

Queensland Government Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

On 29 August 2016, the Queensland Government provided a statement to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the August 2016 Statement) which dealt with the consideration the Queensland Government has given to a range of Royal Commission reports, including: Working with Children Checks Report; Redress and Civil Litigation Report; and Case Studies.

In response to a further request by the Royal Commission dated 3 February 2017 for information to support Case Study 51, which is scheduled to commence on 6 March 2017, the Queensland Government is pleased to provide updated information on:

- Working with Children Checks Report
- Redress and Civil Litigation Report
- Out-of-home care.

The following topics have also been addressed to the extent they were not addressed in the August 2016 Statement:

- Out-of-home care – Data Collection
- Reportable Conduct and Mandatory Reporting
- Child Safe Standards.

It is noted the departments which have lead responsibility for the topics dealt with in this statement are as follows:

- Working with children checks – Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Redress – Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Civil litigation – Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Out-of-home care - Data collection – Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Reportable conduct and mandatory reporting – Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Child safe standards - Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Lead agencies work closely with other relevant departments where appropriate, for example matters about criminal offences in relation to reporting child sexual abuse are the responsibility of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Queensland Government's statement to the Royal Commission dated 29 August 2016.

Updated information

1 Working with Children Checks Report

1.1 **The consideration the Queensland Government has given to the Royal Commission's Report on working with children checks**

- 1.1.1 With reference to paragraph 1.1.1 of the August 2016 Statement, the administration of the working with children check (also known as the blue card check in Queensland) transferred from the Public Safety Business Agency to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) on 1 October 2016.
- 1.1.2 With reference to paragraph 1.1.3 of the August 2016 Statement, there are two other reviews (one of which is still in progress) which will impact the future direction of the working with children checks in Queensland:
- On 17 May 2016, the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) requested, on behalf of the Premier the Queensland, Family and Child Commission (QFCC) review the information sharing between relevant agencies with a focus on risk assessments and decisions about safety of children in regulated home-based services, such as foster and kinship care, family day care and stand-alone services.
 - On 21 September 2016, the Director-General of DPC requested, on behalf of the Premier of Queensland, the QFCC undertake a whole of system review of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and its operation.
- 1.1.3 On 20 February 2017, the QFCC handed down its report on information sharing, the *Recommendation 28 Supplementary Review: A report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulated home-based services*. The report makes 17 recommendations to improve information sharing and develop stronger safeguards for children in regulated home-based services. The Queensland Government supports all 17 recommendations of the supplementary review which include:
- improving the visibility of home-based childcare services and monitoring of family day care services in Queensland
 - developing a centralised register and regulatory approval of home-based services
 - authorising the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to share information with relevant agencies.
- 1.1.4 In direct response to the *When a Child is Missing* report, the Queensland Government will also invest \$6 million to upgrade information technology systems to allow for faster information sharing between agencies for missing children.
- 1.1.5 The Government will also establish a centralised register of all child-related care services being conducted from a person's home. The register will be set up within the Blue Card system.
- 1.1.6 As part of its review of the blue card system in Queensland, the QFCC will consider the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection* and the Royal Commission's recommendations. The findings of the QFCC review are currently scheduled to be delivered to government by mid-2017.

2 Redress and Civil Litigation Report

2.1 The consideration the Queensland Government has given to the Royal Commission's Report on redress and civil litigation

- 2.1.1 With respect to paragraph 2.1.1 of the August 2016 Statement, the Queensland Government continues to consider and implement recommendations contained in the Report on Redress and Civil Litigation. The *Limitation of Actions (Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016* (Qld) (the Limitations Amendment Act), anticipated to commence on 1 March 2017, removes the limitation periods for commencing an action for civil damages in relation to personal injury arising from child sexual abuse claims. The whole of government guidelines for responding to civil litigation involving child sexual abuse have been published on DJAG's website to assist Queensland Government agencies in managing claims.
- 2.1.2 The Queensland Government's issues paper 'The civil litigation recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Redress and civil litigation report – understanding the Queensland context' (the issues paper) was tabled in the Queensland Parliament by the Premier and Minister for the Arts on 16 August 2016 (see Attachment 2 for the issues paper). Submissions received on the issues paper are under consideration.
- 2.1.3 The Queensland Government acknowledges the 4 November 2016 announcement by the Australian Government that it will establish a Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Commonwealth institutions where states and territories (and other institutions) may opt in.
- 2.1.4 Queensland has entered into discussions on the national redress scheme with the Australian Government and other states and territories. Representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in Queensland attended the first working group meeting on the national redress scheme on 6 December 2016, and are looking forward to further engagement in 2017.
- 2.1.5 The full details of the national redress scheme are not yet available, however, Queensland is examining the details of the scheme as they are provided to determine whether participation in the national redress scheme is in the best interests of survivors of child sexual abuse in Queensland.

