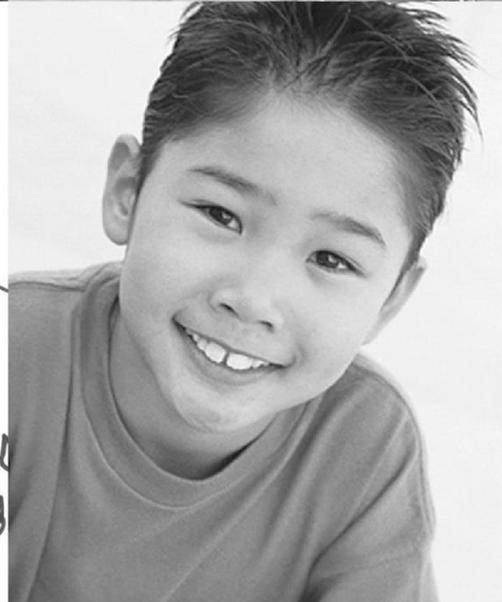


commission for  
children and young people  
and child guardian

*A better life for Queensland children*

# Annual Report 2013-14

## *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian*



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22 September 2014

The Honourable Tracy Davis MP  
Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Minister

We are pleased to present the Annual Report 2013-14 and Financial Statements 2013-14 for the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG)

We certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

The content of the annual report has been prepared and endorsed by Steve Armitage, former Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian of the CCYPCG which ceased operations on 30 June 2014.

As the administering department, the report and the annual reporting requirements checklist can be accessed on the website of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services at [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

The material and reports referenced in the Annual Report can be accessed through the CCYPCG website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

Yours sincerely

**Michael Hogan**  
**Director-General**  
Department of Communities,  
Child Safety and Disability Services

**Steve Armitage**  
**Principal Commissioner**  
Queensland Family and Child Commission  
(former Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian)

# About this report

The annual report describes progress during 2013-14 toward achieving the long term objectives of the Commission that are published in its *Strategic Plan 2013-17*. Importantly, this progress is described in terms of the outcomes we have achieved for children and young people in Queensland. In particular, the report includes information regarding:

- our performance in relation to our five strategic objectives and our key performance indicators (KPI's)
- some of the key challenges affecting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland and how we are addressing these challenges
- our financial position
- our compliance with legislative requirements
- our forward plans.

Publication of this report allows the public, through Parliament, to assess our financial and operational performance. To contain production costs, only in-house resources have been used to develop the report. Limited hard copies of the annual report will be produced and recycled material has been used for report production.



If English is not your first language and you would like assistance to understand this annual report, contact the Queensland Government on 13 QGOV (13 74 68), and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the annual report to you.

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, electronic copies of this and previous Annual Reports are available from the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

Help us improve our annual report by sharing your feedback form on page 105.

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## Contact for enquiries

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, for enquiries or further information about this report, please contact Queensland Family and Child Commission in the first instance on (07) 3900 6000 or email [info@qfcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@qfcc.qld.gov.au).

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This document has been security classified using the Queensland Government Information Security Classification Framework (QGISCF) as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the QGISCF.

# Contents

<b>Commissioner's message</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>About us</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>All Queensland children</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Reporting on children's health and wellbeing .....	6
Generating evidence on child death and injury in Queensland .....	7
Advocacy for children's rights and interests .....	9
Blue card - reducing risks to children in regulated service environments .....	11
Maintaining strong safeguards .....	13
Collaborating to create safe service environments for children .....	19
Keeping stakeholders informed about blue card .....	21
A framework for measuring blue card results .....	22
<b>Vulnerable children</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Generating evidence to improve outcomes for vulnerable children .....	24
Advocacy for vulnerable children .....	24
<b>Children in statutory care</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Advocacy on behalf of children in care or detention .....	28
Visiting children in care or detention .....	31
What type of issues did children in care ask their Community Visitor to help resolve? .....	34
What type of complaints did children ask the Commission to help resolve? .....	39
Giving a voice to children in care or detention - the Views Survey series .....	43
Investigations, audits and reviews into service delivery to children in care or detention .....	46
Performance assessment of the child protection system .....	49
Performance assessment of the youth justice system .....	54
Auditing compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle .....	57
Child Death Case Review Committee .....	60
Role in national child protection agenda .....	61
<b>Building a capable workforce</b> .....	<b>63</b>
Workforce profile .....	64
Workforce governance .....	65
Strengthening capability .....	66
<b>Effective governance</b> .....	<b>69</b>
Governance frameworks .....	70
Summary of financial performance .....	74
<b>Appendices, Glossary and Feedback</b> .....	<b>77</b>
Appendix 1 - The Commission's executive team .....	78
Appendix 2 - Evolution of our mandate .....	79
Appendix 3 - Child Guardian monitoring phases 2004-2013 .....	83
Appendix 4 - Child Guardian monitoring framework for the child protection system .....	84
Appendix 5 - Commission's objectives, strategies and key performance indicators 2013-14 .....	85
Appendix 6 - Assessment against Strategic Plan 2013-17 Key Performance Indicators .....	86
Appendix 7 - Performance against service standards and other measures .....	94
Appendix 8 - Committees .....	99
Glossary .....	102
How to provide feedback .....	105
<b>Financial Performance</b> .....	<b>106</b>

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# Commissioner's message

On 16 December 2013, the Queensland Government announced it had accepted the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) to comprehensively reform the child protection system. As part of the changes, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014 and its major functions were transitioned to other agencies (refer page 4 for more detail).

During the transition process, the Commission continued to meet its legislative mandate to protect and promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland particularly those who were in care or detention, had no one to act on their behalf, were not able to protect themselves or were disadvantaged because of a disability, geographic isolation, homelessness or poverty.

Commission staff also worked collaboratively with other agencies to ensure the interests of children and young people in Queensland, particularly those most vulnerable, were at the forefront of planning for the transition.

During 2013-14, key achievements against the Commission's legislative mandate included:

- publishing child death *Trends and Issues Papers* on low speed vehicle run-overs, swimming pool safety, prevalence of youth suicide in Queensland, and notifiable and vaccine-preventable diseases
- providing evidence-based policy submissions to the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the youth justice reform process in Queensland
- identifying 1,291 cases where individuals represented a high risk and were consequently prohibited from working with children
- continuing work to improve the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the blue card system and increased focus on engagement with western Queensland communities
- publishing independent Child Guardian reports on the performance of the child protection and youth justice systems, compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle and outcomes of two reviews and two investigations
- publishing two statutory child death reports and published updated child death data on its website
- ensuring 95% of children and young people in care and detention were visited in accordance with the designated visiting schedule and resolved 14,968 issues raised by children locally
- resolving 2,718 complaint issues for children and young people
- releasing findings from Views Surveys of children and young people in foster care and young people in residential care, including focus papers on education and young people's views on keeping in contact with family and friends.

I wish to acknowledge and thank all staff of the Commission whose professionalism, commitment and hard work over the life of the Commission has contributed to better lives for children and young people in Queensland, particularly those living in out-of-home care or detention.

Steve Armitage  
**Commissioner for Children and Young People  
and Child Guardian**  
**30 June 2014**

# About us

## *Our vision was a better life for Queensland children and young people*

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission) had its genesis in 1996 in national efforts to tackle organised paedophilia activities and other forms of child abuse. However it broadened in scope to become an independent oversight body for the child protection and youth justice systems after two major inquiries (in 1998 and 2004) found significant failings in the child protection system (including high rates of substantiated harm to children and other forms of abuse) and called for comprehensive reforms to the system.

## Commissioner and Child Guardian

Barry Salmon until 16 January 2014 and Steve Armitage since then was the accountable officer for the Commission and led the strategic focus and direction for its work. More information on the Commission and its executive team and the history of the Commission's mandate can be found at Appendices 1 and 2

## Our mandate

The Commission was an independent statutory body established under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*. The Commission's operations and decisions were independent of any Minister, government department or other agency.

The Commission had a legislative mandate to protect and promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland, particularly those who:

- are in care or detention
- have no one to act on their behalf
- are not able to protect themselves
- are disadvantaged because of a disability, geographic isolation, homelessness or poverty.

In accordance with the State Government's objective for the community to restore accountability in government, the Commission's work provided a child-focused external accountability mechanism that enabled the community to have confidence that robust, independent oversight of the child protection and youth justice systems, and organisations providing regulated services to children, was occurring.

## How our mandate helped children and young people in 2013-14

### *The Commission gave a voice to children and young people and advocated for their interests*

The Commission reported regularly on the comparative health and wellbeing status of Queensland children and young people and emerging trends and patterns in child death and injury, so decision makers were informed. The Commission identified risks and trends impacting on children and young people, particularly those who were disadvantaged or at risk of harm, and advocated for changes to laws and services that will improve their lives.

### *The Commission prevented high risk individuals from working with children*

The blue card system is a critical part of early intervention and prevention of abuse and practices that may place children at risk of harm. Through the blue card system, the Commission conducted employment screening, including the assessment of criminal history information for people wishing to work with children—an important safeguard in environments where children may be particularly vulnerable such as foster care, residential care or detention.

### ***The Commission improved risk management for children in regulated service environments***

The Commission worked with organisations that provide regulated services for children to help them comply with blue card system's legislative requirement to manage child protection risks.

### ***The Commission maintained a robust evidence base on the safety and wellbeing of children***

The Commission's evidence base was shared with stakeholders as appropriate to improve outcomes for children and young people and was informed by:

- data from monitoring and reporting regularly on the health and wellbeing of Queensland children
- analysis of child death data which identifies risk factors and trends in Queensland
- the reports of the Commission's Community Visitors who regularly visit children in foster care, residential care, detention, authorised mental health services and 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities to assess their safety and wellbeing
- data on systemic issues arising from the resolution of complaints about service delivery to children and young people in care or detention
- children and young people's own views on their safety and wellbeing in out-of-home care and detention, collected from the Commission's *Views Surveys*
- information obtained from agencies involved in the child protection and youth justice systems provided to the Commission under agreed Monitoring Plans.

This evidence base included data which was not found or collected elsewhere (e.g. data from Community Visitor reports and data from *Views Surveys* of children in care and detention).

### ***The Commission reported on the performance of the child protection and youth justice systems***

The Commission independently analysed and reported regularly on the performance of the child protection and youth justice systems from the perspective of outcomes for children and young people. The Commission conducted investigations, audits and reviews of individual cases and systemic issues. The key to the effectiveness of the Commission's reporting on the performance of the child protection system was the collection over time of data from a range of sources that was able to be interrogated to identify trends and patterns in service delivery that may provide insights into systemic issues. This data came from:

- the Commission's Community Visitor reports
- the Commission's complaints resolution process that included all children within the child protection system, not just children under protection orders
- agreed data Monitoring Plans developed with government service providers
- targeted audits and investigations conducted into critical areas of service delivery, including where children have been harmed while in care, backlogs in initial assessments, critical incident management, and compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle
- Views Surveys undertaken with children in foster care, residential care and detention which were a means of giving voice to their lived experiences.

### ***The Commission was a key part of the safety net for children in statutory care***

The Commission's Community Visitors regularly visited children and young people in foster care, residential care, detention, authorised mental health services and 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities to confirm their safety and wellbeing, resolve issues locally where possible, and escalate more complex issues to appropriate avenues—which included the Commission's Complaints Resolution Team that offered child-focused and independent complaints resolution for complaints about service delivery to children and young people in the child protection and youth justice systems.

## Transition of Commission functions from 1 July 2014

On 16 December 2013, the Queensland Government announced it had accepted the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) to comprehensively reform the child protection system.

Some of these recommendations impacted on the functioning of the Commission. As part of the changes, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014. Key changes occurring to the Commission's functions included:

- systemic oversight of the child protection system and responsibility for promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people transferred to the new Queensland Family and Child Commission on 1 July 2014
- child-related complaints will be investigated by the relevant department with oversight by the Queensland Ombudsman
- the role of the Child Guardian combined with the Adult Guardian on 1 July 2014 to form the new role of Public Guardian, with the role of the Child Guardian re-focused on individual advocacy for children and young people in the child protection system and primarily operating out of new state-wide advocacy hubs. Visits to children and young people in out-of-home care will be re-focused to visiting those who are considered most vulnerable and will be undertaken by the new Office of the Public Guardian
- the child death review function transferred to the Queensland Family and Child Commission
- the existing Child Death Case Review Committee was replaced on 1 July 2014 by a new child death case review panel process to consider reviews conducted by the Chief Executive, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) in relation to children who have died or suffered a serious physical injury in specified circumstances
- the blue card system transferred to the Public Safety Business Agency.

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to the material and reports referenced in this Annual Report will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

## All Queensland children

**Strategic objective one:** All children and young people in Queensland have their rights, interests, safety and wellbeing upheld and enhanced



## Commission's role

Administered the blue card system.

Reported regularly on the health and wellbeing of Queensland children and young people, including trends in child deaths.

Maintained the Queensland Child Death Register, published reports and papers, and shared data with genuine researchers.

Advocated for changes to laws and services that will improve children's lives.

## Reporting on children's health and wellbeing

### Snapshot report

The Commission had a legislated role to promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people living in Queensland. This role included monitoring, researching and reporting on the health, safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and young people. The annual *Snapshot* report supported this by bringing together national and state data from a wide variety of sources in topic areas including demographics, families, social and lifestyle issues, health, education and care, deaths, child protection and crime and justice.

During 2013-14, the Commission published the eleventh *Snapshot 2013: Children and Young People in Queensland* as well as a Key Data booklet and a web app.

Key findings included:

- children and young people in Queensland are generally doing well
- there continue to be declines in the rate of teenage pregnancies and sexual assault victimisation
- there continue to be declines in mortality among infants and children and young people of all ages
- there have been noticeable decreases in the proportions of children developmentally at

risk and vulnerable by the time they reach their first year of schooling

- the rate of young people continuing from the beginning to the end of secondary school is the highest it has been in a decade.

However, there were areas of concern, including:

- the continued increase in the number of children and young people entering the child protection system
- the significantly poorer outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people on a wide range of measures, such as school attendance and retention to Year 12.
- too many children and young people are homeless
- rates of notifications of sexually transmissible infections continue to rise
- the suicide mortality rate for young people has increased in more recent years.

## **Generating evidence on child death and injury in Queensland**

The Commission analysed the deaths of all children in Queensland and young people for the purpose of identifying modifiable risk factors so that they may be addressed. The Queensland Child Death Register housed a unique and comprehensive dataset on over 4,800 child deaths registered in Queensland from 2004 to date. It was available free of charge to genuine researchers to help them develop evidence-based strategies to address risks associated with preventable deaths, such as drowning.

### **Providing child death and injury data to stakeholders**

During 2013-14, the Commission continued to proactively release child death information through *Trends and Issues Papers*, released the *Annual Report: Deaths of Children and Young People Queensland 2012-13* and published nine years of Queensland child death data on the website. This material was released by the Commission for use by researchers and stakeholders in the development of more effective child death and injury prevention strategies.

During 2013-14, the Commission responded to 50 requests for child death data from researchers and other stakeholders.

The Commission also presented evidence-based research on social media's role regarding youth suicide at the World Suicide Prevention Day Forum attended by suicide prevention and intervention experts from several sectors within Queensland.

### **Use of child death data in advocacy**

Data from the Child Death Register also informed Commission advocacy in the following policy processes:

- a submission to a Queensland Parliamentary Committee inquiry into cycling issues that provided short and long term trend data on bicycle fatalities. The

Commission recommended alternative solutions be adopted for children and young people as the proposed strategies were adult-focused and did not account for the riding practices of children and young people

- a submission on the development of driveway safety design guidelines that provided data to Department of Transport and Main Roads on low speed vehicle run-over incidents in driveways and supported the proposed guidelines for driveway design as an additional layer of protection to reduce the risk of injury to children
- advocacy with the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland for further education and enforcement activities to prevent child drownings on farms and rural properties.

### **Child death Trends and Issues Papers**

During 2013-14, the Commission continued to publish its child death Trends and Issues Paper series that identifies emerging trends and patterns in child death and injury.

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#### ***Trends and Issues Paper 16: Child deaths—Notifiable and vaccine-preventable diseases***

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This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined deaths associated with notifiable and vaccine-preventable diseases in Queensland.

Vaccinating children against life threatening diseases has become a topic of strong debate in Australia, and in fact, throughout the world.

The paper advocated for parents and caregivers to make informed decisions about vaccinating their children and consult with the family doctor if they have any questions or concerns in relation to vaccinations.

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#### ***Trends and Issues Paper 17: Child deaths—Low speed vehicle run-overs***

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This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined low speed vehicle run-over child deaths in order to improve understanding of how and why these incidents occur, and inform prevention initiatives to reduce future child deaths.

Transport deaths have been an ongoing concern for children in Queensland, with children under five years particularly vulnerable when exposed to certain types of transport hazards.

The Commission's evidence base indicated that transport incidents for children under five are the second leading external cause of death for this age group, and approximately one-third of those transport fatalities occur as a result of low speed vehicle run-overs.

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### ***Trends and Issues Paper 18: Child deaths—Swimming pool safety***

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This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined child deaths associated with drowning in swimming pools in Queensland.

Drowning deaths of children continue to be an issue of concern in Queensland. Swimming pool drownings are common and occur more frequently than any other non-pool water hazard.

Changes to pool safety standards, including fencing and barriers, over time have had a noticeable impact on the number of drownings in Queensland.

The paper advocated for strategies that build layers of protection through active supervision, maintenance and compliant use of fencing and gates, and water safety awareness training.

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### ***Trends and Issues Paper 19: Child deaths—prevalence of youth suicide in Queensland***

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This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined child deaths associated with suicide in Queensland. The paper highlighted a potential emerging trend of youth suicides increasing in Queensland, particularly for a younger cohort of the population. More detail on this paper can be found at page 24.

## ***Annual child death report***

The Commission published its ninth *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people in Queensland, 2012-13*, which provided a detailed analysis of the deaths of children registered in the 2012-13 year. In 2012–13, the deaths of 448 children and young people were registered. The rate of deaths has remained consistent since the Commission established the state's Child Death Register in 2004.

Key findings included:

- transport was the leading external cause of child deaths with 28 deaths. This is almost the lowest number of transport deaths since 2004, with 27 recorded in 2009–10
- suicide was the second leading external cause of death with 22 deaths, and was the leading external cause of death overall for 10–14 year olds for the first time, with this age group outnumbering young people aged 15–17 years also for the first time. The suicide rate for young people in Queensland has continued to gradually rise since reporting commenced in 2004
- drowning deaths continue to be low with 11 deaths, which is the lowest ever recorded rate of drownings. However, private swimming pool deaths (eight deaths) were the highest since 2004
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people died at 2.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous children, which is consistent with previous years. The leading external cause of death for this cohort was transport-related fatalities followed by suicide.

## **Advocacy for children's rights and interests**

The Commission had a legislated mandate to promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland.

The Commission fulfilled this mandate by providing advice on legislation, policies and practices that impact on all children and young people and advocating for approaches that promote their best interests.

### **Advocacy on children's rights and interests**

#### **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Issues paper 1 – Working with Children Check**

To achieve consistent Working with Children Check (WWCC) safeguards across jurisdictions the Commission recommended that all jurisdictions implement a nationally consistent:

- decision making and assessment framework to identify and prevent individuals who pose a risk working with children, and
- disqualification framework to prevent individuals with the most serious types of criminal offences from working with children.

The Commission also recommended that all jurisdictions:

- implement daily monitoring of WWCC applicant and card holder's criminal histories to ensure immediate action is taken to prevent individuals who pose a risk from working with children
- require organisations working with children to develop and implement risk management strategies
- establish a process to notify relevant organisations and governing bodies of any changes to a person's WWCC status.

#### **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Issues paper 3 – Child Safe Organisations**

The Commission advised that effective child maltreatment prevention programs need to include strategies which target multiple risk factors on multiple levels and address past, present and future risks of harm to children.

The Commission's employment screening (blue card system) was presented as an example of an effective child maltreatment prevention program as it addressed:

- Past risks - by identifying and preventing individuals with criminal histories associated with increased risks of harm to children from working in child-related environments
- Present risks – engaging in ongoing monitoring of police information of blue card holders, as well as external oversight and compliance mechanisms
- Future risks - requiring child-related organisations to develop, implement and maintain a comprehensive child and youth risk management strategy.

#### **Other advocacy**

In 2013-14, Commission advocacy targeted a range of issues that impacted all children and young people in Queensland including submissions on:

- the role of blue card in early childhood education and care services as part of a submission on the Education and Care Services Bill 2013
- impacts of changes to school discipline for children in the child protection system in a submission on the Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013
- the need for consultation to listen to the views of a wider group of young people in a submission on the Queensland Government's draft Digital Economy Strategy.

## **Promoting children's rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), to which Australia is a signatory, spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have—the right to survival, to develop to the fullest, to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The Commission's work in reviewing, registering, analysing and reporting on trends and patterns in child deaths aligned with principles of UNCROC relating to the reduction of infant and child mortality. During 2013-14, the Commission released its *Annual Report: Deaths of Children and Young People in Queensland 2012-13* as well as a number of *Trends and Issues Papers* on child deaths in Queensland.

The Commission's work on responding to bullying, including cyber bullying, recognises that bullying affects children and young people's rights to good health, right to education, right to leisure and the right to privacy. In 2013-14, the Commission's *Trends and Issues Paper Number 5: Child deaths – cyber bullying as a risk factor for youth suicide* received over 4,500 downloads.

Article 37(c) of UNCROC requires that children not be detained with adults. Queensland is the only remaining Australian state or territory where 17 year olds are sent to adult correctional facilities and dealt with via the criminal justice system. During 2013-14, Commission CVs visited and advocated for 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities and the Commission advocated for specific practical changes that would benefit 17 year olds during their transfer to adult correctional facilities.

The Acting Commissioner launched the 'Children's Voices' art exhibition in place at State Library Queensland. 'Children's Voices' was an inspiring exhibition exploring human rights through the eyes of children, providing an insight into how they view their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

## **Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians group**

The Commissioner joined other Children's Commissioners and Guardians as part of the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians Group (ACCG). The ACCG jointly advocated on national matters relating to children's health and wellbeing and promoted greater consistency of outcomes for children regardless of demographic or geographic factors.

During 2013-14, in addition to an individual submission, the Commission contributed to a joint submission from the ACCG to the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse *Issues Paper 3 - Child Safe Organisations*. The joint submission, developed by the ACT Commissioner, advocated for the adoption of guidelines contained in the National Framework Creating Safe Environments for Children.

The ACCG members met twice during 2013-14 and discussed a range of issues including:

- the differing application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in Australian states and territories
- children and young people in immigration and community detention
- documenting a fundamental set of rights for young people in youth detention
- children adopted overseas by expatriate Australians.

Commissioners and key staff from the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse attended the ACCG meetings to discuss a range of issues including preventing sexual abuse of children in out-of-home care, Working with Children Checks and child-safe/child-friendly organisations.

## ***Blue card - reducing risks to children in regulated service environments***

Introduced in May 2001, the blue card system delivered by the Commission was a key prevention and monitoring system for people working with children which aimed to minimise the risk of harm to children receiving services essential to their development and wellbeing.

It was the only system in Australia that offered fully integrated screening, daily monitoring of holders' and applicants' criminal histories, and a legislated requirement that organisations providing services to children must develop and implement a risk management strategy and review it annually.

The blue card system delivered by the Commission was a three part system which considered past, present and future risks of harm to children.

### ***PAST RISK — Consideration of past behaviour as an indicator of future risk***

The initial employment screening process assessed a person's eligibility to hold a blue card or exemption card based on the person's known police and disciplinary information.

This process prevented people from working with children in regulated service environments if their past behaviour indicates that they are unable to protect a child from harm and promote their wellbeing.

It also disqualified certain people upfront from applying for a blue card (i.e. those convicted of a serious child-related sex or child pornography offence or the murder of a child).

### ***PRESENT RISK — Ongoing monitoring***

Applicants' and card holders' police information was monitored daily through an electronic interface with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). If there was any change in an applicant's or card holder's police information relevant to their child-related employment, the

Commission took steps to immediately protect children from harm.

For example, if the person was charged with a disqualifying offence (such as a child pornography offence or a serious child-related sexual offence), the Commission immediately suspended their blue or exemption card, pending the result of the legal process, and the person was prevented from engaging in regulated child-related activities until their eligibility was reassessed.

In addition, the Commission monitored and audited service providers' compliance with blue card system obligations to ensure that appropriate safeguards for children and young people were being implemented and maintained.

### ***FUTURE RISK — Mitigating future risk***

Organisations and self-employed persons whose business activities fell within the scope of the blue card system were required to implement child and youth risk management strategies. These strategies are aimed at ensuring that there were appropriate policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise the potential risk of harm to children and young people in regulated service environments.

The Commission's legislation outlined eight minimum requirements for child and youth risk management strategies including:

- implementing appropriate codes of conduct
- having policies for identifying and reporting disclosures and suspicions of harm
- having procedures for the recruitment, selection and training of appropriate employees and volunteers.

**A practical example** of the blue card system in operation can be found on the following page.

## *Blue card system in operation*

### ***What is the blue card process?***

The blue card process administered by the Commission involved a check of an individual's national criminal history including charges and convictions. It also took into account disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations and police investigative information in relation to allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid. A person whose application was approved was issued with a positive notice and a blue card. If a person's application was refused, they were issued with a negative notice which prohibited them from carrying on a business or providing child-related activities in the categories regulated by the Commission's Act.

### ***Case study***

A 44 year old man applied for and was issued with a blue card on the basis that he had no police information. Shortly afterwards, the Commission was notified through its information sharing provisions with the Queensland College of Teachers that disciplinary action had been taken against the individual regarding concerning behaviour that he had exhibited while being a teacher.

The disciplinary information provided indicated that the individual had engaged in inappropriate relationships with three students over a period of six years and had exchanged a large number of highly personal text messages, letters and other communications over social media with the students. Additionally, he had later commenced a sexual relationship with a former student within three weeks of that student graduating high school. The individual had been formally cautioned by his employer regarding the inappropriate communications with students but had continued to communicate with students.

Although no formal police proceedings had been commenced against the individual and he did not have any criminal history, the Commission was able to re-assess his blue card status on the basis of this disciplinary information. After assessing submissions received from the individual, the Commission determined that it would not be in the best interests of children for his blue card to be continued. Accordingly, the individual's blue card was cancelled and he was prohibited from continuing to work with children.

The individual appealed this decision. However the Commission's decision was upheld by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT). QCAT stated that the individual's conduct raised doubts as to whether he properly understood his role and responsibilities when placed in a position of trust and authority over children and that the individual failed to demonstrate appropriate insight into the harmful effects of his behaviour.

## **Maintaining strong safeguards**

### **Keeping high risk individuals out**

A key strength of the blue card system administered by the Commission was daily monitoring of blue and exemption card applicants and holders to identify changes in relevant criminal history that indicated the need for cancellation, suspension or refusal of a blue card.

The Commission worked in partnership with child-related organisations to process applications, provide blue card education and risk management advice, and conduct compliance activities.

In 2013-14, the Commission processed 302,931 blue and exemption card applications, renewals and authorisations and identified 1,291 cases where individuals represented a high risk and were consequently prevented from working with children (with 8,181 cases identified since the blue card's inception in 2001).

As at 30 June 2014, 639,219 blue and exemption card holders and applicants were working or volunteering across 714,854 child-related environments, indicating that many people use their blue card for more than one purpose.

The graph on page 14 shows the breakdown of the various categories of regulated employment and businesses where people were working with children and young people as at 30 June 2014.

