

Supporting Families Changing Futures

2018 update





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Minister's message



The Palaszczuk Government has made remarkable progress during the last several years as we implement the family support and child protection system reforms — but we haven't achieved this on our own, and there is more to do.

Since January 2015, 44 Intensive Family Support Services, 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services and 17 Family and Child Connect Services have been progressively established across Queensland so that families can get help earlier. Our communities are hearing and acting upon our 'play your part' message with nearly a third of reports of suspected abuse and harm coming from families, relatives and neighbours. And we now have more than 5,200 families across Queensland, committed to protecting Queensland's vulnerable children by being a foster or kinship carer.

But along the way we have not hesitated to take a closer look at our system and learn where we can do better. This has not been without its challenges, with recent reviews identifying significant pressures in the child protection system and a continued need for strengthening components of the system to increase the safety of children and young people.

The Palaszczuk Government has responded to these challenges with a record budget allocation of \$1.26 billion backed by more frontline positions to ensure the child protection and family support system can respond quickly and effectively to the needs of children and families experiencing vulnerability.

Our reforms are starting to show positive results with further increases in families accessing early intervention services, more investigations being commenced on time and nearly half of children who need to be removed from home to ensure their safety being placed with kin.

We need to continue to build on these positive results to meet the growing and complex needs of Queensland families and children. We know that there are more parents who really struggle with how to keep their kids healthy and safe than most people realise.

We know there are a number of areas where we need to continue to ask ourselves the hard questions, such as how do we respond to the increasing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entering

the child protection system. The *Our Way* strategy demonstrates our collective willingness to accept and act on advice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we recognise that the answers to these complex questions will come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities.

As we approach the halfway point in implementing Supporting Families Changing Futures — our 10 year reform program to strengthen the family support and child protection system we will continue to make sure Queensland children and young people are cared for, protected, safe and able to reach their full potential.

For the next five years of the reform program we need to continue to adapt and adjust as issues and learnings emerge — and we need to continue implementing further reform in a deliberate and considered way that maintains stability of the system and ensures children remain safe and cared for.

We must make sure that the next five years delivers the best possible outcomes for all Queensland children and families. We need to make sure that more families access early intervention and prevention support and that our frontline staff and carers are well supported in the vital work that they do.

We must continue to make sure the views and needs of children, young people and their families remain at the centre of the child and family system. With the ongoing support of our non-government partners and our foster and kinship carers, we will continue to achieve great outcomes as we work together on our reform journey.

I am grateful that I can be part of the work that brings hope and opportunity to Queensland's children and families experiencing vulnerability so they can be safe and thrive in their communities.



Di Farmer MP

Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence



Strengthening the family support and child protection reforms

We have now completed the fourth year of implementing the 10 year Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program — approaching the halfway point. Almost 80 of the 121 recommendations made by the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry have been completed with the remaining recommendations well underway.



These years have seen substantial changes to the family support and child protection system. We now have a system that provides for the full continuum of care — from early intervention to tertiary support.

While it is still early days, we are starting to build a comprehensive picture of the effects of the reform program — what is working and what needs further work.

We know that more families are being supported earlier — there has been over 60,000 enquiries to Family and Child Connect since it commenced and there have been more referrals to Child Safety by family members, friends and neighbours which shows that our ‘play our part’ public education campaign is working. We also have early indications that the family support system is working as intended — by reducing the number of families escalating into the tertiary child protection system. We have seen decreases in the number of intakes to Child Safety and the number of children substantiated in need of protection.

The additional investment in Child Safety staff is starting to see results. The number of investigations commenced is up, as is the number being commenced on time. Caseloads for Child Safety Officers are starting to come down — from 20.9 prior to the reforms to 17.4. Nearly half (49%) of children in family-based care were placed with their kin, and in the last year every young person had a transition to independence plan by the time they turned 18.

This document sets the scene for our stakeholders by providing a performance snapshot, an overview of all we have achieved so far, key initiatives to be undertaken in 2018-19, and our priorities for the following five years.

Our Way and Changing Tracks Update 2018



Developed in partnership with Family Matters Queensland, *Our Way* outlines our framework for transformational change over the next 20 years to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system. It represents a long-term commitment by the Queensland Government to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to work together.

The *Our Way* Strategy provides a generational roadmap for how we will work to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability.

The *Our Way* Strategy acknowledges the strength, determination and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are cared for in their families and communities. It recognises that the Queensland Government needs to be working differently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to improve the life outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by changing the way we do business – our laws, investments, policies and practice.

Changing Tracks recognises the range of positive activities already underway across government and the community through *Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's child protection and family support reforms*.

