

Youth Summit
Impact Report

2026

QUEENSLAND Family & Child Commission

Queensland Government

About this report

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) 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 Commission 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

The Commission acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the lands, seas and skies on which we walk, live and work. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 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.









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Introduction

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (the Commission) Youth Summit (the Summit) is an annual event that celebrates and amplifies the voices of young people. It provides children and young people across Queensland with a unique opportunity to share their experiences, ideas and perspectives directly with leaders and decision-makers from across the public and community sectors. By placing lived experience at the heart of the conversation, the summit helps inspire positive change in the systems and services that shape the safety and wellbeing of young Queenslanders and their families.

Each young speaker takes to the stage to present their advocacy piece to an audience of sector leaders and decision-makers. Through these presentations, they share practical ideas and solutions aimed at improving the lives of children, young people, their families and communities.

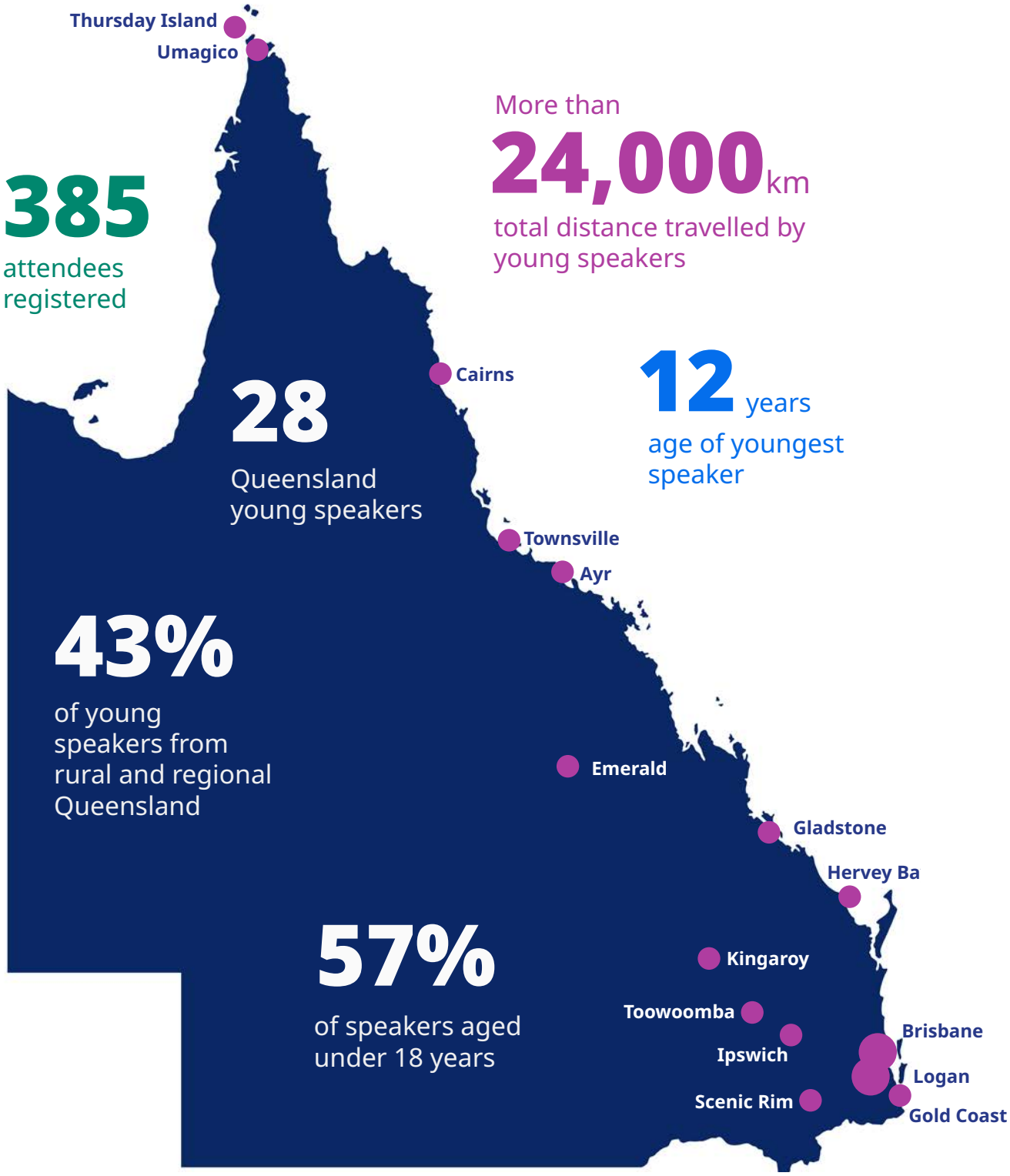
The impact of the Summit extends well beyond the event itself. Speakers from our summits have gone on to advocate for systems change across a range of sectors, including health, education, disability, domestic and family violence, and child protection. Building on the conversations started at the summit, they continue to influence change and challenge professionals to think differently about youth participation, advocacy and accountability.

Meaningful youth participation is essential to creating policies, services and decisions that genuinely reflect the needs and experiences of young people. When children and young people are given opportunities to contribute to conversations that affect their lives, they bring valuable insights, lived experience and fresh perspectives that can lead to more effective and inclusive outcomes. The Summit demonstrates the power of listening to young voices and ensuring they are recognised as active partners in shaping the systems, services and communities they are part of.

Thank you to my six fellow reflection speakers who deeply listened and reflected on what they had heard:

- Hon. Amanda Camm, Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Commissioner Kate Connors, Office of the Victims' Commissioner
- Ms Aimee McVeigh, CEO, QCOSS
- Ms Katherine Hayes, CEO, Youth Advocacy Centre, Inc
- Ms Natalie Lewis, Former Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner
- Ms Peta Bryant, Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Planning Division, Queensland Health.




Thursday Island
Umagico
385
attendees registered
More than
24,000km
total distance travelled by young speakers
Cairns
28
Queensland young speakers
12 years
age of youngest speaker
Townsville
Ayr
43%
of young speakers from rural and regional Queensland
Emerald
Gladstone
Hervey Ba
57%
of speakers aged under 18 years
Kingaroy
Toowoomba
Ipswich
Brisbane
Logan
Scenic Rim
Gold Coast

QUEENSLAND Family & Child Commission

Queensland Government

2026 YOUTH SUMMIT

Valued, Loved & Safe

•ANGUS

always ALERT to danger... ...reading TONE before words

Care

Some environments people + structures BUILD you UP... others destabilise you and PUNISH you

Carers also need good SUPPORT to care

- Training
- Stronger support
- Stable environments
- clear RIGHTS for carers

•CALEB

Each child needs a stable & constant advocate

Out-of-home care

Children enter it in a State of LOSS and invisibility

I fell apart when no-one was L***king

•AHMARNI

There is a need for EDUCATION

as children we are SCARED to SPEAK OUT.

More than half of the young people involved in the Justice System have lived experience of domestic and family violence.

When they go through traumatic experiences such as domestic violence, they need SUPPORT, not punishment.

You want to LOWER youth crime rates? Start LISTENING to Young People with lived experience.

Listen to us

BRING YOUNG PEOPLE into the conversation

•LILLY

The Courts decide how our life will look

The system MUST put CHILDREN'S Needs 1st

Having an Independent Children's Lawyer doesn't mean a child will be LISTENED to.

Community-based solutions like Lilly Pilly Work and bring Happiness

Learning to be small, to not express NEEDS

Best interests as a lived Standard

Identity & Culture

•CHARLI

♥Respect
♥Belonging
♥Community
living between worlds

As a 12yr old I was told I did not look Aboriginal

At my School we built respect & Visibility in an environment that started with none

•KANE

The RIGHT to RETURN to COUNTRY

♥Support to navigate the system

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS with Mentorship

Healing the history of displacement

We have the RIGHT to feel that we BELONG and connect with our Ancestors

•MARIA

Sharing my Culture at School was ridiculed

I only felt safe to share my culture with my people

We need a safe place to be authentically ourselves

ASK, LISTEN, APPRECIATE our expression of who we are.

•TAKEISHA

Being the 'Poster child' for diversity... but am I truly valued?

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE holds our CULTURE BELONGING CONNECTION to Country People Elders Ancestors and WELLBEING

The Voices of our Ancestors live on through our young people

Material Basics

•IZABELLA

Living in Regional Qld means our access to health care is inadequate.

Specialist care separates families. I can't just walk in to talk with my Mum. These small things are what I miss most

•ELISE

Living in a tent, the hardest thing was no access to hygiene

Hygiene & dignity

Dignity, Stability Safety

Schools should provide hygiene facilities

feeling respected & valued

•GRACIE

Two days on the road to get healthcare

- The COSTS
- the strain on marriages
- The emotional strain & guilt

•MADISON

A medical grant so students don't need to abandon their studies to pay for their health care

Medical poverty

UNIVERSAL CARE is not just for the city!

STOP REVIEWING and START FIXING!

Participating

•DIBA

The social media ban isn't working

It cost $167M what if that money was spent on SUPPORT instead?

- Consistent & responsive Counselling
- More support/training for teachers to implement early interventions
- Supporting Students to navigate the System

•HARMONY

Being priced out of the game

The closer we get to achieving our dreams, the more we doubt them and feel unworthy

Fundraising

We need REAL SUPPORT and a COLLECTIVE RESET so that Young People can ACHIEVE their ASPIRATIONS

•LILY

The ANXIOUS generation

7·5 hrs on phones each day

without social media no-one knows we exist

Do what You can to support PLAY and get us back down to earth

•JESSICA

Young people Should be actively included at the table··· CONTINUALLY it should start EARLY and be IMPACTFUL *not passive.* It must be RESOURCED and PRIORITISED!

If we want stronger communities, we must move from *consultation* to COLLABORATION.

Healthy

•CALEB

♥Mental Health♥

ASD + ADHD Loud classrooms distract me. Teachers can HELP when they KNOW HOW.

56×224 = da dum da dum

Don't 'Single us out' Don't overhelp us

- ♥Government + Schools collaborate
- ♥Create calming spaces
- ♥Train teachers
- ♥Shorten diagnostic pathways

We don't want SPECIAL treatment - we want to LEARN and be INCLUDED.

STOP BULLYING and DISCRIMINATION!

•POPPY

Sole trader Carers often have limited training and intervene in the most restrictive way allowed under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024.

No young person should have to fight the system harder than their disease!

A POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR practitioner can provide Excellent support with good PLANNING and good COMMUNICATION.

They need CONTINUOUS and INDIVIDUALISED training

This needs systemic support + resourcing

•RYAN

EARLY DIAGNOSIS and INTERVENTION must be AVAILABLE to *everyone!*

GPs need to be proactive and Bulk Billing is crucial

we need to CHECK those SYMPTOMS NOW

•CLOVELLY

INVISIBLE ILLNESSES are isolating

Teachers don't understand that students are dealing with pain

BELIEVE THEM, ... Support them... don't leave them to Struggle in Silence!