As many blue card holders were engaged with more than one child-related organisation, a key strength of the blue card system delivered by the Commission was the mandatory requirement for all organisations to notify the Commission if they employ someone who already holds a card. This allowed the Commission to notify all relevant employers and volunteer coordinators across a range of employment categories of any updates about any changes to an applicant's or card holder's status, for example if their card was suspended

or cancelled following a change in their police information.

All community engagement activities highlighted the importance of this requirement, including the provision of advice by the Commission through written risk management feedback and community education workshops designed to strengthen organisational child protection policies and procedures.

### **Improved processing capability**

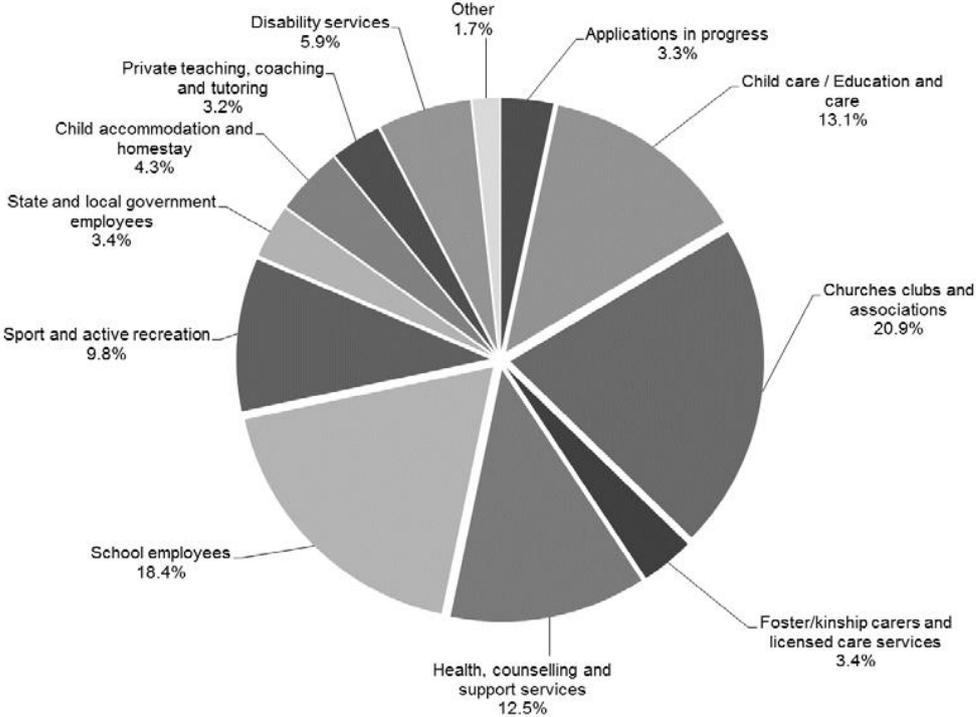
During 2013-14, the Commission continued to progress initiatives to explore options to better leverage technology to create efficiencies and improve processing timeframes. Key examples of improved processing capability included:

- the successful integration between the blue card database and HP TRIM (an electronic documents and records management system), delivering a system which complies with Queensland State Archives' record keeping standards and provides a platform for future digitisation activities
- automation of specific processing activities to reduce paper-based file use and improve turnaround times.

In 2013, the Government committed to streamlining the blue card application process and reported that work was underway to transition to online applications. However, progression of this work was deferred, pending the Government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) Report.

Government has now accepted the QCPCOI recommendation that responsibility for administration of the blue card system be transferred, with further streamlining to occur. Accordingly, the system transferred to the Public Safety Business Agency on 1 July 2014 and further opportunities to streamline the system will be explored.

**Breakdown of the various categories of regulated employment and businesses where people are working with children and young people as at 30 June 2014.**



## **Improving compliance with blue card requirements**

The Commission's compliance activities focused on educating and building the capacity of organisations and individuals to achieve compliance with their blue card system obligations. The Commission also conducted reactive audits in response to complaints, as well as proactive large scale audits across categories of employment.

In 2013-14, the Commission corresponded with 1,337 regulated businesses and organisations to provide information in relation to legislative requirements and increase compliance with the requirements of the blue card system.

It also conducted compliance checks of 300 organisations and 16,104 individuals. This included targeted audits of individuals identified as high risk to confirm that organisations have acted on the Commission's notification that the individual was not eligible to engage in regulated employment.

The Commission also continued its collaborative approach of developing and supporting strategic partnerships with key stakeholders and communities to mitigate risks of harm to children in regulated environments.

For example, in 2013-14 the Commission progressed large-scale compliance audits in partnership with a number of organisations including the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association, and the Office of Non-State Schools. Other key compliance activities included engaging with Catholic Archdioceses to implement consistent practices for the submission of blue card applications for clergy

Although the Commission did not ratify or approve service providers' child and youth risk management strategies, it provided written feedback and support to assist service providers strengthen their child protection policies. In 2013-14, the Commission provided detailed written feedback to 75 organisations on their risk management strategies, each

individually tailored to meet the organisation's specific operational requirements.

The Commission also took action in response to information received from the public (or other Commission functions such as complaints resolution) that raised blue card compliance issues.

The following outlines the blue card compliance model.

### **Blue card compliance model**

#### **Step one – Initial contact made**

The Commission contacted organisations or individuals to seek information from them (or provide information if needed) to help them meet their compliance obligations.

#### **Step two – Warning issued**

If the compliance matter remained unresolved, the service provider is warned in writing of the penalties of non-compliance.

#### **Step three – Investigation/prosecution**

In the final instance, if the matter remained unresolved, it was referred to the Queensland Police Service for investigation and prosecution, if appropriate.

Where the Commission suspected or identified a serious breach which required immediate escalation, or the Commission was unable to engage with an individual or employer, the matter was referred to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) for investigation and possible prosecution.

In 2013-14, the Commission referred 174 matters, involving a total of 436 potential breaches of the Commission's Act, to the QPS for investigation. These referrals involved potential breaches of individual obligations under the Act, and potential breaches by organisations/regulated businesses. The QPS also identified and initiated their own investigations of an additional 18 matters involving 25 potential breaches of the Commission's Act during this period.

**Practical examples** of blue card compliance activities can be found on the following pages.

## ***Community organisation collaborates with Commission to increase compliance***

The Commission received complaint information about two coaches employed by a state-wide sporting organisation providing services to children at a highly competitive level.

Following receipt of this information, the Commission engaged with the organisation and obtained a copy of their child and youth Risk Management Strategy (RMS) which outlined a number of policies and procedures.

The Commission reviewed this strategy and provided comprehensive written feedback to the organisation indicating where the policies and procedures could be improved or strengthened. Subsequent to providing this feedback, the Commission received further complaint information which indicated that although the organisation had developed a comprehensive RMS, the organisation had not actually implemented these policies and procedures in their service environment.

The Commission liaised further with the organisation and, given the repeated nature of the complaint information, determined that it was also appropriate to refer the complaint information to the organisation's national oversight body.

Representatives from the Commission then met with a representative of the organisation to discuss the complaint matters and to provide further practical advice as to how the organisation could implement and strengthen their RMS to better manage these issues.

During this meeting the organisation acknowledged that further work needed to be done by their organisation to better implement their policies and procedures in practice, particularly in relation to their communication with parents and children participating in their service.

The organisation developed a new staff training workshop with the aim of ensuring that their RMS policies and procedures were implemented in practice and reflected an organisational culture of commitment to child safety.

The organisation provided verbal feedback that they viewed the information and support provided by the Commission to be very useful in developing and implementing strategies to create a more child-safe and child-friendly environment.

## ***Blue card system prevented a high-risk individual from working with children***

The blue card system administered by the Commission placed legislative obligations on organisations and business operators providing regulated services to children and young people.

Of particular importance was the mandatory requirement for employers to notify the Commission when engaging a new employee who was already a current blue card holder (by submitting an '*Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application*' form).

This ensured that employers received important updates about any changes to an applicant or card holder's status; for example, if their card was suspended or cancelled following a change in their police information.

While employers could check that a person's card was current by using the Commission's online validation service, this was a point-in-time check of a card's validity and did not replace the obligation to complete and submit the authorisation form.

In 2013-14, the Commission processed 58,992 authorisation forms, linking these individuals to new employer organisations in its database.

The value of this process as a protective mechanism was evident where there was a significant change in a blue card holder's police information.

For example, a 22 year old man applied for a blue card to volunteer with children at his church. As the applicant had no criminal or other history, he was eligible to work with children and was issued a blue card.

Six months later, the individual applied to volunteer with a state-wide religious organisation providing youth outreach and other services to vulnerable children and young people. While the individual showed the organisation his valid blue card, the organisation followed correct process and submitted an '*Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application*' form with the Commission, in addition to checking its validity online.

Soon after, the Commission received notification through its daily electronic monitoring with the Queensland Police Service that the individual had been charged with possessing child pornography.

On the basis of this information, the Commission immediately suspended the individual's blue card.

While the individual did not advise either of his employers of the change in his police information, the Commission was able to immediately notify both his church and the volunteer organisation that the change had occurred and the individual's card had been suspended. Further, that he was now prohibited from engaging in the regulated child-related activities until his eligibility was reassessed.

Both organisations were consequently captured in a high-risk proactive audit undertaken by the Commission, and have since provided official confirmation that the individual is no longer in contact with children in either organisation.

## **Stakeholder feedback informs blue card continuous improvement**

### **Measuring stakeholders views about the value of the blue card system in creating safer service environments for children**

In 2013-14, the Commission continued to measure stakeholder views of its role in assisting to create safer service environments for children through a range of stakeholder surveys. Analysis of this feedback informed continuous improvement of the blue card system including compliance activities and community education and engagement.

Public confidence in the strength of the blue card system was also measured by periodic surveys. Results indicate that the majority of people valued its contribution in helping to provide safer environments for children and young people, with 97% of stakeholders surveyed in 2013-14 responding that they were satisfied with its contribution, including 59% who rated the system as 'excellent'.

A number of organisations who were provided with written feedback on their risk management strategy (RMS) also voluntarily took part in a survey to determine whether they found this feedback useful and how the feedback was used to increase the safety of children in regulated service environments. Of the organisations surveyed:

- 97% advised that they were satisfied with the RMS advice service provided, with 63% rating it as 'excellent'
- 61% used the RMS feedback provided to either develop or amend their child protection policies
- of the organisations who made changes to their RMS after receiving feedback from the Commission, 77% conducted educative activities to help children and young people understand their right to feel safe, while
- 62% reported that they implemented additional procedures designed to reduce risks of harm to children and young people

- 87% of organisations who reported accessing RMS resources and toolkits available on the Commission's website found these resources helpful.

### **Measuring stakeholder satisfaction with the Commission's blue card services**

The Commission also measured stakeholder satisfaction with its blue card system services.

Data for 2013-14 showed that 98% of those surveyed were satisfied with the services provided by the Commission. Findings about specific services showed that:

- over 88% of stakeholders surveyed who submitted written enquiries to the Commission website reported that they were satisfied with the service provided in response to their inquiry
- over 99% of survey participants who called the Commission with a request for blue card information reported that they were satisfied with this service.

#### **Feedback from organisations**

##### **Organisations provided with risk management strategy feedback**

*"it was excellent"*

*"very helpful"*

*"... it was very thorough, we made all the recommended changes"*

##### **Stakeholders who contacted the Commission with written or phone enquiries**

*"thanks for (the) timely response from a government department, and clear answer to my question to satisfy Ethics boards"*

*"100% customer service. Prompt, very helpful, and exactly the type of customer service I would like to receive everywhere"*

## **Collaborating to create safe service environments for children**

The Commission worked to create safe and supportive service environments for young people through developing and sustaining effective working partnerships with government stakeholders and the many employers, businesses and organisations who provided services to children.

## **Engaging with the community**

During 2013-14, the Commission engaged with over 137,700 people to raise awareness of the blue card system and enhance safeguards for children and young people in regulated child-related service environments, and conducted 74 community engagement activities involving over 2,000 participants from a diverse range of stakeholders including government agencies, religious organisations, youth sector peak bodies, educational institutions and community organisations across Queensland.

Of the blue card community information and education session participants surveyed in 2013-14:

- 99% reported that the Commission's workshops and education activities increased their knowledge about the requirements of the blue card system and how they applied to their organisation
- 98% reported that the workshops assisted them in understanding the importance of having, and continuously improving, a risk management strategy to manage risks of harm to children and young people within their organisation
- 95% reported that the Commission's workshops and education activities had provided them with ideas on how to develop or amend their organisation's policies to better safeguard children and young people in their service environment.

In 2013-14, the Commission also continued engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and stakeholders through teleconferences with communities to foster

relationships gained as a result of previous visits to the communities. This included consultation with Community Justice Groups and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service where possible to ensure appropriate support was made available to individual applicants wishing to complete the application process.

In 2013-14, the Commission also undertook comprehensive engagement activities focusing on communities in South West Queensland. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in this region were well represented at these engagements.

### **Feedback from community engagement**

Community organisation participants provided the following comments at blue card education activities over 2013-14:

*"Clear and well-spoken presenter with excellent knowledge"*

*"Thanks for the effort put into this. It was done most respectfully"*

*"On behalf of our group of churches I would like to thank you for helping to organise our risk management workshop ... We consider these workshops very valuable in recognising and performing our best endeavours in meeting our obligation towards those entrusted to our care. We have reached a stage where child protection and risk management have become a normal part of our organisational planning, and in that sense, a part of our culture. Indeed, we are pleased to say that the guidelines on which our own risk policies are made has had influence with our other churches in Australia, and for that we have your Commission to thank"*

During 2013-14, the Commission continued its engagement with disability support services to increase their awareness of blue card system obligations, with a strong emphasis on child and youth risk management.

**A practical example** of the Commission's blue card community engagement can be found on the following page.

## *Engaging with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and key stakeholders*

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) committed to the roll out of the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) aimed at increasing the attendance of children at school in remote Indigenous communities across the country.

In January 2014 the DPMC contacted the Commission to establish Queensland's screening requirements and proposed timeframes. DPMC advised that they planned to roll out the RSAS within weeks.

As the Commission was aware of the potential barriers faced by people in these communities, it was able to advise the DPMC that to meet their planned timeframe, a coordinated approach between the Commission, the DPMC and other stakeholders would be required. To facilitate this, the Commission provided an 'individualised' approach to screening, which included:

- regular teleconferences with all stakeholders to discuss issues and to develop a strategy to assist with the swift processing of the applications
- the development of a specific information sheet to highlight the key processes when applying for a blue card, aimed at organisations recruiting School Attendance Officers
- ensuring there was one point of contact for all stakeholders to forward applications to, enabling the Commission to prioritise and monitor the progress of the applications given the initiative commenced during a peak period for blue card applications
- prompt resolution of issues that arose including incorrectly filled-in forms or difficulties meeting identification requirements
- highlighting the use of the 'Authority to Liaise' form allowing an applicant to nominate another person to communicate with the Commission where there were language or literacy barriers
- frequent telephone contact with applicants and other stakeholders where further information was required to be assessed.

The approach adopted by the Commission assisted the DPMC to meet their timeframes for the roll out of the RSAS, and contributed to its aim of achieving better outcomes for children and young people through increasing school attendance in remote communities.

## ***Working with the Queensland Police Service***

The Commission maintained a close working relationship with QPS through the Police Investigation Management Officer, a QPS officer who was positioned within the Commission to act as an integral link between the two agencies.

The Commission, through its partnership with QPS, monitored the continued eligibility of over 630,000 individuals on a daily basis. This was a critical component of the system as it enabled the Commission to take steps to immediately protect children from harm if a blue or exemption card holder or applicant was subsequently charged with an offence which was relevant to their child-related employment.

In 2013-14, the QPS notified the Commission of 2,436 cases where there had been a change in an individual's criminal history. This included any change, from minor offending behaviour (e.g. public nuisance) through to serious (e.g. sexual assault) or disqualifying offences (e.g. child-related sex or pornography offences).

Once notified, the Commission took immediate steps to determine the individual's continued eligibility to hold a blue or exemption card to engage in child-related employment. These steps could have resulted in:

- cards being immediately suspended
- cards being cancelled by the Commission following the assessment of a notified change in police information
- individuals voluntarily surrendering their card and ceasing to engage in regulated employment due to a change in their criminal history
- cards being continued if the offence is determined not to impact on the person's eligibility to hold a blue card.

In 2013-14 the Commission also delivered tailored training on the blue card system and related offences to QPS Child Protection Investigation Unit officers. This training

strengthened officers' understanding of the Commission's Act and increased police capacity to identify breaches of the legislation.

This inter-agency collaboration increased individual officers' ability to assist the Commission in dealing with instances of non-compliance with blue card system obligations, and to take action in relation to allegations of or suspected harm against children and young people.

## ***Keeping stakeholders informed about blue card***

The Commission's website was a key resource for the community to access information about the blue card system with blue card pages recording over 2.19 million page views in 2013-14.

The Commission continued to revise information in the blue card system section of its website in 2013-14 to provide a more user-friendly format for volunteers, employees, businesses and students to access information and resources.

The Commission also engaged with stakeholders to provide them with information in relation to their obligations and the requirements of the blue card system.

Key community information and education activities in 2013-14 included:

- holding blue card information sessions for stakeholder organisations across the western corridor of the state including Roma, Charleville, Cunnamulla and Toowoomba
- continuing to strengthen links with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities through regular teleconferences with community members of Aurukun, Woorabinda, Thursday Island and Yarrabah
- providing ongoing blue card system support and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities involved in the launch of the Federal Government's School Attendance Officer program

- working closely with a range of community and government organisations to ensure appropriate blue card screening of all applicants providing services to young people at “Schoolies” events.

## ***A framework for measuring blue card results***

During 2013-14, the Commission reported updated data against a framework of indicators implemented in 2012-13 that measured the value and contribution of the blue card system to increasing the safety of children in regulated service environments.

The Commission published the updated data in a series of website articles:

- *Measuring the value and contribution of the blue card system*
- *The blue card system and child protection in Queensland*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the blue card system.*

# Vulnerable children

**Strategic objective two:** Children and young people who are disadvantaged



## **Commission's role**

Generated evidence about issues impacting on vulnerable children and shared findings with government, the community and stakeholders.

Visited certain residential sites where vulnerable children not under statutory care may be living, and responded to any individual issues raised.

Advocated for changes to laws and services that improved vulnerable children's lives.

## **Generating evidence to improve outcomes for vulnerable children**

The Commission's *Trends and Issues Papers* identified emerging trends and patterns in child death and injury and were particularly important for raising awareness of risk factors impacting on vulnerable children.

### ***Trends and Issues Paper 19: Child deaths—prevalence of youth suicide in Queensland***

This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined the prevalence of youth suicides in Queensland over the past nine years and discussed emerging trends.

During the nine year period, there were 169 deaths of children and young people due to suicide. There has been a gradual increase in the number of suicides per year, with an average of 21.3 deaths for the period of 2010–11 to 2012–13 compared to 16.3 deaths from 2004–05 to 2006–07.

In 2012–13, suicide was the leading external cause of death for children aged 10–14 years and had the highest rate of suicide for this age group since 2004. Suicide was the second-leading external cause of death for young people aged 15–17 years.

The paper highlighted a potential emerging trend of youth suicides increasing in Queensland, particularly for children aged 10–14 years. Of concern was that male and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continued to be over-represented in the suicide figures.

The paper noted that it is essential that accurate data on the suicide deaths of children and young people is available to inform prevention and intervention activities. This included providing access to data held within the Queensland Child Death Register to research and policy stakeholders to inform evidence-based strategies to reduce youth suicide.

## **Advocacy for vulnerable children**

### ***Community Visitor advocacy for vulnerable children residing in 'visitable' sites***

In addition to visiting children and young people under statutory care who are living in out-of-home care or detention, CVs also made monthly visits to 'visitable sites' where children and young people who were not under statutory care may have been living in a range of residential care contexts including:

- being cared for in individual or small group residential care as part of a child protection order
- residing at youth shelters and refuges
- residing temporarily in disability respite facilities
- being accommodated and treated in acute mental health facilities
- residing at boarding school facilities as part of a child protection order
- living in supported independent living programs (either homelessness or child protection programs).

These site visits allowed the CV to report on the quality of care being provided at these facilities.

During these visits, vulnerable children and young people who were not under statutory care were able to raise their concerns directly with the CV and have their issues included in the site visit report lodged by the CV.

This ensured the issues were addressed and also contributed to the Commission's unique database on factors affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

The information provided by CVs' site visit reports was able to generate early alerts for the Commission on service delivery issues for children and young people and informed the Commission's advocacy and information sharing on these issues.

During 2013-14, 4,060 site reports by CVs were generated which included 496 reports for disability services facilities, 161 reports for mental health facilities and 16 reports for residential youth boot camps. During 2013-14, 2,500 issues were raised with CVs by vulnerable children in 'visitable' sites<sup>1</sup>.

The following table provides specific data on the top types of issues raised.

Issue type <sup>2</sup>	No. of issues per type	% of total issues
<b>Placement arrangements</b> (e.g. safe living environment, stability of placement, stability of placement)	461	18%
<b>Contact</b> (e.g. contact with family, siblings, Child Safety Officer)	441	18%
<b>Education</b> (e.g. services and support, attendance, education support plans)	226	9%
<b>Decision making, consents and information provision</b> (e.g. bank accounts and financial management, education, medical and dental procedures, and recreation)	178	7%
<b>Harm or risk or harm</b> (e.g. physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, psychological or emotional harm, neglect)	171	7%

<sup>1</sup> Excludes issues raised regarding visitable sites and youth boot camps

## Mental health and young people

The Commission participated in three of six stakeholder consultation forums convened by the Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) to assist with its development of Queensland's strategic plan for improving mental health and limiting harm associated with substance misuse.

Those three forums discussed issues particularly affecting the following populations:

- children and young people
- those involved with the forensic or correctional system
- government agency stakeholders.

## Removing 17 year olds from the adult correctional system

Commission feedback on the *Safer Streets Crime Action Plan – Youth Justice* did not support transferring young people from detention to adult correctional facilities when they turn 17 and advocated for including 17 year olds into the youth justice system in the proposed review of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

**A practical example** of a Community Visitor advocating for a vulnerable child can be found on the following page.

<sup>2</sup> Note that issue classifications may differ slightly to those reported in 2012-13. This is due to the Commission developing an improved issue classification scheme in 2013-14 to better categorise and analyse issues raised by young people.

## *Resolving issues locally*

### *A Community Visitor's individual advocacy on behalf of a vulnerable young person following a site visit to a residential facility*

Daniel and Tom\* were recently placed together in a residential facility. Both young people had high needs and Daniel had specialised disability needs.

Following a Community Visitor (CV) visit to the location, both young people expressed concern about their personal living arrangements and felt unsafe living in the placement with one another. Both young people felt the staff were not taking their experience of feeling unsafe seriously and did not feel that their Child Safety Officer's (CSO's) were listening to them. The CV had observed some concerning interactions between the young people which was also cause to raise concern with Child Safety, specifically regarding the young people's personal safety and security as well as the quality of the pre-placement matching of the young people prior to the placement.

The CV contacted the respective CSO's at different offices along with the Service Provider to discuss strategies that could be adopted to ensure the personal safety and security of both young people and support to assist the young people to live more harmoniously.

Following collaborative discussions with all service providers (and a recognition that the young people were approaching transition to independence), it was decided that, instead of simply separating the young people as a means to stop conflict, additional life skills and relationship building skills should be built into the household routine.

Following implementation of these strategies, the young people reported more positively about their living experience at subsequent visits. While they chose not to engage a lot together socially, they were able to live together more respectfully. Both were able to recognise that in the future they may need to share accommodation with others. Learning skills to incorporate their and others' needs was helpful and valuable to them and made them feel safer and more at home.

*\* Not the young people's real names*

## Children in statutory care

**Strategic objective three:** Effective child safety and youth justice systems that protect and support children and young people where statutory intervention is appropriate.



## **Commission's role**

Provide a critical, independent safety net for children and young people in out-of-home care and detention, involving:

- visiting and building stable and trusting relationships with children in care and detention in order to independently verify their safety and wellbeing and resolve issues for them locally when standards of care are not being met
- independently resolving serious or complex complaint issues, particularly where the interests of children are not being met
- independently investigating issues impacting on children in care and detention and recommending changes that will improve outcomes for children and accountability of government
- building an independent evidence base on the outcomes experienced by children in care and detention and their views of the experience
- using this evidence to independently report on the performance of the closed and confidential child protection and youth justice systems
- conducting blue card employment screening for carers, adults residing in a carer's home and adults wishing to work with children in care
- advocating for changes to laws and services that will improve the lives of children in care and detention.

## **Advocacy on behalf of children in care or detention**

### **Safer Streets Crime Action Plan – Youth Justice**

The Commission provided feedback on the *Safer Streets Crime Action Plan – Youth Justice* that:

- noted that intensive intervention programs which have been demonstrated to be effective in stemming further offending, should be available for young people who are at high risk of becoming persistent and serious offenders
- noted that the number of young people in the youth justice system who have been exposed to the child protection system is significant and highlights the importance of making therapeutic, mental health and other practical supports available to this vulnerable cohort of children and young people
- highlighted that approaches for reducing youth violence and antisocial behaviour need to be multi-faceted; targeting multiple risk and protective factors at multiple levels of influence including school-based multi-component strategies targeting the individual child, the family, the peer group, and the school system
- noted that understanding the reasons why young people breach bail and are not granted bail is the critical first step in addressing the high number of young people on remand in Queensland
- supported prevention and early intervention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- did not support the following proposals:
  - removing the principle of detention being an option of last resort. While the Action Plan indicates that the removal of the principle of detention as a last resort will allow courts to consider a broader range of options when sentencing

young offenders, in the Commission's view the only further option it opened up was detention

- naming and shaming of young offenders as there is little evidence to suggest that publicly naming a young offender acts as a deterrent and it is unlikely to assist in reducing the rate of young people reoffending
- creating an offence for a breach of bail as it is important to understand the reasons young people breach bail before making any legislative change which will have the effect of criminalising them.

### **Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**

In a submission to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee consultation regarding the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, the Commission identified significant risks associated with:

- removing the sentencing principle that detention should only be imposed as a last resort
- the naming and shaming of repeat offenders
- the transferring of 17 year olds to adult prisons
- requiring recidivist motor vehicle youth offenders in Townsville to attend boot camps as this could compromise the effectiveness of sentenced boot camps where a young offender is an unsuitable candidate or is unlikely to benefit from participating in the program.

The Commission recommended the Bill include:

- a legislated review requirement
- mandatory transitional case management plans for 17 year olds transferring to adult prisons
- a criterion in the pre-sentencing assessment for recidivist motor vehicle

youth offenders in Townsville that would make a child ineligible for a boot camp order if the child and the family do not demonstrate a willingness to participate in the boot camp program, and

- clarification of what is meant by the term '*not a first time offender*'.

### **Youth boot camps evaluation process**

The Commission provided feedback on the evaluation process for 'sentenced' and 'early intervention' youth boot camps.

The Commission recommendations included:

- Timelines and planning – sufficient time needs to be factored in for future rollouts to ensure that programs are fully developed before young people enter the boot camp program
- Staffing – clear need for increased staffing to meet the programs' goals and to provide sustainable programs
- Program's focus – the current focus of the boot camp programs needs to extend beyond the residential component to include the mentoring phase
- Referral process – strengthening the referral process for young people who would benefit from participation in youth boot camps to ensure the target group is reached
- Participation – the views of young people who participated in a youth boot camp programs and their families should be included as part of the evaluation process.

