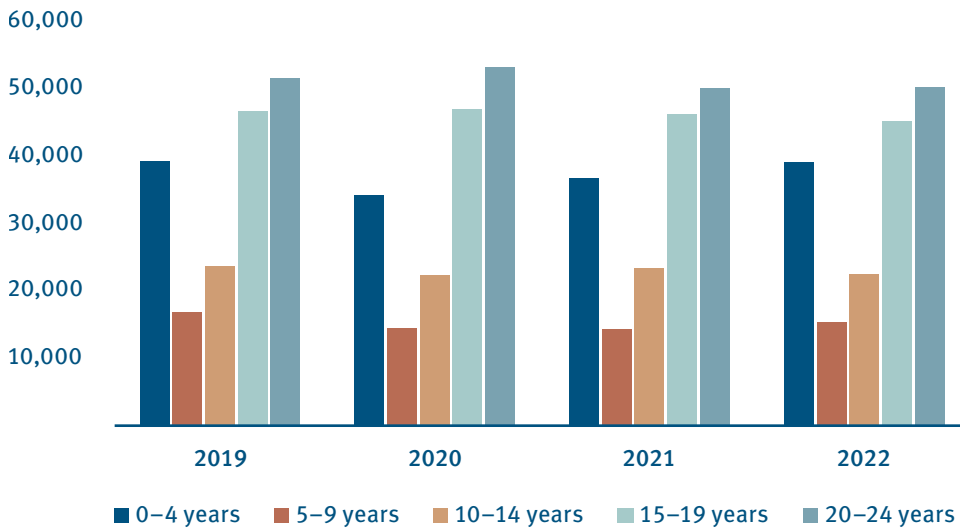
Average response time in minutes



Source: Queensland Ambulance, unpublished data request, 2023.

Between 2019 and 2022, for ambulance callouts relating to children and young people the most common age was 20–24 years followed by 15–19 years (Figure 97).

Figure 97: Number of Queensland Ambulance callouts for children and young people across different age groups 2019–22



Source: Queensland Ambulance, unpublished data request, 2023.

Table 38 shows the most common callout reasons for the different age groups of children and young people. It shows that for children under nine years, the most common reasons for callouts included breathing problems, falls and traumatic injuries, while for older children and young people (10–24 years) the most common reasons included psychiatric/abnormal behaviour/suicide attempts, traumatic injuries and traffic/transport accidents.



Table 38: Five most common reasons for ambulance callouts by age group, 2019–22


| Age         | 1st  | 2nd  | 3rd                 | 4th                         | 5th                   |
|-------------|--|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0–4 years   | Breathing problems                               | Sick person                                      | Falls               | Pandemic                    | Convulsions/ seizures |
| 5–9 years   | Falls  | Traumatic injuries                               | Breathing problems  | Sick person                 | Convulsions/ seizures |
| 10–14 years | Traumatic injuries                               | Psychiatric/ abnormal behaviour/ suicide attempt | Falls               | Convulsions/ Seizures       | Miscellaneous         |
| 15–19 years | Psychiatric/ abnormal behaviour/ suicide attempt | Traumatic injuries                               | Overdose/ poisoning | Traffic/transport accidents | Unconscious/ fainting |
| 20–24 years | Psychiatric/ abnormal behaviour/ suicide attempt | Miscellaneous                                    | Traumatic injuries  | Traffic/transport accidents | Chest pain            |
| 0–24 years  | Traumatic injuries                               | Psychiatric/ abnormal behaviour/ suicide attempt | Breathing problems  | Falls                       | Sick person           |

Source: Queensland Ambulance, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Indicator 3.3.2: Children are immunised

The rates of children who were fully immunised<sup>201</sup> as at 30 June 2023 are shown in Table 39.

Table 39: Rate of children who were fully immunised, 30 June 2023

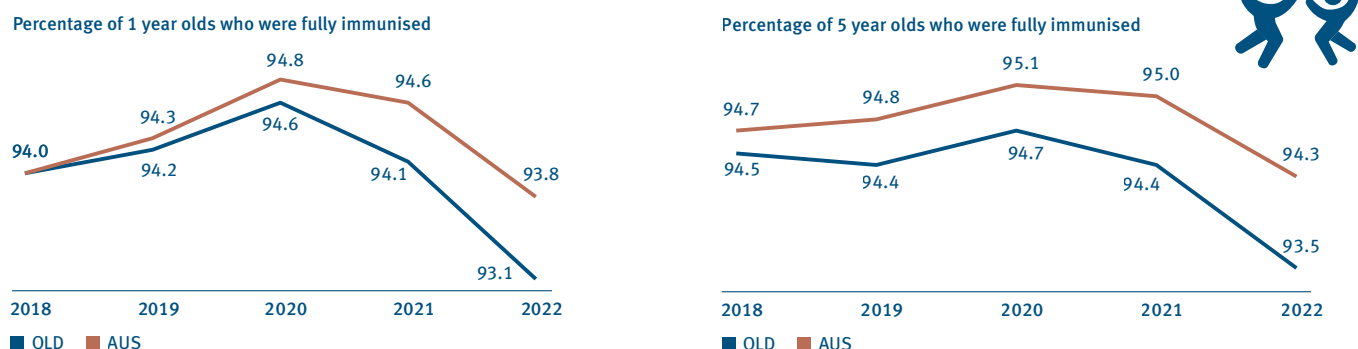


|                     | 1 year olds | 2 year olds | 5 year olds |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Australian children | 93.4%       | 91.4%       | 94.1%       |
| Queensland children | 92.7%       | 90.9%       | 93.2%       |

Source: Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Immunisation Register, 2023.

Immunisation rates peaked in 2020 and since then have been gradually decreasing. Immunisation rates are lower for Queensland children than for children Australia-wide.

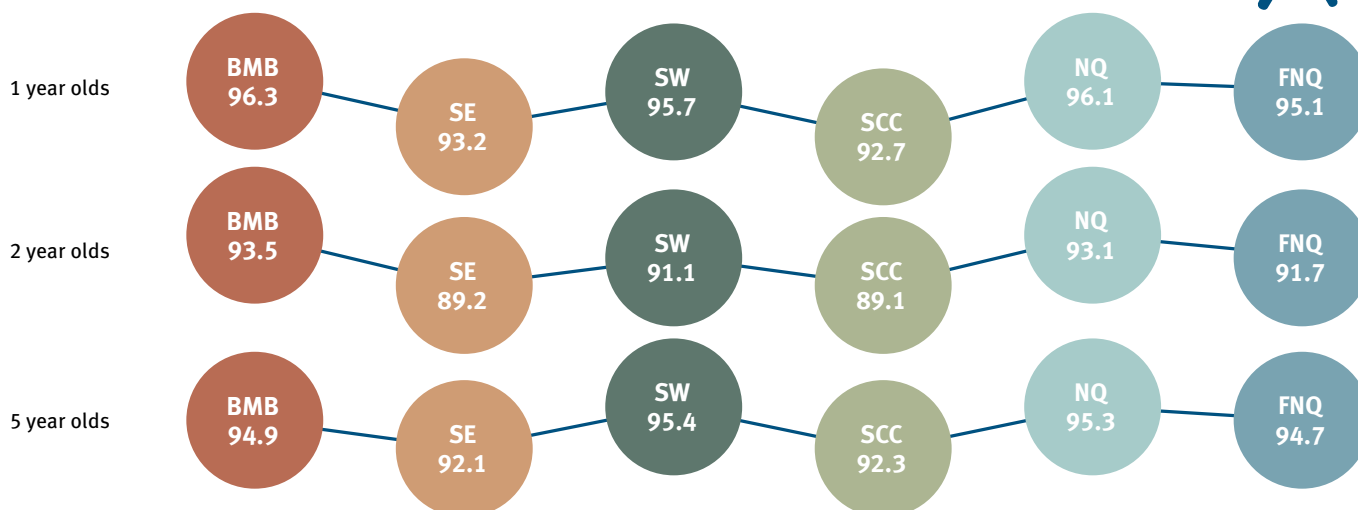
Figure 98: A comparison of trends in immunisation rates – Queensland children versus Australian children



Source: Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Immunisation Register, 2023.

In 2022, within Queensland there was evidence of regional diversity in immunisation rates (Figure 99).

Figure 99: Regional variation in immunisation rates for 1, 2 and 5 year olds across Queensland in 2022



Source: Services Australia, Australian Immunisation Register, 2023.

### Indicator 3.3.3: Children and young people with disability have their support needs met

Estimates indicate that in 2018, 11,900 (3.8%) children aged 0–4 years, 64,600 (9.9%) children aged 5–14 years and 51,700 (8.2%) children and young people aged 15–24 years were living with a disability.<sup>202</sup>

Many children in contact with Child Safety live with a disability. As at 30 June 2022, 2,798 Queensland children and young people (29.0%) in out-of-home care

were living with a disability.<sup>203</sup> Surveys of young people in youth justice suggest a similar high prevalence. In 2022, 27.0% of a sample of young people under youth justice supervision reported they were living with a disability.<sup>204</sup>

The Census estimated the number of children and young people with disabilities requiring assistance with core activities such as self-care, mobility and communication. The age group with the highest proportion of children needing assistance was 5–14 years. There was some regional variation as shown in Figure 100.

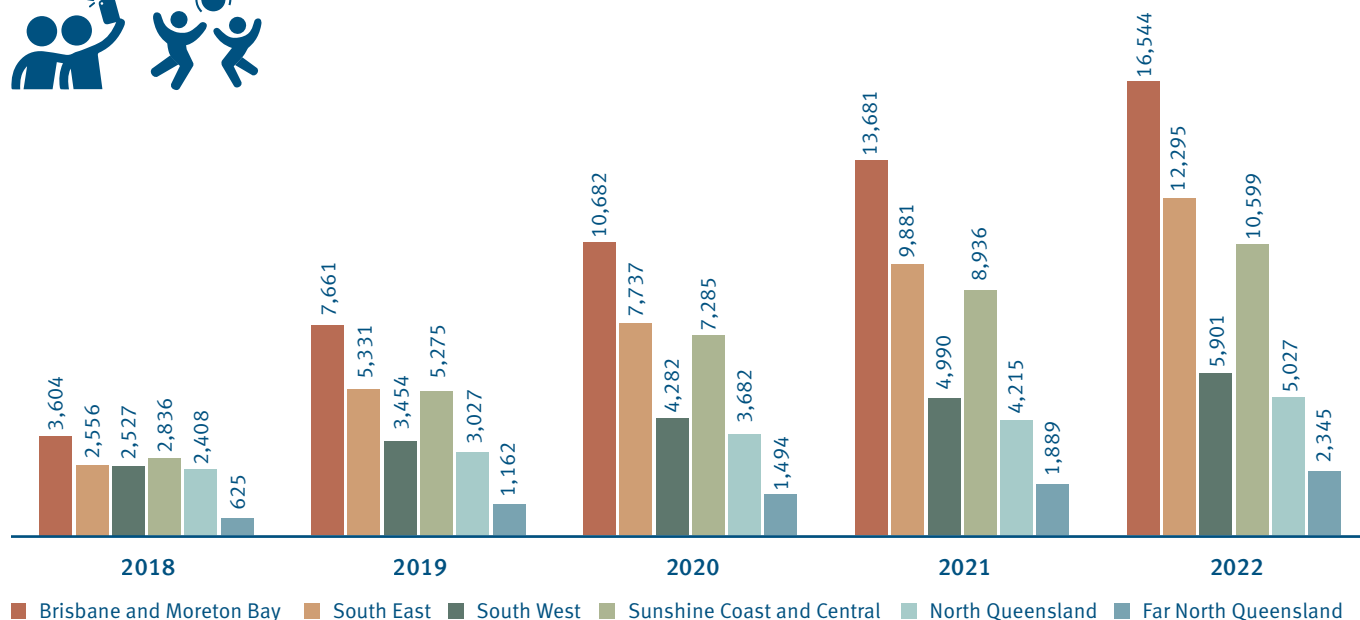
Figure 100: Regional comparison of children and young people aged 0–24, who have need for assistance with core activities



Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, regional profile, 2023.

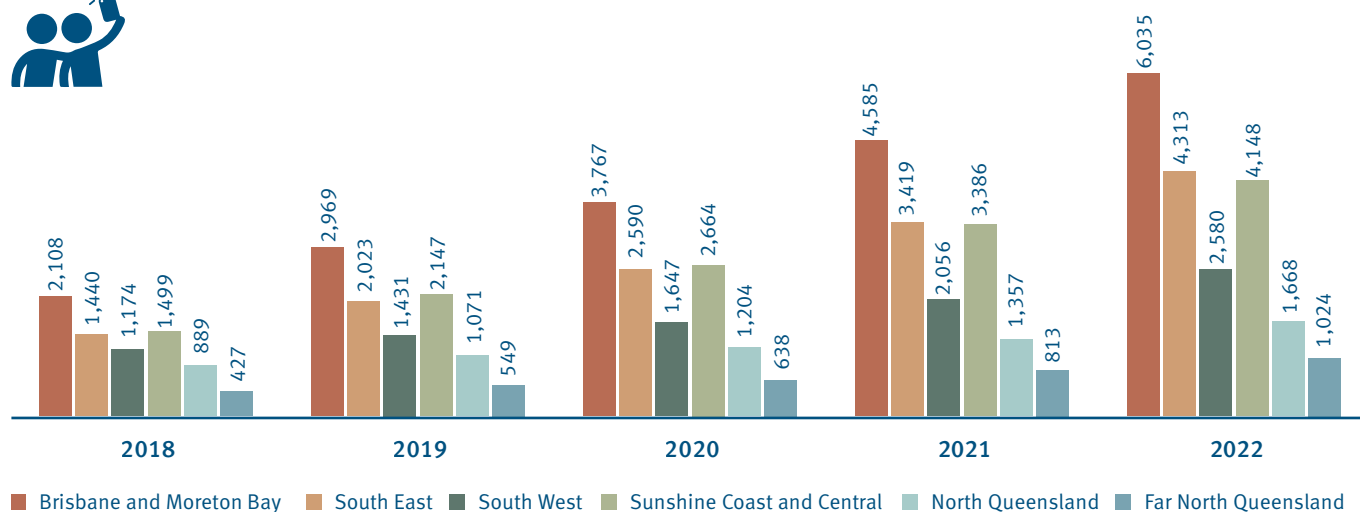
The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding to people with disability to access the services and supports they need to gain greater independence, develop new skills and improve their quality of life.<sup>205</sup> Figure 101 and Figure 102 show that the number of children and young people in each region receiving financial support has been growing over the past five years.

Figure 101: Regional comparison of the number of children and young people in Queensland aged 0–14 years with a NDIS support plan



Source: National Disability Insurance Agency, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 102: Regional comparison of the number of young people in Queensland aged 15–24 years with a NDIS support plan



Source: National Disability Insurance Agency, unpublished data request, 2023.



As at 30 June 2021, 2,262 children subject to an ongoing intervention with Child Safety (either a child protection order or intervention with parental agreement) had a NDIS support plan.<sup>206</sup>

Table 40 compares the number of children and young people in Queensland with the estimated population for two age groups (0–14 years and 15–24 years) and presents a rate per 10,000 for each group. It demonstrates that rates of NDIS support plans have been increasing over time and that the rates for children and young people aged 0–14 years are higher than rates for those aged 15–24 years (527.6 versus 296.4 per 10,000 in 2022).

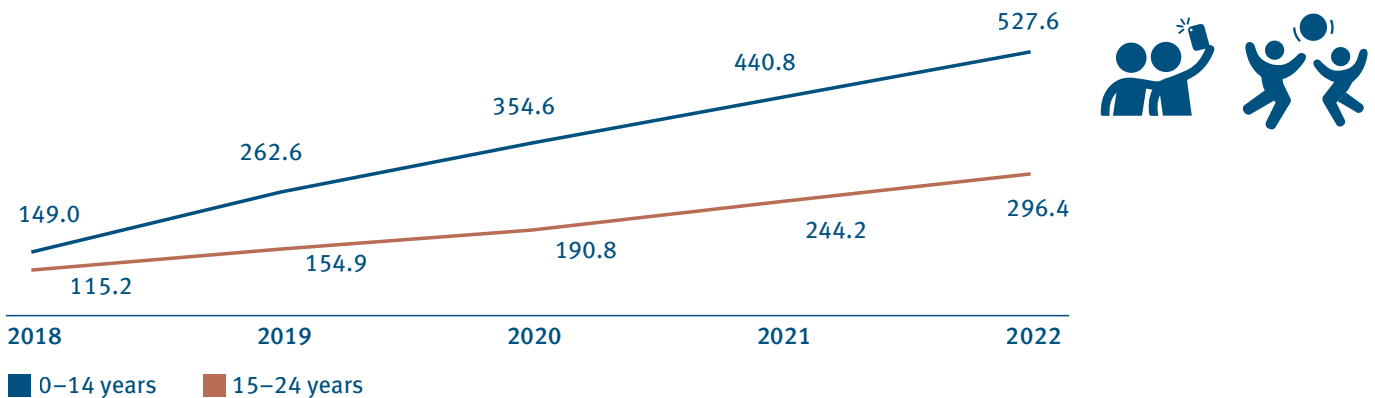
Table 40: Rates of NDIS support plans per 10,000 children and young people in Queensland, 2018–22

| Year | Children and young people (aged 0–14 years) in Queensland |                      |   | Young people (aged 15–24 years) in Queensland |                      |   |
|------|---|----------------------|---|---|----------------------|---|
|      | Number with a NDIS support plan                           | Estimated population | Rate of NDIS support plan per 10,000 population | Number with a NDIS support plan               | Estimated population | Rate of NDIS support plan per 10,000 population |
| 2018 | 14,556  | 977,240              | 149.0   | 7,537   | 654,347              | 115.2   |
| 2019 | 25,910  | 986,711              | 262.6   | 10,190  | 657,675              | 154.9   |
| 2020 | 35,162  | 991,624              | 354.6   | 12,510  | 655,502              | 190.8   |
| 2021 | 43,592  | 989,037              | 440.8   | 15,889  | 650,599              | 244.2   |
| 2022 | 52,711  | 998,992              | 527.6   | 19,768  | 667,015              | 296.4   |

Source: National Disability Insurance Agency, unpublished data request, 2023 and Queensland Government Statistician's Office, estimated residential population data of Queensland 0–14 and 15–24 year olds, 2023.

Figure 103 illustrates the change in rates per 10,000 children and young people with NDIS support plans between 2018 and 2022.

Figure 103: Rates of NDIS support plans per 10,000 children and young people in Queensland, 2018–22



Source: National Disability Insurance Agency, unpublished data request, 2023 and Queensland Government Statistician's Office, estimated residential population data of Queensland 0–14 and 15–24 year olds, 2023.

Sixty-six per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 and 45.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Statutory systems workforce survey 2023 agreed that, in their community, children and young people can access disability services if they need them.<sup>207</sup> Sixty-four per cent of respondents to the survey agreed that children and young people attending their organisation who had a disability can access appropriate support, but only 25.0% agreed that children and young people living

in out-of-home care who live with a disability have adequate access to disability supports and services. Sixty-three per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that in their communities, children and young people can access NDIS supports if needed. More than half (51.0%) of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the disability system.<sup>208</sup>



### What do young people think?

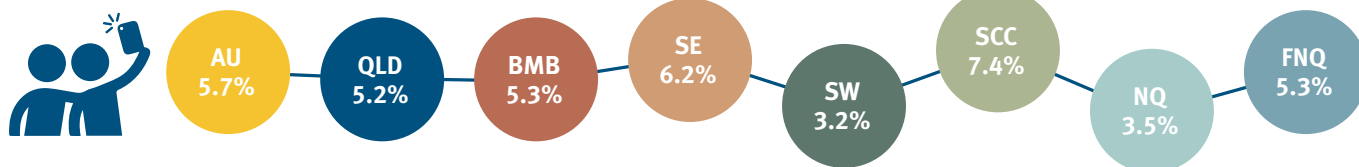
Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023:

- 67.0% agreed they can access disability services if needed
- 64.0% agreed they can access NDIS support if needed
- 48.0% agreed the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the disability service system.

Just over 5.0% of Mission Australia Youth Survey respondents identified as living with disability but almost one in 10 had experienced discrimination due to their disability (Figure 104).

Figure 104: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 reporting they were living with disability and those who had experienced discrimination due to disability

#### Proportion who identify as having a disability



#### Reported being treated unfairly due to disability



Number of respondents

|        |       |       |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>209</sup>

### Indicator 3.3.4 Children and young people have healthy teeth

According to the most recent Queensland study of children’s dental health, one in three children aged 5–6 years had never visited a dentist, 53.7% of children aged 5–14 years had teeth affected by dental decay and 75.0% brush their teeth the recommended twice per day.<sup>210</sup> The National Child Oral Health Study 2012–14 found that Queensland had the second highest proportion of children affected by untreated dental decay (29.9%) behind children in the Northern Territory (39.5%).<sup>211</sup> Almost three-quarters (73.4%) of young people living out-of-home care had seen a dentist in the past year.<sup>212</sup>



#### What do young people think?

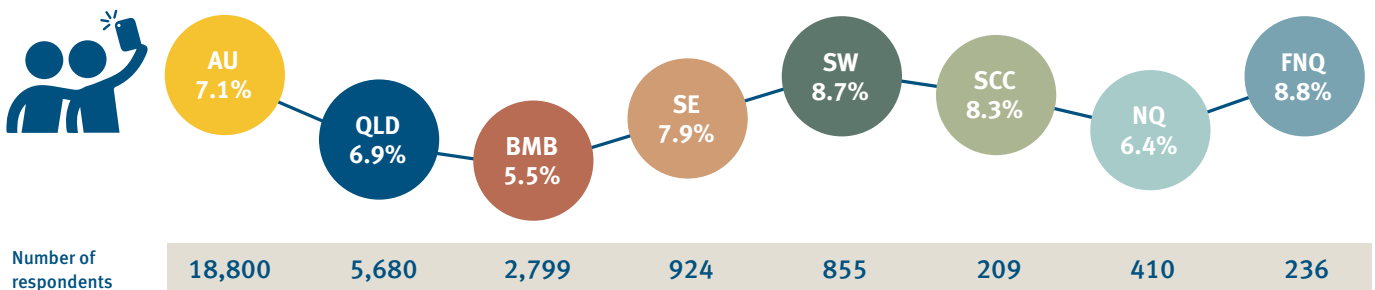
Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023, 66.0% agreed children and young people can access dentists in their communities, if needed.

### Indicator 3.3.5: Young people avoid smoking, drinking and using other drugs

More than 7.0% of young people from Queensland reported they were extremely/very concerned about alcohol and other drugs (Figure 105).<sup>213</sup>

Figure 105: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who were extremely/very concerned about alcohol and drugs by region


Extremely/very concerned about alcohol and drug issues



Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>214</sup>

According to the most recent Queensland study, the majority of young Queenslanders in 2017 did not smoke or vape. The most recent data on e-cigarette and cigarette use among Queensland high school students (aged 12–17 years) is presented in Table 41.<sup>215 216</sup>

Table 41: E-cigarette and cigarette use among 12–17 year old Queensland young people



|  | E-cigarettes | Cigarettes |
|--|--------------|------------|
| Had never tried                        | 84.5%        | 77.1%      |
| Had only a few puffs                   | 7.8%         | 10.0%      |
| Smoked less than 100 in their lifetime | 6.7%         | 19.6%      |
| Smoked more than 100 in their lifetime | 1.1%         | 3.4%       |

Source: Cancer Council Queensland, 2018.<sup>217</sup>

Since 2017, patterns of e-cigarette and cigarette use have been changing. E-cigarette use is increasing, particularly among young people. More recent studies in other Australian jurisdictions suggest around one-third of NSW young people and two thirds of South Australian young people have tried e-cigarettes.<sup>218 219</sup>

At the national level, data on tobacco smoking among young people suggests that rates of daily smoking are dropping. Between 2011–12 and 2021–22, the number of young people in Australia reporting they were daily smokers dropped from 4.4% to 1.7% among 15–17 years old and 16.5% to 7.1% among 18–24 years old.<sup>220</sup>



Among young adults, 12.1% of 17–18 years old and 17.0% of 21–22 years old reported smoking during the past four weeks.<sup>221</sup>

A 2022 survey of young people in out-of-home care found that 34.9% used e-cigarettes while only 26.5% had used cigarettes.<sup>222</sup> A 2022 survey of young people under youth justice supervision found that 47.0% had used cigarettes, but this had reduced from 57.0% in 2018.<sup>223</sup>

In 2017, drinking alcohol was quite common among Queensland young people with 52.0% of secondary school students having consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months. Approximately 8.0% had used cannabis in the past month and 3.0% had used sedatives in the past week. Few students had ever used other illicit drugs.

Findings from the 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey suggest that alcohol use among young people is significantly dropping. Survey findings were that between 2007 and 2019, the proportion of young people aged 14–17 years who abstained from alcohol increased from 39.0% to 73.0%.<sup>224</sup> One-quarter of young people in out-of-home care aged 12–17 years reported that they drank alcohol.<sup>225</sup> Among young people under youth justice supervision in 2022, 48.0% used alcohol, but this had reduced from 52.0% in 2018.<sup>226</sup>



One quarter of people aged 17–18 years and 37.1% of people aged 21–22 years reported they had tried cannabis.<sup>227</sup> More than one in five (21.6%) young people in care aged 12–17 years reported that they use marijuana; however, 57.8% of young people aged over 12 years living out-of-home care had not taken drugs in the past year.<sup>228</sup> Among young people under youth justice supervision in 2022, 62.0% used marijuana and 20.0% used ice and other methamphetamines, which was similar to rates of use in 2018.<sup>229</sup> Overall, the percentage of Queenslanders 14 years and older who had engaged in illicit drug use in the previous 12 months did not change significantly between 2001 and 2017.<sup>230</sup>

### Indicator 3.3.6: Children and young people lead a healthy lifestyle

Queensland Health conducts an annual survey of 2,500 parents to explore selected health behaviours of children and young people aged 5–17 years. In 2022 the survey found:<sup>231 232</sup>

- 18.0% of children and young people were overweight and 8.0% were obese. The prevalence of overweight and obesity in Queensland children 5–17 years is relatively high compared to other Australian states and has remained about the same for almost a decade<sup>233</sup>
- 68.8% of children and young people ate the recommended number of serves of fruit each day, but only 2.8% ate the recommended daily serves of vegetables<sup>234</sup>
- 46.3% of children and young people were physically active for at least one hour every day, as recommended.<sup>235</sup>

### Indicator 3.3.7: Children and young people receive appropriate and timely support for their health needs

More than seven out of 10 of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 (71.0%) and five out of 10 respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission’s Statutory systems workforce survey 2023 (52.0%) agreed that in their community, children and young people can access the services they need to stay healthy, such as GPs and hospitals.<sup>236</sup>



#### What do young people think?

Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023:

- 70.0% agreed in their communities, children and young people can access the services they need to stay healthy such as GPs and hospitals
- 61.0% agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the health system.

The majority of young people in out-of-home care reported they had someone to talk to about puberty and safe sex (Figure 106).

Figure 106: Percentage of young people in out-of-home care feeling supported for their health and development needs



**80.6%**  
agreed they had someone they  
trusted to talk to about puberty

**75.5%**  
agreed they had someone they trusted  
to talk to about sex, safe sex, and sexual  
health (children 12 years and over)

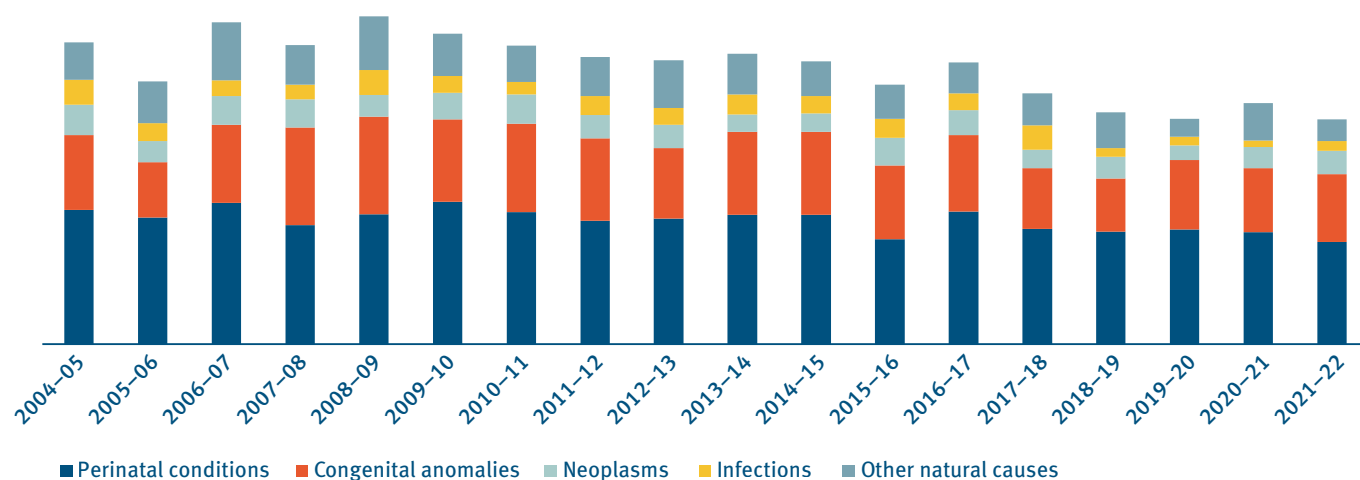
Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Only 55.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the health system.<sup>237</sup> Three-quarters of young people in out-of-home care reported that they felt included in decisions about their healthcare most times or always.

### Indicator 3.3.8: Rates of non-preventable child deaths are reducing

Most child deaths each year in Queensland are from natural (non-preventable) causes. In 2021–22, 259 Queensland children and young people died from non-preventable (natural) causes. Natural causes accounted for 69.0% of all child deaths over the past five years. There has been a downward trend, with the mortality rate decreasing from 35.3 per 100,000 in 2004–05 to 23.1 per 100,000 in 2021–22 (a decrease of 3.2% per year on average).<sup>238</sup>

Figure 107: Number of Queensland children and young people who died from natural causes, 2004–05 to 2021–22



Queensland Family and Child Commission, Deaths of children and young people Queensland Annual Report, 2022.<sup>239</sup>

## Goal 3.4: Children and young people have good mental health and receive appropriate support for their mental health needs

Having good mental health positively influences how children and young people think, feel and act and assists them in developing into independent and confident adults. Good mental health contributes to building healthy relationships with others and being able to respond to life changes and challenges.<sup>240</sup> Young people with poor mental health, including mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, are more vulnerable to other life challenges including educational difficulties, physical ill health and challenges with interpersonal relationships.

Children in out-of-home care tend to experience worse mental health outcomes than young people who have not had contact with the child protection system.<sup>241</sup> While all children and young people experiencing poor mental health need access to appropriate and timely access to supports and services, given the complexity of their health and wellbeing needs, our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers suggested that children living in out-of-home care should be able to access universal mental health services.<sup>242</sup>

Figure 108: Mental health outcomes for children, young people and families in Queensland

### Mental health outcomes for children, young people and families in Queensland

#### A significant number of children are stressed and worried



Among primary aged children

- 22.1%** get sad a lot<sup>1</sup>
- 21.5%** feel worried a lot<sup>1</sup>
- 19.5%** feel like they have a lot of problems<sup>1</sup>

#### Parents also experience challenges with their mental health



High levels of psychological distress were reported by:

- 14.8%** parents in couple families<sup>3</sup>
- 35.6%** parents in one-parent families<sup>3</sup>

Among 15–19 year olds

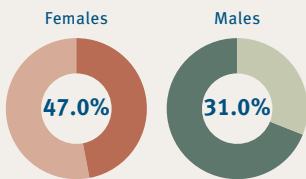


- 22.7%** feel lonely<sup>2</sup>
- 11.1%** feel like they have no control over their life<sup>2</sup>
- 34.8%** are very concerned about mental health<sup>2</sup>
- 40.7%** are concerned about coping with stress<sup>2</sup>

#### Many young people with mental health challenges do not access services<sup>2</sup>

ONLY **55.2%** who have needed mental health support have accessed it

#### Mental disorders are fairly common among young people<sup>3</sup>

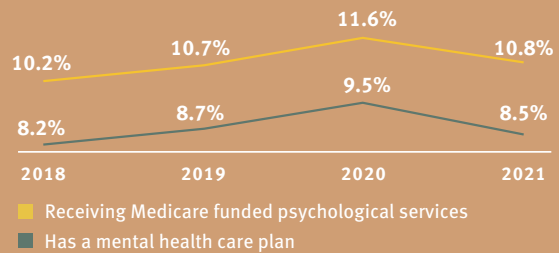


Up to **16.0%** 15 years and over will experience an eating disorder

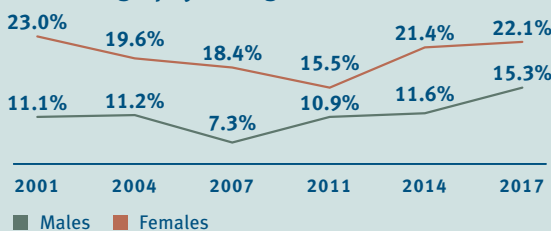
met diagnostic criteria for a mental disorder

#### Just over 1 in 10 accessed Medicare-funded services<sup>7</sup>

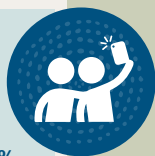
% of 0–24 year olds receiving Medicare funded mental health services



#### Around one in five young women and one in eight young men (18–24 years) experience high psychological distress<sup>4</sup>



#### Many children and young people access emergency support



**66,260**

Ambulance callouts for psychiatric, abnormal behaviour and suicide attempts for children and young people aged 0–24 years (2019–22).<sup>6</sup>

#### Identified barriers to accessing support include:<sup>7</sup>

- Waitlists
- Cost
- Unsure how to access
- Transport
- No services
- No culturally appropriate services

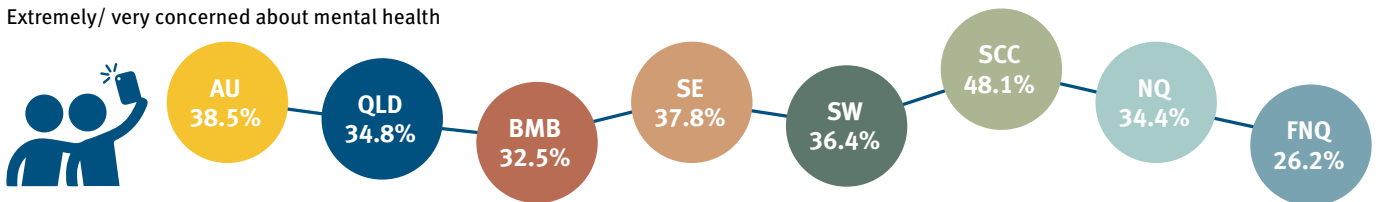
Sources: <sup>1</sup> Rumbles Quest, unpublished data request, 2022. <sup>2</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>243</sup> <sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021. <sup>4</sup> Queensland Health, Chief Health Officer Report, 2018. <sup>5</sup> Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>6</sup> Queensland Ambulance, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>7</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>244</sup>

### Indicator 3.4.1: Children and young people have high levels of wellbeing and good mental health

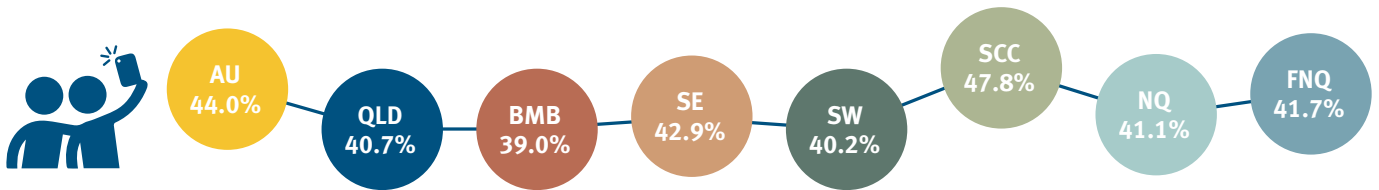
When asked what the issues of greatest personal concern were for young people, over a third of young Queenslanders nominated mental health, two in five nominated stress and 14.6% nominated suicide (Figure 109).