Learning

•SHEYTEIKA

In out-of-home care, I had 15 homes and 12 schools. I had so many new new 'lives' to adjust to before I could even think about learning. I reacted to the CHAOS and suffered more trauma and instability...

1 in 3 of us abandon schooling.

She Kept showing up for me - a CONSISTENT SUPPORT. The RELATIONSHIP was ♥ Central ♥

Trauma doesn't always speak in English

•MAKERE

We must include Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander HISTORY, WAYS of BEING and KNOWING in a *MEANINGFUL, EMBEDDED* way

The whole community gets involved♥

•NAGINA

There are SO MANY fears and worries hidden within a child carrying two worlds

We must HIDE our NEEDS and EXCEL to be Valued

To be HEARD, to feel SAFE, to BELONG

Create spaces where young people feel Valued, loved & safe

•ESTHER

In remote Qld we have limited choice in Subjects, poor internet and teacher 'churn.' Students must work hard to stay engaged.

Education means feeling SAFE and RESPECTED at School

Where you live should not deny you access to education

Valued, Loved & Safe

•ALEX

The last day of "what ifs"

I've been treated as a number all my life

Kids are left with the choice of living on the street OR returning to a violent home.

It's life changing being LISTENED to and RESPECTED, to feel SEEN and SAFE

Don't treat kids as a number.

My name isn't a number. It's Alex.

•LILY

SAFETY and NURTURE win over 'nature'

Family • consistency • love • showing up

My mum's determination and LOVE shaped me

We must SUPPORT SINGLE PARENTS

•TEE

To BREAK the cycle, we MUST INVEST in the NEXT GENERATION

VIOLENCE does NOT start in ADULTS

Prevention isn't a luxury, it's the FOUNDATION

emotional literacy + regulation

peer-to-peer accountability

identity-based prevention

•KORRINNE

A heart is both POWERFUL and VULNERABLE

How many children are learning SURVIVAL instead of LOVE + SAFETY?

We need a System that works like a GUARDED heart: careful, protective discerning

where children are safe, loved and deeply cared for ♥

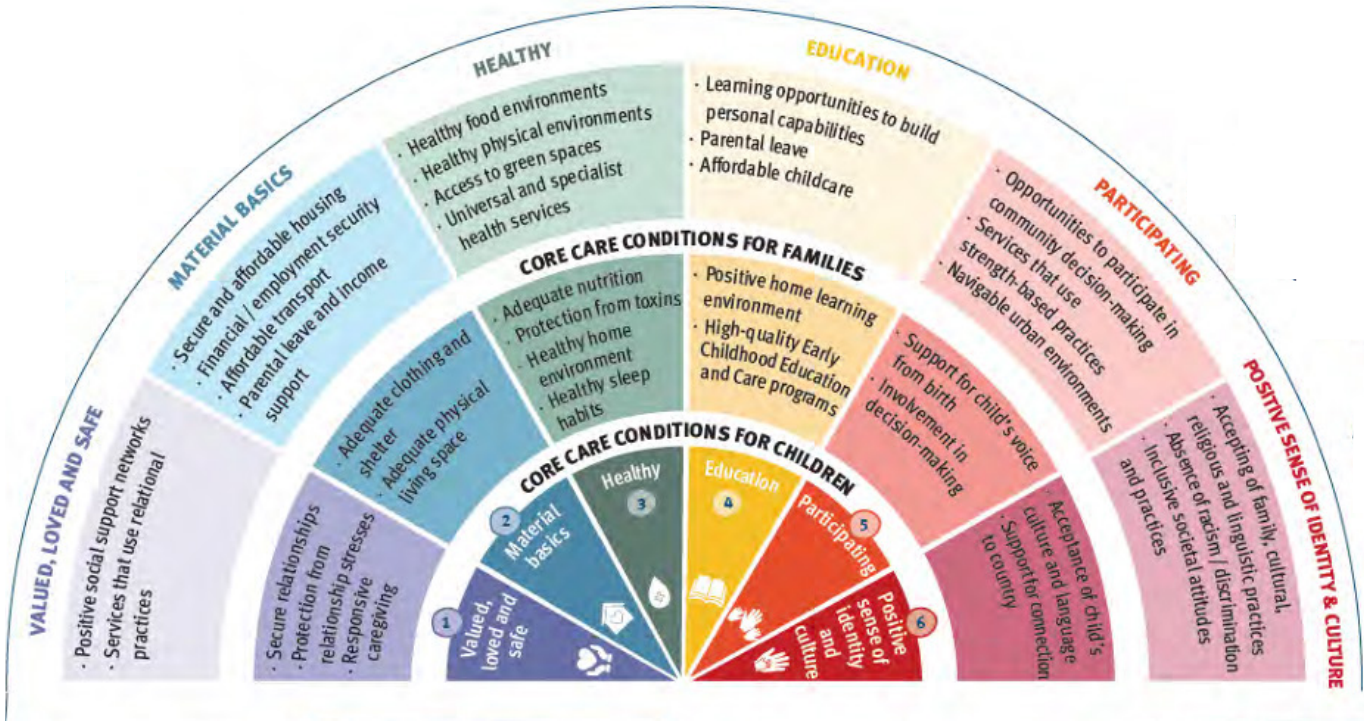
GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm

Nest framework

Speaker sessions are based on the ARACY Nest Wellbeing Framework.

This framework recognises that childhood development, and family and community wellbeing form part of an interconnected system around each Queensland child. It also recognises that it is not possible to separate the wellbeing of a child from the wellbeing of their family and community. These domains work together to create a holistic approach to child wellbeing, recognising that no single factor alone determines positive outcomes for children.

- **Valued, loved and safe** – ensuring that children feel secure, supported, and protected from harm in their family, community, and broader environment.
- **Healthy** – promoting physical, mental, and emotional health through access to healthcare, nutrition, and opportunities for physical activity.
- **Learning** – supporting access to quality education, skill development, and lifelong learning to enable children to reach their full potential.
- **Participating** – encouraging children to actively engage in decisions that affect them, have their voices heard, and are involved in family, community, civic, and cultural life.
- **Material basics** – ensuring children and families have access to essentials like housing, food, clothing, and financial security to support wellbeing.
- **Identity and culture** – helping children develop self-confidence, resilience, and a strong cultural identity, including recognition and support for First Nations children's connection to culture and community.



More powerful together

Bringing the Summit to life is a team effort, and wouldn't be possible alone. This year we once again teamed up with the fabulous crew over at the Australian School of Entrepreneurship (The ASE Group) to ensure our summit speakers were feeling prepared, confident and supported.

The team at ASE has extensive experience delivering youth engagement events and supporting young people to develop life skills for their futures. In the weeks leading up to the Summit, the ASE team met with the speakers, supporting them to draft their speeches to ensure their voices were truly heard and impactful. They supported speakers at the rehearsal dinner the night before, and were on-site throughout summit day to calm nerves and offer support and a familiar face in the crowd!

We truly value the working relationship we have with ASE, and look forward to continuing to work together to amplify the voices of Queensland young people.

Beyond the day, the power of partnership continued. Several Summit speakers went on to become members of the Queensland Kids Partnership (QKP) Intergenerational Stewardship Table. The Table is comprised of a group of young people aged 14-27 who, alongside adult leaders, are committed to making a difference for Queensland kids both now and into the future. Bringing a mix of lived experience and wisdom, knowledge, skills, and connections, the Table is informing and shaping the work of QKP over the next five years.

In early 2026, the Table welcomed the young members, including Summit alumni Ahmarni, Claudia, Korrinne, Rhea Bedi Waia and Shraddha. These Summit greats represent almost 25 per cent of the entire youth Table members.

Big thanks also goes to our event management gurus at MB Squared who ensured everything ran smoothly from the very beginning—from booking flights and accommodation—to ensuring everyone was on the bus on Summit morning, they were incredible.





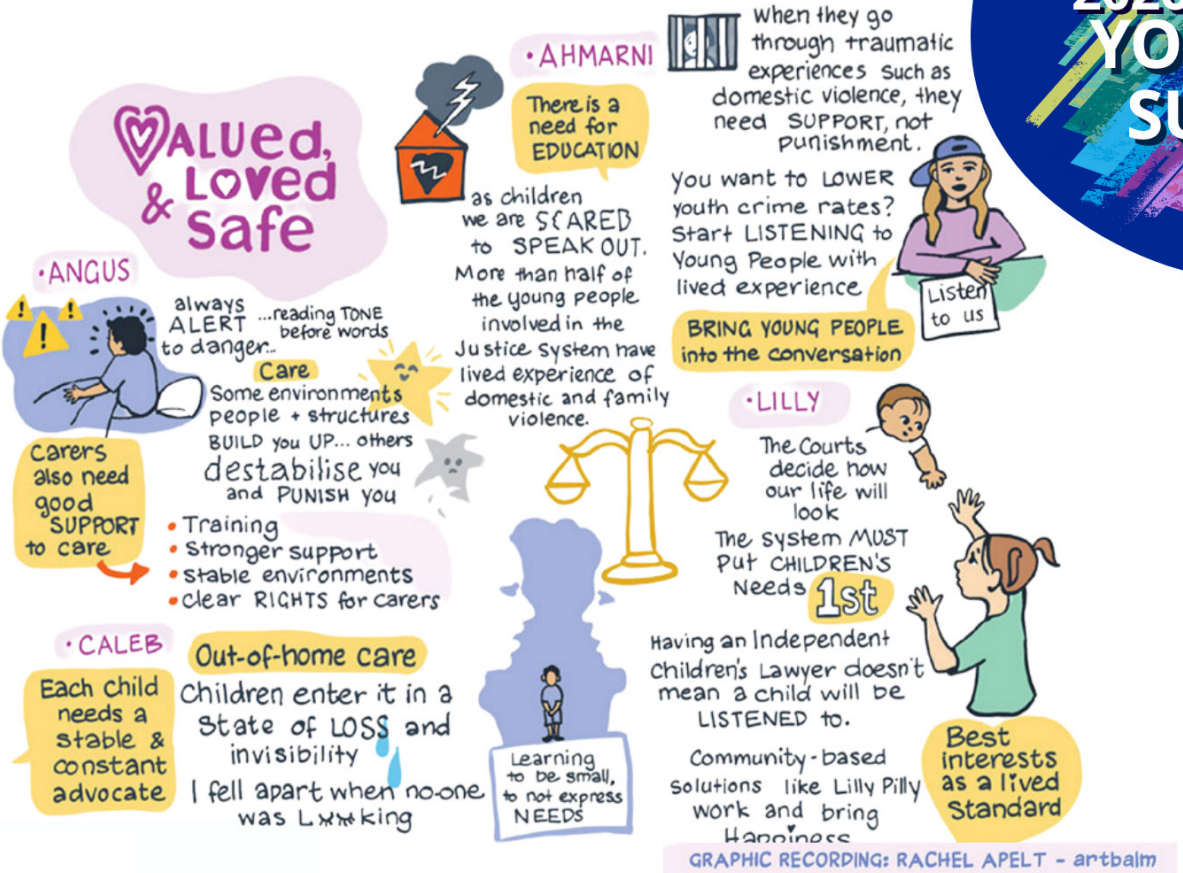
Valued, loved and safe

Ensuring that children feel secure, supported, and protected from harm in their family, community, and broader environment