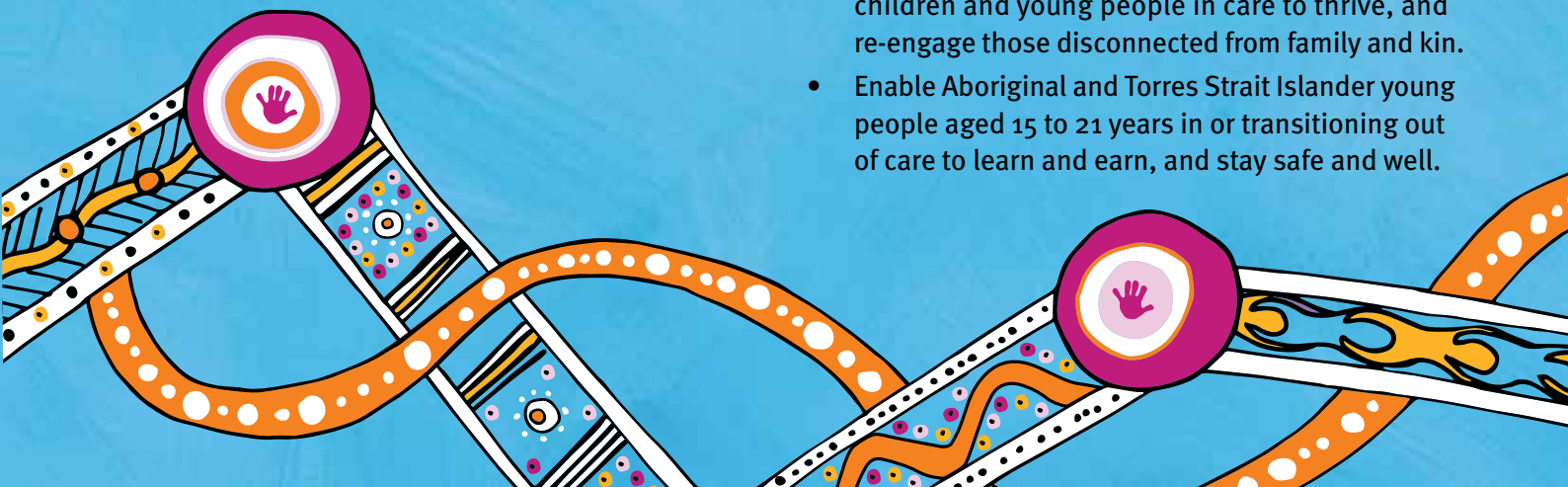
To support the implementation of *Our Way* and *Changing Tracks*, the Palaszczuk Government has invested

 **162.8 million**

Of the 35 actions within *Changing Tracks*, **10** have been **completed** with the remaining **25 underway** and on track to be delivered by December 2019 when our first action plan is completed.

The action plan addresses key areas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families experiencing vulnerability and seeks to:

- Meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young women under 25 years and their partners before and during pregnancy and parenting.
- Increase access to, and involvement in, early years, health and disability programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged two to five.
- Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who have complex needs and children at risk with the right services at the right time.
- Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care to thrive, and re-engage those disconnected from family and kin.
- Enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 15 to 21 years in or transitioning out of care to learn and earn, and stay safe and well.



Our progress so far

(as at 30 June 2018)



Far North Queensland District

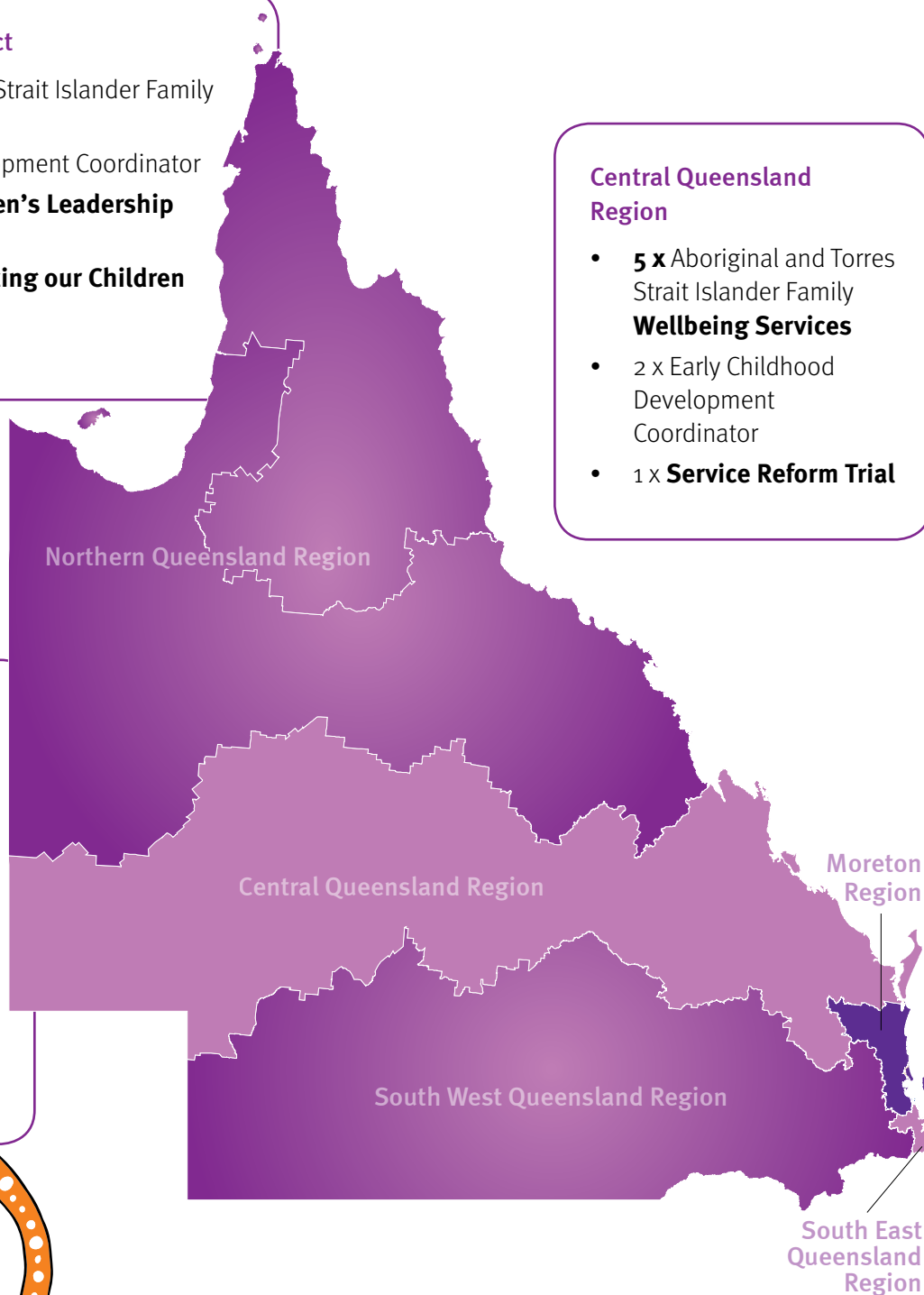
- **9 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 1 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- **\$100,000** grant for **Women's Leadership** Program
- **\$10,954** grant for **Protecting our Children** Media project
- 185 x Pepi-Pods