Figure 109: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who were extremely/ very concerned about mental health, coping with stress and suicide by region

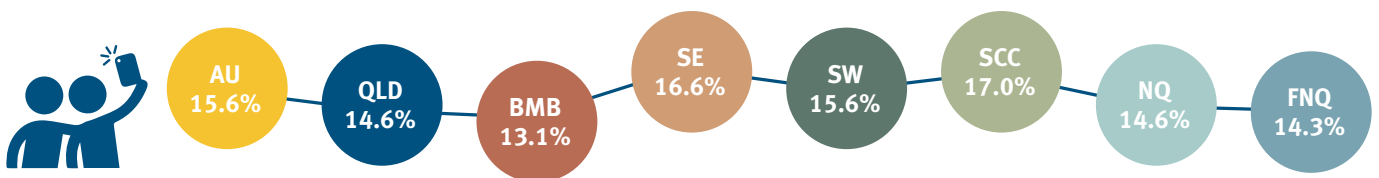
Extremely/ very concerned about mental health



Extremely/ very concerned about coping with stress



Extremely/ very concerned about suicide




Number of respondents

|        |       |       |     |     |     |     |     |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>245</sup>


Assessments of the wellbeing of Queensland primary aged children (5–12 years) identified that the majority are happy and hold a positive view of themselves. Almost nine out of 10 children reported they liked being themselves, and more than eight out of 10 feel happy. Almost seven out of 10 believed people like them the way they are. This does mean, however, that many Queensland children do not feel positively about themselves and are unhappy (Table 42).

Table 42: Primary aged children’s assessments of their wellbeing

|              |   |                       |  |                                      |                                |   |
|--------------|---|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>83.4%</b> | <b>68.3%</b>                              | <b>88.4%</b>          | <b>72.9%</b>                                   | <b>65.8%</b>                         | <b>84.6%</b>                   |  |
| feel happy   | believe people like them the way they are | like being themselves | believe they are good at quite a lot of things | feel that good things happen to them | believe they are a good person |   |

A significant number of primary aged children face challenges: one in five children feel sad, worried or believe they have a lot of problems.

Table 43: Rate of primary aged children who feel sad, worried or feel they have a lot of problems

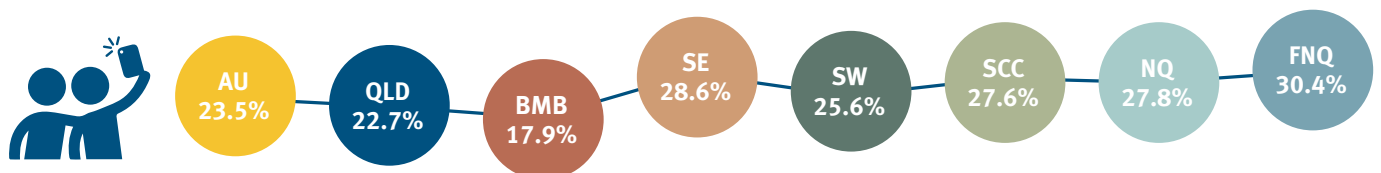
|               |                    |                                       |  |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>22.1%</b>  | <b>21.5%</b>       | <b>19.5%</b>                          |  |
| Get sad a lot | Feel worried a lot | Feel like they have a lot of problems |  |

Source: Rumble’s Quest,<sup>246</sup> unpublished data request, 2023.

Assessments of the wellbeing of Queensland high school aged children (15–19 years) have identified that almost a quarter reported loneliness, one in nine reported having no control over their life and more than two in five were struggling to cope with stress. As shown in Figure 110, there was some variation in responses across regions.

Figure 110: High school-aged young people aged 15–19 years assessments of their wellbeing

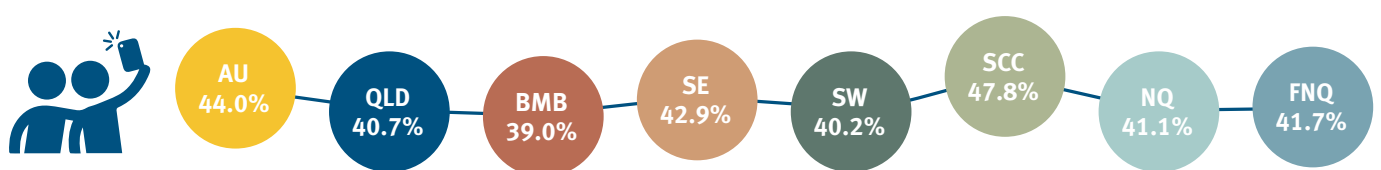
Young people feeling lonely most or all of the time (in the four weeks prior to completing the survey)



Young people feeling they have almost no control or control over their life



Young people identifying coping with stress as an issue of personal concern



|                       |        |       |       |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Number of respondents | 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>247</sup>

Many young people living in out-of-home care reported good levels of wellbeing with more than two-thirds reporting that they mostly felt happy, calm and enjoyed their day. However, just over half reported that they woke up feeling well rested (Figure 111).

Figure 111: Proportion of young people in care rating their wellbeing positively

Always or most times in the past week they:



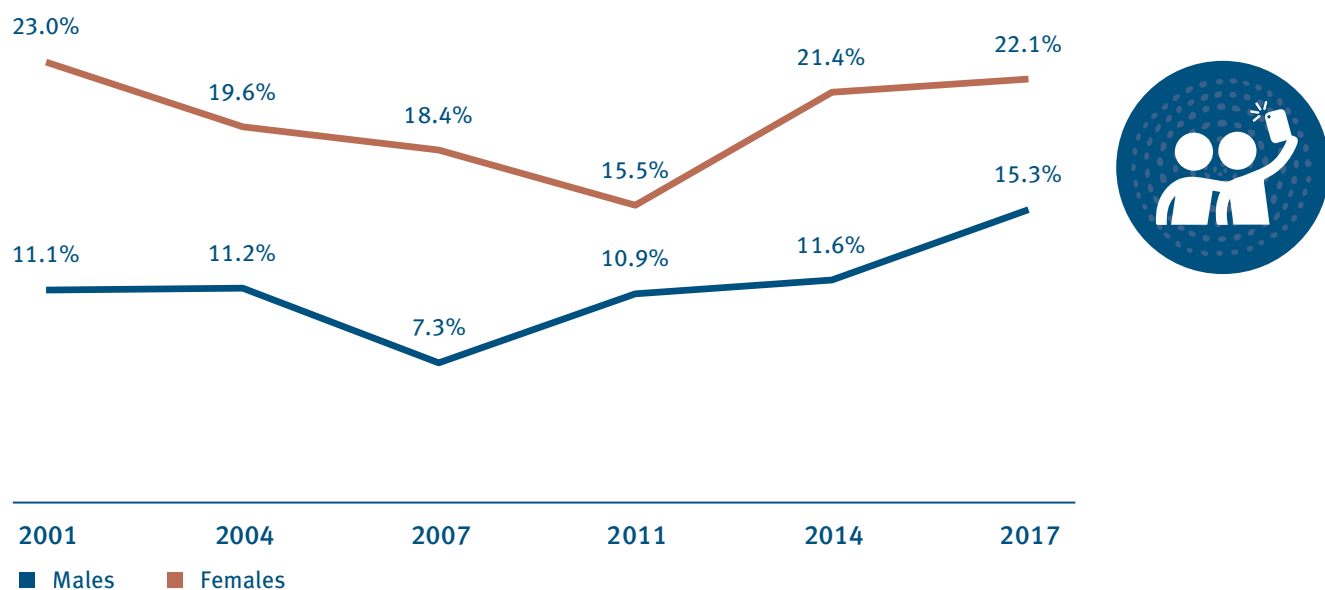
Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Nevertheless, just under one-quarter (24.7%) of Queensland young people living in out-of-home care rated their mental health as poor or very poor, while three-quarters (75.3%) rated it as okay to excellent.

In 2017–18, the standardised prevalence of high or very high psychological distress assessed using the Kessler scale across all age groups was 13.0% in Australia and 14.0% in Queensland. The prevalence was stable over time and did not differ between Queensland and Australia.<sup>248</sup>

Rates of high psychological distress are much higher for young females than for young males although rates have been steadily increasing for young males since 2007–08 (Figure 112).

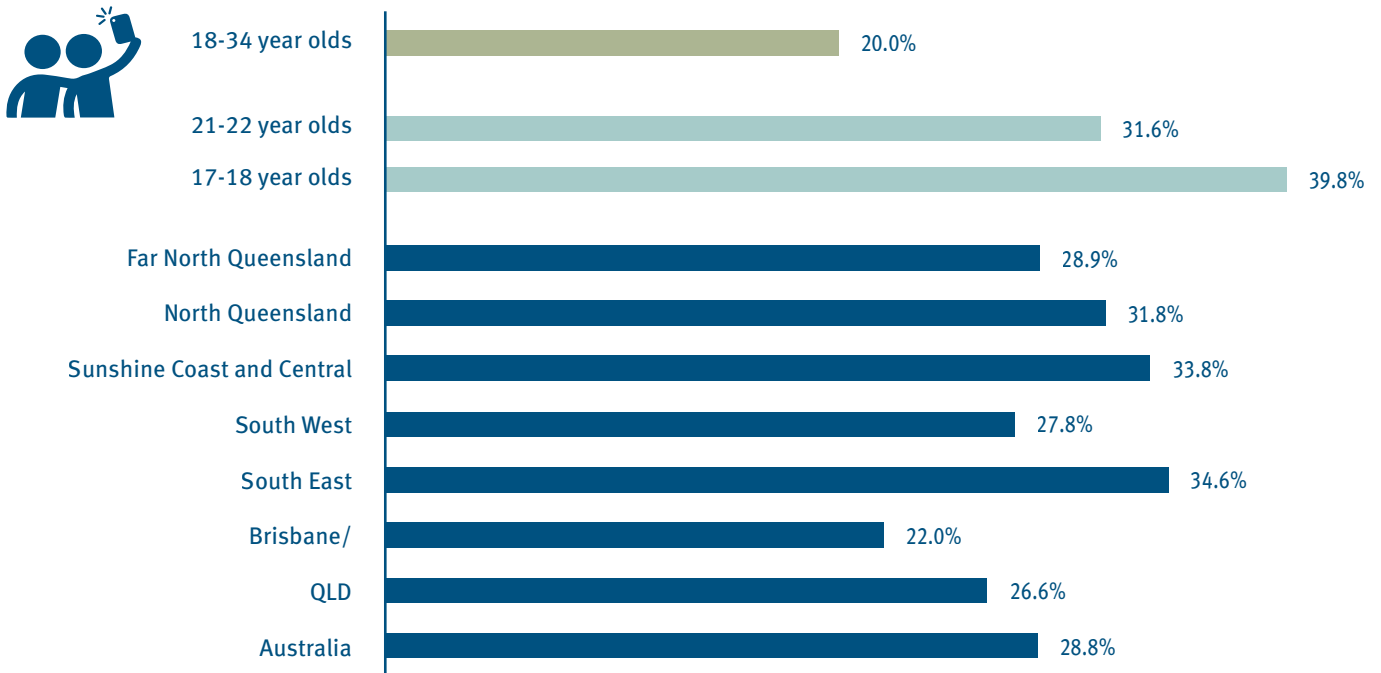
Figure 112: Rates of high or very high levels of psychological distress in Australia among young males and young females aged 18–24 years, 2001–17



Source: Enticott et al., 2022.<sup>249</sup>

The Kessler scale has been used across a number of different recent studies with young people (see Figure 113). Findings indicate that around a quarter of Queensland young people reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Figure 113: Young people and young adults reporting high or very high levels of distress on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale



Sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, National study of mental health and wellbeing, 2020–21.
- Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2021.
- Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.

There is limited data around the prevalence of mental health disorders among primary aged Australian children. Key findings for young children are that more than 13.0% of children aged 4–11 years experienced a diagnosable mental health condition in the past 12 months including ADHD, anxiety disorders, conduct disorders and major depressive disorders.<sup>250</sup>

Mental health disorders are relatively common among young people. Table 44 shows that almost two in five young Australians aged 18–24 years met diagnostic criteria for a mental health disorder in the past 12 months with rates higher for females than males. Young women were almost twice as likely as young men to suffer from an anxiety disorder, and more than twice as likely to suffer from an affective disorder (including depression). While young males were more likely than young females to suffer from a substance use disorder.

Table 44: Percentage of young Australians aged 18–24 meeting diagnostic criteria for mental health disorders in the past 12 months, 2020–21

|                             | Males | Females | Persons |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| All mental health disorders | 31.2% | 46.6%   | 39.6%   |
| Anxiety disorder            | 21.4% | 41.3%   | 31.5%   |
| Affective disorder          | 8.8%  | 19.0%   | 13.6%   |
| Substance use disorder      | 13.3% | 7.1%    | 9.1%    |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, National study of mental health and wellbeing, 2020–21.<sup>251</sup>

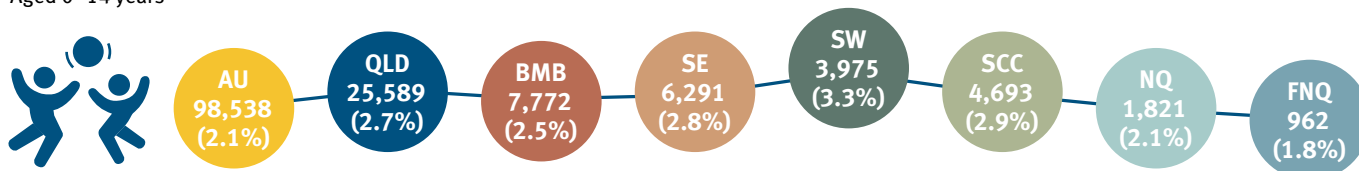


Surveys of young people in youth justice suggest a high prevalence of mental disorders. In 2022, 27.0% of a sample of young people under youth justice supervision (78.0% of whom were male) had a mental health disorder, 19.0% of the sample reported having anxiety and 15.0% reported having depression.<sup>252</sup>

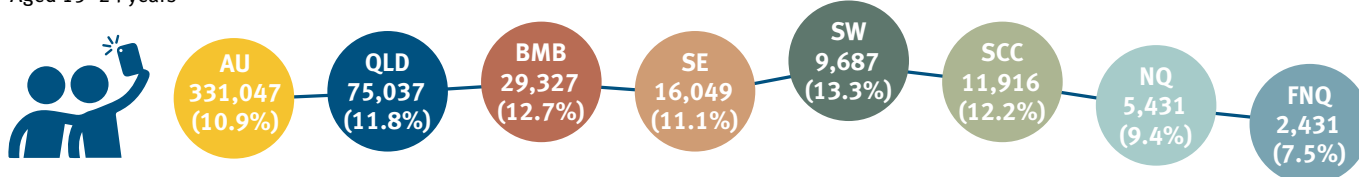
Rates of mental health conditions reported in the 2021 Census were lower. Only 2.7% of Queensland children aged 0–14 years had a mental health condition and 11.8% of young people aged 15–24 years. In most regions except for North and Far North Queensland, rates of reported mental health conditions were higher than the average for Australia (Figure 114).

Figure 114: Number and percentage of children and young people with a mental health condition including depression and anxiety

#### Aged 0–14 years



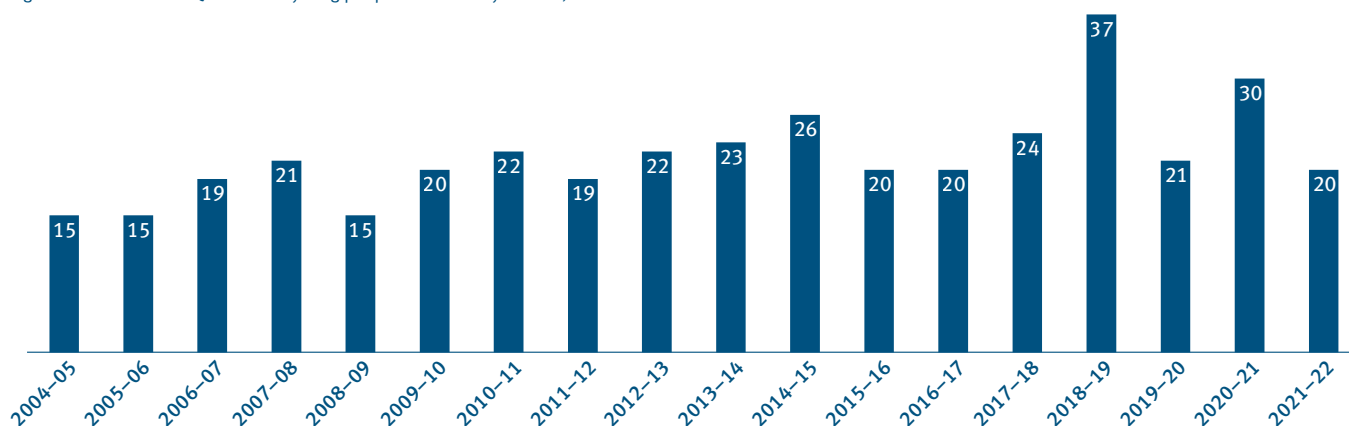
#### Aged 15–24 years



Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Custom Community profiles (table G19), 2021 and Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census, 2021.<sup>253</sup>

In 2021–22, 20 children and young people died by suicide. Information available indicated six of the 20 young people had a history of alleged childhood abuse. A history of domestic and family violence within the young person's family was also identified for six young people.<sup>254</sup>

Figure 115: Number of Queensland young people who died by suicide, 2004–05 to 2021–22



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Deaths of children and young people Queensland Annual Report, 2022.<sup>255</sup>

In addition, 5.2% of young Australians aged 18–34 reported suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and 5.2% reported self-harm in the past 12 months.<sup>256</sup>

## CASE STUDY

### Everything Suarve Inc: Big Brother programs



The team at Everything Suarve Inc. (Esuarve) are committed to transforming the lives of vulnerable young people in Queensland and creating positive change within the community. They have been working to ensure that no young person is left behind. Their vision of changing young lives through second chances, respect, and love has resulted in significant improvements in the lives of disadvantaged youth.

One of the key programs that demonstrate Esuarve's impact is their Big Brother Program. Participant referrals are obtained through Queensland Police, Youth Justice and Queensland Education. This innovative initiative is designed for young people aged 16–24 who are not enrolled in school. Over the course of 10 weeks, the program prioritises mental health, equips participants with valuable

certifications in construction, and places a strong emphasis on overall wellbeing. Through this program, Esuarve has provided young participants with a renewed sense of purpose and hope for the future.

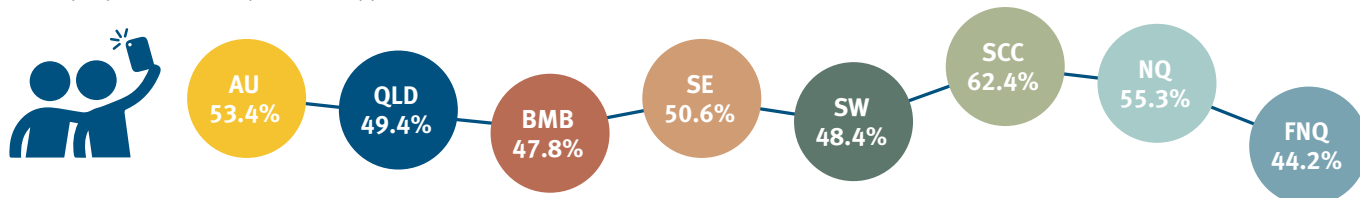
Over the last 3 years, ESuarve has assisted 143 young people and to date, has achieved a 90.91% success rate for employment outcomes for its graduated participants. Further, 67 of the 143 young people that have graduated from their Big Brother Programs, had been identified as 'high risk offenders' through Queensland Police. Through the Queensland Police Evaluation, it has been reported that 95% of the 'high risk' young people are in full or part time employment or pursuing further education.

### Indicator 3.4.2: Children and young people receive appropriate support for their mental and emotional health needs

The nationwide Kids Helpline reported that in 2022 they received 328,424 contacts from children and young people aged 5–25 years. The most commonly mentioned concerns were emotional wellbeing, mental health, family relationships and suicide related.<sup>257</sup> Around half of young Queenslanders reported they have needed support with their mental health, and of these, just over half have accessed support (Figure 116).

Figure 116: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who have needed support for their mental health and of these, the percentage who have accessed mental health supports by region

Young people who felt they needed support for their mental health



Young people who needed support and have sought mental health support



Number of respondents

18,800

5,680

2,799

924

855

209

410

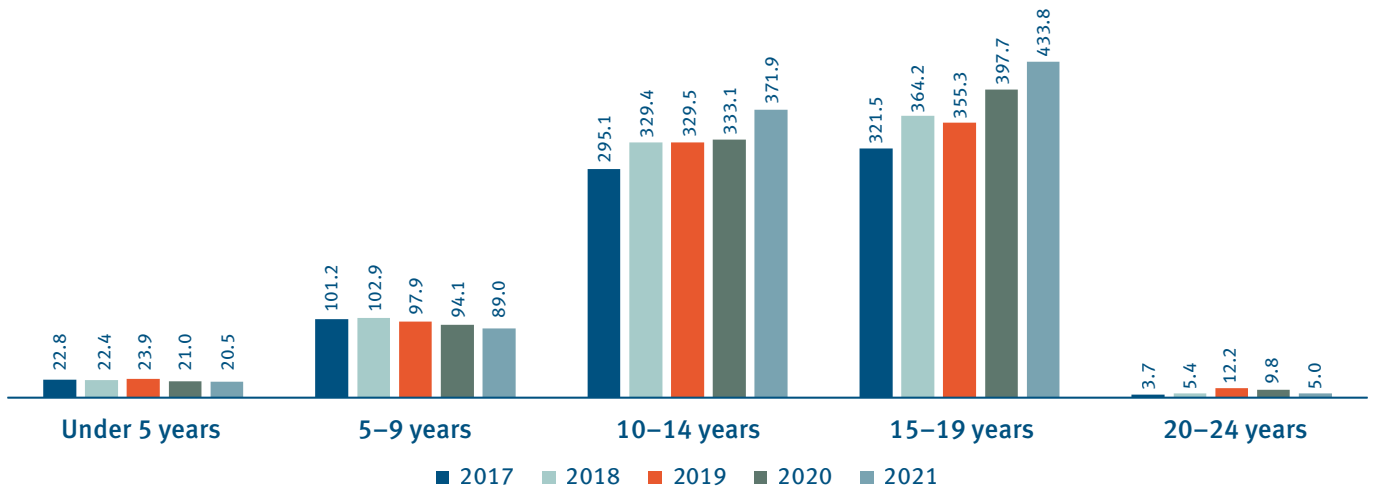
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Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>258</sup>

Almost a quarter (24.1%) of Australians aged 16–34 years saw a health professional for their mental health (including general practitioners, psychiatrists and psychologists), compared with 16.8% of people aged 35–64 years and 7.5% of people aged 65–85 years.<sup>259</sup>

Figure 117 shows the rate per 10,000 of Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years accessing child and youth mental health services. It shows that services are accessed most commonly among young people in the 10–14 and 15–19 year old age groups and that between 2017 and 2021 rates of service access increased for young people in both age groups.

Figure 117: Rate per 10,000 children and young people accessing Queensland Health child and youth mental health services, 2017–21

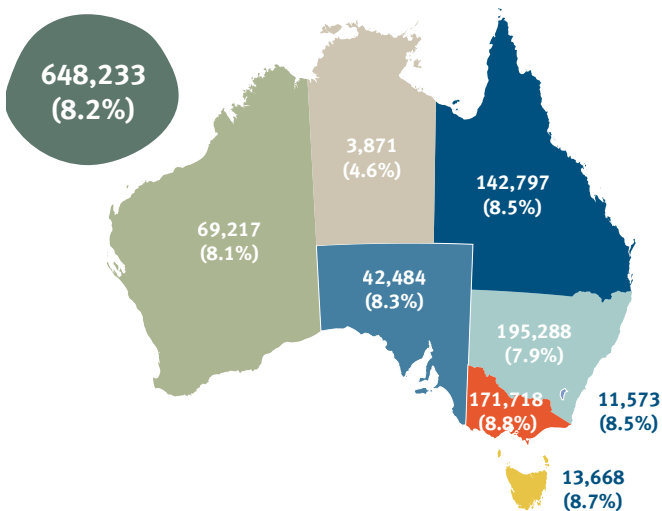


Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023 and Queensland Government Statistician's Office, estimated residential population data of Queensland 0–14 and 15–24 year olds, 2023.

Figure 119 shows a national comparison of the number and percentage of children aged 0–24 years across Australian jurisdictions in 2021–22 receiving Medicare-funded psychological services and Figure 118 shows the percentage who had a mental health care plan. It shows that more than one in 10 Queensland children and young people accessed a Medicare-funded psychological service in 2021–22.

Figure 118: Percentage of children and young people aged 0–24 years across Australian jurisdictions receiving Medicare-funded mental health services in 2022

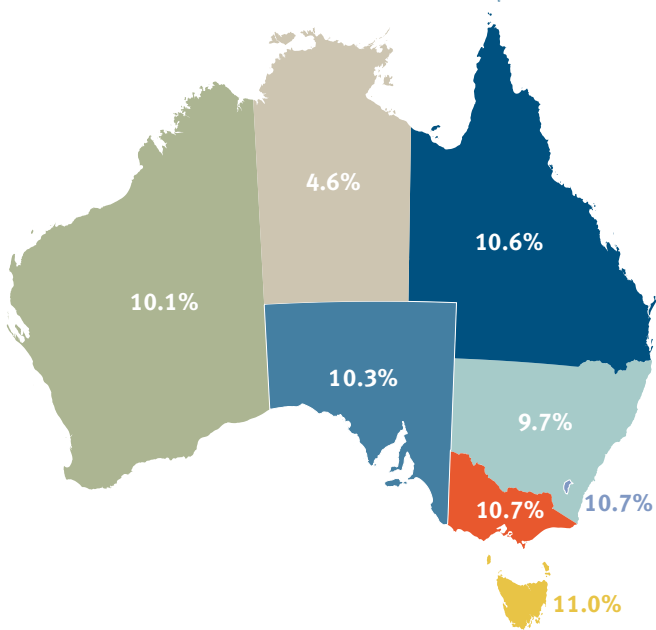
Number and percentage with a mental health care plan



Source: Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023.

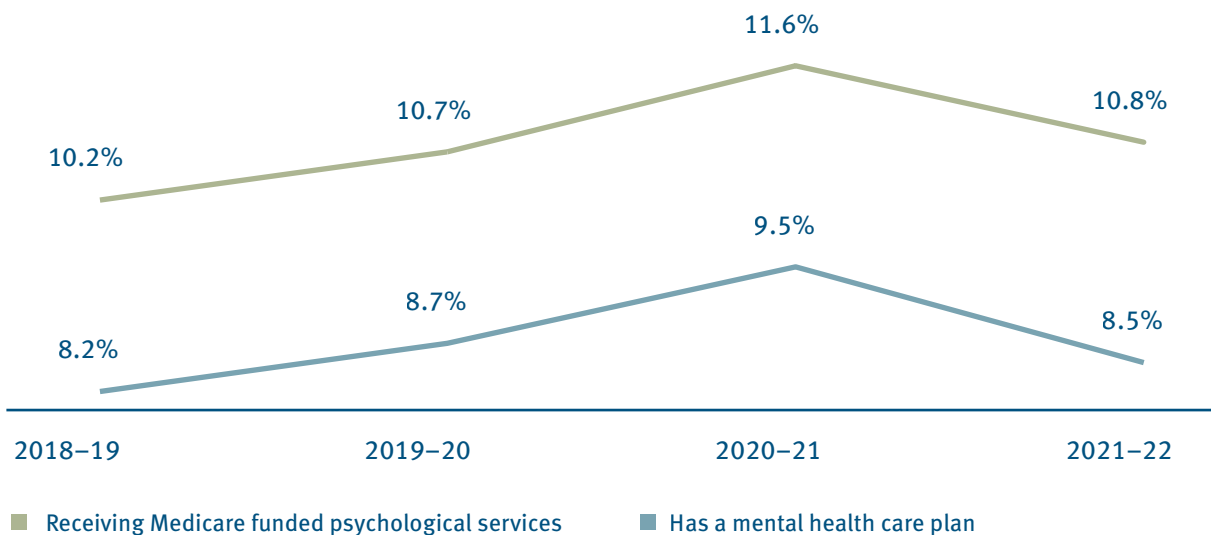
Figure 119 illustrates this data graphically. It shows that around one in 10 Australian children and young people accessed a psychological service in 2021–22.

Figure 119: Percentage of children and young people who accessed a psychological service, 2021–22



Rates of children and young people receiving Medicare-funded psychological services and having a mental health care plan peaked in 2020–21.

Figure 120: Trends in the percentage of Queensland children and young people who received a Medicare-funded psychological service and those who had a mental health care plan



Source: Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023.

In 2022, within Queensland there was evidence of regional diversity in rates of children and young people receiving Medicare-funded psychological services and in those having a mental health care plan (Figure 121).

Figure 121: Regional variation in rates of mental health care plans and Medicare-funded psychological services across Queensland in 2022

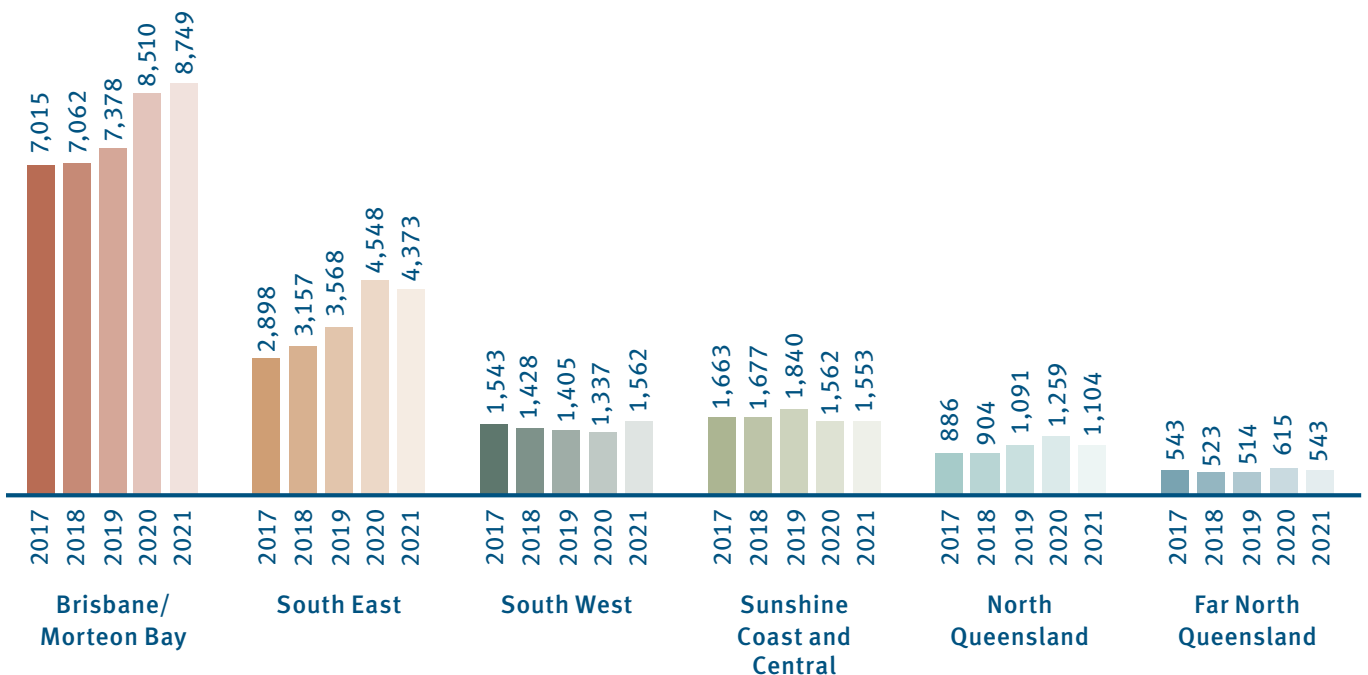
Receiving psychological services



Source: Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 122 shows a regional comparison of the number of young people aged 15–24 years who experienced a hospital admission in relation to a mental or behavioural health-related condition. Between 2017 and 2021 numbers either remained stable or increased.

Figure 122: Number of young people aged 15–24 years hospitalised for mental health-related conditions, 2017–21



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

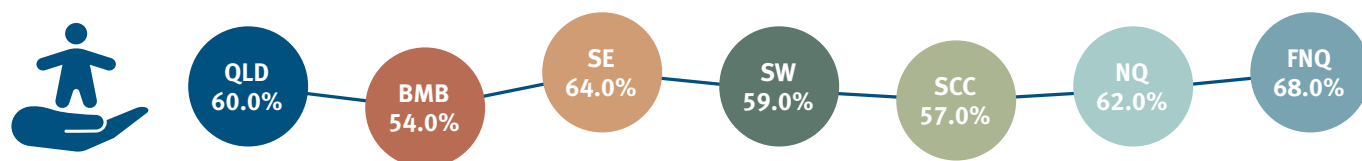
Psychiatric, abnormal behaviour and suicide attempts were the cause of 66,260 ambulance callouts for children and young people aged 0–24 years between 2019 and 2022. It was the most common reason for ambulance callouts for young people aged 15–19 years and 20–24 years and the second most common reason for young people aged 10–14 years.<sup>260</sup>

Findings from Child Safety's *Life in Care* survey indicate that of the 98 Queensland young people aged 12 years and over living in out-of-home care who rated their mental health as poor or very poor, 63 (64.3%) reported they had seen someone about their mental health.

