Speech By

Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (3.45 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report No. 19, 57th Parliament, *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*, tabled on 24 November 2021.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee has oversight responsibilities for the Queensland Family and Child Commission and this report provides information regarding the QFCC's performance of its functions under the Family and Child Commission Act 2014. The committee reviewed the QFCC's annual report for 2019-20, which was tabled on 22 September 2020. The committee held a public hearing with commission representatives on 14 June 2021. The Family and Child Commission Act 2014 established the QFCC to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and improve the child protection system. The committee's responsibilities regarding the QFCC are defined under schedule 6 of the standing orders. The QFCC's annual report provided information about the QFCC's performance in relation to its strategic objectives, its financial position and its compliance with legislative requirements.

At the public hearing, the Principal Commissioner explained that, despite COVID-19, the QFCC continued to 'produce very meaningful and influential work to protect the rights of children and young people in Queensland'. The annual report reported on the QFCC's performance in relation to the following functions: reviewing systems and building evidence; connecting with children and young people; influencing the sector; and engaging communities. During this annual reporting period, the QFCC concluded two major oversight reviews being the post-implementation reviews of *When a child is missing: Remembering Tiahleigh—A report into Queensland's children missing from out-of-home care* and *Seeing they are safe: Responsiveness to notifications of child harm in Queensland*.

In addition to those major oversight reviews, the QFCC undertook or participated in several other oversight initiatives including: the oversight of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection; three whole-of-system reviews following the deaths of children known to Child Safety; and quarterly meetings of the Strategic Cross-Agency Oversight Group. The QFCC's evaluation activities in 2019-2020 included: publishing the *Queensland Child Protection Reform Program (2014-2024) Implementation Evaluation report;* evaluating the outcomes of the first five years of the Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program; publishing the *Workforce survey 2019—Final research report*; publishing the *Community perceptions survey 2019—Research report*, which measured the community's confidence in and awareness of the Queensland child protection system; and undertaking two place-based studies (1) at Caboolture, examining the capability of the workforce in responding to the complex needs of clients, and (2) on the Sunshine Coast, exploring services for young people transitioning from out-of-home care into independent living.

One of the more solemn requirements of the QFCC is to maintain the Queensland Child Death Register and analyse information from it to produce an annual report on the deaths of all children in Queensland. This report, *Annual report: deaths of children and young people Queensland*, was tabled in this House on 15 January 2020.

With regard to child death prevention, in 2019-20 the QFCC participated and contributed to a range of measures, including producing and publishing the following publications on the QFCC website: children known to child protection system 2018-19 fact sheet; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child mortality 2018-19 fact sheet; and reducing drowning deaths among children 0-17 years research summary. The act further requires the QFCC to engage with and take account of the views of children, young people and their families. I commend the report to the House.