

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 1

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister outline the impact of child and family reforms to date on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and what reforms the government is focusing on for the final three years of its reform agenda?

#### ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government remains committed to ensuring vulnerable Queensland children and young people are protected and supported to reach their full potential.

We are now more than half way through implementation of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry 10-year reform program – *Support Families, Changing Futures* – with new investment of more than \$857 million in child protection and family support services committed since the reforms commenced.

Despite this investment, the child protection and family support system is facing ongoing pressure through high demand for support services and increasing complexity amongst vulnerable Queensland families. This pressure has been compounded by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many families experiencing financial hardship, leading to increased risk factors for children and young people.

Although the pandemic has presented many challenges for families, the department, our non-government partners and our child safety staff continue to deliver high quality support to some of Queensland's most vulnerable children and young people. For example, 94 per cent of investigations with a 24-hour response priority had an investigation commenced on time, the highest percentage since record keeping began in 2008.

Other positive performance improvement achieved through the *Supporting Families, Changing Futures* reform program include:

- more Queensland families are seeking the help they need earlier - since commencing in 2015, there have been 143,834 enquiries to Family and Child Connect, and 17,714 referrals to Intensive Family Support services. There have also been 13,247 referrals to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services since commencing in 2016
- family support services are helping to prevent the entry of children to the child protection system – families that complete family support services assistance and have their needs met are less likely to be subsequently investigated by the department within the following six months. Results are particularly positive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families accessing community-controlled Family Wellbeing Services where, compared to families not accessing the service, rates of subsequent investigations within six months are more than 14 per cent lower.
- there are fewer children who have experienced abuse or neglect and who are unable to be safely cared for by their parents – while this has recently increased during COVID-19, it is still lower than prior to the reforms (4.1 per 1000 children in 2012-13, the year before the reforms, compared to 3.7 per 1,000 in 2019-20)

- the proportion of children in care placed with kin has increased – from 37 per cent in 2012-13 to 45 per cent in 2019-20
- the proportion of children in care who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has remained relatively stable for the 10th consecutive quarter - a reversal of the pre-reform trend of growing over-representation
- child safety officer caseloads have decreased – from around 21 as at 30 June 2013 to around 18 or below as at 30 June 2020.

The Commission of Inquiry projected that without the reform program there would be approximately 11,900 children in care by 2018-19, 12,000 children in care by 2019-20 and 13,454 children in care by 2022-23. There are 10,527 children in care as at 30 June 2020 – approximately 1,500 fewer children than anticipated by the Inquiry.

These performance improvements have been delivered by hard-working child safety staff despite significantly increased demand and complexity in families presenting to the department, a challenge which had not been foreseen by the Commission of Inquiry.

In 2020-21, the Government is continuing to pursue better outcomes for children and young people, with more than \$1.475 billion invested in the child protection and family support system. Over the coming years, we will continue to shift the emphasis of the child protection system away from a crisis response towards better and earlier intervention for families so they can safely care for their children and young people at home.

We are also focusing on eliminating the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system through the continued implementation of the *Our Way Strategy* and *Changing Tracks Action Plans*.

The original reform program as outlined by the Inquiry has been augmented by a number of further reviews, as well as recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

To incorporate the expanded reform program and provide a framework for the next phase the department developed a five year, whole-of-government strategy – Supporting Families Changing *Futures 2019-2023 – The Queensland Government’s plan for helping Queensland children, young people, parents and families experiencing vulnerability* (the Strategy) – which was released in July 2019.

Key focus areas include:

- promoting a whole-of-government approach towards meeting the needs of Queensland children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability and enhancing the shared responsibility objective of the reform program
- increasing the reach and effectiveness of family support services to help more families earlier and reduce the number of families escalating into the child protection system
- enhancing and strengthening cross-agency responses to address the wide-ranging needs of families, children and young people experiencing vulnerability
- continuing to reduce the disproportionate representation of First Nation families, children and young people in the child protection system
- increasing and enhancing types of care to not only meet projected demand but to meet the needs of children and young people in care more effectively
- strengthening support for carers and kin
- responding to demand pressures (particularly with COVID), including reviewing the department’s placement system and reunification practice and working better with parents so that children can be safely retained or reunified.

Key reform activities over the next three years include:

- continuing a recruitment campaign to increase the number of carers
- continuing the Finding Kin project to increase connections to kin, community and culture for young people in residential care
- implementing Child Safe principles, standards and initiatives
- reviewing the intake system to address the continued high number of reports being made to Child Safety that do not require investigation
- replacing the outdated Integrated Client Management System to address workload pressures for frontline staff and enhance case management and cross-agency information sharing (the Unify Project)
- operational improvements to the child protection litigation model
- a review of policy and procedures relating to investigations and assessments, including improvements around timeliness and quality.

We will also continue to:

- contribute and respond to the National Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- progress implementation and further amendments to the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- lead the implementation of *Our Way: A generational Strategy for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037* work across government to improve coordination of child protection responsibility through the Queensland Child and Family Commission.

Child protection should be above politics and we will continue to seek a bipartisan approach with the Opposition and crossbench MPs to ensure the child protection system is as strong as it can be for the safety of vulnerable young Queenslanders.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 2

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister outline (a) the major trends impacting child protection service delivery by her department, (b) how they are impacting and (c) how they are being addressed, as well as any jurisdictional comparisons?

#### ANSWER

- (a) Demand for child protection services in Queensland and the number of children on protective orders and children in care continue to increase, as does the complexity of families presenting for child protection services. The child protection system is working with families who are presenting with multiple risks and needs, such as drug, alcohol and domestic violence issues, which in turn is increasing the demand for child protection services.

Methamphetamines were a major factor in 39 per cent of cases where Child Safety assessed a child as being in need of protection – up from 32 per cent two years ago. In the majority of cases (78.1 per cent or 809 children), the type of methamphetamine was Ice. Most of the children impacted by parental Ice use were under the age of five years (56.2 per cent). Approximately 20 children need to be taken into some form of departmental care each week as a result of methamphetamines. In some places more than 50 per cent of children who came into care had one or both parents with meth use recorded.

In the last 13 years:

- 67 per cent of households substantiated for harm or risk of harm to a child had a parent with a current or past drug/alcohol problem – compared to approximately half of all substantiated households in 2006-07
  - 51 per cent had DFV within the last year (35 per cent in 2006-07)
  - 43 per cent had a parent who was abused as a child (25 per cent in 2006-07)
  - 54 per cent had a parent with a criminal history (21 per cent in 2006-07)
  - 56 per cent had a parent with a diagnosed mental illness (19 per cent in 2006-07)
  - 75 per cent had more than one of these factors (44 per cent in 2006-07).
- (b) Despite an increased workload from more notifications, the department is keeping up with demand by commencing and completing more investigations. The number of investigations commenced by Child Safety in 2019-20 increased by over 10 per cent (25,621 in total) compared to the previous year, and the number of investigations finalised in the last year has increased by almost 9 per cent (24,184 in total).

Despite the increase in investigations, the rate of children subject to a substantiation in Queensland in recent years has remained stable. The latest Queensland rate of 5.6 per 1000 children who were subject to a substantiation is similar to the 2018-19 rate of 5.2 per 1000 children. In 2012-13, the year before Queensland's reforms began, the rate was 6.6 per 1000 children. This suggests that Queensland's reforms have helped to reduce the rate of child harm in the state.

Importantly, there are now fewer children in need of protection by Child Safety (4,404 in 2019-20) at the end of investigations compared to the year before the reforms (4,460 in 2012–13). This is helped by Child Safety Officers working more intensely with families during investigations to de-escalate risk to children and provide more holistic support in partnership with other agencies and the community.

