

QFCC YOUTH SUMMIT IMPACT REPORT



2024



Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



Queensland
Government

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.

Accessibility



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this report, you can contact Translating and Interpreting Service National on 13 14 50 to arrange for an interpreter to effectively explain it to you. Local call charges apply if calling within Australia. Higher rates apply from mobile phones and payphones.

Contact for enquiries

Queensland Family and Child Commission Level 8, 63 George Street
PO Box 15217, Brisbane City East QLD 4002
Email: info@qfcc.qld.gov.au www.qfcc.qld.gov.au

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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.

INTRODUCTION

Four months have passed since the inaugural QFCC Youth Summit in Queensland, and its impact continues to resonate across sectors crucial to the safety and wellbeing of children, families, and communities. The summit served not merely as a two-day platform for amplification but as a catalyst for sustained change and actionable initiatives.

It is well understood that children, young people, and families require positive experiences across six critical life domains to thrive. These domains are integral to childhood development and the overall wellbeing of families and communities, forming an interconnected system around every child in Queensland. During the summit, speakers advocated for advancements in each of these domains to enhance the lives of Queensland’s children, youth, families, and communities.

This report encapsulates some of the collective impact made by 38 young participants from across Queensland over the past four months. Their relentless dedication to advocacy has significantly contributed to the safety and wellbeing of Queensland’s youth.

Moreover, the summit has facilitated the establishment of enduring connections between youth speakers and key stakeholders. These connections have laid the groundwork for ongoing dialogue and future actions inspired by the initiatives and discussions initiated by these young leaders.

“ *The QFCC Youth Summit was one of the best examples of providing young people with a platform to be heard by key leaders and decision-makers that I have seen... These inspiring young people put a human face on the importance of maltreatment prevention, response and recovery. QFCC is taking these calls to action to government. How can you be a part of the change?* ”

- Dr Divna Haslam
Clinical Psychologist and Academic
Member of the Child Death
Review Board



QFCC Commissioner Luke Twyford

QFCC Commissioner Natalie Lewis

QFCC YOUTH

The QFCC Youth Summit was a strategic initiative designed to establish a powerful platform for young people in Queensland to share their experiences, insights, and ideas with sector leaders. The primary objective was to create a space where the voices of young Queenslanders could be amplified, thereby influencing policies and decisions that directly impact the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, their families and communities. This initiative sought to enhance the connection, understanding, and resonance between young Queenslanders and sector leaders, aiming for the concerns, insights and proposals for positive change to be heard by those in a position of power to influence systemic change.

The goals of the summit were directly aligned with the QFCC's vision, to ensure that every child in Queensland is loved, respected, and has their rights upheld. By focussing on empowering young people and facilitating their active participation in decision-making processes, the summit was a direct expression of the QFCC's commitment to this vision.

In delivering the Youth Summit, the QFCC

aimed to support its third strategic objective: *Empower children, young people, and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives.* The summit specifically addressed several strategic priorities within this objective, including amplification of perspectives; influencing systemic change; building capacity; leveraging communication approaches preferred by children and young people; and, celebrating achievements.

Furthermore, the summit was committed to supporting the QFCC's explicit commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by highlighting the voices, experiences, and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Key QFCC staff, most of whom are also young people, played a crucial role in facilitating the summit. Their efforts were centred on mobilising young people, coordinating participation opportunities, and amplifying youth voices. This holistic approach not only empowered young people but also highlighted the significance of their contributions to creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all Queenslanders.



PRIYA

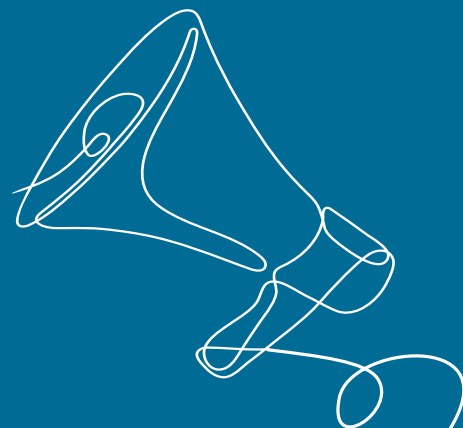
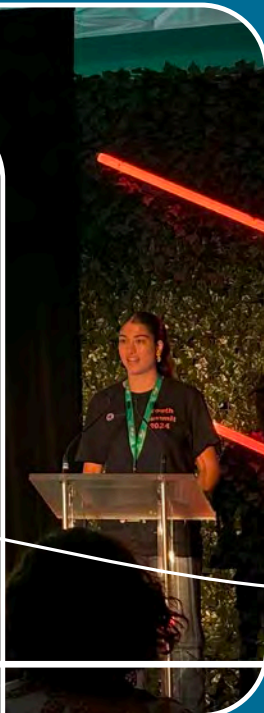
IDENTITY AND CULTURE