Central Queensland Region

- **5 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 2 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- 1 x **Service Reform Trial**

North Queensland District

- **4 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 2 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- **\$13,300** grant for **Early Years Culture Time**
- 70 x Pepi-Pods
- **First 1000 Days Australia** initiative in Townsville



Moreton Region

- **6 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 1 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- **\$100,000** grant for **The Gundala Jarjums** and **Family Hub** project
- **\$15,000** grant for **Kalang Jarjums** project
- **First 1000 Days Australia** initiative in Moreton Bay
- 140 x Pepi-Pods

South East Region

- **4 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 1 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- 65 x Pepi-Pods

South West Region

- **5 x** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family **Wellbeing Services**
- 1 x Early Childhood Development Coordinator
- **\$15,000** grant for **Empowering Families** project
- 1 x **Service Reform Trial**
- 470 x Pepi-Pods

- Established the Empowering Families Innovation Grants program to support new initiatives aimed at reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. Under Round One of this program, close to \$255,000 in funding has been allocated to six Queensland organisations to provide place based, community responses to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.
- Partnered with the CREATE Foundation to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people transitioning from out-of-home care by distributing 467 Grow Your Own Way kits. These kits provide practical resources and information to assist young people to plan their future and work towards achieving their aspirations.
- Continued funding of \$1.5 million over three years from 2016-17 to deliver the *First 1000 Days Australia* initiative, delivered in partnership with the University of Melbourne.
- Invested \$32.7 million in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector for 33 Family Wellbeing Services to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who are at risk or have come into contact with the child protection system.
- Provided for eight Early Childhood Development Coordinators servicing a number of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services for a two year period (from 2017-18) to increase early childhood educational access for children in contact with the child protection system.



Key achievements in progress

- Holding the second round of the Empowering Families Innovation Grants program to support place based, community led responses to keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people connected to their families, community, culture and country.
- Working to establish the Queensland First Children and Families Board with representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community across Queensland.
- Working with key partners and government agencies to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy.
- Working with the Department of Education to increase access to quality health and disability programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 2–5 years through the Remote Early Years Transitions project.
- Developing partnerships with the child and family support sector to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability strategy.



Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children

Fast facts



Record investment of
\$1.26 billion
 for family support and child
 protection (2018-19)

More than **30,000** followers of the



**Talking
 Families**

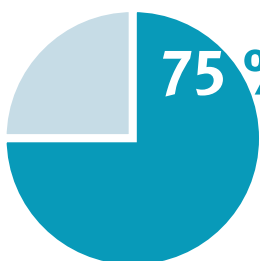
Facebook page, up from 27,000 last year
 The number of followers of the **Talking
 Families Facebook page** continues
 to increase — helping more parents to
 ask for and accept help when they're
 struggling

21%

increase in reports from
**relatives, friends
 and neighbours**
 to help families and children



Reporting by relatives, friends and
 neighbours to Child Safety continues
 to increase and is expected to
 increase as responses to the Royal
 Commission recommendations
 regarding child safe communities are
 rolled out



75% of reports from **mandatory reporters** continue to be
 Child Concern Reports that do not meet the threshold for investigation
 — while this has decreased from 80% prior to establishment of the
 family support system, it indicates that we need to do more to raise
 awareness of **Family and Child Connect** with our mandatory
 reporters and the community



Our progress so far

- Established the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) to provide oversight of Queensland's child protection system and partner with other government and non-government agencies to ensure that best practice services are being delivered to children and families (www.qfcc.qld.gov.au).
- Delivered the *Talking Families* campaign to encourage help seeking and uptake of early support services (www.talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au).
- Partnered with Queensland Child Protection Week to boost its reach and impact across Queensland (www.childprotectionweek.org.au).
- Partnered with the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to rollout the *Play Your Part* community education campaign (www.napcan.org.au).
- Ran a public information campaign about *Family and Child Connect* services to raise its profile with the community, first responders and mandatory reporters.
- Established Regional Child and Family Committees to bring together a more connected and integrated service system including domestic and family violence services.
- Tackled online safety through the *Out of the Dark* initiative and establishment of the Queensland Taskforce on Cyber-bullying.
- Conducted training and workshops to prepare early childhood education and care professionals for their mandatory reporting responsibilities from 1 July 2017.
- Produced the *More than Safe* commitment with shared values and principles for working together across the child protection and family support system so children, families and communities are cared for, protected, safe and able to reach their full potential. (www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/more-than-safe).
- Contributed and responded to the national Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, accepting its recommendations for further action at national and state levels to create child safe communities and organisations.
- Established the Office of the Public Guardian (Child Guardian) which assumes the responsibilities of the community visitor program and established child advocate officers to refocus on providing individual advocacy for the children and young people in the child protection system who are considered most vulnerable.





