

Supporting Families Changing Futures

Advancing Queensland's child protection
and family support reforms

Summary



Protecting children is everyone's business. Supporting families to do the best for their children is not just a responsibility of government — everyone has a role to play.

This document provides a snapshot of the progress made so far in implementing the recommendations in the 2013 Queensland Commission of Inquiry report *Taking responsibility: A roadmap for Queensland child protection*, and sets out the key actions for the 10-year reform agenda over the next two years.



The Queensland Government is progressing wide-ranging reforms to the child protection and family support system in response to the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report *Taking responsibility: A roadmap for Queensland child protection*.

We have established a solid foundation for the child and family reform agenda in collaboration and consultation with non-government agencies, community groups, professionals and communities from across Queensland.

Of the 121 recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry for reforming the system over 10 years, 120 have commenced and we continue to make good progress.

Already we have introduced important new initiatives to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families and will be undertaking further enhancements and new initiatives as we progress.

Of vital focus will be reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. We need a fundamental shift in how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are

cared for by their families and communities, they are eight times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children.

We need to change the way we are working and share responsibility for child protection with community leaders and Elders. We need to listen to communities, invest in capable, community controlled organisations, and look beyond individual projects to a whole-of-government, whole-of-community approach to reducing over-representation.

We also need to continue our focus on prevention as well as early intervention, tackle domestic and family violence and further integrate and leverage off initiatives in education, training, health, housing, policing, justice and information technology. This includes the government's commitment to job creation, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the broader Queensland community services Jobs, Skills and Industry Strategy which is under development.

Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms will help us deliver the best possible outcomes for Queensland children, young people, families and communities.

Some of our key achievements so far



Committed \$416 million in funding to implement the reforms

Established Queensland Family and Child Commission and appointed Principal Commissioner and Commissioner



Launched Talking Families campaign to encourage parents and families to talk about pressures of parenting and seek help (www.talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au)

Opened the doors of 13 new Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services across the state to provide a pathway for families under stress to access the support they need as early as possible



Prioritised engagement with fathers in child protection processes through increased staff development



Established nine Regional Child and Family Committees across the state to drive the reform agenda from the ground up and ensure enduring community partnerships



Completed pilots to determine how to better support families of children with disability

Established the Office of the Public Guardian (Child Guardian) including **four advocacy hubs** for children and young people and an innovative statewide virtual hub accessible by phone, social media, email and SMS



Commenced a review of the Child Protection Act 1999, including the release of a discussion paper for consultation

Developed and released new Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice and trained more than 3750 government and non-government staff in its use



Launched Next Step After Care and the Sortli mobile app to help young people transition to independence

Completed a review of more than 4000 cases as part of an out-of-home care audit to ensure current child protection orders are appropriate



Recruited 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Practice Leaders to drive culturally responsive practice through all levels of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Commenced work with discrete Indigenous communities

to co-develop solutions that deliver the right services at the right time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families



Appointed eight additional specialist Court Magistrates to have matters more expeditiously and efficiently dealt with and to help ensure better outcomes for children and families



Improved Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal practices to make them more child friendly and to reduce unnecessary delays



Provided domestic and family violence training for frontline child protection, family support and domestic and family violence specialist service workers



Developed the Strengthening the Sector Strategy with industry and community partners for working together for a responsive and sustainable service system

Established arrangements for governing implementation of the reforms in line with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations



Some of our key priorities in the next two years

- Develop and implement a strategy and action plan to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the child protection system, reduce child sexual abuse and close the gap in life outcomes for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families
- Roll out stage two of the Queensland Family and Child Commission community education campaign, focusing on promoting the take-up of early intervention support services for families and communities and help-seeking behaviours
- Embed oneplace, a new community services directory with easy access to information and resources
- Continue to build on innovative, whole-of-community efforts to give children and families the best opportunities in life, such as Logan Together and LiveWell CQ
- Provide statewide coverage of Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services to help families care for and protect their children
- Continue to provide free access to the Triple P — Positive Parenting Program for all Queensland parents and carers
- Enhance our approaches for responding to child sexual abuse and youth sexual violence and abuse
- Deliver more integrated service responses for adolescents who are high risk, disengaged and/or have experienced trauma
- Review the *Child Protection Act 1999* and *Adoption Act 2009* to make sure we have strong, contemporary legislative frameworks
- Continue to strengthen the practice skills of child protection workers to better engage with vulnerable children, young people and families, including fathers through initiatives such as Engaging Fathers and using strengths-based, safety-oriented practice tools
- Review our processes and services to improve the system and provide the best response to children and families when they first come into contact with Child Safety
- Review our investment and the types of placements to ensure our out-of-home care services best meet the needs of children and young people
- Continue to build on work to provide young people leaving care with priority access to government services
- Trial innovative funding models and commit \$150 million over five years for new community-run family wellbeing services to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities



Further information

To access the full version of *Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms* and find out more about our progress to date and key actions for the next two years, visit

www.qld.gov.au/supportingfamilies