Diverse Changemakers

- Priya, 18

Identity & Culture



IMPACT

Keynote Speaker at Domestic Violence and Gendered Violence Event

Since the Youth Summit, Priya has remained a passionate advocate for increasing diversity among changemakers. Her commitment to this cause led to an invitation to meet with Jasmina Joldic, the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. During this meeting, Priya articulated the pressing need for greater diversity in leadership and decision-making roles.

Recently, Priya served as a keynote speaker at the *No More: National Rally Against Violence*, an event organised on the Gold Coast by the initiative *What Were You Wearing?* In her address, Priya offered profound reflections on the pervasive issues of gendered violence and sexual assault. She stated, “Gendered violence has no place in modern Australia, and it never has. We need to see this actively reflected in our systems and communities to save lives and change a toxic culture built on our restraint.” Her words resonate as a powerful call to action, urging for systemic reforms and cultural shifts to eradicate violence and foster inclusivity.



Watch Priya's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Priya

IDENTITY AND CULTURE



IMPACT

Huda makes an impact around Australia

Since the summit, Huda has met an Immigration Minister to discuss transforming our approach with culturally and linguistically diverse families and was part of a young persons round table at the home affairs office in Sydney.

Shraddha continues advocating

Shraddha has progressed her advocacy since the summit, speaking publicly about her story via a social media movement and looks forward to her upcoming meeting with shadow Councillor Emily Kim to ignite social justice youth programs. She will also be presenting to her school on National Day Against Bullying and Violence and RUOK Day.

Rhea's project gets off the ground

Rhea's *We are not alone* initiative as presented at the summit was recently funded \$50,000 by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. These much needed funds will support the continuation of events in regional areas and continue to share a movement of youth disability justice and empowerment.

Tobyn gets involved with the rights of children

Tobyn assisted the QFCC recently by participating in the *Child Rights Report* consultation, providing feedback on the methodology and participating in interviews.



LEARNING



IMPACT

Zeblon brings decision-makers to Bamaga

Zeblon made important connections at the summit following their speech on educational inequity. Phillip Brooks, Deputy Director-General, First Nations Strategy and Partnerships, Department of Education and QFCC Commissioner Luke Twyford, have plans to visit Zeblon in Bamaga and make new connections with local teachers, students and the heads of campus.

Caspen makes positive connections

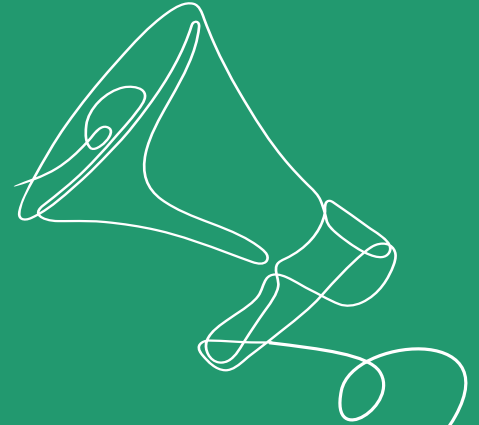
Caspen has made new connections with a youth group following an enquiry about their experiences of transitioning into adulthood following a speech about the need for young people to reconnect.

Lani connects with Youth Parliamentarians

Lani has represented her electorate in Queensland Youth Parliament since the summit. She has also consulted with several education institutions, providing information and feedback to inform a recent Queensland Government Bill.

OLIVER

VALUED, LOVED AND SAFE



IMPACT

Building advocacy networks and opportunities

Following a compelling presentation on child safety reform at the youth summit, Oliver has made significant strides in their advocacy career, establishing key connections with various advisory groups, including within the United Nations. This progress has led to an invitation to apply for the prestigious role of Australian Youth Representative, which Oliver views as the most significant opportunity in their advocacy journey to date. Despite the rigorous four-stage application process, Oliver is energised by the potential impact they could achieve in this role. The Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations is the only role of its kind in Australia.

