

2026–27

Oversight Forward Workplan



QUEENSLAND
Family & Child
Commission



Introduction

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (Commission) is charged with responsibilities to review and improve the systems that protect, safeguard and support Queensland children and their families. Our vision is that every Queensland child is loved, respected and has their rights upheld. We pursue this vision by influencing systemic change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families.

The intent of the Commission's oversight function is to conduct objective analysis to identify changes to laws, policies, programs and services that can improve outcomes for children, their families, and the community.

Our *Oversight Framework 2023–27* articulates the model, principles and methodologies that apply to how the Commission delivers impactful reviews, audits and evaluations that influence positive change, and this document, the *Oversight Forward Workplan 2026-27* (the Workplan), contains the proposed future oversight work of the Commission as at July 2026.

The Commission develops a Workplan to set its systemic oversight priorities and ensure transparency. The Workplan is deliberately agile. While we list the topics we intend to examine, they are subject to review and revision to ensure the Commission's investment is focused on the areas most likely to have the greatest positive impact on Queensland children and families at the time. The Workplan undergoes regular priority review through a consultative approach and is published on the website annually.

The Commission uses a four-stage approach to its oversight work, applying an escalating approach based on the evidence and facts obtained in the earlier stages. The most intensive reviews, examination reviews, include dedicated resources and delivery against a formal project methodology. In contrast, our monitoring activities are deliberately agile and are undertaken to inform the need for deeper reviews.

Consultations with government and non-government agencies, peak bodies, communities and young people guide the design and conduct of our oversight work. The systems over which we provide oversight are complex and multifaceted and there are many experts across Queensland working to reduce risks to children. The Commission values the expertise of others and proactively seeks to work with stakeholders undertaking related initiatives.

This ensures that oversight decisions are informed, evidence-based, objective, and in the best interests of children and families.

Monitoring

Monitoring is the Commission's foundational oversight function. It provides a continuous, intelligence-led process for identifying emerging issues, assessing system performance and determining whether the systems that protect, safeguard and support children are achieving their intended outcomes.

The Commission analyses a wide range of information sources, including administrative data, child death reviews, complaints, research, regulatory intelligence, stakeholder feedback and environmental scanning, to identify patterns, trends and emerging risks. Where issues are identified, the Commission may engage responsible agencies to better understand the issue, encourage improvement or determine whether further oversight is required.

Monitoring ensures the Commission's oversight remains evidence-based and proportionate. It informs decisions about whether an issue should continue to be monitored, progress to an Insight and Discovery Review, or become the subject of a comprehensive Examination Review.

This approach supports the Commission's statutory functions under section 9 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. Through ongoing monitoring, research and analysis, the Commission provides independent oversight of the child protection system, identifies emerging trends and systemic issues, and informs government, responsible agencies and the community about opportunities to improve outcomes for children and families.

Monitoring is therefore the Commission's ongoing intelligence function. It ensures oversight remains evidence-based, proportionate and focused on the areas where independent scrutiny can have the greatest impact for Queensland children and young people.