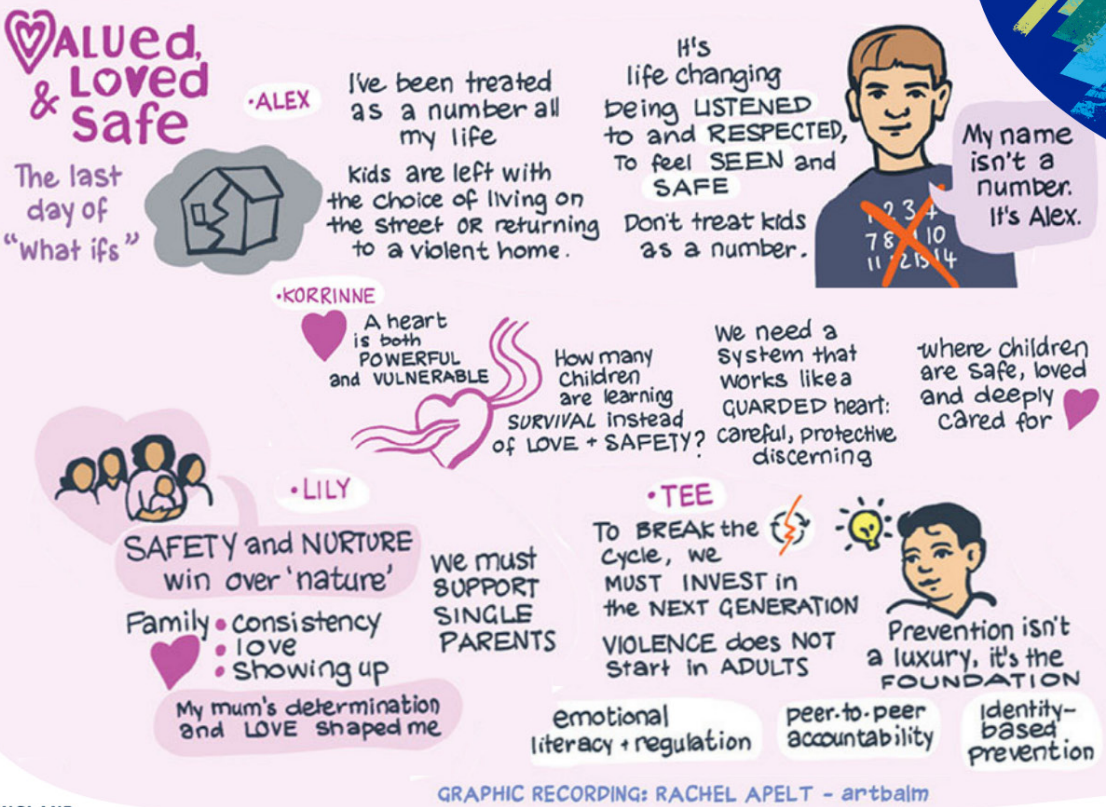
Session 1

2026 YOUTH SUMMIT





Session 2


2026 YOUTH SUMMIT
Valued, Loved & Safe
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Ahmarni

17, Gladstone

Involving survivors of domestic violence in rebuilding the system

Since speaking at the Summit Ahmarni has joined the Queensland Kids Partnership (QKP) Intergenerational Table. The table consists of 25 young people and 25 adults working to guide QKP's strategy and framework to provide the best outcome for Queensland families. As part of this work, Ahmarni is working towards being an accredited Change Facilitator!

Ahmarni is also part of the Youth Advocacy Centre's Youth Ambassador Program and has assisted during Mental Health Week.

> Your wisdom and knowledge are needed in our education space. I would love to pick your brain and co-design programs to be delivered in our local schools! Thank you for being you.
>
> - Summit attendee

Angus

17, Kingaroy

The ups and downs of living in care

At this year's Summit Angus spoke about the critical role of carers, the importance of understanding trauma, and the need for systems that respond to individual needs rather than one-size-fits-all approaches. This advocacy led him to present at the 2026 National Foster and Kinship Care Conference on the Sunshine Coast, sharing his family's experiences with the care system to over 100 workers, carers, and politicians.



> You spoke with courage, conviction and a call to action—to those, like me, who are accountable to children in care. Thank you for using your voice as your power. We are listening. We will do better—we must do better. Be well, keep standing in your power.
>
> - Summit attendee



I work as a Child Safety Officer alongside teenagers in care, primarily resi placement, and wanted to let you know how powerful your speech was. It will have a lasting impression on me.

- Summit attendee

Caleb

16, Ipswich

Proactive systems for young people in out-of-home care

Caleb is a seasoned Youth Summit advocate. At just 16 years old, he has presented at two summits, was a finalist in the 2025 CREATE Home Stretch Awards for youth advocacy, has partnered with the Commission to support the CREATE Art Showcase in Logan, and is in the final stages of producing a deeply personal autobiography about his journey growing up in out-of-home care.

Caleb was named a semi-finalist across two awards as part of the 2026 Awards Australia Young Achiever Awards in recognition of his contribution to community and family safety. In September 2026, Caleb joined a panel at the 40th anniversary breakfast of Queensland Child Protection Week to share his lived experience of the system, and what made a difference in his life.

Korrinne

20, Hervey Bay

A system that listens, acts and empowers

You showed up with such an engaging energy that kept me, and I'm sure the whole audience, locked in. I loved how clearly you spoke and I look forward to seeing your journey and growth.

- Summit attendee





Lily

21, Gold Coast

Best interests on paper, not in practice

Congratulations on your deep policy analysis and smart advocacy. Thank you for sharing your lived experience and that of your brothers of the unintended consequences of system failures—systems that need reform! Putting your trauma and passion into purpose.

- Hon. Amanda Camm, Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Tee

24

Improving outcomes through safe and healthy relationships



Since speaking in 2026, Tee has been an active advocate in her community. She has been appointed to the Ministerial Steering Committee to help draft the Youth Action Plan. She has also been appointed as the New South Wales Representative for the National Experience to Action Board (Youth), to strengthen youth-led reform on a national level. She was a finalist in the Young Achiever Awards.

Tee has also continued her work with the Youth Ministerial Council, ANROWS Youth Advisory Group, and several national domestic and family violence and child safety advisory bodies, by contributing to consultations, speaking at forums, appearing in interviews, and supporting campaigns. Her work on developing the Black Butterfly project continues.

In Tee's own words, "lived experience is not a deficit—it's a compass that guides systems toward what actually works."

Thank you so much for trusting the people and organisations here today with part of your story and your long-term work! I believe that transforming ourselves and our relationships can happen through practical, clearly-expressed and scalable tools like your 3 Pillars of Prevention. From your intro, this model covers a lot of ground and I'd love to learn it, practice it, help it do what you hope it can. I believe in your work and your model!

- Summit attendee

Alex

17, Brisbane

Feeling like a number



Your message was powerful and your desire for yourself and other young people to be seen and valued (and not treated like a number) should be a given. I'm so very sorry for the failure of the QPS (my organisation) to support you when you needed help. You are an extraordinary young man and will be absolutely brilliant youth worker and leader in your field! Thank you for sharing your journey—you've taught me a lot.

– Summit attendee

Lily

17, Brisbane

Strong systems, positive outcomes

Your determination and strength were amazing. I hope your commitment and passion help you on your path in life—I was moved and inspired by you and your wise, insightful words.

– Summit attendee



Alumni spotlight: Ruby

19, Gold Coast | 2024 and 2025 Youth Summit alumni and 2026 Master of Ceremonies

Ruby is a former Youth Summit speaker, addressing the 2024 and 2025 Summits and returning as one of our emcees for the 2026 event.

Ruby's advocacy for children and young people living with domestic and family violence has seen her work with her non-profit, Kids of Purple go from strength to strength since her first speech in 2024. As well as founding Kids of Purple and launching the organisation's website—designed to provide information, support and resources for young people, created by young people—Ruby's advocacy has taken her into the spotlight and the halls of parliament. She's featured in media coverage, appeared as a podcast guest, and met with parliamentarians to advocate for more support for children affected by domestic and family violence.

She has partnered with Act for Kids in running a campaign highlighting how domestic and family violence affects vulnerable children, and has worked directly with the Victims' Commissioner Kate Connors in convening a consultation group to reform the Queensland Charter of Victim's Rights. Ruby is also part of the National Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Youth Taskforce, and as an experienced public speaker regularly appears at events like the YES (Young Entrepreneur Summit) Logan run by the ASE group.

In recognition of all her work and advocacy Ruby was awarded the Gold Coast Young Australian of the Year in 2026, putting her in the running for the Queensland title to be announced in November 2026.

Ruby and her mother recently shared their journey of using their lived experience with the Courier Mail to create a voice for vulnerable children.





Alumni spotlight: Claudia

17, Gold Coast | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

Since sharing her experience of being a young carer at the 2025 Youth Summit, Claudia's advocacy has continued to grow. She is a member of the QKP's Intergenerational Stewardship Table, and of QKP's Thriving Kids Working Group. Claudia's membership of these programs has led to other opportunities, including appearing on a panel at the Digital Child Health Forum.

The Forum was held in Brisbane in August 2026, hosted by the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child, and gave Claudia the chance to share a young person's perspective on digital health with decision-makers and sector leaders from across government and industry.

She is also a Youth Advisor with the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, a member of the Bravehearts Youth Advisory Council, and has shared her experience and expertise through advisory roles on several projects including the Jesuit Social Services' 'What's OK?' website and on 'Focus48', a 48-hour digital reset program for people and families.

Claudia has represented her local community as the 31st youth member for Mudgeeraba in the Queensland Youth Parliament and was a Gold Coast City Junior Council member. Claudia has been awarded the Vice Chancellor's Elite Scholarship at Bond University.



Alumni spotlight: Ash

19, Toowoomba | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

Following her speech at our 2025 Summit, Ash was selected as one of just 16 young Australians to take part in the United Nations Young Diplomats Tour across Europe, taking part in key international forums and workshops to build hands-on experience in negotiation and leadership and amplify her advocacy at a local level.

This amazing achievement is just the most recent of Ash's human rights advocacy journey. Attending the Queensland United Nations State Conference in 2025, she took part in the Model United Nations debates and had the opportunity to provide direct input into Australia's international youth advocacy as part of a consultation with the Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations. She attended the National United Nations Youth Conference in Adelaide, and has also represented her community as the youth member for Toowoomba South in the Queensland Youth Parliament in 2025.