### **Preventing sexual abuse of children in out-of-home care**

During 2013-14, the Commission provided a submission to the Royal Commission into *Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Issues Paper 4 - Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children in Out-of-Home Care*.

The Commission recommended that effective strategies to prevent abuse of children in out-of-home care (OOHC) are those which aim to:

- create an OOHC environment which minimises the likelihood of harm occurring
- reduce children's vulnerability to abuse
- empower children by giving them a voice and creating avenues for their voices to be heard
- provide ongoing monitoring of children to improve the detection of abuse
- create mechanisms and procedures which respond appropriately to allegations or incidents of abuse
- provide effective independent oversight of the system.

The Commission also recommended that core strategies for OOHC environments should include:

- a comprehensive multi-state recruitment and approval process for carers
- employment screening 'working with children checks' and daily criminal history monitoring of carers and adults residing in carer households
- appropriate carer training and ongoing support
- matching placement of children to carers
- providing carers and children with adequate information.

**A practical example** of the Commission's role in advocating for children in care or detention can be found in the following case study.

### *Advocacy for children in residential care*

John\* was a young person in residential care who sought assistance from his Community Visitor (CV) about obtaining his learner's permit and driving lessons. He identified with the CV that this was important for him so that he could obtain his licence and as a result better employment opportunities.

John was uncertain about whether or not this was something that the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services could assist him with or if it was something he would have to undertake himself. John had no one who could assist him with practising driving.

John's CV assisted John to approach his Child Safety Officer (CSO) to discuss this issue. As a result of the discussions, with the assistance of the CV and through positive collaboration with his CSO, John was able to obtain funding for his licence and driving lessons so that he was best prepared to confidently sit his driving test.

*\* Not the young person's real name*

## **Visiting children in care or detention**

The Commission's Community Visitor (CV) program started in 2001 with visits to children in detention and residential sites.

In 2004, the Crime and Misconduct Commission Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Foster Care identified a need for regular and independent assessment of the safety and wellbeing of children in foster homes.

In October 2004, the CV program was extended to include children in foster care. In 2012, CVs started visiting 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities.

### **Community Visitor program 2013-14**

#### **What did our Community Visitors do?**

Community Visitors (CVs) visited children in foster care, residential care, detention, boot camps and authorised mental health services to independently monitor their safety and wellbeing (against legislated standards of care) and worked to resolve issues raised by children locally or refer more serious or complex issues to appropriate agencies.

CVs made unannounced visits to 'visitable sites' where children may have been living in a residential care context e.g. youth shelters. CVs prepared a written report after each visit and the data was entered into the Commission's centralised database.

CVs administered the state-wide *Views Survey* series that sought the views of children and young people in care and detention about their lived experiences.

#### **Number of visits made by CV's 2013-14**

During 2013-14, CVs:

- visited 7,918 individual children and young people
- generated 42,590 individual child reports
- visited a range of 'visitable' sites and generated 4,060 site reports.

#### **How often were visits made to children and how often did the schedule change?**

The Commission adopted a risk management approach to visiting which balanced efficiency in the use of CV resources with minimal intrusion in the lives of children and carers.

Monthly visits were made to residential facilities, remote Indigenous communities and carer homes where some issues have been raised, or when a child or young person has been recently placed.

Bi-monthly visits occurred in carer homes where the placement had been stable for some time and where no serious issues were raised for six months.

Children were moved from bi-monthly back to monthly visits for two reasons:

- when a child changed placement, the Commission's policy provided for the child to receive monthly visits in order to assess the child's needs for subsequent visit frequency
- if a CV determined that there was an issue with a child's welfare that would be best addressed by increasing visit frequency, the child moved to monthly visits.

During 2013-14, there were 752 instances of children and young people previously receiving bi-monthly visits moving back to monthly visits.

#### **How did children and young people rate the helpfulness of their Community Visitor**

For the 2013 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care survey, young people were asked to rate the helpfulness of their CV on a scale from 1 (very unhelpful) to 10 (very helpful).

The survey found that 82% of young people rated their CVs' helpfulness at 9 or 10 (with a mean score of 9.3).

There has been a significant increase in perceived helpfulness of CVs since 2006 when 70% of young people rated the helpfulness of their CV at 9 or 10 (with a mean score of 8.8).

The 2012 Views of Children and Young People in Residential Care reported that most young people (62%) gave their CV 10 out of 10, making 10 the median score. The mean score was 8.7 out of 10.

More information on the Views Survey series can be found at page 43.

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### ***Number of issues raised by children with their CVs***

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During 2013-14, 14,968 issues were raised by children with their CV and resolved locally by the CV. Of these:

- 94% were successfully resolved locally by the CV with service providers
- 92% related to service delivery by the child protection system.

### ***A Community Visitor resolves an issue locally for a young person in care that involved education support***

During a visit, Janine\* told her Community Visitor that she was having some trouble at school, most particularly with her maths.

She told the CV that this was making her dislike school and she felt like she couldn't do anything right.

Her carer told the CV that she attended a meeting at the school and it became apparent that Janine needs extra support.

The carer told the CV that she believes Janine could benefit from tutoring. Following the visit the CV made contact with Janine's CSO who was not aware of her concerns or difficulties at school.

The CSO was in the first instance unwilling to deviate from the education support plan which did not include tutoring, however undertook to discuss with the Team Leader, whether or not the department could assist in this area.

Upon follow up with the CSO, the CV was advised that Child Safety would be able to assist with tutoring.

\* *Not the young person's real name*

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### ***CVs visit young people in youth boot camps***

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During 2013-14, the Commission:

- made 16 visits to the two youth boot camps which were running at some stage in 2013-14
- raised 50 issues (the most common issues were regarding safety and living conditions)
- made adaptations to the current reporting system to ensure it was relevant to capturing information unique to the boot camp environment
- reported on all children residing in the Sentenced Youth Boot Camp (SYBC) residential facility individually. This was particularly important given the small number of young people in the trial program and to ensure accurate and easily accessible data could be collated regarding the views and experiences of young people who are visited by a CV during the residential phase of their boot camp order.
- conducted on-going discussions and liaison with DJAG to:
  - define clear guidelines for the reporting of concerns about serious harm reported by or on behalf of young people in the SYBC residential facility
  - establish clear guidelines and contact persons for CV advocacy
  - ensure that Commission information, in particular information regarding how to make a complaint, continues to be included in induction material provided to young people upon entry to the SYBC residential facility.

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**CVs visit 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities**

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During 2013-14, CVs visited 326 individual 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities and responded to 304 issues raised by them.

The top three types of issues raised by 17 year olds in adult correctional facilities were programs and services, safety and contact.

More detail for 2013-14 is provided in the following table.

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<b>Top three issue types <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>No. of issues per type</b>	<b>% of all issues raised by 17 years olds with CVs</b>
<b>Programs and Services</b> (e.g. education, training, health & transition planning)	107	35%
<b>Safety</b> (e.g. physical harm, responses, safety plans)	70	23%
<b>Contact</b> (e.g. mail or telephone, with family, with others)	51	17%

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**More data** on the Community Visitor program for 2013-14 can be found on the following pages.

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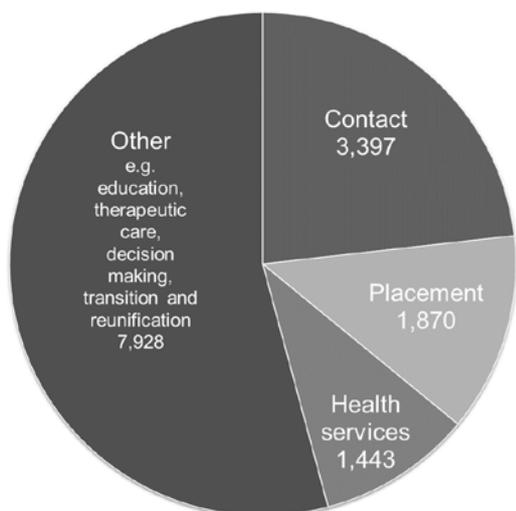
<sup>3</sup> Note that issue classifications may differ slightly to those reported in 2012-13. This is due to the Commission developing an improved issue classification scheme in 2013-14 to better categorise and analyse issues raised by young people.

## What type of issues did children in care ask their Community Visitor to help resolve?

### Breakdown of ALL ISSUES resolved locally by Community Visitors 2013-14

Of the 14,968 issues raised by children with CVs and resolved locally, 6,710 related to three types of matters: contact, placement arrangements and health services.

Issue type <sup>4</sup>	No. and % of all issues
<b>Contact</b> (e.g. contact with family, siblings, Child Safety Officer)	3,397 (23%)
<b>Placement arrangements</b> (e.g. safe living environment, stability of placement, stability of placement)	1,870 (12%)
<b>Health Services</b> (e.g. medical, sexual and mental health)	1,443 (10%)
<b>Other issues</b> (e.g. education, therapeutic care, decision making, transition and reunification)	Totalling 8,258 (Totalling 55%)
<b>Total issues</b>	<b>14,968</b>



<sup>4</sup> Note that issue classifications may differ slightly to those reported in 2012-13. This is due to the Commission developing an improved issue classification scheme in 2013-14 to better categorise and analyse issues raised by young people.

## What did children in care say was the most common type of help their Community Visitor gave them....

The Commission's 2013 Views Survey of Children and Young People in Foster Care reported the most commonly noted type of assistance was 'listening, friendship, support, understanding and doing things together'.

The Commission's 2012 Views Survey of Children in Residential Care reported the top types of help were advocacy on practical matters (e.g. more support from CSO, help with education, better family contact, and support with leaving care) and emotional support.

More information on the Views Survey series can be found at page 43.

## How well did the child protection system meet children's individual needs....

The Commission's performance assessment of the child protection system for 2010-13 found that while an increasing proportion of children have current case plans (93%), and 81% of children reported that they participated in their case plan's development, service delivery to those children with the highest and most complex needs is not as available or effective as it should be.

More information on the Performance Assessment for 2010-13 can be found at page 49.

### **Breakdown of CONTACT issues resolved by Community Visitors 2013-14**

Of the 3,397 contact-related issues resolved locally by CVs, the following were the major types of issues:

- 27% (930) related to the child's views and wishes
- 18% (602) related to contact with child
- 12% (397) related to contact frequency
- 7% (247) related to supervision and behaviour management

The remaining issues related to a range of other types of contact issues.

### **How well did the child protection system perform in reunification....**

The Commission's performance assessment of the child protection system for 2010-13 reported a small decrease in successful reunifications.

Despite existing case planning efforts and family support arrangements post-reunification, more than one in 10 children will still need to be returned to care to protect them from further harm. The Commission noted that reunification outcome measures will remain a significant indicator to monitor during the implementation of new family-based reforms across the sector.

More information on the Performance Assessment for 2010-13 can be found at page 49.

### **What did children in care say about contact with their family and friends....**

The Commission's 2013 *Views Survey of Children and Young People in Foster Care* found that:

- only around four in ten (40%) young people were happy with the frequency of contact they had with their family while more than half (51%) wanted more contact. Only 7.5% wanted less contact with their family
- 74% of young people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background indicated they felt in touch with their community, which is marginally higher than the 69% in 2011 and 71% in 2009, and significantly higher than the 63% in 2007
- of the 60% of *young people* who indicated that they had needed to contact their CV in the past, 75% indicated that they had been able to contact them all of the time. This figure is similar to that of 2011 (76%) but represents a statistically significant decline since 2007 (82%) and 2009 (80%)
- of the 63% of young people who indicated they had needed to contact their CSO, 39% reported being able to contact them all of the time, 35% most of the time, 13% not very often and 10% never. These figures are largely consistent with previous years but represent a significant improvement since 2006 when only 25% of young people reported being able to contact their CSO all of the time.

More information on the *Views Survey* series can be found at page 43.

### **Breakdown of PLACEMENT issues resolved by Community Visitors 2013-14**

Of the 1,870 placement arrangements-related issues resolved locally by CVs, the following were the major types of issues:

- 46% (851) related to conditions
- 30% (559) related to suitability
- 19% (346) related to stability

The remaining issues related to a range of other types of placement arrangements issues.

### **How well did the child protection system perform in providing stability of care....**

The Commission's performance assessment of the child protection system for 2010-13 reported that while there have been improvements in the majority of educational outcomes measures for children and young people in care over the reporting period, the data demonstrated that across most attainment combinations, at least 25% of children and young people in care were performing below the National Minimum Standard.

More information on the Performance Assessment for 2010-13 can be found at page 49.

### **What did children in residential care report about having a carer of the same cultural background as them during their placement....**

The Commission's 2012 Views Survey of Children in Residential Care found the majority (63%) of young people indicated that they do have at least one worker of the same cultural background.

Of the remaining young people, roughly equal numbers reported that they do not have a worker of the same cultural background (18%) or do not know if they have a worker of the same cultural background (19%). This is broadly consistent with 2011.

Having a carer of the same cultural background was particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as a way of supporting their connection to culture.

### **What did the Commission's Views Surveys report about foster care placement arrangements...**

The Commission's 2013 Views Survey of Children and Young People in Foster Care found that the average number of placements was 2.7, with more than one in five or (502 out of the 2417 who responded) reporting to have had more than three placements during their time in care.

Analyses revealed no significant differences between the 2013 and 2011 findings according to the placement history variables.

However since the surveys commenced, there have been a number of noteworthy changes including an increase in placement lengths and a reduction, since 2006, in the number of times that children and young people have experienced a failed reunification with their family

More information on the Views Survey series can be found at page 43.

### **Breakdown of HEALTH SERVICES issues resolved by Community Visitors 2013-14**

Of the 1,443 health services-related issues resolved locally by CVs, the following were the major types of issues:

- 60% (869) related to medical
- 21% (306) related to mental health
- 10% (143) related to Medicare card and health care card
- 9% (125) related to sexual health.

The remaining issues related to a range of other types of therapeutic care issues.

### **How well did the child protection system perform in health outcomes....**

The Commission's performance assessment of the child protection system for 2010-13 reported that health outcomes remained positive across most measures.

However, access to mental health and therapeutic services continued to be identified as a service delivery issue.

More information on the Performance Assessment for 2010-13 can be found at page 49.

### **What did young people in care report about their health needs....**

The Commission's 2013 *Views Survey of Children and Young People in Foster Care* found that 9.0% of young people reported that they had a health problem that they were concerned about.

This is similar to the 2011 figure of 8% but represented a significant improvement since 2009 and 2007 when 12% and 10% of young people respectively reported having a health problem that they were concerned about.

The majority of young people in foster care who reported having a health problem also reported having seen someone about their problem (78%). This proportion has improved steadily since 2007 when the question was first asked

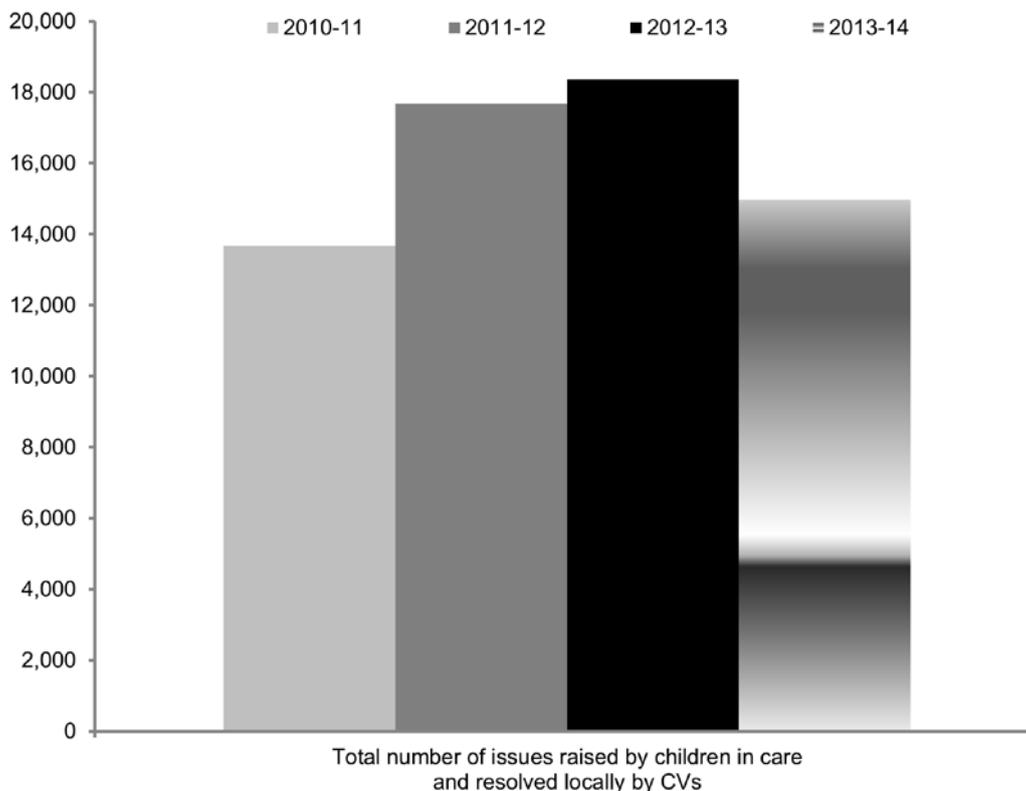
The Commission's 2012 *Views Survey of Children in Residential Care* found young people were most likely to indicate that they need help in relation to physical health (67%), schoolwork (66%) and emotional or mental health (66%).

Four fifths (80%) of young people reported having had a health check in the previous 12 months, which was consistent with the 2011 cohort.

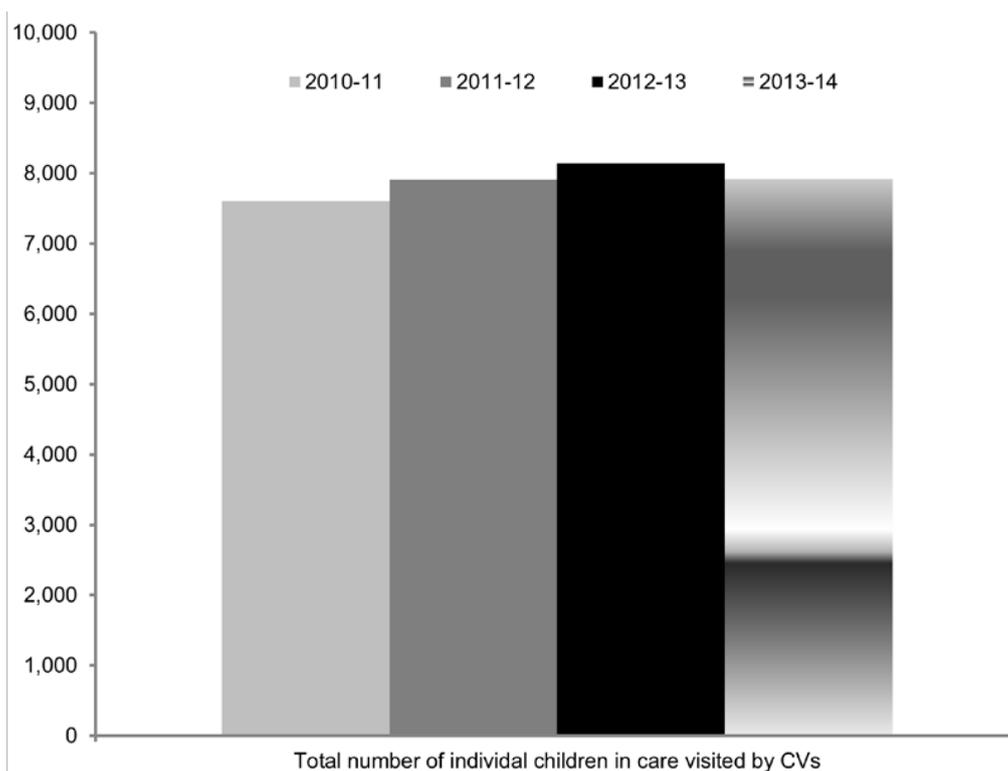
More information on the *Views Survey* series can be found at page 43.

## Trends in Community Visitor program over 2010-11 to 2013-14

### Trends in total number of issues resolved locally by Community Visitors 2010-11 to 2013-14



### Trends in total number of individual children visited by Community Visitors 2010-11 to 2013-14



## **What type of complaints did children ask the Commission to help resolve?**

As the child protection and youth justice systems are 'closed' systems, the Commission's independent complaints resolution mechanism provided a safety net for children and young people in care and assured the community there was an external accountability mechanism for government.

The Commission's Complaints Resolution Team (CRT) possessed professional knowledge and expertise on the delivery of services to children in the child protection system.

CRT conducted objective assessments of complaints that not only considered the statutory obligations of service providers, but also considered what outcome was in the best interests of the child.

### **Complaints resolution program 2013-14.**

#### **Who can complain**

Anyone could complain – young people themselves, parents, relatives, community members or agency representatives with concerns about services delivered to young people.

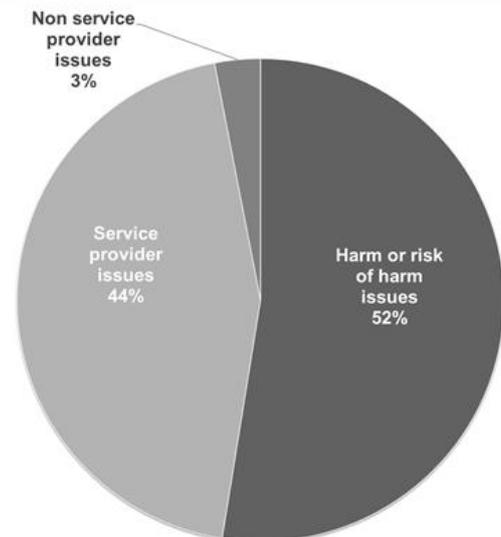
#### **What issues can they complain about**

The Commission could deal with complaints about any government or non-government service provided (or not being provided) to young people in the child safety and/or youth justice systems.

### **Complaint issues resolved 2013-14**

During 2013-14, the CRT resolved 2,718 complaint issues.

<b>Complaint issue type<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>No. and % of all complaint issues<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Harm or risk of harm</b>	1,420 (52%)
<b>Service providers</b>	1,203 (44%)
<b>Non-service providers</b>	95 (3%)
<b>Total complaint issues resolved</b>	<b>2,718</b>



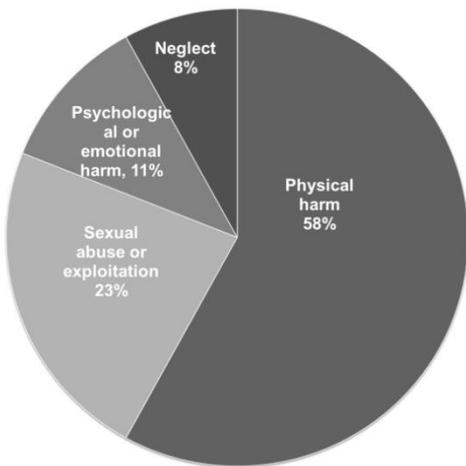
<sup>5</sup> Note that issue classifications may differ slightly to those reported in 2012-13. This is due to the Commission developing an improved issue classification scheme in 2013-14 to better categorise and analyse issues raised by young people.

<sup>6</sup> Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding error.

**HARM OR RISK OF HARM complaint issues resolved 2013-14**

Of the 1,420 harm or risk of harm complaint issues addressed by CRT:

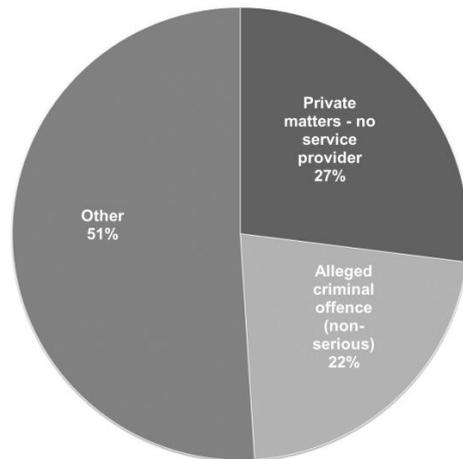
- 58% (818) related to physical harm
- 23% (328) related to sexual abuse or exploitation
- 11% (157) related to psychological or emotional harm
- 8% (117) related to neglect.



**NON-SERVICE PROVIDER complaint issues resolved 2013-14**

Of the 95 non-service provider complaint issues resolved by CRT:

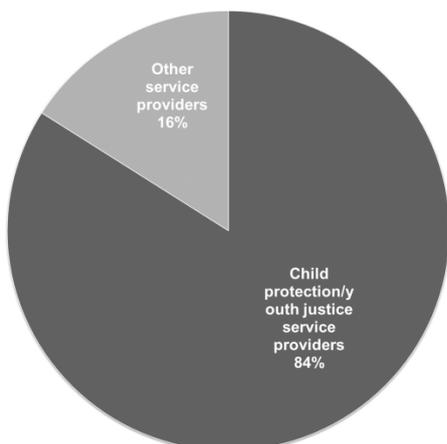
- 27% (26) related to private matters
- 22% (21) related to alleged criminal offence (non-serious)
- 51% (48) related to other non-service provider matters.



**SERVICE PROVIDER complaint issues resolved 2013-14**

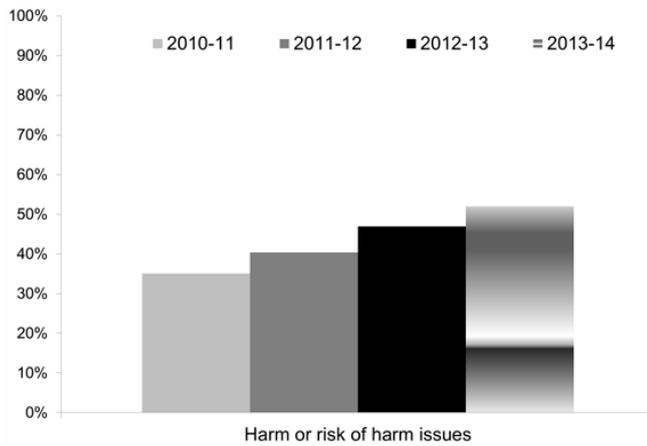
Of the 1,203 service provider complaint issues resolved by CRT:

- 84% (1,012) related to child protection/youth justice service providers
- 16% (191) related to other service providers.



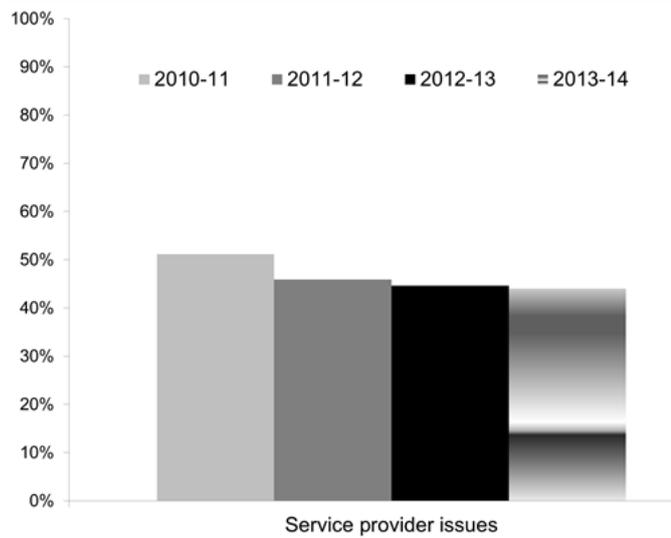
## Trends in complaint issues resolved 2010-11 to 2013-14

### Harm or risk of harm complaint issues

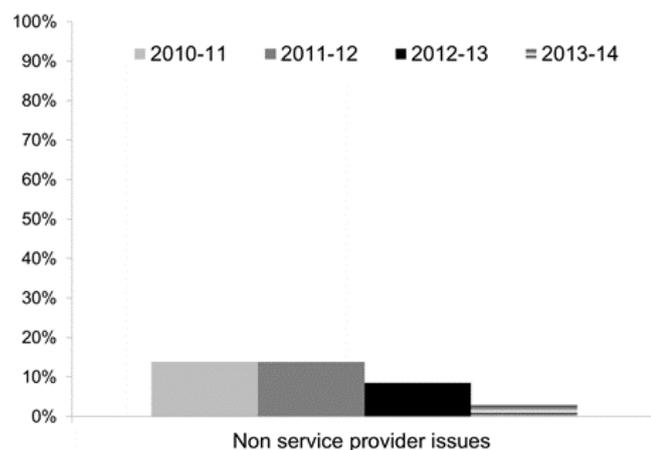


A practical example of the complaints resolution function advocating for children and young people can be found on the following page.