Upcoming in 2018–19



- Deliver a second public information campaign about Family and Child Connect to raise its profile with mandatory reporters and the community.
- Boost public engagement on shared responsibility, parental engagement and the positive difference from effective intervention.
- Undertake community education initiatives to promote the responsibility of families and communities to protect and care for, and support the development, wellbeing and safety of children.
- Continue to streamline and strengthen the Blue Card System.
- Improve information sharing to keep children safer through nationally consistent legislative and administrative arrangements.
- Continue work on national child safety principles and standards, including embedding them in procurement contracts and quality standards.
- Develop, in targeted consultation with stakeholders, the 2019-20 to 2023-24 implementation approach for the next five years of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reforms.
- Refresh Regional Child and Family Committees as Regional Child, Youth and Families Committees, to strengthen focus on young people at risk, youth justice and youth sexual violence.
- Commence implementing the Queensland Government response to the national Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Advocate to the Australian Government actions on housing, welfare, health, mental health and disability that assist families experiencing vulnerability and help keep children safe and well.

Fast facts

Intensive Family Support services

have helped more than 3000 families, continue to work with more than 1200 families, and are starting to engage with more than 500 additional families to meet their needs

14.5% increase in enquiries to **Family and Child Connect** in the last year — up to almost 29,000 enquiries from 25,126 last year

15.3% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

While positive, we need to do more in early intervention and prevention and increase the number of families accessing family support

Funded approximately **391 staff** in 2017-18 across 44 IFS services.

Funded approximately **114 staff** in 2017-18 across 17 FaCC services.

Over **180,000** parents have accessed the **Triple P — Positive Parenting program** since 2015 to help build strong, healthy relationships with their children

- 21% single parents
- 3% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



75%

of substantiated households continue to have **multiple risk factors**

83%

for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** households

Child safety is increasingly working with families with more complex needs. This means additional support is needed for Queensland parents grappling with issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health, and domestic and family violence. In 2016–17, almost three out of every four substantiated households experienced more than one of these issues — an increase from 67% five years ago.

24% decrease in the number of children who re-enter the child protection system



7% decrease for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

We are improving our response to concerns and providing families with the right support at the right time. The number of children subject to a substantiation who are the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 12 months has decreased by 24% since 2012–13, and 7% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

10% decrease

in child safety intakes from 128,534 to 115,454

5% decrease

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (2012-13 to year ending March 2018)





Our progress so far

- Partnered with Triple P International to provide free access for all Queensland parents and carers of children up to 16 years to the Triple P — Positive Parenting Program.
- Established 17 Family and Child Connect and 44 Intensive Family Support services across the state to provide a pathway for families under stress to access support they need as early as possible.
- Established 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Centres to provide early intervention and support to Indigenous families and children.
- Developed the *oneplace — Community Services Directory* which now includes more than 48,000 records to help Queensland children, families, community members and professionals get the right service at the right time.
- Placed Domestic and Family Violence Prevention workers and nurses in Family and Child Connect catchments to improve early identification and intervention relating to the DFV and health and wellbeing of families at risk of entering the child protection system.
- Rolled out Collaborative Case Management in Intensive Family Support Services to better respond to families with multiple or complex needs.
- Commenced trial of evidence-based models of service delivery, Functional Family Therapy — Child Welfare and SafeCare, to test proven overseas options for increasing the impact of family support services.
- Established 5 multi-agency high-risk teams to provide integrated, culturally appropriate responses for victims of domestic and family violence assessed to be at high-risk of serious harm or death.
- Investment of \$6.5 million per annum for Better Budgeting Initiative which has seen Good Money Stores open in Cairns and the Gold Coast, providing access to budgeting advice and no or low-interest loans for people experiencing vulnerability. The initiative is providing Queenslanders with ongoing access to 27 financial counsellor and financial resilience workers located across state to respond better to financial stresses, personal issues and cost of living pressures.
- Developed the *Action on Ice* action plan and engaged providers to deliver *Breakthrough For Families* a program in key ice corridors to support families dealing with ice to get the facts, develop strategies and find out where to access help and support.
- Commenced trial of two child friendly safe spaces in Queensland to provide wrap-around services for victims of sexual assault.
- Invested \$328.9 million over 6 years from 2015-16 in additional domestic, family and sexual violence services across Queensland through the Government response to the *Not Now Not Ever* report, and strengthened links across DFV, family support and well-being services.



Upcoming in 2018–19

- Work with the non-government sector to increase the number of families being supported in the family support system and the impact of interventions and support.
- Support families involved in the child protection system through a pilot of Residential Family Recovery Units in Logan to overcome Ice issues as a part of our \$3 million (in 2018-19) *Action on Ice* package.
- Continue to improve the reach and take up rate of parents accessing the Triple P Positive Parenting Program.
- Provide flexible, targeted in home support packages to improve family preservation rates.
- Partner with Department of Social Services to implement Parent Link trial in Ipswich, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and surrounds to trial better ways of informing new and expectant parents about local parenting and support services available in their region.



Objective
3

Working better with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system

Fast facts



of **investigations** requiring the most urgent response **commenced within 24 hours**

The best result since reporting against this measure commenced in 2009.

16% decrease in the number of children in need of protection

4% decrease

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

We have improved our response to concerns, and are supporting families earlier and providing them with the right services to help them care for their children safely at home. This has resulted in 16% fewer substantiations where the child was in need of protection since 2012–13.



6% decrease in notifications

with a



11% increase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

While notifications for non-Indigenous children have decreased, more is needed to better respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.

Use of **Intervention with Parental Agreements**

has remained relatively **stable** since 30 June 2013.



Child Safety Services can work with families to meet the care and protective needs of their children at home. This is often done through Intervention with Parental Agreement with assistance and support provided to the family. As at 31 March 2018, 2,334 children were subject to Intervention with Parental Agreement.