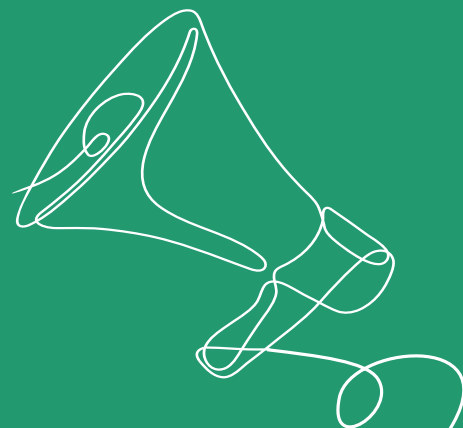
In addition to this pursuit, Oliver has joined the newly formed Youth Advisory Group, *On Your Terms*, a group for diverse youth voices and perspectives, and was recently accepted into the *Toowoomba Youth Leaders Program*. These memberships further solidify Oliver's commitment to youth advocacy. To enhance their skills and knowledge, Oliver has also embarked on a diploma in social work, aligning their academic pursuits with their passion for social justice and child safety reform.

These developments reflect Oliver's dedication to creating meaningful change for young people, both locally and globally. As Oliver continues to build on these experiences, they are positioned to make a lasting impact in the field of youth advocacy.

Watch Oliver's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Oliver

RUBY

VALUED, LOVED AND SAFE



IMPACT

The Youth Summit was a pivotal experience for Ruby, opening several opportunities for her advocacy work. Through the summit, Ruby established connections with leading professionals who have provided significant support for her non-profit domestic violence initiative, *Kids of Purple*. With assistance from the QFCC and the Attorney General's office, she secured funding for her website hosting and has initiated a promotional campaign. Ruby is currently working with a professional animator to produce promotional videos to engage children and young people and direct them to information and resources on the Kids of Purple website, providing support during times of hardship at home. Ruby received positive feedback about her initiative from the team of the Minister for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention.

Beyond website development, Ruby has expanded her advocacy efforts in several areas. After making a new connection with the Queensland Police Service at the summit, Ruby's speech was implemented into the training curriculum of the Domestic and Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Training Unit. She also collaborated with the Department of Housing on a Child Protection Week video and is preparing a presentation on domestic and family violence for an upcoming Queensland Health workshop. Ruby's summit speech also featured in the QFCC's promotional video for Domestic Violence Awareness month in May.



Watch Ruby's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Ruby

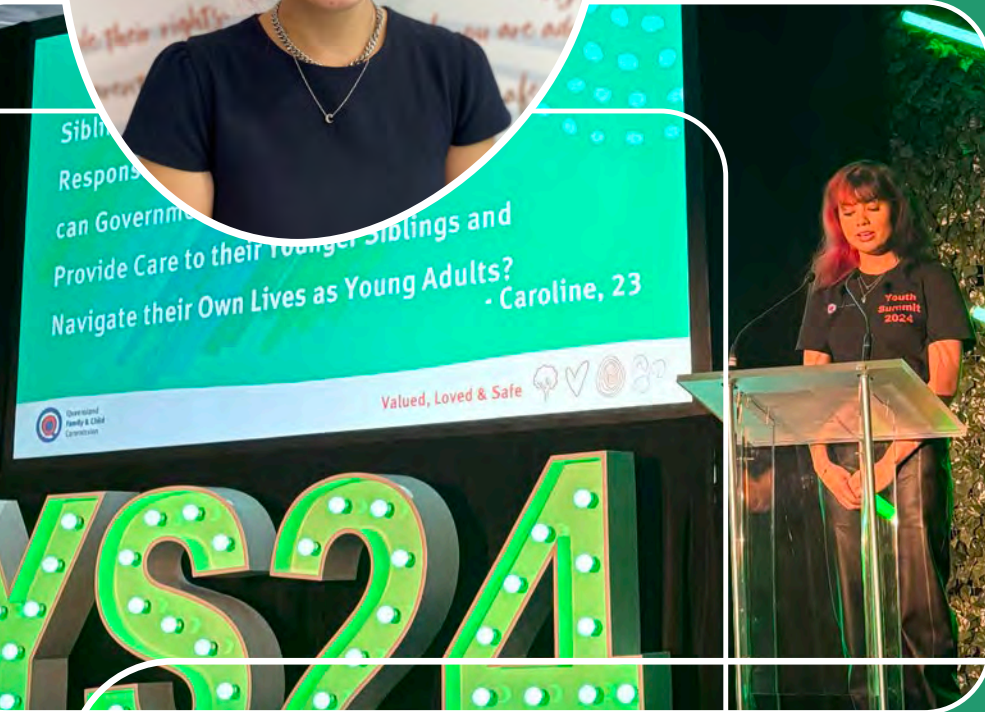
CAROLINE

VALUED, LOVED AND SAFE



“It only takes one story to start the domino effect.”