As one of Toowoomba's Regional Youth Leaders Ash met with the Australian Human Rights Commission to advocate for better recognition and support for children and young people who have experienced domestic violence, calling for better respectful relationships education and inclusive support services for young people to help them speak up and seek help.

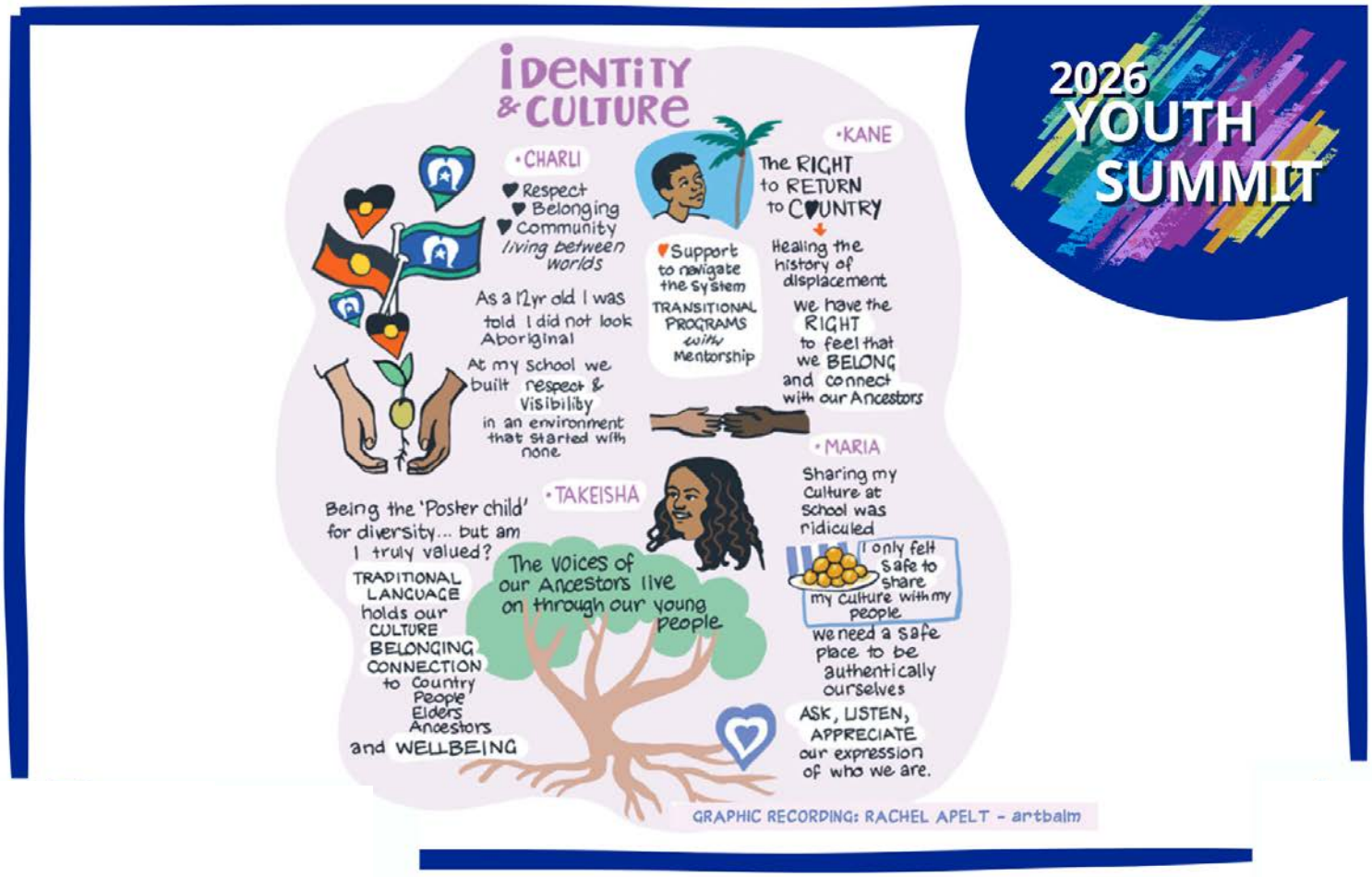
Ash also participated in the Queensland Youth Council Network Workshop, hosted by the Office for Youth, which brought together representatives from youth councils across Queensland to connect, collaborate, and explore the idea of creating a statewide youth council networking forum, attended the Queensland University of Technology's Future You Summit, and shared her youth advocacy journey as a guest on YouthConnect Toowoomba's podcast.



Identity and culture

Helping children develop self-confidence, resilience, and a strong cultural identity, including recognition and support for First Nations children's connection to culture and community




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GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm

Kane

16, Ipswich

The disconnection of Indigenous youth and their cultural identity

Kane was a finalist for the Commission's 2026 Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award for First Nations, as part of the Awards Australia Young Achiever Awards. On the same night, Kane walked away with the Kennelly Constructions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Award in recognition of his cultural mentorship, youth advocacy, and national representation.

As 2026 Culture Captain and leader of the First Nations dance group at St Peter Claver College, National Rugby League Indigenous Youth Ambassador for 2025–2026, Kirrawe Ambassador, and volunteer with Nana Magic as a First Nations children's entertainer, Kane is dedicated to creating culturally safe spaces where young people feel seen, valued, and proud of their heritage. He has represented his community at the National Rugby League All Stars Indigenous Round in New Zealand and spoken at the Māori Rugby League Youth Summit.

Kane advocates for children in care through the Groundswell Younger People Advisory Group, consulting with organisations like QATSICPP to embed Elders in decision-making. His own journey of reconnecting with culture—including travelling to the Torres Strait—deeply informs the way he supports other young mob to find their identity and their path.

> We focus on education and awareness of children's rights and convene Children's Week in Queensland. This year the theme focuses on the right to culture—it would be great to see how we could work together to promote this.
>
> - Sector attendee



Charli

19, Thursday Island

Strengthening identity through education

'I didn't have to change what I am to succeed, I had to believe what I am is enough' – this was great to hear. I am working with universities to see more young people from First Nations communities to go through uni. Please give me a call, I would love to discuss with you.

- Summit attendee



Maria

16, Brisbane

Lifting the mask

Maria remains dedicated to contributing positively to her community and the wider world. This year, her focus has been on completing her Year 12 studies to the best of her ability, yet she has continued to demonstrate and uphold values of service and social justice, including leadership, compassion and inclusivity.

Maria has maintained her ongoing volunteer work with St Vincent de Paul's Buddies Day programs and has actively engaged in advocacy within her school environment. Looking ahead to 2027, she hopes to elevate her advocacy journey and ideally help establish mechanisms within society that foster a more inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for people from all cultures.

I didn't feel like my words were going to get lost, but rather that they were valued and accepted.

The Youth Summit has meant the world to me. It is an absolute once in a lifetime opportunity that many people don't get. It gave me the chance to truly express my thoughts, and hopefully have an impact on Queensland's future.

- Maria

Thank you for your presentation! Keep striving to build cultural community for yourself and others – this is so so important. You did a great job!

- Sector attendee



Alumni spotlight: Rhea Bedi Waia

24, Brisbane | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

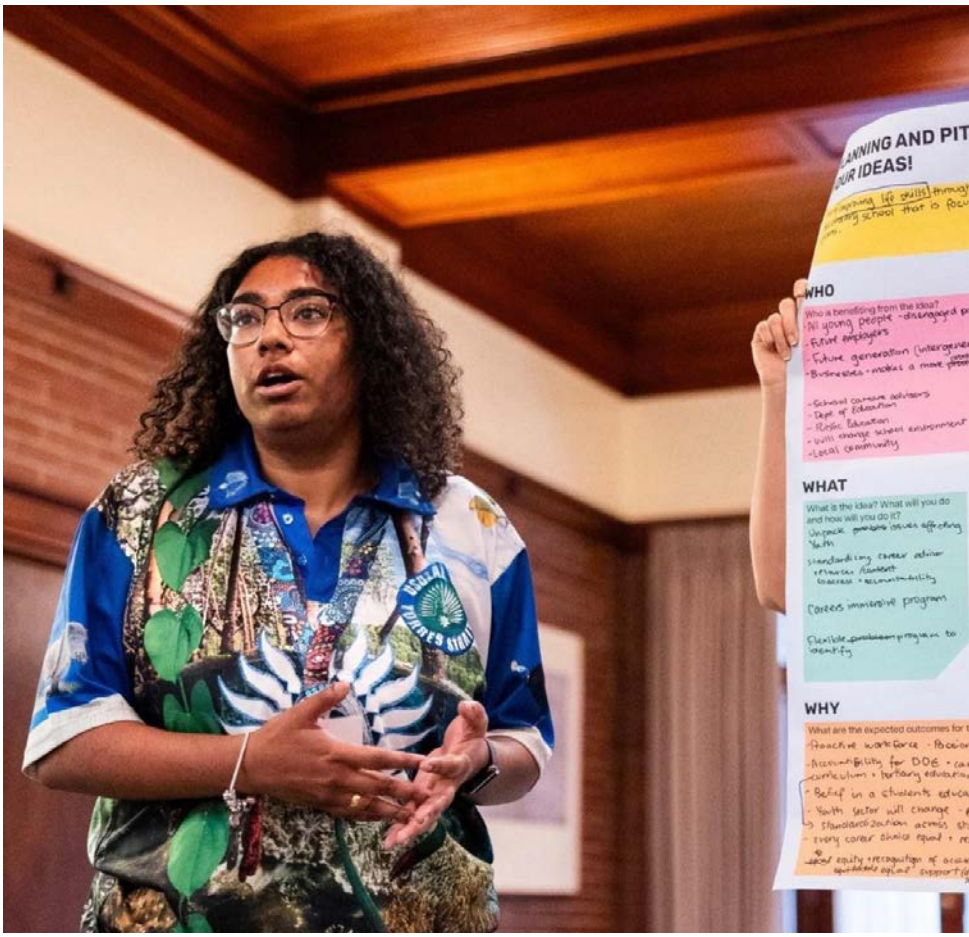
Over the past 18 months, Rhea Bedi Waia has continued to establish herself as a leading young Torres Strait Islander and Punjabi Indian advocate. Within her advocacy for the Torres Strait Islands, she has championed ethical climate justice, First Nations self-determination, youth participation and decision-making, cultural and linguistic preservation, and social justice reform.

Her advocacy particularly stems from a Torres Strait Islander perspective and the rising sea levels for the Islands and their communities, as well as the need for authentic Indigenous youth voices to shape decisions that have a direct influence on their futures.

Rhea was a key contributor to the Commission's 2026 Child Rights Report and was interviewed by ABC Radio on the importance of children knowing their rights, as part of the launch of the report. Rhea was a panellist at the University of Queensland's Justice and Law Society's climate change panel for 2025. Currently, she is a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Panel Advisory Member with the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and a Young People for Country Working Member with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance.