Fewer children

admitted into care

6% decrease

3% decrease

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children





Our progress so far

- Restored and boosted Child Safety frontline and frontline support staff, with an additional 129 positions in 2016-17 and further 236 in 2017-18.
- Developed and implemented the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Framework for Practice – a new strengths-based, safety-oriented child protection practice framework and supporting policies and procedures that focus on engaging with families earlier and delivering better outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Established seven new family group meeting coordinators and a new collaborative family decision-making model to ensure more inclusive planning and decision-making with families in the child protection system.
- Developed a resource Information kit on child protection to provide parents with information about their rights, investigation and case management processes, court proceedings, how to make a complaint, and where to find support.
- Established 7 regional specialist student protection principal advisors jointly with the Department of Education to better support schools and school communities.
- Established three joint response teams with Child Safety services and Queensland Police Service and stationed four child safety officers at Police Headquarters to expedite information sharing.
- 12 Child Safety Officers connected to key hospitals to ensure rapid responses where there are concerns about the welfare of a child and improve and streamline information sharing.
- Established a new Child Safety Service Centre in Morayfield to meet increasing demand across the region.
- Commenced the family recovery initiative in Logan, in partnership with Lives Lived Well, to support families involved with the child protection system to overcome ice issues so they can stay together or reunite.
- Strengthened joint efforts across Child Safety and Youth Justice to prevent and divert children in care from offending.

Upcoming in 2018–19

- Boost Child Safety frontline and frontline support staff by a further 56 positions in 2018-19.
- Hold an Inaugural Practice Conference to showcase excellence in child protection practice across the state.
- Strengthen the quality of service provided through state-wide implementation of a Quality Improvement Program that assesses the practice and systems in Child Safety Service Centres.

Improving care and post-care for Queensland children and young people

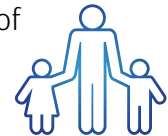
Fast facts

10% increase in foster carers
and **19% increase**
in kinship carer families
(June 2013 to March 2018)



12% increase
in number of children in care
20% increase for
**Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander children**

While the number of children coming into care is decreasing, the number of children in care has increased as a result of increasing durations in care. (June 2013 to March 2018)



53 extra workers created
in the non-government sector
in 2017/18 as a result of new
investment in family based care

12% more children placed
with a **sibling** who was also in care

More children **placed with kin** increasing
from **37% to 44%**
and increasing from **36% to 43%** for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
(30 June 2013 to 31 March 2018)

We are working hard to place children with their kin and help them maintain connection to their community. Since 2013, we have seen a 5% decrease in the number of children placed with foster carers and a 33% increase in those placed with kin. This has occurred despite nearly 1000 additional children in out-of-home care.

More than **2,000 young people**
accessed **Next Step after care**

100% of 18 year olds who
existed the child protection system
had a **Transition
to independence
case plan**



99% of children subject to a Child
Protection Order have a **case plan**



89% had a **child health
passport**



Our progress so far

- Undertook an audit of more than 4,000 cases to assess whether current child protection orders remained in the child's best interests.
- Co-designed and implemented, in partnership with the non-government sector, the *Hope and Healing Framework* — a trauma-based therapeutic framework to help improve outcomes for children and young people living in residential care.
- Launched *Next Steps After Care* to support young people up to 21 years old who have transitioned from care to independence. This includes negotiating priority access to government services such as social housing to better support young people to live as independent adults.
- Introduced the *Early Childhood Education and Care Participation* initiative to help carers meet the costs of kindergarten, and reduce red tape for vaccinations to ensure children can enter kindergarten.
- Transferred the recruitment, training and support services for foster and kinship carers to the non-government sector to strengthen our support of carers.
- Progressed 3 stages of significant legislative reform to support the rolling reform program.
- Undertook foster care recruitment campaigns to increase the number of foster carers available to support children in need.
- In partnership with Foster Care Queensland, engaged carers through *Partners in Care* forums across the state and produced the *Partners in Care Action Plan* to further enhance partnerships across the care sector.
- Established *Care2Achieve* scholarships, in partnership with The Smith Family, to make tertiary education more affordable and feasible for young women leaving care.
- Partnering with Queensland Health and Primary Health Networks to implement strengthened health assessment pathways for children entering care so that children have an initial health check within 30 days of entering care, followed by a comprehensive health and development assessment within 90 days.
- Implemented safety plans for children in care who are frequently absent from their placement, including providing information on who they can talk to, where it is safe for them to go and regular visits from Community Visitors.





Upcoming in 2018–19



- Enhance stability and permanency for children and young people in care through legislative changes commencing late 2018.
- Pilot the evidence-based model Treatment Foster Care Oregon, a therapeutic (professional) foster care model, proven to address trauma and help children in care thrive.
- Implement Safety and Support Networks — High Intensity Response across the state for children in care to increase their safety and consider further strategies.
- Expand the ways in which Community Visitors can make unannounced visits to foster and kinship care homes.
- Continue to work with other states and territories to develop and progress the Sexual Abuse Prevention Strategy for children in care.
- Continue to implement the Partners in Care initiative to improve support for and work collaboratively with foster and kinship carers and non-government organisations supporting foster and kinship carers.
- Implement a Parent Advisory Committee to enable parents to engage at a policy and system level with departmental programs.
- Strengthen the transition of young people from care, including legislative amendments to extend support to age 25, targeting young people in care at risk of homelessness and improving priority access to services to better equip young people when they leave care.
- Implement a digitised health assessment pathway and pilot communities of health practice to strengthen health responses for children in care in collaboration with Queensland Health and Primary Health Networks.
- Continue the recruitment campaign to increase the number of foster carers.
- Advocate with the Australian Government on ways they can improve support for carers and grandparents — such as through carer support, child care subsidies, family tax benefit and income support — to reduce stress and enhance care stability.
- Extend the Sustaining Tenancies for Young People Pilot, delivering support to young people aged 16 to 25 living in social housing who are at risk of losing their tenancy and becoming homeless.

Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities

Fast facts

42% of all children in care are Indigenous **compared to 39%** in 2013



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately represented in the tertiary child protection system, and this continues to increase.