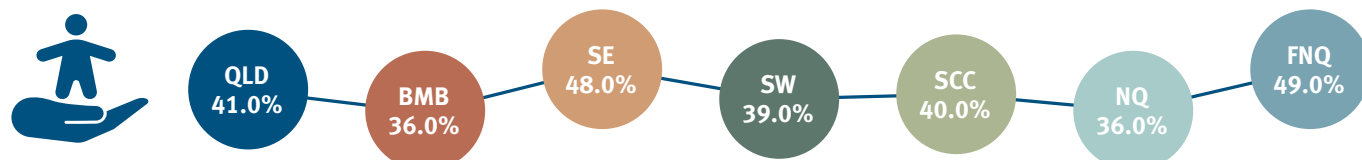
Around six out of 10 foster carers agreed that young people in out-of-home care have access to health services when they need them; however, only four out of 10 agreed that young people have access to adequate mental health services (Figure 123). There was some variation across regions with more young people in the South East and Far North Queensland reporting they had accessed help and lower rates in North Queensland and Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

Figure 123: Number of foster carers who agree children and young people in care have access to health services

Percentage of foster carers who agreed young people have access to health services when they need them



Percentage of foster carers who agreed young people have access to mental health services when they need them



Number of respondents (194 skipped this question)

|     |     |     |     |    |    |    |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| 576 | 125 | 142 | 109 | 92 | 42 | 66 |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|

Source: Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers Survey, 2022.<sup>261</sup>

Across all regions, findings from the Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2022 indicated that the top four barriers to seeking professional mental health support reported by young people were:

- concerns about confidentiality
- stigma or shame about mental illness
- didn't know where to go for help
- cost.<sup>262</sup>

Sixty per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 and 35.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Statutory systems workforce survey 2023 agreed that in their community, children and young people can access mental health services they need them.<sup>263</sup>



### What do young people think?

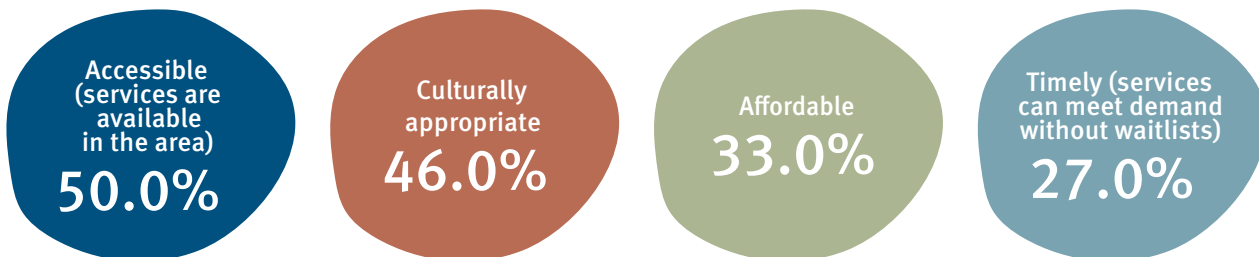
Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023:

- 64.0% agreed in their communities, children and young people can access mental health services if needed
- 53.0% agreed the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the mental health system.

Respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 and Queensland Family and Child Commission, Statutory systems workforce survey 2023 were asked to provide feedback on their experiences of mental health services. As shown in Figure 124, only a minority of respondents agreed that services were timely, affordable, culturally appropriate or accessible.

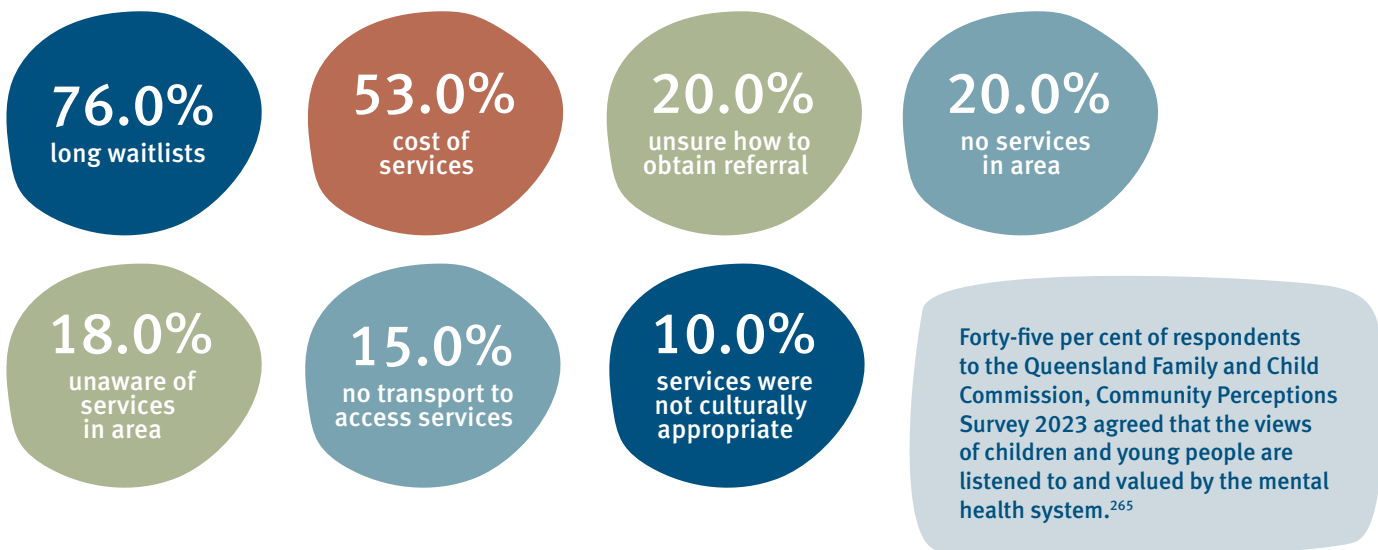
Figure 124: Percentage of community survey respondents agreeing on features of mental health services

Youth mental health services in my area are:



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>264</sup>

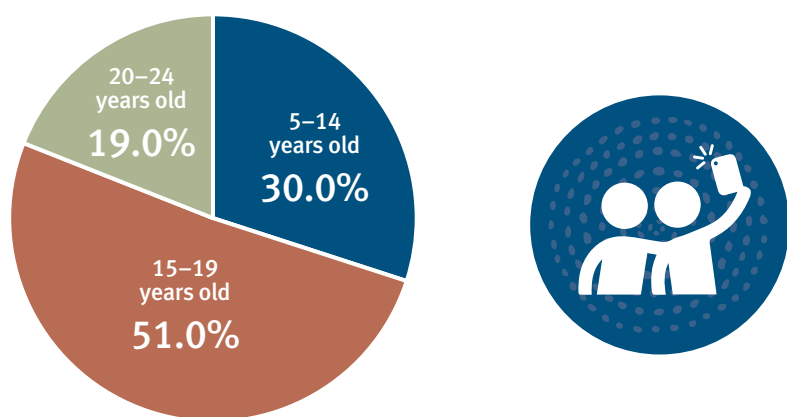
Almost 3 in 10 Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 respondents who were either under 26 years or who had parenting responsibilities had tried to access youth mental health services in the past three years. Of these, 69.0% had experienced barriers, including:



### Indicator 3.4.3: Young people with eating disorders receive treatment

It is estimated that between 4.0% and 16.0% of Australians aged 15 and over will experience an eating disorder;<sup>266</sup> nevertheless, many will neither seek nor receive treatment. In 2022, 1,822 Queensland children and young people presented to a community-based health service with an eating disorder diagnosis (Figure 125).

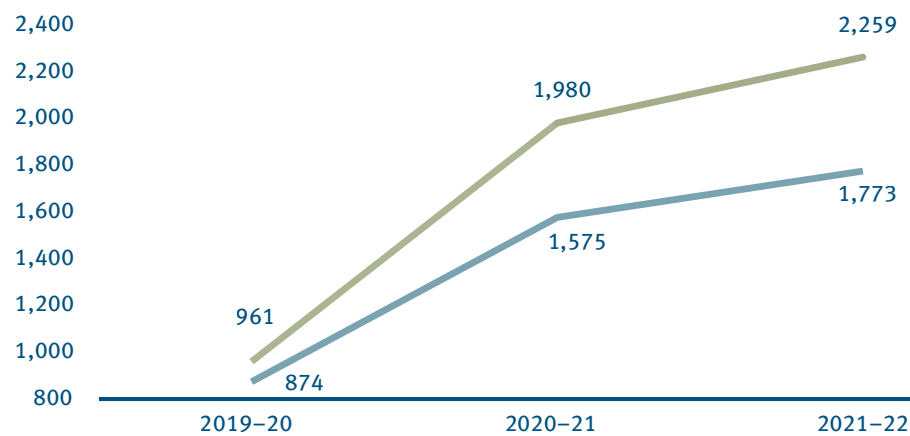
Figure 125: Proportion of young Queenslanders in different age groups (n=1,822) presenting to a community-based service in 2022 with an eating disorder diagnosis



Source: Queensland Health, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 126 shows the number of Queensland children and young people aged 0–24 years who were receiving Medicare funded psychological services and those who had a mental health care plan relating to the treatment of an eating disorder. In 2021–22, 2,259 children and young people or 0.1% of the Medicare-enrolled Queensland population received a service. The data suggests that while numbers receiving services have increased over time, a significant number of young people experiencing an eating disorder may not be receiving treatment.

Figure 126: Number of Queenslanders aged 0–24 years receiving services relating to the treatment of an eating disorder (2019–20 to 2021–22)



■ Receiving Medicare funded psychological services for an eating disorder  
 ■ Has a mental health care plan for an eating disorder



One per cent of young people under youth justice supervision reported having an eating disorder.<sup>267</sup>

Source: Services Australia, unpublished data request, 2023.

## Endnotes

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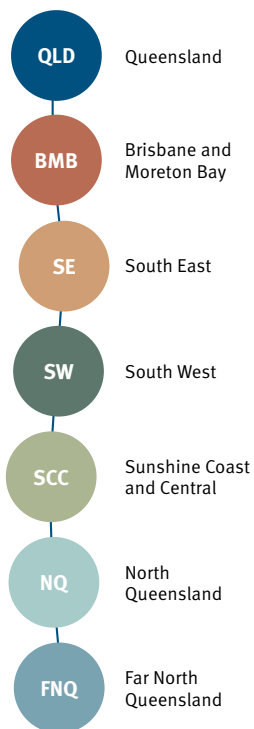


## Domain 4



Children, young people  
and their families  
***are engaged  
in education***

Regions of Queensland



## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

Children and young people who do well at school are more likely to have strong support for their education from their parents or carers throughout childhood and adolescence. Parents and carers begin their children’s learning experiences informally from infancy, by sharing stories, singing songs and through day-to-day conversations. As toddlers and children get older, informal learning experiences at home are broadened through interactions within their community, including formal educational experiences such as kindergarten and primary school. Families continue to support children’s education by listening to children read, volunteering at school and taking a regular interest in what they are learning. Increasingly, as children and young people get older, their educational experiences occur in formal settings such as school, vocational education and university and take on a greater focus on preparing for entry into the workforce.

Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers highlighted that children and young people in out-of-home care frequently face challenges with their schooling such as needing to change school if they change placements and having to negotiate departmental processes to obtain permissions, for example, to participate in school camps and formals. As a group they are more likely to struggle to meet academic standards and experience school disciplinary absences. This highlights the value in providing additional supports with more equitable educational experiences.

Having positive learning experiences and successfully completing their education has many benefits for all children and young people. These include employment opportunities, career advancement and lifetime income, but also other outcomes including better lifelong health.

The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children, young people and their families are engaged in education.

Table 45: Domain 4 goals and indicators

| Domain   | Goal   | Indicator groupings   |
|--|--|---|
| Domain 4: Children, young people and their families are engaged in education | <b>Goal 4.1: Families are engaged with their children’s learning</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 4.1.1: Children are regularly read to at home</li> <li>• Indicator 4.1.2: Families are actively engaged with their children’s school</li> </ul>  |
|  | <b>Goal 4.2: Children receive early childhood education and are supported to transition into school</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 4.2.1: Children participate in quality early childhood education and care</li> <li>• Indicator 4.2.2: Children are supported to transition into school</li> </ul>  |
|  | <b>Goal 4.3: Children and young people succeed at school and feel safe, included and valued</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 4.3.1: Children and young people regularly attend school</li> <li>• Indicator 4.3.2: Children and young people are able to meet academic standards</li> <li>• Indicator 4.3.3: Children and young people do not experience suspensions and exclusions from school</li> <li>• Indicator 4.3.4: Children and young people are able to cope with school pressures</li> <li>• Indicator 4.3.5: Children and young people feel safe, included and valued at school</li> </ul> |
|  | <b>Goal 4.4: Young people successfully complete school and are equipped with life skills to transition into adulthood.</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 4.4.1: Young people complete high school</li> <li>• Indicator 4.4.2: Young people are engaging with post-school education and training pathways</li> <li>• Indicator 4.4.3: Youth unemployment is low</li> </ul>   |

Figure 127: Educational engagement and outcomes for children and young people in Queensland

## Educational engagement and outcomes for children and young people in Queensland

Children are engaged with early education but only half are developmentally on track in their first year of school

**7/10**  
parents

regularly read to their children at home<sup>1</sup>

**9/10**  
children

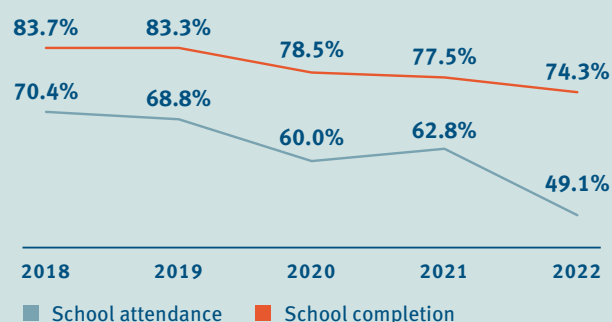
are enrolled in a kindergarten program<sup>2</sup>

**1/2**  
children

are developmentally on track in their first year of school<sup>2</sup>

Rates of school attendance and school completion in QLD (and Australia) have dropped<sup>2</sup>

Rates of QLD school attendance and completion



Most children and young people feel supported by their parents and teachers



**9/10** children

have parents who think school is important<sup>3</sup>

**8/10** children

have teachers who make them feel happy<sup>3</sup>



**9/10** young people

have teachers who help them when they need it<sup>4</sup>

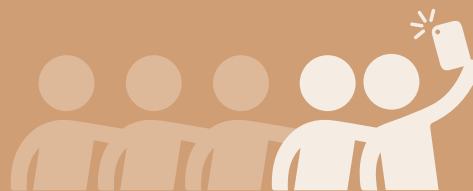
**8/10** young people

like being at school<sup>4</sup>



**9/10** parents say they can support their child to do well at school<sup>5</sup>

Young people are experiencing stress around their schooling and future goals<sup>7</sup>



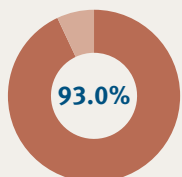
**2/5** young people

are concerned about school or study problems

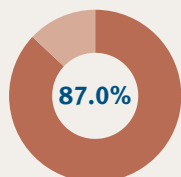
Identified barriers to work and study goals include mental health, academic ability and financial difficulties

Most children and young people are meeting national academic standards<sup>6</sup>

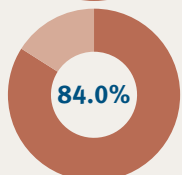
National minimum standards in numeracy, reading and writing are being met by at least:



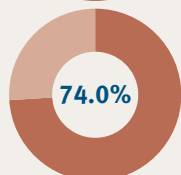
Year 3 students



Year 5 students



Year 7 students



Year 9 students

Most young people make a successful transition from school to employment and/or further study<sup>8</sup>

**9/10**

are engaged in employment and/or study

**20.0%**

have completed a degree

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Australian Early Development Census, 2021. <sup>2</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>3</sup> Rumble's Quest, 2023. <sup>4</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>5</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>6,7</sup> Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2023. <sup>7</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022.

## Goal 4.1: Families are engaged with their children’s learning

Family engagement with children’s learning is associated with improved school outcomes for children and young people of all ages. It can include activities such as parents or carers volunteering in class, regularly communicating with teachers and supporting learning at home by reading together. Family engagement activities strengthen relationships between the child, family and their school and can have many benefits for children and young people, supporting the development of their language, literacy and social-emotional skills.<sup>270</sup>

Overall, children were most developmentally on track to commence school in Brisbane and Moreton Bay, the South East, and Sunshine Coast and Central indicating the importance of additional services and supports in other regions.

Table 46: Regional variations in educational outcomes

| Brisbane and Moreton Bay              |   |  |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 54.5%                                 | 76.8%   | 92.8%                                    | 80.2%   | 93.4%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |
| South East                            |   |  |   |  |
| 51.3%                                 | 72.8%   | 92.6%                                    | 75.0%   | 92.5%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |
| South West                            |   |  |   |  |
| 48.9%                                 | 67.0%   | 91.6%                                    | 66.7%   | 89.5%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |
| Sunshine Coast and Central            |   |  |   |  |
| 51.0%                                 | 72.8%   | 95.4%                                    | 71.1%   | 90.2%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |
| North Queensland                      |   |  |   |  |
| 47.9%                                 | 66.5%   | 89.5%                                    | 63.8%   | 88.0%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |
| Far North Queensland                  |   |  |   |  |
| 46.1%                                 | 65.6%   | 93.3%                                    | 65.9%   | 87.1%  |
| Developmentally on track <sup>1</sup> | Parents actively engaged with school <sup>2</sup> | Enrolled in a kindy program <sup>3</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN writing standards <sup>4</sup> | Meeting NAPLAN numeracy standards <sup>5</sup> |

Source: <sup>1</sup> Australian Early Development Census, 2021. <sup>2</sup> Australian Early Development Census, 2021. <sup>3</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>4</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023. <sup>5</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Indicator 4.1.1: Children are regularly read to at home

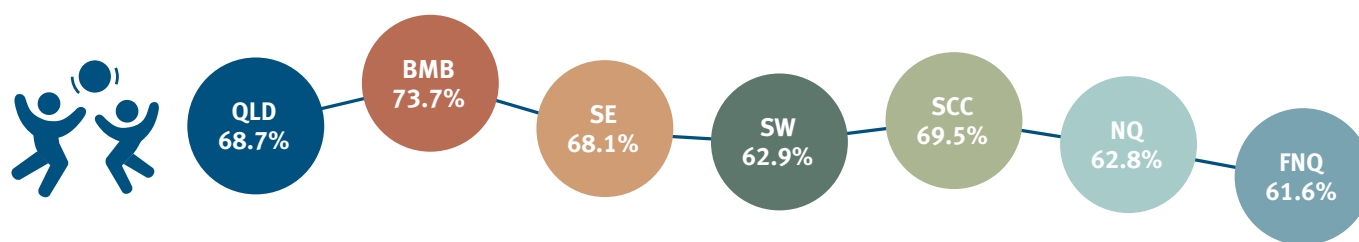
Queensland-wide, almost seven out of 10 parents who had a child in their first year of school were reading to them at home. Reading is consistently more common among families living in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and less common among families living in the South West and Far North Queensland. While in most regions, rates of reading have stayed steady over time, between 2018 and 2021 in North Queensland and Far North Queensland, there was a marked drop in families reading to their children (Table 47).

#### Key finding

68.7% of parents support their children's early learning by reading to them at home.



Table 47: A regional comparison of the percentage of children in their first year of school who were regularly read to at home, 2015, 2018 and 2021



|      | Queensland | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2015 | 69.0%      | 73.9%                    | 67.7%      | 63.3%      | 69.4%                      | 66.5%            | 63.7%                |
| 2018 | 69.3%      | 73.2%                    | 68.2%      | 63.9%      | 70.8%                      | 66.3%            | 64.4%                |
| 2021 | 68.7%      | 73.7%                    | 68.1%      | 62.9%      | 69.5%                      | 62.8%            | 61.6%                |

Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2015–21.

### Indicator 4.1.2: Families are actively engaged with their children's school

According to Australian Early Development Census data, in 2021, in Queensland children's first year of full-time school, just over seven out of 10 parents or caregivers (72.4%) were actively engaged in supporting their child's learning. Rates of engagement were higher for parents or caregivers in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and lower for those in the South West, North Queensland and Far North Queensland (Table 46).

#### Key finding

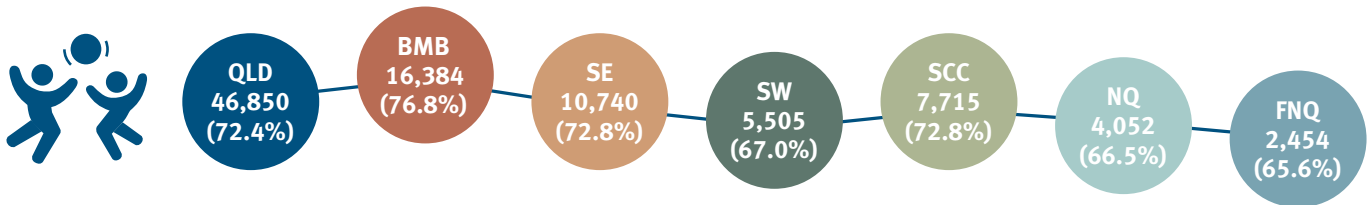
72.4% of parents and carers are actively engaged in supporting their child's learning.



## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

Figure 128: A regional comparison of the rates of school engagement among parents and carers who had a child in their first year of school, 2021

### Number and rate of children whose parents or carers are actively engaged with the school



Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2021.<sup>271</sup>

Ninety-one per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that they could support their child to do well at school. Just under 80.0% felt confident they could get help from teachers or other school staff if their child was having problems at school (Table 48).



Table 48: A regional comparison of parent and carer confidence in supporting children's learning

|   | Queensland | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|---|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| I can support my child to do well at school   | 91.0%      | 91.0%                    | 91.0%      | 91.0%      | 92.0%                      | 89.0%            | 93.0%                |
| I feel confident I could get help from teachers or other school staff if my child was having problems at school | 79.0%      | 77.0%                    | 82.0%      | 77.0%      | 80.0%                      | 80.0%            | 78.0%                |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>272</sup>

Based on primary aged children's ratings of their parents' engagement with school, while the majority of children reported that their parents or carers thought school was important (92.4%), fewer children (seven out of 10) reported that they told their parents or carers about things they were doing at school (Table 49).



Table 49: Child reports of parental engagement with their schooling

| Number of children who:  | Queensland (n=18,878) | Brisbane and Moreton Bay (n=5,191) | South East (n=5,938) | South West (n=2,588) | Sunshine Coast and Central (n=1,768) | North Queensland (n=903) | Far North Queensland (n=2490) |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Have parents or carers who think school is important               | 92.4%                 | 92.4%                              | 92.4%                | 92.5%                | 93.8%                                | 92.1%                    | 91.2%                         |
| Tell their parents or carers about things they are doing at school | 69.7%                 | 68.6%                              | 68.4%                | 70.6%                | 72.4%                                | 72.9%                    | 70.9%                         |

Source: Rumble's Quest, 2023.<sup>273</sup>

A second Australian survey of children in year 4, 6 and 8 found that while most children reported that their parents regularly spoke to them about school and supported their homework, rates of parents speaking to their child's teacher at least once or twice per term ranged between 67.9% for year 4 students to 37.6% for year 8 students (Table 50). Children and young people with a disability were more likely to report their parents 'never or almost never' talked with teachers.<sup>274</sup>



Table 50: Rate of young people who agree that the following are 'pretty much' or 'very much' true (year 4, 6 and 8)

|  | Year 4 students | Year 6 students | Year 8 students |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Parents ask them what they are learning in school at least once per week | 85.5%           | 85.3%           | 84.7%           |
| Parents make sure they set aside time for homework at least once a week  | 84.4%           | 86.3%           | 86.1%           |
| Parents talk to their teacher at least once or twice a term              | 67.9%           | 60.8%           | 37.6%           |

Source: Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>275</sup>

## Goal 4.2: Children receive early childhood education and are supported to transition into school

High-quality early childhood education and care provides young children with opportunities to develop important social, cognitive and emotional skills.<sup>276</sup> Children who participate in quality early childhood education are more likely to develop social skills, experience higher levels of educational success both in primary school and beyond and, in the long term,

have better employment outcomes.<sup>277</sup> Although beneficial for all children, kindergarten programs prove to be particularly valuable for children from families experiencing vulnerability.<sup>278</sup>



Michelle Martin,  
SDK teacher

### CASE STUDY

#### Teaching the next generation in State Delivered Kindergarten

State Delivered Kindergarten (SDK) programs ensure all children have access to a free kindergarten program in the year before school, no matter where they live. The programs are offered in schools located at least 40 kilometres by road from the nearest approved kindergarten, in a selected discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or other selected communities where there have been barriers to accessing kindergarten.

SDK programs are currently offered in 118 Queensland state schools (or their campuses) providing children with access to high quality teaching and learning in the year prior to Prep.

With over 30 years of experience, Michelle Martin is proud to be teaching the next generation of children at Thursday Island (Paru Kaziw Mudh) Kindergarten, an SDK located in the Torres Strait in remote Far North Queensland.

Michelle, a local from Thursday Island, went away to study but always knew that she would return home to teach. She sees it as a real privilege to work with Thursday Island's children every day.

*'We embed language and culture into our SDK program daily and this starts every morning when the children walk in with their families and are greeted by one of the adults at the gate in their traditional language.'*

A Torres Strait Creole and English speaker, Michelle values the children's daily exposure to a range of local languages and culture which she incorporates into all aspects of the kindergarten program. Staff who come from other islands in the Torres Strait are encouraged to teach the children their language, culture and songs.

*'I just absolutely love what I do – I don't think it's a job, I think it's just a great honour, a great privilege to get to work with amazing children.'*

### Indicator 4.2.1: Children participate in quality early childhood education and care

Around three-quarters (76.0%) of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that in their community children and young people were able to access early childhood education and care, such as kindergarten.

In 2022, across Australia, 49.0% of children aged 0–5 years and 34.4% of children aged 0–12 years attended childcare-subsidy approved care. In Queensland, 189,290 children attended centre-based daycare, 17,380 attended family daycare and 124,250 attended outside school hours care. Queensland had the third largest share of families using centre-based daycare, at 22.4% (Figure 130). On average, Queensland children attended 34.6 hours per week in centre-based daycare as compared to 32.4 hours per week across Australia.<sup>279</sup>

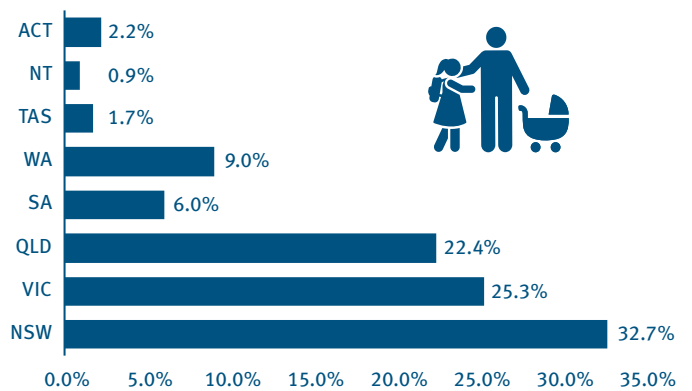
Across Queensland over the past five years, more than nine out of 10 young children aged four and five years attended a kindergarten program. In most regions, rates of enrolment peaked in 2021, as Queensland emerged from COVID-19 lockdowns, but fell in 2022. While rates had been lower between 2018 and 2020 in the South West and Far North Queensland, since 2021 rates of kindergarten enrolment in those regions have been increasing (Figure 130).



### Key finding

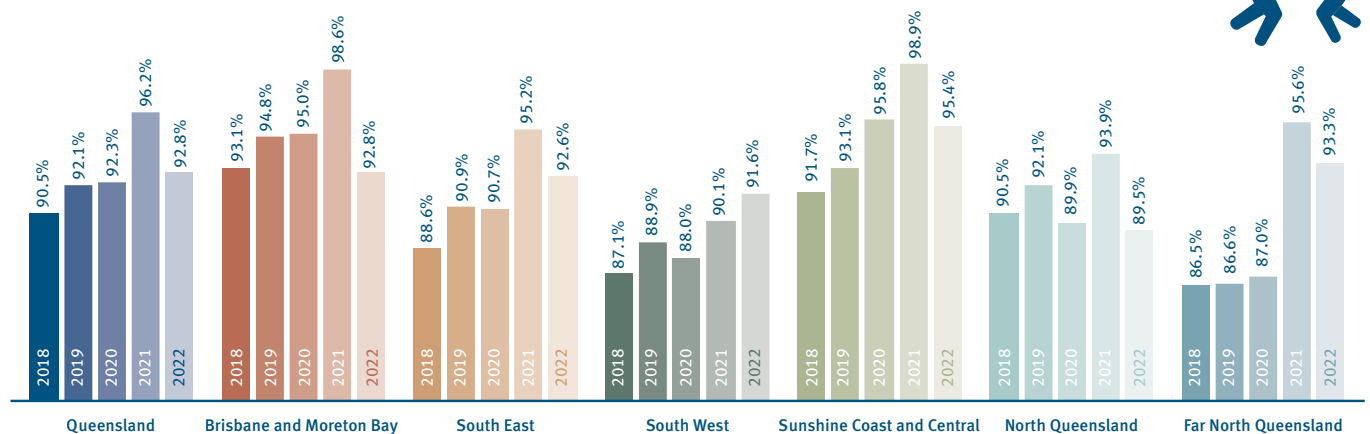
The majority (92.8%) of 4 and 5 year old children are enrolled in a kindergarten program prior to commencing school.

Figure 129: Families using centre-based day care by state and territory, September quarter 2022



Source: Australian Government Department of Education, 2022.<sup>280</sup>

Figure 130: Regional comparison of the percentage of 4 and 5 years old children enrolled in a kindergarten program, 2018–22



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

## Indicator 4.2.2: Children are supported to transition into school

The Australian Early Development Census provides data on children's development in their first year of full-time school across five domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based) and communication skills and general knowledge. Prior research has found that children with language backgrounds other than English are 1.3 times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more Australian Early Development Census domains, predominantly the communication skills and general knowledge domain.<sup>281</sup>

In 2021, only 51.4% of Queensland children in their first year of full-time school were developmentally on track for all five Australian Early Development Census domains, with 24.7% developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and 13.2% developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. As shown in Table 51 there was variation across regions with children in Far North Queensland, North Queensland and the South West least likely to be developmentally on track and most likely to be assessed as developmentally vulnerable.

Table 51: A regional comparison of the proportion of Queensland children in their first year of full-time school in 2021 who were on developmentally on track or developmentally vulnerable

| Percentage of children assessed as developmentally:                    | Queensland     | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East    | South West    | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| on track on all five domains (all children)                            | 51.4%          | 54.5%                    | 51.3%         | 48.9%         | 51.0%                      | 47.9%            | 46.1%                |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on track on all domains | 33.8%          | 35.0%                    | 38.2%         | 32.3%         | 33.5%                      | 31.5%            | 33.4%                |
| vulnerable on one or more domains                                      | 15,143 (24.7%) | 4,515 (22.2%)            | 3,308 (23.9%) | 2,142 (27.5%) | 2,490 (24.8%)              | 1,630 (28.2%)    | 1,058 (29.8%)        |
| vulnerable on two or more domains                                      | 8,088 (13.2%)  | 2,343 (11.5%)            | 1,716 (12.4%) | 1,200 (15.4%) | 1,307 (13.0%)              | 904 (15.6%)      | 618 (17.4%)          |

Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2021.<sup>282</sup>


### Key finding



In 2021, only 51.4% of Queensland children in their first year of full-time school were developmentally on track in all five Australian Early Development Census domains: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based) and communication skills and general knowledge.



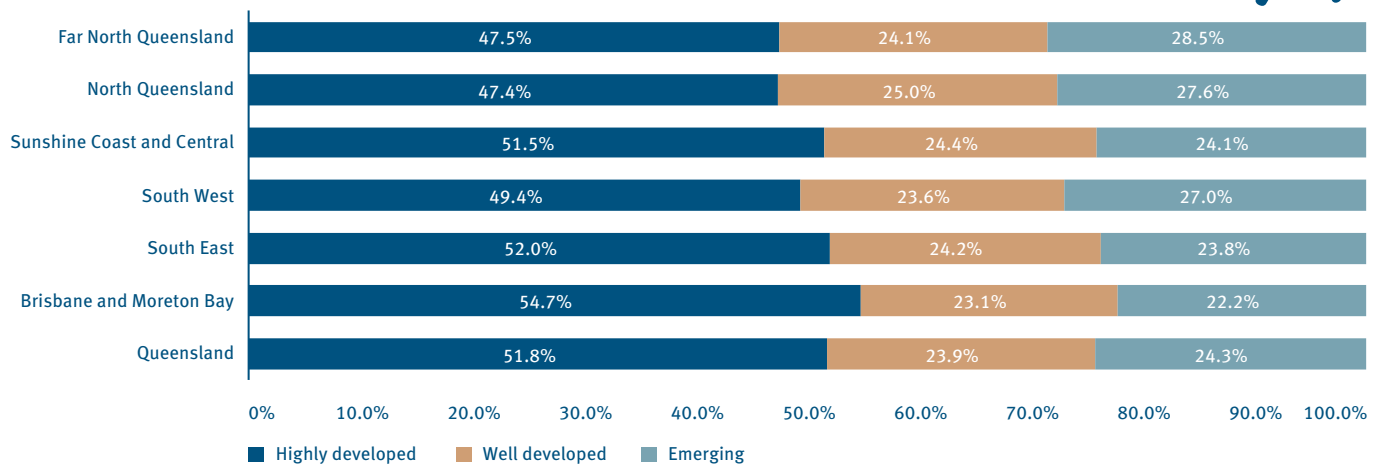
## Queensland’s progress against Closing the Gap targets <sup>283</sup>



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Closing the Gap indicator</b>                              | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years   |
| <b>Closing the Gap target</b>                                 | By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55%.                               |
| <b>Queensland data</b>  | In 2021, 33.8% of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their first year of full-time school were assessed as being developmentally on track in all five Australian Early Development Census domains. |
| <b>What does the Growing Up In Queensland report tell us?</b> | Table 86 shows that in 2021, no Queensland regions were meeting the Closing the Gap targets but that some regions (Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South East) were faring better than others.                              |

The Multiple Strengths Indicator is a strengths-based measure of children’s development at the time they commence their first year of full-time school. It is used as part of the Australian Early Development Census.<sup>284</sup> It focuses on social and emotional developmental strengths such as self-control, prosocial skills and respectful behaviour towards peers and teachers.<sup>285</sup> According to teacher reports, children from the South West, North Queensland and Far North Queensland were least likely to have highly developed socio-emotional strengths (Figure 131).