Monitoring priorities

Product	Description	System portfolio
Report on the performance of the Child Protection system (Section 40 report)	The Commission's annual statutory report analysing the performance of the child protection system and Queensland's performance against state goals.	Child Protection
Over-representation in the Child Protection system monitoring dashboard	A monitoring dashboard tracking the extent and drivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation across the child protection system, including notifications, investigations, substantiations, care and protection orders, out-of-home care, permanency and reunification outcomes, to identify emerging trends, regional variation and opportunities for systemic improvement.	Child Protection
Over-representation in the Youth Justice system monitoring dashboard	A monitoring dashboard tracking the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the youth justice system, including police interactions, cautions, court outcomes, detention, recidivism and diversion, to monitor trends, assess progress against reform initiatives and identify opportunities to reduce system involvement.	Youth Justice
Child death data monitoring dashboard	A live dashboard monitoring child mortality trends, causes of death and demographic patterns to identify emerging risks and inform child death prevention priorities.	Child Death
Cross-over cohort data monitoring program	Ongoing monitoring of children and young people involved in multiple statutory systems, including child protection, youth justice, disability and mental health, to understand pathways, outcomes and opportunities for earlier intervention.	Child Protection and Youth Justice
Sector insights – emerging research and trends affecting children and families	A regular intelligence publication summarising emerging research, evidence, innovations, and national and international trends across child safety, youth justice, family support, housing, education, health, poverty and other systems affecting the wellbeing of children and families.	Child Protection
Child safety data monitoring program	Continuous monitoring of child protection system performance, demand, service delivery and outcomes to identify emerging issues, monitor reforms and inform the Commission's oversight priorities.	Child Protection
Youth Justice data monitoring program	Continuous monitoring of youth justice demand, performance and outcomes, including diversion, supervision, detention and recidivism, to identify trends and inform system improvement.	Youth Justice
Child Death Data Monitoring program	Continuous analysis of child death data to identify changes in mortality patterns, emerging causes of death, vulnerable cohorts and opportunities for targeted prevention initiatives.	Child Death
Recommendation monitoring report	An annual assessment of the implementation and impact of recommendations made by the Commission and other major inquiries, reviews and royal commissions relevant to child safety and wellbeing.	All
Report on child deaths in Queensland	The Commission's annual statutory report analysing the deaths of Queensland children, identifying trends, contributing factors and evidence-based recommendations to strengthen child death prevention and improve system performance.	Child Death
Annual report on the activities of the Child Death Review Board	Child Death Review Board Annual Report detailing the Board's system reviews and recommendations to drive continuous improvement in the systems, legislation, policies, practices and mechanisms that protect children and help prevent avoidable deaths.	All

Insights and discovery reviews

Insight and Discovery Reviews are the Commission's primary mechanism for understanding emerging or complex systemic issues before determining whether more intensive oversight is required. They rapidly build an evidence base, identify system strengths and weaknesses, and provide objective insights to inform policy, practice and future reform. These reviews examine what is known about an issue and the broader legislative, policy and service delivery environment, and may conclude with practical recommendations without the need for a full Examination Review.

Insight and Discovery Reviews also examine the experiences of those who interact with the system. The Commission may engage children and young people, families, carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government agencies, non-government organisations, researchers, practitioners, regulators and other stakeholders to understand the causes of an issue, its impacts, barriers to improvement and opportunities for reform. Unlike Examination Reviews, they are deliberately agile and proportionate, enabling the Commission to respond quickly to emerging risks, identify evidence gaps and prioritise future oversight activity.

This approach supports the Commission's statutory functions under section 9 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. Insight and Discovery Reviews contribute to the Commission's oversight of the child protection system by examining legislation, policies, programs, practices and services; undertaking research and analysing evidence; engaging children, families and stakeholders; and providing independent advice to support systemic improvement.

By rapidly building an evidence base, these reviews help identify emerging risks, systemic issues, opportunities for improvement and matters that may require more comprehensive examination. This ensures the Commission's oversight remains responsive and directed towards issues where independent scrutiny can have the greatest impact for Queensland children and young people.