The *Our Way* strategy and *Changing Tracks* action plan outlines the framework for the transformational change to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system.

99% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children subject to a child protection order have a **case plan**



95% of children subject to ongoing intervention have a **cultural support plan**

18% increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children **subject to child protection orders**

25% increase in Intervention with Parental Agreement

We are working more closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to protect and care for their children at home.

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are **placed with kin,**

increasing from **36% to 43%**

Our Way calls for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care to be placed with kin, and enabled to reconnect or reunify with their family. This has been supported by a 16.8% increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.



17% increase since June 2013 in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **carer families**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are **five times more likely to become carers** than non-Indigenous families



Established **33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services**



Our progress so far

- Established 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing services and funded approximately 251 full-time workers to build the capacity of families to safely care for and protect their children.
- Recruited 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practice leaders to drive culturally responsive practice.
- Provided \$38.8 million over four years to deliver Children and Family Centres to provide vital early education, child and maternal health and family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- Trialled the *Safe Sleeping Baby* program to assist young parents prepare for postnatal care and infant health.
- Established the *Empowering Families Innovation Grants* program to support new initiatives aimed at reducing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.
- Implemented the *New Parent Infant Network* social benefit bond program in Cairns to safely reunify children care with their families.
- Made changes to the *Child Protection Act* to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to identify an independent person with cultural authority to support them in child protection decision making processes.
- Implemented a range of career progression initiatives to help increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working in child protection.
- Commenced implementation of the First 1000 Days Australia initiative in Moreton Bay and Townsville to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children the best start in life.
- Jointly developed with Family Matters the generational *Our Way* strategy to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child protection system and close the gap in life outcomes. The strategy's first action plan, *Changing Tracks*, sets the foundations for transformational change to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture.
- Trialled new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making and shared practice models to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in contact with the child protection system to meet the needs of their children.
- Developed a culturally safe midwifery student learning and clinical model to increase the number of practising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, babies and communities.





Upcoming in 2018–19

- Continue implementing *Changing Tracks* action plan to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families experiencing vulnerability.
- Establish the *Queensland First Children and Families Board* to drive and oversee whole of government and community action to implement the *Our Way* strategy and action plans.
- Continue the *Empowering Families Innovation Grants* initiative and share learnings from funded projects.
- Continue to grow the proportion of investment provided to community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, including to increase the proportion of funding supporting Aboriginal kinship care services.
- Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and leaders to ensure a strong and sustainable community controlled child and family sector.
- Action the Queensland Government response to the Queensland Productivity Commission report into Service delivery in Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous Communities.
- Recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination and require all five elements of the Child Placement Principle to be taken into consideration, through the commencement of legislative amendments.
- Transform child safety practice to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safe Care and Connection amendments to the *Child Protection Act*.
- Roll out a new state-wide Family Participation Program to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to have a stronger voice in child protection decision making processes that affect their children.



Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations

Fast facts

Funded **458**
additional child and family staff

since July 2016 to restore and support frontline services.



The number of frontline and frontline support staff is increasing.

The Child Safety Workforce Strategy was supported by a further \$200 million investment over four years from 2017-18. This includes employing an additional 292 child safety services staff in 2017-18 and 2018-19. This is on top of the 129 positions in 2016-17.



Caseload decreasing for frontline child safety officers is and is now less than 18

As at 31 March 2018, the average caseload for child safety officers working with children in need of protection and subject to ongoing intervention was **17.4** — this is an improvement from **20.9** in June 2013, despite the continued increase in the number of children in care

New higher level positions will provide career progression opportunities for child safety officers to **improve retention and enable experienced staff** to continue to work directly with children, young people and families

The **retention rate** of **Child Safety Officers** is **stable**

with 97% retention of permanent Child Safety Officers (June 2017 quarter and June 2018 quarter)

More than **3,750** government and non-government staff across the state have been trained in the **new framework for practice**, creating a shared language so children and families hear consistent and client-focused messages



Child and Family Services staff (including Child Safety Officers) report

lower rates of absenteeism

compared to the public sector benchmark

— **3.48%** (March 2018 quarter) **versus 4.11%**.





Our progress so far

- Trained more than 3,750 government and non-government staff across the state in the new framework for practice, creating a shared language so children and families hear consistent and client-focused messages.
- Developed, in partnership with key government and non-government stakeholders, a minimum qualification standard for residential care workers.
- Restored and boosted frontline and frontline support with an extra 365 child and family positions.
- Established a team of mobile experienced practitioners who provide onsite support to Child Safety Service Centres experiencing urgent and emergent issues.
- Developed and commenced implementation of the *Strengthening Our Sector Strategy* and support action plans to build a responsive and sustainable service system across the child protection and family support sector.
- Implemented a new court litigation model, including the establishment of the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) within the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women to enhance its in-house legal service provision and Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL), an independent body within the justice portfolio.
- Provided domestic and family violence training for frontline child protection, family support and domestic and family violence specialist service workers.
- Released the Laying Foundations Report, in collaboration with Community Service Industry Alliance which provides a broad industry profile of the child and family support sector to help with sector development.





Upcoming in 2018–19



- Continue restoring and strengthening our frontline services by a further 56 child and family services positions.
- Continue the *Child Safety Quality Improvement Program* including enhancements to Child Safety Services' workload management guide to ensure fair and equitable allocation of work to child safety officers that facilitates best outcomes for children.
- Commence implementation of a minimum qualifications standard for residential care workers.
- In partnership with PeakCare release free, online training to support implementation of the Hope and Healing Framework across the sector workforce.
- Implement *Carer Connect* state-wide to ensure carers are connected to information they need to provide the best possible support for children and young people.
- Undertake a comprehensive stocktake of available carer training and develop a strategy to address key gaps across sector.
- Continuing to embed child protection litigation reforms by improving processes and practices between the DCPL, OCFOS and Child Safety Service Centres.
- Continue implementation of *Navigate*, a leadership and management program to improve the leadership and managerial capabilities of child safety service centre managers and senior team leaders.
- Continue to implement the *Strengthening Our Sector Strategy Action Plan 2017–19*.