Figure 131: A regional comparison of the percentage of children in their first year of school who had emerging, well developed or highly developed socio-emotional strengths assessed using the Multiple Strengths Indicator, 2021



Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2021.<sup>286</sup>

### 4.3 Children and young people feel safe, included and valued at school

School success promotes children and young people's self-esteem and self-confidence. Young people who succeed at school are more likely to have more employment opportunities, more stable employment and higher lifetime salaries. They are more likely to contribute to the community through activities such as volunteering and less likely to experience anxiety and depression and to engage in alcohol and substance misuse. Many factors contribute to school success including strong and supportive relationships with teachers and other students, regular school attendance and school achievement.<sup>287</sup> Suspensions and exclusions are traditionally used by schools to manage disruptive student behaviour, however research shows that punitive approaches are ineffective in the long term, can exacerbate student disengagement and are associated with lower educational outcomes.<sup>288 289</sup>

#### CASE STUDY

##### Alternative learning support to get back on track with education.

Queensland Pathways State College (QPSC) offers a senior transitions program for young people in grades 10 to 12 who face significant barriers in accessing mainstream education. QPSC actively identifies, develops and facilitates pathways to post-school education, training or employment, while focusing on student-centred learning, student wellbeing, vocational development and community partnerships.

Kayla\*, a proud Koori woman from Ngarabal country who was born and raised on Quandamooka country is a recent successful QPSC graduate. She had disengaged from school in year 9. At the age of 15, she faced additional challenges and became involved with the youth justice system. She also became pregnant. The culmination of life challenges made a return to mainstream school feel impossible.

After giving birth at 16, Kayla decided she wanted to return to education and boost her pathway options. She found information about QPSC and

enrolled at their Mount Gravatt campus. While enrolled, she would travel from the islands, drop her daughter to childcare on the way to Mount Gravatt 4 days a week, and also attend a school-based traineeship on the 5th day, completing a Certificate II in Health Support Services. She graduated from QPSC with her Queensland Certificate of Education and a passion and commitment to life beyond school.

She transitioned to a teacher aide course at TAFE and using her skills from a Certificate II in Business, started her own successful business selling First Nations dolls to hospitals, childcare centres and private buyers online. She now has a second child and a new career goal in educating "jarjums" (children).

She is going from strength to strength and is now at university studying for a Bachelor of Education.

\* name has been changed

### Indicator 4.3.1 Children and young people regularly attend school

Out of every 100 school students in Queensland, 66 attend a government school, 18 attend a Catholic school and 16 attend an independent school. As at 9 December 2022, 5,592 children and young people living in out-of-home care attended Queensland state schools.

#### Key finding



Rates of regular school attendance have dropped. In 2018, Queensland-wide, 70.4% of children and young people regularly attended school, but by 2022 this rate had dropped to 49.1%.

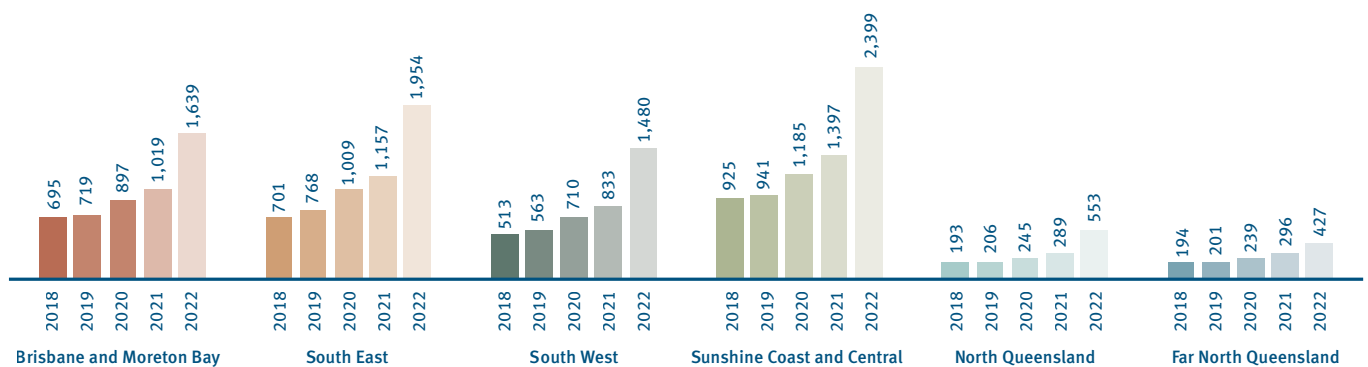
Table 52: Number of schools and students in Queensland in 2021–22

|                    | Government schools | Catholic schools | Independent schools | Total   |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Number of schools  | 1,248              | 314              | 229                 | 1,791   |
| Number of students | 571,550            | 157,956          | 141,313             | 870,819 |

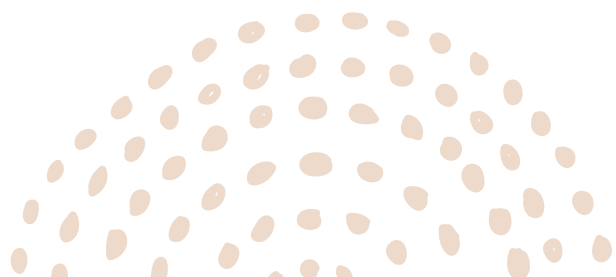
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia, 2022. <sup>290</sup>

In 2018 across Queensland, 3,232 school students were home schooled. By 2022, this number had increased more than 2.5 times to 8,461 students. The numbers of students being home schooled has grown across all regions (Figure 132). While numbers are increasing, this represents less than 1.0% of all enrolled students.

Figure 132: Number of students who are home schooled by Child Safety region, 2018–22



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.



Rates of school attendance drop as children and young people get older. As can be seen in Table 53, in 2022, the rate of attendance for children in Prep was 88.0%, but by year 10 this had dropped to 81.1%. The overall student attendance rate for all Queensland state schools in 2022 was 85.6%, 3.3 percentage points lower than the 2021 attendance rate.

Table 53: Attendance rates of Queensland state school students by year level, 2018–22

|      | Prep  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Year 12 |
|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2018 | 92.4% | 92.0%  | 92.3%  | 92.5%  | 92.3%  | 92.1%  | 91.8%  | 90.9%  | 88.6%  | 87.6%  | 87.2%   | 88.7%   | 89.8%   |
| 2019 | 91.9% | 91.6%  | 91.8%  | 92.0%  | 91.9%  | 91.7%  | 91.5%  | 90.6%  | 88.5%  | 87.0%  | 87.2%   | 88.4%   | 89.5%   |
| 2020 | 89.8% | 89.2%  | 89.8%  | 89.9%  | 89.9%  | 89.7%  | 89.8%  | 89.1%  | 87.0%  | 86.1%  | 85.7%   | 87.3%   | 88.5%   |
| 2021 | 90.6% | 90.4%  | 90.7%  | 90.9%  | 90.7%  | 90.3%  | 90.1%  | 89.0%  | 86.4%  | 84.9%  | 84.7%   | 86.3%   | 87.7%   |
| 2022 | 88.0% | 87.3%  | 87.5%  | 87.6%  | 87.3%  | 86.9%  | 86.5%  | 86.0%  | 83.0%  | 81.4%  | 81.1%   | 83.2%   | 84.7%   |

Source: Queensland Department of Education, State school attendance, 2022. <sup>291</sup>

The percentage of full-time students regularly attending school (attending school 90.0% of the time) has also been dropping across every region over the past five years. In 2018, Queensland-wide, 70.4% of children and young people regularly attended school, but by 2022 this rate had dropped to 49.1%. Rates of regular attendance were highest in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and lowest in Far North Queensland. Rates of regular attendance for students in out-of-home care were slightly lower than or similar to the rate for all Queensland students (Figure 133).

Figure 133: Percentage of full-time students (prep to year 12) whose attendance rate in semester 1 was equal to or greater than 90 per cent across regions, 2022

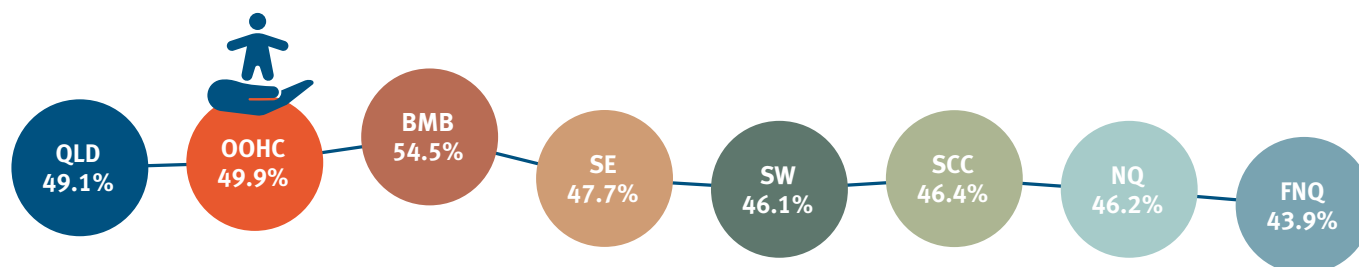


Table 54: Percentage of full-time students (prep to year 12) whose attendance rate in semester 1 was equal to or greater than 90 per cent across regions, 2018–22

|      | Queensland | Children in out-of-home care | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|------|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2018 | 70.4%      | 68.3%                        | 75.5%                    | 69.7%      | 68.0%      | 68.7%                      | 66.3%            | 62.7%                |
| 2019 | 68.8%      | 65.8%                        | 73.9%                    | 68.2%      | 66.4%      | 67.5%                      | 64.1%            | 60.2%                |
| 2020 | 60.0%      | 60.1%                        | 64.7%                    | 58.0%      | 58.5%      | 57.9%                      | 58.5%            | 53.8%                |
| 2021 | 62.8%      | 60.6%                        | 70.1%                    | 60.7%      | 58.6%      | 59.0%                      | 59.8%            | 54.7%                |
| 2022 | 49.1%      | 49.9%                        | 54.5%                    | 47.7%      | 46.1%      | 46.4%                      | 46.2%            | 43.9%                |

Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.



School attendance rates for students in out-of-home care are consistent with findings from surveys of foster and kinship carers, indicating that the majority (77.0%) felt the children in their care were being supported to attend school (Table 55).

Table 55: Number and percentage of foster and kinship carers reporting that the children in their care were supported to attend school

| QFKC 2022 survey <sup>1</sup>   | Queensland | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|---|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Total number of respondents (188 skipped this question)   | 582        | 126                      | 144        | 111        | 92                         | 42               | 67                   |
| Children in respondent's care being supported to attend school (including early childhood education). | 77.0%      | 78.0%                    | 80.0%      | 74.0%      | 75.0%                      | 76.0%            | 81.0%                |

Source: <sup>1</sup> Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers Survey, 2022<sup>292</sup>

Sixty-six per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that in their community children and young people have support to stay engaged in learning at school or TAFE.<sup>293</sup>

### Indicator 4.3.2: Children and young people are able to meet academic standards

When asked about their perceptions around schoolwork, the majority of Queensland young people agreed that their schoolwork challenged them to think and that they understood how their work was assessed. A lower proportion of young people reported they were interested in their schoolwork. The proportion of young people agreeing with these statements dropped between 2018 and 2022 (Table 56).

#### Key finding

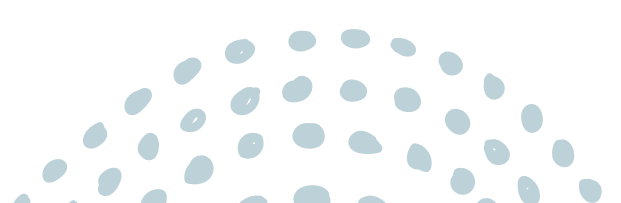


**Most Queensland children and young people are meeting national academic standards. In 2022, national minimum standards in numeracy, reading and writing were met by 93.0% of year 3 students, 87.0% of year 5 students, 84.0% of year 7 students and 74.0% of year 9 students.**

Table 56: Queensland students' responses to selected items from the Queensland Department of Education Student School Opinion Survey, 2018–22

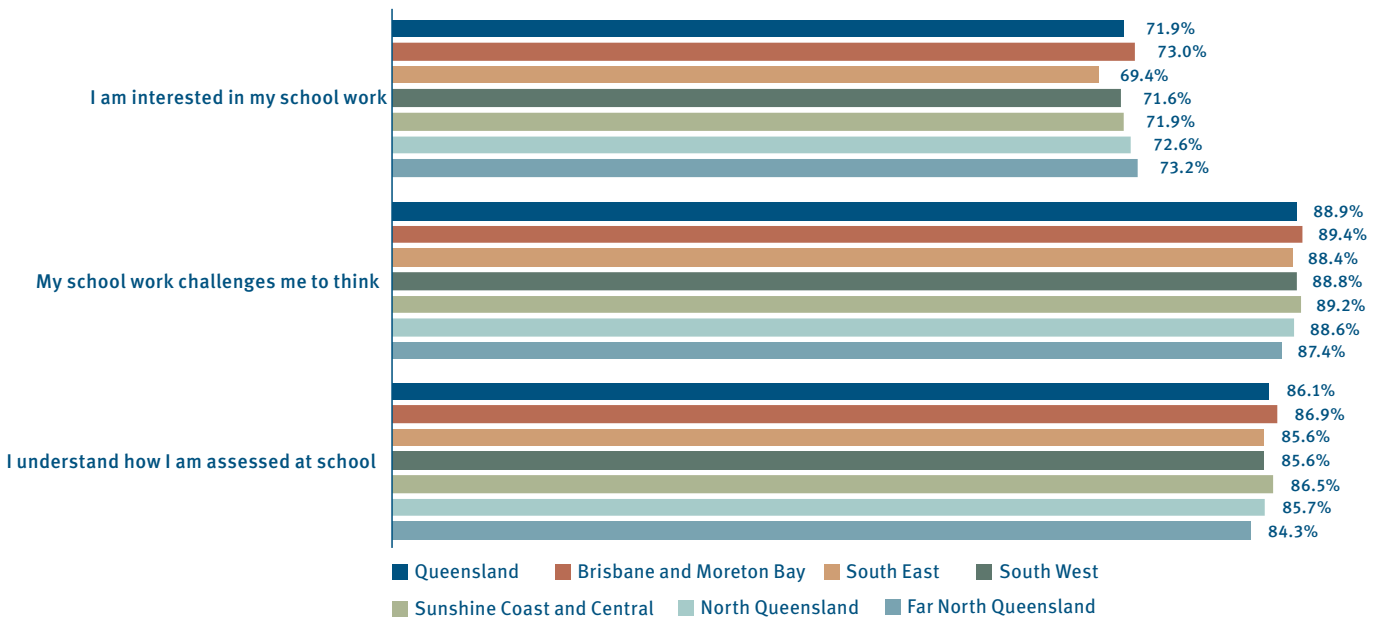
|   | 2018  | 2019  | 2021  | 2022  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| My school work challenges me to think.  | 92.8% | 92.8% | 90.2% | 88.9% |
| I understand how I am assessed at my school.                                  | 90.5% | 89.5% | 87.7% | 86.1% |
| I am interested in my school work (question asked for the first time in 2021) | N/A   | N/A   | 75.1% | 71.8% |

Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.



There was little regional variation in young people’s perceptions (Figure 134).

Figure 134: A regional comparison of Queensland students’ responses to items from the Queensland Department of Education Student School Opinion Survey, 2022, n=99,464



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

More than six out of 10 young people reported they were satisfied with their studies. There was notable regional variation on this measure with young people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay much more likely to be satisfied than those living in the South East and Far North Queensland. Just under half of young people were confident about achieving their study or work goals (Figure 135).

Figure 135: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who reported being satisfied with their studies and those feeling confident about achieving their study/work goals by region

Very satisfied or satisfied with their studies



Extremely/very confident in achieving study/work goals



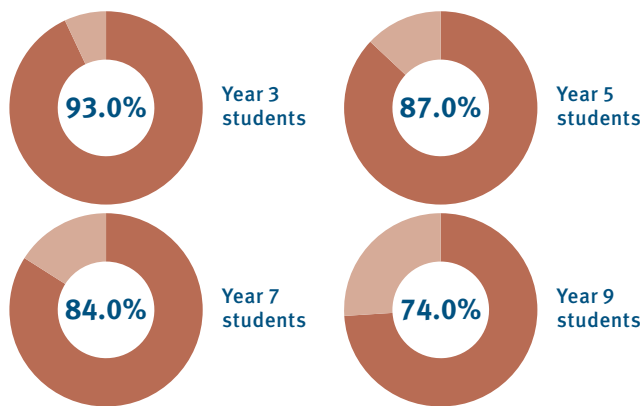
| Number of respondents | AU     | QLD   | BMB   | SE  | SW  | SCC | NQ  | FNQ |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                       | 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>294</sup>

In terms of meeting academic standards, Figure 136 provides a comparison of year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students achieving NAPLAN minimum national standards for numeracy, reading and writing in 2022.

So while the majority of Queensland school students are meeting national minimum standards, many Queensland children and young people are falling behind and this increases as they progress through school.

Figure 136: Rates of national minimum standards in numeracy, reading and writing being met



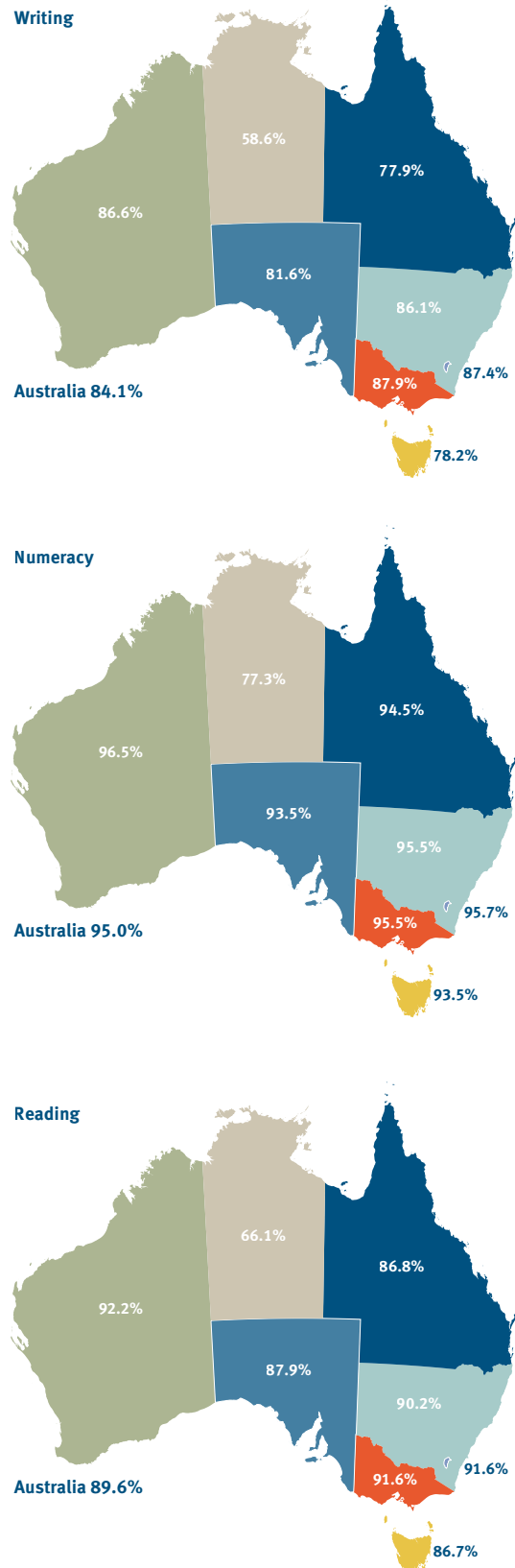
Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, NAPLAN results, 2023.

Compared with other Australian jurisdictions, the proportion of Queensland year 9 students meeting national minimum standards is:

- similar to other states for numeracy
- lower than other states for reading and writing (Figure 137).

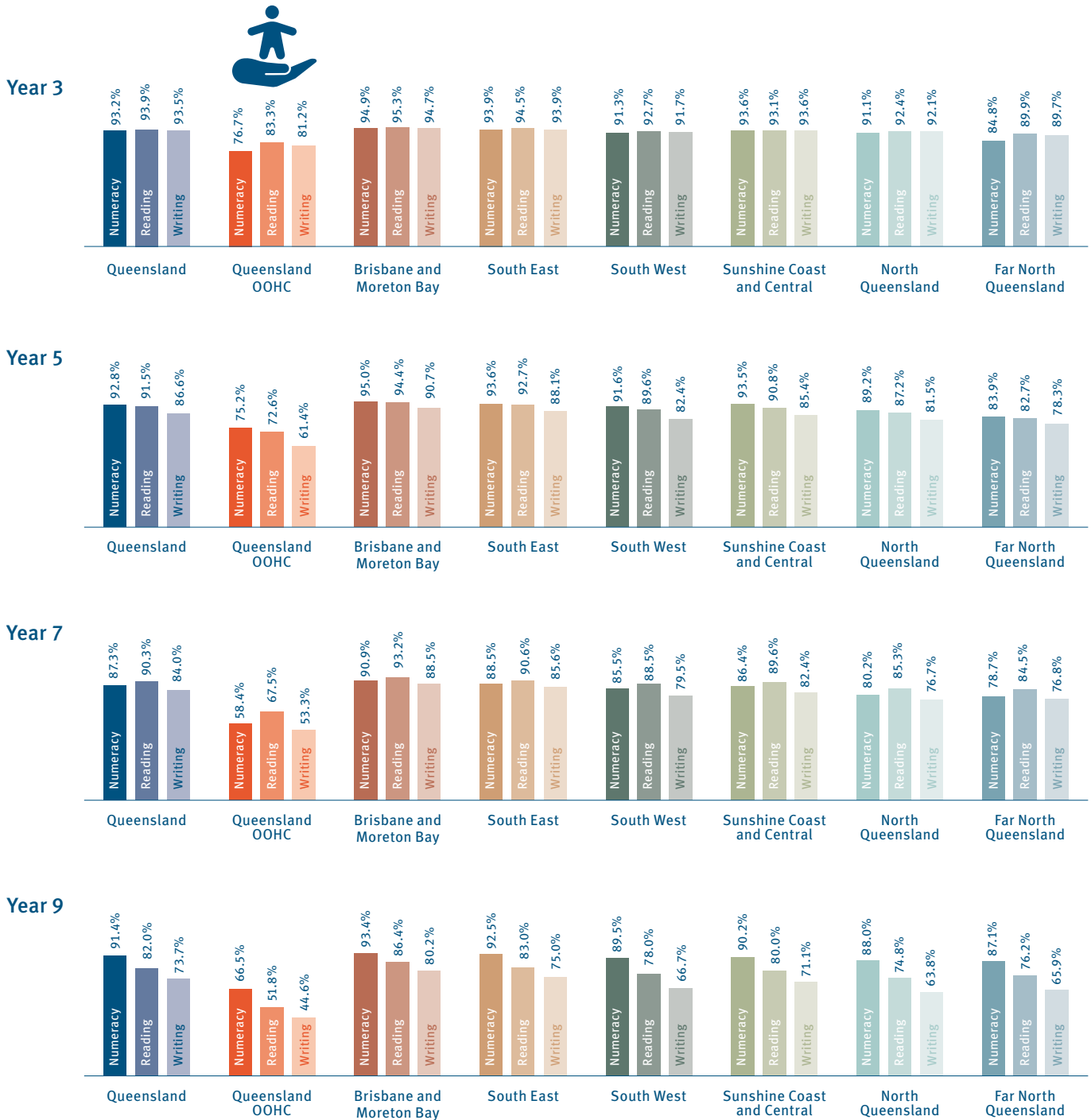
Figure 138 provides a regional comparison of the percentage of Queensland year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students meeting NAPLAN minimum standards in 2022. It also presents data on the number of students living in out-of-home care Queensland-wide meeting NAPLAN minimum standards.

Figure 137: National comparison of year 9 students meeting NAPLAN national minimum standards, 2022



Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2023.<sup>295</sup>

Figure 138: A regional comparison of the percentage of year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students reaching NAPLAN minimum national standards, 2022



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

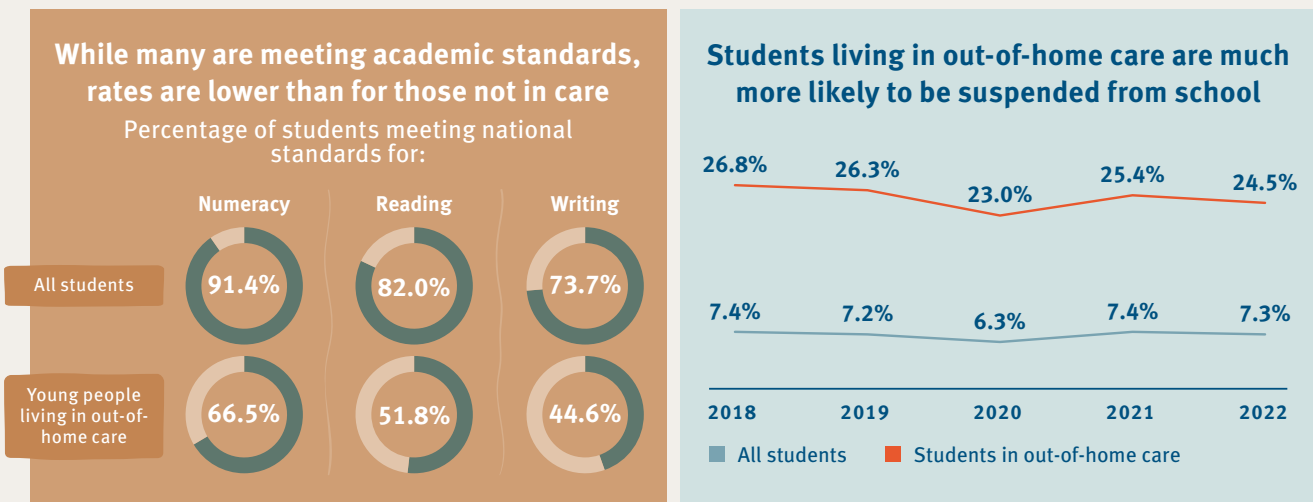
Children, young people and their families are engaged in education





## Young people living in out-of-home care are less likely to experience school success and more likely to experience suspensions and exclusions

Figure 139: School challenges for young people in care



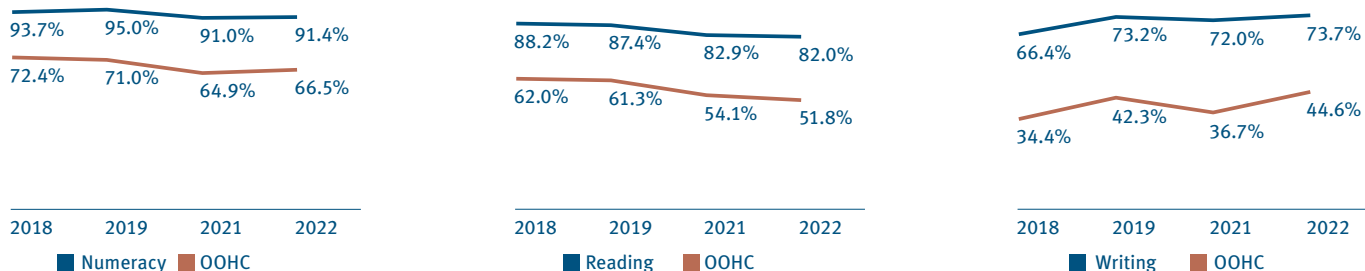
Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

Overall, in every year level, students in out-of-home care were less likely to be meeting national standards than other Queensland students. The decline in the proportion of out-of-home care students meeting national standards was greatest for writing which was attained by 81.2% of students in year 3, 61.4% of students in year 5, 53.3% of students in year 7 and 44.6% of students in year 9.

As shown in Figure 140, the proportion of Queensland year 9 students reaching NAPLAN minimum national standards for both numeracy and reading was lower in 2022 than it was pre-pandemic in 2018. The proportion meeting national standards for writing has increased between 2018 and 2022. While overall a lower proportion of out-of-home care students were meeting national NAPLAN minimum standards, the pattern was consistent with the overall pattern for all students (meeting national standards for numeracy and reading was dropping, but meeting national standards for writing was increasing).



Figure 140: A comparison of year 9 Queensland out-of-home care and all students meeting NAPLAN national minimum standards, 2018–22



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.



Young people in care were asked to nominate the best options to help them with their schoolwork presented in Table 57.

Table 57: Top five options identified by young people in out-of-home care to help them with their schoolwork

| Options that would help children and young people with their schooling | Percentage of young people in care reporting |
|--|--|
| Extra help in the classroom  | 41.5%  |
| Tablet, laptop or iPad   | 37.1%  |
| Tutoring   | 29.6%  |
| Help with homework   | 27.4%  |
| Wifi   | 22.1%  |

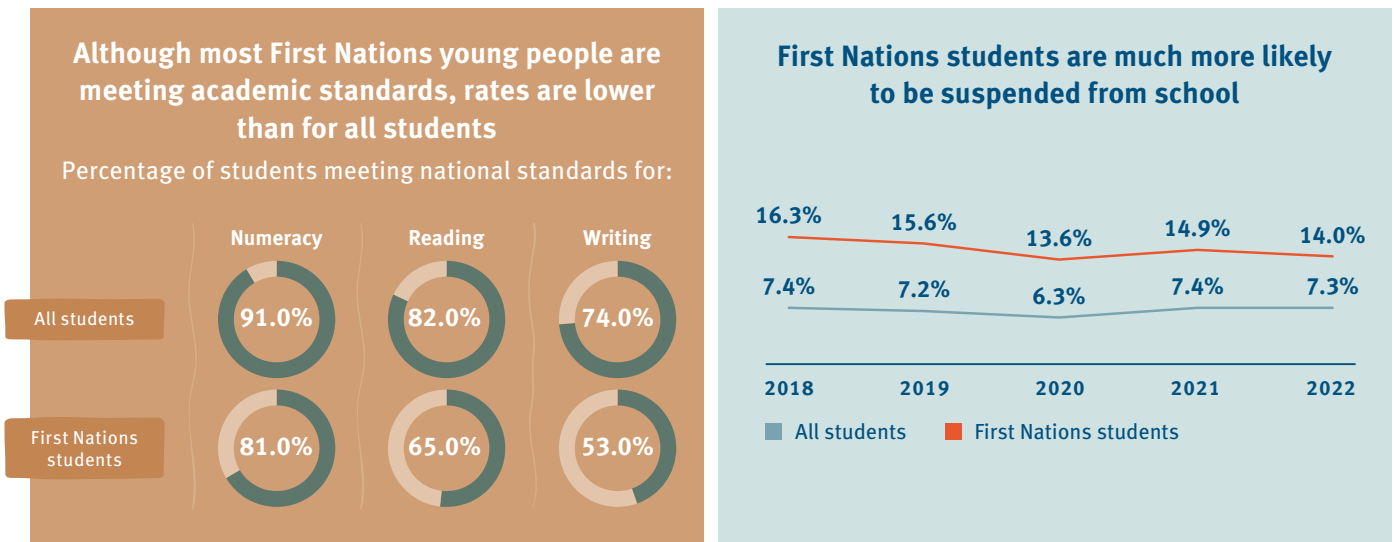
Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are less likely to experience school success and more likely to experience suspensions and exclusions than other students.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people face challenges with their schooling.

Figure 141: Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reaching national NAPLAN standards and experiencing suspensions and exclusions



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Indicator 4.3.3: Children and young people do not experience suspensions and exclusions from school

In 2022, 7.3% of Queensland state school students experienced a school disciplinary absence (they were suspended or excluded). As shown in Figure 142, for all groups of children and young people, rates of school disciplinary absences were highest for those living in the South West and lowest for those living in Brisbane and Moreton Bay. Rates of school disciplinary absences were markedly higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability and students living in out-of-home care. In 2022, almost a quarter of students living in out-of-home care had a school disciplinary absence.

#### Key finding



In 2022, 7.3% of Queensland state school students experienced a school disciplinary absence. Rates were higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, for students with a disability and for students living in out-of-home care.

Figure 142: Regional comparison of the percentage of students with school disciplinary absences in 2022 (all students versus Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students versus students with disability versus students living in out-of-home care)

#### All students



#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students



#### Students with disability



#### Students living in out-of-home care



Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

The rates of school disciplinary absences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability and students living in out-of-home care dropped slightly between 2018 and 2022. Overall, however, for Queensland children and young people attending state schools, the percentage of students with a school disciplinary absence was the same in 2022 as in 2018.

### Indicator 4.3.4: Children and young people are able to cope with school pressures

Among children and young people aged 8–14 years, half reported that they felt some or a lot of pressure from schoolwork.<sup>296</sup>

More than two in five (43.1%) young Queenslanders noted their biggest personal challenge in the last year was around school, while over a third were concerned about school problems.<sup>297</sup>

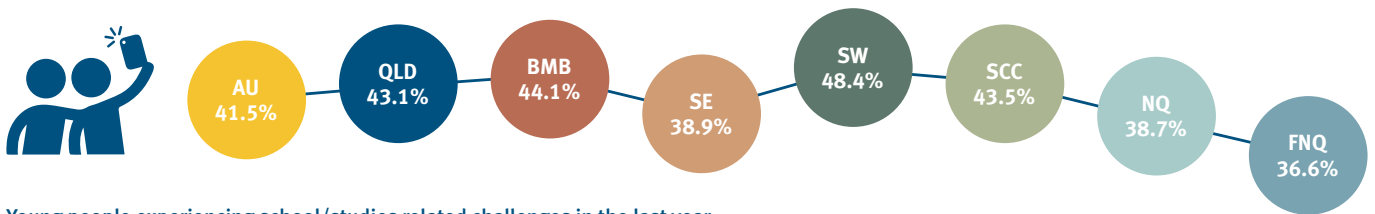
### Key finding



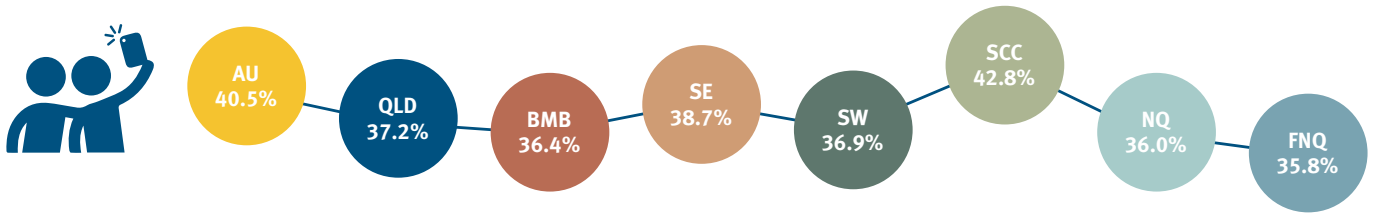
37.2% of young people are very concerned about school or study problems.

Figure 143: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who said school/studies related challenges were their biggest personal challenge in the last year and those who were extremely/very concerned about school by region

#### Young people experiencing school/studies related challenges in the last year



#### Young people experiencing school/studies related challenges in the last year



| Number of respondents | AU     | QLD   | BMB   | SE  | SW  | SCC | NQ  | FNQ |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                       | 18,800 | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924 | 855 | 209 | 410 | 236 |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>298</sup>

## Indicator 4.3.5: Children and young people feel safe, included and valued at school

Most Queensland children and young people reported supportive relationships with their teachers. Among primary aged children, 79.5% reported they had teachers who made them feel happy and 75.4% reported they had teachers who noticed when they did good work. Among upper primary and high school aged young people, 73.4% reported they could talk to their teachers about their concerns and 90.2% said their teachers helped with their schoolwork when they needed it. On all measures, the variation across regions was only slight.

