

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 1

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide an update on the intersection between Child Safety and Youth Justice, and outline any initiatives under the \$1.28 billion Community Safety Plan for Queensland child safety is taking lead on?

ANSWER

While children known to child safety are over-represented in youth justice matters, only a very small number of children in care are also subject to youth justice orders.

In March 2024, the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) released *Fast Facts: the crossover cohort*. This document drew information from a variety of sources, including republishing the figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) December 2022 report *Young People under youth justice supervision and their interaction with the child protection system*.

The QFCC report republished the AIHW data-point that 58.2 per cent of young people known to the youth justice system had an interaction with the child protection system in the five-years to 30 June 2021.

In the year to 31 March 2024, Child Safety received more than 140,000 intakes relating to more than 100,000 individual children.

Every one of those children is considered 'known' to the department.

It is also not surprising that young people in the youth justice system are also known to child safety, when the children and families who interact with the child protection and youth justice systems often experience similar vulnerabilities, including abuse, neglect, violence, trauma, socio-economic disadvantage and poor rates of school attendance.

As at 31 March 2024, there were 219 young people aged 10 to 17 years in Queensland who were subject to both a Child Protection Order and a Supervised Youth Justice Order. This is 3.1 per cent of the 7,002 young people aged 10-17 years of age subject to a child protection order.

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) policies and procedures require Child Safety Officers to share information, work closely and coordinate with Youth Justice staff to meet the needs of children in contact with the child protection and youth justice systems.

When DCSSDS identifies a child in care has offended or is on remand, Child Safety Officers work with the child, parents, carers, carer support services, Youth Justice and other agencies to activate additional supports. DCSSDS can assist young people to participate in youth justice diversion programs; target the behaviours that led to their involvement with the youth justice system; and provide or strengthen care supports and options to assist in their rehabilitation.

The *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* (the Plan) takes a whole-of-government approach to address the many complex issues that lead to crime and brings together education, health, sport, housing, community services, domestic violence and child protection services.

Under the Plan, \$5.7 million will be invested over a two-year period to design, implement, and procure a family reunification pilot service targeted at children aged between 12 and 15 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Young people under 16 are generally unable to be accommodated or receive support from specialist homelessness services that work with a broad range of people who often have complex needs and behaviours.

The pilot service will support the Government's commitment as part of the Plan to invest in prevention and early intervention services to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families.

The service model includes two elements to be co-designed in conjunction with the service provider:

1. Reunification: individualised support services for children and their families aimed at resolving relationship difficulties or conflict and facilitating the child's return to the family.
2. Respite and short-term accommodation: safe, temporary accommodation for varying lengths of stay for the child, as respite for the child and family unit, while support is provided for reunification.

The service will work with the secondary support system, including family support and youth support services, and/or DCSSDS where safe reunification is not possible or not appropriate and ensure safe and suitable care and housing arrangements are provided.

The Miles Government will also invest \$2.6 million over two years to support community building and mentoring programs for young Queenslanders from African backgrounds.

This work, to be led by the African Youth Support Council in South East Queensland, will ensure strong community connections for young Queenslanders with an African background, a cohort which is disproportionately represented in the state's criminal justice system.

Young people engaged in similar programs with the African Youth Support Council report high levels of satisfaction, positive experiences and are supported by youth mentors who help them achieve the things they want to do.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 2

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister please advise why the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Child Protection Australia Report 2022-23 shows that Queensland has more than twice the number of children in residential care as any other state or territory?

ANSWER

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Queensland experienced a significant surge in the number of children and young people needing protection and care. Between early 2020 and late 2021, over 1,000 additional children required care, a 10.5 per cent increase.

This growth placed pressure on the foster and kinship care system and led to a greater reliance on residential care.

More recently, Queensland has seen substantial population growth, with the second highest increase in the number of children aged 0-17 years among Australian states and territories. This population growth, combined with current pressures on families such as cost of living, domestic and family violence, and drug and alcohol misuse, means that demand continues to be placed on Queensland's out-of-home care system.

