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Reference: TF23/177 – D23/2626

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email: cssc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Community Support and Services Committee about the Path to Treaty Bill 2023.

The QFCC is a statutory body of the Queensland Government. Our purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families. Our Strategic Plan 2022-2026 outlines our explicit commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families and to embed culturally safe and responsive design, practices and delivery in our work. We recognise that self-determination, healing, dignity and respect are all fundamental elements needed to improve outcomes and relationships.

The QFCC is pleased to provide support for the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. We acknowledge the Bill as a significant and historic step for Queensland, one that builds on the hard work of generations of people working towards reconciliation and healing. We welcome its introduction to progress treaty negotiations and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to shape the future of their communities and Queensland as a whole.

The QFCC promotes accountability of the systems working with children, young people and families by overseeing and reporting on system performance. Through this work, the QFCC continues to observe the impacts of past policies and practices on present day drivers of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in statutory systems, combined with their underrepresentation in decision making models that impact their lives.

The Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry proposed by this Bill will be uniquely positioned to investigate both historic practices—and their legacy—as well as contemporary decision making, to understand their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through our

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oversight function, we are also committed to continuing to promote accountability for systems that disproportionately impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and promote initiatives which could help guide solutions.

Further, we recognise that truth-telling is an important foundation to the treaty process and will have significant positive implications for the relationship and understanding between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Queenslanders for generations to come. As such, it is essential that this process is inclusive of all members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including children, young people and families.

Engaging children, young people and families and listening to their views is critical for understanding their contemporary experiences of colonialism and discrimination, and identifying opportunities to improve systems they interact with. This will also help to empower children and young people to take an active role in shaping their future.

We encourage the truth-telling sessions to facilitate conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families in ways that are safe, accessible, and meaningful. Consideration should also be given to means for engaging with the most marginalised groups of First Nations peoples, including those experiencing statutory interventions, to provide opportunities to share their lived experience of current systems and injustices.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are strong, capable and resilient—the descendants of the oldest and continuous living culture in the world. They have made significant contributions to history and society, and it is important that their achievements and contributions are recognised and celebrated through truth-telling processes, as well as the Path to Treaty process. We look forward to a future where all Queenslanders foster a shared pride in First Nations cultures, where exceptional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have made significant contributions to all aspects of our lives sit prominently in our historical frame of reference.

The QFCC welcomes the opportunity to continue to be involved in the Path to Treaty process, particularly to support the development of the Truth-Telling and Healing Inquiry's Terms of Reference and guidelines for engaging with children, young people and families. If the Committee has any queries in relation to this matter they may contact

[REDACTED]



Yours sincerely



Luke Twyford
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission



Natalie Lewis
Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

17 March 2023