The 2013 Child Protection Commission of Inquiry projected that without the reform program there would be approximately 11,900 children in care by 2018-19, 12,000 children in care by 2019-20 and 13,454 children in care by 2022-23. There are 10,527 children in care as at 30 June 2020 – which is approximately 1,500 fewer children than anticipated by the Inquiry.

- (c) Since 2015, the Queensland Government has significantly increased investment in early intervention support for families to reduce the likelihood of their becoming involved in the child protection system. In 2020-21 the following funding has been provided:
- \$16.9 million per annum for 17 Family and Child Connect services to link families with advice, information and support services
  - \$58.9 million per annum for 43 Intensive Family Support services to respond to families with multiple and complex needs
  - \$41.4 million per annum for 33 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services, enabling families to access support to improve their wellbeing and build capacity to safely care for and protect their children
  - \$6.7 million per annum for 15 Assessment and Service Connect services to connect families to appropriate support services early in the child protection process to help children to remain safely at home.

Monitoring of these services indicates they are reducing the likelihood of families coming into contact with the child protection system.

We have also acted to address practice complexity and system issues by:

- implementing the Safe and Together domestic and family violence practice model to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence and to partner with non-offending parents
- creating two specialist practice leader positions for mental health and domestic and family violence
- creating the Specialist Services team to focus on disability support needs for children and parents
- mandatory drug testing for Intervention with Parental Agreement parents.

In respect to the challenges posed by the harms of Ice use on individuals, families and communities, the Government announced a \$105.5 million investment over five years in February 2018 to the whole-of-government Action on Ice plan to reduce the supply, demand and harms of ice use. The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs has responsibility or joint responsibility for 14 out of 55 actions in the plan; these are focused on prevention, early intervention and treatment, which are integral to managing the impact of Ice in Queensland.

The department is committed to implementing actions outlined in the Queensland Government's Action on Ice plan, such as:

- funding the new Breakthrough for Families (Queensland) drug education and support program for families impacted by Ice use
- training for frontline staff
- funding Logan House Family Recovery Units coordinated outreach and intensive case management support for families in Logan and surrounds
- better links to other drug and alcohol services and expertise.

In February 2020 the department finalised a rapid review of Breakthrough for Families and the Logan Family Recovery Units, these initiatives have since transitioned to Queensland Health.

Overall, compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland's reforms to date have helped to keep the rates of children in the child protection system relatively low. Based on data published in the 2018-19 Child Protection Australia report:

- the rate of children receiving child protection services in Queensland was 27.0 per 1,000 children in 2018–19, which was below the national average of 30.5 and the fourth lowest of all jurisdictions (South Australia (SA), Tasmania (TAS) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) were lower)
- the rate of children who were the subject of substantiations in Queensland was 5.2 per 1,000 children in 2018–19, which was below the national average of 8.5 and the fourth lowest of all jurisdictions (SA, TAS and the ACT were lower)
- the rate of children subject to care and protection orders in Queensland was 8.9 per 1,000 children at 30 June 2019, which was below the national average of 10.5 and the lowest of all jurisdictions
- the rate of children in out-of-home care in Queensland was 6.9 per 1,000 children at 30 June 2019, which was below the national average of 8.0 and the second lowest of all jurisdictions (Victoria was lower).

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 3

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister advise what proportion of the department's total budget is allocated to front-line service delivery, supporting those working directly with children and families at Child Safety Service Centres?

#### ANSWER

The Service Delivery Statement identifies that the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs 2020-21 Expenses Budget is \$1.735 billion.

This includes the full year funding associated with Child and Family Services and part year funding associated with Youth Justice, Multicultural Affairs, Domestic and Family Violence Prevention, Women and Youth Affairs.

The 2020-21 budget allocates approximately 76 per cent of the total expense budget to frontline service delivery, including to:

- the running of child safety service centres and delivery of intake, investigation and assessment, and after hours support services
- the running of youth detention centres and youth justice service centres
- social services procurement funding for family support services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing, residential care services, and family based foster and kinship care services together with youth justice funding for bail support services, community youth response, On Country trials and family-led decision making
- payment of foster and kinship carer allowances and child related costs
- provision of collaborative family led decision making, and transition and post care support services
- payment of multicultural affairs grants, and
- provision of legal and court support services.

Frontline services are supported by frontline support services, including Child and Family Services led by the Chief Practitioner, commissioning and contract management functions both in central office and in the regions, statewide operations, Indigenous Strategy and Partnerships, National Redress Scheme coordination and other program, performance and policy activities.

As at 30 June 2020, the former Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women reported that 84.87 per cent of full time equivalent staffing positions were categorised as frontline and frontline support and the former Department of Youth Justice reported 94.77 per cent of full time equivalent staffing positions were categorised as frontline and frontline support.

Remaining funding is allocated to whole of department overheads including corporate services functions, depreciation and amortisation expenses associated with departmental assets and information and communications systems and software, and other overhead expenses such as insurance, office accommodation, audit and legal expenses.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 4

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people continuing to be overrepresented in the child protection and youth justice systems –

Will the Minister advise the action being taken by her department to improve this situation, and what investment has been directed towards this issue?

#### ANSWER

My department continues to implement *Our Way: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037* (Our Way) and its supporting action plans, which set the strategic approach to eliminating the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system within a generation.

The Queensland First Children and Families Board (the Board), established in 2018, provides strategic advice and guidance to my department on the implementation of Our Way. As part of a strong and enduring partnership, regular meetings, with departmental senior officer and minister representation, take place with the Board and its members, and also with Our Way partners and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Minister Farmer held regular meetings with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders as a way of ensuring good communication at that critical time.

My department also established the First Nations Council, comprising 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members, to ensure culturally sensitive and respectful collaboration regarding decisions made on matters of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

*Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2020-2022*, the second action plan under the Our Way strategy, maintains our long-term commitment to set the foundations for change across the child protection system and build on the prevention and early intervention approach of *Supporting Families Changing Futures: Advancing Queensland's Child Protection and Family Support* reforms.

Significant reforms to the *Child Protection Act 1999* are being implemented to achieve the Our Way vision, including:

- the ability for the Chief Executive, Child Safety to delegate their functions or powers in relation to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child to a 'prescribed delegate'. The objectives of delegated authority are to co-create the structures to support systemic change, enable greater self-determination and deliver a fundamental shift in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The *Child Protection Act 1999* legislates full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and participation of children and their families in placement decisions.



Queensland leads the nation in the proportion of expenditure provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) for family support and intensive family support services. Queensland's record level of investment includes \$41.4 million per annum allocated for Family Wellbeing services that make it easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access support to strengthen social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and safely care for and protect their children. These services are delivered by ACCOs in 33 locations across the state.

In addition to these services, \$13.9 million is directed to the Family Participation Program to support families to participate in child protection decision making.

Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families early prevents children entering the child safety and youth justice systems. Collaboration, coordination and service provision is at the heart of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs' (DCYJMA) work, particularly with First Nations young people, families and communities, to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system. The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention or court-ordered custody decreased from 42.7 per 1,000 persons in 2018-19 to 34.3 in 2019-20.

In respect of the youth justice system, the *Working Together Changing the Story - Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023* (Youth Justice Strategy) is a key piece of work to reduce offending and re-offending, developed in partnership between Queensland Government agencies and the 20-member Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group, comprising community leaders, industry representatives and criminal justice experts. The Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group has significant representation by leaders of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent and they provide invaluable input which is reflected in policy and practice.