Queensland's priority is to reduce the numbers of children and young people in residential care and increase the number of children living with kin. The *Child Protection Australia 2022-23* report shows that Queensland is making good progress in this area, with a 5.9 per cent increase in the number of children in care living with relatives/kin over the past year.

This improvement is expected to continue with the implementation of the *Roadmap for Residential Care in Queensland*, which aims to enhance outcomes for children and young people in residential care while reducing use of the service, and seeing more children cared for by foster or kinship carers. Queensland's *Our Way* strategy also supports this goal by promoting kin care arrangements.

It is important to note that the data in the *Child Protection Australia 2022-23* report does not capture all children under various care arrangements across states and territories.

Since 2018-19, children subject to third party parental responsibility orders have been excluded from the national count of children in out-of-home care. In Queensland, 1,826 children and young people were subject to such orders as at 30 June 2023.

Additionally, comparisons between states and territories can be misleading due to differences in the use and reporting of placement types across jurisdictions. For example, Queensland does not rely on hotel/motel accommodation as much as some other states and territories such as New South Wales, which uses it more extensively to address care shortages.

As a further example, Western Australia counts children in 'family group homes' separately, where live-in, non-salaried carers provide care, excluding them from residential care counts.

Finally, some states have reported data quality issues. Tasmania, for instance, has noted inconsistencies in the recording of placement types, which mean the numbers of children reported for Tasmania as being in residential, non-residential and other types of placements, should be interpreted with caution.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 3

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister outline how many children or young people were recently impacted by the exit of Mercy from residential care services and provide an update on the transfer of placements to other providers?

ANSWER

Mercy Community Services (Mercy) made the decision to withdraw as a service provider for foster and kinship care services, residential care and Supported Independent Living services on 8 June 2024.

At the time of relinquishment, Mercy was providing support to 863 children and young people across the South East, South West and Brisbane and Moreton Bay regions.

With the support of Mercy, peak bodies and care service agencies, the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services has been able to transition all children and young people to suitable arrangements where they can continue to receive the support they need:

- 787 children in family-based care have transitioned with their carers to other family based care support arrangements;
- 5 children experienced family-based placement breakdown and were moved to residential care. The breakdowns were not related to the Mercy relinquishment;
- 44 children in residential care and 8 young people in supported independent living services transitioned to new service providers;
- 9 children were safely reunified with their families;
- 5 young people turned 18 years old and left the care service system; and
- 5 young people made the decision to self-place. The department is closely monitoring these arrangements to ensure these young people are safe.

The withdrawal of Mercy also provided an opportunity to successfully transition 85 children and young people to First Nations service providers.

The safety and wellbeing of the children and support of carers was always the top priority during the transition process and no children or young people have been left without care.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 4

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide an update on permanency arrangements for children in out-of-home care, how many children and young people are now on permanent care orders or long-term guardianship orders to others in Queensland?

ANSWER

The safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are paramount when the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services is considering care arrangements.

Safely reunifying children with their parents, whenever possible, is the first priority.

Where there is not a parent willing and able to safely care for a child, the department works to ensure stable care arrangements for children and young people in care.

During the year ending 31 March 2023, 606 children were reunified with their parents. Of these, 551 or 91 per cent did not return to care in the following 12 months (to the year ending 31 March 2024).

As at 31 March 2024, there were 8,058 children and young people subject to a long term Child Protection Order, 2.5 per cent (198) more than as at 31 March 2023. Of these, 6,136 were subject to a long-term order granting guardianship to the Chief Executive – 1.5 per cent (89) more than the previous year; 1,573 were subject to a long-term order granting guardianship to other suitable persons (including relatives) – 1.0 per cent (16) more than the previous year; and 349 were subject to a Permanent Care Order – 36.3 per cent (93) more than the previous year.

There has also been an increase in the number of children whose Permanent Care Order assessments have been completed with their orders yet to be finalised. This signals the continued strong focus on ensuring children are stable in their long-term care arrangements.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 5

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise, what the current timeframes for getting a disability worker screening check are and how do these compare across recent years?

ANSWER

The current average time to finalise applications without criminal history or other assessable information (approximately 88 per cent of all applications) is 0.7 days. This is faster than in 2021-22 when the time to finalise these applications was 1.9 days.