She is also a member of the Univeristy of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health Research Advisory Group and a member of the Queensland Kids Partnership's Intergenerational Stewardship Collective. At present, Rhea works at Headspace National as the Cultural Supervision Program Lead.

> The stories, wisdom, and truths I carry forward through my self-determination are the fundamental pillars of my existence, ancestry, heritage, and understanding of humanity.
>
> There was once a time when these survival skills were shared differently. This is how survival speaks through me now, and this is what you call advocacy.
>
> - Rhea Bedi Waia



Alumni spotlight: Masoumeh (Mas)

23, Brisbane | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

Mas has continued to share her story of empowerment. Since speaking at the 2025 Youth Summit, Mas has graduated her Bachelor of Health Sciences (Public Health) at the University of Queensland and is now a Senior Policy Officer at the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland. Mas has achieved Higher Education Academy Fellowship status of Associate Fellow through her teaching work with the University of Queensland School of Public Health. Through her teaching, Mas enjoys the opportunity to inspire the next generation of public health professionals to ask better questions, think more deeply, and to never stop being curious.

Mas was invited to the Queensland Multicultural Youth Matters Conference in April 2026, as its resident poet. Her poetry has continued to be published through Croakey Health Media, and Medium.

Mas has kindly agreed for us to share an excerpt of her poem, *Now it's my turn, and I pick up the pen:*

> Here is your reminder again:
>
> We are the youth.
>
> We are the future
>
> not someday, not then
>
> But here in this moment.
>
> And now.
>
> It's my turn, and I pick up the pen.



Alumni spotlight: Rhea

20, Toowoomba | 2024 Youth Summit alumni

Since taking to the stage in 2024, Rhea continues to demonstrate a remarkable commitment to community leadership, advocacy and inclusion. Throughout the year, Rhea has shared innovative research and co-design practice on national stages, presenting a project focused on developing a mental health promotion framework for refugee and migrant communities as part of the lived experience co-design team. Rhea's dedication to advocacy is further reflected through participation in the inaugural Discover Governance program, and engagement with Queensland's Ministerial Advisory Panel for Volunteering.

At the same time, Rhea has continued to create meaningful opportunities for young people across Queensland through community leadership, disability advocacy and grassroots action. Rhea is a co-founder of We Are Not Alone, a youth-led organisation connecting young people with disability in regional areas and creating opportunities for their voices to be heard and represented. We Are Not Alone is planning their free Digital Youth Disability Summit for Queensland, designed specifically for young people aged 18–29 living in regional, rural, and remote communities. This was made possible through the receipt of a Backing the Future Grant from Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation.

Rhea has supported the delivery of panels and presentations at a range of events including Queensland Mental Health Week, the Australian Association for Adolescent Health National Youth Health Conference, and helping to deliver International Day of People with Disability celebrations. Rhea's contributions have been recognised through the University of Queensland LeadHers Student award and a Highly Commended award in the Next Gen category of the Landcare Queensland Awards.

These achievements build on years of service through leadership of the Toowoomba Youth Peace Group, environmental and climate advocacy, veterinary sector volunteering, and active involvement in community initiatives that promote peace, diversity, sustainability and social connection. Whether advocating for inclusion, strengthening community participation or creating opportunities for young people to lead, Rhea consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to building stronger, more connected and more equitable communities.



Alumni spotlight: Shraddha

16, Brisbane | 2024 Youth Summit alumni

After taking to the stage in 2024 at just 14 years of age, Shraddha has had several opportunities to further amplify her racism and bullying advocacy work through her role in Queensland Youth Parliament. This program allows for direct and tangible change through legislation and debating topics in Parliament House. Shraddha has had the opportunity to present speeches on the importance of legislating racism and bullying and how society can create safer environments for everyone no matter their race. Additionally, a speech written by Shraddha was read in Federal Parliament by Senator Penny Allman-Payne during Youth Voice Week.

When not working hard on parliamentary speeches, Shraddha holds membership on the QKP Intergenerational Stewardship Table, working with peers and sector leaders towards a strategy to ensure all families in Queensland can thrive including having a sense of identity and culture.

What is one thing that you will do to champion a world where equity is not just ideal, but a reality?

- Shraddha

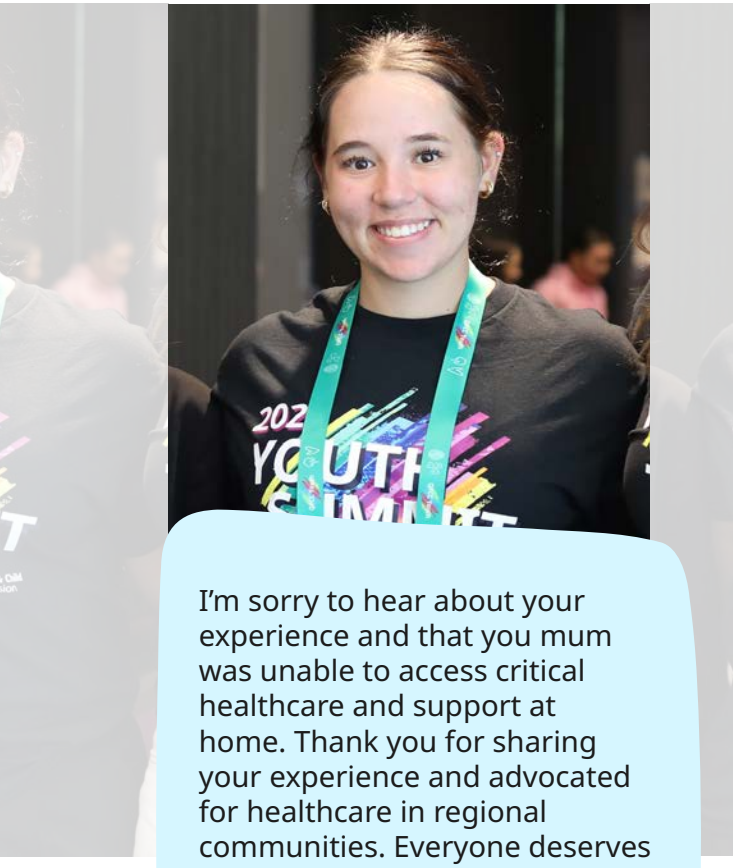


Material basics

Ensuring children and families have access to essentials like housing, food, clothing, and financial security to support wellbeing




Material Basics
2026 YOUTH SUMMIT
•IZABELLA
Living in Regional Qld means our access to health care is inadequate.
Specialist care separates families. I can't just walk in to talk with my Mum. These small things are what I miss most
•ELISE
Dignity, Stability safety
Living in a tent, the hardest thing was no access to hygiene
Hygiene & dignity
feeling respected & valued
Schools should provide hygiene facilities
•MADISON
A medical grant so students don't need to abandon their studies to pay for their health care
Medical poverty
•GRACIE
Two days on the road to get healthcare
•The COSTS
•the strain on marriages
•The emotional strain & guilt
UNIVERSAL CARE is not just for the city!
STOP REVIEWING and START FIXING!
GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm



I'm sorry to hear about your experience and that you mum was unable to access critical healthcare and support at home. Thank you for sharing your experience and advocated for healthcare in regional communities. Everyone deserves access.

- Summit attendee

Izabella

16, Emerald

Healthcare shouldn't depend on your postcode

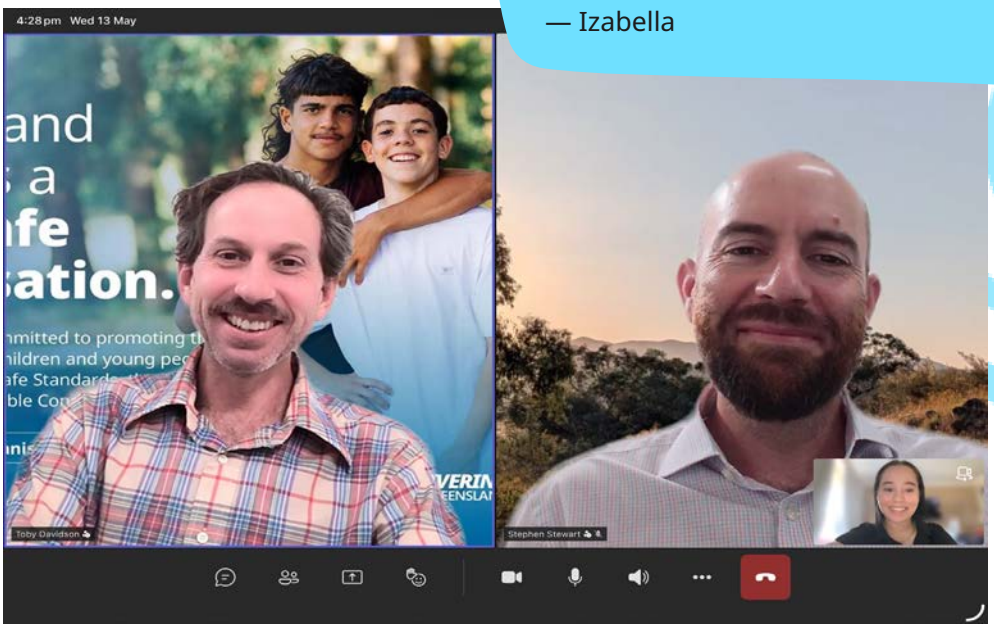
Izabella spoke at 2026 Youth Summit about the struggles with healthcare availability in regional Queensland. Since her speech, Izabella has continued her advocacy and engagement to raise awareness.

During her reflection speech, Peta Bryant, Deputy Director-General, System Policy and Planning Division, Queensland Health, invited Izabella to meet with her team. That was on the Friday. By Monday morning, an email inviting Izabella had been received. Soon after, Izabella met with Stephen Stewart, Director, and Toby Davidson, Principal Policy Officer, Child Protection, Justice Health and Wellbeing Unit, System Policy Branch, Queensland Health and has been invited to join the 2026 Queensland Health Youth Collaboration Group. This group will work with Queensland Health to improve our complaints system for children and young people.

Izabella has also continued her role as Unit Leader with the Emerald Emergency Service Cadets.

The Youth Summit gave me the confidence to realise that my voice matters. It transformed my family's experience into an opportunity to help improve systems for other young people.

— Izabella



Elise

19, Logan

Navigating final exams without material basics

Elise is continuing her advocacy work in her role as the Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation's inaugural Youth Ambassador and program facilitator, bringing authenticity, compassion and a genuine passion for supporting young people to thrive. Elise spoke at the Foundation's Orange Ball 2026, sharing her lived experience and reinforcing the importance of ensuring every young person has someone who believes in them. The Ball raised more than $18,000 for the Foundation's work.