Culturally responsive youth justice programs and services, which aim to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the youth justice system, include:

- On Country trial program, a direct response to discussions with community leaders and elders across North Queensland which focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, recognising they are over-represented in the youth justice system, to deliver culture-based education and rehabilitation, delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations – \$5.7 million over four years.
- Community Youth Response and Diversion with culturally informed after-hours services and outreach in Townsville and five other locations – \$33.5 million over four years
- Mount Isa Transitional Hub, which is an integrated, culturally appropriate safe place for at-risk children and young people after hours – \$2.16 million over two years
- 33 Indigenous Youth and Family Workers based in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services – \$6.38 million over two years
- Cultural support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people detained in watchhouses – \$875,000 across three years starting 2018-19 to 2020-21
- Family-led decision making, person-centred practice that applies the unique knowledge and skills held by First Nations practitioners in the community-controlled sector to genuine problem solving with families and to address concerns of police, courts and youth justice about Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people's offending, in partnership with their families – \$2.3 million over three years.

In 2020 the then Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for Domestic and Family Violence invited the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service to join the Youth Justice Reference Group, to bring their perspective on youth legal matters.

Amendments to the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* in August 2019 required police to attempt to notify a representative of a legal aid organisation when a young person was held in custody for an indictable offence. This amendment aimed to enable legal advice and representation to be arranged for a young person as soon as possible, to assist decision making on watchhouse bail and to enable arrangements to be put in place for timely information to be provided to courts. The amendment was operationalised through funding to hotlines managed by Legal Aid Queensland and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, with 3329 advices given from 16 December 2019 to October 30 this year – 1299 in 2019-20.

In respect of departmental staff, as at 30 June 2020, 9.39 per cent of youth justice staff and 5.63 per cent of child safety staff identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is well above the Queensland Public Service benchmark, (average of 2.52 per cent at 31 March 2020) and strengthens the ability of our workforce to provide culturally competent programs and services.

In addition, the Youth Justice First Nations Action Board, which comprises staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, assists DCYJMA to develop culturally appropriate approaches to reducing over-representation.

Practice is informed directly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Cultural Units within DCYJMA strengthening policies and design and delivery of programs in the community and service delivery in youth detention centres.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 5

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister advise what support is provided by the Queensland Government to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Queensland?

#### ANSWER

Under the *Queensland Multicultural Policy: Our story, our future*, the Queensland Government has committed to support refugees and people seeking asylum to reduce barriers and create opportunities for them to participate and contribute to our economic, social and cultural future.

Many refugees and people seeking asylum, including families with children, face extreme vulnerability, including financial, housing and emotional stress. Since 2017-18, the Queensland Government has committed \$4.688 million to the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) program. Under the ASRA program, CommuniQ Queensland, is funded to coordinate delivery of support services to people seeking asylum and vulnerable refugees on temporary visas in Queensland.

Based on regular progress reports, CommuniQ Queensland and its service partners have delivered a range of support services to more than 600 people in the June to August 2020 quarter, including employment assistance, personal and family counselling, emergency relief and food supplies, clothing, medication, housing and allied health to alleviate financial and mental stress. These supports are critical, as under Federal Government policy, people seeking asylum may have limited work rights and access to Medicare and may not be eligible for accommodation assistance or income support benefits due to their visa status. The support services provided have not only helped to prevent these individuals and families from living in destitution but have also offered them hope and opportunities for economic and social participation.

In addition to the ASRA program, under the *Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2019-20 to 2020-22*, the Queensland Government:

- offered 50 per cent transport concession fares to people seeking asylum through the Fairer Fares package
- improved access to playgroups and kindergarten for children and families from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds
- provided people seeking asylum with access to the electricity rebate
- provided opportunities for refugees, people seeking asylum and eligible temporary residents in skills training that leads to job outcomes.

People seeking asylum and refugees on temporary visas have become more vulnerable during COVID-19, as they are mostly ineligible for Federal Government pandemic support. This cohort was acutely affected by closures of support services during the pandemic, loss of casual work in restricted industries and increased demand on charities and other agencies for food and other emergency relief. The Queensland Government has therefore provided additional funding of \$420,000 to address increased service demands by this cohort as part of the Government's COVID-19 response.

There have been further adverse impacts on asylum seekers in Queensland due to the Department of Home Affairs releasing over 100 refugees and people seeking asylum, including children and families from community detention in Queensland. This cohort has been in Queensland on community detention for a number of years. It is understood many within the cohort were transferred from Nauru and Papua New Guinea because of medical needs. During that time they received housing, income and other medical and mental health support services, and did not have access to work rights.

Once released from community detention and placed on Final Departure Bridging Visas, people are generally provided with Department of Home Affairs' Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) for three weeks and after that they will only have access to Medicare, work rights, and education for school-aged children. Final Departure Bridging Visa E (FDBVE) holders can apply for an extension of SRSS, which is considered on a case-by-case basis.

I hold serious concerns about the impacts of this decision on this already vulnerable cohort, including financial and housing stress and health and mental health impacts for individuals and families, including those with young children. My predecessor, Minister Hinchliffe, the former Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs wrote to Minister Dutton recently with grave concerns about the health and wellbeing of people being released from community detention in Queensland. The response from the Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, gave no indication that the Federal Government is willing to provide further assistance.

The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs has been engaging with key non-government organisations and other key Queensland Government agencies, to discuss support options for people in this cohort. The Department has continued to advocate for greater Federal Government support for this cohort and asked for greater notice prior to any further release of people from community detention at recent national meetings hosted by Department of Home Affairs.

There has been no indication at the meetings that the Federal Government is willing to provide further assistance, which is of great concern as others in similar circumstances have been in Queensland for several years on FDBVEs, and some are unable to leave the country as their home countries will not accept them back.

I am aware that some people who have recently been released from community detention are being supported through the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program and although our resources are stretched, the Queensland Government will continue to work with the intention of ensuring that no one is made destitute.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 6

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister outline the work that has been undertaken to support culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including through the COVID-19 pandemic?

#### ANSWER

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities are often disproportionately impacted by disasters. Many have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to a range of factors, including English language proficiency, previous experiences of trauma, cultural understandings, family groupings and the types of employment they are often engaged in.

Unfortunately, some communities have also experienced an increase in racism. Consequently, local engagement with known community leaders and organisations has been critical to the success of health and support messaging.

The Queensland Government acted swiftly to ensure multicultural communities are supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. Key activities included:

- the implementation of a \$900,000 COVID-19 Community Connections Support Package in 2019-20, including the design of a new Community Connector Advisor role within the Australian Red Cross and expansion of the tele-support / I Speak Your Language program
- extension of funding agreements (\$2.43 million in 2020-21) with organisations under the Community Action for a Multicultural Society program to implement coordinated engagement with and support for local community leaders, as well as enhanced technology for online participatory platforms (\$5,000 per organisation; \$90,000 in total)
- virtual meetings with the Multicultural Queensland Advisory Council in April and May 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on multicultural communities and release of a statement in support of communities
- development of a COVID-19 Engagement Plan for diverse communities and introduction of fortnightly sector meetings for important information sharing and issues identification
- development of a COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship, in collaboration with faith communities and Queensland Health
- engagement with different cultural groups, including Chinese, African and Iranian community representatives, to discuss emerging issues and identify communication needs
- the Queensland African Communities Council received \$10,000 through an out-of-round funding process to help engage diverse African groups in community and social activities to foster increased knowledge of available services and effective communication around COVID-19 – this included the broadcast of information translated into multiple African languages and dialects through their community audio and telecommunication channels
- funding for 4EB to pass on up-to-date public health information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities across South East Queensland in relation to COVID-19, translated into 45 different languages

- production of the *Unite Against Racism – Call to Action: Stakeholder toolkit* for Government agencies, community organisations and corporations to use.

Close collaboration has occurred with key agencies through all these activities, including Queensland Health; the Queensland Police Service; the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training; and the then Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors. Activities were designed to complement, rather than duplicate, existing efforts and support avenues into economic and social recovery. This has ensured coordinated efforts in considering community needs during the COVID-19 response and recovery, and increasingly, resilience building and preparedness for the coming natural disaster season.