In approximately 12 per cent of cases, applicants have a criminal history or other assessable information that needs detailed and careful assessment of the risk they pose to people with disability.

Since 2021, approximately two thirds of applications with assessable information are finalised in under 28 days. The remaining applications can take longer as they are complex and require a detailed risk assessment, including gathering information from external agencies (such as Queensland Police) and natural justice processes for applicants.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 6

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister advise how many clients have accessed the government's centre-based respite services (separated by centre); and any trends in respite clients' accessing these services?

ANSWER

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, 114 children and adults accessed the Government's centre-based respite services with one client accessing multiple centre-based respite services (Ipswich and Toowoomba) during the year.

The number of clients who received a respite service at the Deception Bay Respite Centre was 14; Gold Coast Yalburu Respite Centre was 22; Loganholme Respite Centre was 21; Nangare Respite Centre was 8; Ipswich Respite Centre (Adult) was 37; and the Toowoomba Respite Centre was 13.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan funding has provided families with increased flexibility in how they access and use alternate respite providers. This includes providers who offer "in-home" respite or day centres. Decision makers, in many instances, have exercised choice and control with how they utilise their loved ones' NDIS plan funding by choosing some of these more flexible options.

Accommodation Support and Respite Services has seen a decline in clients accessing government centre-based respite services over the past financial year with 47 clients families taking advantage of the range of options available using the funding contained in their loved ones' NDIS plans.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 7

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister provide an update on how the multicultural community in Queensland is responding to international developments, and steps the Miles Government is taking to support those impacted by conflict overseas, including in the Middle East?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government promotes social cohesion by supporting affected communities and families and listening to community leaders.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting Queensland communities affected by events on the international stage.

Through the 2024-2025 budget, this Government has invested an additional \$5.8 million over two years to support the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program (ASRA), and the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT).

Of this amount, \$4.8 million over two years will go to ASRA to expand the vital support it provides to some of our most vulnerable residents, including people arriving from overseas conflict zones who are not immediately entitled to Commonwealth Government support.

Through this funding, and through the responsiveness of other State agencies, we have, for example, already been able to provide much-needed support to people arriving from the conflict in the Middle East, including access to free health care and fee-free education at Queensland State Schools.

Another \$1 million over two years will go to QPASTT so it can continue its significant work in Queensland schools and to broaden engagement with children through their 'Social Cohesion in Times of Crisis' project.

The project aims to reduce cultural tensions and increase social cohesion and a sense of safety and belonging for individuals, families and communities.

The Government will also continue to provide \$3 million annually to fund the long-established grants programs for multicultural events and projects, which foster community cohesion at a grass roots level across the State.

Multicultural Affairs Queensland works closely with communities affected by international conflicts, including the Middle East, Ukraine, Eritrea, Rwanda and India.

In relation to the Middle East, in March a motion was tabled in the Queensland Parliament joining with the Federal Government in a call for an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages.

We acknowledge there is an urgent need for a negotiated political solution to achieve peace and security in the region.

This will require a two-state solution, where Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peace, security, and dignity within internationally recognised borders.

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, through Multicultural Affairs Queensland, works closely with the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Federal Police, the Queensland Police Service and other agencies on national and international matters that may affect Queenslanders.

Queensland will support any additional humanitarian settlement services, where we have service gaps.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 8

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide an update on the indemnity scheme for PSA insurance, including whether any money has been paid in response to claims?

ANSWER

In response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Queensland Government made legislative changes to remove the limitation periods for civil claims for child sexual abuse and serious child physical and associated psychological abuse.

These changes made it easier for survivors to access justice.

The changes also led to an increase in the number of civil claims made by survivors, which resulted in many commercial insurers withdrawing cover for physical and sexual abuse claims for organisations providing child safety out-of-home care and youth homelessness services.

In October 2021, the Queensland Government implemented an Interim Indemnity Framework to respond to this withdrawal and provide indemnity for physical and sexual abuse claims to eligible out-of-home care and youth homelessness service providers.