- Caroline
QFCC Youth Advocate



IMPACT

Empowering sibling caregivers

After delivering a compelling presentation at the Youth Summit, Caroline initiated a campaign to recognise and support the unique role of sibling carers. Her presentation posed a critical question: “How can government help older siblings provide care to their younger siblings while navigating their own lives as young adults?” In response, Caroline has been actively advocating for tailored support systems that ensure both sibling carers and those they care for can thrive.

Caroline spearheaded a partnership with PeakCare, the child protection peak body, and the QFCC, both of which now actively support her initiative. To launch the campaign, Caroline presented to Key Assets, a foster and kinship agency, highlighting the challenges sibling carers face. As this initiative gains momentum, we anticipate its profound impact on the child protection landscape.

Caroline's speech has been reviewed by the 11 Children's Commissioners, Guardians and advocates across Australia and New Zealand, and they have agreed to support Caroline in this cause. Letters of support for improved approaches to sibling carers have come from agencies, foster care peak bodies and advocates from across the nation including Tasmania, south Australia, and ACT.



Tom Allsop



Watch Caroline's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Caroline

MAX

MATERIAL BASICS



“Max, for you, at 11 years old, to stand up here in front of this room of people...and the ability that you at your age could identify the impacts of people at school not having food in their bellies, knowing that that’s not okay.”

- Murray Benton
Q Shelter

Member of the Child Death
Review Board

IMPACT

Impacting futures, one meal at a time

Initiated from the QFCC Youth Summit 2024, a valuable connection was established that holds potential for advancing student health initiatives. Michael Hogan, Convener of the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership, facilitated an introduction between Max, an enthusiastic young advocate for student wellbeing, and Professor Danielle Gallegos, an academic from the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, part of the Faculty of Health at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Danielle has expressed a keen interest in collaborating with Max to discuss and explore innovative lunch box solutions aimed at improving the nutrition of students, especially when at school. Research shows that when young students are provided with essential nutrition intake, their overall health and academic performance increases. Both Max and Danielle are eager to move forward with this important discussion.

Watch Max’s video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Max

SAMUEL

MATERIAL BASICS



IMPACT

Life literacy advocacy: Taking the next step

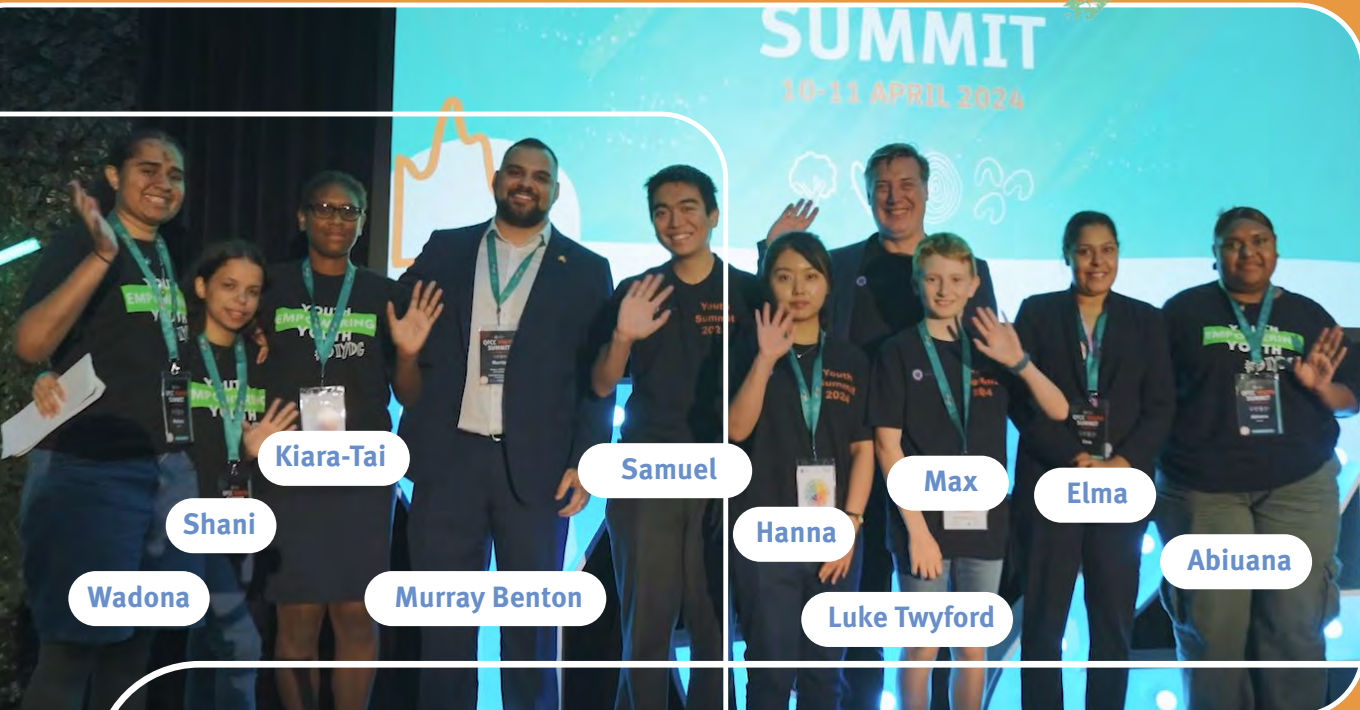
Following the Youth Summit, Samuel engaged with the Minister for Education's office, advocating for the inclusion of life literacy in the school curriculum. In response, he received an acknowledgment emphasising the Department's commitment to student voice and was provided with a key contact for further discussions. He also lobbied various State MPs, including Minister Leanne Enoch, the Shadow Education Minister, and the Shadow Youth, Science, and Innovation Minister, to highlight the necessity of financial literacy education in schools. Samuel has secured a meeting with senior officials at the Department of Education to further these discussions.