Building an accountable, transparent and cost-effective Queensland system

Fast facts

77 of **121**

Commission of Inquiry recommendations

completed

with the rest underway as at May 2018



10 of **29**

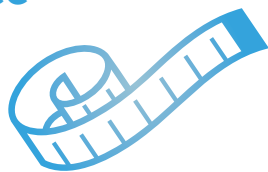


Apelt review and associated KPMG report strategies implemented, with the rest underway.

More than **90 performance measures**

published quarterly

Since 2012-13, more than 25 measures have been added to improve transparency and accountability of the family support and child protection system.



Improved QCAT practices

to make them more child friendly and to reduce unnecessary delays

\$6M

to upgrade IT systems to support faster information sharing between agencies when children are missing

All **29 recommendations** from *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh — A report into Queensland's children missing from out-of-home care* **completed**

Appointed 8 additional specialist Court Magistrates

to have matters more expeditiously and efficiently dealt with and to help to ensure better outcomes for children and families



22 of 30 Partners in Care system level actions **completed or partially completed**, with the remaining to commence in 2018-19

9 of **42**

Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the foster care system

recommendations completed with the remaining to be implemented in phases



Our progress so far

- Reviewed the *Child Protection Act 1999* to ensure the child protection and family support system is underpinned by a strong and contemporary legislative framework.
- Established the Director of Child Protection Litigation, an independent statutory officer within the justice portfolio to undertake child protection matters in the Childrens Court and appointed eight additional specialist Court Magistrates.
- Implemented an enhanced complaints management process based on client feedback to increase responsiveness, accountability and learnings.
- Developed and began implementation of a continuous Quality Improvement Program within Child Safety Services.
- Implemented the inter-agency missing child information system to improve and speed up information sharing between agencies when a child is missing from care.
- Improved Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal practices to make them more child-friendly and to reduce unnecessary delays.
- Developed a three-year rolling research program to build the evidence base for child protection practice in collaboration with stakeholders and research institutions.
- Refocusing of the Community Visitor Program and creation of Child Advocate — Legal Officer positions within the Office of the Public Guardian to provide children and young people in the child protection system with independent advocacy that contributes to fostering cultural change towards child-centred outcomes (including legal processes) and greater access to services.





Upcoming in 2018–19

- Implement the remaining provisions of the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*.
- Embed the continuous Quality Improvement Program to strengthen child protection practice and enhance oversight of system performance.
- Continue development of a regional funding allocation model to better link funding to demand and develop an Investment and Commissioning Strategy for all DCSYW investment.
- Explore development of a client management system that is contemporary and customer-centric, and improves capabilities for multi-agency service delivery.
- Conduct post implementation reviews with agencies to ensure review recommendations achieve the intended system improvements.
- Strengthen the Child Safety Licensing system by refreshing target levels for inspections and new risk based and assurance frameworks.
- Establish a register of home-based services within the Blue Card system to improve the visibility and monitoring of foster and kinship carers, family day care services and stand-alone care services in Queensland.
- Contribute to the Office of the Public Guardian’s development of a reporting framework to identify systemic issues such as number and rate of issues and complaints identified.
- Support the development of the Office of the Public Guardian’s legislative role to provide individual advocacy for children and young people on Interventions with Parental Agreement or Orders still in the family home.
- Continue participation in national forums to develop a nationally consistent information exchange scheme and progress development of nationally consistent definitions and data.
- Undertake the Expert Assistance pilot in Beenleigh and Cairns to improve consultation with children and families in the court system.
- Deliver a Year 3 evaluation of the Child Protection Reform Program.