### Service provider complaint issues



### Non-service provider complaint issues



## *Advocating for children and young people with a complaint*

### *Advocating for kinship care options for young Indigenous people*

The complainant father contacted the Commission's Complaints Resolution Team (CRT) and requested assistance to advocate for his 17 year old son with a diagnosable mental health issue to be secured an appropriate kinship placement and for appropriate supports to be implemented to meet his needs.

The complainant father advised that his son resided in remote Queensland until relocating to rural Queensland approximately six months ago. During this time, his son had sought accommodation at a youth shelter through the assistance of a biological uncle. However, an officer from Child Safety Services provided information to the youth shelter about his son's previous behaviours which resulted in his son not being provided accommodation. Child Safety Services indicated that his son could secure accommodation at an adult shelter.

The complainant father and uncle opposed this decision and the uncle decided to allow the young person to reside at his home. Since this time, Child Safety Services had not provided support to the young person or financial support to assist the young person's uncle meet his needs.

Through advocacy initially with the service centre and then escalation to the Child Safety Regional Director, the CRT negotiated that the uncle be provided financial assistance to meet the young person's needs, a senior departmental officer engage in face-to-face contact with the young person and his uncle to determine the appropriate level of support required to meet his needs, and the kinship carer application to be fast tracked. The complainant father and uncle expressed the value added by involvement of the CRT in ensuring better outcomes for the young person and in particular ensuring the young person's cultural rights and needs were met.

### *Advocating for improved service delivery for young people in their placement*

The Commission's Complaints Resolution Team (CRT) was advised by the Community Visitor of unresolved issues relating to an Indigenous carer not meeting the needs of the three Aboriginal adolescent siblings in her care. The most significant issue related to the carer not facilitating access to medical and therapeutic services to meet the health needs of one of the young people. Of major concern was that carer was not allowing Child Safety Services access with the children at the placement. Further, the educational needs of all three young people were not being met.

A collaborative multi-disciplinary approach was coordinated by the CRT to achieve better outcomes and positively influence service delivery to the young person. Through the extensive advocacy efforts of the CRT, the Indigenous carer support agency acknowledged that the carer's current lack of engagement was a significant issue and would potentially require a review of her carer approval status if an immediate solution was not obtained.

Increased support was provided to the carer by the Indigenous carer support agency that resulted in the child attending appointments and having her health needs met. In addition, the carer support agency undertook actions to work collaboratively with Child Safety Services to break down the barriers to engagement with the carer that was associated with her experiences as a member of the Stolen Generation.

Further discussions were undertaken in relation to the educational needs of the young people and progression of enrolment to private school for the two older siblings occurred. In addition, a community service was commissioned by Child Safety Services to engage with the other young person to recommence her engagement in academic studies.

## ***Giving a voice to children in care or detention - the Views Survey series***

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to the following Views Survey reports will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

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***The Views Surveys was the largest repeated cross-sectional longitudinal study of its kind that involved the direct participation of children and young people in care.***

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The Commission's *Views of Children and Young People* survey series (the *Views Surveys*) sought the views of children and young people in foster care, residential care and detention and were established in response to the 2004 CMC Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Foster Care.

The surveys were administered by the Commission's Community Visitors where the child or young person resided (e.g. in the foster carer's home, in a residential facility or in a detention facility).

The survey process allowed children and young people to make their own assessment of the quality of their care, to share their lived experience of care in their own words and to have direct input into important areas of child protection policy and practice. Where the children were too young to be able to complete the survey, the carer completed the survey on behalf of the child.

### ***What did we learn about the lived experiences of children in care?***

During 2013-14, the Commission published:

- *2013 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care Survey: Overview and selected findings*

- a focus paper *Education* from the *2011 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care*
- *2012 Views of Young People in Residential Care: Overview and selected findings*
- a focus paper *Young people's connections with family and friends outside their care environment* from the *2012 Views of Young People in Residential Care*.

### ***Views of children and young people in foster care***

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#### ***2013 Overview and key findings***

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The key findings from the fifth survey of children and young people living in foster care indicated that the vast majority said they felt better off since coming into care and reported feeling safe and happy in their placement.

When asked what is special about their placement, they consistently spoke about feeling loved, supported and cared for. Many talked about how good it is to feel safe and protected and be part of a family, while others mentioned doing fun activities, going on holidays, having friends and pets, having treats and good food, and living a 'normal' life. Together, these comments demonstrated how a quality foster carer can have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people.

Other positive findings included continued improvements in the take up of leaving care plans, a decrease in the numbers reporting problems with bullying at school and high levels of satisfaction with the support provided by the Commission's CVs. Alongside these encouraging findings, however, the report revealed that many continue to experience considerable instability in their lives due to numerous placement changes. Many also reported having problems at school they have been unable to get assistance with, wanted to see their Child Safety Officers and Community Visitors (CV) more often, felt left out of departmental decisions and faced ongoing challenges in obtaining departmental permission to engage in various activities.

Also concerning are high levels of anxiety with more than 30% of young people and 41% of children saying that they worry a lot.

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## **Education**

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The third focus paper from the 2011 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care focused on their experiences at school, including their attitudes towards, and perceptions of, their education. The findings highlighted that despite having some problems at school, overwhelmingly, children and young people in care felt positive about school.

The focus paper confirmed improvements over the years in the performance of the child protection system in terms of the support provided by CSOs. For instance, there had been an increase in the proportion of children and young people reporting that they have Education Support Plans and, importantly, that they found these plans to be helpful.

However, the focus paper revealed that children and young people in care continued to experience educational disadvantage.

They had high rates of school changes and suspensions and exclusions, and experienced a range of problems at school including bullying and issues with schoolwork, teachers and their own behaviour.

It also showed that these difficulties can often be exacerbated by some aspects of the child protection system.

For example, young people who have had more school and placement changes are also more likely to have been suspended or excluded from school.

The educational disadvantage experienced by children and young people in care was a complex issue that was affected by both pre-care and in-care environments, but there were clear signs of progress.

## **Views of young people in residential care**

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### **Overview and key findings**

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The overview paper from the 2012 Views Survey of Young People in Residential Care reported that most young people reported feeling safe, and were satisfied with the support they have received in relation to their physical health, school work and emotional or mental health.

The vast majority of young people indicated that someone had spoken to them about what happens to their care situation when they turn 18 years of age.

Young people reported being very positive about Community Visitors, finding them helpful, accessible and a valuable source of advocacy and emotional support. They also felt that Child Safety Officers (CSO) explained decisions made about them and were contactable when needed. However, more than one in two young people reported they were not confident in CSOs following through on promised action and over one third of young people wanted to see their CSO more often. More than two fifths of young people reported they either were not involved in Child Safety case planning or did not have a case plan.

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### **Connecting with family and friends**

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The focus paper *Young people's connections with family and friends outside their care environment* drew on findings from the 2012 Views of Young People in Residential Care Survey. The findings revealed that while many young people maintained connections with parents through a variety of modes of communication, contact with parents was limited or non-existent for a substantial proportion of young people living in residential care.

The survey also explored young people's connections with other significant people including siblings, other family and peers, and revealed considerable strengths to be built upon.

Family, friends and carers each made important but often different contributions to young people's social and emotional wellbeing.

Overall, young people tended to be pessimistic about their likelihood of family reunification, but for the most part, there was congruence between young people's desires for and expectations of reunification.

The findings indicated the important role residential care had in facilitating connections with family, but, given the substantial proportions of young people with limited or no connections to key family members, a greater focus on helping young people manage feelings associated with separation could be warranted.

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### ***Young persons' edition published***

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The Commission also released a young persons' edition of the 2012 survey report, *Your Views... Keeping in touch with family and friends*. The report was written explicitly for young people in residential care and included the findings that related most directly to young people's experiences, particularly in relation to their connections to family and friends outside of the care environment.

While young people had regular on-going contact with important people and this was often experienced positively by young people, it was also true that limited, disrupted, difficult and unsatisfying connections were not unusual for young people in residential care.

Showing the variety of responses in the report is intended to help normalise difficult and conflicted feelings about family contact that, for many young people, arise from the realities of living in residential care. It is hoped that this will directly assist young people but also provide opportunities for others (including CVs, CSOs and carers) to discuss these difficult but very common experiences.

The report encouraged young people to talk to someone they can trust, such as their CSO, CV or carer, if something is not right for them. Contact details are provided in the report for the Commission and Kids Helpline as well as 000 in the case of emergencies.

### ***Providing access for the research community to Views Survey data***

During 2013-14, the Commission developed processes to provide access to *Views Survey* data to genuine researchers.

The process developed met obligations to protect the privacy of children and young people in care or detention under *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* and also allowed the broader research community to access the information.

In response to requests to obtain research information, the Commission:

- shared the Views residential care survey instruments with another state which wished to replicate the survey in their jurisdiction
- provided Views foster care survey data to an academic researcher to allow for an investigation of the interrelationships between factors that both influence and are influenced by placement stability and placement movement.

## ***Investigations, audits and reviews into service delivery to children in care or detention***

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to the following Child Guardian reports will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

The Commission had formal powers under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, to investigate, audit and review serious or systemic issues impacting on children in the child protection and youth justice systems. This work acted as an independent, evidence-based and transparent 'feedback loop'. It consistently highlighted changes which could improve the quality of the safety and wellbeing services delivered to children in care and detention.

In 2013-14, the Commission commenced eight and completed 29 investigations, audits and reviews. As at 30 June 2014, seven investigations, audits and reviews were not finalised and in accordance with the transitional arrangements in the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014*, these investigations, audits and reviews were transferred to the Queensland Ombudsman.

During 2013-14, the Commission made 31 formal recommendations to DCCSDS and DJAG in three reports on investigations, audits and reviews:

- the *Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Report 2012-13*
- the report on *An investigation into services provided to a child who suffered significant physical harm whilst in kinship care 2013*
- the report on *An investigation into the use of separation at a Queensland Youth Detention Centre*.

As at 30 June 2014, 38 recommendations from 2013-14 and earlier years had not been fully

implemented and were also transferred to the Queensland Ombudsman.

**More detail** on these investigations, audits and reviews can be found in the following pages.

## **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

***Final Report: An investigation into services provided to a child who suffered significant physical harm while in kinship care 2013***

### ***Background***

This investigation concerned a child who suffered significant physical harm while in the care of DCCSDS. The subject child, a three-month-old infant, was allegedly violently shaken by one or both of the birth parents on one or more occasions, leaving the subject child with significant and permanent brain injuries. The birth parents were living with the subject child in the home of a provisionally approved kinship carer at the time of the alleged harm.

***Number of opinions formed - 12***

***Number of recommendations - 6***

### ***Key findings***

The Commission formed a number of opinions about the quality of DCCSDS' service delivery to the subject child and the family during the period from when DCCSDS first became aware of the subject child's mother being pregnant to the time of the critical incident that resulted in the subject child's significant injuries.

An issue of most significance to the outcome experienced by the subject child in this case was the decision to place the subject child with the kinship carer in a discrete Indigenous community in circumstances where the birth parents would also live in the kinship carer's home.

## **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

***Final Review Report: Response to the sexual abuse of children in out-of-home care***

### ***Background***

The Commission commenced this review after it was established that there had been no significant review of the sexual abuse of children in out-of-home care since the Commission completed its initial audit in 2005.

***Number of opinions formed - 4***

***Number of recommendations - Nil***

### ***Key findings***

The Commission's review resulted in two key findings:

- there was a need for ongoing reporting on the rates of sexual abuse in out-of-home care to enable analysis, over time, of any trends or issues
- DCCSDS should take an ongoing interest in reviewing the outcomes for children and actions arising from substantiated sexual abuse in out-of-home care.

DCCSDS advised it was committed to continuing public reporting via the 'Our Performance' section on its website and will review presentation of data for future releases.

## **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

***Final summary report: An investigation into the use of separation at a Queensland Youth Detention Centre***

### ***Background***

This was a summary of a report on an investigation by the Commission about the use of locked door separation for young people for a continuous period of ten days at a Queensland Youth Detention Centre following a serious security incident in March 2012, described in this report as the Code Black incident. The *Youth Justice Regulation 2003* imposed strict limits on the use of locked door separation including mandated time limits and an approval framework.

***Number of opinions formed - 31***

***Number of recommendations - 20***

### ***Key findings***

The Commission's investigation found that the use of locked door separation after four days following the Code Black incident was not authorised under the *Youth Justice Regulation 2003*. The Commission made 20 recommendations to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's (DJAG) aimed at improving systems, policies and practices governing the use of separation including training for relevant officers. DJAG have responded to the report and advised they are working through implementation of the recommendations.

## **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

***Summary Review Report: Life Diaries for children and young people in out-of-home care***

### ***Background***

During the Commission's 2010 *Out-of-Home Care Mandatory and Essential Services Audit* the Commission noted that in many cases, it was difficult to build an accurate picture of the child's time spent in out-of-home care. Significant information about the child including achievements of the child, information about the child's family, special occasions, etc., was not recorded on the file.

At that time, the Commission recommended that DCCSDS takes steps to actively encourage that a life diary, detailing a child's time in out-of-home care, was developed as part of a child's file.

In 2013, the Commission conducted a review of the use of life diaries for children and young people in out-of-home care.

***Number of recommendations - none necessary***

### ***Key finding***

While initial results were encouraging, they also showed that there is still some work to be done to encourage the establishment and maintenance of life diaries for all children in out-of-home care, including those in residential sites.

## **Performance assessment of the child protection system**

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to the Child Guardian reports on the performance of the child protection system will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

The annual Queensland Child Guardian Key Outcome Indicators Update: Queensland Child Protection System report series provided a regular, independent and objective analysis of the extent to which the Queensland child protection system met the needs of children and young people reliant upon its services.

It was distinct from other statistical and annual reporting on the child protection system that occurs in Queensland as it was independent, outcomes-focussed and incorporated the views and perspectives of children and young people.

### **How did we measure the performance of the child protection system?**

The analysis and assessment was undertaken against the 10 Key Outcome Indicators (KOIs) of the Child Guardian monitoring framework:

- effective non-statutory assessments and interventions
- effective statutory assessments and interventions
- safe out-of-home care
- best health possible
- best education possible
- stable out-of-home care
- special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children
- individual needs met
- successful reunifications
- successful transitions to independence.

A detailed explanation of each Key Outcome Indicator can be found at Appendix 4.

The Commission developed this monitoring framework in 2005, and reported annually on each of these outcome indicators since. The KOIs represented the desired safety and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people who come into contact with the child protection system.

### **What data sources were used?**

#### **DCCSDS administrative data**

DCCSDS provided the Commission with data and information about its service delivery to children under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Information provided by DCCSDS covered the entire spectrum of the child protection system, from the Investigation and Assessment phase to custody and/or guardianship orders to transitions to independence. It included information about key service delivery areas such as timeliness of taking action on Investigation and Assessments, case planning and Education Support Plans.

#### **Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) administrative data**

DETE provided the Commission with data and advice on programs for education services they provided for children and young people in the child protection system. Information provided by DETE included advice on NAPLAN outcomes and Education Support Planning.

#### **Queensland Health administrative data**

Queensland Health provided administrative data on Health Passports for children and young people living in out of home care.

#### **Commission data**

This was data from Community Visitor reports and the Views Survey reports.

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### **What were the Monitoring Plans with agencies?**

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Under these plans, agreed data was provided by a range of agencies to the Commission to form part of its evidence-base on the outcomes experienced by children and young people in care and detention.

These plans also facilitated access to data from relevant service providers about the safety and wellbeing of children. During 2013-14, the Commission reviewed and maintained Monitoring Plans with existing service providers and established a new Monitoring Plan with the Department of Housing and Public Works.

### **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

#### **Queensland Child Guardian Key Outcome Indicators Update: Queensland Child Protection System 2010-13**

During 2013-14, the Commission published its third online interactive report *Queensland Child Guardian Key Outcome Indicators Update: Queensland Child Protection System 2010-13* (the Update).

This Update featured the Commission's Performance Assessments, which were intended as a summary comment on the status of the child protection system and were aimed at helping service providers and stakeholders quickly identify priority areas for action.

The Update was available in an interactive online format, and reflected the Commission's commitment to providing quality, contemporary and readily-accessible data that analysed matters relevant to vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

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### **Key findings**

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Performance Assessments against the Key Outcome Indicators (KOIs) identified:

- four KOIs as performed below expectations (effective statutory and non-statutory assessments and interventions, meeting needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, successful reunifications)

- three performed satisfactorily (education, stable out-of-home care and transition to independence)
- three performed well (safe out-of-home care, health and individual needs met)

Key trends and issues identified in the Update include:

- the continuing high percentage of children re-referred to DCCSDS, including with escalated risks, endorsed the Government's reform agenda for more effective family support services across the state
- the majority of children and young people continue to report feeling safe in out-of-home care
- health outcomes remained positive across most measures. However, access to mental health and therapeutic services continued to be identified as a service delivery issue
- while improvement in the majority of educational outcomes was evident, the data demonstrated that across most attainment combinations, at least 25% of children and young people in care were performing below the National Minimum Standard
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continued to be significantly over-represented at all levels of the child protection system
- while an increasing proportion of children had case plans and participated in their development, service delivery to those children with the highest and most complex needs was not as available or effective as it should have been.

**A more detailed explanation** of the assessment against the Key Outcome Indicators can be found on the following page.

**More information** on the Child Guardian monitoring phases 2004-2013 can be found at Appendix 3.

**Child Guardian Performance Assessment Summary**  
**Child Protection System 2010-13**

**Legend**



The child protection system is performing well across this key outcome indicator and any areas for improvement are being actioned appropriately.



The child protection system is performing satisfactorily across this Key Outcome Indicator. However, scope for improvement exists and the success of action being undertaken may not yet be evident.



The child protection system is performing below the expected standard and the corrective action being taken has not yet produced the desired result, creating risk of negative outcomes for children and young people.

Key Outcome Indicator for children in care	Performance Assessment 2010-13	Rationale
Effective non-statutory assessments and interventions		The continuing high percentage of children who are re-referred to the Department, including with escalated risks, again endorsed the need for more effective family support services across the state. The Commission acknowledged that the Government's anticipated rollout of reforms for families known to, or at risk of entering, the child protection system may have a positive impact on this trend.
Effective statutory assessments and interventions		Measures relating to the management and outcomes of Child Protection Notifications (CPNs) revealed that work needs to continue to implement strategies to improve these outcomes. This required urgent corrective action and the Commission acknowledged that anticipated reforms in the sector may have a significant impact on the outcome of CPN assessments and investigations.
Safe out-of-home care		The child protection system continued to perform well in relation to the safety of children in care. Improvement was evident in the percentage of substantiated Matters of Concern (MOC); however, this outcome measure should continue to be monitored closely as current proposed reforms to the sector are implemented.

Key Outcome Indicator for children in care	Performance Assessment 2010-13	Rationale
Best health possible		<p>Health outcomes remained positive across most measures. However, access to mental health and therapeutic services continued to be identified as a service delivery issue.</p>
Best education possible		<p>While there have been improvements in the majority of educational outcomes measures for children and young people in care over the reporting period, the data demonstrated that across most attainment combinations, at least 25% of children and young people in care were performing below the National Minimum Standard.</p>
Stable out-of-home care		<p>There was a decrease in the number of children and young people leaving their approved placements without approval. The Commission noted that stability of care will remain a significant outcome measure during the transition to the Government's new reforms across the child protection system.</p>
Special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children		<p>The Commission acknowledged the improvement in the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people reporting satisfaction with the support provided by the Department to participate in cultural activities and maintain cultural links.</p> <p>However, while a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to ongoing intervention may have had a Cultural Support Plan, the available evidence suggested a lack of depth in terms of the quality of the planning identifying specific cultural activities when developing these Cultural Support Plans.</p> <p>In light of this evidence, the Commission was concerned that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care remained at significant risk of losing their connection to their family, community and culture, which will have significant impacts on their long-term wellbeing.</p>

Key Outcome Indicator for children in care	Performance Assessment 2010-13	Rationale
Individual needs met		<p>There have been improvements in case planning, recognised by the increasing proportion of children who have current case plans and the proportion who reported being able to participate in their case plans' development. Low compliance remained, however, for those children with the highest and most complex needs where indicators reported that supports planned and provided are not as effective as they could be.</p>
Successful reunifications		<p>The percentage of successful reunifications has shifted from last year to be performing below the expected standard due to the small decrease in successful reunifications over the most recent reporting period. Despite existing case planning efforts and family support arrangements post-reunification, more than one in 10 children will still need to be returned to care to protect them from further harm. The Commission noted that reunification outcome measures will remain a significant indicator to monitor during the implementation of new family-based reforms across the sector.</p>
Successful transitions to independence		<p>While only 12.6% of young people self-assessed as feeling unready to transition from care, significantly, only 29.4% of young people aged 15 and 16 years reported having completed transition from care planning. This suggested there is scope to significantly improve readiness of young people during the transition to independence phase.<sup>7</sup></p>

<sup>7</sup> DCCSDS advised that as at 30 June 2013, there were 1247 young people aged 15 years and over subject to a child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the Chief Executive. Of these, transition from care planning had occurred for 904 young people or 72.5%. The majority of these young people had participated in their planning (91.2%).

## **Performance assessment of the youth justice system**

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to the Child Guardian reports on the performance of the youth justice system will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

Through its legislative functions, the Commission was in a unique position to independently monitor service delivery in the youth justice system and to advocate for improvement on behalf of young people.

Young people in contact with the youth justice system are amongst Queensland's most vulnerable and disadvantaged and the circumstances that lead to their offending are often complex and cumulative. Contemporary research has shown that these young people exhibit poor decision making skills, high risk taking behaviours and experience poor educational attainment or exclusion and many come from families of intergenerational social and economic disadvantage, and crime prone communities.

The Child Guardian's report on the performance of the youth justice system identified strengths and weaknesses in service delivery in the youth justice system and assisted stakeholders to identify and prioritise areas for further reform and action in youth justice policy, program and service delivery.

During 2013-14, the Commission released its second *Child Guardian Report: Youth Justice System 2011-12*, which outlined the Commission's monitoring of outcomes and experiences of young people in the Queensland Youth Justice System.

### ***How did we measure the performance of the youth justice system in Queensland?***

The Report used the Commission's Youth Justice Monitoring Framework domains: *Youth*

*Offending and Prevention, Diversions; and Supervision, Intervention and Re-integration* and provided a unique insight into service delivery to young people across each phase of the youth justice system. The domains were endorsed by Government and non-government stakeholders in 2011 (refer page 56 for more information).

The evidence base for the report incorporated analysis of performance data from a range of stakeholders including the Queensland Police Service (QPS), and the Departments of Justice and Attorney-General, Education, Training and Employment, Community Safety and Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

As well as drawing on the Commission's own evidence base from reports on issues that were raised by young people in detention with the Commission's Community Visitors or Complaints Resolution Team, additional evidence from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare was used where departmental data was not available to provide analysis of trends over the past three years.

## **CHILD GUARDIAN REPORT**

### ***Child Guardian Report: Youth Justice System 2011-12***

#### ***Key findings***

Queensland's population included 473,802 young people aged 10 to 17 years. While the considerable majority (99.5%) of these young people had no interaction with formal youth justice supervision during 2011-12, those that did were amongst the most disadvantaged young people in the State.

Of particular concern was the chronic over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people at each stage of the justice system, with the rate of over-representation widening, as each step is taken through the criminal justice system.

The disparity between experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young

people when compared to non-Indigenous young people is significant.

Offences by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were:

- five times more likely to receive a Caution from police
- 17 times more likely to result in an Arrest action made by police
- 12 times more likely to result in Children's Court proceedings
- 19 times more likely to result in a youth justice supervision order, and
- 33 times more likely to result in a sentenced Detention Order.

Also concerning was the increasing prevalence of young people coming into contact with the youth justice system who were already known to Government, through its child protection system.

While the rate of offences committed by young people remained relatively stable over the reporting period (2009-12), the rate at which police diversions have been offered to young people in response to offences had shifted notably over the reporting period.

The rate of Cautions given to young people aged 10 to 16 years in response to offences had decreased by 20% over the 2009–12 reporting period, while conversely the rate of Arrests in response to offences by young people the same age had risen by 30%.

Child maltreatment has been linked to an increased risk of youth offending, and as at 30 June 2012, 72% of children and young people in the youth justice system were known to the child protection system. For those young people who were contemporaneously subject to justice and child protection orders, an additional responsibility was placed on the State's guardianship obligations.

In addition, available data on the prevalence of young people aged 17 years in the adult correctional system while subject to an order under the child protection system indicated that almost 5% of the total population of 17 year

olds subject to finalised Child Protection Orders were also subject to the adult correctional system. This highlighted the particular vulnerability of young people entering adult correctional centres while still considered to be in need of protection by the State.

Other key findings for the 2011-12 period included:

- in 2011–12, the QPS took 49,943 actions against young people aged 10 to 17 years, a rate of 105.4 offences per 1,000 young people in Queensland
- offences by 10 to 17 year olds in the Far Northern QPS region occurred at approximately four times the rate than the Metropolitan South QPS Region
- of the 2,282 referrals to Youth Justice Conferences in 2011–12, only 33.9% (774) of the referrals were for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. When surveyed, 98.2 per cent of participants (including victims) were satisfied with the outcome of the conference
- together, young people aged 15 and 16 years accounted for more than half of young people admitted to youth justice orders
- the combined youth justice regions of Far North Queensland, North Queensland and Central Queensland accounted for more than two-thirds of all admissions to sentenced Detention Orders, during 2011-12.

**Key domains for the Youth Justice Monitoring Framework:**

- **Domain One: Youth offending and prevention**

Explored the extent of youth offending and the supports and services that provided communities, families and young people the opportunity to address risk factors linked to potential offending. It was intended to capture levels of youth offending and of targeted crime prevention services for at-risk young people.

- **Domain Two: Diversions**

Explored the way in which the youth justice system provided young people with the opportunity to address offending behaviours through strategies, such as cautions and conferencing, aimed at diverting them from further progression into the youth justice system.

- **Domain Three: Supervision, Intervention and Re-integration**

Explored the use of statutory youth justice interventions in preventing young people from reoffending, including the success of detention and reintegration supports.

It was intended to capture whether appropriate supports and services were provided to young people subject to youth justice supervision to give them an opportunity to address their offending behaviour and allow for successful re-integration into the community. Case management services offered by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to assist with their personal, educational, health and safety needs can provide each young person the best chance to reintegrate successfully into the community.