As at 30 June 2024, 24 out-of-home care service providers were covered under the Interim Indemnity Framework, and 11 additional providers were being assessed. As at 30 June 2024, no payments to claimants had been made under the Interim Indemnity Framework.

The Queensland Government remains committed to ensuring survivors have equitable access to justice and supporting service providers to continue delivering critical services to vulnerable children and families.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services was allocated \$623,000 to support the continued development of a long-term indemnity scheme and scoping of an appropriate record keeping system.

The Interim Indemnity Framework is currently in place until 30 June 2025 to enable survivors to continue to access justice and support providers to continue delivering essential services while a longer-term solution is finalised and implemented.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 9

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of current vacancy rates and caseloads for Child Safety Officers by Child Safety Service Centre, as at the 31st of March 2024?

ANSWER

Child Safety Officers are doing one of the most rewarding but difficult and challenging jobs in Queensland, working with some of our most vulnerable children and families.

As is currently the case with the majority of employment sectors, particularly those in regional, rural and remote areas, there are significant pressures being felt on the ability to attract and retain staff. The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) has continued to invest in these important roles and a focus on recruitment remains a key priority.

Other actions taken to support Child Safety Service Centres includes employing paralegals to take on some of the court work; employing additional support/professional staff; and increasing partnerships with universities for student placement of social work students, including paying students on placement and supporting living away from home costs.

Regions also continually monitor their priorities, pressures and demands at a local level and have capacity to redistribute resources across Child Safety Service Centres as required. This flexibility allows the right resources to be redirected to where they are needed.

As a result of the *Child Safety and Youth Justice Certified Agreement 2023* being certified on 20 December 2023 and entry level Child Safety Officer roles being increased to the PO3 classification level upon commencement, an increase in applications has been observed across the State.

An iterative action plan has been developed to support and deliver a multipronged approach to advertisement, attraction, recruitment and retention, and continuous statewide advertising continues through a variety of mediums, including Smart Jobs, SEEK, and social and online platforms.

The Public Service Commission methodology counts as a vacancy each approved funded position with no employee paid in that position in that fortnight. This includes positions where the person appointed to that position was on some form of unpaid leave, secondment or higher duties relieving arrangement. This count of positions is expressed as a full time equivalent (FTE) and compared to the total FTE budget assigned to that organisational unit to derive a vacancy rate.

The current overall vacancy rate for Child Safety Officers as at pay period ending 22 March 2024 is 12.43 per cent compared to 16.08 per cent as at 30 June 2023.

Data regarding the average caseload is provided for Child Safety Officers who provide ongoing support to children and young people. This includes children subject to intervention

with parental agreement, children subject to a child protection order and children on support service cases.

The 31 March 2024 vacancy rate by Child Safety Service Centre is: Alderley – 20.04%; Atherton – 19.74%; Bayside – 0.21%; Beaudesert – 0.6%; Beenleigh – 14.65%; Browns Plains – 0.4%; Bundaberg – 9.55%; Caboolture – 6.26%; Cairns – 11.24%; Caloundra – 3.07%; Cannon Hill – 2.76%; Cape York North and Torres Strait Islands – 14.26%; Chermside – Nil; Child Safety After Hours Service Centre – 17.28%; Edmonton – 27.11%; Emerald – 17.99%; Far North Queensland Investigation and Assessment – 15.52%; Fitzroy – 28.48%; Forest Lake – Nil; Fraser Coast – 14.97%; Gladstone – 26.45%; Gold Coast Assessment and In Home Service – 0.9%; Gympie – 2.11%; Inala – 4.65%; Innisfail - Nil; Ipswich Intake, Assessment and Service Connect – 0.07%; Ipswich North – 17.78%; Ipswich South – 13.07%; Labrador – 0.02%; Logan Central – Nil; Loganlea – 1.48%; Mackay – 22.21%; Maroochydore – Nil; Mermaid Beach – Nil; Morayfield – 2.43%; Mount Archer – 40.03%; Mount Gravatt – Nil; Mount Isa-Gulf - 38.06%; North Cairns and Lower Cape – 7.8%; Redcliffe – Nil; Roma - 59.08%; South Burnett – 14.14%; Southern Downs Child and Family Centre – 6.43%; Springfield – 8.58%; Strathpine – Nil; Toowoomba North – 31.63%; Toowoomba South – 31.95%; Townsville Investigation and Assessment – 11.77%; Townsville North and Hinchinbrook – 3.02%; Townsville South and Burdekin – 13.6%; Townsville West and Charters Towers – Nil; and Western Downs Investigation and Assessment – 39.86%.