Studying a Bachelor of Psychology at Queensland University of Technology, Elise is committed to promoting youth wellbeing and understands the transformative impact that positive relationships and mentoring can have on a young person's life.

Drawing on her own lived experience, Elise is a strong advocate for ensuring young people feel seen, heard and valued. As Youth Ambassador, she provides an important youth perspective across Inspiring Brighter Futures Foundation's Onwards & Upwards mentoring programs, helping to shape initiatives that are responsive to the needs, aspirations and experiences of young people.

Elise was a panellist at the 2026 Inspiring Journeys community event, joining five fellow local role models to share her lived experience on stage.

> Powerful testimony, I am grateful to have heard you speak today and will use my platform to advocate for stigma-free facilities in high schools across Queensland. What you are asking for is possible, keep pushing! You are the change!
>
> - Summit attendee





Gracie

21, Ayr

Regional families, invisible costs

Following her speech at this year's Youth Summit, Gracie has continued to spread her message of increasing access to healthcare across regional Queensland healthcare. Now living in Brisbane, Gracie has continued to advocate on behalf of small towns across Queensland, conducting an interview with Burdekin Life, as well as an interview with ABC Regional Radio. While starting a Masters of International Relations, she is currently in the midst of preparing to launch a website and public petition for improved healthcare access in regional and remote communities, and has discussed healthcare access with Member for Burdekin, Dale Last MP.

I felt your anger and your passion today. Listening to you was moving, and it shook me to the core. We need angry advocates—don't let anyone tell you to 'tone it down'. Your energy and lived experience needs to be FELT. It creates real change.

– Summit attendee

Madison

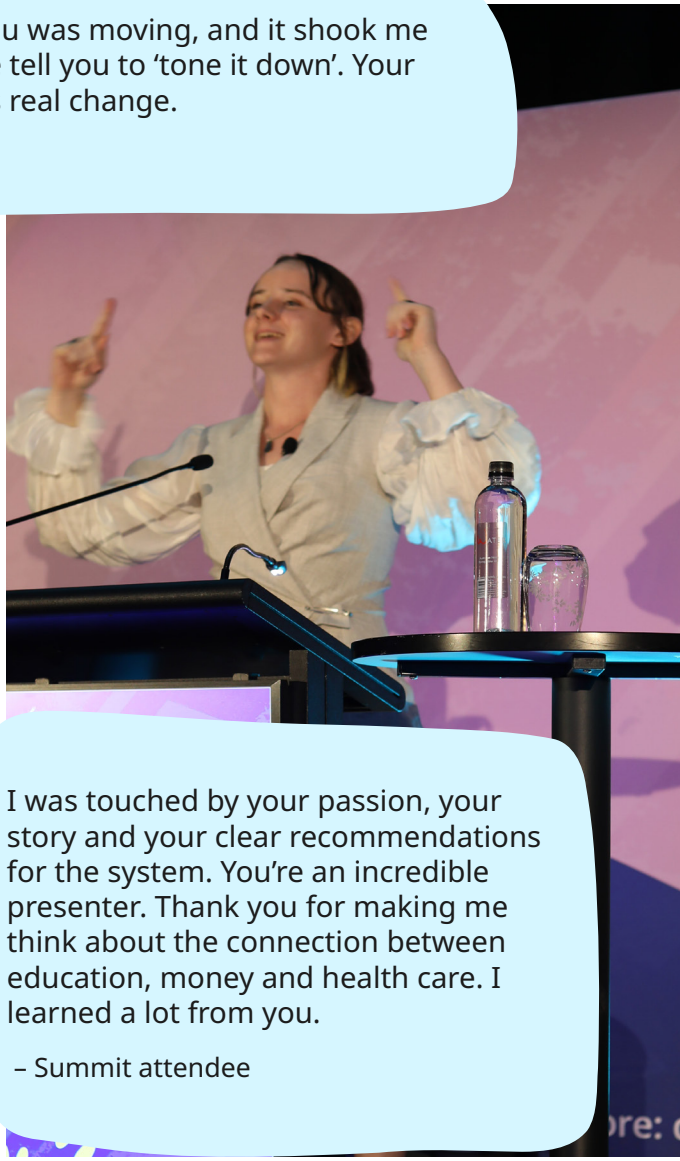
22, Brisbane

Medical poverty

Since speaking at the 2026 Youth Summit about medical poverty, Madison has started a petition to assist those struggling with hospital payments, by seeking to add hospital discharge as a possible eligibility criteria for crisis payment support. She has also spoken at the Canteen Clinical conference about the financial toxicity that comes with those suffering cancer. Madison has continued to be a working group member for the 2026 National Youth Cancer Conference run by Canteen Australia.

Madison has also used her lived experience to co-design an exercise program for the Adapted Physical Activity Program. Run by the University of Queensland, the program is an evidence-based physical activity promotion service for people with chronic and complex health conditions.

Following on from an invite received at the summit, Madison spoke to Brisbane Times about her lived experience of navigating medical poverty, culminating in an article, *For young people like Madison, cancer costs more than their health.*



I was touched by your passion, your story and your clear recommendations for the system. You're an incredible presenter. Thank you for making me think about the connection between education, money and health care. I learned a lot from you.

– Summit attendee

Alumni spotlight: Amelia

20, Logan | 2025 Youth Summit alumni and 2026 keynote speaker

Amelia is a passionate and vocal advocate for better mental health services for childhood trauma survivors, and uses her lived experience as a victim-survivor to make childhood safer. Amelia was a Youth Summit speaker in 2025 and we were thrilled to welcome her back in 2026 to give a keynote address.

Amelia's journey has led her from statewide to national platforms to advocate for survivors of childhood trauma. She has shared her expertise through advisory roles including membership of the Bravehearts Youth Advisory Council, the Australian Child Rights Taskforce, and the Domestic and Family Violence Commission Youth Taskforce. She has continued to speak publicly at conference and events including through chairing a youth panel discussion at the ANROWS national conference and speaking at NAPCAN's National Child Protection Week launch event.

Amelia has met with state and federal parliamentarians, addressed the launch of the Parliamentary Friends Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Parliament House in Canberra, and attended a national roundtable with federal Minister for Social Services, Tanya Plibersek, and Assistant Minister Ged Kearney. Amelia has also met with National Children's Commissioner Deb Tsorbaris, acted as spokesperson for Bravehearts' national awareness campaign 'Grooming hides behind harmless', and contributed her vital expertise to the Child Death Review Board's review into system responses to child sexual abuse. She was also a guest on the Commission's In Plain Sight podcast, produced following the publication of the review's final report.

In 2026, Amelia co-founded the Camellia Youth Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation providing trauma-informed services for young Queenslanders.

Amelia is looking forward to an upcoming meeting with the Governor General in Canberra. Amelia is a member of the Commission's Advisory Council and has commenced work as a research assistant supporting a study focused on the involvement of children in the family court system.



Participating

Encouraging children to actively engage in decisions that affect them, have their voices heard, and are involved in family, community, civic, and cultural life




2026 YOUTH SUMMIT
PARTICIPATING
•DIBA
The social media ban isn't working
It cost $167M → what if that money was spent on SUPPORT instead?
•Consistent & responsive counselling
•More support/training for teachers to implement early interventions
•Supporting students to navigate the system
•LILY
The ANXIOUS generation
7·5 hrs on phones each day
without social media no-one knows we exist
Do what you can to support PLAY and get us back down to earth
•HARMONY
Being priced out of the game
The closer we get to achieving our dreams, the more we doubt them and feel unworthy
Fundraising
We need REAL SUPPORT and a COLLECTIVE RESET so that Young People can ACHIEVE their ASPIRATIONS
•JESSICA
Young people should be actively included at the table… CONTINUALLY it should start EARLY and be IMPACTFUL not passive.
It must be RESOURCED and PRIORITISED!
If we want stronger communities, we must move from consultation to COLLABORATION.
GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm

Harmony

11, Logan

Greater support, access and cost relief in shaping sporting dreams

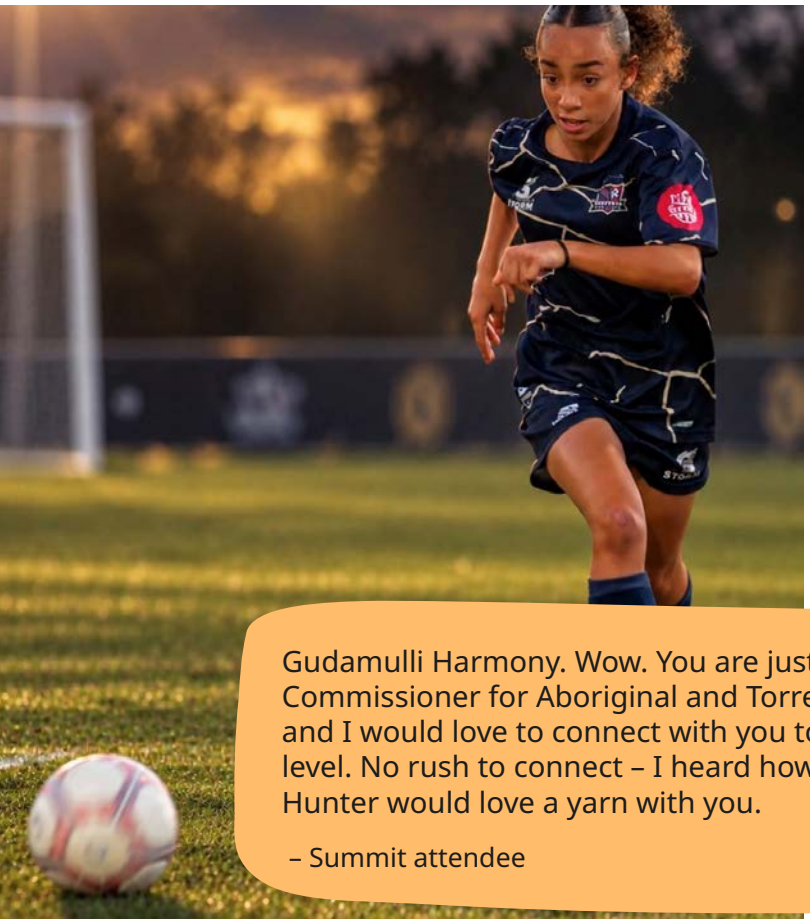
Shortly after taking to the stage as one of our youngest speakers this year, 12-year-old Harmony met with Dominique Lamb, Director of Community Affairs to the President of Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with plans to present directly to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Organising Committee.

In her speech, Harmony called on the Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to work with governing bodies across all sports to be invited to register their events to enable young athletes to access a range of sporting grants to support their dreams. In Harmony's words, 'This will see a newly improved register and partnership between Government and Sport Governing bodies. It will ensure that all events are captured and ready to recognise athletes representing at any one of the events when they go to access grants in future.'