In addition, with over 180 languages currently spoken in Queensland and many small language groups or dialects experiencing a lack of accessible translations, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown there is an urgent need for interpreters in some languages to help Queenslanders to access essential services in the event of future disasters.

The Queensland Government committed \$740,000 over three years to boost the number of interpreters who are certified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). An Interpreter Training Boost program will be launched in 2021 to support multicultural communities, by helping people who speak in-demand languages with their interpreter training and NATTI certification fees. The new program will provide opportunities for up to 100 Queenslanders to gain jobs in the interpreting industry.

The Queensland Government also recognises the growing interest in migrant and refugee resettlement into regional areas, particularly where councils have an interest in building sustainable populations. In 2019, the then Minister for Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs announced funding of \$300,000 over three years (\$900,000 in total) for Regional Partnerships Projects to support the Balonne, Bulloo and Paroo Shire Councils to deliver demonstration projects that implement welcome and inclusion in their regional locations.

The Government continues to work with the Welcoming Cities organisation to strengthen inclusive recovery and support Queensland councils to explore regional migration pathways, particularly where the attraction and retention of newcomers is central to COVID-19 economic and regional recovery.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 7

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister provide an update about the outcomes from the Government's Youth Justice 5-point plan released in March this year, including the On Country program and co-responder model?

#### ANSWER

Community safety is a priority for this government and that is why we have invested record funding of over half a billion dollars to reduce youth crime. As a result, we have seen a 30 per cent decrease in the number of 10 to 17-year-old offenders in Queensland over the last 10 years and a 23 per cent decrease in the number of 10 to 17-year-old offenders with a charged offence in this financial year compared to the previous year.

We are now dealing with hard-core repeat offenders – the 10 per cent that commit 47 per cent of youth crime in this state. In March this year, we announced a five-point plan to crack down on those hard-core repeat youth offenders. Funding of \$4.78 million was provided to the Queensland Police Service and \$10.9 million to Youth Justice to implement the five-point plan, to ensure community safety and hold young offenders to account. That plan included tougher action on youth bail, a trial of On Country programs across north Queensland, funding for 10 community led crime committees and the introduction of 24/7 Co-responder strike teams. This was strengthened in October 2020 with an election commitment to extend the co-responder program to Mackay. I am pleased to report that the plan has been implemented and although it is early days, the plan is having a positive impact in the community.

New bail laws were passed in June 2020 to ensure young people who are an unacceptable risk to the safety of the community are refused bail. Police are also appealing court bail decisions where appropriate, with more than 736 bail decision reviews resulting in six appeals being filed with the court.

Trials of On Country programs in Townsville, Cairns and Mount Isa have been up and running since July 2020. These trials were a direct response to discussions with community leaders and elders across North Queensland and are focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, recognising they are over-represented in the youth justice system. The aim of the programs is to stop offending by reconnecting young people with culture, kin, community and getting them back into education, training or a job. The programs are tailored to individual young people and all those engaged are provided with one-on-one support and supervision by On Country elders and community leaders in the community and on camps. To date there have been 88 referrals to the program, 11 On Country camps and as at 17 November 2020 over 40 per cent of young people referred have already attended camps.

\$2 million was allocated for 10 community crime action committees across the state because it is important that communities play a part in addressing youth crime in their own backyards and have a say in how they would like it to be addressed.

The Co-responder trial involves police and youth justice staff working together 24/7 to target anti-social behaviour and crime hotspots to reduce offending and improve community safety.

Police and Youth Justice co-responder strike teams are on the road in Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane North, Rockhampton and Logan and will start in Mackay in early 2021. They have had more than 4500 engagements with young people as at November 2020. While it is still early days for the Co-responder initiative, feedback from staff, the community, young people and their families to date has been positive.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 8

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

Will the Minister advise about trends in youth crime in Queensland?

#### ANSWER

Community safety is a priority for this government and that is why we have invested record funding of over half a billion dollars to reduce youth crime. Overall, the number of individual young people with a proven offence is declining in Queensland, however, this is of little comfort to victims of youth crime and their families, and the Government continues to ensure youth justice policies and programs are directed at keeping the community safe, and ensuring young people are held accountable for their actions.

Queensland has seen a 30.8 per cent reduction in the number of young offenders aged 10 to 17 years over the last 10 years<sup>1</sup>.

The latest data also shows:

- a 23 per cent decrease in the number of 10 to 17-year-old offenders with charged offences in Queensland in 2019-20, compared to 2018-19
- a nine per cent decrease in the number of charged offences by 10 to 17-year-old offenders in Queensland in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19, and
- a three per cent decrease in reoffending rates for 10 to 15-year-olds in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.

This demonstrates that the Palaszczuk Government's record investment of over half a billion dollars in youth justice reform and new programs to reduce offending and reoffending are having an impact, with expansion of programs such as Transition to Success, restorative justice conferencing and early intervention programs across the state making a real difference.

This trend is also reflected in Australian Bureau of Statistics data released on 6 February 2020 which showed the number of youth offenders in Queensland per 100,000 was the lowest recorded over the last ten years.

However, while there are fewer young people offending, those who do offend have more complex needs and are committing more offences. About 10 per cent of young offenders are hard-core repeat offenders who account for about 47 per cent of youth crime in Queensland.

That is why in March 2020 the Palaszczuk Government launched their five-point plan aimed at dealing with this hard core offender group and keeping the community safe.

That plan included tougher action on youth bail, a trial of On Country programs across north Queensland, funding for 10 community-led crime committees and 24/7 Co-responder strike teams.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Statisticians Office, Crime Report, Queensland 2018-19, p89.  
<https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/issues/7856/crime-report-qld-2018-19.pdf>

The 2020 Youth Justice Census results show that of the young people supervised in detention or the community at a point in time in 2020:

- 1,578 young people were supervised, a decrease from 1,846 in 2019
- 55 per cent were disengaged from education, employment/training (53 per cent in 2019)
- 21 per cent used Ice or other methamphetamines, an increase from 20 per cent in 2019. Ice or other methamphetamine use related to the largest level of impairment in daily life at 89 per cent, compared to 86 per cent in 2019
- 30 per cent had parents who had been held in adult custody (either on remand or sentence) at some point in time, compared to 33 per cent in 2019.
- 60 per cent had experienced, or been impacted by, domestic or family violence compared to 63 per cent in 2019.

Keeping communities safe is a priority for our Government and we will continue to invest in programs that target repeat offenders and reduce reoffending.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 9

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to the Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy launched in 2019, which included input from community organisations, and other government departments and was based on evidence analysed by Bob Atkinson and presented in the 2018 Report on Youth Justice –

Will the Minister advise outcomes of this strategy to date?

#### ANSWER

The *Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023* is a key piece of work to reduce offending and re-offending, developed in partnership between Queensland Government agencies and the 20-member Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group, comprising community leaders, industry representatives and criminal justice experts.

Action Plan progress in 2019-20 included:

- Nine government agencies undertaking 155 initiatives, projects and actions despite COVID-19 impacts, with 61 completed in the first year, and
- 152 commitments commenced in the first year.

The three remaining actions include training for human services sector staff in adolescent development and trauma-informed responses, developing and promoting sport and recreational programs for the youth justice cohort and an evaluation of the Youth Connect Social Benefit Bond (Housing).

Early signs indicate that strategies and actions are making a difference. In 2019-20 there was a 23 per cent decrease in the number of young people with a charged offence and a nine per cent decrease in charged offences compared with 2018-19.