The 31 March 2024 average caseload by Child Safety Service Centre is: Alderley – 14.6; Atherton – 11.7; Bayside – 14.3; Beaudesert – 16.3; Beenleigh – 13.2; Browns Plains – 15.2; Bundaberg – 15.4; Caboolture – 16.3; Cairns – 12.7; Caloundra – 15.5; Cannon Hill – 13.8; Cape York North and Torres Strait Islands – 13.6; Chermside – 18.3; Child Safety After Hours Service Centre – N/A; Edmonton – 15.8; Emerald – 18.6; Far North Queensland Investigation and Assessment – N/A; Fitzroy – 16.5; Forest Lake – 15.5; Fraser Coast – 15.8; Gladstone – 12.4; Gold Coast Assessment and In Home Service – 16.5; Gympie – 13.4; Inala – 15.1; Innisfail – 12.1; Ipswich Intake, Assessment and Service Connect- N/A; Ipswich North - 17; Ipswich South - 13.1; Labrador – 15.1; Logan Central – 14.9; Loganlea – 14.7; Mackay – 20.8; Maroochydore – 14.5; Mermaid Beach – 16.2; Morayfield – 16.7; Mount Archer – 16.7; Mount Gravatt – 16.1; Mount Isa-Gulf – 19.1; North Cairns and Lower Cape – 15.7; Redcliffe – 15.8; Roma – 17.7; South Burnett – 13.1; Southern Downs Child and Family Centre – 15.7; Springfield – 15.9; Strathpine – 16; Toowoomba North - 17; Toowoomba South – 15.9; Townsville Investigation and Assessment – N/A; Townsville North and Hinchinbrook – 13.6; Townsville South and Burdekin – 15; Townsville West and Charters Towers – 15.2; and Western Downs Investigation and Assessment – N/A.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 10

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister advise what the government is doing about complaints involving guide, hearing and assistance dog handlers being denied access to public places?

ANSWER

Guide, hearing and assistance dogs are a key support for people with disability – they increase independence and access to the community and can reduce the need for other funded supports.

Queensland leads the nation with legislation to protect rights of people who rely on certified dogs to access public places.

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services' response to complaints about guide, hearing and assistance dog handlers being denied access to public places is proportionate to risk and determined on a case-by-case basis.

The *Guide Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (the Act) imposes penalties on individuals and business owners who refuse access to certified dogs and their handlers.

If a certified dog and handler are denied access to a public place, the department can investigate and, in most cases, provides information and education to the individual or business to ensure it does not happen again.

If a handler has been refused service by a driver of a taxi or a ride-share service, the complaint is referred to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, which may issue infringement notices.

Queensland is working with other state, territory and Commonwealth representatives to develop a nationally consistent approach to regulation and accreditation of assistance animals.

Disability Reform Ministers have also given in-principle agreement to settle national principles to help work towards greater consistency for assistance animal users to enable them to travel across state and territory borders with greater ease and certainty.

The department has a new Guide Hearing and Assistance Dogs website for handlers, businesses, and transport providers to learn about their responsibilities and promote the rights of handlers and their certified dogs (www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/ghad).

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 11

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 5 of the SDS 'accommodation support services for people with disability', will the Minister advise how many Queenslanders are supported through accommodation support services for people with a disability (2023-24, and 2024 to date)?

ANSWER

Accommodation Support and Respite Services provides assistance with daily living for people with a primary diagnosis of an intellectual disability and who have standard or high support needs. This assistance is offered through supported independent living arrangements in a range of home environments in many Queensland communities, including shared households with one or more other people with an intellectual disability.