2.2 The steps, if any, the Queensland Government has taken in relation to the recommendations concerning:

- (a) Redress scheme structure (recommendations 26 to 33); and**
- (b) Redress scheme funding (recommendations 34 to 39)**

2.2.1 The Queensland Government has already conducted and finalised a redress scheme for survivors of institutional child abuse in 2007-10, and has provided a range of information to the Royal Commission on the scheme, as reflected in the Royal Commission's report on redress and civil litigation. Queensland is happy to further share its experiences with redress with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to ensure any future redress scheme is as effective and equitable for survivors as possible.

2.2.2 The Queensland Government is still examining the available details of the national redress scheme and is determining whether participation is in the best interests of survivors of child sexual abuse in Queensland. In the meantime, the Queensland Government remains committed to working with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions on redress.

2.3 The steps, if any, the Queensland Government has taken in relation to the recommendations concerning:

- (a) Limitation periods (recommendations 85 to 88);**
- (b) Duty of institutions (recommendations 89 to 93); and**
- (c) Identifying a proper defendant (recommendations 94 to 95)**

2.3.1 The Queensland Government has legislated to give effect to recommendations 85 to 88 of the Royal Commission's Report on Redress and Civil Litigation. Part 2 and Part 3, divisions 3 and 4 of the Limitations Amendment Act, anticipated to commence on 1 March 2017, retrospectively abolish limitation periods applying to claims for damages founded on personal injury arising from child sexual abuse. The scope of the removal of the limitation period covers child sexual abuse in any setting which goes further than the Royal Commission's recommendations.

2.3.2 The Limitation Amendment Act in certain circumstances allows for judgments and previous deeds of settlement which have been entered into, with respect to time barred sexual abuse claims, to be set aside on the grounds that it is just and reasonable to do so.

2.3.3 The Limitation Amendment Act does not limit the jurisdiction of the Court to summarily dismiss or stay proceedings if the lapse of time has a burdensome effect on the defendant that is so serious that a fair trial is not possible.

2.3.4 The issues paper tabled in the Queensland Parliament by the Premier of Queensland on 16 August 2016 sought community feedback on recommendations 85–95 of the Royal Commission's Redress and Civil Litigation Report which relate to:

- The potential for widening the scope of the removal of statutory limitation periods for claims of child sexual abuse to include issues such as whether this should include other forms of abuse (not just sexual abuse), and whether this should cover abuse more broadly than in institutional settings.
- The imposition of a non-delegable duty on institutions for their employees.
- The reversal of the onus of proof to hold institutions liable for abuse committed by their employees unless it took reasonable steps to prevent the abuse.
- Legislation to overcome difficulties in identifying a proper defendant in civil claims against faith-based institutions.

Submissions received on the issues paper are under consideration. Amendments were made during the debate on the Bill for the Limitation Amendment Act on 8 November 2016, extending the scope of the removal of the limitation period to child sexual abuse regardless of the setting, which had been one of the questions posed in the issues paper.

3 Case Study 24: Out-of-home care

- 3.1 Following the investigation into the tragic death of Tiahleigh Palmer and the subsequent arrest of Tiahleigh's foster carers on 21 September 2016, the Premier of Queensland requested the QFCC undertake a comprehensive and thorough examination of the blue card and foster carer systems in Queensland to identify any improvements which may be required.
- 3.2 The QFCC is an independent statutory body whose oversight role includes monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the child protection system from a systemic perspective.
- 3.3 The QFCC review on the foster care system will consider the approval and monitoring processes for foster carers (including kinship carers and provisionally approved carers) and pressure points in child protection service delivery. It will also provide an opportunity to examine the work undertaken by the Royal Commission in relation to the out-of-home care system.
- 3.4 Public consultation by the QFCC on a discussion paper *Review of the foster care system* closed on 20 January 2017.
- 3.5 On 20 February 2017, the QFCC handed down its report on information sharing, the Recommendation 28 Supplementary Review: A report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulation home-based services. The report makes 17 recommendations to improve information sharing and develop stronger safeguards for children in regulated home-based services. The Queensland Government supports all 17 recommendations of the supplementary review which include:
 - improving the visibility of home-based childcare services and monitoring of family day care services in Queensland
 - developing a centralised register and regulatory approval of home-based services
 - authorising the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to share information with relevant agencies.
- 3.6 The Government will also establish a centralised register of all child-related care services being conducted from a person's home.

Current action by Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

- 3.7 In addition to the reforms outlined in paragraph 3.5.17 of the August 2016 Statement, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) has made available to staff and promoted to non-government organisations (NGOs), an Information Kit on Child Protection for Parents which has been produced by the QFCC and the South West Brisbane Community Legal Service. This kit, which is available online at <http://childprotection.org.au> provides information about the Queensland child protection system, including rights, investigation, case management processes, court processes, and making complaints to help families find their way and make informed decisions about their future.
- 3.8 DCCSDS is currently developing a new type of care team to respond to children with a high level of vulnerability. It is anticipated this could include children with sexually reactive behaviours and those vulnerable to this type of abuse and the risk of child exploitation.