### Key finding



More than three-quarters of Queensland children and young people report they feel well supported by their teachers.

Figure 144: Children and young people reporting supportive relationships with their teachers

Number of children who:

Have teachers who make them feel happy



Have teachers who notice when they do good work



I can talk to my teachers about my concerns



My teachers help me with my school work when I need it



Sources: Rumble's Quest, 2023<sup>299</sup> and Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

Table 58 shows that between 2018 and 2022 there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of Queensland young people reporting supportive relationships with their teachers, particularly those reporting on their ability to raise concerns with their teachers.



Table 58: Changes in the proportion of young people reporting supportive relationships with their teachers, 2018–22 (excluding 2020)

|   | 2018  | 2019  | 2021  | 2022  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I can talk to my teachers about my concerns.            | 80.4% | 80.4% | 75.9% | 73.4% |
| My teachers help me with my school work when I need it. | 91.4% | 91.1% | 91.3% | 90.2% |

Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

Consistent with the data in Table 59, between 58.0% and 80.2% of participants in the Australian Child Wellbeing project reported they had a teacher who really cares for them and between 73.7% and 82.9% agreed that a teacher listens to them when they have something to say (Table 59). The survey results indicated that younger children felt more supported than older children and that young people with disability perceived teachers to be less supportive.<sup>300</sup>



Table 59: Rate of children and young people who agree that the following are pretty much or very much true (year 4, 6 and 8)

| At my school there is a teacher or another adult who | Year 4 students | Year 6 students | Year 8 students |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Really cares for me                                  | 80.2%           | 77.8%           | 58.0%           |
| Listens to me when I have something to say           | 82.9%           | 81.4%           | 73.7%           |

Source: Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>301</sup>

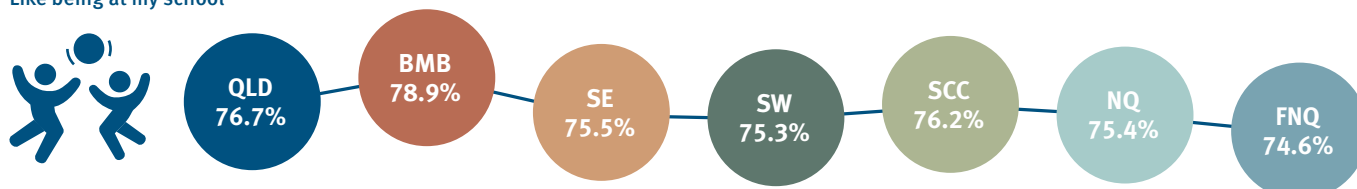
The majority of Queensland children and young people reported that they liked school. Across all measures between 70–80% of children and young people reported that school was a nice place to be (78.1%), they liked being at school (76.7%) and that going to school made them happy (70.4%). Only two-thirds (66.8%) said they did interesting things at school. There was little variation across regions (Figure 145).



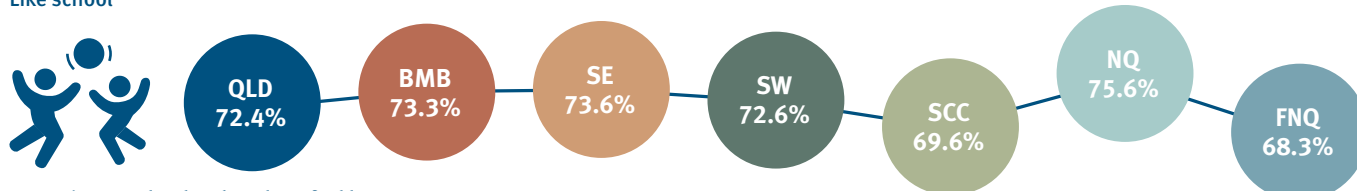
Figure 145: Children and young people's self-reported opinions of school

Number of children who:

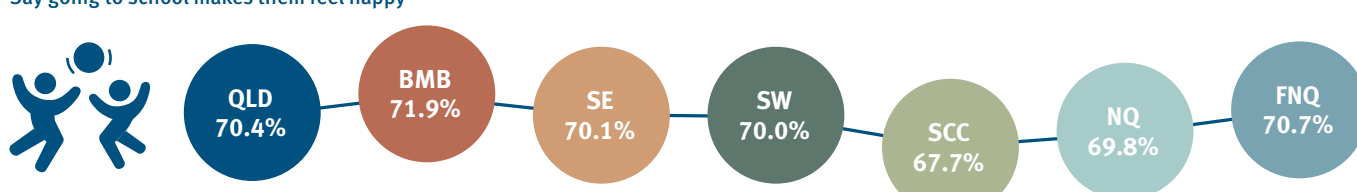
Like being at my school



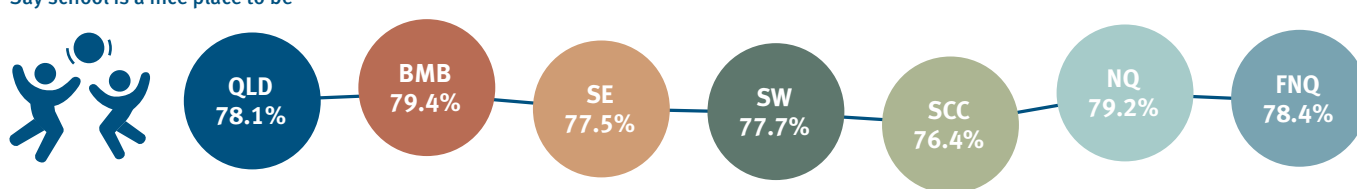
Like school



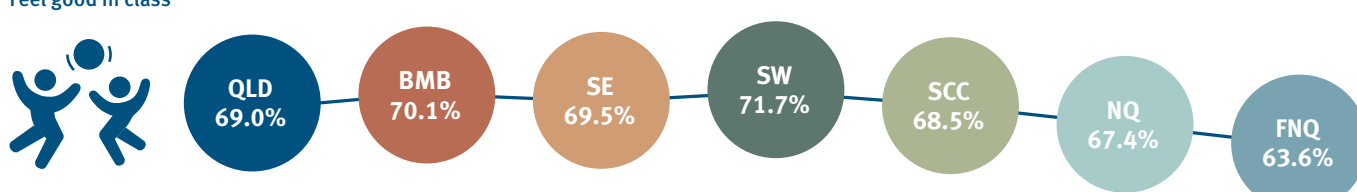
Say going to school makes them feel happy



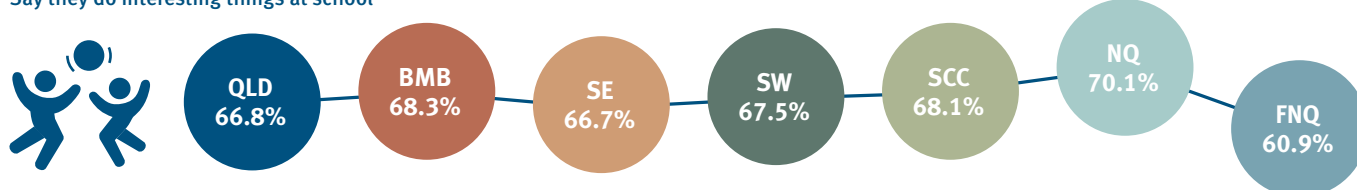
Say school is a nice place to be



Feel good in class



Say they do interesting things at school

Sources: Rumble's Quest, 2023<sup>302</sup> and Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

Finally, 15 year old students were asked about their experiences with peers at school and whether they felt comfortable in the school environment. While most Queensland (and Australian) young people reported getting along well with other school students, this does leave a large number reporting they do not make friends easily and felt as though they are not liked by others. The majority of students reported they felt like they belonged at school, and did not feel left out or awkward but again, this does leave a number who felt less comfortable in their school environments (Table 60).

## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education



Table 60: Queensland and Australian 15 years old students' perceptions of their school environment

|  | Queensland students | Australian students |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>% of students who agreed or strongly agreed with:</b>       |                     |                     |
| I make friends easily at school                                | 76.0%               | 76.0%               |
| Other students seem to like me                                 | 85.0%               | 85.0%               |
| I feel like I belong at school                                 | 67.0%               | 68.0%               |
| <b>% of students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with:</b> |                     |                     |
| I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school      | 71.0%               | 73.0%               |
| I feel awkward and out of place in my school                   | 75.0%               | 75.0%               |
| I feel lonely at school  | 80.0%               | 81.0%               |

Source: Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, Programme for International Student Assessment, 2018.<sup>303</sup>

Among young people in out-of-home care, 74.4% reported they felt included in decision making about their schooling. Just under two-thirds had changed schools since coming into care, and of that group, around two-thirds were happy to change. A minority (18.2%) had experienced problems in securing things they needed for school and had missed out on school experiences as a result (Table 61).



Table 61: Experiences of schooling among young people in out-of-home care

| Variable  | Percentage of young people in care reporting |
|---|--|
| Felt included in decisions about their schooling most times or always   | 74.4%  |
| Had changed schools since coming into care  | 65.1%  |
| Of those who had changed schools, those who were happy to change schools  | 65.9%  |
| Had problems getting things they need for school  | 18.2%  |
| Of those who had problems getting things they needed for school, those who had missed school or school activities because of it | 61.1%  |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Forty-seven per cent of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that the views of children and young people are listened to and valued by the education system.<sup>304</sup>

## Goal 4.4: Children and young people successfully complete school and are equipped with life skills to transition into adulthood

In Queensland, year 12 students work towards attaining a Queensland Certificate of Education or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement. Students can choose from a wide range of learning options to suit their interests and career goals. This includes a range of subjects and courses provided by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority and nationally recognised vocational education and training, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. Eligible students receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), which can be used for entry into tertiary pathways.

Students who complete year 12 or equivalent vocational training are more likely to complete further education or training, more likely to get a job and to be paid more over their lifetime.<sup>305 306</sup> Participating in further education and training after completing school can assist with the transition from school to work, helping individuals to increase their skills and make a productive contribution to their community.<sup>307</sup>

### CASE STUDY

#### Link and Launch: post-school support for year 12s

Link and Launch is a Queensland Department of Education initiative designed to help young people who have recently completed high school but who have not yet moved on to post-school study, training or employment. The service provides individualised support to get young people started with choosing a pathway that will work for them and to help them take the next steps.

Link and Launch officers are located in 36 schools across Queensland. They provide a 'bridge' between school and the post-school services and opportunities in the community. This support builds on the school connection ensuring that support extends beyond the last day of year 12 for those young people who may need it.

A quote from the parent of a Link and Launch client of the Trinity Bay State High School Link and Launch service (in the Cairns area) captures the power of this transition support:


 The logo for 'LINK AND LAUNCH' is displayed in a dark blue circle. 'LINK' is in white, 'AND' is in a smaller white font, and 'LAUNCH' is in a bright green color.

*'My son finished year 12 last year but had a chronic health condition which meant his future was uncertain. The kickstart he got through this program has truly linked and launched him! Now he has his construction White Card, First aid certificate, and has accessed driving lessons. He's gaining skills and has started with an employment mentor. Thanks to Link and Launch for giving him an opportunity to experience a few small successes. He's now on track to find long term employment. Thank you for not forgetting my son after he left school.'*

### Indicator 4.4.1: Young people complete high school

In 2022, 51,502 students completed year 12 in Queensland and 27,245 (52.9%) were ATAR eligible.

Table 62: Number of year 12 students eligible for an ATAR 2020–22



|   | 2020           | 2021           | 2022           |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Size of the year 12 cohort              | 49,667         | 51,957         | 51,502         |
| Number of students eligible for an ATAR | 26,042 (52.4%) | 27,277 (52.5%) | 27,245 (52.9%) |

Source: Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2023.<sup>308</sup>

### Key finding



Between 2018 and 2022 in Queensland the percentage of students enrolled in year 10 who were still enrolled in year 12 in state schools dropped from 83.7% to 74.3%.

Many Queensland year 12 students completed vocational education and training qualifications as part of their senior studies that may contribute to the calculation of the student’s ATAR or direct tertiary study entrance (Table 63).



Table 63: Number of vocational education and training qualifications completed by Queensland year 12 students 2020–22

|                  | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Certificate III  | 15,387 | 17,486 | 18,083 |
| Certificate IV   | 1,074  | 1,259  | 1,204  |
| Diploma          | 1,933  | 2,626  | 2,798  |
| Advanced diploma | 19     | 9      | 8      |

Source: Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, 2023.<sup>309</sup>

Eight per cent of Mission Australia youth survey respondents reported they were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship with rates highest for those living in the South East and Far North Queensland (Table 64).



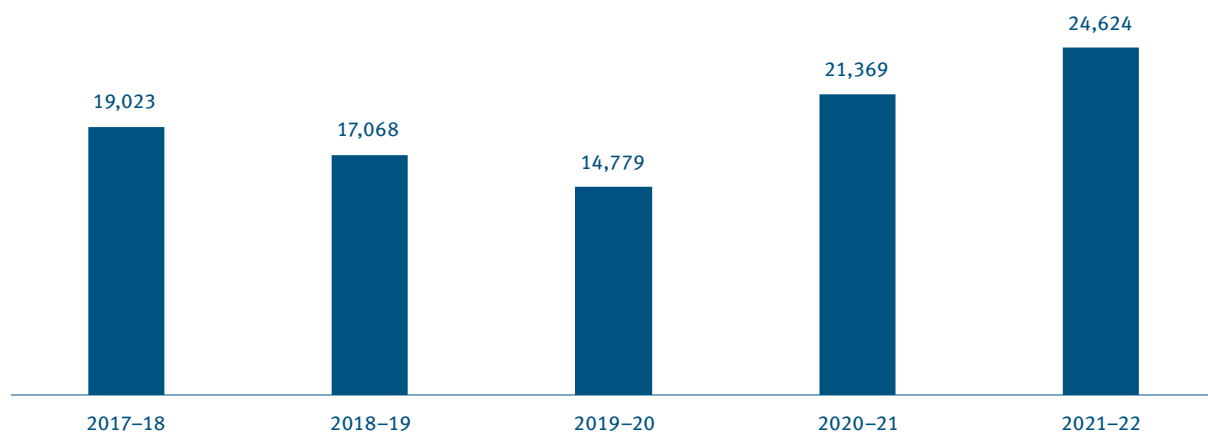
Table 64: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who reported they were undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship by region

| Number of young people                                       | Australia | Queensland | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Currently doing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship | 6.0%      | 8.0%       | 5.4%                     | 14.8%      | 9.8%       | 5.8%                       | 8.2%             | 10.6%                |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>310</sup>

Figure 146 shows that since 2018, a growing number of young Queenslanders have commenced apprenticeships and traineeships.

Figure 146: Number of young people in Queensland aged 15–19 years commencing apprenticeships and traineeships, 2017–18 to 2021–22



Source: Department of Youth Justice, Small Business and Training, Apprentice and trainee participation activity data and statistics, 2023.<sup>311</sup>

Most young Queenslanders intend to complete high school. There was regional variation in terms of the proportion of Queensland 15–19 year olds who were currently studying part-time or full-time (ranging between 82.1% and 94.3%). Almost all of those who were currently studying (98.1%) said they planned to complete year 12.<sup>312</sup>

Table 65: Proportion of young Queenslanders aged 15–19 years who reported they were studying and those who plan to complete year 12 by region

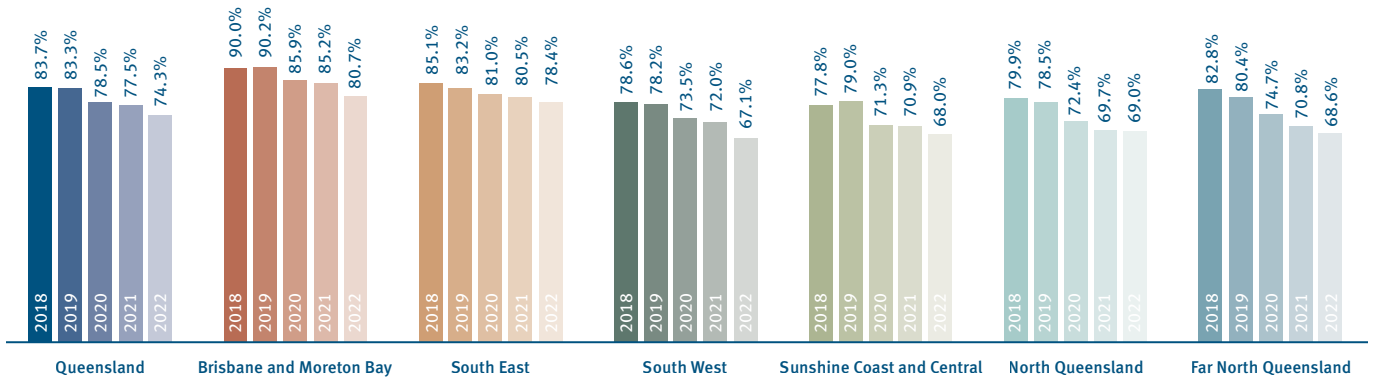
| Number of young people   | Australia | Queensland | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast and Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|--|-----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey | 18,800    | 5,680      | 2,799                    | 924        | 855        | 209                        | 410              | 236                  |
| Currently studying full time or part time  | 93.2%     | 92.0%      | 94.3%                    | 88.0%      | 92.1%      | 93.3%                      | 90.7%            | 82.1%                |
| Planning to complete year 12   | 97.3%     | 98.1%      | 98.8%                    | 97.7%      | 97.5%      | 97.9%                      | 98.9%            | 94.7%                |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>313</sup>

Data on school completion rates however suggests that despite these aspirations, a significant proportion of young people do not complete high school. The apparent retention rate is an estimate of the percentage of students who stay enrolled full-time in secondary school from the start of year 10 to year 12.<sup>314</sup> Across Queensland in 2022, of those enrolled in year 10, only 74.3% were still enrolled in year 12. As shown in Figure 147, the percentage of students staying enrolled at school dropped between 2018 and 2022 from 83.7% to 74.3%. The drop was greatest for students in Far North Queensland. Young females are more likely than young males to stay enrolled at school (77.9% females versus 70.9% males in 2022).

## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

Figure 147: Regional comparison of the percentage of students who stayed enrolled at school between years 10 and 12, 2018–22

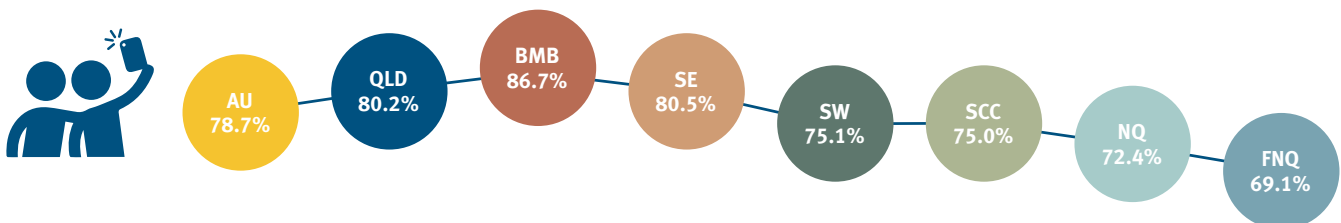


Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

According to the 2021 Census, overall, around 4 in 5 young adults in Queensland had completed year 12 or equivalent in 2021, which was slightly higher than the average for Australia. There was significant variation across regions with completion rates ranging from 69.1% in Far North Queensland to 86.7% in Brisbane and Moreton Bay.

Figure 148: Regional comparison of the percentage of 20–24 years old who had completed year 12 or equivalent, 2021

### Percentage of 20–24 year olds who had completed year 12 or equivalent



Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Custom Community profiles (table G16), 2021.

According to the Queensland Department of Education's annual survey of early school leavers,<sup>315</sup> in 2021, the most common reasons for leaving school early were:

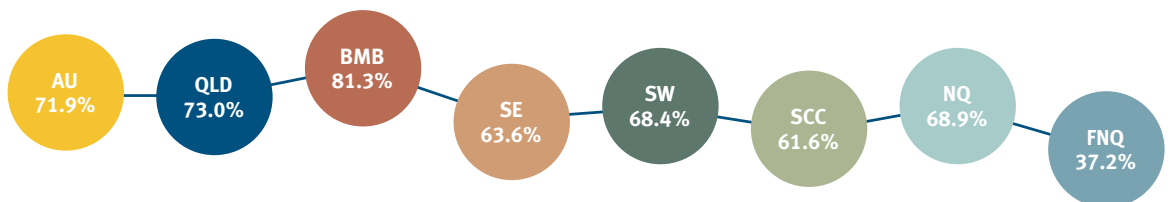
- to get a job or apprenticeship (23.3%)
- did not like school (18.0%)
- health reasons (11.9%)
- difficult academically (7.5%)
- study options did not meet my needs (7.0%)
- bullying (6.8%)
- asked to leave by school (5.5%).

## Indicator 4.4.2: Young people are engaging with post-school education and training pathways

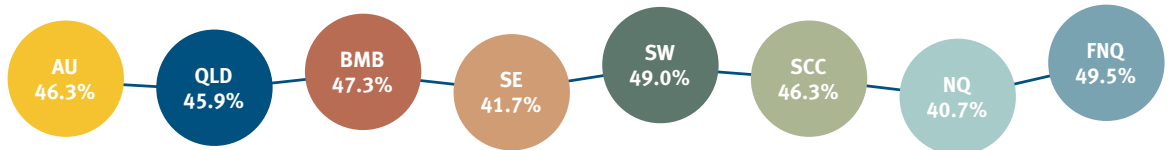
The top three post-school plans both for young Australians and Queenslanders were to go to university, get a job and have a gap year. This was consistent across nearly all of the regions expect for Far North Queensland, where getting a job was higher than going to university (Figure 149).

Figure 149: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who had post school plans by region

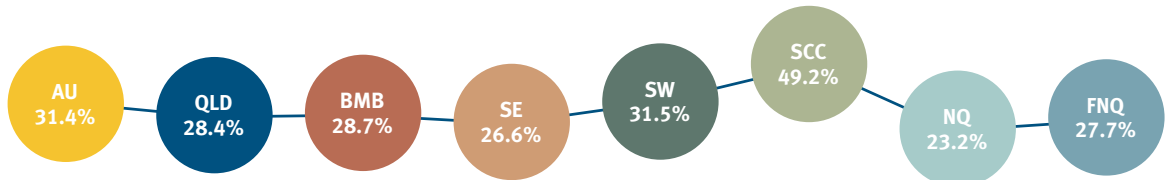
### Go to university



### Get a job



### Travel/gap year



### Go to TAFE or college



### Start a business



Number of respondents

18,800

5,680

2,799

924

855

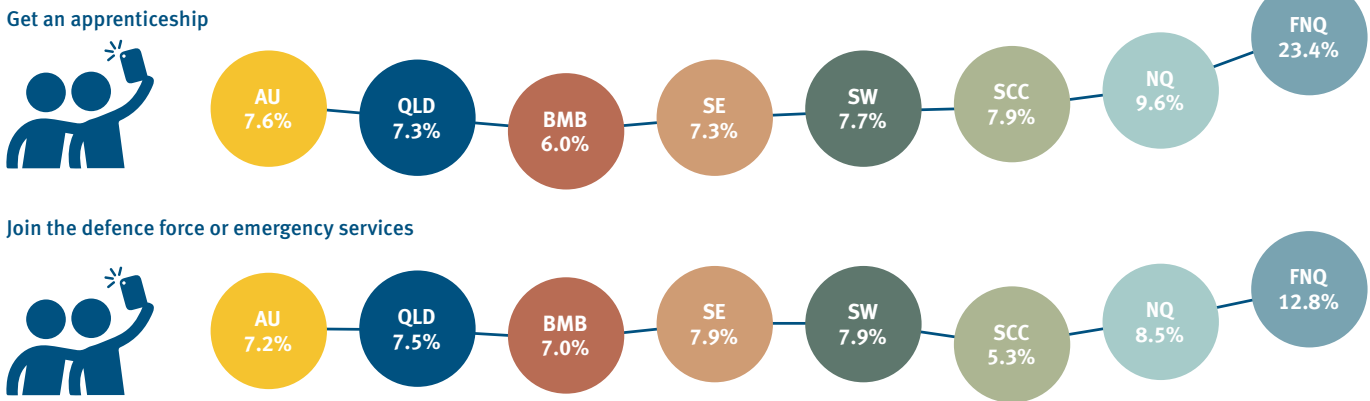
209

410

236

## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

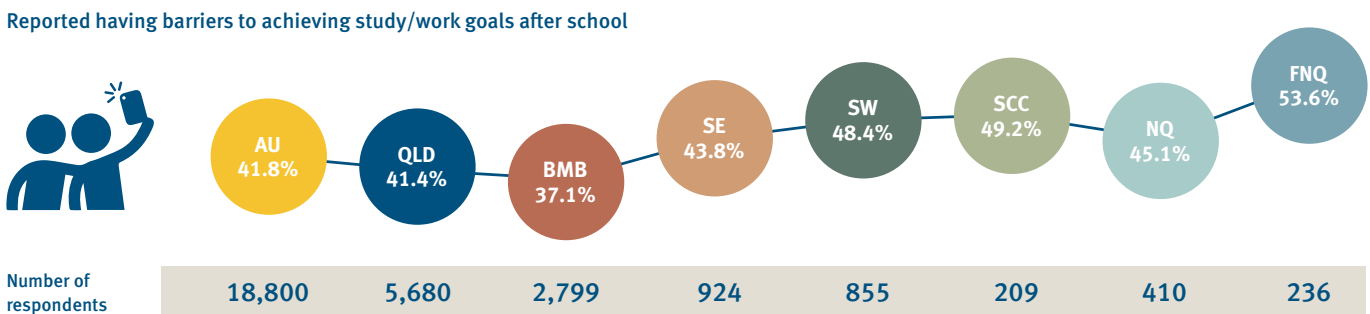
Figure 150: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who had school plans by region (continued)



**Note:** Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Australia frequency.  
Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>316</sup>

Over two in five young Queenslanders reported there were barriers that prevented them from achieving their study or work goals. In 5 out of the 6 regions the top 3 barriers were mental health, academic ability and financial difficulties. In Far North Queensland the top three barriers were ‘where you live’, ‘mental health’ and ‘lack of information’.<sup>317</sup>

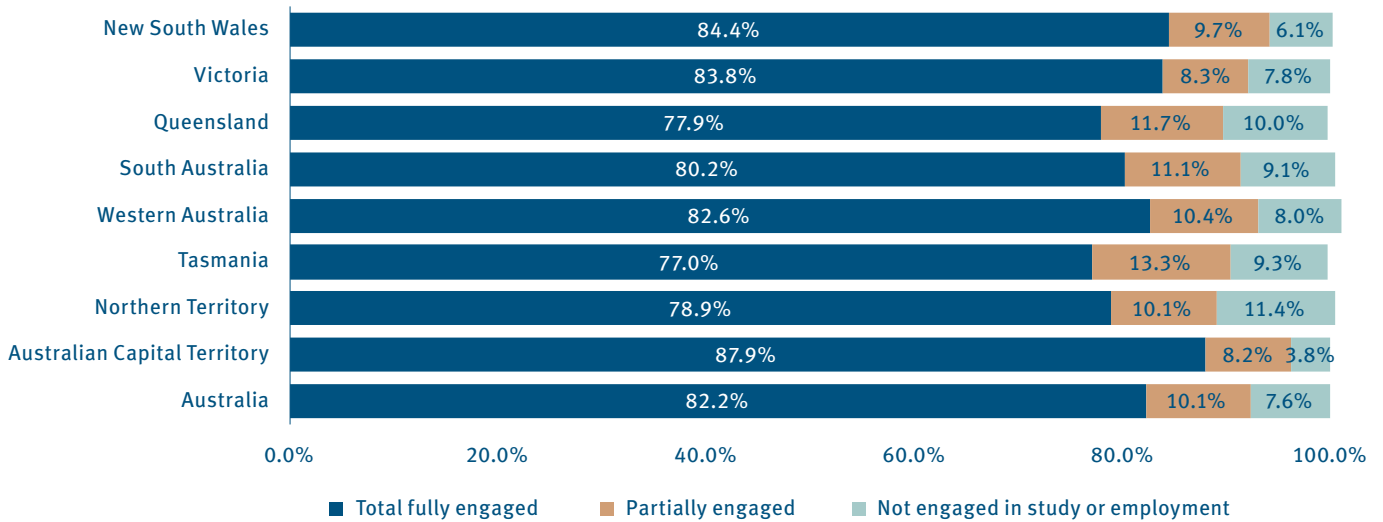
Figure 151: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who reported having barriers that prevented them achieving their post-school plans by region



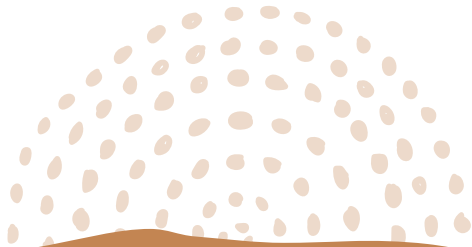
Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>318</sup>

In May 2022, most young Queenslanders (79.0%) aged 15–24 years were undertaking some work or study, or a combination of both. A further 11.7% were engaged in part-time work or study. Around 65,100 young people (10.0%) were not engaged in either study or employment.<sup>319</sup> Queensland had the second highest proportion of young people not engaged in work or study behind Northern Territory (Figure 152).

Figure 152: A national comparison of the percentage of young people aged 15–24 years engaged in employment and/or study



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work Australia: Education and Employment (table 15), 2022.<sup>320</sup>



## Children, young people and their families are engaged in education

In 2021, 18.3% of young Queenslanders aged 15–24 years were attending university. There was a large regional variation with 27.8% of those living in Brisbane and Moreton Bay attending university versus 8.0% in Far North Queensland. Rates of enrolment in vocational education were slightly more even across regions and ranged between 4.9% and 6.6% (Figure 153h).

Figure 153: Number and percentage of young people aged 15–24 years who were university or vocational education students, 2021



### Percentage of young people who are part time and full time university or higher education students



#### Number of young people aged 15–24 years

|           |         |         |         |        |        |        |        |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 3,037,351 | 637,245 | 230,509 | 145,197 | 72,806 | 97,393 | 57,532 | 32,198 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|

#### Number of part-time and full-time university or higher education students

|         |         |        |        |       |        |       |       |
|---------|---------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 659,912 | 116,911 | 64,057 | 24,794 | 7,848 | 10,747 | 6,681 | 2,589 |
|---------|---------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|



### Percentage of young people who are part time and full time vocational education students (including TAFE)



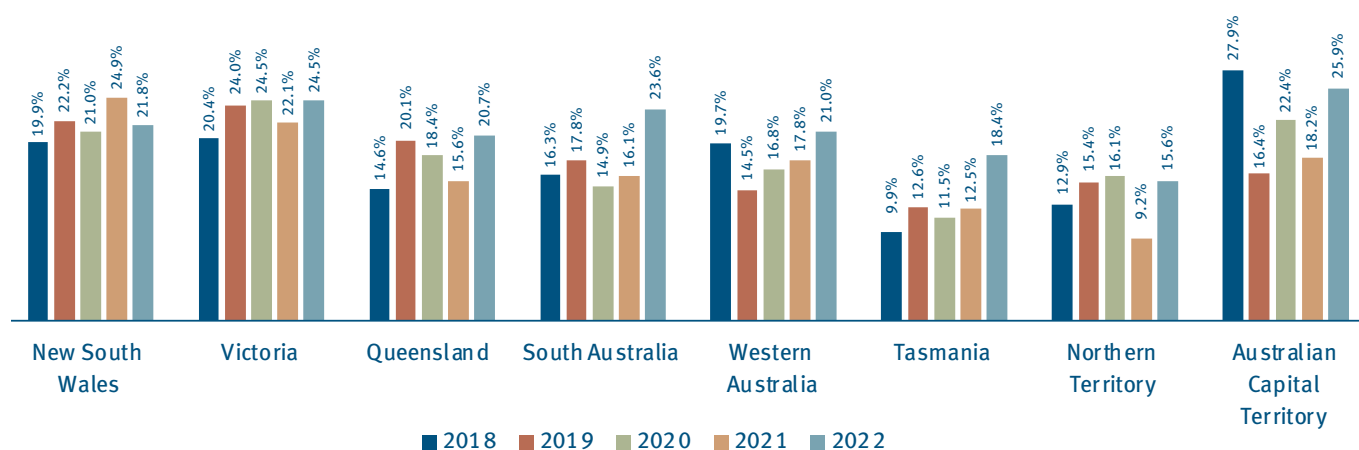
#### Number of part-time and full-time vocational education students (including TAFE)

|         |        |        |       |       |       |       |       |
|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 219,584 | 37,311 | 13,175 | 9,523 | 4,477 | 5,509 | 2,825 | 1,664 |
|---------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|

Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, Custom Community profiles (table G15 and table G01), 2021.

In 2022, Queensland had the sixth lowest rate of 20–24 years old who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher behind ACT, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia although rates had been gradually increasing since 2018 (20.7% versus 14.6% in 2018).

Figure 154: National comparison of the percentage of 20–24 years old who completed a bachelor's degree or higher, 2018–22



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work Australia: Education and Employment (table 34), 2022.<sup>321</sup>

A state-wide survey of young people aged 10–17 years under youth justice supervision found that 45.0% of young people had totally disengaged from education, training or employment.<sup>322</sup>

### Indicator 4.4.3: Youth unemployment is low


Over half of young Queenslanders reported that they were in paid employment – either part-time or full-time (Table 66). Of those not in paid employment, around a quarter (26.6%) were looking for work. There was some regional variations but young people from North Queensland had the highest proportion looking for work.<sup>323</sup>

#### Key finding



By comparison with other OECD countries, Australia’s youth unemployment rate is low. Nevertheless, as at April 2023, 10.6% of Queenslanders aged 15–24 years were unemployed.