With strong support from her community, friends, local clubs and her mother, Harmony is dedicated to developing her skills and achieving her goals. She trains regularly while balancing her schooling and has been recognised for her commitment and leadership with a Coaches Award. Since the Summit, Harmony has represented Australia on the world stage in Spain, captaining the team to a victorious, history-making runner-up trophy. Harmony has been endorsed as one of ten AllStars for her Indoor performance at Australian School Nationals Futsal Tournament and will once again represent Australia in Barcelona, Spain in 2027!

Harmony was absolutely thrilled to receive a 2026 Young, Black and Proud sporting scholarship which will support Harmony's dream of becoming a professional football player, representing the Matildas, and competing at the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.



Gudamulli Harmony. Wow. You are just remarkable bub! I work for the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People and I would love to connect with you to amplify your voice and message on a national level. No rush to connect – I heard how busy you are! – but I know Commissioner Hunter would love a yarn with you.

– Summit attendee



Diba

13, Logan

The social media ban hasn't changed much for young people

Thank you for your honesty and for sharing your perspective on where the money spent on the social media delay could have been better spent in supporting your teachers and wellbeing staff to support students. I'd love to talk more with you if you are open to it – we work with educators and help them try and do all the things you suggested! Thanks again – you rock.

– Sector attendee

Jessica

16, Cairns

Youth as partners in decision making

You were so articulate, passionate and insightful about the importance of establishing meaningful youth participation in decision making as the norm—yes!

We are partnering with another organisation about exactly this and I would love to connect with you and ensure your voice and expertise is included.

– Summit attendee





Lily

16, Scenic Rim

Life on Mars

I love your work—peer to peer, and next level: young person to system. You have natural talents and you've got this! I hope you are in this sector for a loooong time!

– Summit attendee

Alumni spotlight: Teanna

11, Logan | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

Since speaking at the 2025 Youth Summit, Teanna has continued her advocacy in promoting digital safety, wellbeing and online kindness. She has launched her initiative website, eSmart Kids, and its accompanying YouTube channel. She was also the principal petitioner to the Queensland Government for a petition to add digital literacy and online safety to the Queensland school curriculum. The petition was tabled in parliament and has been referred to the Minister for Education.

She has continued her contributions, working with Australia's National Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, the Act for Kids' Child Protection Week, and the Life Ed Queensland First Youth Advisory Group.

Teanna is working on a series of books to teach children of various ages about the digital world and is a first-round finalist for the Commissioners' Award for Community Engagement as part of the Commission's work with Children's Rights Queensland.





Digital spaces shape our lives, and young people should help shape them too, because youth advocacy makes the online world safer and kinder.

- Teanna

Alumni spotlight: Saanvi

13, Logan | 2025 Youth Summit alumni



After speaking at the 2025 Youth Summit, Saanvi was invited to interview with the Act for Kids campaign, talking about online child safety, and shared her thoughts on how young people can stay safe online.

Through the Brisbane Catholic Education Student Voice Network and Complaints Project Hub, she has helped build a safer, more inclusive way for students to be heard. She is also a member of the Youth Leadership Academy Australia Advisory Board.



Alumni spotlight: Jess

19, Brisbane | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

Since speaking at the 2025 Youth Summit, Jess has continued to work in child abuse prevention, with particular focus on technology-facilitated abuse.

Jess is the Global Youth Networks Project Lead at Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (a youth initiative of the United Nations), leading a team of hundreds of young people across the world. She chairs the NAPCAN Youth Speak Out and is a Youth Advisor to the U.S. Embassy in Australia, Orygen, Our Watch, Daniel Morcombe Foundation and UNSW Childlight.

Jess' advocacy journey has also well and truly gone global. She is an inaugural member of the United Nations Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Youth4Rights Advisory Group, a global youth leadership body representing youth perspectives in international human rights dialogue, and a co-founder of the Oceania Caribbean Climate Alliance.

Jess shares her insights and voice by speaking at conferences and events across Australia, including the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect conference, National Association for Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Central Queensland Healthy Families, and the National Office for Child Safety. She has also contributed to public policy, consulting on the Child Safe Standards and the Commission's In Plain Sight review into system responses to child sexual abuse.

Her advocacy and leadership were recognised at the Young Achievers Awards in 2025, when she was awarded the 7News Contribution to Community or Family Safety Award. In 2026, Jess was named a finalist for the Australian Human Rights Award and a finalist in the Children's Rights Queensland Children's Week Awards.

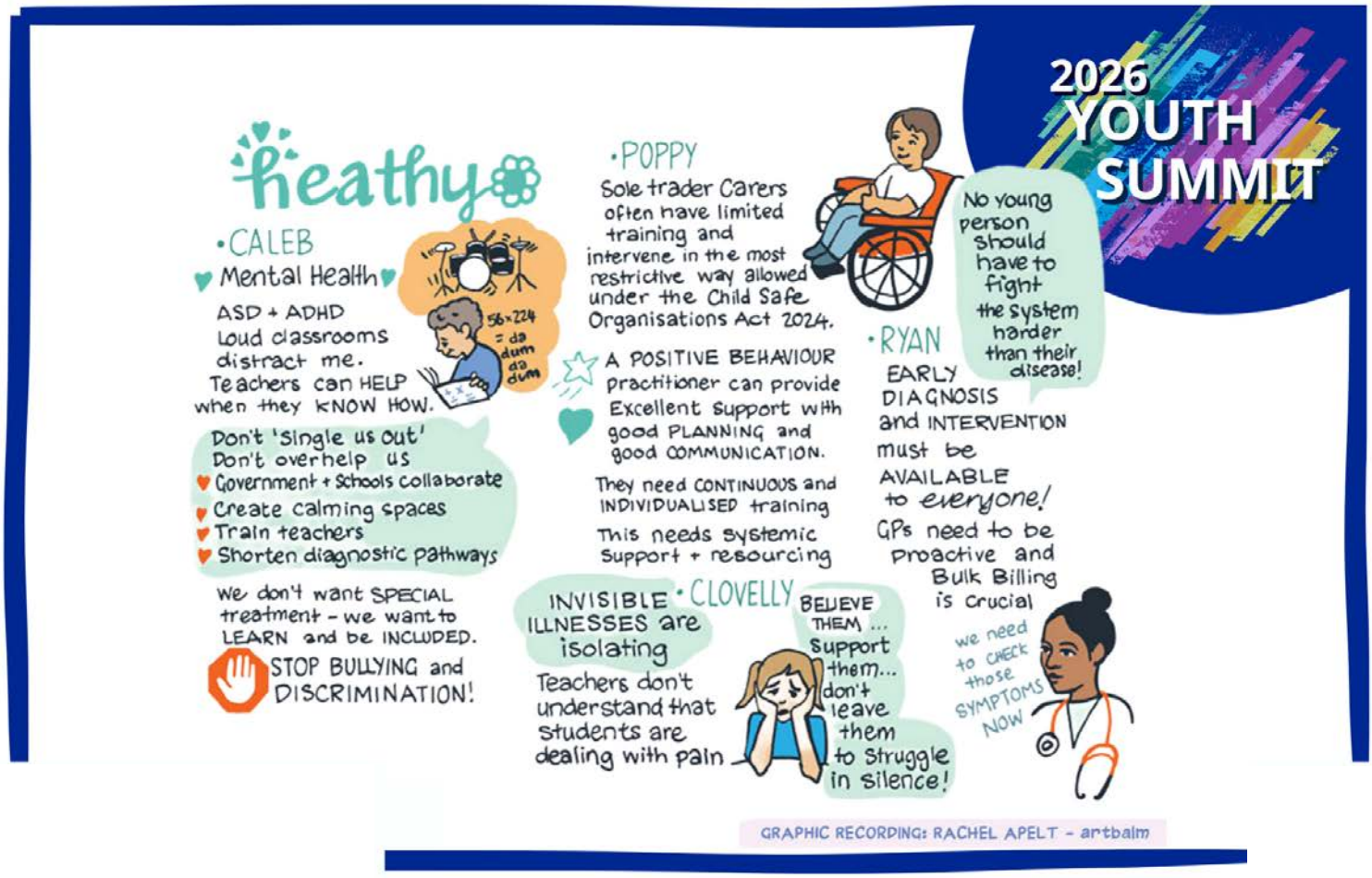
> Young people deserve to be included in conversations about us. I truly believe that collectively, we are taking positive steps towards creating a safety world for the next generation.
>
> - Jess



Healthy

Promoting physical, mental, and emotional health through access to healthcare, nutrition, and opportunities for physical activity




2026 YOUTH SUMMIT
Heathy
• CALEB
Mental Health
ASD + ADHD
Loud classrooms distract me.
Teachers can HELP when they KNOW HOW.
56×224 = da dum da dum
Don't 'Single us out'
Don't overhelp us
Government + Schools collaborate
Create calming spaces
Train teachers
Shorten diagnostic pathways
We don't want SPECIAL treatment - we want to LEARN and be INCLUDED.
STOP BULLYING and DISCRIMINATION!
• POPPY
Sole trader Carers often have limited training and intervene in the most restrictive way allowed under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024.
A POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR practitioner can provide Excellent support with good PLANNING and good COMMUNICATION.
They need CONTINUOUS and INDIVIDUALISED training
This needs systemic support + resourcing
No young person should have to fight the system harder than their disease!
• RYAN
EARLY DIAGNOSIS and INTERVENTION must be AVAILABLE to everyone!
GPs need to be proactive and Bulk Billing is crucial
we need to CHECK those SYMPTOMS NOW
INVISIBLE ILLNESSES are isolating
• CLOVELLY
Teachers don't understand that students are dealing with pain
BELIEVE THEM ... Support them... don't leave them to struggle in silence!
GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm



Poppy

21, Brisbane

Improving the Child Safe Organisations Act for young people with a disability

After her powerful speech at the 2026 Youth Summit, Poppy was invited to participate in a research project, Making Community Visitor Schemes safer for children and young people with disability. The project, commissioned by the Australian Government, aims to make disability Community Visitor Schemes more consistent across Australia. Poppy also has a digital radio show on 4ZZZ, where she interviews young up-and-coming disabled artists about their creative careers.

> It's not okay that it takes youth to call out poor written policy by 'well-educated' adults, but thank you for doing it!! Your work will change the support that children receive, and change their lives.
>
> – Summit attendee

Caleb

11, Logan

Mental health matters

After his unforgettable speech, Caleb has been involved with Life Ed QLD and has been a member of their Youth Advisory since May. He also presented a speech at the 2026 Creche and Kindergarten kindy teachers and director's day.

> You really made me think! I am an educator of both children and adults, and I will now always remember your sentence: 'I'm like Google, I may need a different map to get there' and think about this in my teaching and support work.
>
> – Summit attendee



Ryan

22, Brisbane

Adolescent and young adult cancer

Youth health consumer advocate Ryan has shared some wonderful news with the Commission – he has finished treatment for Hodgkin Lymphoma and is in remission!!!

