

Research Strategy 2025

Our research functions

Under section 9 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (FCC Act), the QFCC has a broad range of functions related to research for the purposes of promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and improving the child protection system, including:

- (d)(iii) ...to inform and educate the community about research relevant to the child protection system; and
- (e) to develop and coordinate a multidisciplinary research program to inform policies and practices, in consultation with stakeholders and relevant agencies.

Section 26 further states the Principal Commissioner has the following research-related functions to help reduce the likelihood of child deaths;

- (b)... to conduct research, alone or in cooperation with other entities, relevant to the (child death) register;
- (c) to identify areas for further research by the commission or other entities; and
- (d) to make recommendations, arising from keeping the (child death) register under this section, about laws, policies, practices and services

Genuine researchers (as defined in section 28 of the FCC Act) may also access information in the child death register for research purposes, under the conditions specified in section 28 of the FCC Act.

The QFCC hosts the Child Death Review Board, which is enabled under the Act to:

- analyse data, and apply research, to identify patterns, trends and risk factors relevant to reviews; and
- carry out, or engage persons to carry out, research relevant to reviews.

In 2023-24 the Child Death Review Board made the following recommendation for all Queensland Government research, that we will comply with:

The Queensland Government strengthens its policies and commits to ensuring that research seeking to understand the needs of First Nations families is designed, procured, coordinated and conducted involving First Nations professionals. ~ 2023-24 CDRB Recommendation Four

Our research continuum

The QFCC recognises the importance of high-quality research in shaping positive system outcomes for Queensland Children and Families.

We pursue research across a continuum where we empower and enable research through collaboration with relevant sector partners, researchers and agencies.

This research strategy defines the QFCC's approach to supporting, coordinating and investing in research activities, as defined under the Family and Child Commission Act.

Our research is separated into five key areas:

- externally led research we support
- externally led research we partner on
- externally led research we commission
- internally led research we partner on
- internally led research we undertake.

Undertaking research across this continuum helps us identify when and how we provide our funding, our data, our facilities and our staff.

Figure 1: The continuum of possible elements and considerations of how the QFCC can approach research.



Research Approach

The QFCC will invest in research that informs policies and services for children, parents and families in Queensland.
To maximise impact we take an empowering approach where we support and invest in external research to maximise our reach.



Research investment decision making framework

Collaborative	Does the research opportunity promote collaboration with peaks, institutions, organisations or individuals of strategic importance (either in the research itself or the use of research outputs)?
Public Value	Does the research opportunity promote collaboration within the policy systems for children and young people? Does the research opportunity involve researchers (institutions or individuals) who are trusted to deliver value? Does the opportunity involve skill transfer or professional development for the QFCC and/or other stakeholders? Does the opportunity offer the QFCC an appropriate level of control over research outputs?
Child and Family Centric	Does the research topic concern or could positively impact the interests, rights, and/or wellbeing of children, parents and families? Has the research design been informed by the views of children, parents and families?
Values led	Does the research opportunity align to our objectives under the QFCC Reframing the Relationship Plan, through investment in First Nations-led research and/or Indigenous data sovereignty? Does the opportunity involve investment in the Queensland economy? Does the research promote equity and diversity of perspectives?
Cultural Authority	Does research proposing to understand the needs of First Nations peoples have sufficient involvement in the design, procurement, coordination and conduct of the research?



Research Strategy

SUPPORTING EXTERNALLY LED RESEARCH

External researchers may request access to the data we hold to enable their own research.

Sharing our data with external researchers offers significant benefits that enhance both the Commission's impact and the broader research community. By providing access to our data, we allow researchers to analyse and interpret it through different lenses, bringing fresh insights and innovative approaches to the challenges we face. This collaborative approach can lead to the discovery of new patterns, trends, and solutions that may not be visible within our organisation alone. Researchers from diverse disciplines can explore questions beyond the immediate focus of our Commission, leading to broader societal impacts.

JOINING EXTERNALLY LED RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Entering research partnerships where others take the lead offers numerous advantages, while enabling the Commission to support critical research.

It allows us to leverage the expertise, resources, and networks of the lead partner, which can enhance the quality and scope of the research. By aligning with external research leaders, the Commission gains access to new insights and innovations without bearing the full burden of management, freeing up internal resources for other priorities.

Participating as a non-lead partner allows us to focus on specific areas of contribution, such as data collection or analysis, while leaving overall coordination and strategic decision-making to the lead, creating a more efficient division of labour.

COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

The Commission provides funding to specific research projects that it oversees and manages through funding contracts.