## ***Auditing compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle***

As the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014, access to Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Reports will be through the Commission's website archived at the National Library of Australia's Pandora web archive at <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/tep/14014>

### ***Context***

When placing an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person in out-of-home care, DCCSDS must follow a prescribed process to ensure the most culturally appropriate placement for the child.

This process was outlined in section 83 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* which required Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be placed according to a hierarchy of options, with kinship care at the top, to help ensure that cultural links are maintained.

The Commission had a legislative responsibility to monitor DCCSDS' compliance with section 83 requirements.

During 2013-14, the Commission released the *Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Report 2012/13*, the third such Audit undertaken by the Commission.

The Audit also included a review of more than 500 Cultural Support Plans (CSPs) to determine the adequateness of the cultural support planning process for Aboriginal and Torres Islander children and young people in out-of-home care.

## ***Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Report 2012/13***

### ***Background***

A key finding of the audit was that overall compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle remained low and was established for 12.5% of placement decisions analysed as part of the audit.

While this represented an improvement since the inaugural Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit 2008, which found no records of overall compliance, it was lower than the Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit 2010-11, which found 15% overall compliance.

***Number of opinions formed - Nil***

***Number of recommendations - 5***

The Commission's recommendations highlighted the need for improved recording, information sharing and planning to ensure optimal cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care.

### ***Detail of report***

A significant component of the audit related to the limitations of DCCSDS's key mechanism for recording compliance, the Indigenous Child Placement Principal/Recognised Entity form (the REP/\_CPP form).

This form was DCCSDS's own self-report as to whether it complied with section 83 and it recorded compliance by asking departmental officers to provide a simple 'yes' or 'no' response to a series of direct questions addressing each of the elements prescribed in section 83.

The Commission acknowledged that without additional information verifying DCCSDS's self-reported compliance, the value of the information that can be drawn from these 'yes/no' responses was limited.

The audit of Cultural Support Plans (CSPs) showed that, whilst a significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to ongoing intervention may have had a CSP recorded on their file, the available evidence suggested a lack of depth in terms of the quality of the planning that went into developing these CSPs, for example:

- half (50%) of the CSPs audited did not identify the names of any family members who would assist the child in maintaining and developing their cultural identity
- a significant number of the CSPs (26%) did not contain any information about the cultural group, geographical area or language group relevant to the identity of the child and/or child's parents and extended family
- only 9% of the CSPs had information about each aspect of the child's cultural identity (relating to cultural group, geographical area and language group)
- 67% of the CSPs audited did not identify the support that would be required by the child's carer to maintain and support the child's involvement in cultural activities, or identified only general support (such as financial assistance). This absence of support planning was likely to impact on a carer's ability to adequately maintain a child's connection to vital aspects of their culture
- most CSPs audited (64%) only contained information about universal cultural activities, such as general references to family contact and participating in NAIDOC Week activities. The limited information about specific cultural activities indicated a lack of depth in relation to plans for maintaining a child's connection to their culture.

The Commission made five recommendations that highlighted the need for improved recording, information sharing and planning to ensure optimal cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care.

The Commission recommended that DCCSDS give the highest and most immediate priority to improving cultural support planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people subject to ongoing intervention as part of its ongoing strategic and operational planning processes.

**A practical example** of the role Community Visitors can play in linking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care to their culture and communities can be found on the following page.

***A Community Visitor's role in supporting the development of Cultural Support Plans as a way for reinforcing the role these plans play in good outcomes experienced by Indigenous children in care***

Renee\* lived in a kinship placement with extended family with whom she shared a strong bond. Over the past 12 months, Renee had been asking more questions about her cultural heritage. The carers and Renee spoke to the Community Visitor (CV) about Renee's desire to learn more about her culture and the carers felt they needed some more support to do this with Renee.

While they were confident that their family links were strong, they did not know how to articulate their family history to Renee. The CV raised this issue with Renee's Child Safety Officer (CSO) who, with the assistance of the recognised entity, helped the carers and Renee explore and learn about their family and cultural history.

As a result of this, Renee and her kinship carers identified feeling more connected as a family and Renee feels more confident in talking about and discovering opportunities to participate in cultural activities.

*\* Not the young person's real name*

*\*\* Under the Child Protection Act 1999, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) is required to work with a recognised entity when making all decisions about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child. A recognised entity may be an individual or organisation. If the entity is an individual, he or she must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, have appropriate knowledge of or expertise in child protection and not be an officer or employee of the department.*

## Child Death Case Review Committee

The Child Death Case Review Committee (CDCRC) was an independent statutory committee established to assess the adequacy of all child death case reviews undertaken by DCCSDS involving the deaths of children and young people who were known to DCCSDS within the three years prior to their deaths.

The CDCRC was chaired by the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, and the Assistant Commissioner was also a statutory member.

The CDCRC critically assessed every review undertaken by DCCSDS to ensure it had been conducted in accordance with statutory requirements and that any service system issues and risk factors relevant to each child had been thoroughly considered and appropriately addressed.

The CDCRC identified systemic service delivery issues and made targeted recommendations to DCCSDS at the policy and program level.

The CDCRC also referred issues to other government agencies for consideration of options to strengthen their involvement in areas relevant to improving service responses for children and young people.

Key findings from the *Queensland Child Death Case Review Committee Annual Report 2012-13* were:

- the majority of departmental reviews were sufficiently comprehensive. In four reviews, the CDCRC found that DCCSDS review was of a high quality. However, in four reviews, the CDCRC found that DCCSDS's review was insufficient
- in relation to 58 reviews, DCCSDS engaged with external entities in conducting its reviews. In six reviews the CDCRC found DCCSDS's lack of engagement with some agencies in the review process resulted in missed learning opportunities impacting on

future service delivery to children and young people

- the quality of the DCCSDS's reviews remained variable, demonstrating the value of ongoing external independent scrutiny of child deaths in Queensland
- in three reviews the CDCRC determined the actions and/or inactions of the child protection system were linked to the child's death:
  - two of the three children were fatally assaulted after DCCSDS failed to identify and appropriately respond to the risks present in the home
  - in relation to the other child, the CDCRC found the child protection system failed the child numerous times over their short life. Instead of being a mechanism to protect them, the system perpetuated further abuse and damage, to the point where the child's behaviours escalated and the CDCRC concluded they were perceived by many service providers as being 'the problem'.
- in two further reviews, the CDCRC made a finding that while there was no direct link between the actions and/or inactions of DCCSDS and the child's death, there were significant deficiencies in service delivery that resulted in the child being harmed or being placed at risk of harm.

The report noted that the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommended DCCSDS establish a specialist investigation team and investigate cases where children in out-of-home care have died or sustained serious injury, overseen by a multi-disciplinary panel, which includes departmental officers, instead of the current CDCRC.

In order to promote genuine accountability and transparency, the CDCRC report noted that the Committee considered it would be more appropriate that the panel or committee reviewing the deaths not include in its membership, officers of the department whose service delivery is being reviewed.

The CDCRC considered all DCCSDS's child death review reports for 2013-14 within the prescribed three-month timeframe.

## ***Role in national child protection agenda***

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children aimed to improve the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children and was endorsed by all governments and representatives from a number of non-government agencies in 2009. A key component of the National Framework was the creation of *National Standards for Out of Home Care*.

The National Framework was discussed at the May 2014 meeting of the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG).

The Commissioners and Guardians will be involved in ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth about ACCG identified priorities in the Framework.

The Commonwealth has invited the ACCG to be represented on the National Forum for Protecting Australia's Children (previously the National Framework Implementation Working Group).

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# Building a capable workforce

Strategic objective four: A workforce which delivers on the Commission's



## **Workforce profile**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>30 June 2014</b>
FTEs	192
Commission's Community Visitors (head count)	125
Employee expenses	\$27.349 million

The Commission managed its staffing levels within its funding allocation to fulfil its statutory accountabilities, align with fluctuations in operational demand and deliver its agreed performance targets.

### **Frontline staff 2013-14**

Allocation of resources focused on managing resources to support the delivery of its frontline services. This ensured that the Commission continued to deliver on its business objectives and statutory responsibilities

As at 30 June 2014, 69% of Commission staff was engaged in the delivery of frontline services and statutory obligations.

### **Workforce management strategy for Commission closure 30 June 2014**

During 2013-14, the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) released its findings and recommendations. The government accepted the QCPCOI recommendations to reform Queensland's child protection system.

Under the reforms, the Commission ceased operations on 30 June 2014. The Commission's functions transferred to other agencies effective from 1 July 2014.

A workforce management strategy was developed in consultation with receiving agencies and the Public Service Commission to support the process of implementing the transitional arrangements and the placement of permanent staff.

The strategy involved a number of phases designed to maximise opportunities for the

placement of staff in compatible roles. The strategy was integral in securing the placement of the vast majority of permanent employees into suitable roles.

The workforce management strategy also facilitated the transition of CVs. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (as the receiving agency) conducted an appointment process in which CVs were offered employment with the Office of the Public Guardian.

### **Community visitor workforce 2013-14**

The Commission's Community Visitor (CV) workforce was employed on a casual basis to visit children in care across Queensland.

The working hours of CVs fluctuated and were dependent on the number, geographical location and frequency of the visiting schedule of children and young people in out-of-home care. Given the casual nature of employment and variation in working hours, data for CVs was more accurately reflected by a head count rather than full-time equivalent figures.

### **Staff profile 2013-14**

As at 30 June 2014, the Commission had the following staff profile:

- 81.23% female and 18.77% male
- 8.92% from a non-English-speaking background, or whose parents originated from a non-English-speaking background
- 2.76% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 1.84% identified as having a disability.

While the overall percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the Commission equated to 2.76%, the ratio within the Commission's Individual Advocacy and Resolution program was 4%. This reflects the importance the Commission placed on having culturally aware staff in front line positions, particularly those visiting children in foster care, residential care and detention.

As at 30 June 2014, the Commission's retention rate of staff employed on a permanent basis was 84.9%, with a separation rate of 15.1%.

The Commission employed a highly qualified workforce with a diverse range of qualifications, skills, expertise and capabilities to deliver its strategic objectives. This provided the Commission with the capacity and flexibility to position staff to respond to, and advocate for, action on emerging trends, risks and opportunities related to the health, wellbeing and quality of life for children and young people in Queensland, particularly those most vulnerable.

### **Workforce governance**

As an independent statutory body, the Commission was committed to developing and implementing a range of corporate standards that ensure cohesive and proactive workforce management.

A program of reviewing corporate standards was undertaken throughout the year to ensure standards and policies continue to meet statutory requirements, organisational and operational needs while accommodating endorsed and accepted practices.

### **Employment conditions**

The Commission's workforce was employed under the *Public Service Act 2008*, with the exception of the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner and CVs, who were employed under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*.

In 2013-14, the Commission continued to review the remuneration and entitlements of CV's to ensure continued alignment with legislative provisions and industrial relations requirements.

### **Public Sector Ethics Act 1994**

The Commission operated under a Code of Conduct which aligned with the whole of government Code of Conduct and the *Public*

*Sector Ethics Act 1994*. The Commission's Code of Conduct outlined the standards of professional behaviour and conduct expected of staff and established an ethical framework to provide guidance as to how employees were required to behave and operate.

The integrity and accountability program implemented across the public sector required employees to attend training on ethics at regular intervals. The Commission continued to deliver ethical behaviour and decision-making training to staff. This reinforced the need for the highest standards of integrity, accountability and behaviour from everyone in the Commission.

The Commission also offered Ethics and Ethical Decision Making training via an online training module. This formed part of the Commission's suite of mandatory training programs which was offered both face-to-face and online.

The Commission delivered a number of training sessions on Ethics, Code of Conduct, Harassment and Anti-Discrimination (face to face and online) in which 113 employees attended.

Information about the Commission's Code of Conduct and ethical decision making was also incorporated into induction programs and the orientation of newly appointed employees.

### **Workplace health and safety**

The Commission was committed to providing its employees with a safe and healthy work environment and ensuring the application of responsible practices which supports health and safety in the workplace.

The Commission continued to review and update relevant policies, standards and guidelines which ensured continued adherence to obligations under workplace health and safety legislative provisions. The Commission also adopted a proactive approach in examining reported workplace health and safety (WH&S) incidents and potential hazards. A number of WH&S assessments were

conducted throughout 2013-14 to ensure the health and safety of employees.

The Workplace Health and Safety Committee met on a quarterly basis to facilitate a collaborative approach to health and safety in the Commission. The Committee promoted responsible and pro-active health and safety practices and provided advice and recommendations on potential health and safety risks and the resolution of issues.

The Commission increased employee awareness of health and safety through training and information available on the intranet. In March 2014, the annual influenza vaccination program was rolled out. A total of 92 employees were vaccinated.

The Commission supported ill or injured employees through the development of rehabilitation and return to work plans. This was successful in facilitating a planned and practical return to work of injured employees.

### ***Strengthening capability***

Through the implementation of professional development programs and related strategies, the Commission was able to build capability throughout the organisation and support the delivery of business goals and objectives. These initiatives are described below.

### ***Leadership***

The Commission was committed to extending opportunities for staff to participate in professional development activities relevant to realising its strategic objectives.

The Commission recognised the importance and benefits of good people management. The Managing People to Achieve Positive Outcomes management training program developed by the Commission was useful in assisting supervisors and managers to effectively support and manage staff by applying best practice principles.

It also provided a toolkit for supervisors and managers which was aligned with relevant corporate standards, policies and procedures.

A number of programs were delivered in 2013-14 which covered courageous communication (influencing skills and effectively articulating a message), performance management, resolving conflict in the workplace, managing and leading change and leading your team to success. A number of sessions were delivered in which 38 supervisors and managers attended.

### ***Attraction, management and retention of staff***

The Commission recognised the importance of attracting, retaining and developing people who will maximise the achievement of its strategic goals and objectives and developed a program of initiatives to improve our capacity to attract, retain and develop staff. These included:

- a rewards and recognition program
- flexible work practices such as telecommuting arrangements
- employee support programs (such as the Employee Assistance Program)
- performance and development management through a Managing Performance and Development Framework which facilitates regular performance management reporting
- exit questionnaires for separating employees that provided feedback on their experience with the Commission
- participation in whole of government employee opinion surveys (Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey)
- professional development opportunities (career development pathway framework and study and research assistance scheme).

### ***Cultural awareness***

Cultural awareness is integral to culturally appropriate engagement, given the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system. The Commission

ensured staff who engaged with Indigenous children and young people and stakeholders were well versed in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness .

### ***Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment***

During 2013-14 the Commission did not pay any early retirements, redundancies or retrenchments.

### ***Public Sector Renewal Program***

The Commission was proactive in participating in relevant public sector renewal reforms. This has involved participation in the Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey. The information collected from employees was useful in developing actions to improve capability and performance across the Commission.

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# Effective governance

**Strategic objective five:** A Corporate Governance framework that supports the Commission to achieve its objectives.



## Governance frameworks

The Commission had cohesive and robust governance arrangements that underpinned its performance and enabled it to act in accordance with sound business principles and government requirements.

## Planning and performance frameworks

Cohesive planning and performance reporting were integral to the Commission's effective execution of program level activities.

The objectives, strategies, key performance indicators (KPIs) and service delivery standards for the financial year 2013-14 remained unchanged from the previous financial year.

These continued to provide a strong strategic base for planning and performance reporting against service standards and measures.

The Commission's strategic direction was informed by regular environmental scanning of emerging political, economic, social, technology, environmental and legal issues and was implemented through operational plans highlighting and prioritising tactics to realise the strategic plan.

The Commission's operational plans integrated risk management and met the requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*. A six month review of the operational plans was conducted in January 2014 and tactics and risks were updated.

## External scrutiny

### Parliamentary Committee

The Queensland Parliament's Health and Community Services Committee (the Committee) had responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

During 2013-14, the Committee did not hold any oversight hearings for the Commission but did publish two reports:

- a report on the public hearing on Committee's oversight of the Commission (held by the Committee on Wednesday 22 August 2012) was published on 25 July 2013. The report concluded that "the committee considers the Commission has effectively exercised its oversight responsibilities for the Queensland child protection system"
- a report on the Committee's oversight of the Commission was published on 11 April 2014 (no public hearing was held). This report concluded that "the committee considers the CCYPCG has effectively exercised its oversight responsibilities for the Queensland child protection system. The committee notes the challenges ahead for the Queensland's child protection system, as outlined in the Commission's *Queensland Child Guardian Key Indicators Update: Queensland Child Protection System 2009-12*".

**More information** on the Health and Community Services Committee can be found at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)

### Open data strategy

The Commission's Open Data Strategy was published in 2013-14 and detailed a plan of action for the delivery of open data, consistent with the Queensland Government's Open Data Revolution.

The objective of the Open Data Revolution was to release as much public data created and stored by the Queensland Government as possible and make it available free to anyone who wished to use the data.

In 2013-14, the Commission released service delivery data relating to child death, employment screening and children and young people in out-of-home care and detention.

## **Internal performance reporting**

The Commission's performance was evaluated and monitored throughout the year, with monthly reporting by program areas and quarterly reviews by the Commission's Executive Management Team (EMT) and program directors.

The quarterly reviews were informed by a report that highlighted progress against the strategic objectives in the Commission's *Strategic Plan 2013-17*, service standards measures and operational plan commitments.

This report was compiled from a number of sources including program area monthly reports, financial and non-financial data and a balanced scorecard measurement model.

Collated 2013-14 data and five-year trend data of performance against the Commission's service standards and other measures are provided in Appendix 7.

## **Financial management framework**

The Commission was declared a Statutory Body under the:

- *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*
- *Financial Accountability Act 2009*
- *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*
- *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*.

The intent of creating the Commission as a Statutory Body was to give it control of the use of its funds consistent with sections 15 and 22 of its Act.

The Commission's financial performance was scrutinised through a number of externally focused state government reporting mechanisms, including Service Delivery Statements, Estimates Committee Hearings, the annual financial statements (included in this report from page 107) and meetings with a portfolio committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

On 18 May 2012, the Health and Community Services Committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly and assumed the portfolio responsibilities in relation to the Commission.

A summary of the Commission's financial performance for 2013-14 can be found at page 74.

## **Enhanced information management systems**

During 2013-14 the Commission continued implementation of the *Information Management Strategy 2012-16*.

Work continued on flagship ICT projects that were designed to strengthen the Commission's evidence base for children and young people:

- continued enhancements to the database that underpins the Commission's CV reporting, investigations, monitoring and complaints resolution functions (Jigsaw)
- integration of an electronic document and records management system (HP TRIM) with the blue card database to support future digitisation processes
- continued enhancements to the blue card database
- refinements to the Commission's child death database base, Egis.

## **Effective recordkeeping practices**

The Commission operated under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*, *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and *Information Standard 31: Retention and Disposal of Public Records*.

The Commission developed and maintained full and accurate records of its activities and operated within the standards and guidelines issued by the Queensland State Archivist.

## **Risk management**

Risk management formed an integral part of the Commission's decision making, planning and reporting. The Commission integrated contemporary risk management practices within

the strategic management framework. The framework enabled rigorous assessment of organisational business risks.

Operational planning processes (including six monthly reviews) used a risk management approach (based on risks to achieving the Commission's objectives for children and young people) to identify risks and develop mitigation strategies for inclusion into the reporting framework.

During 2013-14, the Commission implemented Operational Plans that were aligned with the *Strategic Plan 2013-17*.

The key risks identified in these Operational Plans were also used by Internal Audit when developing the annual audit plan. The Audit Committee provided further governance oversight and focus on risk.

The Commission maintained its strong commitment to overseeing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in care. The adoption of a flexible, risk management based approach within the Commission's Individual Advocacy and Resolution program continued to allow the Commission to target visits to where they were most needed and respond more effectively to the needs of children and young people in out-of-home care.

### **Business continuity**

The Commission managed business continuity planning and disaster recovery through its Crisis Response Team (CRT) and supported the Executive Management Team by developing effective, efficient and timely responses to any crisis affecting the Commission and its employees. The CRT met on a monthly basis and was responsible for maintaining the Commission's Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and implementing BCP requirements in the event of a crisis.

### **Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit charter required the Internal Audit function to provide an independent and objective review and advisory service to:

- provide assurance to the Commissioner that the Commission's financial and operational controls (designed to manage the organisation's risks and achieve the organisation's objectives) were operating in an efficient and ethical manner
- assist management in improving the Commission's business performance.

Internal Audit operated in accordance with a *Strategic Internal Audit Plan* and *Annual Internal Audit Plan* that were informed by relevant risk management processes.

The Internal Audit function operated in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter that was compliant with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* as well as the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

The function also had regard to Queensland Treasury's *Audit Committee Guidelines: Improving Accountability and Performance*. The internal assurance framework for the Commission was sound, with all audits finding that the control environment was satisfactory.

In line with the *Annual Audit Plan 2013-14* approved by the Audit Committee, eight audits were conducted in 2013-14. Audit recommendations implemented strengthened the internal controls over:

- management of staff timesheets and leave
- integrity of data from surveys of children and young people in care
- receipting of public moneys handled by the Commission
- corporate governance
- prevention of fraud
- procurement
- accuracy of travel and work time claims by CV's.

### **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee's role was to provide independent assurance on the Commission's risk, control and compliance framework and its external accountability responsibilities.

The Audit Committee met quarterly and operated under terms of reference that are compliant with Queensland Treasury's *Audit Committee Guidelines: Improving Accountability and Performance*.

The cost incurred in 2013-14 for participation of one external member in audit committee meetings was \$2,844.

Audit Committee achievements in 2013-14 included endorsing the *Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2013-16* and *Annual Internal Audit Plan 2013-14* as well as monitoring the implementation of recommendations from audit reports and monitoring management of risks within the organisation. Further details on the membership and role of the Audit Committee are in Appendix 8.

### ***Other reports by the Commissioner***

Section 395 of the Commission's Act allowed the Commissioner to provide reports to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on the administration of the Act, including the Commissioner's performance and exercise of functions and powers. In 2013-14, there were three requests from the Minister to the Commissioner for a report under section 395.

## Summary of financial performance

The following table gives an annual summary of our income and expenses and resulting financial surplus or deficit at the end of the financial year for the past five financial years.

Funding profile (\$'000)	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>Income</b>					
User charges	5,515	6,499	6,225	3,749	7,278
Grants and contributions	39,217	38,620	42,947	42,114	40,254
Other revenue	268	456	540	534	545
Assets assumed/liabilities relinquished	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total income</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>45,575</b>	<b>49,712</b>	<b>46,397</b>	<b>48,077</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee expenses	30,114	27,707	32,050	30,808	27,349
Supplies and services	13,261	12,971	13,333	10,004	13,470
Grants and subsidies	22	0	0	0	5
Depreciation and amortisation	1,873	1,503	1,606	1,625	1,861
Other expenses	78	3,616	2,453	54	1,113
Liabilities assumed/assets relinquished	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>45,348</b>	<b>45,797</b>	<b>49,442</b>	<b>42,491</b>	<b>43,798</b>
Net surplus/(deficit)	348	222	270	3,906	4,279

## **Funding profile**

As shown below, the majority of the Commission's operating funds were provided by government grant and recognised as output income. The remaining sources of income include user charges for the Working with Children Check and bank interest. As shown in the table below, in 2013-14, these funding sources totalled \$48,077 million.

<b>Income 2013-14 ('000)</b>	
Other revenue	\$ 545
User charges	\$ 7,278
Grants	\$40,254
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,077</b>

## **Expenses**

The following table shows expenses for 2013-14.

<b>Expenses 2013-14 ('000)</b>	
Supplies and services	\$13,470
Other expenses	\$ 1,113
Depreciation and amortisation	\$ 1,861
Employee expenses	\$27,349
Grants and subsidies	\$ 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,798</b>

## **Consultancies**

The Commission did not undertake any consultancies in 2013-14.

## **Contractors**

In 2013-14, the Commission undertook 30 contracts at a cost of \$4.081 million which equated to 9.6% of total Commission expenses.

The top five contracts (by cost) accounted for 63.9% of total contract expenses and were for:

- Corporate Administration Agency (Corporate Services SLA) \$670,109
- ABNote Australasia (Printing and distribution of blue cards) \$624,174
- Recall Australia (Record storage & retrieval services) \$563,908
- Hewlett Packard (Bluebox software eDRMS development) \$422,226
- SMS Consulting (QFCC ICT infrastructure setup) \$330,320.

## **Gifts received or given**

One reportable gift was made by the Commission during 2013-14, a donation of 17 cameras to the CREATE Foundation, with an estimated value of \$2,750, for CREATE to use / distribute as they see fit. The cameras were originally bought by the Commission in 2012 for the "As Eye See It" Photo Exhibition project which did not proceed.

## **Overseas travel**

There was no overseas travel in 2013-14.

## **Boards and committees**

In 2013-14, the Commission had one statutory committee which was the Child Death Case Review Committee chaired by the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. Total costs and fees (including on-costs such as travel and accommodation) were \$598,207.

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# Appendices, Glossary and Feedback



## **Appendix 1 - The Commission's executive team**

### ***Our executive team***

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#### ***Commissioner and Child Guardian***

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Steve Armitage was appointed to carry out the roles of Commissioner and Child Guardian and Assistant Commissioner on 17 January 2014 and led the strategic focus and direction for its work until 30 June 2014.

As Acting Commissioner, Barry Salmon was the accountable officer for the Commission (in conjunction with his substantive role of Assistant Commissioner) from 1 July 2013 until 16 January 2014.

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#### ***Assistant Commissioner***

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The Assistant Commissioner role was responsible for the administration of the external monitoring of the child safety and youth justice systems and the Commission's policy, advocacy and research agenda. Program areas reporting to the Assistant Commissioner are:

- Strategic Policy and Research
- Systemic Monitoring and Review
- Individual Advocacy and Resolution.

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#### ***Executive Director***

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Bob Van-Kempen was responsible for the administration of the blue card system and the Commission's corporate governance framework. Program areas reporting to the Executive Director were:

- Employment Screening Services
- Corporate Services
- Executive Services.

NOTE: The Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner appointment information is detailed under sections 26 to 34 of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*.

## Appendix 2 - Evolution of our mandate

### 1996

In 1996, the Queensland Children's Commission was established and operated under the *Children's Commissioner and Children's Services Appeals Tribunal Act 1996* with the Commissioner reporting to the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care.

### 1998

In August 1998, the Commission of Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry) was established to report on the care and treatment of children in out-of-home residential facilities and juvenile detention centres and made a number of recommendations designed to strengthen the Children's Commission.

### 2000

In August 2000, portfolio responsibility for the Commission was transferred to the Premier to confirm the independence of the Commission.

### 2001

In February 2001, the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* (the Act) established the Commission for Children and Young People with enhanced scope, functions and powers, reflecting the Government's implementation of recommendations of the Forde Inquiry.

The Act embraces the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and provides the Commission with both ombudsman and advocacy functions. It extended the Commission's mandate as an advocate for all children and young people in Queensland, established the Commission as an independent statutory body, introduced the Community Visitor program (for children in detention and residential care) and increased the Commission's powers and functions in relation to complaint handling.

In May 2001, employment screening of people working with children (later to be known as the blue card system) was introduced.

### 2002

On 17 June 2002, the inaugural *Children and Young People in Queensland: A Snapshot 2002* report was released.

### 2003

In late 2003, an independent audit of abuse of children in foster care prompted a Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) inquiry. The resultant findings and report, *Protecting Children: An inquiry into abuse of children in foster care*, identified systemic failures in the child safety system and led to recommendations for legislative change and systemic reform.