Through ongoing meetings with his new Principal, guided by the QFCC's Youth Participation Framework, Samuel implemented a school reform agenda. Key changes include the restructuring of timetables to reduce assembly frequency, the introduction of student-led academic conferences, embedding student voice throughout school policies, and establishing a new feedback process for student leadership teams to engage with the executive team.

Samuel also had the opportunity to shadow Councillor Emily Kim, Brisbane's youngest councillor, gaining insights into how advocacy and policy-making intersect. Additionally, he participated in the Brisbane Youth Forum, engaging with key figures such as entrepreneur Ben Croft and Doctor Christian Rowan MP. His next step involves requesting a meeting with the QCAA to discuss the Senior Curriculum.

Watch Samuel's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Samuel

MATERIAL BASICS



IMPACT

Deadly young people support local young people

Since the summit, the young speakers from Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) have continued to thrive and stay engaged with the issues they spoke about. Their group speech on the importance of funding grassroots organisations to uplift youth resonated strongly with many. Wadona, Abiuana and Shani have remained active in their community, volunteering at DIYDG and advocating for the holistic support of young people through proper funding. Kiara-Tai, who has since enlisted in the navy, reflected on how the summit broadened her understanding of the struggles faced by youth and highlighted the need to raise awareness among government officials. The group have been integral to this year's wellbeing camp, held by DIYDG annually. The Cairns-based camp is a transformative three-day program designed to enhance the wellbeing of First Nations young people by fostering positive peer connections and providing the opportunity to be on Country.

Elma gets involved with the rights of children

Elma's advocacy has continued locally and statewide. Recently, Elma assisted the QFCC by participating in the *Child Rights Report* consultation, providing feedback on the methodology and participating in interviews.



AARON

PARTICIPATING



IMPACT

Brisbane Youth Forum Inspires Action and Empowerment

Aaron's enthusiasm for amplifying the voices of young people has proven fruitful since the Youth Summit. At the end of June, Aaron filled Queensland Parliament House with 70 young people at the inaugural Brisbane Youth Forum. This event, envisioned just a few months earlier, was born out of the realisation that young voices were missing from critical decision-making spaces and that there is great need for collaboration and empowerment. The forum's theme, *Unleashing Confidence*, guided the day's activities, beginning with workshops led by esteemed professionals.

Ben Croft conducted a workshop on discovering one's Ikigai, while psychologist Dr. Ian Plowman shared insights on effective group communication. Young entrepreneur Ned Heaton also engaged participants in brainstorming social enterprise ideas. Attendees collaborated on actionable solutions to pressing issues such as education, transport, youth voice, and climate change. The most popular idea was the creation of a *Your Story Told* newsletter to highlight youth engagement opportunities and achievements. Minister for Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, Leeanne Enoch, attended the event.