Examples of outcomes for programs delivered under the Youth Justice Strategy include:

#### Restorative Justice Conferencing

2,472 young people have been referred to restorative justice conferencing, with 1,747 participating, and 2,069 agreements reached. The number of young people participating in a restorative justice conference increased by 14 per cent from 2018-19 to 2019-20, the highest level in eight years.

Restorative Justice conferencing is often a confronting experience for young offenders and for many it is a turning point in their lives. A 2018 evaluation of the program found that 77 per cent of young people who completed a conference did not reoffend, or the magnitude of their reoffending decreased, within six months of their conference.

#### Transition to Success

Expansion of the Transition to Success (T2S) initiative from 10 to 16 locations has helped young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the youth justice system to re-engage in education and training. This has seen 33 young people gain employment, 93 graduate from a certificate course and 40 obtain participation certificates. Results of a 2018 evaluation show

that T2S graduates are less likely to reoffend after completing the program and that 67 per cent of participants did not reoffend within 12 months of completing the program.

In addition, a cost benefit analysis highlighted that for every \$1 spent on the program, the government realises \$2.13 in benefits. T2S changes the story for young people, the community and our organisation.

#### Family Led Decision Making

Family Led Decision Making (FLDM) provides greater collaboration between Youth Justice practitioners and community in pursuing new ideas for support not previously addressed in case management, based on the advice and perspective of people within the young person's kinship and family network.

FLDM is person-centred practice that applies the unique knowledge and skills held by First Nations practitioners in the community-controlled sector to genuine problem solving with families.

157 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have been referred to the trial Family Led Decision Making program in Toowoomba, South East Queensland, Moreton and Cairns.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

## 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### No.10

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to Youth Detention Centres which are complex and difficult environments –

Will the Minister outline what has been done to improve these facilities, operations and the services they provide?

#### ANSWER

Since 2015, the Palaszczuk Government has invested in capital improvements and developments, including:

Investment	Detail
\$21.5 million	Investment in upgrades to security and fire safety systems at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC).
\$9.4 million	16 new beds to enable security upgrade at BYDC .
\$4.1 million	New zonal fencing to improve safety at detention centres at the BYDC and Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC).
\$9 million	Two new accommodation blocks (eight and four beds) – operational in April 2019 at CYDC.
\$0.9 million	Further fire safety upgrades at CYDC.
\$27 million	Construction of 16 additional beds with associated kitchen, laundry and education facilities at BYDC.
\$150 million	Construction of the new West Moreton Youth Detention Centre, 32 beds, with a therapeutic focus. The first eight beds are due for operation in December 2020 and full operation by mid-2021. This new detention centre is purpose built for young people ensuring security and maintaining safety of staff and young people. Expansions will increase total capacity of detention centres to 306 by early 2021.
\$5 million	Improved fire safety management and infrastructure upgrades at BYDC and CYDC.

CYDC and BYDC opened 20 years ago and the government has consistently invested in infrastructure and security upgrades.

Every incident at a Youth Detention Centre is reviewed by the department, to ensure changes to policy, processes, and infrastructure are made where necessary or desirable, and they also guide future Youth Detention Centre build and upgrade programs.

Capital improvements such as roof access prevention upgrades, that were developed and designed in 2014, have been implemented. Other improvements have occurred over time, including \$949,000, approved in February 2019, to improve anti-climb measures. These capital improvement measures have been combined with non-infrastructure measures to ensure security.

The Palaszczuk Government continues to invest in non-infrastructure developments such as programs, training and resources to support young people and staff within our youth detention centres.

In 2019-20, Youth Justice committed \$6.735 million for the continued implementation of the Independent Review of Youth Detention recommendations. All 83 recommendations have now been implemented resulting in significant practice, safety and security enhancements and improvements to service provision to young people in youth detention centres.

51 full-time equivalent staff have been funded through the Independent Review of Youth Detention and appointed in both youth detention centres and programs within youth justice to support the implementation and delivery of new services.

In November 2020, a working group was established at CYDC with representation from CYDC and unions. The role of the working group is to review current practices, processes and strategies, including strengthening safety and security. The group first met on 14 November 2020 and conducted a detailed review of the safety measures used when dealing with the most traumatised young people, with immediate changes occurring as a result.

While it is not appropriate to detail operational processes and changes, for security reasons, we will continue to work with staff and experts to ensure Youth Detention Centres are as safe for staff and children as is practicable, while delivering essential programs which are designed to reduce recidivism.

The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs also relies on strong, collegial partnerships with education, health providers, and a number of government and non-government agencies to provide a range of services that evidence shows are important in reducing recidivism and anti-social behaviour, including violence.

Positive role models, the use of intelligence, and implementation of a restorative practice approach aim to assist young people to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions, for example, repairing damage, including graffiti. Other activities with young people include delivering anger management programs; helping them to understand the damaging impacts of domestic and family violence; working with speech therapists to assist young people to communicate better and learn to read and write; and building their capacity to undertake and practice basic life skills.

Youth Detention Centres are monitored by the Queensland Ombudsman, the Office of the Public Guardian, and an internal independent Youth Detention Inspectorate. The Queensland Ombudsman's 2019 report, *The Brisbane Youth Detention Centre report: An Investigation into the management of young people at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre between November 2016 and February 2017* focused on key areas for improvement, including management of high-risk young people, training, communication, and the complaints management processes. 12 of the 17 recommendations are closed or completed, with the remaining five partially completed. As a result of the recommendations, investments were made for improvements, including enhanced CCTV infrastructure to maximise coverage of the BYDC and implementation of body-worn cameras.

Youth Detention Inspectorate Reviews are conducted quarterly by Principal Inspectors under the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, and an executive summary of findings are published online. Inspections focus on security and management of youth detention centres and the safe custody, wellbeing and enhanced outcomes for young people.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 11

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 93 of the SDS Volume 1, which relates to the department's vision is for Queenslanders to be safe and thriving in families, communities and culture –

With respect to the recommendations made by Deputy Coroner Jane Bentley in the Inquest into the death of Mason Jet Lee, will the Minister outline (a) the recommendations made, (b) of those, the ones which were (i) agreed to, (ii) agreed in principle or (iii) rejected, and (c) of those agreed to or agreed in principle, a list of those that (i) have been implemented, (ii) are currently being implemented and (iii) have not yet commenced?

#### ANSWER

a) On 6 June 2020, six coronial recommendations were delivered:

- Recommendation 1 - The SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) manual and relevant legislation, policies and procedures should be amended to mandate that when a family is engaged with a service provider, and that family's matter is referred to SCAN:
  - the external support worker must be invited to attend all SCAN meetings relevant to that family, and
  - information held by the SCAN members must be shared with the external support worker.
- Recommendation 2 - The Queensland Department of Health should implement formal policies and procedures for the escalation of a case in which medical officers disagree with a decision made by the department in relation to the discharge from hospital of a child.
- Recommendation 3 - Procedures and policies for the provision of information to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) should be reviewed to ensure that information held by the department is provided to the QPS, upon request, in a timely manner and without redactions and the QPS report annually for the next three years to the Coroners Court of Queensland on the number, if any, of search warrants executed on the department for the provision of information in relation to children who are subject to a joint investigation.
- Recommendation 4 - The SCAN manual and relevant legislation, policies and procedures should be amended to require cases to remain open to SCAN until appropriate feedback has been provided to core members and it is agreed that the recommendations have been fulfilled, or if not fulfilled, are no longer appropriate, and that no further recommendations are appropriate.
- Recommendation 5 - The SCAN manual and relevant legislation, policies and procedures should be amended to mandate that when a SCAN meeting is inquorate, the available members nevertheless hold a case planning discussion about the matters that would have been subject to the meeting.