Insight and discovery priorities

Product	Description	System portfolio
Understanding police decision-making in child harm report triage	Analyse police decision-making when assessing child harm reports to identify factors influencing triage decisions, referral pathways and opportunities to improve consistency and child safety outcomes.	Child Protection
Revisiting the joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police callouts	Review the effectiveness of the joint agency protocol between Child Safety and Police and identify opportunities to reduce avoidable police attendance while maintaining child and worker safety.	Child Protection
Preventable child deaths in the natural environment	Analyse child deaths occurring in natural environments to identify common risk factors and evidence-based prevention opportunities relating to water, bushland, farms, beaches and other outdoor settings.	Child Death
Growing up in Queensland report	Provide an annual statewide picture of the safety, wellbeing and life outcomes of Queensland children through key indicators, trends and system performance measures.	All
First Nations children's report	Report on the wellbeing, safety and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, highlighting trends, disparities and opportunities for systemic improvement.	All
Stability, permanency and reunification in Queensland	Analyse trends in placement stability, permanency and reunification outcomes to identify factors associated with successful and timely exits from care.	Child Protection
Child deaths and injuries from fire, burns and smoke inhalation	Examine the circumstances surrounding deaths and serious injuries from fire, burns and smoke inhalation to identify housing, product safety and prevention priorities.	Child Death
Transport deaths	Analyse child transport-related deaths across all transport modes to identify emerging trends, contributing factors and priorities for prevention.	Child Death
Accidental poisoning, suffocation and asphyxia	Examine trends, risk factors and prevention opportunities associated with accidental poisoning, suffocation and asphyxia across different age groups and environments.	Child Death
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality	Analyse long-term mortality trends for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to identify disparities, protective factors and priorities for targeted prevention.	Child Death
Emerging risks for Queensland children	Identify and assess emerging hazards affecting Queensland children and young people, providing early evidence to inform prevention, regulation and public awareness.	Cross-system
The deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children known to child safety	Analyse mortality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children known to the child protection system to identify systemic risk factors and opportunities to improve outcomes.	Child Protection / Child Death
Deaths of babies under one year	Examine mortality patterns among infants to better understand why the first year of life remains the period of highest risk and identify priorities for prevention.	Child Death
Children with disability or chronic illness	Analyse mortality patterns for children with disability or chronic illness to identify system implications, service gaps and opportunities to improve safety and care.	Child Death
Children and young people in Queensland watchhouses	Analysis of changes in the number, age and length of stay of young people held in Queensland watchhouses following the Commission's 2024 review.	Youth Justice
Prosecution and sentencing for child sexual abuse and exploitation offences	Analysis of the changing number, length and conversion rate for people charged with child sexual abuse and exploitation offences in Queensland, including comparison to other jurisdictions.	Justice

Research

The Commission recognises the importance of high-quality research in shaping positive system outcomes for Queensland children and families. The Commission undertakes research across a continuum ranging from enabling external research to leading internally driven research. The Commission's research program clarifies how the Commission fulfils its statutory research functions, guides strategic investment and prioritisation, strengthens governance of structured research, and shapes engagement with external partners. This agenda outlines how we support, coordinate and invest in research activities, as set out in the Act.

Our research activities fall into five key areas:

1. externally led research we support
2. externally led research we partner on
3. externally led research we commission
4. internally led research we partner on
5. internally led research we undertake.

The Act sets out the research functions of the Commission. These functions help promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and help support improvements to the child protection system. Under section 9 of the Act, the Commission must:

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

Section 26 sets out the Principal Commissioner's functions to help reduce the likelihood of child deaths:

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

Research priorities

Product	Description	System portfolio
Child sexual abuse prevention research program	A strategic research program to strengthen the evidence base for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and inform the priorities, policies and safeguarding functions of the Queensland Protection Commission.	Safeguarding
Youth suicide research	A collaborative research project led by the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (Griffith University) to analyse linked child death and service system data to better understand pathways to youth suicide, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, to identify opportunities for earlier intervention and prevention.	Child Protection
Paediatric sepsis research	A collaborative research project led by Queensland University of Technology and health partners to develop a paediatric post-sepsis model of care, with the Commission contributing child death review insights and bereavement expertise to support knowledge translation.	Child Death
Drivers and protective factors in youth suicide	An exploratory data partnership examining trends and risk factors for youth suicide in Queensland, including regional analyses aligned to Primary Health Network areas, to strengthen understanding of service system interactions and inform targeted prevention efforts.	Child Death
Mental health impacts of being in out-of-home care	A partnership with the Australian Catholic University examining associations between contact with the child protection system and psychiatric hospital admissions by age 30, to inform approaches to supporting recovery from childhood maltreatment.	Child Protection
Annual family and community survey	Survey to understand Queensland families' and communities' perceptions of the child protection, child safeguarding and family support needs.	All



Examination reviews

An Examination Review is the Commission's most comprehensive form of systemic oversight. It is undertaken where an issue is complex, high-risk or of significant public importance, and where improving outcomes for children requires a detailed understanding of how legislation, policy, governance, funding and service delivery interact across the child safeguarding system.