Over the 12 month period of 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, 428 individuals accessed the government delivered supported independent living service.

For the period of 1 July 2024 until 17 July 2024, 393 individuals accessed the government delivered supported independent living service.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 12

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

With reference to this year's Queensland Government funded survey for Queenslanders with a disability, 'Voice of Queenslanders with Disability' Survey, will the Minister advise;

- (a) How long was the survey open for (opening and closing dates),
- (b) How many valid survey responses were received, and
- (c) What was the total cost of the survey?

ANSWER

The annual Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey and Report was first delivered in 2023. The Survey provides critical insights into the lived experiences of Queenslanders with disability and provides a means of independently monitoring progress on implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy and the Queensland Disability Plan, including by highlighting priority areas for building a more inclusive Queensland.

In response to part (a) of the question, the 2024 survey was open for six weeks, between 24 January 2024 and 22 March 2024.

In response to part (b) of the question, 640 valid responses were received from people with disability, family members, carers and service providers across Queensland. This is a 27 per cent increase in the number of responses compared to 2023.

In response to part (c) of the question, in 2024, \$62,500 was provided to Queenslanders with Disability Network to deliver the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey and Report.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 13

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

With reference to Seniors, page 5 of the SDS, will the Minister advise for the FY 2023-24, and 2024 to date;

- (a) Details of advertising campaigns to support, engage and educate seniors, and
- (b) The cost and timeframe of each campaign (listed separately)?

ANSWER

Almost 20 per cent of Queenslanders are aged over 65, making campaigns to support, engage and educate seniors on issues impacting seniors now and into the future important.

In 2023-24, the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services hosted 11 Seniors Expos across the State, from Mareeba to Hervey Bay and Logan. Expos provide an opportunity to engage with older Queenslanders to provide information about concessions and rebates to address the cost of living and staying safe at home, in the community and online.

The department also held 19 Seniors Savings Pop-up events in places like Gympie and Caboolture, through Western Queensland and at the Brisbane EKKA. Pop-ups provide seniors with an opportunity to meet face-to-face with a government representative to discuss concessions and rebates.

In response to part (a) of the question, the Queensland Government's annual Elder Abuse Prevention campaign was launched to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June 2024. The campaign aims to motivate family members, friends, neighbours and carers to start a conversation with older people to build understanding and awareness of elder abuse. The campaign also promotes support for older Queenslanders experiencing elder abuse, particularly through the Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 651 192.

Both the 2023 and 2024 campaigns, called 'Some things never grow old', included digital advertising, Google Search advertising, on television screens in medical centres, radio and social media advertising. Partnerships support the advertising, with in-kind promotion through the Department of Transport and Main Roads customer service centres and on TransLink trains.

In response to part (b) of the question, in 2023, the Elder Abuse Prevention campaign cost \$273,825 and was delivered from 12 June 2023 to 30 July 2023.

In 2024, the Elder Abuse Prevention campaign is expected to cost \$210,000 and commenced on 10 June 2024 and recently concluded on 28 July 2024.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 14

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide, on latest available data:

- (a) the total number of funded CSOs across the state
- (b) the vacancy rate of CSOs across the state
- (c) the number of funded CSOs per region
- (d) the vacancy rate for CSOs per region; and
- (e) the number of cases managed per region?

ANSWER

The latest available data for parts (a) to (d) is for pay period ending 28 June 2024 and includes Child Safety Officers (CSOs) and Seniors CSOs.

In response to part (a) of the question, the current funded full time equivalent (FTE) for CSOs is 1,383.16 FTE.

In response to part (b) of the question, the current vacancy rate for CSOs is 8.87 per cent.

In response to part (c) of the question, the number of funded FTE for CSOs per region is Brisbane and Moreton Bay - 270.46; Far North Queensland - 133.72; North Queensland - 164.36; South East - 261.90; South West - 263.06; and Sunshine Coast and Central - 242.16.

In response to part (d) of the question, the vacancy rate for CSOs per region is Brisbane and Moreton Bay - 1.96 per cent; Far North Queensland - 18.07 per cent; North Queensland - 13.70 per cent; South East - 3.48 per cent; South West 8.84 per cent; Sunshine Coast and Central - 11.93 per cent.