- Recommendation 6 – The department should review its policies and procedures to ensure that, in accordance with the Government’s acceptance of Recommendation 7.4 of the Carmody Inquiry:
  - Adoption is routinely and genuinely considered as a suitable permanency option for children in out-of-home care where re-unification or unification is unlikely, and should be pursued in those cases, particularly for children aged under three years.
  - Adoption is routinely and genuinely considered by Child Safety officers as one of the permanency options open to them when deciding where to place a child in out of home care.
  - The Government should consider whether the *Adoption Act 2009* (Qld) should similarly reflect the 2018 amendments to the *Adoption Act 2000* (NSW), expecting children to be permanently placed through out of home adoptions within 24 months of entering the department’s care.
  - The department should report to the Coroners Court of Queensland the numbers of children adopted and the details of those matters, every six months for the next five years.
- b) All recommendations from the Deputy Coroner’s report were accepted in full by the Queensland Government.
- c) (i) Three recommendations have been implemented: Recommendations 1, 4 and 5. These recommendations made changes to the SCAN team procedures to confirm it is now a requirement to invite stakeholders to a SCAN team meeting where the service provider is actively working with the family; a requirement for all core member representatives to agree that a recommendation is resolved prior to closure of a SCAN team matter; and the introduction of SCAN team case planning discussions.  
(ii) Three recommendations are still in progress: Recommendations 2, 3 and 6. Work has commenced on recommendations 2 and 3 in partnership with Queensland Health and QPS.  
(iii) There are no recommendations yet to commence.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 12

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 93 of the SDS Volume 1, which relates to the department's vision is for Queenslanders to be safe and thriving in families, communities and culture – Will the Minister advise, between 2018-19 and 2020-21 to date, (a) the number of children known to child safety who have died or were seriously physically injured within one year before the child's death or serious physical injury, the Chief Executive became aware of alleged harm or alleged risk of harm to the child (reported separately by year), (b) of those who died, how many were as a result of (i) disease/morbid condition, (ii) accident, (iii) sudden and unexpected death in infancy, (iv) suicide and (v) fatal assault and neglect and (c) of those involving serious physical injury, whether it was (i) accidental, (ii) assault or (iii) self-harm?

#### ANSWER

All statistics relating to child deaths are provided by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), who hold responsibility for maintaining the Queensland Child Death Register. It should be noted the data in this field does not always remain static, as some causes of death are determined later than others. The QFCC has not yet published child death figures for 2019-20 or 2020-21, however, 2018-19 figures are available and have been provided.

There were 386 child deaths in Queensland in 2018-19. Of these, 58 were of children known to the department. As is the case every year, the great majority of the deaths of children known to the department are from causes other than assault and neglect.

All child deaths are incredibly sad and tragic for those who cared for them. QFCC reports have highlighted that the risk factors that bring children to the attention of Child Safety are often the same risk factors that place them at a higher risk of fatal assault and neglect.

**Table 1: Child deaths, child known to Child Safety in 12 months prior to death (by date of registration) 2018–19.**

	2018–19
<b>Deaths of children known to Child Safety</b>	
Total	58
<b>Cause of death</b>	
Diseases and morbid conditions	22
Accident (transport, drowning, other injury)	9
Suicide	14
Fatal assault and neglect	7
SIDS and Undetermined causes	5
Cause of death pending	1
<b>Sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI)</b>	
SUDI	8

Data source: QFCC, Queensland Child Death Register

1. Data for 2018–19 by cause of death may differ from previously published data due to inclusion of updated cause of death information.

**Table 2: Serious physical injuries, child known to Child Safety in 12 months prior to injury (by date of notification of injury) 2018-19 to 2020-21 to date**

	2018-19	2019 - 20	2020-21 to 30/11/2020	Total
Serious physical injuries of children known to Child Safety				
Total	27	38	16	81
Cause of injury				
Accidental	19	26	10	53
Assault	3	6	4	13
Self-harm	4	4	0	8
Unknown	1	2	2	7

Data source: DCYJMA, Resolve database

1. Data counted refers to incidents rather than the specific number of injuries.
2. Data for 2020-21 includes those incidents received and registered up to 30 November 2020 and classifications are based on information available at that date.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 93 of the SDS Volume 1, which relates to the department's vision is for Queenslanders to be safe and thriving in families, communities and culture –

Will the Minister advise, between 2018-19 and 2020-21 to date (reported separately), (a) the number of urgent notifications sent to Queensland Police Service (QPS) (i) Monday to Thursday, (ii) Friday and (iii) weekend, (b) the number of times the QPS requested information from the department, (c) of those requests, the (i) shortest, (ii) median and (iii) longest time it has taken the department to provide the information, (d) of those requests, the number of unredacted files sent to the QPS and (e) the number of requests made by the department to the QPS in relation to obtaining warrants before releasing information?

#### ANSWER

As the specific data requested is not part of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) standard corporate reporting and, in some cases, would require the manual extraction of information from individual case files, compiling the data would divert resources from important frontline service delivery.

DCYJMA works collaboratively with QPS to ensure that information exchange is efficient and complies with the law. Search warrants are only required when under law there are no other avenues of information exchange available.

Strong partnerships with QPS are critical to increasing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and during 2019-20, a number of new initiatives were implemented or finalised by the department in partnership with the QPS, including:

- the Police Self Service of Document Retrieval portal, which commenced providing relevant Child Safety staff across Queensland with direct access to criminal and domestic and family violence history, with the aim of increasing timely access to information and minimising the number of information requests required to be processed by police officers
- completion of the statewide rollout of the Child Protection Joint Response Initiative, designed to improve consistency and reliability in the processes for joint investigations, and also benefited the timely exchange of information, following a series of workshops jointly facilitated by the department and QPS. These joint responses aim to improve the experience of and outcomes for children, young people and parents, relating to matters requiring Child Safety and QPS investigation, through improved collaboration and reducing the need for a child to tell their story multiple times.

Information exchange with QPS is a frequent, daily and normal part of the business of the department across the state. This includes, for example providing relevant information for cases subject to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) team discussions and providing relevant information to enable location of missing young people, the conduct and planning of investigation and assessments and safety planning.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 14

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 93 of the SDS Volume 1, which relates to the department's vision is for Queenslanders to be safe and thriving in families, communities and culture –

Will the Minister advise, between 2018/19 to 2020/21 to date, (a) the median caseload for FTE child safety officers across the state per month (reported separately per year and month), (b) total number of FTE child safety officers working per day between Monday – Sunday (reported separately per day) and (c) average hours per day worked by child safety officers across the state between Monday – Sunday (reported separately per day)?

#### ANSWER

(a) Caseload data is reported quarterly by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. Data provided is for the quarters 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2020, which is the latest available. For comparison purposes caseload data as at 30 June 2014 is also provided.

As at 30 June 2020, the statewide average caseload was 18.1. This is the eleventh consecutive quarter that caseloads have remained around or below 18.1.

By comparison, the statewide average caseload as at 30 June 2014 was 20.3.

The median quarterly caseload over the period 30 June 2018 to 30 June 2020 was 17.2.

Case management responsibilities can differ depending on the child, their personal needs, their educational needs, their health, their location, their connection to culture, and the type of guardianship situation.