Table 66: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years by their employment status by region




|  | Australia | QLD   | Brisbane and Moreton Bay | South East | South West | Sunshine Coast / Central | North Queensland | Far North Queensland |
|--|-----------|-------|--------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia’s youth survey | 18,800    | 5,680 | 2,799                    | 924        | 855        | 209                      | 410              | 236                  |
| Employed full time   | 0.7%      | 0.8%  | 0.3%                     | 0.8%       | 1.6%       | 1.4%                     | 0.2%             | 2.2%                 |
| Employed part time   | 52.6%     | 55.7% | 53.6%                    | 58.2%      | 56.6%      | 61.1%                    | 66.1%            | 59.2%                |
| Not in paid employment, looking for work   | 25.9%     | 26.6% | 27.4%                    | 24.9%      | 24.9%      | 25.5%                    | 21.6%            | 32.9%                |
| Not in paid employment, not looking for work   | 20.8%     | 16.9% | 18.7%                    | 16.1%      | 16.8%      | 12.0%                    | 12.0%            | 5.7%                 |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>324</sup>

The youth unemployment rate for Queensland in April 2023 was 10.6% versus 8.7% Australia-wide. The unemployment rate dropped sharply after the pandemic and Queensland rates are currently much lower than they were pre-pandemic.<sup>325</sup>

Table 67: Youth unemployment rate (15–24 years) for Australia and Queensland, 2018–23

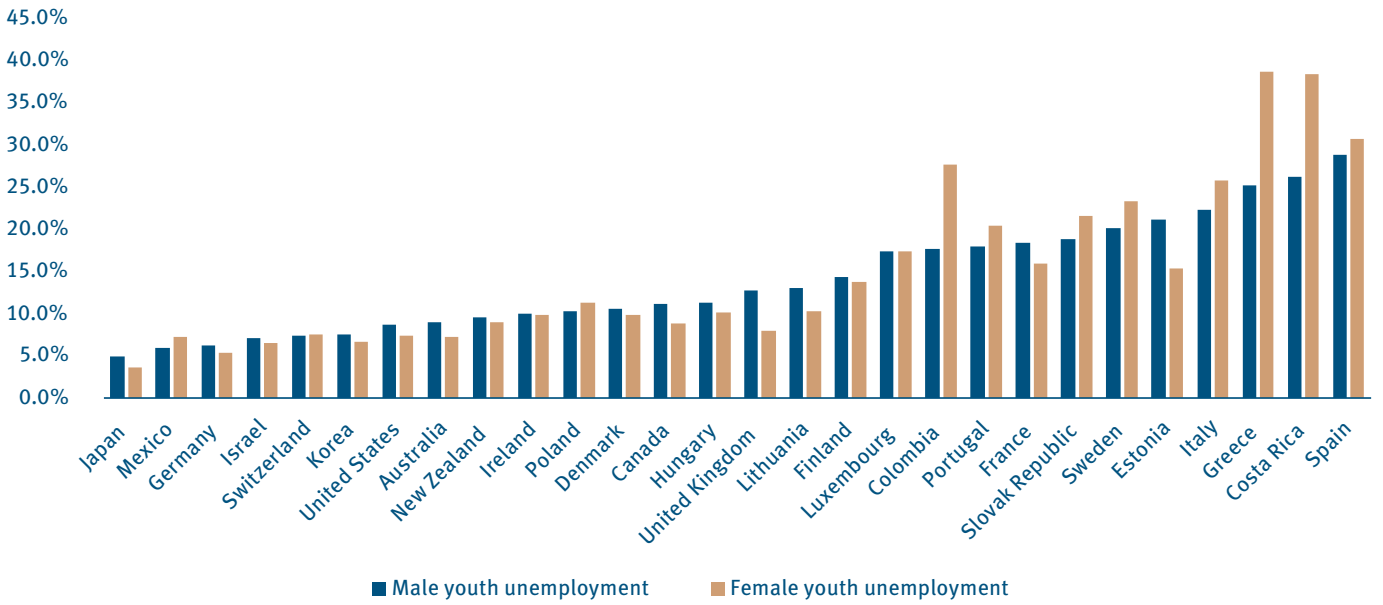


|            | Australia | Queensland |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| April 2018 | 12.5%     | 13.5%      |
| April 2019 | 12.0%     | 13.9%      |
| April 2020 | 14.2%     | 15.6%      |
| April 2021 | 10.7%     | 9.7%       |
| April 2022 | 8.8%      | 9.3%       |
| April 2023 | 8.7%      | 10.6%      |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Australia (table 16), 2023.

Figure 155 shows that by comparison with other OECD countries, Australia’s youth unemployment rate is relatively low.

Figure 155: A comparison of youth unemployment across OECD countries



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023.<sup>326</sup>



## Endnotes

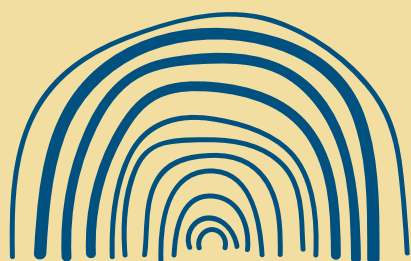
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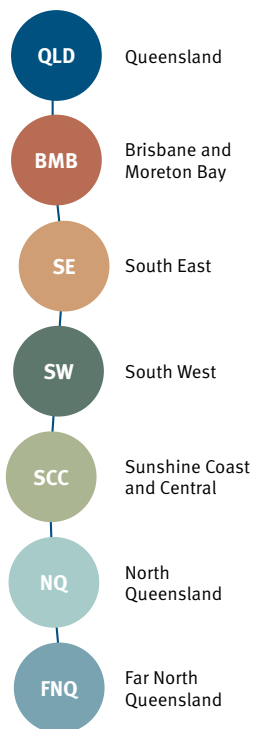


## Domain 5



Children, young people  
and families are  
***participating in  
their community  
and in decisions  
about their lives***

Regions of Queensland



## Children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives

It is important for children and young people’s wellbeing that they have opportunities to actively participate within their community. Participation can take many forms—including children and young people being involved in leisure and recreational activities, social groups, or volunteering.

Participation is also about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them and being empowered to speak out and express themselves.

Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights to participate in their communities and to be involved in decisions about their lives. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers agreed that children and young people living in out-of-home care need to be supported to participate in sporting and recreational activities and they also have a right to participate in decisions that affect them.<sup>327</sup>

The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children and young people feel they have opportunities for participation.

Table 68: Domain 5 goals and indicators

| Domain  | Goal  | Indicator groupings  |
|---|---|--|
| Domain 5: Children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives | <b>Goal 5.1:</b> Communities are positive places for children and young people                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 5.1.1: Children and young people feel proud to be part of their community and feel that it has the things they need for a positive and thriving future</li> </ul>   |
|   | <b>Goal 5.2:</b> Children and young people can enjoy leisure and recreation activities                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 5.2.1: Children and young people think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood</li> <li>• Indicator 5.2.2: Children and young people participate in recreational and leisure activities</li> <li>• Indicator 5.2.3: Children and young people safely engage with social media and other digital technologies</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>Goal 5.3:</b> Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to and participate in their community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 5.3.1: Children and young people participate in community-building activities</li> <li>• Indicator 5.3.2: Young people are enrolled to vote</li> <li>• Indicator 5.3.3: Young people have a driver’s licence</li> <li>• Indicator 5.3.4: Young people have employment opportunities</li> <li>• Indicator 5.3.5: Children and young people can make decisions about their lives</li> </ul> |



Figure 156: Young people's participation in their communities

More could be done to improve young people's opportunities to participate in their communities

Most Queensland young people complete formal transition to adulthood tasks.

87.0%

young people are enrolled to vote.<sup>1</sup>

88.0%

young people hold a Queensland driver's licence.<sup>2</sup>

4 in 10

young people reported participating in paid work at least once a week in the last year.<sup>3</sup>

Many young people feel they do not have opportunities to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them.



2 in 5

young people feel they have a say on issues that matter to them.<sup>3</sup>

More than half

of young people (aged 18–24 years) agreed they had the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them.<sup>3</sup>



6/10 young people living in out-of-home care

feel they can make decisions about their lives and have the support they need to transition to adulthood.<sup>4</sup>

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Australian Electoral Commission, unpublished data request, 2023.

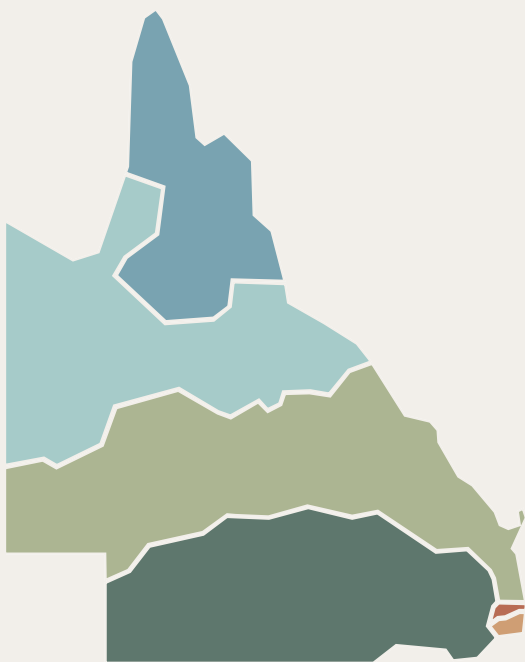
<sup>2</sup> Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.<sup>328</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

## Goal 5.1: Communities are positive places for children

It is important that children and young people feel that their communities are positive places to live in. Positive communities can provide an important source of social connection and a sense of belonging for children and young people as they grow and develop. Participating in a community bonded by positive attitudes, values, and goals is an essential element for enjoying a fulfilling life.



Overall, children and young people had the most opportunities to participate and engage with recreational activities in Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South East indicating the importance of additional services and supports in other regions.

Table 69: Regional variations in opportunities to participate

| Brisbane and Moreton Bay   |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>62.7%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>23.8%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>81.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>80.2%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |
| South East   |  |   |  |
| <b>39.4%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>20.9%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>83.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>48.7%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |
| South West   |  |   |  |
| <b>49.3%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>19.2%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>68.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>47.8%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |
| Sunshine Coast and Central   |  |   |  |
| <b>45.8%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>26.1%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>73.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>51.0%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |
| North Queensland   |  |   |  |
| <b>36.4%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>22.3%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>74.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>56.1%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |
| Far North Queensland   |  |   |  |
| <b>43.6%</b><br>young people feel proud to be part of their community <sup>1</sup> | <b>16.7%</b><br>young people feel adults listen to them <sup>2</sup> | <b>69.0%</b><br>parents agree their community has activities available <sup>3</sup> | <b>54.1%</b><br>young people donate their time to community improvement <sup>4</sup> |

Source: <sup>1</sup> Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022. <sup>2</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up in Queensland, 2020. <sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023. <sup>4</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up in Queensland, 2020.



### Indicator 5.1.1: Children and young people feel proud to be part of their community and that it has the things they need for a positive and thriving future

More than half of young people in Queensland reported they feel proud to be part of their community, with some regional variation.<sup>329</sup>

#### Key finding



53.0% of children and young people in Queensland feel proud to be part of their community and 52.0% agree that it has the things they need for a positive and thriving future.



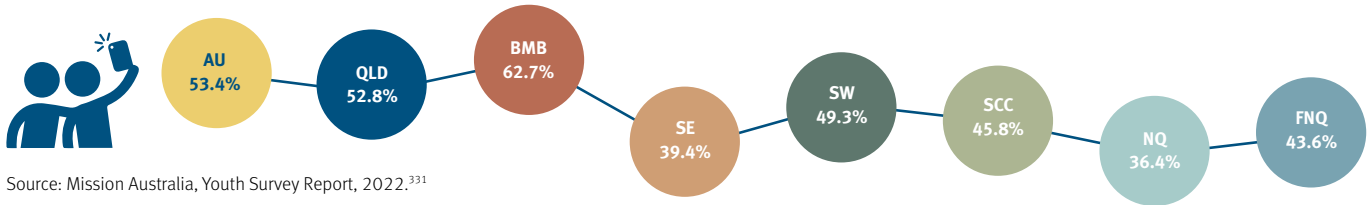
Table 70: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years' agreement level on being proud to be part of their community by region

|  | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey | 18,800    | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924   | 855   | 209   | 410   | 236   |
| Strongly agree/ agree with the statement 'I am proud to be part of my community'       | 53.4%     | 52.8% | 62.7% | 39.4% | 49.3% | 45.8% | 36.4% | 43.6% |
| Have mixed feelings about the statement 'I am proud to be part of my community'        | 36.3%     | 36.6% | 29.3% | 46.2% | 39.9% | 42.4% | 51.5% | 36.6% |
| Strongly disagree/ disagree with the statement 'I am proud to be part of my community' | 10.3%     | 10.6% | 8.0%  | 14.5% | 10.7% | 11.8% | 12.1% | 19.8% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>330</sup>

# Children and young people are participating in their community and in decisions about their lives

Figure 157: Regional variation of young people’s agreement to feeling proud to be part of their community



Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>331</sup>

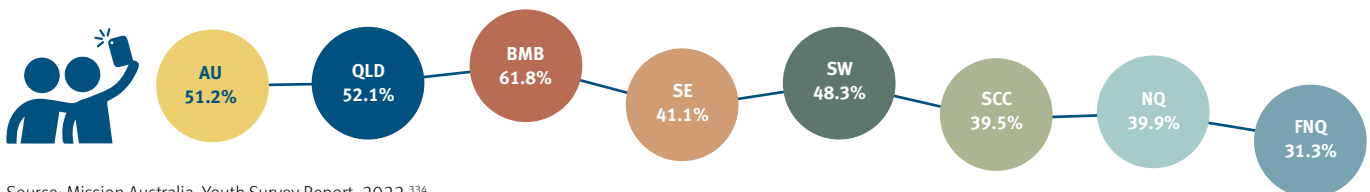
More than half of young people in Queensland feel their community has the things they need for a positive and thriving future, which was equal to the average for all young Australians.<sup>332</sup>

Table 71: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years’ agreement level on being proud to be part of their community by region

|  | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia’s youth survey   | 18,800    | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924   | 855   | 209   | 410   | 236   |
| Strongly agree/agree with the statement ‘My community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future’       | 51.2%     | 52.1% | 61.8% | 41.1% | 48.3% | 39.5% | 39.9% | 31.3% |
| Have mixed feelings about the statement ‘My community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future’       | 36.4%     | 36.0% | 29.8% | 46.3% | 37.5% | 36.1% | 47.0% | 42.7% |
| Strongly disagree/disagree with the statement ‘My community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future’ | 12.4%     | 11.9% | 8.3%  | 12.6% | 14.2% | 24.4% | 13.1% | 26.0% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>333</sup>

Figure 158: Regional variation in young people’s agreement that their community has the things they need for a positive and thriving future



Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>334</sup>

Around six in ten young Queenslanders reported that their community is a place where they feel they belong and that people in their community help each other. Around half agreed that adults in their community were friendly to people their age and around one-quarter agreed that adults in their community listen to what young people have to say (Table 72). These findings are consistent with the 2021 Census data which reported that 28.7% of young people aged 15–24 years felt they have a say within their community on important issues.



Table 72: Number and rate of young people who feel they can participate by region

|  | BMB              | SE             | SW             | SCC            | NQ             | FNQ            |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| My community is a place where I feel like I belong             | 1,426<br>(61.9%) | 646<br>(57.9%) | 325<br>(52.3%) | 617<br>(57.5%) | 240<br>(58.9%) | 130<br>(55.8%) |
| People in my community help each other                         | 1,395<br>(60.5%) | 602<br>(56.0%) | 349<br>(56.2%) | 620<br>(57.8%) | 233<br>(57.2%) | 125<br>(53.6%) |
| Adults in my community are friendly to people my age           | 1,291<br>(56.0%) | 520<br>(46.6%) | 303<br>(48.8%) | 547<br>(50.9%) | 192<br>(47.0%) | 111<br>(47.7%) |
| Adults in my community listen to what young people have to say | 547<br>(23.8%)   | 234<br>(20.9%) | 119<br>(19.2%) | 280<br>(26.1%) | 91<br>(22.3%)  | 39<br>(16.7%)  |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>335</sup>



## CASE STUDY

### Neighbourhood play project

The Neighbourhood Play project was an initiative funded through Logan Together to increase physical literacy in Logan. Research has shown that the most impactful way children can increase physical literacy is through play because it is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. Michelle, who led the development of the project, wanted to find a way to get her children more physically active, create a safe place for them to play and to build a community. The team from Logan Together, Hyahno and Jordan, supported Michelle to get things started.

The team circulated a letter from Michelle to her neighbours and created a Facebook group to connect with nearby community members. Michelle introduced herself to those living in all 29 houses on her street, inviting them to attend the first Neighbourhood Play barbeque. Logan Together and Michelle provided fun family activities including rock painting, Lego, and bike and scooter riding. The event was a great success, with four families attending including 10 children.

Hyahno and Jordan facilitated a discussion to gauge the interest in holding this style of event again. Through consultation, it was decided that they would meet up every Wednesday afternoon, with Michelle providing activities to support the children in building relationships and navigating new play boundaries. Neighbourhood Play provided a space for the parents to discuss parenting values, the differing personalities and needs of children, and the needs and expectations of parents.



Part of the consultation included establishing the location where parents felt comfortable with their children playing, the distance for exploring, the rules of play and how they could sustain Neighbourhood Play. Over 6 months, the group held birthday parties, a Halloween celebration, Fire Fridays and endless hours of playtime. The neighbours grew to know each other by name and a sense of belonging was established. At the end of the project, the children involved were active agents in facilitating their own play.

2.5 years on and Michelle's street is still a vibrant, connected and safe place for children to play. The children said that since this project started, they felt safer, healthier, that they could concentrate better at school, that they were confident in trying new things, experienced better mental health and were proud of their street. Michelle said, *'I would strongly urge everyone to get to know your neighbours, let your children play in the street (if safe to do so) and build a longer table, not a bigger fence.'*

The Australian Institute of Play continues to invest in understanding and advocacy for child-led play, the role of adults in this process, and building new opportunities and access to active play for children in their local neighbourhoods.

## Goal 5.2: Families are safe places for children and young people

Children and young people value having access to leisure and recreation activities. Engaging in recreational activities from a young age allows children and young people to develop important social, athletic and creativity skills. It also allows children and young people to develop hobbies and interact with others in their community.

### CASE STUDY



#### Isabella Eurell-Young, Black and Proud Arts Scholarship winner

18 year old proud Yugambeh woman Isabella is a talented digital artist and winner of a Young, Black and Proud arts scholarship. She has a passion for creating artworks that carry traditional methods into modern times. Isabella is also a talented filmmaker with her documentary 'Barcoola' recently winning the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation Yarning with Elders competition. Barcoola tells the moving story of Isabella's great grandmother, Marley Lena Byerly (Bostock) who was one of the first Aboriginal Brownie leaders in Australia. Barcoola or Brown Owl was highly respected and much-loved by her Brownies, family and within the wider community. Isabella performs in the Yugambeh youth choir and performed at the Commonwealth Games.



### Indicator 5.2.1: Children and young people think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood

In an Australian survey of children aged 9–14 years, between half and three-quarters of participants across all year levels reported ‘lots of fun things to do’ in their neighbourhoods. The survey results indicated that younger children found their neighbourhoods had more fun things to do than older children did.<sup>336</sup>

#### Key finding



The majority of children and young people feel that there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood and community, with regional variation. Young people feel there are fewer fun things to do as they get older.

Table 73: Rate of children who think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood



| Number of children who think there are a lot of fun things to do in their neighbourhood: | Year 4 students | Year 6 students | Year 8 students |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Agree or strongly agree  | 73.1%           | 67.2%           | 47.0%           |

Source: Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>337</sup>

According to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023, 75.0% of respondents agree that their neighbourhoods had plenty of sporting, recreational and community activities, with some regional variation.<sup>338</sup>



Table 74: Regional comparison of rates of parents and carers agreeing their neighbourhood has plenty of sporting, recreational and community activities

|  | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of respondents  | 1,377 | 333   | 205   | 223   | 255   | 204   | 157   |
| My neighbourhood has plenty of sporting, recreational and community activities | 75.0% | 81.0% | 83.0% | 68.0% | 73.0% | 74.0% | 69.0% |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>339</sup>



## Indicator 5.2.2: Children and young people participate in recreational and leisure activities

Three-quarters of primary aged children in Queensland reported that they do things they enjoy in their spare time. This was consistent across all Queensland regions (Table 75). Between 62.6% and 66.3% of children throughout Queensland's regions take part in clubs or activities such as sport, dance or music. While on average, less than half of Queensland children reported that they play at their friend's house.



Table 75: Rate of children who participate in recreational activities by region

| Number of children who:                                      | QLD                       | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Do things they enjoy in their spare time                     | <b>13,996<br/>(74.1%)</b> | 73.0% | 74.7% | 76.0% | 76.1% | 73.6% | 72.0% |
| Take part in clubs or activities like sports, dance or music | <b>12,265<br/>(65.0%)</b> | 63.1% | 65.6% | 66.3% | 66.0% | 62.6% | 66.0% |
| Play at their friend's house                                 | <b>8,747<br/>(46.3%)</b>  | 44.1% | 44.9% | 46.0% | 49.4% | 46.5% | 52.6% |

Source: Rumble's Quest, 2023.<sup>340</sup>

### Key finding



65.0% of primary aged children reported they take part in activities such as sports, dance or music. The most commonly reported activity for young people was using electronic devices such as phones, tablets or gaming consoles reported by more than 98.0%. In addition, 72.5% of young people reported participating in sport while 45.5% reported participating in arts, cultural or music groups.

Most young people (98.0%) across each region reported using a device such as a phone, tablet, or gaming system/console at least once a week in the last year. Between 88.0% and 91.0% of Queensland young people reported watching tv or movies at least once a week (Table 76).

Three-quarters of Queensland young people reported doing sport or fitness activities at least once a week, with the highest rates in Far North Queensland. Between 72.0% to 84.0% of Queensland young people reported playing with a pet or animal at least once a week, with the South West reporting the highest and Brisbane and Moreton Bay reporting the lowest rate.

This may be because young people in this region are more likely to live in rural locations with farm animals and pets than young people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay (Table 76).

More than half of young people across Queensland said they hung out with friends, however the results indicate that young people in the South West were less likely to see friends outside of school than in other regions. Between 56.0% and 62.0% of young people across Queensland reported doing music, drama or art activities at least once a week, with some regional variation. Around half of young people in Queensland reported reading at least once a week (Table 76).



Table 76: Number of young people who participated in recreational activities at least once a week in the last year

|   | BMB           | SE            | SW          | SCC           | NQ          | FNQ         |
|---|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Use a device (e.g. phone, tablet, gaming, system/console) | 2,269 (98.4%) | 1,104 (98.9%) | 614 (98.8%) | 1,059 (98.7%) | 401 (98.4%) | 231 (99.2%) |
| Watch a tv series or movies                               | 2,056 (89.2%) | 1,015 (91.0%) | 561 (90.3%) | 948 (88.4%)   | 369 (90.4%) | 208 (89.3%) |
| Do sports or fitness activities                           | 1,887 (81.9%) | 891 (79.8%)   | 493 (79.4%) | 849 (79.2%)   | 316 (77.5%) | 191 (82.0%) |
| Play with pets/animals                                    | 1,661 (72.0%) | 874 (78.3%)   | 523 (84.2%) | 876 (81.6%)   | 330 (80.9%) | 189 (81.1%) |
| Hang out with friends                                     | 1,348 (58.5%) | 650 (58.2%)   | 329 (53.0%) | 608 (56.7%)   | 246 (60.2%) | 132 (56.7%) |
| Do music, drama, or art activities                        | 1,432 (62.0%) | 682 (61.1%)   | 385 (62.1%) | 598 (55.7%)   | 238 (58.3%) | 139 (59.7%) |
| Read  | 1,340 (58.1%) | 587 (52.6%)   | 368 (59.3%) | 577 (53.8%)   | 231 (56.7%) | 131 (56.2%) |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>341</sup>

Almost three-quarters of Queensland young people reported that they were involved in sport as a participant last year, this was slightly higher than the national average (Table 77). Similarly, 68.2% of Queensland young people reported watching sport in the last year, higher than the national average. Just under half of young people in Queensland reported that they were involved in art, cultural, or music activities last year.<sup>342</sup>



Table 77: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who participated in activities in the last year by region

|                                       | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sport (as a participant)              | 72.0%     | 72.5% | 81.0% | 56.7% | 73.9% | 67.5% | 63.9% | 62.2% |
| Sport (as a spectator)                | 65.6%     | 68.2% | 73.9% | 54.1% | 72.2% | 69.0% | 65.3% | 62.6% |
| Arts/cultural/music groups/activities | 43.1%     | 45.5% | 47.9% | 39.2% | 44.8% | 41.5% | 47.5% | 43.8% |

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Australia frequency.  
Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>343</sup>

A quarter of children between school years 4–8 reported that they play sport outside of school every day or almost every day. Children in years 4 and 6 reported higher rates of spending time with friends outside of school every day or almost every day compared to students in year 8 (Table 78). The rates of children who used a computer outside of school every day or almost every day increased by year level, with year 4 students using computers the least, and year 8 students reporting the highest computer use outside of school.<sup>344</sup>



Table 78: Number of young people who participate in outside school activities every day or almost every day (years 4, 6 and 8 students)

| Number of young people who participated in outside school activities every day or almost every day: | Year 4 students | Year 6 students | Year 8 students |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Friends   | 36.0%           | 36.0%           | 28.0%           |
| Playing sports  | 24.0%           | 26.0%           | 22.0%           |
| Computer  | 26.0%           | 31.0%           | 43.0%           |

Source: Australian Child Wellbeing Project, 2016.<sup>345</sup>

Among young adults, rates of participation in recreational activities such as community groups and sports were higher for young people aged 17–18 years than for young people aged 21–22 years. Participation rates were highest for community groups and team sports (20.0–30.0% of young people participated) and lowest for participating in religious services (Table 79).<sup>346</sup>



Table 79: Rate of young people’s participation in recreational activities (young people aged 17–18, and 21–22)

| In the last 6 months have you participated in: | Young people aged 17–18 years<br>(2,688) | Young people aged 21–22 years<br>(2,463) |
|--|--|--|
| Community groups or clubs                      | 33.7%                                    | 30.6%                                    |
| Team sports                                    | 28.7%                                    | 18.8%                                    |
| Art, music or performance                      | 20.1%                                    | 10.9%                                    |
| Classes to learn new skills                    | 19.2%                                    | 15.1%                                    |
| Religious services                             | 10.7%                                    | 6.3%                                     |

Source: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children, 2022.<sup>347</sup>

More than half of children living in out-of-home care reported playing sport or other physical activities, and three-quarters reported engaging in a lot of recreational activities (Table 80).



Table 80: Rate of how often children in care participate in sports and recreational activities

| How often do children in care:  | Never | Sometimes | A lot |
|---|-------|-----------|-------|
| How often do you play sports or other physical activities (i.e., football, tennis, netball, or swimming)? | 8.8%  | 40.4%     | 50.8% |
| How often do you do recreational activities (i.e., playing games, watching a movie, or reading)?          | 1.8%  | 20.1%     | 78.1% |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.



During 2021–22, 371,048 children and young people in Queensland were library members. Usage of the library collection was highest among early and junior readers (16.7% of early readers and 19.7% of junior readers), while library use for young adults was much lower at only 2.5%.<sup>348</sup> Similarly, the number of children and young adults attending library programs in Queensland varied by age group. During 2021–22, 453,368 0–5 year olds; 159,260 5–12 year olds and 15,169 13–17 year olds attended library programs.<sup>349</sup>

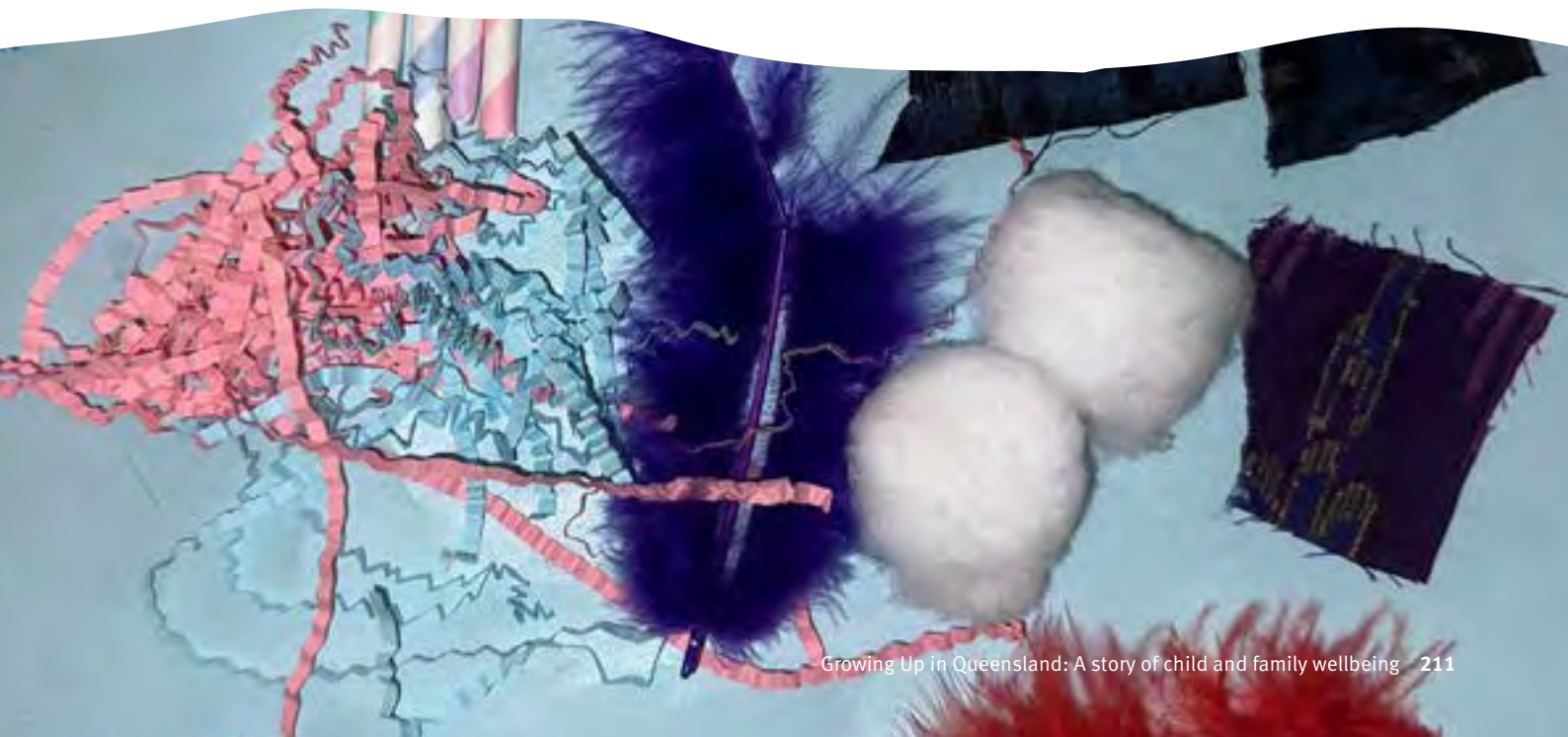
Of a survey of 770 foster and kinship carers, 37 reported that children and young people in their care felt that they have been unable to join in school excursions because of Department of Child Safety restrictions (Table 121). Fifty-nine reported that they were unable to participate in sleepovers due to the restrictions, 9 reported that they were unable to participate in drama, 13 in dance, 66 in sport, and 172 reported they were unable to participate in holidays due to departmental restrictions (Table 121).



Table 81: Carer reports of the number of young people in care who feel they are unable to join in everyday life

| Activities        | Foster and kinship carers (770) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| School excursions | 37                              |
| Sleepovers        | 59                              |
| Drama             | 9                               |
| Dance             | 13                              |
| Sport             | 66                              |
| Holidays          | 172                             |

Source: Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers Survey, 2022.<sup>350</sup>



### Indicator 5.2.3: Children and young people safely engage with social media and other digital technologies

A 2018 study of pre-school aged children found that 81.0% of parents said their 2–5 year old uses the internet, of which 94.0% report their child was already using the internet by the age of 4.<sup>351</sup> The study found that 69.0% of preschool-age children use YouTube, 55.0% use streaming services for TV shows or movies, 37.0% play single-player games, 25.0% play education games, 20.0% play multi-player games, and 6.0% use the internet for social media (including Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat).<sup>352</sup>

A 2019 survey of social media use among Australians included a sample of Generation Alpha children (aged 6 to 13 years at the time of the survey). Among this group, 72.0% were YouTube users, 21.0% used TikTok and 19.0% used Instagram. Among young people from Generation Z (approximately aged between 15 and 28 years at the time of the survey), 91.0% were YouTube users, 82.0% were Facebook users and 69.0% reported they were Instagram users. At the time of the survey, only 14.0% reported that they were TikTok users.<sup>353</sup>

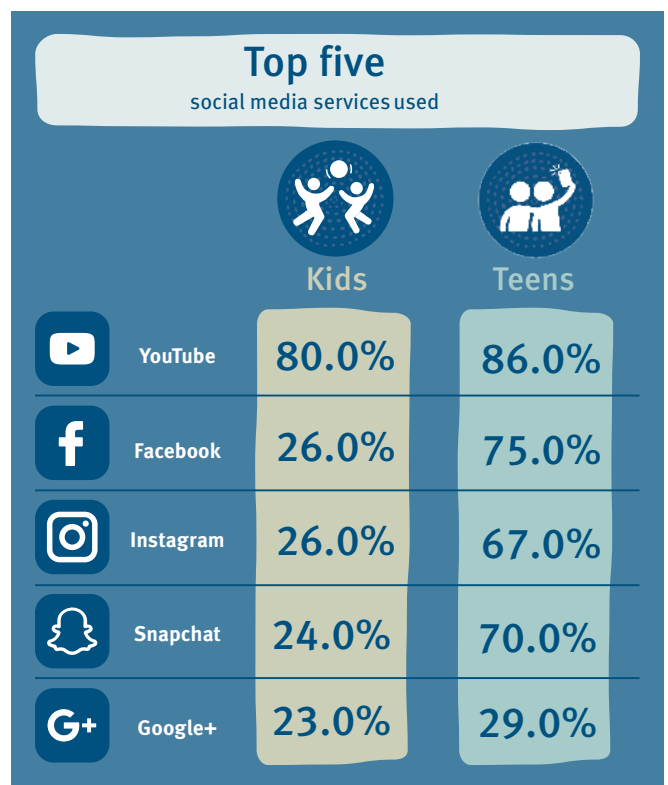
Findings from an earlier survey of children (aged 8–12 years) and teens (aged 13–17 years) in 2018 confirmed high rates of social media use, particularly for the use of YouTube (Figure 159).<sup>354</sup>



#### Key finding

Most children and young people are engaged with social media platforms. Around three-quarters of parents feel they can adequately monitor their child’s online activities.