In response to part (e) of the question, the number of cases managed per region is reflected in the number of children and young people subject to ongoing intervention support as at 31 March 2024: Brisbane and Moreton Bay - 2,937; Far North Queensland - 1,563; North Queensland - 1,671; South East - 2,898; South West - 3,276; and Sunshine Coast and Central - 2,618.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 15

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

Can the Minister provide the number of children under 12 who have had a stay in residential care, by year for the last five years?

ANSWER

Most children are cared for in family-based care; however, residential care is an important part of a suite of care options, for some children and young people who cannot live safely within a family.

Residential care is one care arrangement option for young people who have complex mental health, disability or cognitive impairments or complex trauma, which require intensive 24-hour supervision.

Residential care provides therapeutic support to help children and young people access the services they need to be reunified with their family, move to family-based care or transition to independent living.

In some instances, residential care placements allow large sibling groups to remain together, rather than being separated across multiple family-based placements.

I can advise the number of children aged under 12 years in residential care as at: 30 June 2020 - 330; 30 June 2021 - 388; 30 June 2022 - 442; 30 June 2023 - 540; and 31 March 2024 - 613.

Notes:

1. Residential care counts the number of children under the age of 12 placed in a residential care placement at the reference date.
2. Age of the child reported is at the reference date.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 16

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

In 2023-24 a commitment was made to boost frontline and frontline support roles by a further 123 FTEs. How many of these positions have been filled?

ANSWER

Our child safety workforce is one of the most rewarding but difficult and challenging jobs in Queensland, working with some of our most vulnerable children and families.

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, like many industries, continues to experience challenges in attracting and retaining staff, particularly in regional, remote and rural areas. The department offers various incentives for people to move to and work in hard to fill locations in Queensland.

As at 28 June 2024 and when compared to 30 June 2023, 135.81 additional Child Safety Officers (CSOs) (including Senior CSOs) and other caseworker FTE's have been employed in frontline CSO and support roles.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 17

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

In regard to extended post care support, can the Minister provide:

- (a) the number of young people who left statutory care at 18 years to live in their own arrangements who turned 18 after 1 July 2023; and
- (b) the number of these young people (as identified under (a)) who received financial assistance between:
 - (i) 1 July 2023 – 31 December 2023; and
 - (ii) 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024.
- (c) the total funding expended to young people identified under (a) between:
 - (i) 1 July 2023 – 31 December 2023 and
 - (ii) 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024.

ANSWER

Queensland provides the most flexible model of financial support to young people exiting care in Australia.

In response to part (a) of the question, a total of 517 young people who turned 18 years of age after 1 July 2023, left statutory care to live in their own arrangements.

In response to part (b) of the question, currently the collection of this information is a manual process reliant on reporting by funded providers. Six-monthly breakdowns are not currently available. However, I can advise a total of 331 young people received financial assistance between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

In response to part (c) of the question, a total of \$4.35 million in financial support funding was provided to Extended Post Care Support (EPCS) services in 2023-24 to support all 517 young people that were eligible for financial support funding:

- (i) 1 July 2023 – 31 December 2023 - \$0.999 million; and
- (ii) 1 January 2024 – 30 June 2024 - \$3.352 million.

The total funding expended by EPCS services on young people for 2023-24 cannot be reconciled until the end of the 2024-25 financial year.

2024 PRE ESTIMATES HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 18

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

In relation to Queensland Childrens Court Orders granting or maintaining Child Safety custody, for each of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years:

- (a) How many parent(s) in total had children removed from their care?
- (b) How many removals were subject to short-term or temporary orders?
- (c) In how many instances where children were removed subject to short-term or temporary orders and long term orders respectively, did the parents:
 - (i) Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
 - (ii) Have physical disabilities;
 - (iii) Have cognitive or intellectual disabilities;
 - (iv) Have a mental illness;
 - (v) Have a history of substance misuse or alcohol addiction disorders?

ANSWER

Children and young people are taken into care when necessary to ensure their safety and where there is not an acceptable alternative.