By taking a proactive approach to research funding, the Commission can directly shape the focus of studies to align with our specific objectives, ensuring that the outcomes provide actionable insights that address the challenges we are aiming to solve. Contracts give us the ability to set clear expectations, timelines, and deliverables, ensuring that the research is conducted efficiently and within defined parameters. This level of control enables us to stay on track with our strategic priorities and ensures that the research outcomes are relevant and timely, maximizing the impact of our investment. Ultimately, by funding and managing research through contracts, the Commission can enhance both the rigor and relevance of the studies we support, ensuring they generate meaningful, policy-relevant insights that advance our mission.

QFCC LED PARTNERSHIPS

When we lead a research partnership, we gain significant control over the research agenda and objectives. This allows us to shape the direction of the project to align with our strategic priorities and to ensure the outcomes have the greatest relevance and impact for our stakeholders. Leading a partnership also enables the Commission to allocate resources, set timelines, and engage with key stakeholders in ways that best suit the Commission's needs – while drawing on the resources of others to perform the work. It also allows us to build leadership capacity within our team, as members take on key roles in managing and coordinating the research effort. Our research partners can also improve our skills and knowledge, and we can formally set up expectations for skill transfer when we scope the work. This approach is best used when the research is strategically important but not being prioritised by the market, necessitating our leadership and direct involvement.

INTERNALLY LED RESEARCH

Conducting research in-house provides full control over every aspect of the research process, ensuring that we can pursue lines of inquiry that are most relevant to our immediate needs and long-term goals. This control allows for greater flexibility and agility, as decisions on methodology, timelines, and objectives can be made and adjusted without needing external consensus. This autonomy also allows for quicker responses to emerging issues, ensuring that research efforts remain relevant and actionable. This approach however, is the most resource heavy and is best limited to times when The research is sufficiently niche or contained in scope that it can be delivered by internal resources without impacting core work of the QFCC.

- The research involves sensitive and confidential information that we cannot share with external partners (i.e. child death or abuse case content).
- There is a clear gap in the existing research (or coordination of research) that we are filling.
- There is a time-limited window for the research outcome, and direct control will enable outcomes to be produced and communicated.

Our current work

We are averaging 20 research requests per annum for child death data and we have previously hosted PHD and research students within the Commission and assisted them to conduct their research.

Our current work

We are supporting Silke Myer and a PHD candidate to research 'Unborn Child Notifications' through an NHMRC research project. Cmr Twyford is an advisor on the "Role of DFV in youth Suicide" research project led by Silke Myer and Griffith University. Cmr Lewis is a lead investigator on MRFF research project on 'Substance use disorders in the perinatal period'. Cmr Twyford is on the Young Minds: Our Future National Stakeholder Advisory Group for research into the link between child maltreatment and suicide (Divna Haslam).

Our current work

We are providing \$100k per annum over two years to the Australian Catholic University to research the mental health impacts of out of home care, drawing on the Australian Maltreatment study We are providing \$40k to Queensland Health to build on our Paediatric Sepsis research. We are providing \$50k to the Parenting Research Centre for research on best-practice family support services. We have a further \$50k to commission research in 2024-25.

Our current work

We are providing \$40k and CDP staff time to Queensland Health to build on our Paediatric Sepsis research We have met with Health and Wellbeing Queensland about creating a sustained research partnership similar to theirs.

Our current work

The Safer Pathways Through Childhood Action Plan contains 7 internally led research project. Regular reporting to the Executive by the CDP team suggests they do not have the capacity to deliver this plan.

Our strategy for this form of research is to:

- Proactively engage Universities, research institutes and other Commissions to promote the availability of our child death data.
- Develop a formal student placement program as part of our workforce strategy.
- Use the refresh of our Safer Pathways through Childhood Framework to better engage external researchers in a shared research agenda.

Our strategy for this form of research is to:

- Create a register of external research that we are supporting so that there can be a coordinated and strategic approach that leverages outcomes.
- Target known researchers, institutions to identify research topics that we might better support.
- Use our cross-agency committees to better understand where Departments are also supporting and sponsoring research.

Our strategy for this form of research is to:

- Create a formal process and accountability for the investment in commissioned research, and more effectively link these research outcomes to the advocacy and advice functions in the Commission.
- Target known researchers, institutions to identify research topics that we might invest in.
- Use our cross-agency committees to better understand where Departments are also supporting and sponsoring research.

Our strategy for this form of research is to:

- Scope and design a long-standing research partnership arrangement with academic institutions that maximises output of valuable intelligence.

Our strategy for this form of research is to:

- Adopt a 'internal as last approach' methodology, meaning we will explore and exhaust external research options first.
- Refresh the Safer Pathways Through Childhood Framework with increased focus on the research performed by our partners.