### 2004

On 16 June 2004, the implementation of the CMC's recommendations led to the creation of the Commission's Child Guardian function, including the extension of its existing Community Visitor program to all children in foster care. These functions were introduced through the *Child Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2004*.

On 1 August 2004, the Child Death Case Review Committee (CDCRC) commenced its independent external reviews of the Department of Child Safety's child death case reviews and the Commission established its Child Death Register.

On 1 August 2004, the new *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (the Commission's Act) was introduced, with the Commission's name changed to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in recognition of its new Child Guardian function to oversee the child safety system.

## 2005

On 17 January 2005, the scheduled review of the employment screening provisions of the Commission's Act and comprehensive feedback from stakeholders resulted in further strengthening of the blue card system.

New provisions established risk management obligations for regulated child service providers, gave the Commissioner greater powers to screen blue card applicants and required more categories of employment to be screened.

On 8 November 2005, the inaugural *Child Death Case Review Committee Annual Report 2004-05* and the inaugural *Annual Report: Deaths of children and young people Queensland 2004-05* were tabled in Parliament.

## 2006

On 19 January 2006, the inaugural *Child Guardian Report 2005* was released.

On 2 May 2006, the *Child Safety (Carers) Amendment Act 2006* expanded the blue card system to require foster and kinship carers and adult occupants, as well as relevant people associated with licensed care services, to comply with the blue card system requirements.

On 6 June 2006, the inaugural *Views of Children and Young People in Care - Queensland 2006* report was tabled in Parliament.

## 2007

On 11 September 2007, an amendment to the blue card system provisions took effect, resulting in a strengthening of the health, counselling and support services category of work requiring blue cards.

## 2008

On 2 June 2008, a further amendment was made to the operation of the blue card system provisions of the Commission's Act to safeguard children by preventing certain people from applying for a blue card upfront if they are a 'disqualified' person. A disqualified person is someone who:

- has been convicted of a disqualifying offence (including child-related sex or pornography offences, or the murder of a child)
- is a reportable offender with current reporting obligations under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*
- is subject to a child protection offender prohibition order
- is subject to a disqualifying order from a court prohibiting them from applying for or holding a blue card
- is subject to a sexual offender order under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual offenders) Act 2003*.

In July 2008, the inaugural *Views of Young People in Detention Centres* report was released.

## 2009

On 26 March 2009, the portfolio responsibility for the Commission's Act was transferred from the Premier to the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women.

In April 2009, the Social Development Committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly in April 2009 to monitor and report on issues in the policy areas of health, education and training, social welfare services, community development, housing, child safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. Committee reports can be found at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)

In December 2009, the Commission commenced participation in a national exchange of criminal history information for people working with children. This allowed the Commission access to expanded criminal history information (including spent convictions) to better inform its decision making when assessing risks to the safety and wellbeing of children.

## 2010

In April and July 2010, the *Criminal History Screening Legislation Amendment Act 2010* reduced duplication of screening for people working with children in Queensland by linking comparable systems to create blue card exemptions for people who have already been screened, making it easier for people to work across different areas of child-related employment. These changes included:

- in April 2010:
  - advances in information sharing among States and the safeguards provided by the Commission's daily monitoring of individuals' criminal history information allowed for the extension of the blue card's validity period from two years to three years with the benefit of streamlining processing and reducing administration for individuals and organisations
  - child-related employment screening processes were amalgamated for individuals providing services to children in the disability sector, employees within government working with children, and health students undertaking placements involving service delivery to children
  - registered health practitioners (including nurses and midwives) became exempt from blue card screening across all regulated service environments if they provide services or conduct activities relevant to their professional registration
  - employers and organisations were required to notify the Commission if they employ a blue card holder, so the Commission can notify all relevant employers and volunteer coordinators if a person's card is cancelled or suspended.
- in July 2010, police officers and registered teachers were able to apply for an exemption from holding a blue card when providing services to children which are outside of their professional duties.

## 2011

In March 2011, the one millionth blue card applicant was processed and on 6 May 2011, the Commission recognised the efforts of key partner stakeholders at an event to mark the 10th anniversary of the blue card system.

On 16 June 2011, the Community Affairs Committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly and assumed the portfolio responsibilities in relation to the Commission. Committee reports can be found at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)

## 2012

On 26 March 2012, the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services gained portfolio responsibility for the Commission's Act. The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice gained portfolio responsibility for the *Youth Justice Act 1992*. On 18 May 2012, the Health and Community Services Committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly and assumed the portfolio responsibilities in relation to the Commission. The Committee held a public briefing on 22 August 2012 with regard to the Committee's oversight responsibilities of the Commission. Committee reports can be found at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)

## 2013

The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) was established by the Queensland Government on 1 July 2012 to review progress of outcomes related to the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions and the Crime and Misconduct Commission Inquiry to chart a new road map for child protection for the next decade.

## 2014

On 16 December 2013, the Queensland Government announced it had accepted the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI) to comprehensively reform the child protection system.

Some of these recommendations impacted on the functioning of the Commission. As part of the changes, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian ceased operations on 30 June 2014. Key changes occurring to the Commission's functions included:

- systemic oversight of the child protection system and responsibility for promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people transferred to the new Queensland Family and Child Commission on 1 July 2014
- child-related complaints will be investigated by the relevant department with oversight by the Queensland Ombudsman
- the role of the Child Guardian combined with the Adult Guardian on 1 July 2014 to form the new role of Public Guardian, with the role of the Child Guardian re-focused on individual advocacy for children and young people in the child protection system and primarily operating out of new state-wide advocacy hubs. Visits to children and young people in out-of-home will be re-focused to visiting those who are considered most vulnerable and will be undertaken by the new Office of the Public Guardian
- child death review function transferred to the Queensland Family and Child Commission
- the existing Child Death Case Review Committee was replaced on 1 July 2014 by a new child death case review panel process to consider reviews conducted by the Chief Executive, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in relation to children who have died or suffered a serious physical injury in specified circumstances
- the blue card system transferred to the Public Safety Business Agency.

## **Appendix 3 - Child Guardian monitoring phases 2004-2013**

Since the Child Guardian function commenced in 2004, the Commission has undertaken three distinct phases of monitoring as follows:

### ***Phase one monitoring (2004-07): The immediate safety of children and young people***

During this phase:

- the Commission's Community Visitor role was extended to include providing an independent voice for children in out-of-home care and the development of a data set capable of interrogation to identify trends and patterns in service delivery that may provide insights into systemic issues
- complaints jurisdiction was expanded to include all children within the child protection system (not just children under protection orders) and the development of a further data set capable of interrogation to identify trends and patterns in service delivery that may provide insights into systemic issues
- documented monitoring plans were developed with government service providers to assist in building capacity to assess their own effectiveness and that of service providers they licence, fund or accredit
- targeted audits and investigations were conducted into critical areas of service delivery, including where children have been sexually abused in care, backlogs in initial assessments, critical incident management, accuracy of child protection data and compliance with the Indigenous Child Placement Principle.

### ***Phase two monitoring (2007-11): Outcomes for children and young people***

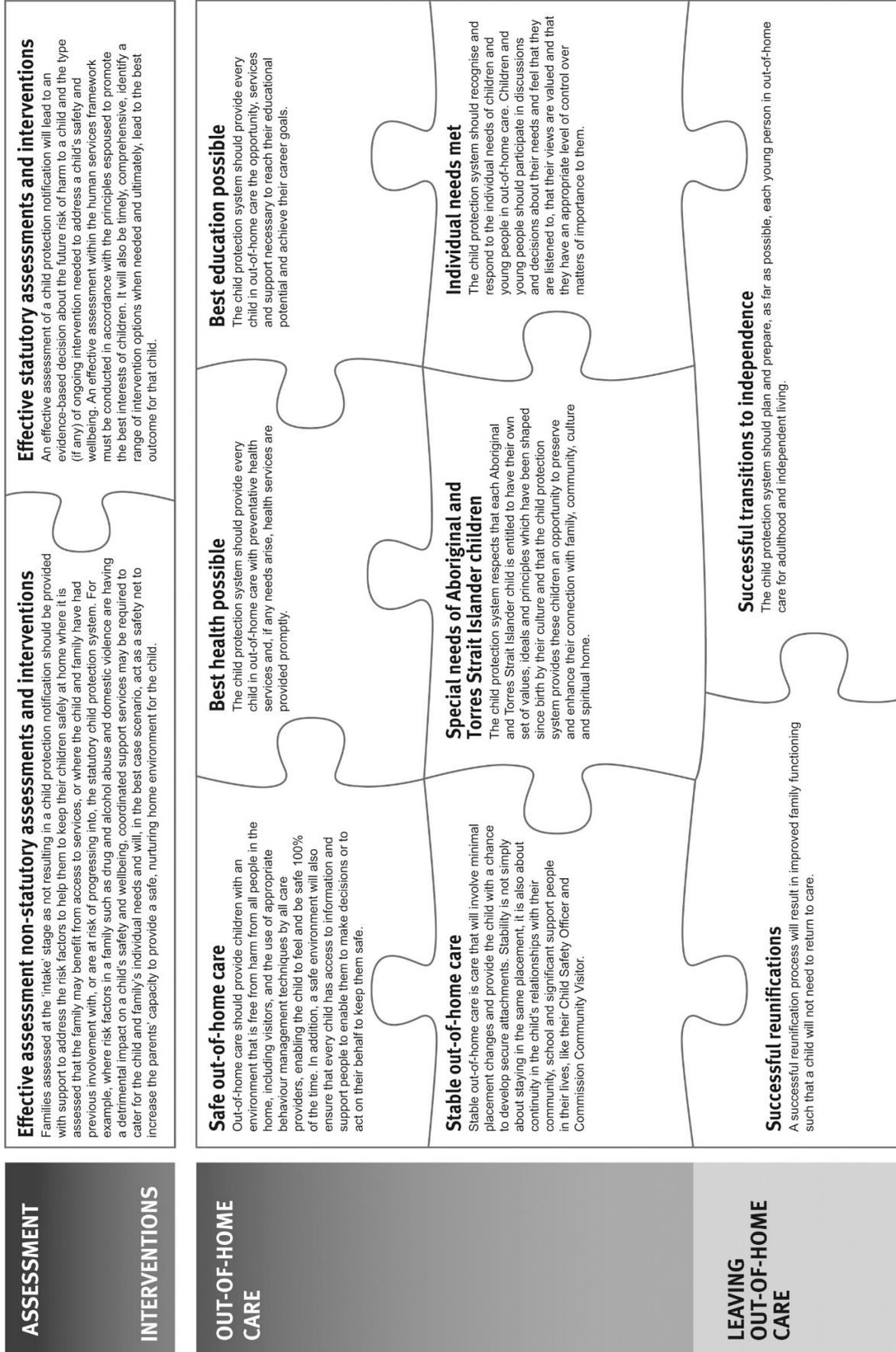
During this phase, the Child Guardian 10 Key Outcome Indicators of the effectiveness of the child protection system were implemented (refer following page for more information). These indicators represented a broader approach to monitoring than phase one, as they incorporated detailed consideration of children's wellbeing and facilitated reporting on outcomes related to the effectiveness of the service delivery continuum in the Child Guardian annual report series. This enabled evidence-based targeting of areas of concern for audits, including case planning, child health passports, education support plans and placement decisions.

The Commission commenced publication of surveys undertaken with children in foster care, residential care and detention, as a critical means of giving voice to their lived experiences to inform practice with a view to improving service to them. Phase two also saw the commencement of detailed audits of services provided to children in youth detention, beginning with harm analysis and the use of force.

### ***Phase three monitoring (2011-13): Refined child protection reporting and development of outcome indicators for the youth justice system.***

During this phase the Commission realigned its organisational structure to strengthen the focus on individual advocacy, prioritised enhanced systemic monitoring on the child protection system through implementation of new management systems supporting better data capture in key Child Guardian activities, and developed an outcome indicator framework for the youth justice system and associated annual reporting.

# Appendix 4 - Child Guardian monitoring framework for the child protection system



## Appendix 5 - Commission's objectives, strategies and key performance indicators 2013-14

Our Objectives	Our Strategies	Our Key Performance Indicators
<p>1 All children and young people in Queensland have their rights, interests, safety and wellbeing upheld and enhanced</p>	<p>1.1 Identify and promote engagement practices that support the participation of children and young people in policy development and matters that affect them</p> <p>1.2 Identify and share current and emerging trends, policy and research evidence about the needs, interests, wellbeing and rights of children and young people</p> <p>1.3 Enhance the safety of children and young people in Queensland through administering the blue card system and testing the level of compliance in regulated organisations</p> <p>1.4 Collaborate and work with relevant governments, organisations and the community on streamlining the blue card system and improving organisational accountability</p>	<p>KPI 1 Comparisons across key safety, wellbeing and participation indicators show Queensland children and young people are consistent with or better than other Australian states</p> <p>KPI 2 Organisations and businesses known to provide regulated services to children and young people comply with blue card system requirements</p> <p>KPI 3 The community values the contribution of the blue card system in creating safe service environments</p>
<p>2 Children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of harm receive appropriate support and early intervention</p>	<p>2.1 Engage with children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of harm</p> <p>2.2 Raise awareness within the community about factors affecting children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of harm</p> <p>2.3 Develop and maintain strategic partnerships to address emerging issues for children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of harm</p> <p>2.4 Monitor proposed policy and legislative changes and advocate for evidence-informed, accountable action by governments, organisations and the community that improves outcomes for children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of harm</p>	<p>KPI 4 The gap between Queensland's disadvantaged children and young people and all Queensland children and young people with respect to national safety and wellbeing indicators closes</p> <p>KPI 5 Queensland's relative performance against other jurisdictions on the rate of entry into statutory systems is positive</p>
<p>3 Effective child safety and youth justice systems that protect and support children and young people where statutory intervention is appropriate</p>	<p>3.1 Engage with children and young people in statutory systems to independently verify their safety and wellbeing and broker solutions when required</p> <p>3.2 Engage with Queensland children and young people in care to support their participation in the development of policy and practice that has regard for their views and experiences</p> <p>3.3 Assess and report on outcomes for children and young people reliant on statutory systems through targeted reviews and annual reports that assess the accountabilities and effectiveness of the system and intervention pathways</p> <p>3.4 Provide leadership on critical information about factors affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people requiring statutory intervention and work with strategic partners to address systemic improvements and greater accountability for outcomes</p>	<p>KPI 6 Children and young people in statutory systems and support facilities are safe and have their therapeutic, health, education, cultural and transitional needs met within prescribed timeframes</p> <p>KPI 7 Improvements are made to address recommendations in the Commission's systemic monitoring reports</p> <p>KPI 8 Children and young people's views are regularly captured and used to inform Commission advocacy on the effectiveness of the system</p>
<p>4 A workforce which delivers on the Commission's vision</p>	<p>4.1 Implement the Workforce Capability Strategy</p>	<p>KPI 9 Staffing levels, skills and experience are adequate to pursue the Commission's agenda</p>
<p>5 A Corporate Governance framework that supports the Commission to achieve its objectives</p>	<p>5.1 Maintain an effective corporate governance and risk framework</p> <p>5.2 Maintain financial performance in accordance with government requirements</p>	<p>KPI 10 Corporate Governance framework meets policy, fiscal and legislative requirements and promotes the achievement of the Commission's strategic objectives</p>

## Appendix 6 - Assessment against Strategic Plan 2013-17 Key Performance Indicators

### KPI 1 Comparisons across key safety, wellbeing and participation indicators show Queensland children and young people are consistent with or better than other Australian states

A key strength of the *Snapshot* series was the ability to represent a time series of indicators and provide a longitudinal evidence base from which conclusions can be drawn to facilitate change. The following data was taken from *Snapshot 2012* and *Snapshot 2013* reports.

Measure	Queensland for year indicated	Australia for year indicated	Level of Queensland data for year indicated
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Low birthweight (per cent)</b>			
Infants born weighing less than 2,500g – of all infants	6.9 (2010)	6.2 (2010)	Higher
Indigenous infants born weighing less than 2,500g – of all Indigenous infants	9.7 (2010)	12.0 (2010)	Lower
<b>Premature births (per cent)</b>			
Babies born before 37 weeks gestation – of all babies	8.7 (2010)	8.3 (2010)	Higher
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born before 37 weeks gestation – of all Indigenous babies	10.9 (2010)	13.1 (2010)	Lower
<b>Immunisation (per cent)</b>			
Children fully immunised at five years of age – of all children five years of age	92.0 (2012)	91.9 (2012)	Higher
<b>Education and care</b>			
<b>Childhood education and care (per cent)</b>			
Children aged 0–5 years attending Australian Government approved early childhood education and care services	44.8 (2012)	38.6 (2012)	Higher
Average weekly attendance hours at Australian Government approved long day care services for children aged 0–12 years	29.4 (2012)	27.3 (2012)	Higher

Measure	Queensland for year indicated	Australia for year indicated	Level of Queensland data for year indicated
<b>Retention from Year 8 to Year 12 (per cent)</b>			
Apparent retention rate	83.7 (2012)	79.9 (2012)	Higher
Apparent retention rate – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	62.1 (2012)	51.1 (2012)	Higher
Apparent retention rate – males	80.9 (2012)	75.8 (2012)	Higher
Apparent retention rate – females	86.7 (2012)	84.3 (2012)	Higher
<b>Reading (per cent)</b>			
Year 5 students reaching national minimum reading standard	89.1 (2012)	91.6 (2012)	Lower
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 5 students reaching national minimum reading standard	65.5 (2012)	64.7 (2012)	Higher
<b>Numeracy (per cent)</b>			
Year 5 students reaching national minimum numeracy standard	91.7 (2012)	93.3 (2012)	Lower
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 5 students reaching national minimum numeracy standard	69.5 (2012)	69.2 (2012)	Higher

### Death statistics

<b>Neonatal and infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)</b>			
Neonatal mortality rate	3.5 (2009-11)	2.7 (2011)	Higher
Post-neonatal mortality rate	1.5 (2009-11)	1.1 (2011)	Higher
Infant mortality rate	5.0 (2009-10)	3.8 (2011)	Higher
<b>SIDS and undetermined causes (per 1,000 live births)</b>			
SIDS infant mortality rate	0.5 (2009-11)	0.4 (2011)	Higher
Infant mortality rate – undetermined causes	0.1 (2009-11)		

Measure	Queensland for year indicated	Australia for year indicated	Level of Queensland data for year indicated
<b>Child protection</b>			
<b>Substantiated notifications (per 1,000 population)</b>			
Non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years subject to a substantiated notification	5.0 (2011-12)	5.4 (2011-12)	Lower
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years subject to a substantiated notification	28.2 (2011-12)	41.9 (2011-12)	Lower
<b>Ongoing intervention (per 1,000 population)</b>			
Non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years subject to ongoing intervention	6.8 (2011-12)	n/a (2011-12)	Not comparable <sup>8</sup>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years subject to ongoing intervention	58.6 (2011-12)	n/a (2011-12)	Not comparable <sup>8</sup>
<b>Living away from home (per 1,000 population)</b>			
Non- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years living away from home	5.2 (2011-12)	5.4 (2011-12)	Not comparable <sup>9</sup>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0–17 years living away from home	45.9 (2011-12)	55.1 (2011-12)	Not comparable <sup>9</sup>
<b>Crime, justice, drug and alcohol</b>			
<b>Youth detention (per 1,000 population)</b>			
Average daily rate of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in youth detention	0.2 (2010-11)	0.2 (2010-11)	At level
Average daily rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in youth detention	2.9 (2010-11)	4.0 (2010-11)	Lower
<b>Drug and alcohol use (per cent)</b>			

<sup>8</sup> There is no national figure for 'rate per child subject to ongoing intervention'.

<sup>9</sup> Nationally comparable data refer to children living in out-of-home care at 30 June 2012, whereas Queensland data refer to children living away from home at 30 June 2012. Refer *Snapshot 2013* for more information.

Measure	Queensland for year indicated	Australia for year indicated	Level of Queensland data for year indicated
Young people aged 14–19 years who smoked daily	7.3 (2009-10)	6.9 (2010)	Higher
Young people aged 12–17 years who consumed alcohol weekly	23.9 (2009-10)	22.6 (2010)	Higher
Young people aged 14–19 years who used marijuana in the past 12 months	14.6 (2009-10)	15.7 (2010)	Lower
Young people aged 14–19 years who used illicit drugs in the past 12 months	17.3 (2009-10)	18.2 (2010)	Lower

### ***KPI 2 Organisations and businesses known to provide regulated services to children and young people comply with blue card system requirements***

In 2013-14, the Commission engaged with over 137,700 people to raise awareness of the purpose and scope of the blue card system and build capacity of organisations to meet their blue card obligations.

The Commission corresponded with 1,337 regulated businesses and organisations to provide information in relation to legislative requirements and increase compliance with the requirements of the blue card system, and conducted compliance checks of 300 organisations and 16,104 individuals.

The Commission processed 302,931 blue and exemption card applications, renewals and authorisations for individuals seeking to work in regulated service environments or operate regulated child-related businesses and, as at 30 June 2014, monitored over 630,000 blue and exemption card holders and applicants. The Commission also worked in partnership with child-related organisations on the processing of applications, provision of blue card education and risk management advice and conduct of compliance activities.

In 2013-14, there were 174 cases of probable non-compliance referred to Queensland Police Service who identified a further 18 through their own investigations.

### ***KPI 3 The community values the contribution of the blue card system in creating safe service environments.***

Continuing community support for, and involvement in, the blue card system was indicated by the number of Queensland community members participating in the system. The Commission has processed 2,819,091 applications, (including renewals) and authorisations since 2001.

The Commission gauged stakeholder views of its role in assisting to provide safer environments for children and young people through a range of survey measures. Results continued to be positive with almost all survey participants in 2013-14 (99.58%) rating the importance of the Commission's role in helping to provide safer environments for children and young people as 'important' or 'very important'.

Public confidence in the strength of the blue card system was also measured by periodic surveys. Results indicated that the majority of people valued its contribution in providing safer environments for children and young people, with 97% of stakeholders surveyed in 2013-14 responding that they were satisfied with its contribution, including 59% who rated the system as 'excellent'.

#### ***KPI 4 The gap between Queensland's disadvantaged children and young people and all Queensland children and young people with respect to national safety and wellbeing indicators closes***

During 2013-14, the Commission released a number of publications that highlighted gaps between Queensland's disadvantaged children and young people and all Queensland children and young people.

#### ***Trends and Issues Paper 19: Child deaths—prevalence of youth suicide in Queensland***

In 2012–13, suicide was the leading external cause of death for children aged 10–14 years and had the highest rate of suicide for this age group since 2004.

Suicide was the second-leading external cause of death for young people aged 15–17 years.

This *Trends and Issues Paper* examined the prevalence of youth suicides in Queensland over the past nine years and discussed emerging trends. During the nine year period, there were 169 deaths of children and young people due to suicide. There has been a gradual increase in the number of suicides per year, with an average of 21.3 deaths for the period of 2010–11 to 2012–13 compared to 16.3 deaths from 2004–05 to 2006–07

The paper highlighted a potential emerging trend of youth suicides increasing in Queensland, particularly for children aged 10–14 years. Of concern was that male and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continued to be over-represented in the suicide figures. The paper noted that it is essential that accurate data on the suicide deaths of children and young people is available to inform prevention and intervention activities. This included providing access to data held within the Queensland Child Death Register to research and policy stakeholders to inform evidence-based strategies to reduce youth suicide.

#### ***KPI 5 Queensland's relative performance against other jurisdictions on the rate of entry into statutory systems is positive***

Data from the Commission's *Snapshot 2013* report showed that, in 2011-12, there were:

- 114,503 intakes received in relation to harm or risk of harm to children or risk to an unborn after he or she is born (up from 70,126 in 2006-07)
- 7,681 substantiations of harm or unacceptable risk of harm to children (down from 10,108 in 2006-07)
- 4,820 children assessed to be in need of protection from harm or unacceptable risk of harm, including unborn children assessed to be in need of protection after their birth (up from 4,038 in 2007-08).

The number of children subject to ongoing intervention has increased since 2007. At 30 June 2012, there were:

- 10,963 children subject to some form of ongoing intervention (up from 8,263 in 2008)
- 4,146 children on short-term orders (up from 3,926 in 2007)
- 4,668 children on long-term orders (up from 2,346 in 2007).

At 30 June 2012, there were 8,482 children living away from home, up from 6,493 in 2007:

- 4,579 (54.0%) were in foster care
- 2,767 (32.6%) were with relatives or kin

- 653 (7.7%) were in residential care
- 483 (5.7%) were in other types of care, including hospitals, youth detention centres and independent living.

The most rapid growth in the population of children and young people living away from home has been in the number of young people in residential care, which has grown by 89.3% since 2007.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than five times more likely to be subject to a notification, nearly six times more likely to be subject to a substantiation and just under nine times more likely to be living away from home. In 2012, over one half (53.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living away from home were placed with kin, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander carer or in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residential care service. In 2008, this figure was 56.7%.

***KPI 6 Children and young people in statutory systems and support facilities are safe and have their therapeutic, health, education, cultural and transitional needs met within prescribed timeframes***

During 2013-14, the Commission published its third online interactive report *Queensland Child Guardian Key Outcome Indicators Update: Queensland Child Protection System 2010-13* (the Update).

The Update featured the Commission's Performance Assessments, which were intended as a summary comment on the current status of the child protection system and were aimed at helping service providers and stakeholders quickly identify priority areas for action.

The Update report was available in an interactive online format, and reflected the Commission's commitment to providing quality, contemporary and readily-accessible data that analysed matters relevant to vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

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***Key findings***

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Performance Assessments against the Key Outcome Indicators (KOIs) identified:

- four KOIs as performed below expectations (effective statutory and non-statutory assessments and interventions, meeting needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, successful reunifications)
- three performed satisfactorily (education, stable out-of-home care and transition to independence)
- three performed well (safe out-of-home care, health and individual needs met).

Key trends and issues identified in the Update include:

- the continuing high percentage of children re-referred to DCCSDS, including with escalated risks, endorsed the Government's reform agenda for more effective family support services across the state
- the majority of children and young people continue to report feeling safe in out-of-home care
- health outcomes remained positive across most measures. However, access to mental health and therapeutic services continued to be identified as a service delivery issue
- while improvement in the majority of educational outcomes was evident, the data demonstrated that across most attainment combinations, at least 25% of children and young people in care were performing below the National Minimum Standard
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continued to be significantly over-represented at all levels of the child protection system

- while an increasing proportion of children had case plans and participated in their development, service delivery to those children with the highest and most complex needs was not as available or effective as it should have been.

During 2013-14, the Commission's Community Visitors (CVs) visited 7,918 children and young people in foster care, residential care, detention and youth boot camps and generated 42,590 individual child reports. CVs also visited a range of 'visitable' sites and generated 4,060 site reports.

CVs are intended to be a part of the local community and therefore in touch with services and programs within the local area. This ensures CV's understand the issues impacting on a child and can be effective at resolving issues. The vast majority of almost 15,000 issues raised by children with CVs (94%) were successfully resolved locally by the CV with service providers and 92% of the issues related to service delivery by the child protection system. The top three issue types were contact, placement arrangements and health services.

### ***KPI 7 Improvements are made to address recommendations in the Commission's systemic monitoring reports***

The Commission had formal powers under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, to investigate, audit and review serious or systemic issues impacting on children in the child protection and youth justice systems. This work acted as an independent, evidence-based and transparent 'feedback loop' that recommended changes that would improve the quality of the safety and wellbeing services delivered to children in care and detention.