Figure 159: Top five social media services used by children and young people in 2018

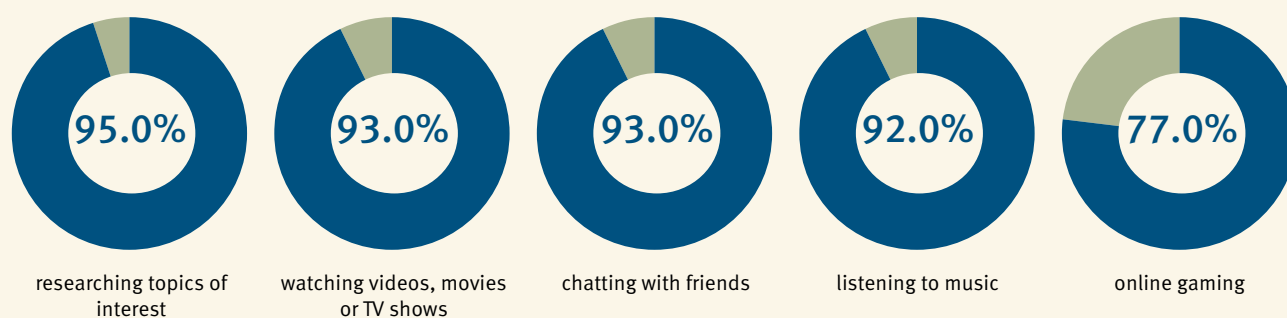


Source: Australian Government eSafety Commissioner, Young people and social media usage, 2023.<sup>355</sup>



Figure 160: Time spent online for Australian 12–17 year olds, 2020

A 2020 study of young people aged 12–17 years found that Australian teens spent an average of 14.4 hours a week online, with males spending more time online (15.0 hours) than females (13.8 hours).<sup>356</sup> Of those hours spent online, most spent time:



Source: Australian Government eSafety Commissioner, 2023.<sup>357 358</sup>

The study also found high rates of social media use among Australian teens. However, the results found a decrease in the use of popular social media services including YouTube (72.0% compared to 86.0% in 2017), Instagram (57.0% down from 66.0% in 2017), Facebook (52.0% down from 66.0% in 2017), and Snapchat (45.0% compared to 63.0% in 2017). While newer social media platforms such as TikTok and Discord had substantial growth, for example, TikTok increased to 38.0% (up from 12.0% in 2017).<sup>359</sup>

In 2023, TikTok released data showing that around 30.0% of the Australian population was users of its app.<sup>360</sup> Given its significant recent growth it seems very likely that rates of use among children and young people would be markedly higher than identified through prior surveys.

Children and young people need to be able to use social media safely. One in nine Queensland young people nominated social media as an issue of personal concern.



Table 82: Percentage of young people aged 15–19 years who nominate social media as the issue of personal concern

|   | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ   | FNQ  |
|---|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| In region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey                         | 18,800    | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924   | 855   | 209   | 410  | 236  |
| Who nominate social media as the issue of greatest personal concern to young people | 12.6%     | 10.8% | 10.4% | 11.6% | 12.4% | 15.0% | 9.2% | 7.8% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>361</sup>



### What do parents and carers think?

The Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 asked parents and carers about whether they felt they were able to adequately monitor their child’s online activities. Three-quarters of parents and carers felt they were able to adequately monitor their children.

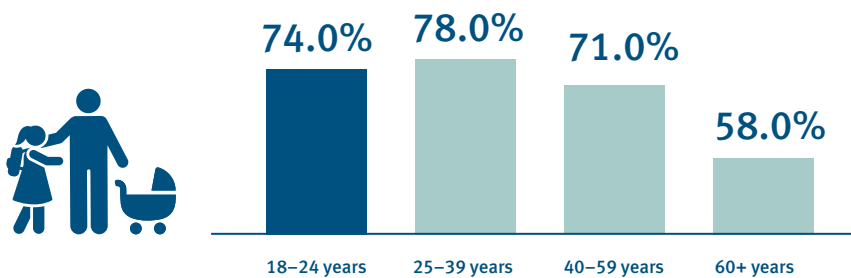
Table 83: Parents and carers report on their ability to monitor children and young people online

|  | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of respondents  | 1376  | 332   | 205   | 223   | 255   | 205   | 156   |
| I am able to adequately monitor my child’s online activities | 74.0% | 71.0% | 73.0% | 76.0% | 77.0% | 72.0% | 75.0% |

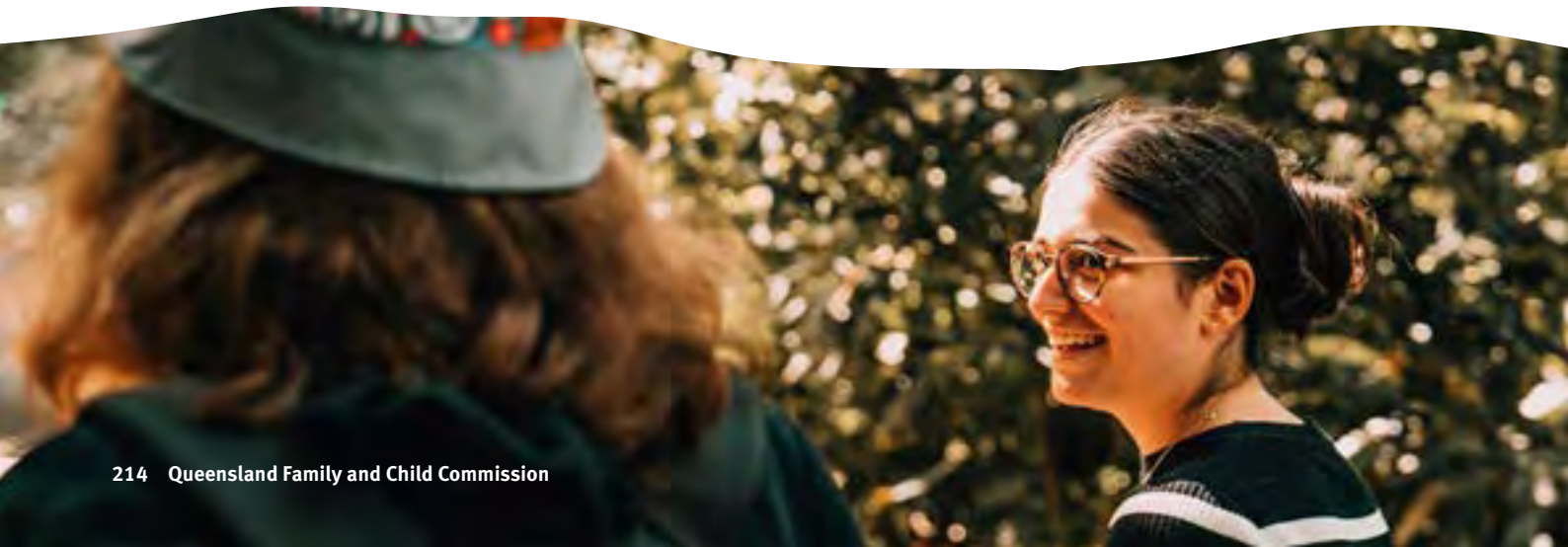
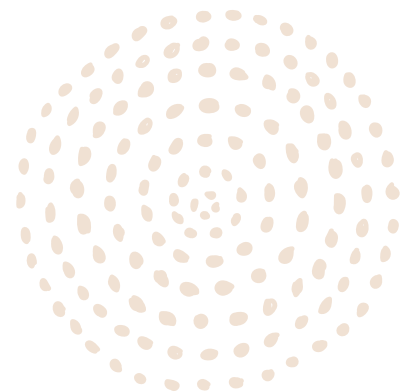
Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>362</sup>

As shown in Figure 161, along with respondents aged 25–39 years, young respondents aged 18–24 years were most likely to report feeling confident about their ability to monitor children’s activities online.

Figure 161: Age group comparison of parents/carers reports around their ability to monitor children and young people online



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>363</sup>



## Goal 5.3: Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to and participate in their community

Community connections can give children and young people a sense of belonging and help them to develop important social skills. Children and young people have opportunities to contribute to building their community, improving their local area, and assisting others in need. This helps children and young people to develop a sense of connection to their communities and an understanding of their ability to contribute as an active and informed citizen.

It is important that children and young people feel they have opportunities to participate in their community and in making important decisions that affect them. When children and young people are given the opportunity to participate, they feel empowered about their rights, feel they can make informed decisions and that they will be taken seriously.

### CASE STUDY

#### Talented young Queensland filmmaker Aurora Iler

13-year-old filmmaker, Aurora, is committed to improving social issues in her local community. Aurora actively seeks out topics that matter to the people around her, responding with engaging, high-quality films that reinforce key messages that create positive change. Aurora's youth-led projects targeted at young people are being noticed nationally and internationally.

In 2022 at 11 years old, Aurora wrote, produced, directed, cast, and starred in *Melon Head*, a short film aimed to encourage teenagers to make better choices when riding bikes and scooters. As a result of *Melon Head*, many young people have shared their experiences of bike and scooter incidents with Aurora, expressing their gratitude for being encouraged to wear a helmet.

Earlier in 2023 at 12 years old, Aurora wrote, produced, directed, cast, and starred in *Grape*, a short film about the dangers of vaping, targeted at young people. *Grape* has been wildly successful,



appearing in many television news shows, newspaper articles and radio segments. *Grape* has also been well received at international film festivals. Aurora is currently working towards distributing the film across Queensland High Schools to educate young people about the dangers of vaping, as a long-term preventative approach.

Aurora currently has several new film projects underway. In addition, Aurora has created over 80 jobs for local people through her creative projects.

### Indicator 5.3.1: Children and young people participate in community-building activities

Two-thirds of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that involving young people in public life resulted in a positive contribution, however less than half agreed that young people had opportunities to contribute to discussions about issues that affected them.<sup>364</sup>

#### Key finding



Around half of children and young people in Queensland participate in community-building activities.

Table 84: Community perceptions on the participation of young people

| Data point  | Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 |
|---|---|
| The involvement of young people in public life positively contributes to social cohesion    | 66.0%   |
| Young people have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect hem | 46.0%   |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>365</sup>



#### What do young people think?

Among 18–24 year old respondents to our Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023:

- 65.0% agreed that involvement of young people in public life positively contributes to social cohesion
- 56.0% agreed that young people have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about issues that affect them.

In 2020, almost half of Queensland young people reported they had donated money or goods, fundraised, or given time to a charity or cause in the last year, with some regional variation. Around 1 in 6 young people helped to improve their local area (Table 85).<sup>366</sup>

Table 85: Percentage of young people who reported participating in community-building activities in the last year by region

| Percentage of young people who, in the last year:                              | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Donated money or goods, done any fundraising, given time to a charity or cause | 48.4% | 48.7% | 47.8% | 51.0% | 56.1% | 54.1% |
| Helped improve your local area   | 17.3% | 17.6% | 22.1% | 21.2% | 16.7% | 16.7% |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>367</sup>

Around one-third of Queensland young people reported that they had tutored, coached or mentored someone in the last year (Table 86).

Table 86: Percentage of young people who reported tutoring, coaching or mentoring someone in the last year by region

| Percentage of young people who, in the last year: | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Tutored, coached, or mentored someone             | 34.0% | 34.4% | 35.9% | 31.1% | 34.1% | 35.2% |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>368</sup>

Over a third of Queensland young people reported being involved in student leadership activities in the last year, which is comparable to the national average (Table 87).



Table 87: Rate of young people aged 15–19 years who participated in student leadership activities in the last year by region

|                                      | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Student leadership groups/activities | 39.7%     | 39.8% | 43.0% | 25.2% | 47.3% | 48.0% | 43.6% | 27.9% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>369</sup>



A quarter of Queensland young people reported participating in youth groups in the past year. Around 1 in 5 reported that they participated in religious groups, 16.9% reported they participated in environmental groups and 8.3% reported they participated in political groups. Each of these rates were comparable to the national average but there was some regional variation, particularly with young people in Far North Queensland reporting the highest participation rates for most activities (Table 88). The 2021 Census indicates that 5.9% of young people aged 15–24 were involved with civic and political groups in the last 12 months.



Table 88: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who participated in certain groups and activities in the last year by region

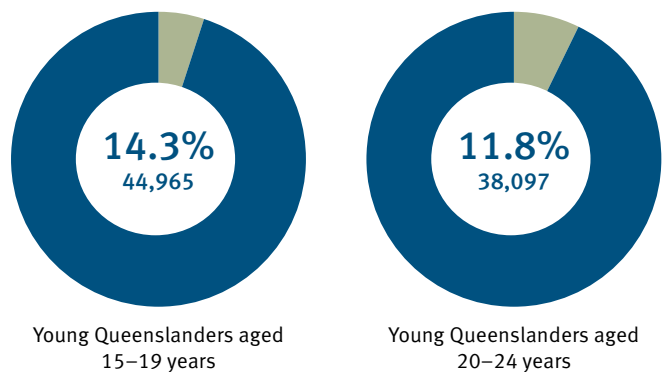
|                                  | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Youth group/ activities          | 27.4%     | 25.7% | 25.1% | 26.4% | 26.6% | 21.7% | 25.4% | 32.8% |
| Religious groups/ activities     | 24.1%     | 22.9% | 23.3% | 23.3% | 23.8% | 22.3% | 19.7% | 20.7% |
| Environmental groups/ activities | 16.6%     | 16.9% | 17.5% | 12.6% | 17.6% | 15.8% | 21.8% | 20.2% |
| Political groups/ activities     | 8.4%      | 8.3%  | 8.5%  | 7.5%  | 7.7%  | 6.1%  | 8.1%  | 12.9% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>370</sup>

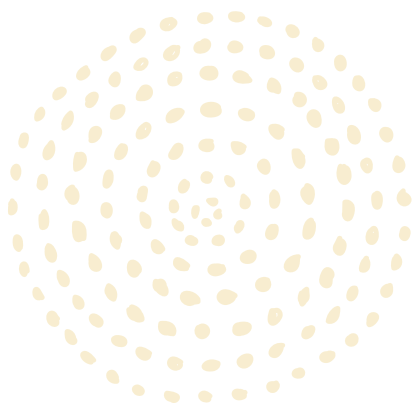


According to the 2021 Census, around 1 in 7 volunteers in Queensland were young people under 25 years (Figure 162).

Figure 162: Number and percentage of Queensland young people who volunteer, 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census community profile, 2021.



Less than half of young people from Queensland reported that they volunteered in the last year, this is slightly higher than the national average (Table 89).

Table 89: The proportion of young people who volunteered last year by region

|                | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|----------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Volunteer work | 45.3%     | 47.8% | 51.4% | 34.0% | 51.9% | 47.8% | 54.0% | 44.4% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>371</sup>

In terms of regular volunteering, on average, between 11.0% and 15.0% of young people in Queensland volunteer at least once a week (Table 90).

Table 90: The proportion of young people who volunteered at least once a week last year by region

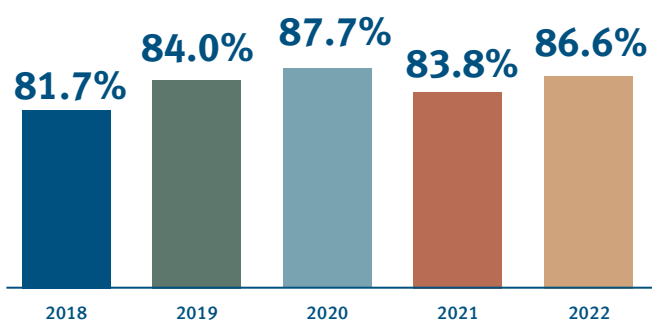
|   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| The proportion of young people who volunteered at least once in the last year | 12.8% | 12.5% | 14.6% | 12.1% | 11.3% | 11.1% |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>372</sup>

### Indicator 5.3.2: Young people are enrolled to vote

According to the Australian Electoral Commission, as at 31 December 2022, the Queensland federal enrolment rate for young people aged 18–24 was 86.6%. Voter enrolments increase around the time of elections which is illustrated in Figure 164 with the highest youth enrolment rates being in 2020 (around the time of the Queensland election) and 2022 (around the time of the federal election).

Figure 163: Federal enrolment rate of young people in Queensland aged 18–24 years, as at 31 December 2022



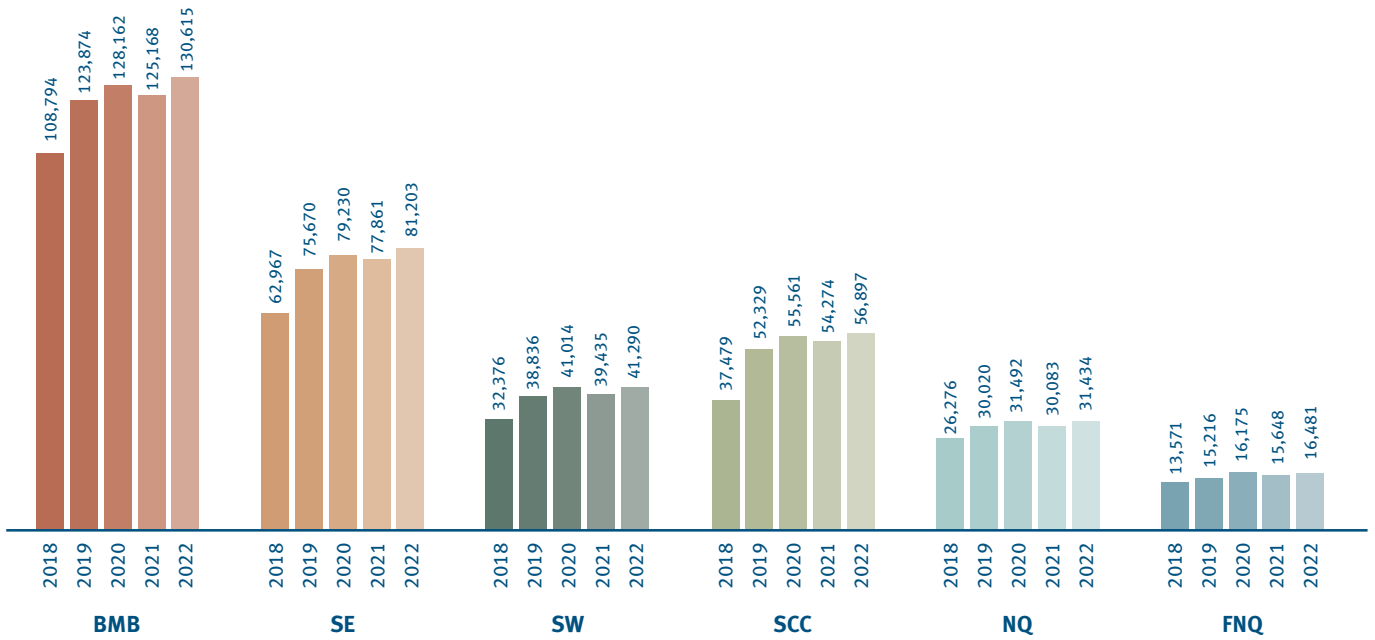
Source: Australian Electoral Commission enrolment records and estimated eligible population, unpublished data request, 2023. Enrolment rate is based on the estimated eligible population compared to actual enrolment records.

### Key finding

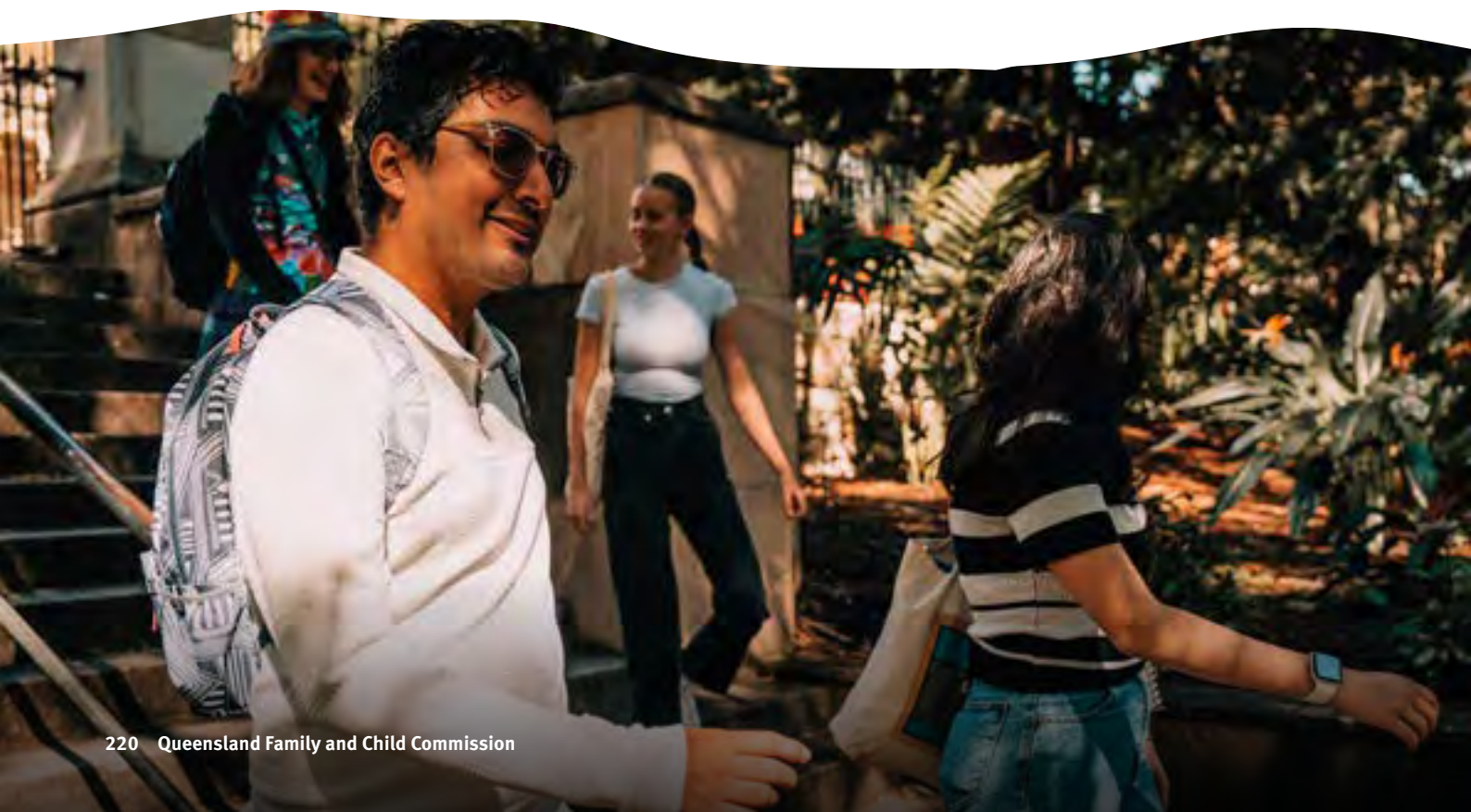
Almost 9 out of 10 young people are enrolled to vote. Voter enrolments tend to increase around the time of elections.

This pattern in federal enrolment numbers was consistent across all Queensland regions for young people aged 18–24 years (Figure 164).

Figure 164: Number of federal enrolments among young people aged 18–24 per region, as at 31 December



Source: Australian Electoral Commission enrolment records, unpublished data request, 2023. Data for individuals living in addresses suppressed from the electoral roll (Silent electors) has been excluded from this table. Data was originally stored in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. The data has been conformed to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard for the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, which may introduce small errors in regional numbers.



### Indicator 5.3.3: Young people have a driver's licence

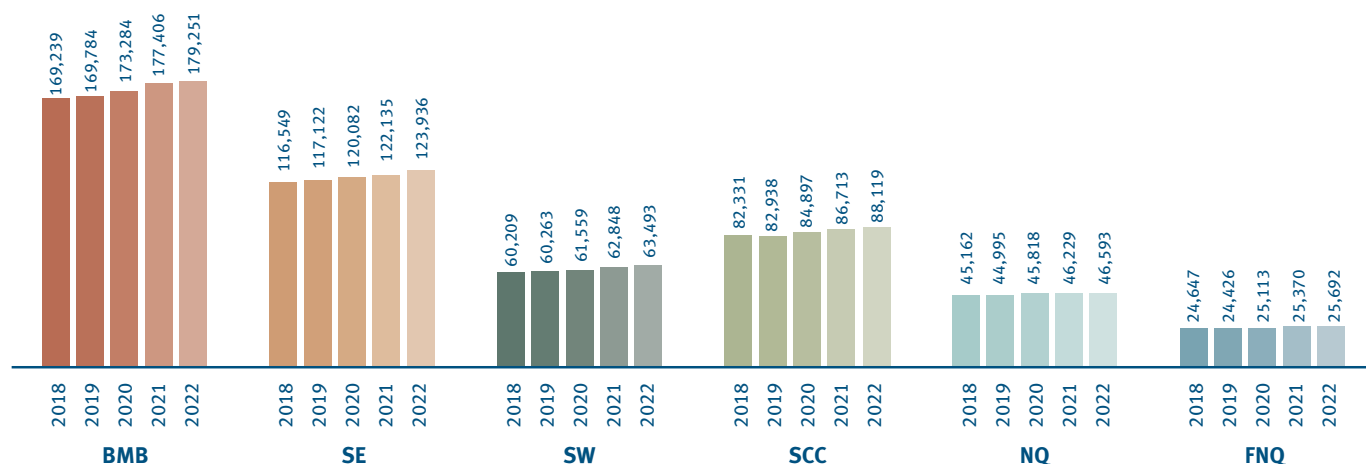
In 2022, 527,213 young people aged 16–24 held a Queensland driver's licence, including learner's, provisional (P1 and P2) and open licences. Between 2018 and 2022, the number of young people aged 16–24 years with a driver's licence has gradually risen in each region. In 2018, 83.9% of Queenslanders aged 16–24 years had a licence versus 88.3% in 2022.<sup>373</sup>

#### Key finding

The number of young people with a driver's licence is gradually increasing over time.



Figure 165: Regional comparison of the number of young people in Queensland aged 16–24 with a driver's licence

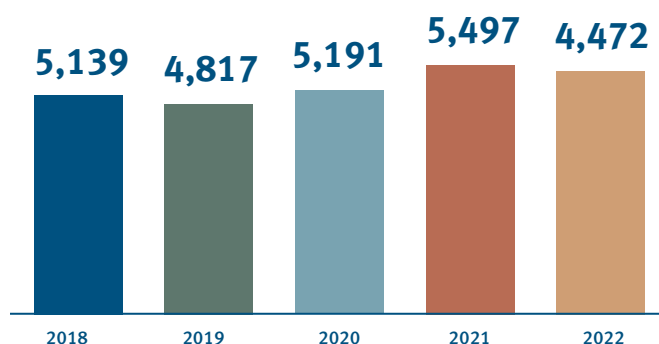


Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads allows young people to apply for an exemption from the requirement to record 100 hours of supervised driving in a learner logbook before applying for a P1 provisional licence. Exemptions can be granted where a young person can prove they have no suitable vehicle or supervisor or limited access to a road network. If approved, young people are required to hold a learner licence for at least two years prior to applying for a P1 provisional licence.

Figure 167 shows that over the past 5 years, between 4,472 and 5,497 young people per year have been granted an exemption.

Figure 166: Number of Queensland young people who were exempt from learner logbook requirements 2018–22



Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

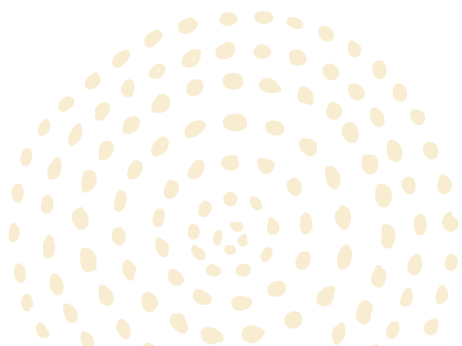

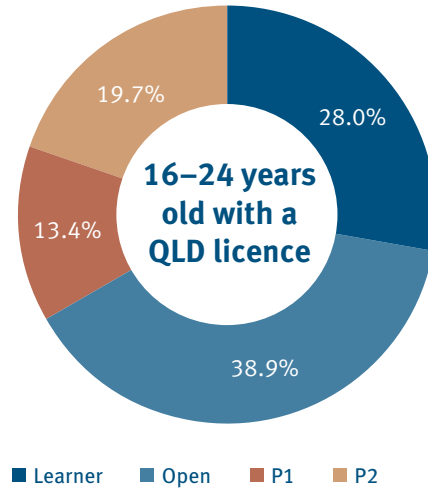


Figure 167 provides a breakdown of licence types across all ages for the 527,213 young people aged 16–24 who had a Queensland licence in 2022.

Figure 167: Proportion of Queensland young people aged 16–24 years with each type of driver's licence in 2022



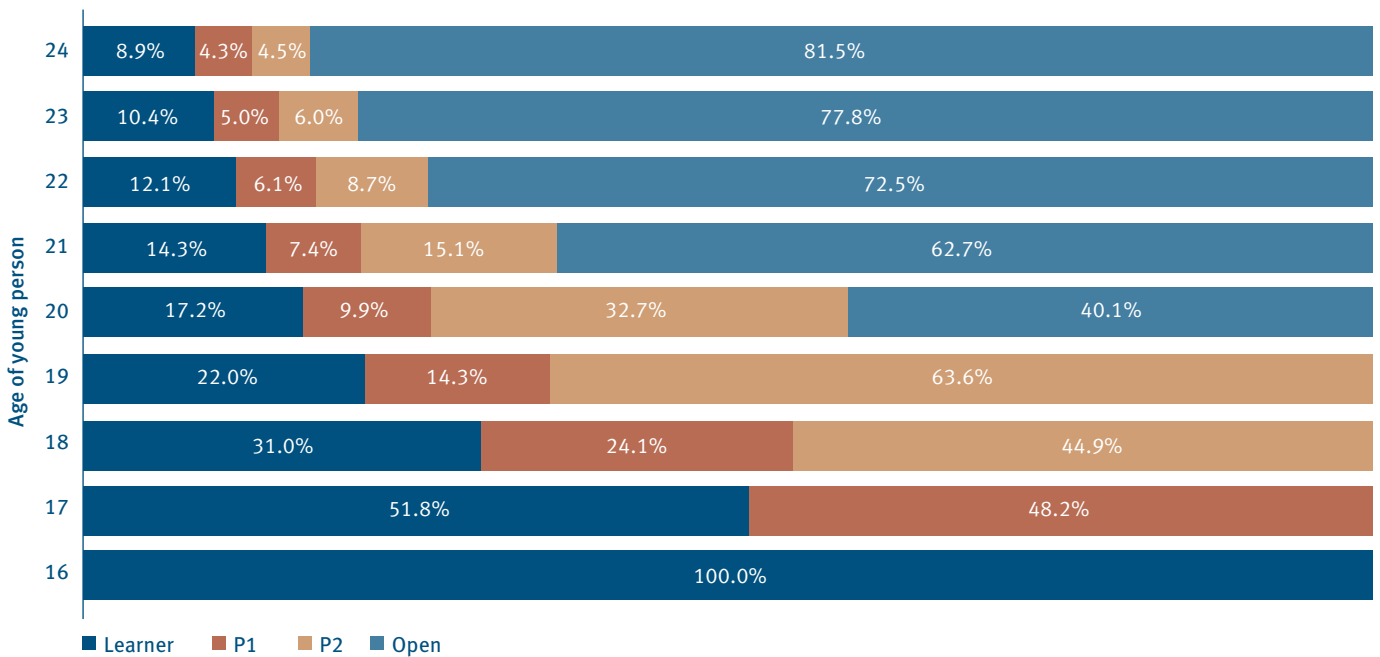
To support young people who do not have access to a suitable vehicle or supervisor to gain their driver's licence, the Department of Transport and Main Roads funds Learner Driver Mentor programs in a number of different locations across Queensland. During 2022, 671 young people aged 16–24 participated in Learner Driver Mentor programs.



Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

Figure 168 shows the breakdown of each licence type by year of age for young people aged 16–24 years.

Figure 168: Proportion of licence types by age among Queensland young people aged 16–24 years with a Queensland licence in 2022



Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads, unpublished data request, 2023.

### Indicator 5.3.4 Young people have employment opportunities

In 2020, around 4 out of 10 young people in Queensland reported participating in paid work at least once a week in the last year (Table 91).



Table 91: Number of young people who participated in paid work at least once a week in the last year

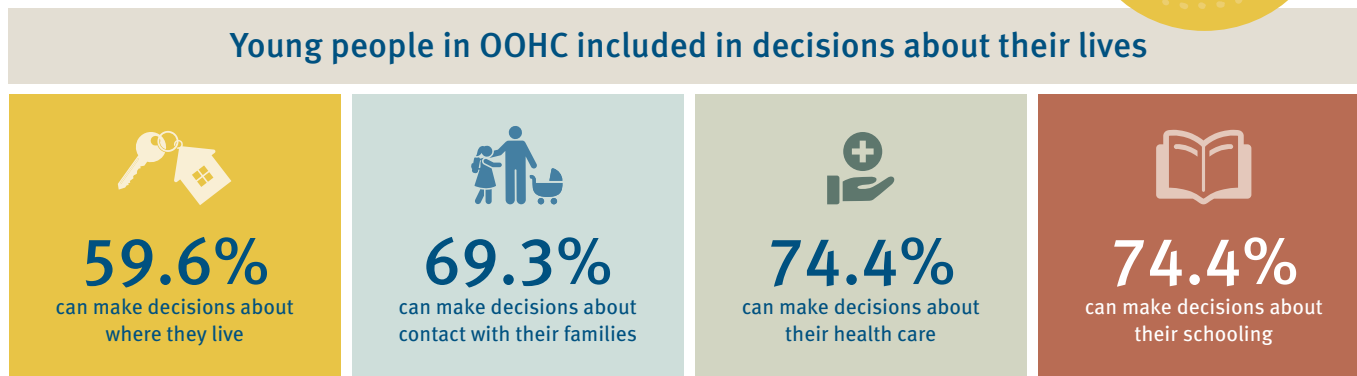
|   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Percentage of young people who participated in paid work at least once a week last year | 38.0% | 44.4% | 48.3% | 45.3% | 47.1% | 47.2% |

Source: Queensland Child and Family Commission, Growing Up In Queensland, 2020.<sup>374</sup>

### Indicator 5.3.5 Children and young people in care can make decisions about their lives



Figure 169: Young people in out-of-home care are included in decision made about their lives



**58.7%**

Are supported to make decisions about what they will do when they exit care

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Of children and young people living in care, 3 in 5 felt they were able to make decisions about where they live, and two-thirds also stated that they were able to make decisions about contact with their family. Three-quarters reported they were able to make decisions about their healthcare, and a further three-quarters reported they were able to make decisions about their schooling (Table 92).



Table 92: Proportion of young people living in out-of-home care who feel included in decisions about their lives

| Proportion of children in care who feel included in decisions about their lives: | Never/Rarely | Sometimes | Most times/Always |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Where they live  | 24.1%        | 16.3%     | 59.6%             |
| Contact with their family  | 14.3%        | 16.4%     | 69.3%             |
| Their health care  | 9.9%         | 15.7%     | 74.4%             |
| Their schooling  | 11.5%        | 14.1%     | 74.4%             |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Of the young people in care who are transitioning to adulthood, 3 in 5 stated they felt that they had everything they needed to make decisions about what they will do when they exit care (Table 93).