#### **Caseloads for child safety officers working with children in need of protection who require ongoing intervention**

<b>Ongoing Intervention</b>	<b>Case load measure</b>
As at 30 June 14	20.3
As at 30 June 18	17.0
As at 30 Sep 18	16.9
As at 31 Dec 18	16.8
As at 31 March 19	16.7
As at 30 June 19	17.2
As at 30 Sep 19	17.5
As at 31 Dec 19	17.8
As at 31 March 20	18.1
As at 30 June 20	18.1

- (b) A response to this question would require the manual extraction of information from individual staff files. Compiling the data would divert resources from important frontline service delivery.
- (c) From 1 July 2020 a new electronic time recording system was introduced. Prior to 30 June 2020, individual child safety officers (CSOs) maintained manual timesheets filed by supervisors locally. Extracting average hours worked by CSOs per day would require the manual extraction of information from individual staff files. Compiling the data would divert resources from important frontline service delivery. Therefore, based on data extracted from the new system for the period 1 July 2020 to 4 December 2020, the average hours (including overtime) worked by CSOs per day (excluding the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre) was:
- 7.61 average hours on Monday
  - 7.63 average hours on Tuesday
  - 7.61 average hours on Wednesday
  - 7.61 average hours on Thursday
  - 7.54 average hours on Friday
  - 1.62 average hours on Saturday
  - 6.00 average hours on Sundays.

The Child Safety After Hours Service Centre operates outside of business hours from 5.00pm to 9.00am Monday to Friday and 24 hours on public holidays and weekends, and their working hours are recorded manually. Extracting average hours worked by CSO full-time equivalents per day would require the manual extraction of information from individual staff files. Compiling the data would divert resources from important frontline service delivery.

The hard work of the CSO's above is also augmented by the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre which operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, with increased staffing capacity from Friday evening through to Monday morning to support CSSCs across the State.

In the evenings and on weekends the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre is responsible for all Child protection intake matters, youth justice response and emergent issues in relation to children and families involved with the department.

Where issues cannot be resolved by After Hours staff contact is made with CSSC Managers and on-call staff across the State for advice, coordination and approvals.

In critical matters such as child death or serious injury of a child known to the department the Duty Executive Officer is contacted for advice and direction. In these instances, After Hours staff coordinate immediate responses with and on behalf of Regions.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE No. 15

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 97 of the SDS Volume 1, which refers to “youth justice services”—

Will the Minister provide (a) the total number of youths who have resided in the Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) since the commencement of operation (reported separately by SCA), (b) an update on the number of distinct youths that have committed (i) at least one offence post-SCA (reported separately by SCA), (ii) at least two offences post-SCA (reported separately by SCA) and (iii) the highest number of offences committed by a child post-SCA, (c) the number of offences committed by each youth post-SCA, (d) the total cost of all reviews undertaken on the SCA's to date (reported separately by each review) and (e) advise when the Government will make a decision around whether it will continue or cease SCAs?

#### ANSWER

SCAs are intended to deliver safe, secure and stable accommodation for vulnerable young people and they have done that. Evaluations show that young people are less likely to reoffend while they are supervised and supported.

- (a) 255 young people have resided in and exited SCAs since commencement as follows:
- Townsville (TAIHS) –103 young people
  - Townsville (Mission Australia) – 66 young people
  - Carbrook – 57 young people
  - Logan Reserve – 29 young people
- (b) (i) 210 distinct young people have committed at least one offence post-placement at a SCA:
- Townsville (TAIHS) – 84 young people
  - Townsville (Mission Australia) – 51 young people
  - Carbrook – 52 young people
  - Logan Reserve– 23 young people
- (ii) 197 distinct young people have committed two or more offences post-placement at a SCA (this is a subset of the 210 who have committed at least one offence)
- Townsville (TAIHS) – 80 young people
  - Townsville (Mission Australia) – 50 young people
  - Carbrook – 47 young people
  - Logan Reserve – 20 young people

- (iii) the highest number of offences committed by a child post-SCA:
- 255 offences. The young person responsible for these offences spent a total of five nights in a SCA in 2018 and is currently in detention.
- (c) In the three years since establishment, there have been 5648 charged offences committed by 210 young people post-SCA.
- (d) The total cost of external evaluations of the SCAs has been \$426,542:
- Griffith University (2018-19) – \$164,952
  - Ernst & Young (2019-20) – \$261,590
- (e) The Palaszczuk Government has made it clear, in response to reviews of the performance of SCAs, that changes would be made to intake and operations to see if they can be made to be more cost effective and if the judgement at the end of this trial is that they are not cost effective, they will be closed. The Government has committed to making an announcement about SCAs by the end of the year.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 16

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 97 of the SDS Volume 1, which refers to “youth justice services” – Will the Minister advise (a) the number of children detained in all watch houses across the state since April 2020 to date (reported separately by month), (b) how many of the children identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, (c) how many of the detained children are remanded for (i) serious offences as defined in section 8 of the Youth Justice Act and (ii) indictable offences, (d) the number of youths detained in Queensland police watch houses (reported separately for ages 10-14, 15, 16, 17) for (i) a period of one night, (ii) a period of 2-6 nights, (iii) a weekend and (iv) more than 1 week and (e) the longest period of time a youth was detained?

#### ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government has funded over \$550 million in programs to reduce youth offending, including an increase of 76 new youth detention centre beds. There has been a marked decrease in the number of young people being held on remand in police watchhouses over the past 12 months.

Most young people are held in watchhouses for fewer than 24 hours while waiting for a court appearance, for normal processing and while awaiting transfer to a youth detention centre. Given the regional and remote nature of many communities, sometimes it takes time to transport young people to detention centres based in Townsville or Brisbane.

Since December 2019, there have been no young people held on remand in custody in watchhouses other than for routine processing or while awaiting transport from regional areas, except for the period when the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre was placed in quarantine.

All data is collated at a point in time to define the end of a day. For the purpose of this data, a young person is counted at 11:59pm each night.

a) The following figures represent distinct young people detained in a watchhouse per month:

April	May	June	July	August	September	October
112	102	115	85	105	130	113

Between 1 April and 31 October 2020, 520 distinct young people spent at least one night in a Queensland Police watchhouse. Of those distinct young people:

- b) 354 (68 per cent) were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people.
- c) (i) 240 (46 per cent) spent time in a watchhouse for serious/indictable offences (as defined in section 8 of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*)  
(ii) 95 (18 per cent) spent time in a watchhouse for indictable-only offences.



- d) The following figures represent the number of distinct young people who completed a stay in a Queensland Police watchhouse between 1 April and 31 October 2020, by the length of their stay:

Age	Length of stay			
	(i) 1 night	(ii) Excess of one night (2-6 nights)	(iv) More than 1 week (7+ nights)	(iii) Weekend <sup>a</sup>
10-14 years	74	36	6	46
15 years	52	33	2	27
16 years	53	28	5	30
17+ years	46	24	4	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>128</b>

a. A "weekend" stay is a watchhouse stay that began on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, and concluded either during that same weekend or on the following Monday. A "weekend" stay is at minimum one night, and maximum three nights.

- e) While the Government wants young people to spend only the time necessary in a watchhouse for normal processing and arranging transport, circumstances related to COVID-19 in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre critically impacted standard practice.

From 1 April to 31 October 2020, the longest period of time a young person was detained in a Queensland police watchhouse was 20 nights. This 20-night watchhouse stay involved a young person spending one night in a watchhouse after arrest as they waited to attend court. They were then remanded in custody by the court for their charges. Due to the COVID-19 cluster at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC), this young person had to remain in a watchhouse until the situation at the BYDC was resolved in September 2020.

While BYDC was quarantined, young people who would otherwise have been transferred from watchhouses in South East Queensland to BYDC, were held at the Ipswich District Watchhouse until it was safe to recommence admissions.

No adults were held at the Ipswich Watchhouse during this period. Additional support was also provided by: Murri Watch; Forensic Child and Youth Mental Health Service; Education; Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health; Sisters Inside; and Child Safety.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 17

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to page 97 of the SDS Volume 1, which refers to “youth justice services” – Will the Minister advise, between 2018 to 2020 to date (reported separately), the number of children aged 10-17 years who have committed (a) 1 new offence, (b) 2 - 5 new offences, (c) 6 - 9 new offences, (d) 10 - 20 new offences, (e) 21-30 new offences and (f) more than 30 new offences while out on bail pending court appearance?