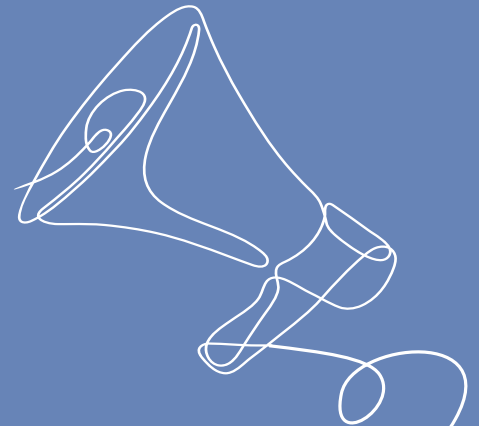
The forum's impact will extend beyond Parliament's walls. A Youth Ambassador Program is being established, with over 70 participants committed to meeting monthly to bring their ideas to life. Aaron was interviewed by respected ABC radio announcer, Kelly Higgins-Devine.

Watch Aaron's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Aaron



RYAN

PARTICIPATING



IMPACT

Contributing to the Thriving Kids in disasters report

Ryan played a key role in the introduction of the Thriving Kids in Disasters report following his speech on *Eco-anxiety and the necessity of youth voice* at the summit. This report represents the outcome of a comprehensive statewide stakeholder engagement process and a thorough review of current knowledge on child wellbeing and resilience within the context of Queensland's disaster management framework.

Ryan's foreword provided a perspective on experiencing disasters from the vantage point of a young person. He highlights how growing up in Queensland can be a journey marked by a variety of challenges due to our wild and unforgiving natural environment, emphasising the significant ways natural disasters can impact on Queensland kids.

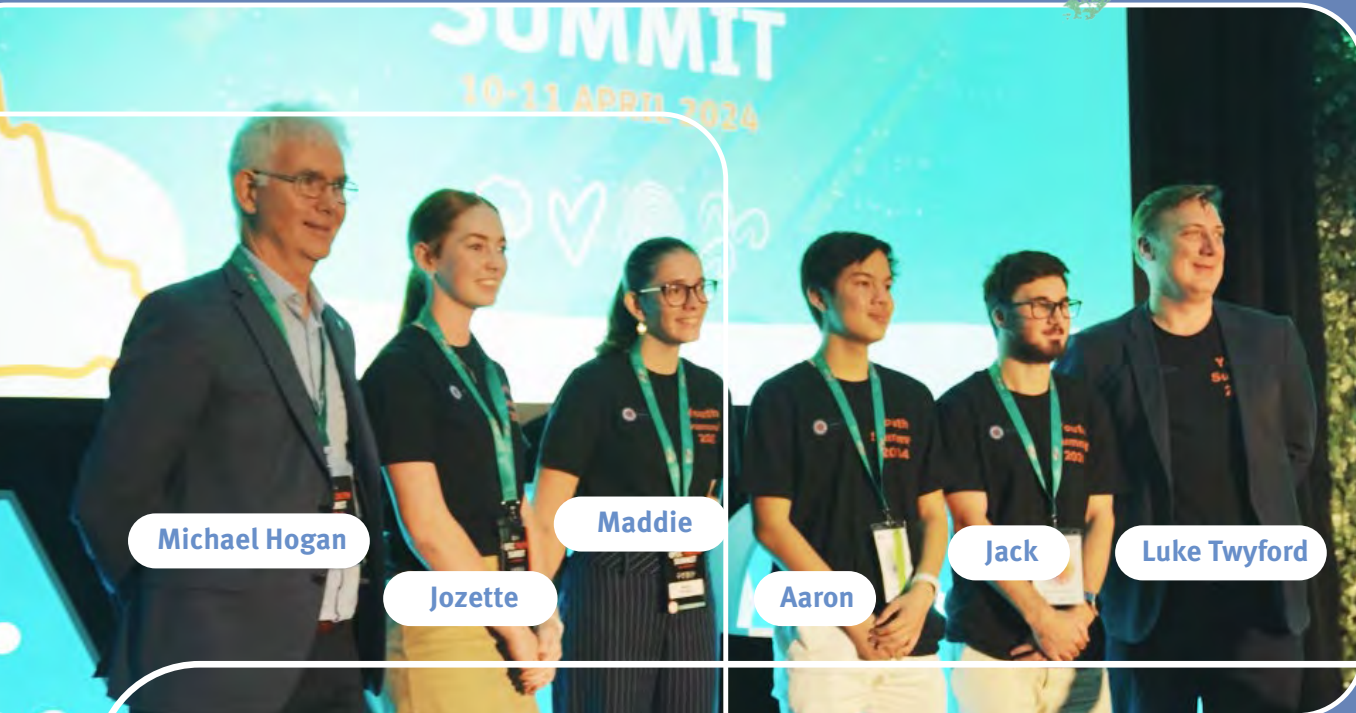
This opportunity was presented to Ryan following a connection made at the summit with Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership Convener, Michal Hogan.