Examination Reviews are informed by extensive research, data analysis and evidence from government and non-government sources, research literature, complaints, child death reviews, regulatory intelligence and stakeholder engagement. This evidence is considered alongside the experiences of children, young people, families, practitioners and organisations to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Each review culminates in a public report containing systemic findings and practical, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen legislation, policy, governance, regulation, capability and service delivery.

This approach supports the Commission's statutory functions under section 9 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*. Examination Reviews provide comprehensive and independent oversight of complex, high-risk or significant systemic issues affecting children and young people. They bring together research, data, stakeholder expertise and lived experience to assess how legislation, policy, governance, funding, workforce capability and service delivery interact across the child protection and broader child safeguarding systems.

Each review produces evidence-based findings and practical recommendations to strengthen system effectiveness, accountability and performance. Consistent with the objects of the Act, Examination Reviews are intended to drive lasting systemic improvement and better outcomes for Queensland children and young people.

Examination priorities

Product	Description	System portfolio
Investment and impact of Queensland's family and parenting support system	Examine investment across Queensland and Commonwealth-funded parenting and family support services, assess the relationship between expenditure and family outcomes, and identify opportunities to strengthen prevention and early intervention.	Families
Outcomes from the involvement of ATSICCOs in child protection work	Evaluate the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations to child protection decision-making, service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	Child Protection
Service response to children in care – National Disability Insurance Scheme	Examine how children in care access, transition into and receive National Disability Insurance Scheme supports, and identify barriers to timely and effective service delivery.	Child Protection / Disability
System response to chronic parental neglect	Examine how agencies identify, assess and respond to chronic parental neglect and determine opportunities to strengthen prevention, intervention and long-term outcomes for children.	Child Protection
Infants in high-risk environments	Examine the effectiveness of early identification, assessment and coordinated responses for infants exposed to cumulative risk factors during pregnancy and early childhood.	Child Protection / Health
Recognising family and domestic violence	Assess how family and domestic violence affecting children is recognised across service systems and identify opportunities to improve early identification, information sharing and coordinated responses.	Child Protection
The impact of workforce issues on timely service delivery in child protection	Examine how workforce capability, capacity and stability affect access to, quality and timeliness of services for vulnerable children and families.	Child Protection
Identification and responses to child sexual abuse of children in care	Examine how concerns of child sexual abuse involving children in care are identified, reported, investigated and responded to, and identify opportunities to strengthen safeguarding and therapeutic responses.	Child Protection
Responding to the mental health needs of children in care	Examine whether children in care receive timely, appropriate and coordinated mental health assessment, treatment and ongoing therapeutic support.	Child Protection / Health
Emotional abuse	Examine how emotional abuse is recognised, assessed and responded to within the child protection system, and identify opportunities to strengthen practice, prevention and recovery.	Child Protection
Supporting young parents with a care experience	Examine the experiences and outcomes of young parents who have previously been in care and identify opportunities to strengthen parenting support and reduce intergenerational system involvement.	Child Protection / Families
Life after care	Examine the long-term outcomes of young people who have transitioned from care through linked administrative data to identify factors associated with successful adulthood and opportunities to improve leaving care supports.	Child Protection
Initial impact of the 12-month post-release support for children leaving detention	Evaluate the implementation and early outcomes of the 12-month post-release support program and identify opportunities to improve reintegration and reduce reoffending.	Youth Justice
Twenty years of child mortality in Queensland	Analyse two decades of child mortality trends to identify changing patterns, successful interventions, emerging risks and priorities for future child death prevention efforts.	Child death prevention
Developing and supporting First Nations child protection workforce, and culturally safe practice	Examine the effectiveness of strategies to recruit, retain and support a culturally capable First Nations child protection workforce and identify system changes required to embed culturally safe practice.	Child Protection
School Disciplinary Absences	Part 3 of this oversight program will engage directly with children and identify schools demonstrating positive practice and outcomes compared with Queensland benchmarks.	Education