Table 93: Rates of young people in care transitioning to adulthood for children who feel supported

| Transitioning to adulthood for children in care   | Not at all/Not really | Some but I need more | Yes as much as I need |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| How supported do they feel to make decisions about what they will do when they exit care? | 18.3%                 | 23.1%                | 58.7%                 |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

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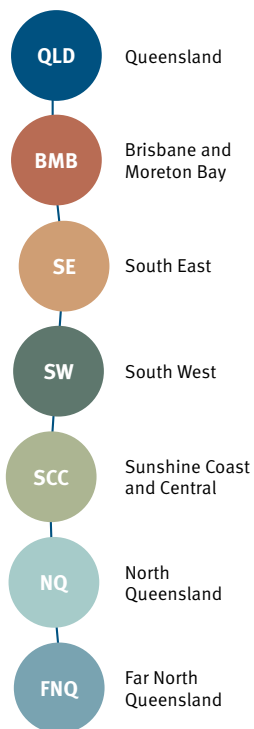


## Domain 6



Children and young people feel  
***connected to their  
culture and safe and  
supported around  
expressing their  
identity and cultural  
and spiritual beliefs***

Regions of Queensland



## Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, being strong in identity, culture and language comes from their relationships with their family, their community and their land. Being strong in culture drives confidence and wellbeing. Having a positive sense of identity and culture means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have a sense of cultural connectedness, feelings of belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture, and community is respected and valued.<sup>375</sup>

Identity relates to a person’s sense of self and their understanding of who they are, both individually and within their cultural and social context. All children, young people and their families have the right to feel safe and supported both at home and in the community to express their identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture, language or spiritual beliefs. Both identity

and culture are influenced by many factors including family, country, language, religion and/or spiritual beliefs, health, feeling valued, loved and safe and being able to participate in the community. Each of these factors both influence and are influenced by identity and culture.

Children and young people in out-of-home care have the same needs and rights to be supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs. Our *Rights, Voices, Stories* youth researchers agreed that identity for them means knowing who they are, where they are from, and having a positive sense of self-identity which is not defined by their involvement with the child protection system.<sup>376</sup>

The following indicators have been selected to measure whether Queensland children and young people feel safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs.

Table 94: Domain 6 goals and indicators

| Domain  | Goal  | Indicator groupings   |
|---|---|---|
| Domain 6: Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs | Goal 6.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel supported in their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 6.1.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel connected to and supported in their culture</li> <li>• Indicator 6.1.2: The systems supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are culturally safe</li> </ul>  |
|   | Goal 6.2: Children, young people and their families feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator 6.2.1: Children and young people report a sense of belonging through spiritual or cultural beliefs</li> <li>• Indicator 6.2.2: Children and young people have confidence that their identity, culture, and spiritual beliefs are respected and valued</li> <li>• Indicator 6.2.3: Funding is provided to support multicultural events</li> </ul> |



Figure 170: Children and young people's connection to culture and identity

## More could be done to support children and young people's connection to culture and identity

### Many Queensland children and young people feel connected to their culture



Almost 7/10 young people living in out-of-home care agreed they were 'always' or 'most times' able to follow their culture where they lived.<sup>1</sup>

59.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were supported to stay connected with their communities.<sup>2</sup>



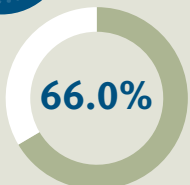
Over the past 5 years there has been an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frontline staff working with children

| Teachers |   | Child Safety Officers |   |
|----------|---|-----------------------|---|
| 1.4%     | ▲ | 3.5%                  | ▲ |
| 2018     |   | 2018                  |   |
|          |   |                       |   |
| 1.9%     |   | 6.5%                  |   |
| 2022     |   | 2022                  |   |

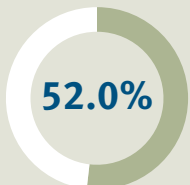
Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



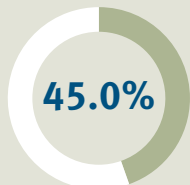
### A significant minority of young people hold spiritual and/or cultural beliefs<sup>5</sup>



have both spiritual and cultural beliefs, or just spiritual beliefs.



have cultural beliefs.



have no spiritual or cultural beliefs.



### Many young people feel they are not safe and supported to express their identity, and cultural and spiritual beliefs

#### Children and young people face discrimination<sup>5</sup>

- 4 in 10** face discrimination because of their gender
- 3 in 10** face discrimination because of their race/ culture, mental health, or sexuality
- 2 in 10** face discrimination because of their age

Source:

<sup>1</sup> Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey, 2023.<sup>377</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, Statutory systems workforce survey, 2023.<sup>378</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mission Australia Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>379</sup>

## Goal 6.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel supported in their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing

Culture is very much a protective factor in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's and families' lives. Cultural connectedness and spiritual wellbeing provide a sense of belonging and an empowering sense of trust, support and confidence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from a very young age. The use of Indigenous languages is one way of strengthening Indigenous identity and culture.<sup>380</sup> Different child rearing practices are present in both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures; they share an emphasis on whole of community caring and include important roles for extended family and kin in meeting the day-to-day needs of children.<sup>381</sup>

The responsibility to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child wellbeing should rest with their communities as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions are the most effective way of improving outcomes.<sup>382</sup> Increasing funding to community-controlled organisations and increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in human service organisations can contribute to creating more culturally safe support services.

### CASE STUDY

#### Olli Simmonds

Proud Gayiri and Darumbal man Olli is a lyrical and contemporary dancer and a natural storyteller. At only 13 years old and with a talent for engaging audiences and breaking down barriers, the sky is the limit for Olli. He has a passion for promoting awareness and understanding of culture and enjoys contributing to his community any chance he gets. He currently volunteers his time to teach young dancers at his dance studio on top of the 3–4 hours per day he spends training, while also maintaining a high standard with his schoolwork.

Olli has recently been invited to perform as a member of the Dream Dance Company for the 2024 Singapore Tour and has also successfully been selected to represent Australia after competing in the recent Get the Beat National Finals.



## Indicator 6.1.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel connected to and supported in their culture

Data from the Census identified that the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in Queensland who spoke an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language increased from 7.0% in 2016 to 8.0% in 2021. As shown in Table 95, this rate is the highest it has been in 10 years.

### Key finding



Just over two-thirds of young people living in care reported they most times or always were able to follow their culture where they lived.

Table 95: Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons who speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language



|  | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 |
|--|------|------|------|
|  | 7.5% | 7.0% | 8.0% |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Language Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2021.<sup>383</sup>

The Queensland Family and Child Commission's survey of the Queensland frontline workforce included questions aimed at determining cultural connectedness for children, young people and their families. The data from the survey found that three-quarters of respondents believed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are supported to preserve their culture and linguistic identity. In addition, 59.0% of respondents to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey 2023 agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were supported to stay connected with their communities.

Of young people living in out-of-home care 68.1% agreed that they were 'always' or 'most times' able to follow their culture where they lived. In response to a question about opportunities to follow individual culture, 17.6% of young people reported 'sometimes', and 14.4% reported 'rarely' or 'never' (Table 96).

Table 96: Rates of young people in care who feel supported in following their culture



|  | Never/Rarely | Sometimes | Most times/Always |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| How much can you follow your culture where you live? | 14.4%        | 17.6%     | 68.1%             |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care reported that the most common source of knowledge about their culture was their carer, followed by their birth parents or family they did not live with. A number of other sources of knowledge were mentioned including community members and teachers (Table 97).

## Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity and cultural and spiritual beliefs



Table 97: Sources of cultural knowledge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people living in care

| Learned 'quite a bit' to 'a lot' about their culture from: | Results |
|--|---------|
| Carer  | 50.7%   |
| Birth parents  | 39.9%   |
| Family they don't live with                                | 39.7%   |
| Member of their community                                  | 30.5%   |
| Youth Worker   | 27.6%   |
| Teacher  | 24.1%   |
| Child Safety Officer                                       | 21.6%   |
| Murri Caseworker   | 18.2%   |
| Coach  | 13.8%   |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services Life in Care Survey, 2022.

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people living in out-of-home care, their cultural support plan is vital in maintaining their connection to family, community and cultural supports. Data shows that only 21.7% of young people were included in developing a cultural support plan, and only 33.9% were offered an independent support person when making decisions about care (Table 98).



Table 98: Number of young people involved in developing their cultural support plan

| Number of young people  | No    | Not sure | Yes   |
|---|-------|----------|-------|
| Included in developing a cultural support plan                      | 48.8% | 29.5%    | 21.7% |
| Offered an Independent Person when making decisions about your care | 32.2% | 33.9%    | 33.9% |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

## CASE STUDY

### Russell Bennet

Russell Bennet, with the support of Landcare, facilitates the Gubbi Gubbi program in Gympie with young people involved with Anglicare's family support and out-of-home care programs. Many have experienced grief, loss, and intergenerational trauma, and are disconnected from family, culture, community, and country.

Yan-din'na Djaagan' was developed to engage children in care who have experiences of trauma. Russell connects children to country and culture, mentoring life skills, building the next generation of custodians, developing cultural identity and healing from trauma. Children go on to develop increased self-esteem and create meaningful change in their lives.

The engaging program provides therapeutic benefits to the mental wellbeing of participants and provides opportunities to develop practical skills. They learn about native plants and are involved in the practical conservation of plants. For some of the young people who have participated in the program, their involvement has translated into employment opportunities.



Part of the innovation of this project is using culture to connect young people to country which in turn can lead to employment and training opportunities. Russell uses community engagement and a whole-of-community approach to give young people a sense of belonging and of place. His role in this is all about connection, about seeing these young people and hearing them and listening to them. The young people see Russell interacting with community leaders and prominent local figures and this instills a sense that they can achieve anything as he has done.



### Indicator 6.1.2: The systems supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are culturally safe

Nationally in 2021, there were 99 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focused integrated early years services that were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled. This number has increased each year since the baseline year of 2016 when there were 86 services. In Queensland, the number has risen from 20 services in 2016 to 22 services in 2021.

The proportion of classroom teachers in government schools who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people steadily increased across Queensland from 1.4% in 2018 to 1.9% in 2022. Nevertheless, this number is still much lower than the rate of Queenslanders who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (7.8%). At the regional level there was some variation, with Far North Queensland reporting the highest proportion of classroom teachers in government schools who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Brisbane and Moreton Bay reported the lowest (Table 99).

### Key finding



Only 1.9% of classroom teachers and 6.5% of the child protection frontline workforce are currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but the proportion is increasing.



Table 99: Numbers and rate of classroom teachers in Queensland who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by region, 2018–22

| Year | QLD        | BMB        | SE         | SW         | SCC        | NQ         | FNQ        |
|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 2018 | 627 (1.4%) | 131 (0.9%) | 103 (1.1%) | 71 (1.2%)  | 97 (1.1%)  | 82 (1.9%)  | 143 (4.6%) |
| 2019 | 882 (1.9%) | 193 (1.3%) | 149 (1.5%) | 112 (1.8%) | 158 (1.8%) | 110 (2.6%) | 160 (5.2%) |
| 2020 | 860 (1.9%) | 192 (1.3%) | 148 (1.6%) | 115 (1.9%) | 148 (1.8%) | 94 (2.3%)  | 163 (5.6%) |
| 2021 | 868 (1.9%) | 207 (1.4%) | 143 (1.5%) | 109 (1.8%) | 157 (1.9%) | 98 (2.4%)  | 154 (5.2%) |
| 2022 | 863 (1.9%) | 202 (1.4%) | 139 (1.4%) | 116 (2.0%) | 160 (1.9%) | 101 (2.5%) | 145 (5.0%) |

Source: Queensland Department of Education, unpublished data request, 2023.

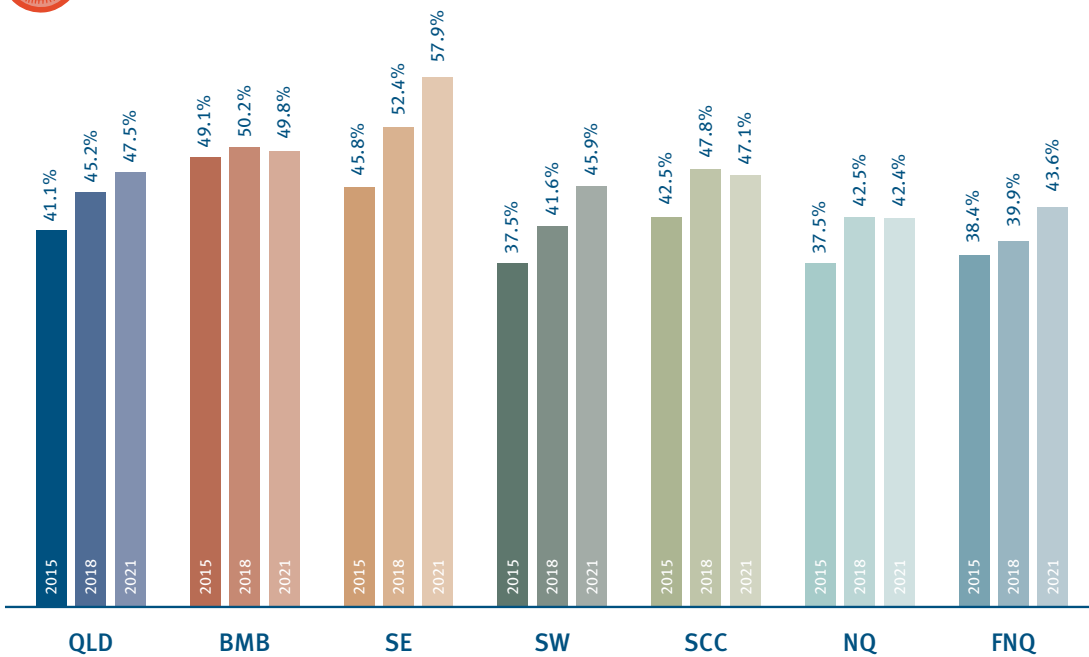
Source: <sup>1</sup> Increasing the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations is a current Closing the Gap target under Priority Reform 2 – Building the community-controlled sector. Targets and indicators are currently under development.



While not necessarily driven by the increases in Aboriginal and Torres Strait community controlled early years services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' employment in schools, it is encouraging to see across most regions, a growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents or caregivers actively engaging with schools in supporting their child's learning during their child's first year of school. Across Queensland between 2015 and 2021 this grew from 41.1% to 47.5%. The highest rate of engagement was 57.9% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents or caregivers living in the South East in 2021 (Figure 172).



Figure 171: Regional comparison of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents or caregivers who are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning



Source: Australian Early Development Census, 2015–21.

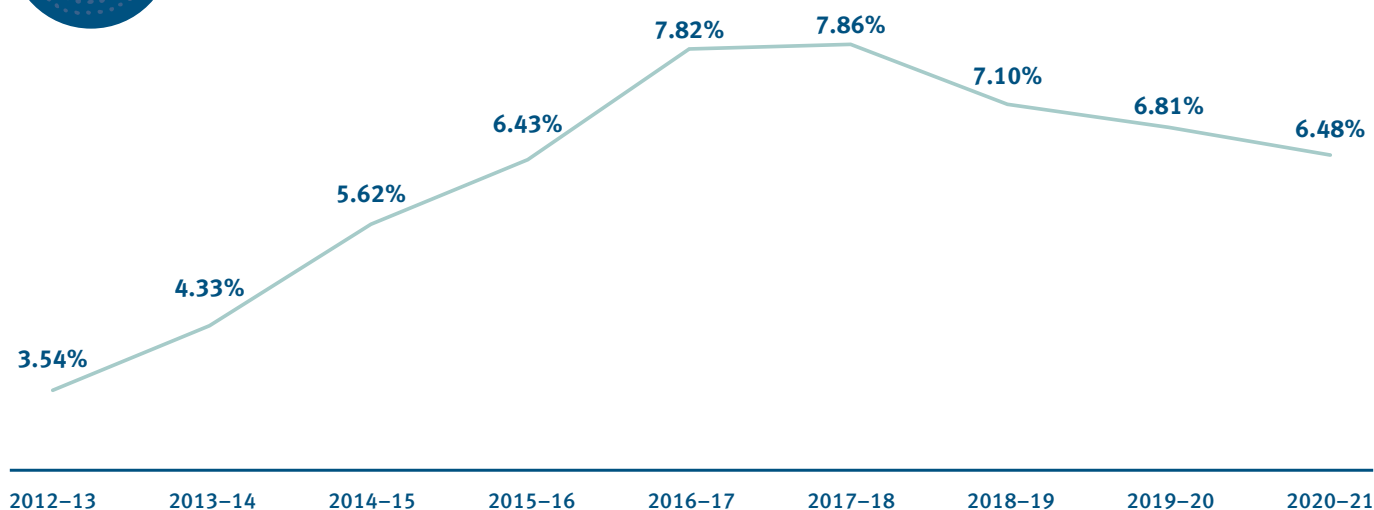


Given the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in contact with the child protection system, ensuring high rates of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples is one way to promote cultural safety within the system. As shown in Figure 172, rates of employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in frontline roles have been as high as 7.9% but have dropped over the past five years.

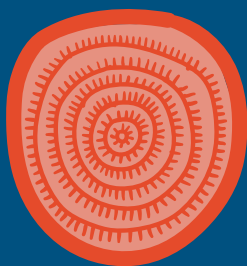
Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity and cultural and spiritual beliefs



Figure 172: Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed by Child Safety in frontline child protection roles, by year, from 2012–13 to 2020–21.



Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, *Respecting the Workforce: How did the Queensland Child Protection Reform Environment impact the frontline Child Safety workforce?*, 2021.<sup>384</sup>



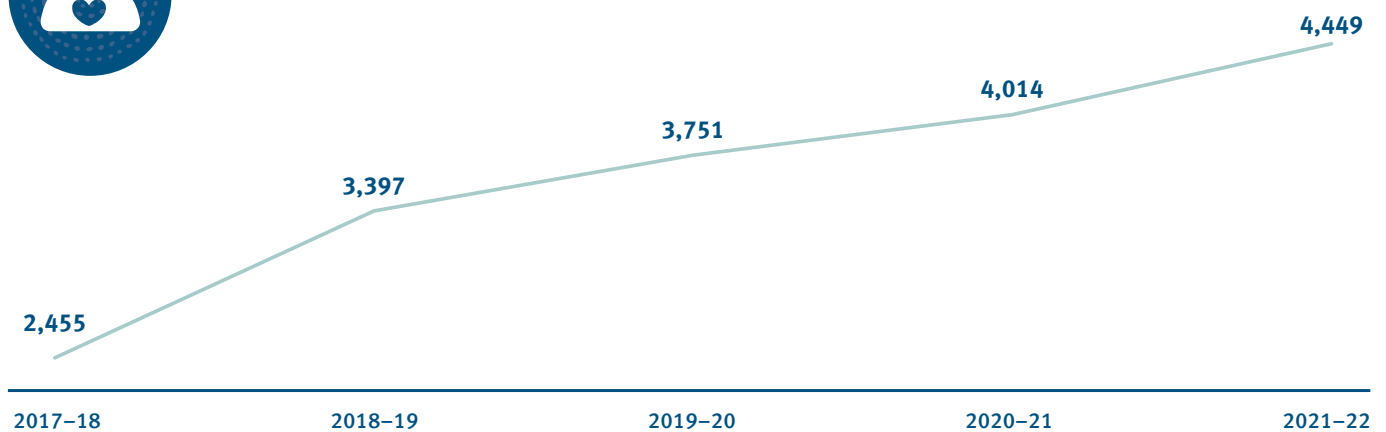
Since 2016, the Queensland Government has launched 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services across Queensland. These services were established to deliver culturally responsive services for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, including those already in contact with the statutory system. The services were developed through an extensive co-design process with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, including the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak.

Family Wellbeing Services are delivered by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, drawing on their local knowledge and expertise to create innovative solutions to support children, families and communities, emphasising healing and culture. They are designed to provide tailored, holistic and coordinated support to families to improve their social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and build their capacity to safely care for and protect their children.

As shown in Figure 173, the number of Queensland families attending Family Wellbeing Services has increased over the past five years. As at 31 March 2023, 89.7% of children who had a case closed with all or the majority of their needs met after attending a Family Wellbeing Service, did not have a subsequent investigation by Child Safety.<sup>385</sup>



Figure 173: Number of families who have received a Family Wellbeing Service (2017–18 to 2021–22)



Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, 'Our performance' dashboard', 2023.<sup>386</sup>





## Goal 6.2: Children, young people and their families feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, culture and spiritual beliefs

Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures to empower people and enable them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves. In a culturally safe community, children, young people, and their families feel that their culture and identity are respected. This allows children, young people and their families to feel safe and supported in expressing their identity, cultural and spiritual beliefs and to truly express who they are.

### Indicator 6.2.1: Children and young people report a sense of belonging through spiritual or cultural beliefs

Rates of formal religious affiliation are dropping. In the 2021 Census, more than 3.5 million Queenslanders (45.7%) described themselves as being affiliated with a Christian religion, 258,850 (5.0%) reported that they were affiliated with a non-Christian religion such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or 'other Religion', and a further 2.1 million Queenslanders (40.7%) described themselves as having no religion. Between 2016 and 2021, the rate of young people aged 15–24 years reporting having no religion (including secular beliefs, other spiritual beliefs and no religious affiliation) rose from 37.2% to 45.6%.<sup>387</sup>

#### Key finding

More than half of children and young people (51.3%) reported having no spiritual or cultural beliefs.

In 2022, almost one in five young people in Queensland reported having both spiritual and cultural beliefs or just spiritual beliefs. One in 10 reported having cultural beliefs, while more than half reported having no beliefs. There was a small level of regional variation in terms of spiritual and cultural beliefs (Table 100).

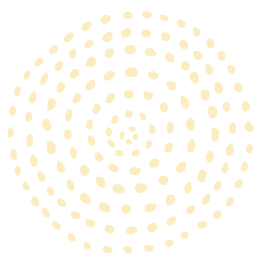




Table 100: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years by cultural and/or spiritual belief status by region

|  | Australia     | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey | <b>18,800</b> | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924   | 855   | 209   | 410   | 236   |
| Yes – both spiritual and cultural beliefs  | <b>20.2%</b>  | 19.2% | 20.1% | 17.4% | 17.4% | 22.1% | 16.9% | 23.2% |
| Yes – spiritual beliefs  | <b>20.2%</b>  | 19.3% | 18.7% | 21.0% | 20.0% | 19.6% | 19.1% | 15.4% |
| Yes – cultural beliefs   | <b>10.3%</b>  | 10.2% | 11.6% | 8.0%  | 7.5%  | 8.3%  | 10.2% | 13.2% |
| No beliefs   | <b>49.3%</b>  | 51.3% | 49.6% | 53.6% | 54.8% | 50.0% | 53.8% | 48.2% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>388</sup>





**Indicator 6.2.2 Children and young people have confidence that their identity, culture, and spiritual beliefs are respected and valued**

**Key finding**



Up to four in 10 young people in Queensland face discrimination due to either their identity, culture, sexuality, gender or spiritual beliefs.

**CASE STUDY**

**School support for students from refugee backgrounds to cope with school pressures**

A state high school in North Queensland has taken a whole-school approach to enable students from refugee backgrounds to cope with the pressures of school.

To create safe, supportive and inclusive environments, refugee youth leaders were invited to address the whole school during Refugee Week. Drawing on the 2023 Refugee Week theme, ‘Finding Freedom’, they shared their lived experiences and discussed barriers to safety and belonging for students from refugee backgrounds. All students developed greater cultural understandings and school leaders and staff gained deeper insights into refugee student wellbeing and its connection to learning.

To empower recently arrived students from refugee backgrounds to thrive in their new school, school staff partnered with a support agency for survivors of torture and trauma to deliver a workshop focused on



managing stress, anxiety and depression. Delivered to over 60 students, the workshop also provided participating students with a range of strategies to cope with the pressures of adapting to an unfamiliar educational context.

The school has developed strong systems of early intervention, from recognising the early signs that a student’s wellbeing is at risk to referring young people with higher levels of need. Students and families are supported to access culturally-responsive counselling services from an external provider that offers specialised services enabling youth from refugee backgrounds to recover and succeed.

Over a third of Queensland respondents indicated that equity and discrimination was a national concern. Young people in Brisbane and Moreton Bay had the highest proportion reporting this issue as a national concern (Table 101).



Table 101: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who reported equity and discrimination as a national concern by region

|                           | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Equity and discrimination | 35.9% | 39.5% | 29.4% | 35.0% | 34.7% | 34.9% | 22.2% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>389</sup>

More than a third of young people from Queensland reported receiving unfair treatment in the last year as a result of their gender, while close to three in ten reported facing unfair treatment due to their race/cultural background. Over a quarter reported receiving unfair treatment due to their mental health or sexuality, while one in five received unfair treatment because of their age (Table 102). As shown in the table, there was some variation across regions for the different reasons for unfair treatment.



Table 102: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years by reasons they were being treated unfairly in the last year by region

| Reasons for unfair treatment   | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of young people in the region who responded to Mission Australia's youth survey | 18,800    | 5,680 | 2,799 | 924   | 855   | 209   | 410   | 236   |
| Gender   | 38.6%     | 34.8% | 31.5% | 36.8% | 35.5% | 45.2% | 42.3% | 40.3% |
| Race/cultural background   | 31.3%     | 29.4% | 29.7% | 33.2% | 23.1% | 24.7% | 26.8% | 37.1% |
| Mental health  | 28.9%     | 28.3% | 24.9% | 34.5% | 30.6% | 27.4% | 24.4% | 30.6% |
| Sexuality  | 24.9%     | 24.6% | 23.2% | 27.7% | 24.8% | 23.3% | 20.3% | 19.4% |
| Age  | 19.5%     | 20.6% | 16.9% | 23.5% | 26.4% | 26.0% | 17.9% | 30.6% |
| Religion   | 9.7%      | 7.7%  | 5.7%  | 13.0% | 9.9%  | 4.1%  | 3.3%  | 8.1%  |

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Answered by those who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination in the past year.

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>390</sup>



Table 103: Proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who were extremely/very concerned about LGBTIQ+ issues by region

|  | Australia | QLD   | BMB   | SE    | SW    | SCC   | NQ    | FNQ   |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Young people who identify LGBTIQ+ issues as being a personal concern | 13.8%     | 12.8% | 11.8% | 13.6% | 11.8% | 19.4% | 12.6% | 12.6% |

Source: Mission Australia, Youth Survey Report, 2022.<sup>391</sup>

## Children and young people feel connected to their culture and safe and supported around expressing their identity and cultural and spiritual beliefs

Among young people living in out-of-home care, 60.9% said they felt supported about their sexual orientation, 6.9% said they did not feel supported, and 24.1% were unsure (the remaining 8.0% preferred not to say).<sup>392</sup>

Of young people aged 12 years and over who identified as LGBTIQ+, 35 children out of 87 indicated they had been treated badly because of their sexual orientation. Out of the 41 young people aged 12 years and over who identified as gender diverse, 24 indicated they had been treated badly because of their gender identity (10 none of the above, seven prefer not to say). Young people reported that the most common sources of poor treatment around sexual orientation were family they did not live with and friends. The most common sources of poor

treatment around gender identity were family they did not live with, carers, friends and teachers.

Data from the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Community Perceptions Survey and Statutory systems workforce survey, 2023 found a quarters of respondents, which included frontline child protection and family support workers throughout Queensland, believed children and young people are discriminated against. High rates of discrimination were also perceived for young people who identify as Aboriginal and/Torres Strait Islander peoples, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those identifying as LGBTIQ+, refugees and asylum seekers, those experiencing poverty and those in rural and remote areas (Table 104).



Table 104: Rates of groups which experience discrimination in terms of having rights upheld for children and young people

| Groups   | Percentage of respondents who recorded sometimes, often or always |
|--|---|
| In contact with the youth justice system               | 89.0%   |
| From culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds | 88.0%   |
| In contact with the child protection system            | 88.0%   |
| Who identify as LGBTIQ+                                | 86.0%   |
| Who are refugees or asylum seekers                     | 86.0%   |
| Experiencing poverty                                   | 86.0%   |
| Living in rural and remote areas                       | 85.0%   |
| Who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander   | 85.0%   |
| With a disability                                      | 83.0%   |

Source: Queensland Family and Child Commission, Statutory systems workforce survey, 2023.<sup>393</sup>

Consistent with the findings from the Statutory systems workforce survey, more than half of young people in care indicated that they feel the same as peers who are not in care 'most times' or 'always'. While just over a quarter of young people in care responded that they 'rarely' or 'never' felt the same as their peers who are not in care (Table 105).



Table 105: Rates of young people in care's feelings in relation to peers

|  | Never/Rarely | Sometimes | Most times/Always |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Do you feel the same as your peers who are not in care | 28.5%        | 18.4%     | 53.1%             |

Source: Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Life in Care Survey, 2022.

### Indicator 6.2.3: Funding is provided to support multicultural events

Six out of 10 (60.0%) respondents to our Statutory systems workforce survey agreed that culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people attending their organisations were supported to preserve their cultural and linguistic identity.

The Queensland government has created a \$2 million annual funding program to support multicultural projects, known as the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program. The program provides funding towards multicultural events and projects that engage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, to contribute to building a united, harmonious, and inclusive Queensland.

During 2023, 20 organisations will share in almost \$1 million in Celebrating Multicultural Queensland funding to build social and economic participation throughout the state and create opportunities for Queenslanders from diverse backgrounds to engage with their cultures. This will include:

- a multicultural playgroup in Sunshine Coast and Central
- a financial literacy and wellbeing program and targeted programs to reduce risk-taking behaviours among young people in the South East
- a mentoring program for young men to improve mental health and reduce risk-taking behaviour across Brisbane and Moreton Bay and the South West
- a tutoring program to address a gap in homework support for young people supported by mother-tongue learning opportunities in the South West
- targeted mentoring and empowerment for young people in North Queensland and Far North Queensland.

### Key finding



**The Queensland Government is funding a range of events and projects to support cultural and linguistic diversity in Queensland.**

Further to these programs, the Queensland government has also:

- funded 22 organisations to share in almost \$1 million funding to deliver projects which celebrate Queensland's multicultural diversity, including:
  - » a multicultural youth film making and screen acting program, and multicultural mother's group in Brisbane and Moreton Bay
  - » a project to support around 1,000 culturally diverse persons to overcome barriers to re-entering the workforce in the South West
  - » a program to support young women to build their self-confidence in a safe and supportive space, and a project to assist refugees to gain a driver's licence throughout North Queensland
- launched a \$1.07 million investment over four years (starting 2022) to raise awareness of Australian South Sea Islander people's unique culture and history. The program will deliver more targeted and culturally appropriate support, help address disadvantages, and meaningfully acknowledge past harm and trauma
- provided support to help Pasifika young people build a brighter future. This includes a program to allow young people from the Pasifika community in the South East to access culturally responsive wrap-around support through a locally designed initiative aimed at tackling youth crime
- announced (in 2022) a \$5.5 million investment to grow Queensland's multicultural workforce known as the Diverse Queensland Workforce program, which includes connecting work-ready migrants, refugees, and international students with employers to strengthen their workforce.

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## Conclusion

This report demonstrates that Queensland is a great place to grow up. The evidence presented here highlights where we can all do more to strengthen our community. If we focus on our children and young people, and continue to lift the quality of their lives, we have the opportunity to build a better Queensland.



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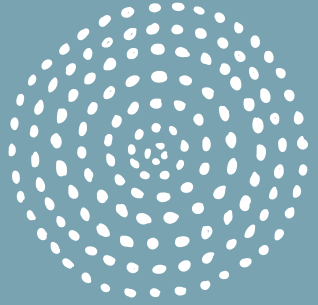
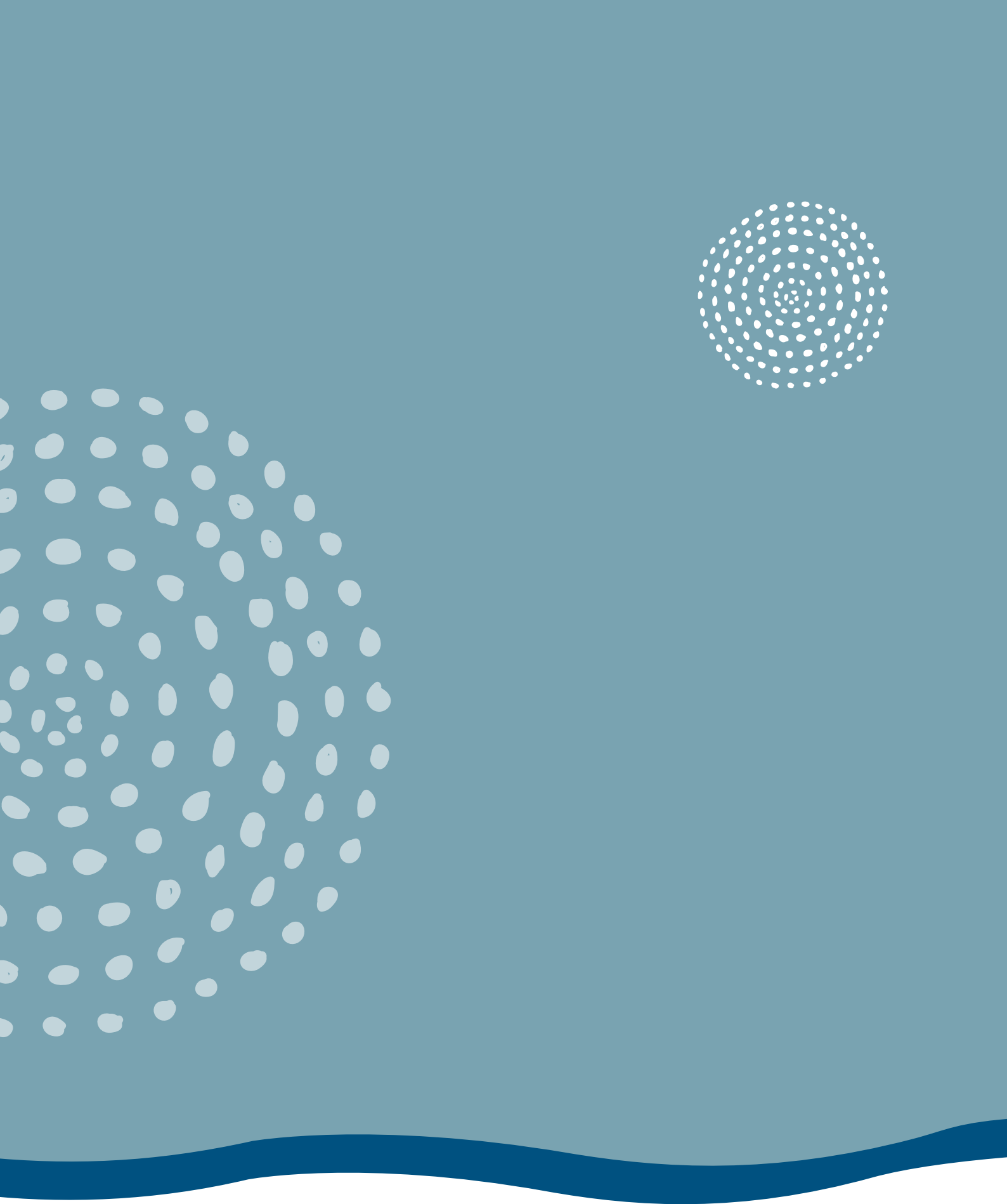
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