In 2013-14, the Commission commenced eight and completed 29 investigations, audits and reviews. As at 30 June 2014, seven investigations, audits and reviews were not finalised and, in accordance with the transitional arrangements in the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014*, these investigations, audits and reviews were transferred to the Queensland Ombudsman.

During 2013-14, the Commission made 31 formal recommendations to DCCSDS and DJAG in three reports on investigations, audits and reviews:

- the *Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Report 2012-13*
- the report on *An investigation into services provided to a child who suffered significant physical harm whilst in kinship care 2013*
- the report on *An investigation into the use of separation at a Queensland Youth Detention Centre.*

As at 30 June 2014, 38 recommendations from 2013-14 and earlier years had not been fully implemented and were also transferred to the Queensland Ombudsman.

### ***KPI 8 Children and young people's views are regularly captured and used to inform Commission advocacy on the effectiveness of the system***

During 2013-14, the Commission published:

- *2013 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care Survey: Overview and selected findings*
- a focus paper *Education* from the *2011 Views of Children and Young People in Foster Care*
- *2012 Views of Young People in Residential Care: Overview and selected findings*
- a focus paper *Young people's connections with family and friends outside their care environment* from the *2012 Views of Young People in Residential Care.*

***KPI 9 Staffing levels, skills and experience are adequate to pursue the Commission's agenda***

The Commission's executive management team and director structure supported the Commission in developing strong leadership, comprehensive corporate knowledge and extensive experience in the child protection area. A qualified and experienced workforce was also essential to achieving the Commission's strategic objectives. Commission staff possessed an appropriate range of higher education qualifications in human and welfare services (or other relevant disciplines) that supported their role and contribute to the Commission's mandate (e.g. legal staff within blue card operations have appropriate legal qualifications).

***KPI 10 Corporate governance framework meets policy, fiscal and legislative requirements and promotes the achievement of the Commission's strategic objectives***

The internal assurance processes for the Commission were sound, with all external audits to date finding that the control environment was satisfactory. Statutory performance and reporting requirements were also achieved in line with central agency guidelines and timeframes. Commission planning and performance reporting met whole-of-government obligations and supported the Commission's strategic management goals.

## Appendix 7 - Performance against service standards and other measures

### Performance against service standards and other measures 2013-14

Service Standards	Note	2013-14 Target /	2013-14 Actual
Statutory oversight recommendations pertaining to the child protection and youth justice systems are accepted by government.	1	95%	87%
Children within the Commission's visiting jurisdiction:	2,3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are visited in accordance with the designated visiting schedule</li> </ul>		90%	95%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have their concerns resolved locally</li> </ul>		85%	94%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have a visit report submitted to the Commissioner within 10 days</li> </ul>	4	90%	92%
Average processing times (days) of blue card applications where there is no criminal history	5	15	9

#### Notes

- This was an amended service standard that highlighted the effectiveness of the Commission's investigations, systemic monitoring, audit and review statutory oversight functions in developing recommendations which are accepted by government to improve services or processes impacting children and young people in the child protection and youth justice systems. Two previous service standards (percentage of recommendations from investigations accepted by government and percentage of recommendations from systemic monitoring, audit and review activities accepted by Government) were amalgamated, with existing reporting methodology remaining the same. This measure will be discontinued in 2014-15.
- Reference to children includes young people under the age of 18.
- Legislation stated that children on child protection orders must be regularly and frequently visited by a community visitor, to promote and protect their rights, interests and wellbeing. This service standard recognised the necessity that children are regularly visited, the importance of resolving concerns impacting their health, safety and wellbeing needs, and the need to report on the visit. A related service standard and existing measures were amalgamated with reporting methodologies remaining the same.
- The children's visiting function transitioned to the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) on 1 July 2014. This component of the service standard will be discontinued in 2014-15 however the remaining two components of the service standard (visiting schedules and locally resolved concerns) will be included in OPG's 2014-15 Service Delivery Statement.
- The blue card function transitioned to the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) on 1 July 2014. This service standard will be included in PSBA's 2014-15 Service Delivery Statement.

## Performance against service standards and other measures - Five years at a glance

In 2010-11 and 2013-14, a number of new and revised service standards were introduced and a number of SDS measures discontinued. In these instances \* indicates where measures continue to be tracked by internal performance reporting and n/a indicates where comparable data has not been produced (refer Notes for more detail).

Service standards	Notes	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Statutory oversight recommendations pertaining to the child protection and youth justice systems are accepted by government.	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	87%
Children within the Commission's visiting jurisdiction:						
• are visited in accordance with the designated visiting schedule		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95%
• have their concerns resolved locally		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	94%
• have a visit report submitted to the Commissioner within 10 days	2,3,4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	92%
Average processing times (days) of blue card applications where there is no criminal history	5,6	n/a	*	*	*	9
Average processing time (days) of Employment Screening applications where there is no criminal history	5	n/a	35	17	7	*
Percentage of recommendations from investigations accepted by government		n/a	100%	100%	100%	85%
Child Death Case Review Committee members rating of secretariat support provided by the Commission	7	n/a	9.4	9.3	9.7	n/a
Percentage of recommendations from systemic monitoring, audit and review activities accepted by government		n/a	100%	100%	97%	100%
Percentage of locally resolvable issues e.g. health, education, special needs and transition issues related to children within the scope of the Community Visitor program resolved at the local level		n/a	91%	91%	92%	94%
Young people's rating of the helpfulness of Community Visitors		n/a	9.0	9.1	9.2	9.3
Applicant satisfaction with Employment Screening processes	8	83%	83%	..	..	n/a

Other measures	Notes	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Number of policy submissions made that incorporate Commission data as evidence or promote children's rights		n/a	56	53	40	24
Number of children and young people responding to <i>Views surveys</i>		n/a	3,058	3,124	3,044	2,969
Number of Indigenous children and young people responding to <i>Views surveys</i>		n/a	948	1,025	1,000	1,079
Percentage of complaints issues relating to child safety and youth justice systems resolved within 90 days		n/a	84%	84%	87%	90%
Percentage of deaths of Queensland children and young people that are recorded on the Commission's Child Death register and reported annually to Parliament		n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of monitoring plans with relevant agencies that are up to date		n/a	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of serious issues (section 25) raised by Community Visitors that are referred to relevant agencies within 24 hours		n/a	97%	99%	96%	96%
Percentage of children within the scope of the Community Visitor program visited in accordance with the designated visiting schedule		n/a	91%	95%	97%	95%
Percentage of Indigenous children within the scope of the Community Visitor program visited in accordance with the designated visiting schedule		n/a	89%	93%	96%	93%
Percentage of Employment Screening applications processed:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 28 days where there is no criminal history</li> </ul>		83%	30%	92%	99%	99%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 4 months where a criminal history has been notified</li> </ul>		89%	79%	89%	89%	99%
Number of blue card holders and applicants monitored for continued eligibility on a daily basis	9	n/a	505,388	517,796	623,842	639,219
Complaints enquiries received		2,895	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Complaints progressed		1,127	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of monitoring and review activities commenced		17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of monitoring and review activities completed		18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Other measures	Notes	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Number of child death cases reviewed		82	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community visitation and support hours per year		161,450	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Employment screening applications processed		279,781	*	*	*	*
Number of policy submissions made		83	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of public and media statements and presentations made		405	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of serious issues raised by Community Visitors (regarding both visitable sites and visitable homes) that are progressed to relevant agencies		100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of non-serious issues regarding visitable homes that are resolved at the local level		83%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of complaints cases closed		82%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of monitoring and review recommendations accepted		100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of CDCRC recommendations accepted		100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Follow-up on complaints resolution in 28 days		99%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of visitable sites contacted per month		85%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of visitable homes contacted per month		88%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of CDCRC cases reviewed within legislated timeframe		99%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of complaints received from outside Brisbane locations		73%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of visitable sites known to the Commission visited by Community Visitors outside Brisbane		92%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of visitable homes known to the Commission visited by Community Visitors outside Brisbane		97%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of training and awareness activities conducted outside Brisbane		44%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of employment screening applications received outside Brisbane		64%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

## Notes

1. This was an amended service standard that highlighted the effectiveness of the Commission's investigations, systemic monitoring, audit and review statutory oversight functions in developing recommendations which are accepted by government to improve services or processes impacting children and young people in the child protection and youth justice systems. Two previous service standards (percentage of recommendations from investigations accepted by government and percentage of recommendations from systemic monitoring, audit and review activities accepted by Government) were amalgamated, with existing reporting methodology remaining the same. This measure will be discontinued in 2014-15.
2. Reference to children includes young people under the age of 18.
3. Legislation stated that children on child protection orders must be regularly and frequently visited by a community visitor, to promote and protect their rights, interests and wellbeing. This service standard recognised the necessity that children are regularly visited, the importance of resolving concerns impacting their health, safety and wellbeing needs, and the need to report on the visit. A related service standard and existing measures were amalgamated with reporting methodologies remaining the same.
4. The children's visiting function transitioned to the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) on 1 July 2014. This component of the service standard will be discontinued in 2014-15 however the remaining two components of the service standard (visiting schedules and locally resolved concerns) will be included in OPG's 2014-15 Service Delivery Statement.
5. The description of the measure changed in 2013-14 however the data methodology remained the same, resulting in a separate Service Standard being established. Data from 2010-11 to 2013-14 is comparable.
6. The blue card function transitioned to the Public Safety Business Agency (PSBA) on 1 July 2014. This service standard will be included in PSBA's 2014-15 Service Delivery Statement.
7. Due to planning for the transition to new child death case review arrangements from 1 July 2014, no survey of CDCRC members was completed in 2013-14.
8. This service standard was discontinued in 2013-14 and replaced with internal survey mechanisms that measured stakeholder satisfaction with the broader range of blue card services provided by the Commission than just the application process. Data for 2013-14 indicated that 98% of stakeholders surveyed in 2013-14 were satisfied with services provided by the Commission.
9. These represent the number of people monitored as at 30 June 2014 in the given financial year and include blue and exemption card holders and applicants.

## **Appendix 8 - Committees**

A range of committees provided oversight and help drive effective management in pursuit of our outcomes.

### ***Internal governance committees***

#### ***Executive Management Team (EMT)***

This committee comprised the Commissioner (Chair), the Assistant Commissioner and the Executive Director, who oversaw the Commission's entire strategic agenda. Meetings of EMT were held monthly.

#### ***Quarterly performance review committee***

Each quarter, the EMT also met with all program directors to review performance against stakeholder and corporate governance strategic objectives (including strategic marketing objectives), assess trends and risks, and reset priorities and resource allocations to meet the changing needs of the Commission.

#### ***Agency Consultative Committee***

The Commission's Agency Consultative Committee was chaired by the Executive Director. The committee included staff, management and union representatives and met as needed to facilitate consultation to address any industrial relations issues and matters relating to the implementation of the Certified Agreement.

#### ***Information Steering Committee***

The Information Steering Committee's (ISC) role was to advise the Commissioner on the development and use of information resources and technologies to achieve strategic objectives. The ISC secretariat supported the committee by monitoring, assessing and reporting on the implementation of the *Information Management Strategy 2012-16* and the performance and achievements of the three sub-program Information Systems Steering Committees. The ISC met twice a year while the sub-program committees met monthly.

#### ***Community Visitor Oversight Committee***

The Community Visitor Oversight Committee was chaired by the Assistant Commissioner. The committee met monthly and sought to ensure the efficient and effective performance of the Community Visitor (CV) program within the Commission. It considered CV program performance measures and provided oversight and advice to the Commissioner on strategically significant matters. It also promoted the effective implementation of CV program operations and practices.

#### ***Workplace Health and Safety Committee***

The Commission's Workplace Health and Safety Committee met quarterly. Chaired by the Executive Director, it engaged nominated staff and management representatives in identifying and addressing workplace health and safety risks and issues affecting our diverse workforce.

#### ***Audit Committee***

The Audit Committee's role included a review of the Commission's:

- internal audit coverage and annual work plan, supporting effective development and implementation of strategic and operational plans
- compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and associated government policies

- effectiveness of the internal control framework
- current and future risk management frameworks, assessing their comprehensiveness
- approach in establishing the business continuity planning arrangements (including whether disaster recovery plans have been tested), fraud control plan, and assessment that the fraud control plan includes appropriate processes and subsystems to capture and effectively investigate fraud related information
- annual financial statements
- internal audit reports developed by the Principal Auditor.

Membership of the Audit Committee in 2013-14 comprised:

- Steve Armitage, Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian from 17 January 2014 to 30 June 2014
- Barry Salmon, Assistant Commissioner and Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian from 1 July 2013 to 16 January 2014
- Bob Van-Kempen, Executive Director
- Belinda Borowik, Director, Corporate Services
- Len Scanlan – as a committee member external to the Commission
- Anthony Benedetti, Director, Individual Advocacy and Resolution program, as senior management representative from 1 July 2013 to 31 January 2014
- Fiona Boorman, Acting Director Strategic Research and Policy program as senior management representative from 1 February to 30 June 2014.

Other officers who were invited to attend the meetings include Principal Auditor (to provide information to support the Internal Audit function) and Audit Manager, Queensland Audit Office (to provide reports on Queensland Audit Office activities within the Commission).

### ***External committees, working groups and forums***

Commission staff participated in a range of external forums to progress initiatives to benefit Queensland children and young people. Key forums for 2013-14 included:

#### ***All children***

Australia and New Zealand Child Death Review and Prevention Group  
 Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians  
 Australasian Mortality Data Interest Group  
 Child Care Restraint Campaign Committee  
 Consumer Product Injury Research Advisory Group  
 Crime and Misconduct Committee: Crime Reference Committee  
 Mt Isa Lead Health Management Committee  
 National Committee for the Standardised Report of Suicide  
 Queensland Advisory Group on Suicide  
 Queensland Drug Action Committee  
 Queensland Government Births and Deaths Working Group  
 Queensland Road Safety Researchers Network

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***Vulnerable children***

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AISRAP (Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention) Australian Research Council Linkage Project Steering Committee

Child Protection Week Committee

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and CCYPCG Quarterly Forum  
State-wide Watch House Liaison Committee

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***Children in statutory care***

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Child Protection Reforms Evaluation Community of Practice

CCYPCG and Ombudsman Liaison

Child Death Case Review Committee

G-Force Working Group

Indigenous Child Placement Principle Audit Advisory Committee

SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) Teams System Subcommittee

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***Governance***

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Corporate Governance Collaborative Group

Inter-Agency Communicators Group

Inter-Agency Complaints Management Committee

Inter-Agency HR Committee

Heads of Corporate Services

Right to Information Practitioners Forum

Information Privacy Practitioners Forum

Statistics Liaison Officer Network

Strategic Management Network

## Glossary

Term	Explanation
<b>Agencies</b>	Organisations which may include Queensland Government departments, statutory bodies and authorities, and those of other state governments or the federal government.
<b>Blue card</b>	Blue cards are issued by the Commission once a screening check has been carried out to confirm that a person is eligible to work in the areas of child-related work covered by the Commission's Act. If a person is eligible, they are issued a positive notice letter and a blue card. The blue card check is also known as the 'Working with Children Check'.
<b>Blue card system</b>	The system regulates services or activities that are directed to, or mainly involve, children. It was established in 2001 to strengthen safeguards and foster safe and supportive environments for children and young people in Queensland.
<b>Child Guardian Report</b>	A Commission report on the performance of the child safety or the youth justice systems.
<b>CSO</b>	Child Safety Officer (a staff member of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services).
<b>Community Visitor (CV)</b>	An authorised person under the Commission's Act who visits and checks on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are living in out-of-home care and detention.
<b>Corporate governance</b>	The set of structures, policies and processes, customs, laws and institutions affecting the way an organisation is directed or administered.
<b>Complaint</b>	An expression of dissatisfaction that the Commission has jurisdiction to investigate.
<b>Cyber bullying</b>	Cyber bullying is a method of bullying using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms and social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.
<b>FTEs</b>	Full time equivalents.

Term	Explanation
<b>Jigsaw</b>	The Commission's information management system which provides case management support for, and reporting on, individual and systemic advocacy activities under the Commission's Child Guardian functions.
<b>Maladministration</b>	<p>Any action which is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contrary to law</li> <li>• unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory</li> <li>• taken in accordance with a rule of law, or a provision of an Act or a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstances</li> <li>• taken for an improper purpose, on irrelevant grounds or having regard to irrelevant considerations</li> <li>• an action for which reasons should have been given but were not based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact</li> <li>• wrong.</li> </ul>
<b>NAIDOC</b>	<p>NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.</p>
<b>Out-of-home care</b>	Where a child or young person has been placed by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in the care of an approved foster carer or kinship carer, or placed in the care of someone else other than their parent(s) (includes residential facilities and detention centres).
<b>Postvention</b>	Refers to the activities and strategies undertaken after a suicide or attempted suicide to reduce associated trauma to other potentially vulnerable people. There are two main aims— to provide bereavement support to those affected by a suicide and to prevent future suicide events including contagion and cluster suicides.

Term	Explanation
<b>Recognised entity</b>	<p>Under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) is required to work with a recognised entity when making all decisions about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child. A recognised entity may be an individual or organisation. If the entity is an individual, he or she must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, have appropriate knowledge of or expertise in child protection and not be an officer or employee of the department.</p> <p>If the recognised entity is an organisation, its members must include Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons who have appropriate knowledge of or expertise in child protection and are not officers or employees of the department. It must also provide services to Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islanders.</p>
<b>Spent convictions</b>	Refers to convictions where a waiting period has passed and the individual in question has not re-offended.
<b>Snapshot</b>	A Commission report that brings together information from diverse sources to provide an overview of safety and wellbeing issues for Queensland children over time and compared with other jurisdictions.
<b>Systemic issue</b>	Where an error or omission in an agency's administrative processes (its system) is causing or contributing to complaints or issues for children and young people in the child safety or justice systems.
<b>Views Surveys</b>	The Commission's' surveys of the views and experiences of young people in foster care, residential care and detention that are collated, analysed and regularly reported.

## ***How to provide feedback***

Thank you for taking the time to read the *Annual Report 2013-14: Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Annual Report*.

We would like to hear your views on our annual report – please provide any comments you may have to [www.qld.gov.au/annualreportfeedback](http://www.qld.gov.au/annualreportfeedback).

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# Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2014



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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN  
FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS*

for the financial year ended 30 June 2014

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**COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
CHILD GUARDIAN**

**Final Financial Statements 2013-14**

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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No</b>
Statement of Comprehensive Income	3
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Changes in Equity	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes To and Forming Part of the Final Financial Statements	7-31
Management Certificate	32
Independent Auditor's Report	33-34

**General Information**

This final financial report covers the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission).

The Commission is an independent statutory body attached to the portfolio of the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services proclaimed under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*. This legislation was replaced by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* resulting in the abolition of the Commission on 30 June 2014.

The head office and principal place of business of the Commission is:

Level 17  
53 Albert Street  
Brisbane, Queensland 4000

A description of the nature of the Commission's operations and its principal activities are included in the notes to the final financial statements.

For information in relation to the Commission's final financial report please call contact the Chief Finance Officer, Arthur O'Brien, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on 3227 8331, email [Arthur.O'Brien@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:Arthur.O'Brien@communities.qld.gov.au)

Amounts shown in these final financial statements may not add to the correct sub-totals or totals due to rounding.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

Statement of Comprehensive Income  
for the year ended 30 June 2014

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	Notes	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
Income from Continuing Operations			
User charges	3	7,278	3,749
Grants and other contributions	4	40,254	42,114
Other revenue	5	545	534
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Income from Continuing Operations		48,077	46,397
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee expenses	6&7	27,349	30,808
Supplies and services	8	13,470	10,004
Grants and subsidies	9	5	
Depreciation and amortisation	10	1,861	1,625
Other expenses	11	1,113	54
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations		43,798	42,491
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Operating Result from Continuing Operations		4,279	3,906
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Comprehensive Income		4,279	3,906
		<hr/>	<hr/>

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

**COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN**

Statement of Financial Position  
as at 30 June 2014

	Notes	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	12	13,176	9,296
Receivables	13	743	358
Other	14	213	322
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>14,132</b>	<b>9,976</b>
<b>Non Current Assets</b>			
Intangible assets	15	5,654	5,899
Plant and equipment	16	1,503	4,663
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>		<b>7,157</b>	<b>10,562</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>21,289</b>	<b>20,538</b>
<b>Payables</b>			
Payables	17	1,766	1,436
Accrued employee benefits	18	2,496	2,178
Other	19		663
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>4,262</b>	<b>4,277</b>
<b>Non Current Liabilities</b>			
Accrued employee benefits	18		556
Other	19		2,957
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>			<b>3,513</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>4,262</b>	<b>7,790</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>17,027</b>	<b>12,748</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Contributed equity		8,411	8,411
Accumulated surplus		8,616	4,337
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>17,027</b>	<b>12,748</b>

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

Statement of Changes in Equity  
for the year ended 30 June 2014

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	Accumulated Surplus \$'000	Contributed Equity \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2012	431	8,411	8,842
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	3,906		3,906
Balance as at 30 June 2013	4,337	8,411	12,748
Balance as at 1 July 2013	4,337	8,411	12,748
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	4,279		4,279
Balance as at 30 June 2014	8,616	8,411	17,027

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

Statement of Cash Flows  
for the year ended 30 June 2014

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	Notes	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
<i>Inflows:</i>			
User charges		7,278	3,790
Grants and other contributions		40,240	42,114
GST input tax credits from ATO		1,128	1,036
GST collected from customers		17	18
Interest receipts		519	531
Other		3	
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Employee expenses		(27,728)	(30,609)
Supplies and services		(14,307)	(10,913)
GST paid to suppliers		(1,324)	(1,000)
GST remitted to ATO		(21)	(14)
Grants and subsidies		(5)	
Other		(53)	(70)
Net cash provided by operating activities	20	5,747	4,883
Cash flows from investing activities			
<i>Outflows:</i>			
Payments for plant and equipment		(1,218)	(128)
Payments for intangibles		(649)	(1,315)
Net cash (used in) investing activities		(1,867)	(1,443)
Net increase in cash held		3,880	3,440
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		9,296	5,856
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	12	13,176	9,296

*The accompanying notes form part of these statements.*

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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	Objectives of the Commission
Note 1:	Summary of Significant Accounting Policies
Note 2:	Services/Major Activities of the Commission
Note 3:	User Charges
Note 4:	Grants and Other Contributions
Note 5:	Other Revenue
Note 6:	Employee Expenses
Note 7:	Key Management Personnel and Remuneration
Note 8:	Supplies and Services
Note 9:	Grants and Subsidies
Note 10:	Depreciation and Amortisation
Note 11:	Other Expenses
Note 12:	Cash and Cash Equivalents
Note 13:	Receivables
Note 14:	Other Current Assets
Note 15:	Intangible Assets
Note 16:	Plant and Equipment
Note 17:	Payables
Note 18:	Accrued Employee Benefits
Note 19:	Other Liabilities
Note 20:	Reconciliation of Operating Surplus to Net Cash from (used in) Operating Activities
Note 21:	Non-Cash Financing and Investing Activities
Note 22:	Commitments for Expenditure
Note 23:	Contingent Liabilities
Note 24:	Financial Instruments
Note 25:	Assets and liabilities transferred on 1 July 2014

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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Objectives of the Commission

The Commission is an independent statutory body with a legislative mandate to promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland, particularly those most vulnerable. It has particular responsibility for overseeing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in out-of-home care and administers this through its Child Guardian function which includes the Individual Advocacy and Resolution Program. The Commission also administers Queensland's blue card system (a working with children check).

The Commission focuses on those who:

- are in care or detention;
- have no one to act on their behalf;
- are not able to protect themselves; and
- are disadvantaged because of a disability, geographic isolation, homelessness or poverty.

Key outcomes sought by the Commission are:

- the rights, interests, safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people are upheld and enhanced;
- vulnerable children and young people in Queensland have appropriate support and early intervention services;
- effective child safety and youth justice systems to protect and support children and young people where legislative intervention is appropriate;
- a workforce with the capability to achieve the Commission's vision; and
- a corporate governance framework that allows the Commission to sustainably achieve its strategic objectives.

On 28 June 2013 the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (Carmody Review) presented its final report to the Premier of Queensland. In its report the Commission of Inquiry considered that there is no longer a need for the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian to be retained in its current form. As part of the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry recommendations the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* was replaced by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian being effectively abolished on 30 June 2014.

The final financial statements of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission) for the year ended 30 June 2014 have been prepared consistent with section 80(3) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*. The Commission's final financial statements have been prepared to the cessation date of 30 June 2014, however the redistribution of its assets and liabilities is taken to have happened on the following day, 1 July 2014. Whilst the Commission ceased to exist and is therefore not a going concern, the final financial statements have been prepared consistent with the going concern basis of preparation, as its functions and services have generally continued to operate within different Queensland Government entities. The distribution of the Commission's assets and liabilities effective as at the redistribution date is shown at Note 25.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Statement of Compliance

The Commission has prepared these financial statements in compliance with sections 43 and 48 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*.

These final financial statements are general purpose financial statements, and have been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations. In addition, the financial statements comply with Queensland Treasury and Trade's Minimum Reporting Requirements for the year ending 30 June 2014, and other authoritative pronouncements.

With respect to compliance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, the Commission has applied those requirements applicable to not-for-profit entities, as the Commission is a not-for-profit entity. Except where stated, the historical cost convention is used.

(b) The Reporting Entity

The financial statements include the value of all income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity of the Commission.

(c) User Charges

User charges and fees controlled by the Commission are recognised as revenues when invoices for the related services are issued or upon processing of bluecard applications. User charges and fees are controlled by the Commission where they can be deployed for the achievement of the Commission's objectives.

(d) Grants

Grants, contributions, donations and gifts that are non-reciprocal in nature are recognised as revenue in the year in which the Commission obtains control over them. Where grants are received that are reciprocal in nature, revenue is recognised over the term of the funding arrangements.

Contributions of services are recognised only when a fair value can be determined reliably and the services would be purchased if they had not been donated.

(e) Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Cash Flows, cash assets include all cash and cheques receipted but not banked at 30 June as well as deposits at call with financial institutions.

(f) Receivables

Trade debtors are recognised at the amounts due at the time of sale or service delivery i.e. the agreed purchase/contract price. Settlement of these amounts is required within 30 days from invoice date.

The collectability of receivables is assessed periodically with provision being made for impairment.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

(g) Acquisitions of Assets

Actual cost is used for the initial recording of all non-current physical and intangible asset acquisitions. Cost is determined as the value given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including all other costs incurred in getting the assets ready for use, including architects' fees and engineering design fees. However, any training costs are expensed as incurred.

Assets acquired at no cost or for nominal consideration, other than from an involuntary transfer from another Queensland Government entity, are recognised at their fair value at date of acquisition in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) 116 *Property, Plant and Equipment*.

(h) Plant and Equipment

Items of plant and equipment with a cost equal to or in excess of the following thresholds are recognised for financial reporting purposes in the year of acquisition:

Computer Hardware	\$5,000
Office Equipment	\$5,000
Leasehold Improvements	\$5,000

Plant and equipment is measured at cost in accordance with Queensland Treasury and Trade's *Non-Current Asset Policies for the Queensland Public Sector*. Items with a lesser value are expensed in the year of acquisition.

(i) Intangibles

*Internally Generated Software*

Intangible assets with a cost or other value greater than \$100,000 are recognised in the financial statements, items with a lesser value being expensed. Each intangible asset is amortised over its estimated useful life to the Commission, less any anticipated residual value. The residual value is zero for all of the Commission's intangible assets.