First Nations Oversight Workplan

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities continue to experience significant inequities in safety, wellbeing and life outcomes, including disproportionate involvement in the child protection and youth justice systems. These disparities reflect complex historical, social and structural factors that require sustained, culturally informed and evidence-based oversight. Recognising this, the Commission maintains a dedicated First Nations Oversight Workplan to ensure that issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children receive focused attention and that oversight is informed by the voices, priorities and expertise of First Nations peoples.

A dedicated Workplan provides a structured approach to monitoring progress, identifying systemic barriers and highlighting opportunities to improve outcomes through evidence-based reform. The Commission develops and delivers this work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, community-controlled organisations, government agencies and people with lived experience. This ensures oversight is culturally informed, grounded in community knowledge and focused on practical improvements that strengthen the safety, wellbeing and cultural connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Maintaining a dedicated First Nations Oversight Workplan supports the Commission's statutory functions under section 9 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* by providing focused oversight of systemic issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. It also reflects the Commission's commitment to advancing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, supporting Closing the Gap priorities, and promoting culturally safe, community-led approaches that improve children's safety, wellbeing, cultural identity and connection.

First Nations Oversight Workplan

Product	Description	System portfolio
Over-representation in the Child Protection system monitoring dashboard	A monitoring dashboard tracking the extent and drivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation across the child protection system, including notifications, investigations, substantiations, care and protection orders, out-of-home care, permanency and reunification outcomes, to identify emerging trends, regional variation and opportunities for systemic improvement.	Child Protection
Over-representation in the Youth Justice system monitoring dashboard	A monitoring dashboard tracking the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the youth justice system, including police interactions, cautions, court outcomes, detention, recidivism and diversion, to monitor trends, assess progress against reform initiatives and identify opportunities to reduce system involvement.	Youth Justice
First Nations children's report	Report annually on the wellbeing, safety and outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, highlighting trends, disparities and opportunities for systemic improvement.	All
Stability, permanency and reunification in Queensland	Analyse trends in placement stability, permanency and reunification outcomes to identify factors associated with successful and timely exits from care.	Child Protection
The deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children known to child safety	Analyse long-term mortality trends for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to identify disparities, protective factors and priorities for targeted prevention. Analyse mortality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children known to the child protection system to identify systemic risk factors and opportunities to improve outcomes.	Child Protection / Child Death
Youth suicide research	A collaborative research project led by Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (Griffith University) to analyse linked child death and service system data to better understand pathways to youth suicide, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and identifying opportunities for earlier intervention and prevention.	Child Death
Developing and supporting a First Nations child protection workforce, and culturally safe practice	Examine the effectiveness of strategies to recruit, retain and support a culturally capable First Nations child protection workforce and identify system changes required to embed culturally safe practice.	Child Protection
Outcomes from the involvement of ATSiCCOs in child protection work	Evaluate the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations to child protection decision-making, service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.	Child Protection
Initial impact of the 12-month post-release support for children leaving detention	Evaluate the implementation and early outcomes of the 12-month post-release support program and identify opportunities to improve reintegration and reduce reoffending.	Youth Justice
School Disciplinary Absences	Part 3 of this program of oversight focuses on interviewing children and highlighting schools who are outstanding in their comparison to Queensland norms.	Education