#### ANSWER

The table below shows the number of distinct young people aged 10-17 years who had a proven finalised offence while the young person was on bail, disaggregated by the number of offences. Data is based on the calendar year of an offence.

In the table below, the proportion committing no new offences has been rising and this is a very positive trend, along with the substantial decline (23 per cent) in the number of young people with a proven offence across Queensland, and the decline (9 per cent) in the number of charges against young people in the 12 months to June 2020.

Number of new offences	Distinct young people					
	2018		2019		2020 (to date*)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0 new offences	2,027	57%	1,993	59%	1,752	68%
1 new offence	310	9%	276	8%	157	6%
2 - 5 new offences	539	15%	463	14%	287	11%
6 - 9 new offences	237	7%	225	7%	127	5%
10 - 20 new offences	295	8%	266	8%	143	6%
21-30 new offences	91	3%	84	2%	65	3%
more than 30 new offences	64	2%	68	2%	47	2%
<b>All distinct young people</b>	<b>3,563</b>	<b>100%**</b>	<b>3,375</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,578</b>	<b>100%**</b>

\*Up until 31 October 2020

\*\* Percentages have been reported as whole numbers. Due to rounding, some percentage columns may sum to more than 100 per cent.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to children under 18 being held in Police watch houses, for the period since the start of July 2019, or since the last Budget Estimates (whichever is easier to tabulate) –

Will the Minister advise (a) how many separate times children have been held in watch houses for longer than 48 hours, (b) how many children (separated by age in years at the time of their detention) have been held in watch houses for longer than 48 hours, (c) what proportion of the above children were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, (d) how many of the above children were held in isolation for any length of time and (e) what was the longest period for which a child was held in a watch house?

#### ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government has funded over \$550 million in programs to reduce youth offending and take the number of youth detention centre beds up to 306, an increase of 33 per cent. There has been a marked decrease in the number of young people being held on remand in police watchhouses over the past 12 months.

Most young people are held in watchhouses for fewer than 24 hours while waiting for a court appearance, for normal processing and while awaiting transfer to a youth detention centre. Given the regional and remote nature of many communities, sometimes it takes time to transport young people to detention centres based in Townsville or Brisbane.

Since December 2019, there have been no young people held on remand in custody in watchhouses other than for routine processing or while awaiting transport from regional areas, except for the period when the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre was placed in quarantine.

a) The department holds data on the number of nights a young person stays in a watchhouse. It does not have information on the number of hours. For this reason, three or more nights are used as an approximation of the period 'longer than 48 hours'. From 1 July 2019 to 31 October 2020, there were 500 stays where children under 18 years of age were held in watchhouses for three nights or more.

b) and c)

Number of distinct young people			
Age	All young people	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	
		Number	%
10	0	0	-
11	4	4	100%
12	14	12	86%
13	30	27	90%
14	50	38	76%
15	75	52	69%
16	81	59	73%
17	103	61	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>71%</b>

The figures above represent the number of distinct young people under 18 years of age who were held in Queensland police watchhouses between 1 July 2019 and 31 October 2020 for three nights or more, disaggregated by their age and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status.

- d) This data is not generated or kept by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. Police watchhouses are the responsibility of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services.
- e) While the Government wants young people to spend only the time necessary in a watchhouse for normal processing and arranging transport, circumstances related to COVID-19 in the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre critically impacted standard practice.

From 1 April to 31 October 2020, the longest period of time a young person was detained in a Queensland police watchhouse was 20 nights. This 20-day watchhouse stay involved a young person spending one night in a watchhouse after arrest as they waited to attend court. They were then remanded in custody by the court for their charges. Due to the COVID-19 cluster at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC), this young person had to remain in a watchhouse until the situation at the BYDC was resolved in September 2020.

While BYDC was quarantined, young people who would otherwise have been transferred from watchhouses in South East Queensland to BYDC were held at the Ipswich District Watchhouse until it was safe to recommence admissions.

No adults were held at the Ipswich Watchhouse during this period. Additional support was also provided by: Murri Watch; the Forensic Child and Youth Mental Health Service; Education; Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health; Sisters Inside; and Child Safety.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 19**

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

**QUESTION**

With reference to the measure in the SDS Volume 1 page 1 - 97 “Youth detention centre utilisation rate” — Will the Minister advise (a) if the capacity of youth justice facilities is constrained to some extent by an industrial agreement based on ratios of staff to prisoners, (b) if the measure is based on built capacity and (c) what is the utilisation rate based on the actual constraints, including the staff ratios for 2019-20 and the Estimate/Target rate for 2020-21?

**ANSWER**

The safety of staff and young people at Youth Detention Centres is paramount.

- a) There is no impact on capacity with regard to staffing ratios. Capacity is determined by built bed numbers.
- b) and c)

The centre utilisation rate is based on the Report on Government Services formula, which is the average nightly population in youth detention centres during the period divided by the average number of permanently funded beds.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 2020 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

#### QUESTION ON NOTICE

##### No. 20

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

#### QUESTION

With reference to children in youth detention facilities being held while on remand –

Will the Minister advise (a) how many children were held on remand on an average basis in 2019-20, (b) if the department aims to reduce this number in 2020-21 and by how much, (c) how many children (separated by age in years) are on remand either currently or based on the most recent data, (d) what proportion of the above children were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (e) how many of the above children were held in isolation for any length of time and (f) what was the longest total period for which a child imprisoned in 2019-20 was held on remand?

#### ANSWER

The *Youth Justice Act 1992* requires that a child must be remanded if there is an unacceptable risk of the child committing an offence that endangers the safety of the community, or the safety or welfare of a person and the risk cannot be adequately reduced by making bail conditions.

- (a) In 2019-20, the average daily number of young people held on remand in a youth detention centre was 168.
- (b) The Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs does not have a remand reduction target within its Service Delivery Standard measures; however, the Department has reduced the remand figure by four per cent from 2018-19 to 2019-20 (175 young people in 2018-19 and 168 young people in 2019-20).

An amendment to section 421 of the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* in August 2019 required police to attempt to notify a representative of a legal aid organisation when a young person was held in custody for an indictable offence. This amendment aimed to enable legal advice and representation to be arranged for a young person as soon as possible, which may assist in informing police decision making about appropriate diversion or charge options and watch house bail. It also enables arrangements to be put in place for timely applications to courts for bail if a young person is refused watch house bail.

The amendment was operationalised through funding to hotlines managed by Legal Aid Queensland and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, with 3329 advices given from 16 December 2019 to October 30 this year – 1299 in 2019-20. Also, the youth justice principles that underpin the *Youth Justice Act 1992* provide that the youth justice system should give priority to proceedings for children remanded in custody.

Further, the extension of funding for an additional Specialist Children's Court Magistrate and the establishment of a specialist high-risk court, in which high-risk and repeat defendants appear before the same magistrate, were included in the record youth Justice investment of over \$550 million. The Youth Justice Strategy Action Plan 2019-21 also details 155 actions that are funded to stop offending thus reducing the number of young people on remand.

- (c) During 2019-20, the average daily number of young people held on remand in a youth detention centre by age was:

<b>Average daily number of young people held on remand in YDC during 2019-20 by age</b>								
<b>Age in years</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17+</b>
<b>Average daily no.</b>	0	0.8	4.5	11.4	21.5	32.0	37.3	60.6

- (d) 71 per cent of young people held on remand in a youth detention centre in 2019-20 were Aboriginal and/or Torres strait Islander.
- (e) The separation rate for detention centres in 2019-20 was 5.5 for every 100 bed nights.
- (f) The longest period for which a child was detained on remand in a detention centre that concluded in 2019-20, was 620 days. This episode relates to a young person who was charged with a serious offence.