It has been determined that there is not an active market for any of the Commission's intangible assets. As such, the assets are recognised and carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Expenditure on research activities relating to internally-generated intangible assets is recognised as an expense in the period in which it is incurred.

Costs that are directly attributable to the development of computer software are capitalised and are amortised on a straight-line basis over the period of expected benefit to the Commission, namely 7 to 10 years.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

(j) Amortisation and Depreciation of Intangibles and Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment is depreciated and intangibles are amortised on a straight-line basis so as to allocate the net cost of each asset, less its estimated residual value, progressively over its estimated useful life to the Commission.

Assets under construction (work-in-progress) are not depreciated or amortised until they reach service delivery capacity. Service delivery capacity relates to when construction is complete and the asset is first put to use or is installed ready for use in accordance with its intended application. The assets are then reclassified to the relevant classes within plant and equipment.

Where assets have separately identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned useful lives distinct from the asset to which they relate and are depreciated accordingly.

Any expenditure that increases the originally assessed capacity or service potential of an asset is capitalised and the new depreciable amount is depreciated over the remaining useful life of the asset to the Commission.

The depreciable amount of leasehold improvements is allocated progressively over the unexpired period of the lease. The unexpired period of a lease includes any option period where exercise of the option is probable.

For each class of depreciable asset the following depreciation and amortisation rates are used:

Class	Rate
Plant and equipment:	
Computer Hardware	10-33%
Office Equipment	20%
Leasehold Improvements	
Office Fitouts	10%
Intangibles	
Internal Use Software	10-15%

(k) Impairment of Non-Current Assets

All non-current physical and intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, the Commission determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and depreciated replacement cost.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

(I) Amortisation and Depreciation of Intangibles and Plant and Equipment

An impairment loss is recognised immediately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount. When the asset is measured at a revalued amount, the impairment loss is offset against the asset revaluation surplus of the relevant class to the extent available.

Where an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but so that the increased carrying amount does not exceed the carrying amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the reversal of the impairment loss is treated as a revaluation increase.

(m) Leases

A distinction is made in the financial statements between finance leases that effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all risks and benefits incidental to ownership, and operating leases, under which the lessor retains substantially all risks and benefits.

Operating lease payments are generally representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets and are expensed in the periods in which they are incurred. The exception is rent operating lease payments, which require the fixed rental increases, of 4.5% per year, to be included in the lease payments to be allocated on a straight-line basis. The difference between the expense and the cash payment at a point in time is recorded as a deferred lease liability.

Incentives received on entering into operating leases are recognised as liabilities. Lease payments are allocated between rental expense and reduction of the liability.

(n) Payables

Trade creditors are recognised upon receipt of the goods or services ordered and are measured at the nominal amount i.e. agreed purchase/contract price, gross of applicable trade and other discounts. Amounts owing are unsecured and are generally settled on 30 day terms.

(o) Financial Instruments

*Recognition*

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

*Classification*

Financial instruments are classified and measured as follows:

- Cash and cash equivalents - held at fair value through profit and loss
- Receivables - held at amortised cost
- Payables - held at amortised cost.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

(o) Financial Instruments (cont'd)

The Commission does not enter into transactions for speculative purposes, nor for hedging. Apart from cash and cash equivalents, the Commission holds no financial assets classified at fair value through profit and loss.

All disclosures relating to the measurement and financial risk management of other financial instruments held by the Commission are included in Note 24.

(p) Employee Benefits

Employer superannuation contributions, annual leave and long service leave levies are regarded as employee benefits.

Payroll tax and workers' compensation insurance are a consequence of employing employees, but are not counted in an employee's total remuneration package. They are not employee benefits and are recognised separately as employee related expenses.

*Wages, Salaries, Recreation Leave and Sick Leave*

Wages and salaries due but unpaid at reporting date are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position at current salary rates.

Not all annual leave entitlements are expected to be paid within 12 months, therefore in accordance with AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*, the value of annual leave owing at the end of the reporting period is measured and recognised at its present value, calculated using yields on Fixed Rate Commonwealth Government bonds of similar maturity, after projecting the remuneration rates expected to apply at the time of likely settlement. As the Commission's assets and liabilities at 30 June were transferred to other government entities on 1 July 2014, all unpaid entitlements have been classified as current liabilities.

Prior history indicates that on average, sick leave taken each reporting period is less than the entitlement accrued. This is expected to continue in future periods. Accordingly, it is unlikely that existing accumulated entitlements will be used by employees and no liability for unused sick leave entitlements is recognised.

As sick leave is non-vesting, an expense is recognised for this leave as it is taken.

*Long Service Leave*

Under the Queensland Government's Long Service Leave Scheme, a levy is made on the Commission to cover the cost of employees' long service leave. The levies are expensed in the period in which they are payable. Amounts paid to employees for long service leave are claimed from the scheme quarterly in arrears

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

{p) Employee Benefits (cont'd)

No provision for long service leave is recognised in the Commission's financial statements, the liability being held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in those financial statements pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

*Superannuation*

Employer superannuation contributions are paid to QSuper, the superannuation scheme for Queensland Government employees, at rates determined by the Treasurer on the advice of the State Actuary. Contributions are expensed in the period in which they are paid or payable. The Commission's obligation is limited to its contribution to QSuper.

The QSuper scheme has defined benefit and defined contribution categories. The liability for defined benefits is held on a whole-of-government basis and reported in the financial statements pursuant to AASB 1049 *Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting*.

{q) Key Management Personnel and Remuneration

Key management personnel and remuneration disclosures are made in accordance with section 5 of the Financial Reporting Requirements for Queensland Government Agencies issued by Queensland Treasury and Trade. Refer to Note 7 for the disclosures on key management personnel and remuneration.

{r) Insurance

The Commission's non-current physical assets and other risks are insured through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund, premiums being paid on a risk assessment basis. In addition, the Commission pays premiums to WorkCover Queensland in respect of its obligations for employee compensation.

{s) Contributed Equity

Adjustments to 'Contributed Equity' are made in accordance with Interpretation 1038 *Contributions by Owners Made to Wholly-Owned Public Sector Entities*.

{t) Taxation

The Commission is a State body as defined under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and is exempt from Commonwealth taxation with the exception of Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

FBT and GST are the only taxes accounted for by the Commission. GST credits receivable from, and GST payable to the ATO, are recognised (refer to Note 13).

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

(u) Issuance of Financial Statements

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the former Commissioner, and the Chief Finance Officer - Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in the capacity of former responsible person at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

(v) Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of financial statements necessarily requires the determination and use of certain critical accounting estimates, assumptions, and management judgements that have the potential to cause a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Such estimates, judgements and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in future periods as relevant.

(w) Rounding and Comparatives

Amounts included in the financial statements are in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Comparative information has been restated where necessary to be consistent with disclosures and classifications in the current reporting period.

(x) New and Revised Accounting Standards

The Commission did not voluntarily change any of its accounting policies during 2013-14. Australian accounting standard changes applicable for the first time for 2013-14 have had minimal effect on the Commission's financial statements.

AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* became effective from reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2013. AASB 13 sets out a new definition of 'fair value' as well as new principles to be applied when determining the fair value of assets and liabilities. The Commission's assets are valued at cost in accordance with Queensland Treasury and Trade's *Non-Current Asset Policies for the Queensland Public Sector*. As such, AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* does not apply to the Commission's assets. As the Commission ceased operations on 30 June 2014 any new accounting standards or revised accounting standards relating to future periods will have no relevance.

2. Services/Major Activities of the Commission

The Commission has one output "Promotion and Protection of the Rights, Interests and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Queensland" and therefore no Income Statement by Outputs/Major Activities has been prepared.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
3. User Charges		
Employment screening	7,253	3,722
Other revenue	25	27
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	7,278	3,749
	<hr/>	<hr/>
4. Grants and Other Contributions		
Grants via State Government Department	40,240	42,099
Assets received at below fair value	14	15
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	40,254	42,114
	<hr/>	<hr/>
5. Other Revenue		
Interest	542	531
Other	3	3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	545	534
	<hr/>	<hr/>

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013/14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
6. Employee Expenses		
<i>Employee Benefits</i>		
Wages and salaries	22,892	25,887
Employer superannuation contributions	2,569	2,874
Long service leave levy	456	503
Redundancies	20	
<i>Employee Related Expenses</i>		
Workers' compensation premium	49	66
Payroll tax	1,195	1,351
Other employee related expenses	168	127
Total	27,349	30,808

The number of employees including both full-time employees and part-time employees measured on a full-time equivalent basis (reflecting Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHR!)) is:

	2014	2013
Number of Employees:	211	245

Community Visitors are casual employees employed under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*.

	2014	2013
Number of Community Visitors:	70	76

MOHRI information differs from the staffing information contained in the Commission's Service Delivery Statements due to the calculation method used.

MOHRI data summarises the Commission's workforce profile and includes all staff employed or separated during the previous quarterly reporting period. It also takes into account staff on long term leave (paid or unpaid). The Service Delivery Statements include only those staff currently employed at the Commission at 30 June, calculated on a full-time equivalent basis.

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

7. Key Management Personnel and Remuneration

(a) Key Management Personnel

The following details for key management personnel include those positions that had authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Commission during 2013-14. Further information on these positions can be found in the body of the Annual Report under the section relating to Executive Management.

Position	Responsibilities	Current Incumbents		
		Contract classification and appointment authority		Date appointed to position (Date resigned from position)
Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner and Child Guardian	The Commissioner is the accountable officer for the Commission and leads the strategic focus and direction for its work. In accordance with the <i>Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000</i> , the Commissioner is to control the Commission (s15), act independently (in a way that promotes and protects the rights, interests and wellbeing of children) and is not under control or direction of the Minister (s22).	Refer note(b) below	Appointment by the Governor in Council	17 January 2014
Acting Commissioner and Child Guardian	The Commissioner is the accountable officer for the Commission and leads the strategic focus and direction for its work. In accordance with the <i>Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000</i> , the Commissioner is to control the Commission (s15), act independently (in a way that promotes and protects the rights, interests and wellbeing of children) and is not under control or direction of the Minister (s22).	Refer note(b) below	Appointment by the Governor in Council	31 January 2013 (Resigned 16 January 2014)
Executive Director	Responsible for the effective administration of the blue card system and the Commission's corporate governance framework.	SES2	Section 110 <i>Public Service Act 2000</i>	15 November 2007

## COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN

### NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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#### 7. Key Management Personnel and Remuneration (cont'd)

##### (b) Remuneration

Remuneration for the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner is set by the Governor in Council in accordance with Part 3, Sections 28 and 34 of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*. Remuneration policy for the Executive Director is set by the Queensland Public Service Commission as provided for under the *Public Service Act 2008*. The remuneration and other terms of employment for the key executive management personnel are specified in employment contracts. The contracts provide for the provision of other benefits including professional memberships and motor vehicles.

For the 2013-14 year, remuneration of key management personnel increased by 2.2% in accordance with government policy.

Remuneration packages for key management personnel comprise the following components:-

- Short term employee expenses which include:
  - salaries, allowances and leave entitlements earned and expensed for the entire year or for that part of the year during which the employee occupied the specified position.
  - non-monetary benefits- consisting of provision of vehicle together with fringe benefits tax applicable to the benefit.
- Long term employee expenses include amounts expensed in respect of long service leave entitlements earned.
- Post-employment expenses include superannuation contributions.
- Termination benefits are not provided for within individual contracts of employment. Contracts of employment provide only for notice periods or payment in lieu of notice on termination, regardless of the reason for termination.
- Performance bonuses are not paid under the contracts in place.

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

7. Key Management Personnel and Remuneration (cont'd)

(b) Remuneration (cont'd)

1 July 2013- 30 June 2014

Position (date resigned if applicable)	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Monetary Expenses \$'000	Non-Monetary Benefits \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner and Child Guardian	108	0	2	10	0	120
Acting Commissioner and Child Guardian (resigned 16 January 2014)	132	7	3	12	3	157
Executive Director	176	0	5	17	0	198
<b>Total Remuneration</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>475</b>

1 July 2012 -30 June 2013

Position (date resigned if applicable)	Short Term Employee Expenses		Long Term Employee Expenses	Post-Employment Expenses	Termination Benefits	Total Expenses
	Base \$'000	Non-Monetary \$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Commissioner and Child Guardian (resigned 30 January 2013)	137	5	3	14	3	162
Acting Commissioner and Child Guardian	94	15	10	9	0	128
Assistant Commissioner	88	14	2	12	0	116
Executive Director	171	0	4	17	0	192
<b>Total Remuneration</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>598</b>

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
8. Supplies and Services		
Building Services	2,399	2,952
Queensland Police Service criminal history checks	3,798	2,127
Administration costs	2,084	1,897
Contractors and consultants	2,511	450
Corporate services provider costs	654	588
Telecommunications	310	331
Advertising and promotions	15	16
Travel	580	674
Minor plant and equipment	769	631
Repairs and maintenance	210	199
Hospitality	12	12
Motor vehicle running costs	7	23
Professional services	57	18
Printing	63	70
Other		16
Total	13,470	10,004
9. Grants and Subsidies		
Sponsorships paid	5	
Total	5	
10. Depreciation and Amortisation		
Depreciation and amortisation were incurred in respect of:		
Plant and equipment	967	966
Intangibles	894	659
Total	1,861	1,625

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
11. Other Expenses		
Insurance premiums	23	17
External audit fees*	30	33
Losses from disposal of plant & equipment **	1,060	4
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,113	54
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<p>* Total audit fees paid to the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2013-14 financial statements are estimated to be \$30,000 (2012-13 actual - \$30,500). There are no non-audit services included in this amount.</p>		
<p>** The losses from disposal of plant and equipment include \$1.045M being the write-off of the net book value of a lease fit-out asset.</p>		
12. Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank	1,398	76
Cash on hand		
Deposits at call	11,778	9,219
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	13,176	9,296
	<hr/>	<hr/>
13. Receivables		
Trade debtors	137	94
Long service leave reimbursement	223	103
Other receivables	23	
GST receivable	362	166
GST payable	(2)	(5)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	743	358
	<hr/>	<hr/>
14. Other Current Assets		
Prepayments	213	322
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	213	322
	<hr/>	<hr/>



*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
16. Plant and Equipment		
Plant and equipment		
At cost	2,459	8,560
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(1,231)	(3,897)
	1,228	4,663
Work in progress: At cost	275	
Total	1,503	4,663

Plant and Equipment Reconciliation

	<i>Plant and equipment</i>		<i>Work in progress</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
Carrying amount at 1 July	4,663	5,498			4,663	5,498
Acquisitions	946	135	275		1,221	135
Donations received	14				14	
Disposals	(3,428)	(4)			(3,428)	(4)
Depreciation/ Amortisation	(967)	(966)			(967)	(966)
Carrying amount at 30 June	1,228	4,663	275		1,503	4,663

The Commission has plant and equipment with an original cost of \$0.342 million (2013 \$0.265 million) and written down value of nil still in use for the provision of services.

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
17. Payables		
Trade creditors	1,660	1,309
Other	106	127
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,766	1,436
	<hr/>	<hr/>
18. Accrued Employee Benefits		
<i>Current</i>		
Salaries and wages outstanding	484	518
Recreation leave	1,893	1,518
Long service leave levy payable	119	142
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	2,496	2,178
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<i>Non current</i>		
Recreation leave		556
		<hr/>
Total		556
		<hr/>
19. Other Liabilities		
<i>Current</i>		
Lease incentive		473
Deferred lease liability		190
		<hr/>
Total		663
		<hr/>
<i>Non current</i>		
Lease incentive		2,366
Deferred lease liability		591
		<hr/>
Total		2,957
		<hr/>

Effective 30 June 2014 the balance of the lease incentive liability was offset against the balance of the corresponding lease incentive leasehold improvements asset. The balance of the deferred lease liability was offset against lease rental expense through the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
<b>20. Reconciliation of Operating Surplus to Net Cash from (used in) Operating Activities</b>		
Operating Result	4,279	3,906
Depreciation and amortisation expense	1,861	1,625
Gain on sale of property, plant and equipment		(3)
Asset received at below fair value	(14)	
Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment	1,060	
Leasehold improvement asset offset against lease incentive liability	2,365	
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
(Increase) in receivables	(186)	(58)
(Increase)/decrease in GST input tax credits receivable	(196)	35
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	109	(250)
Increase/(decrease) in accounts payable	330	(138)
Increase/(decrease) in accrued employee benefits	(238)	292
(Decrease) in GST payable	(3)	(4)
(Decrease) in deferred lease liability	(781)	(48)
(Decrease) in lease incentive liability	(2,839)	(474)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>5,747</u>	<u>4,883</u>

**21. Non-Cash Financing and Investing Activities**

Assets and liabilities received or transferred by the Commission as a result of non-reciprocal transfers are recognised as adjustments to the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Changes in Equity.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
22. Commitments for Expenditure		
(a) <i>Non-Cancellable Operating Lease</i>		
Commitments under operating leases at reporting date are inclusive of anticipated GST and are payable as follows:		
Not later than one year	3,870	3,707
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,397	6,253
Later than five years		
Total	<u>6,267</u>	<u>9,960</u>

Operating leases are entered into as a means of acquiring access to office accommodation. Lease payments are generally fixed, but with inflation escalation clauses on which contingent rentals are determined.

Following the cessation of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian after 30 June 2014 these expenditure commitments transferred to other Queensland Government entities.

*(b) Capital expenditure commitments*

Material classes of capital expenditure commitments inclusive of anticipated GST, contracted for at reporting date but not recognised in the accounts are payable as follows:

	Software
Not later than one year	730
Later than one year and not later than five years	
Later than five years	
Total	<u>730</u>

*(c) Other expenditure commitments*

Material expenditure commitments inclusive of anticipated GST, contracted for at reporting date but not recognised in the accounts are payable as follows:

Not later than one year	2,607	2,717
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,439	1,310
Later than five years		
Total	<u>5,046</u>	<u>4,027</u>

Following the cessation of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian after 30 June 2014 these expenditure commitments transferred to other Queensland Government entities.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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23. Contingent Liabilities

As at 30 June 2014, no legal action has been brought against the Commission.

24. Financial Instruments

*(a) Categorisation of Financial Instruments*

The Commission has the following categories of financial assets and liabilities:

Category	Note	2014 \$'000	2013 \$'000
<hr/>			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	12	13,176	9,296
Receivables	13	743	358
Total		<hr/> 13,919	<hr/> 9,654
<hr/>			
Financial Liabilities			
Payables	17	1,766	1,436
Total		<hr/> 1,766	<hr/> 1,436

*(b) Financial Risk Management*

The Commission's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks -credit risk, liquidity risk, market risk and interest rate risk.

The Commission provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as policies covering specific areas. These policies focus on the unpredictability of financial markets and seek to minimise potential adverse effects on the financial performance of the Commission.

All financial risk is managed by the Corporate Services Program under policies approved by the Commissioner.

Credit risk exposure refers to the situation where the Commission may incur financial loss as a result of another party to a financial instrument failing to discharge their obligation.

The maximum exposure to credit risk at balance date in relation to each class of recognised financial assets is the gross carrying amount of those assets inclusive of any provisions for impairment.

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*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

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24. Financial Instruments (cont'd)

*(c) Credit Risk Exposure*

Financial Assets

The carrying amount of receivables represents the maximum exposure to credit risk. As such, receivables are not included in the credit risk exposure disclosure.

The Commission manages credit risk through the use of a credit management strategy. This strategy aims to reduce the exposure to credit default by ensuring that the Commission invests in secure assets and monitors all funds owed on a timely basis. Exposure to credit risk is monitored on an ongoing basis.

No financial assets and financial liabilities have been offset and presented net in the Statement of Financial Position.

No financial assets have had their terms renegotiated so as to prevent them from being past due or impaired, and are stated at the carrying amounts as indicated.

The method for calculating any allowance for impairment is based on past experience, current and expected changes in economic conditions and changes in client credit ratings.

*(d) Liquidity Risk*

Liquidity risk refers to the situation where the Commission may encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or another financial asset.

The Commission manages liquidity risk through the use of a liquidity management strategy. This strategy aims to reduce the exposure to liquidity risk by ensuring the Commission has sufficient funds available to meet employee and supplier obligations as they fall due. This is achieved by ensuring that adequate levels of cash are held within the various bank accounts so as to match the expected duration of the various employee and supplier liabilities.

The following table sets out the liquidity risk of financial liabilities held by the Commission. It represents the contractual maturity of financial liabilities, calculated based on undiscounted cash flows relating to the liabilities at reporting date. The undiscounted cash flows in these tables differ from the amounts included in the Statement of Financial Position that are based on discounted cash flows.

	Note	2014 Payables in			Total \$'000
		<1 year \$'000	1-5 years \$'000	>5 years \$'000	
Financial Liabilities					
Payables	17	1,766			1,766
Total		1,766			1,766

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

24. Financial Instruments (cont'd)

(d) Liquidity Risk (cont'd)

	Note	2013 Payables in			Total S'000
		<1year S'000	1-5years \$'000	>5 years S'000	
Financial Liabilities					
Payables	17	1,436			1,436
Total		1,436			1,436

(e) Market Risk

The Commission does not trade in foreign currency and is not materially exposed to commodity price changes. The Commission is exposed to interest rate risk through cash deposited in interest bearing accounts. The Commission does not undertake any hedging in relation to interest risk and manages its risk as per the liquidity risk management strategy articulated in the Commission's Financial Management Practice Manual.

(f) Interest Rate Sensitivity Analysis

The Commission has an exposure to variable interest rates on cash deposited in interest bearing accounts. The following interest rate sensitivity analysis is based on a report similar to that provided to management, depicting the outcome on the operating result if interest rates would change by +/- 1% from the year-end rates applicable to the Commission's financial assets and liabilities. With all other variables held constant, the Commission would have a surplus and equity increase/(decrease) of \$132,000 (2013: \$93,000).

Financial Instruments	Carrying Amount S'000	2014 Interest rate risk			
		-1%		+1%	
		Operating Result	Equity	Operating Result	Equity
Cash	13,176	(132)	(132)	132	132
Potential Impact		(132)	(132)	132	132

Financial Instruments	Carrying Amount S'000	2013 Interest rate risk			
		-1%		+1%	
		Operating Result	Equity	Operating Result	Equity
Cash	9,296	(93)	(93)	93	93
Potential Impact		(93)	(93)	93	93

*COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
CHILD GUARDIAN*

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013-14

	Transfers to:						Total
	Queensland Family and Child Commission	Public Safety Business Agency	Department of Justice and Attorney- General	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Controlled	Queensland Ombudsman	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Administered	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
25. Assets and liabilities transferred on 1 July 2014							
Current Assets							
Cash and cash equivalents	1,358	3,277	1,584	175	1	6,781	13,176
Receivables	19	147	33	-	-	544	743
Other	3	206	4	-	-	-	213
Total Current Assets	1,380	3,630	1,621	175	1	7,325	14,132
Non Current Assets							
Intangible assets	969	4,229	456	-	-	-	5,654
Plant and equipment	274	1,229	-	-	-	-	1,503
Total Non Current Assets	1,243	5,458	456	-	-	-	7,157
Total Assets	2,623	9,088	2,077	175	1	7,325	21,289
Current Liabilities							
Payables	728	748	75	-	-	215	1,766
Accrued employee benefits	474	1,118	728	175	1	-	2,496
Total Current Liabilities	1,202	1,866	803	175	1	215	4,262
Net Assets	1,421	7,222	1,274	-	-	7,110	17,027

The above table reflects the anticipated disposition of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's final assets and liabilities effective 1 July 2014 and is subject to formal acceptance by the receiving entities.

**CERTIFICATE OF THE COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to section 62(1) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (the Act), relevant sections of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* and other prescribed requirements. In accordance with section 62(1)(b) of the Act we certify that in our opinion:

- (i) the prescribed requirements for establishing and keeping the accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- (ii) the statements have been drawn up to present a true and fair view, in accordance with prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN for the financial year ended 30 June 2014 and of the financial position of the Commission at the end of that year; and
- (iii) these assertions are based on an appropriate system of internal controls and risk management processes being effective, in all material respects, with respect to financial reporting throughout the reporting period.



Arthur O'Brien FCPA FIPA, M Bus P Actg, B Bus Mgt  
**Chief Finance Officer**  
**Department of Communities, Child Safety**  
**and Disability Services\***

Date: 29/08/2014



Steve Armitage  
**Former Commissioner for Children and**  
**Young People and Child Guardian**

Date: 29/8/14 .

\* The Chief Finance Officer of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has been appointed by the Treasurer to certify the final financial report of the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in accordance with section 48(4) of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009* in the capacity of former responsible person.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the former Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Report on the Final Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying final financial report of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2014, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the period then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and certificates given by the former Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian and the Chief Finance Officer of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

### *The Former Commissioner's Responsibility for the Final Financial Report*

The former Commissioner is responsible for the preparation of the final financial report in accordance with prescribed accounting requirements identified in the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009*, including compliance with Australian Accounting Standards. The former Commissioner's responsibility also includes such internal control as the former Commissioner determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the final financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### *Auditor's Responsibility*

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the final financial report based on the audit. The audit was conducted in accordance with the *Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require compliance with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and that the audit is planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the final financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the final financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the final financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the final financial report that gives a true and fair view in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control, other than in expressing an opinion on compliance with prescribed requirements. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the former Commissioner, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the final financial report including any mandatory financial reporting requirements approved by the Treasurer for application in Queensland.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

### *Independence*

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* promotes the independence of the Auditor-General and all authorised auditors. The Auditor-General is the auditor of all Queensland public sector entities and can be removed only by Parliament.

The Auditor-General may conduct an audit in any way considered appropriate and is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which audit powers are to be exercised. The Auditor-General has for the purposes of conducting an audit, access to all documents and property and can report to Parliament matters which in the Auditor-General's opinion are significant.

### *Opinion*

In accordance with s.40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*:

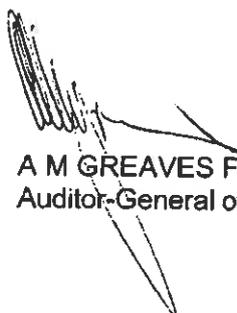
- (a) I have received all the information and explanations which I have required
- (b) in my opinion:
  - (i) the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects
  - (ii) the final financial report presents a true and fair view, in accordance with the prescribed accounting standards, of the transactions of the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian for the final period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and of the financial position as at the end of that final period.

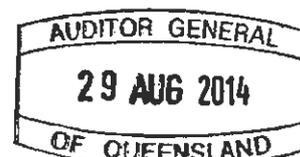
### *Emphasis of Matter – Abolishment of Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian*

Without modifying my opinion, attention is drawn to the Objectives of Commission in the final financial report which identifies that pursuant to the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian was abolished on 30 June 2014. The assets and liabilities of the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian as at the date of abolition were transferred to the entities included in Note 25. Accordingly this final financial report has been prepared on a going concern basis.

### **Other Matters - Electronic Presentation of the Audited Final Financial Report**

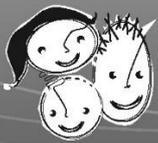
Those viewing an electronic presentation of these financial statements should note that audit does not provide assurance on the integrity of the information presented electronically and does not provide an opinion on any information which may be hyperlinked to or from the financial statements. If users of the financial statements are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic presentation of information, they are advised to refer to the printed copy of the audited financial statements to confirm the accuracy of this electronically presented information.

  
A M GREAVES FCA FCPA  
Auditor-General of Queensland



Queensland Audit Office  
Brisbane





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children and young people  
and child guardian

*A better life for Queensland children*

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