Watch Ryan's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Ryan

Click to view

PARTICIPATING



Michael Hogan

Jozette

Maddie

Aaron

Jack

Luke Twyford

IMPACT

Maddie creates new opportunities

Since participating in the Youth Summit, Maddie has successfully commenced a graduate role in Canberra, capitalising on the skills and insights gained during the event. Prior to her departure, she made significant contributions to youth advocacy in Queensland by collaborating with the Queensland Youth Parliament. Notably, Maddie played a consultative role in the submission of a recent education Bill, demonstrating her commitment to shaping policy and supporting the educational needs of young people.

Jozette continues local advocacy in regional areas

Jozette remains committed in her advocacy efforts within her hometown of Longreach. She is currently supporting the QFCC by forging connections with local stakeholders. This collaboration is aimed at promoting the upcoming Youth Leadership Summit, scheduled for October 2024. The event aims to empower future entrepreneurs in regional areas, reflecting Jozette's dedication to ensuring that youth in remote communities have access to opportunities for leadership and personal growth.

GRACE

HEALTH



“ Grace presents an authentic depiction of not only her own journey but that which is reflective of the all too common challenges faced by many young people today. Grace’s passion and compassion, clarity of thought and determination to make a difference are clearly conveyed in her efforts and commitment to enhance her own knowledge but also to contribute deeply via her own lived experience towards suicide prevention!

”
- Jacinta Hawgood
Associate Professor
Australian Institute for Suicide
Research and Prevention

IMPACT

Real-world solutions for mental health

Since the summit, Grace has continued her work in suicide and mental health lived experience advocacy. As a proud queer woman, and member of the Queensland Government’s LGBTQIA+ Roundtable, Grace provided advice and support to the development of the government’s LGBTQIA+ strategy Pride in our Communities, addressing the intersectional needs of the community.

Grace has also been advising on the development of a first of its kind youth-focussed suicide assessment tool for clinicians, and is excited about the opportunity to provide further tailored support to young people and relevant training to clinicians. She has also joined the eSafety Commission as a member of their Youth Council, aiming to address harmful and discriminatory behaviour online, and the real-world consequences it can have.

As part of her goal to better incorporate lived experience into research, and elevate lived experience expertise, Grace is conducting research on people’s experiences of consent and decision-making while in hospital post-suicide attempt. The aim of her research is to further understand the difficulties that people with a lived experience of suicide face, and spark further conversations about how to best engage with and support people after a suicide attempt. She hopes that this research will also support people with a lived experience to advocate for their rights and needs.

Watch Grace’s video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Grace

ALICE



HEALTH

“You weren’t wrong when you said this has an impact! I shared it with members of my team.”

We were all touched by Alice’s story and bravery. What an incredible advocate. ”

- Dr Robyn Littlewood
Chief Executive Officer
Health and Wellbeing Queensland

Minimising Isolation
During Cancer Treatment
- Alice, 16



YS24

IMPACT

Alice’s contribution to health initiatives

In July, the Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership and the Queensland Child and Youth Clinical Network hosted a workshop on Harnessing Neuroscience and Operationalising Resilience in Clinical Practice, which attracted 100 participants both in-person and online. Youth Summit speaker Alice, served on the panel, sharing her lived experience as a consumer. She emphasised the importance of consultation, collaboration, and being treated as more than just her illness. Her insights underscored the vital role of listening to young people and integrating their experiences with evidence-based practices.

Alice, who also presented at the Youth Summit on Minimising Isolation During Cancer Treatment, caught the attention of key leaders. Robyn Littlewood, CEO of Health and Wellbeing Queensland, committed to considering Alice’s story during the development and consultation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is being led by Health and Wellbeing Queensland in partnership with the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