In care, these children receive the support they need to enjoy their childhood, feel safe and cared for, and develop into adulthood.

In response to part (a) of the question, while data relating to a child or young person's parents is recorded in the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services' Integrated Client Management System, departmental corporate reporting relates to the child or young person. Data on parents is therefore not readily available and would require extensive manual extraction from individual records, diverting frontline workers from core service delivery to families and children.

In response to part (b) of the question, data relates to the number of children and young people admitted to out-of-home care and who were subject to an assessment or child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the Chief Executive. The latest available reporting period is for the year ending 31 March 2024.

For the year ending 30 June 2023 – subject to a long term child protection order - 401; subject to an assessment order or short-term child protection order - 1,822; total - 2,223.

For the year ending 31 March 2024 (placement start date on or after 1 July 2023) – subject to a long term child protection order - 282; subject to an assessment order or short-term child protection order - 1,481; total - 1,763.

In response to part (c) of the question, data is not readily available and would require extensive manual extraction from individual records, diverting frontline workers from core service delivery to families and children.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 19

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

In relation to the use of hotels and motels to accommodate children in the child protection system, for 2023-24 financial year, will the Minister advise, for each month:

- a) The total number of children who were housed overnight in hotels or motels;
- b) How many of these children were under 12 years old;
- c) How many of these children spent more than two consecutive nights in hotels or motels;
- d) The total number of nights that all children spent in hotels and motels;
- e) The cost of accommodating children in hotels and motels.

ANSWER

Commercial accommodation, such as hotels and motels, is used by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services in a variety of circumstances when caring for young people in the child protection system.

These circumstances include emergency accommodation, respite accommodation and family contact accommodation requirements.

The specific data regarding length of stays and age groups, requested in parts (a) to (d) of the question, is not part of standard corporate reporting and would require manual extraction of data from individual case files, which would divert resources from frontline service delivery.

However, following a review of local registers, I can advise that during the 2023-2024 financial year, 130 children spent a total of 643 nights in commercial accommodation.

In response to part (e) of the question, the cost of accommodating children and young people in hotels and motels during 2023-2024 by month is July - \$3,155.83; August - \$5,697.63; September - \$11,285.83; October - \$20,577.54; November - \$32,410.65; December - \$18,825.96; January - \$28,468.44; February - \$12,525.68; March - \$25,946.74 - April - \$57,527.49; May - \$14,998.92; and June - \$29,605.85.

2024 ESTIMATES PRE HEARING

Question on Notice

No. 20

Community Support and Services Committee asked the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON C MULLEN)—

QUESTION

In relation to people currently on forensic orders (disability):

- a. How many are living in the community?
- b. How many are subject to orders requiring inpatient care?
 - (i) of those, how many are living in a mental health hospital or ward?
- c. What is the average length of time a person is subject to an order requiring inpatient care?

ANSWER

The Forensic Disability Service (FDS) is a small, specialist, medium-security residential rehabilitation facility for up to 10 clients with cognitive impairment or intellectual disability.

The FDS and the guiding legislation were introduced in 2011 by the Queensland Government to provide a suitable and secure option for the support, rehabilitation and habilitation of people with intellectual or cognitive disability who are subject to a Forensic Order (Disability).

Clients are placed on Forensic Orders (Disability) by the Mental Health Court or Tribunal if they are alleged to have committed serious criminal offences and considered to pose an unacceptable risk to the community. Forensic orders are made under *the Mental Health Act 2016*, administered by Queensland Health.

In response to part (a) of the question, the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services is only responsible for individuals on Forensic Orders (Disability) where the category is Inpatient – detained to FDS. Individuals on the Community category are the responsibility of Queensland Health; this part of the question should be directed to the Minister for Health.

In response to part (b) of the question, as at 30 June 2024, there were four individuals on Forensic Orders (Disability) – Inpatient category detained to the FDS.

Queensland Health is responsible for individuals on Inpatient Orders detained to authorised Mental Health Services. This part of the question should be directed to the Minister for Health.

In response to part (c) of the question, the average length of time of an Inpatient order is four years and eight months.