Setting the direction for the next five years

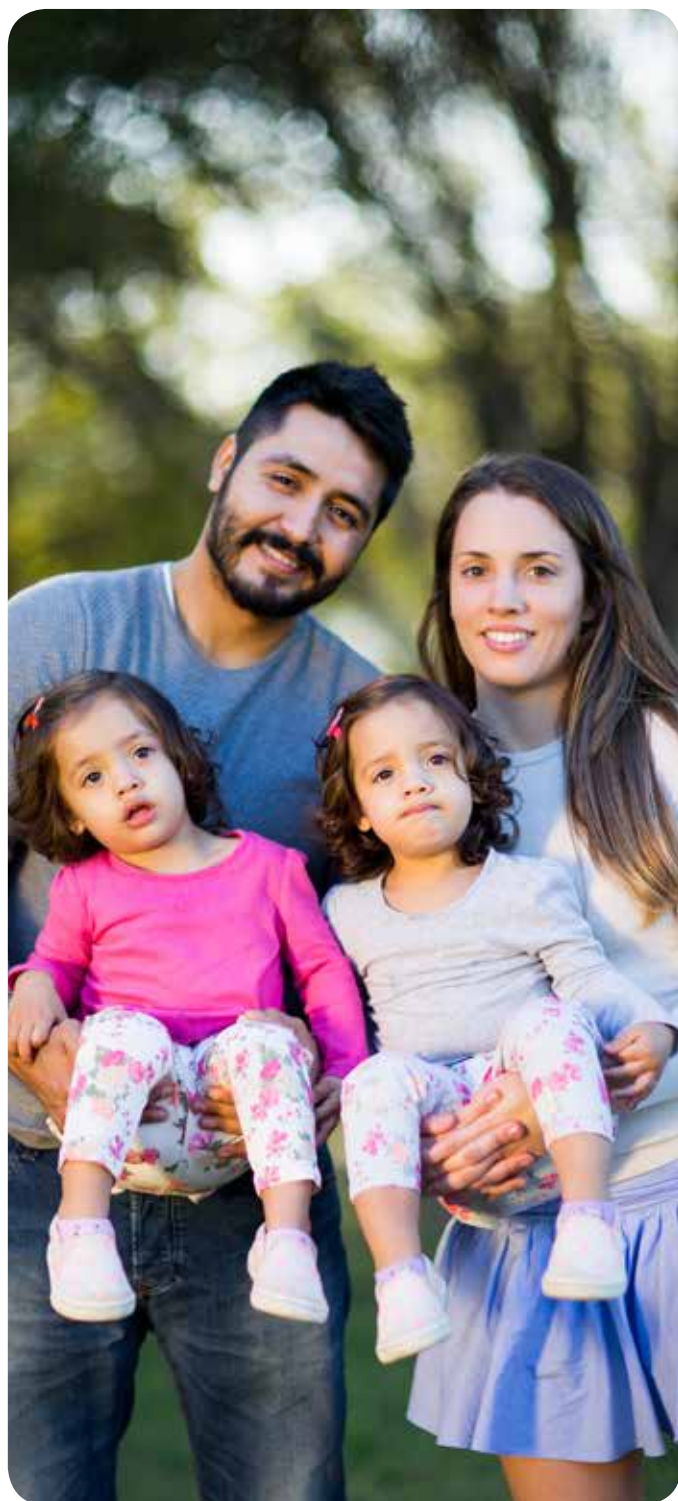
Progress toward reform goals to date indicate the reform program is working to make tangible and positive differences in the lives of Queensland children, young people and their families experiencing vulnerability. The QFCC year 3 evaluation of the child protection reform program will help guide future decisions and areas of focus.

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Over the next 5 years of the 10 year reform program — 2019-20 to 2023-24, we will continue to embed existing reform as well as work to further strengthen the system as a result of additional reviews into Queensland’s family support and child protection system since the 2013 Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. This includes ensuring we deliver on our response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’s findings.

A high-level *Strategic Direction* (inside back cover) for the next 5 years has been developed that outlines where our energies and focus will need to be. This represents a significant reform agenda, and we will be considered and collaborative in our implementation approach.

Over the remainder of 2018 we will undertake detailed planning with our stakeholders as to how we can best deliver on this *Strategic Direction*.



Turn page for Strategic Direction

Supporting Families

Advancing Stage 2 of Queensland's family support

Our vision: Queensland children and young people are cared for, protected, safe and able to reach their full potential. Queensland families and communities are empowered to become stronger, more capable, more resilient and better equipped to care for their children. Queensland understands and respects the importance of family, community and culture.

Our values



Cultural integrity

We learn from and work with the strengths, knowledge, culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all that we do



Client-focused

We listen and represent the voices of children, young people and families



Connected and integrated

We collaborate with partners, not simply consult



Effective evidence

We use an evidence-based approach to

Our results

Communities, organisations and systems are safer for children and young people

More families access parenting and family support services

Fewer children and young people coming into care

Our objectives

Sharing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children

Supporting Queensland families earlier

Working with Queensland families who are in contact with the child protection system to address risk to children's safety

Improving care and post-care for Queensland children and young people

Key 2nd stage priorities

Implement Child Safe principles, standards and initiatives at community, organisational and systems levels

Continue to build the family support system and invest in those family support and other services that achieve the best results

Strengthen access to early childhood education and care, domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol, health and mental health, disability and housing services for families at risk

Strengthening referral, investigation and assessment practices and interventions to address risk in families and help them safely care for their children

Continue to implement *Partners in Care* and improve support for carers and grandparents

Implement legislative and practice reforms to strengthen stability and outcomes for children in care and post-care

Strengthen access to trauma-informed education, health, disability & well-being services for children in care

Extend and broaden support for young people transitioning from care, especially to housing, further education, training and employment and other supports

Our way



All families enjoy **access to quality, culturally safe universal and targeted services** necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations **participate in and have control over decisions** that affect their children

Changing Futures: and child protection reforms 2019-20 to 2023-24

...ll potential.
...re resilient and are supported by a child and family support system that

 <p>Evidence-based and client-focused Evidence-based decision making</p>	 <p>Flexible We adapt to our client's needs and changing operating environment</p>	 <p>Accountable We are accountable, responsible and transparent</p>
<p>Greater stability, better health and well-being, and improved education, training and employment for children and young people in and post care</p>	<p>Fewer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care</p>	
<p>Meeting the needs and requirements of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities</p>	<p>Delivering quality services to Queensland children and families, through a capable, motivated workforce and client-focused organisations</p>	<p>Building an effective, accountable and transparent Queensland system</p>
<p>Implement the <i>Our Way</i> strategy and Changing Tracks action plans, in conjunction with communities, Indigenous leaders and organisations, and other levels of government</p>	<p>Further invest in our workforce and sector Embed the Quality Improvement Program to support Child Safety to improve operations Facilitate place-based initiatives driving better outcomes for children, young people and families</p>	<p>Continue to implement Government responses to recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, QFCC, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and other reviews Take a continuous improvement approach to improve the performance and sustainability of the system Improve information sharing across agencies and jurisdictions</p>

Our Future State: Advancing Queensland's Priorities



Give all our children a great start



Create jobs in a strong economy




Keep communities safe



Keep Queenslanders healthy



Be a responsive government

 Law, policy and practice in child and family welfare are culturally **safe and responsive**

 **Governments and community services are accountable** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

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Indigenous artwork on pages 3-6 by Rachael Sarra, Gilimbaa

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