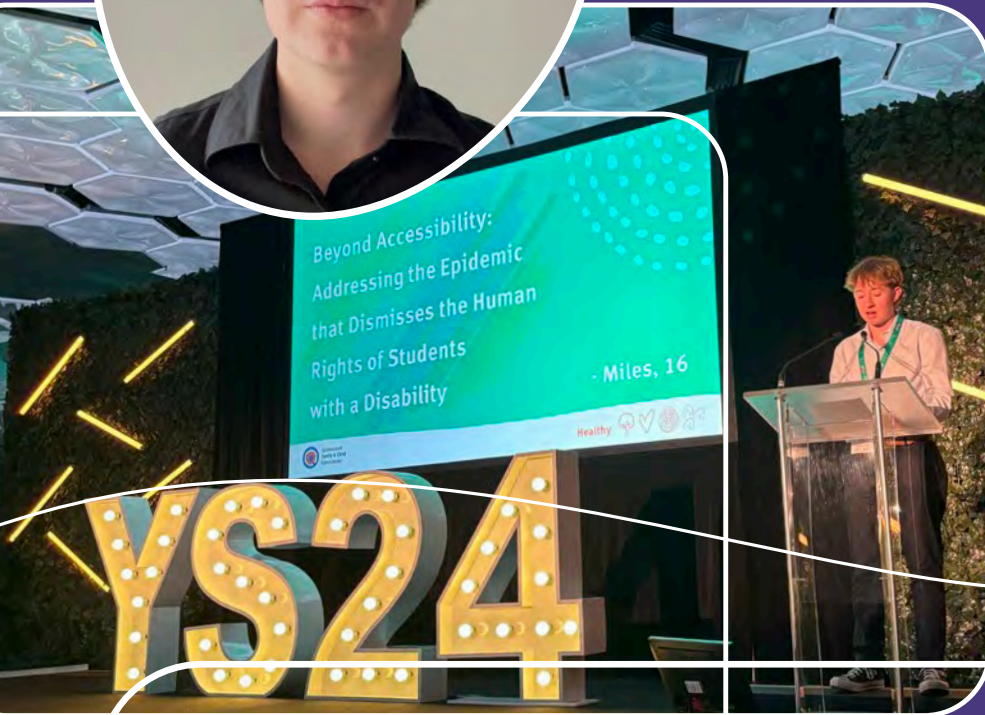
Additionally, the Health Service Chief Executive of Children’s Health Queensland has agreed to meet with Alice to explore potential solutions for addressing and supporting key aspects of isolation, loneliness and the importance of fostering self-love during some of the most challenging times in young people’s lives.



Watch Alice’s video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Alice

MILES

HEALTH



IMPACT

Advancing disability advocacy post-summit

Following the summit, Miles has actively disseminated his speech, *Beyond Accessibility: Addressing the Epidemic that Dismisses the Human Rights of Students with Disabilities*, across local organisations, catalysing public discourse on this critical issue and exploring potential solutions.

Collaborating with several local organisations, including Headspace, Miles has continued to champion this advocacy agenda. His efforts have focussed on influencing policy and practice to improve the lives of students with disabilities. Notably, his advocacy has led to the integration of revised approaches within key organisational frameworks.

For Miles, the summit underscored the importance of community and support. Both the event and the people involved reinforced to Miles that support is always available, even in challenging times, and that a network of allies exists, and with collective effort, progress will unfold as it should.

Watch Miles's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Miles

SIOBHAN



HEALTH

“ You should be incredibly proud. What a great speaker and expression of lived experience in a policy making sense.

Well done, obviously lots of work behind that and Siobhan should be commended. ”

- Jackson Hills
Q Shelter



IMPACT

Ongoing advocacy for changing alcohol culture

Since the summit, Siobhan has continued her advocacy efforts to address the impact of alcohol on the community and individuals' lives. She has further developed her public speaking skills and was invited to participate in a media training session with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). During this session, she connected with Steve Austin, a well-known and respected ABC radio presenter, who expressed interest in supporting her advocacy.

In early August, Siobhan was interviewed by Steve Austin on ABC Radio Brisbane, where she had the opportunity to elevate her advocacy agenda concerning alcohol dementia. During the live broadcast, Siobhan shared critical statistics about alcohol abuse, highlighting that over 70,000 alcohol-related assaults occur in Australia each year, involving 20,000 children and young people. She emphasised that alcohol dementia is not age-related but is a consequence of excessive alcohol consumption, describing its effects on the brain as being “washed away” which can devastate families.

Siobhan continues to call for a systemic and cultural shift to address the deeply ingrained alcohol culture in Australia, advocating for healthier practices and significant change.

Watch Siobhan's video:
qfcc.qld.gov.au/Siobhan



The QFCC is excited to announce that we will be holding the second QFCC Youth Summit on 10 April, 2025.

We would like to thank the young speakers who continue to drive their advocacy agendas to make positive change for their peers, families and communities.

We would also like to thank our partners and the key stakeholders who committed to actions following the Youth Summit.

Lastly, we encourage you to ask yourself, your workplace, your community - ***can you do more to embed the views of young people in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing?***

**“ You can’t
talk about us
without us. ”**

- Maddie
Youth Summit speaker

Visit www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/youth/summit

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