While he was receiving inpatient treatment, Ryan joined forces with friends and family to fold more than 1500 paper cranes, in a bid for good fortune during his hospital stay. The cranes now hang in display up in the youth space on Ward 2E to brighten the ward for other cancer patients. Ryan's crane initiative received attention from the PA Research Foundation, with Ryan lending his voice to an article to ensure his story inspires others to support and acknowledge the Foundation's critical work in research and patient services.

For anyone wondering, his personal best crane creation time is three minutes and twenty seconds.

> Too often our health is compromised by access costs and medical gaslighting—we need to start demanding more. You are a powerful reminder of this.
>
> – Summit attendee





Clovelly

16, Toowoomba

When you 'don't look sick': Living with invisible illness

From a 32-year-old invisible illness warrior to a 16-year-old one: you are amazing. Never lose who you are—you are so much more than your illness, you are an advocate, a friend, and living proof of resilience.

– Summit attendee

Alumni spotlight: Liam

23, Brisbane | 2025 Youth Summit alumni



Liam has continued extensive advocacy since speaking at the 2025 Youth Summit. Liam spoke at the 2025 TheMHS conference: Envisioning 2050 – Towards a better mental health system, discussing his mental health lived experience and his role working at the Logan Youth Step Up Step Down.

Liam has also helped shape Brisbane's healthcare, by being part of the Metro South Health's Youth Advisory Council. The Council has worked to evaluate the effectiveness and service fulfilment for young people, through policy advocacy and advisement. Liam's contributions and experience has also been recognised and reported by Mind Australia.

Alumni spotlight: Bailey

20, Logan | 2025 Youth Summit alumni

In 2025, Bailey spoke about ending the stigma of men's mental health in rural towns. Since speaking at the Youth Summit, he has also spoken at the Yourtown Your Voice summit in Melbourne. He has also been involved in the charity We Are Not Alone, aiming to amplify the voices of young people with disabilities in regional Australia.

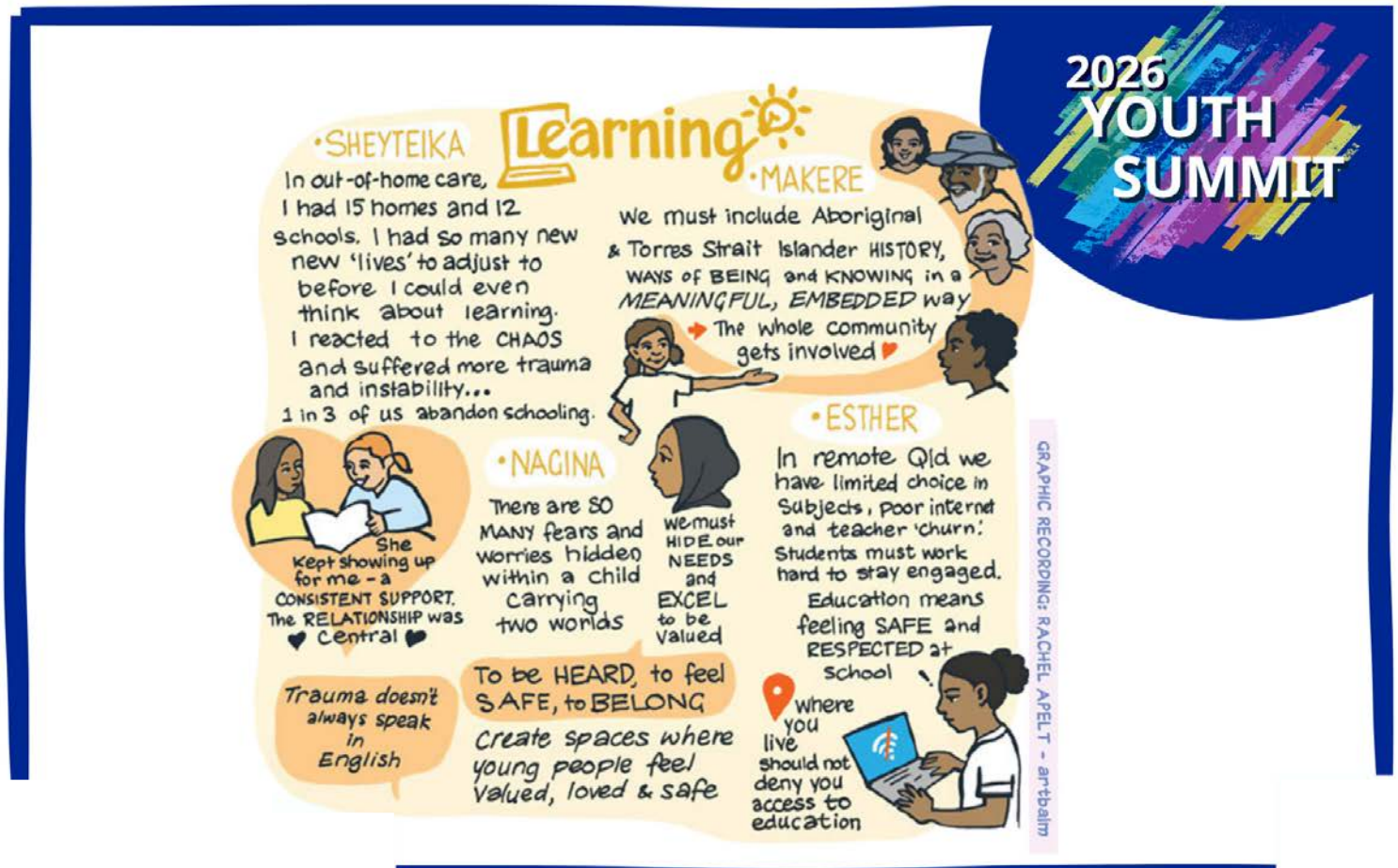
Bailey has secured employment as a student supervisor for a disability bus company.



Learning

Supporting access to quality education, skill development, and lifelong learning to enable children to reach their full potential


2026
YOUTH
SUMMIT


2026 YOUTH SUMMIT
Learning
•SHEYTEIKA
In out-of-home care, I had 15 homes and 12 schools. I had so many new new 'lives' to adjust to before I could even think about learning. I reacted to the CHAOS and suffered more trauma and instability... 1 in 3 of us abandon schooling.
•MAKERE
We must include Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander HISTORY, WAYS of BEING and KNOWING in a MEANINGFUL, EMBEDDED way
The whole community gets involved
She Kept showing up for me - a CONSISTENT SUPPORT. The RELATIONSHIP was Central
•NAGINA
There are SO MANY fears and worries hidden within a child carrying two worlds
We must HIDE our NEEDS and EXCEL to be valued
•ESTHER
In remote Qld we have limited choice in subjects, poor internet and teacher 'churn.' Students must work hard to stay engaged.
Education means feeling SAFE and RESPECTED at school
Where you live should not deny you access to education
Trauma doesn't always speak in English
To be HEARD, to feel SAFE, to BELONG
Create spaces where young people feel Valued, loved & safe
GRAPHIC RECORDING: RACHEL APELT - artbalm

Sheyteika

21, Brisbane

Trauma-informed education

In her role as Support Practitioner with Churches of Christ, Sheyteika has delivered several professional development sessions to staff entitled More Than a Case Note. Throughout the training, Sheyteika draws on her deeply personal experience reading her care leaver records as an adult. Using real excerpts from her case notes, Sheyteika shares with frontline workers what it was like to read those records years later and learn about her childhood.

In her own words: 'Across thousands of pages, only a small number of case notes truly showed me who I was. They captured my personality, my strengths, my humour, my relationships, and the little things that made me uniquely me. Most records documented incidents, assessments, and behaviours. They told me what happened, but rarely who I was... As I read through them, I wasn't looking for casework history. I was looking for myself.'

Sheyteika was invited by the Queensland Child Protection Week Committee to speak at their 40th anniversary breakfast panel. Sheyteika joined fellow summit speaker Caleb to share what made a difference in their time living in care. Sheyteika was Master of Ceremonies at the Mackillop Family Services Lead the Way conference and a panellist for the 'Getting ready to start training' and 'Fostering beginnings' carer development sessions facilitated by Social Care Solutions.



Thank you for sharing your personal story and advocating for consistent mentorship. I felt it when you said 'which version for I need to be'.

I'm so glad Amelie came into your life. Keep shining!

– Summit attendee

Your story made me remember why I became a teacher! I've been a bit defeated lately, too often knocking on doors for kids who are ignoring it. Your speech reminded and reinvigorated in me the exact reason I need to keep showing up. Why I need to keep fighting for every student to have their own Amelie. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

– Summit attendee





Nagina

18, Logan

A migrant youth perspective on belonging

Thank you Nagina for your courage to get up on a stage to share your experience as a migrant student. Hearing your perspective really emphasised the importance of your call to action – young people need a sense of belonging. Please continue your advocacy in this space!

– Summit attendee

Makere

16, Townsville

Educating the younger generation

Your speech today was so well-delivered and powerful! Your message about embedding Aboriginal ways of learning, knowing and connecting into education is so important, and the reasons that matters came across so clearly. Your advocacy and voice on this made a big impact in the room – congratulations on all you are already doing to create change!

– Summit attendee





Esther

15, Umagico

Restricted futures: Inequity in education

Thank you for bringing your powerful story to us. I hope you keep showing up, keep leading by example, and keep advocating for change. Your message is too important to not be heard.

– Sector professional

2027 Youth Summit

Planning is underway for the Commission's 2027 Summit, our fourth in the series. We are excited to once again provide a platform for young Queenslanders to speak directly to sector leaders and decision-makers.

What better way to sign off this report than with the words from our wonderful alumni, Ruby.

Sharing stories of pain, of isolation, of difficulty is hard. Extremely hard, even. Harder still when you are in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people.

But it is never as difficult as living through that hardship. And embracing our vulnerabilities is not easy but it is also never as dangerous as giving up on hope and change.

It was through this very summit, that I realised the infinite power of rooms like these because, after taking that chance, after speaking through the nerves, I had a whole new world of possibilities open for me. Ones that I didn't even know existed at the time but am, so beyond grateful for. And most importantly I realised that this is the work I want to be doing.

So, I have two messages.

1 For the young people who have courageously shared what is important to you and your opinions, thoughts and desires for change, I encourage you to keep advocating, to keep exploring the power of your own light. You might not know the true impact of sharing your stories and your passions today but I can guarantee that it will have touched at least one person – if not everyone – in this room today. And as you continue advocating for change, don't be afraid to push...

2. Stakeholders, no pressure, but it has been your job to listen and now it is your job to respond. And that response starts with recognising that for every young person who has courageously spoken today, there is an experience – a real life experience – that they have lived through that is or was so much harder than all the words on a piece of paper combined...

Thank you again to the youth advocates for your courage and your passion and for the Queensland Family Child Commission for once again providing a platform for all voices to be heard.

— Ruby





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