- 3.9 With reference to paragraph 3.5.18 of the August 2016 Statement, DCCSDS has contracted PeakCare Queensland Incorporated to work with the residential care service sector to implement the new framework throughout 2017 and 2018.
- 3.10 With reference to paragraph 3.5.27 of the August 2016 Statement, the 2015 Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry examined online child sexual offending and the child exploitation material market. This Commission made recommendations to strengthen the legal response to online and electronic child exploitation material.
- 3.11 The Youth Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Committee was established on 12 March 2016 to oversee the coordination and implementation of activities across all tiers of government in Aurukun and West Cairns to address youth sexual violence and abuse. In its first report dated 31 August 2016, the Committee made recommendations across three themes: improving service effectiveness, raising awareness and resourcing.
- 3.12 The Queensland Government supports all recommendations from the first report, and the Committee's work will include further consultation and will examine the prevalence of youth sexual violence and abuse across Queensland.

Data limitations

- 3.13 In July 2013, DCCSDS introduced a new policy 'Responding to concerns about the standards of care' which replaced the former policy 'Assessing and responding to matters of concern'. The revised policy places a greater emphasis on identifying issues and developing solutions in partnership with either the carer and foster and kinship care service or the residential care service.
- 3.14 Queensland data is not comparable to other jurisdictions due to differences in policies, practices and reporting methods regarding harm to a child in care.
- 3.15 With respect to paragraph 3.5.31 of the August 2016 Statement, the following updates are provided:
- DCCSDS' Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) is able to capture the date the concerns were received (date and location of abuse may be collected however is recorded in free text)
 - information regarding culturally and linguistically diverse status and information about disabilities and mental health are collected if known, however this data is not currently reported or validated
 - information such as police reports and outcomes of criminal and civil justice responses are able to be recorded, however this information is recorded in free text and is therefore not in a format suitable for recording.
- 3.16 DCCSDS has commenced planning for the replacement of ICMS. The current system was designed in the early 2000s and will be replaced with a contemporary solution that reflects current and emerging policies, practices, business processes, data sharing and technology capabilities to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Queensland.
- 3.17 Any recommendations by the Royal Commission in relation to data collection will be considered in the design and development of the replacement client management system.

- 3.18 In response to the QFCC *When a Child is Missing* report, DCCSDS is leading the development of a multi-agency information sharing solution to improve communication between agencies. Functionality will be rolled out in stages, with initial linkages between the QPS and DCCSDS, before possible extension to domestic and family violence prevention, child sexual abuse and at risk adolescents. The Queensland Government will invest \$6 million to upgrade information technology systems to allow for faster information-sharing between agencies for missing children.

Regulation and oversight

Investigation of harm to a child in out-of-home care

- 3.19 With reference to paragraph 3.5.54 of the August 2016 Statement, standards of care concerns are analysed by DCCSDS staff, with a view to identifying any trends and actions that may be required by NGOs to mitigate against future risk to children.

Monitoring and licensing of out-of-home care

- 3.20 With reference to paragraph 3.5.57 of the August 2016 Statement, the application and monitoring process for licensed care services includes requiring organisations to provide evidence of:
- a safe physical environment for children in care
 - governance processes that are aware of, and ensure, child safety, including the risk management strategy required by the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*
 - staff, manager and executive suitability to provide or manage care services including not posing a risk to children
 - selection training and management of employees to provide a care service
 - care planning and delivery that meets the statement of standards in the *Child Protection Act 1999*
 - reporting harm and other concerns in line with legislative requirements
 - record keeping
 - confidentiality.

- 3.21 This process also requires the licensed organisation to provide evidence that staff have received and continue to receive appropriate training and support in mandatory reporting. The evidence includes document review and the findings of regular departmental inspections of licensed premises.

- 3.22 With reference to paragraph 3.5.61 of the August 2016 Statement, achieving and maintaining the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) certification is a contractual obligation for NGOs providing out-of-home care services.

Child safe policies and practices

- 3.23 With reference to paragraph 3.5.81 of the August 2016 Statement, the Public Safety Business Agency Blue Card Services Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit has been renamed the Blue Card Services Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit, to reflect the transfer of the administration of the blue card check from the Public Safety Business Agency to DJAG.
- 3.24 Following the release in 2016 of the Royal Commission's *Creating Child Safe Institutions Report* DCCSDS commenced work to consider the application of the findings of the Royal Commission to the department's practices, policies and culture.

- 3.25 DCCSDS acknowledges that creating child safe organisations requires more than a compliance driven approach and that organisational change and the development of a child safe culture takes leadership and time.
- 3.26 One step in this work was the engagement of Ernst and Young (EY) to independently assess and identify strategies to improve child safe practices within the department.
- 3.27 In undertaking this assessment, EY applied its own 'ChildPlace' Health and Safety Framework which leverages five key organisational elements to keeping children safe.
- 3.28 The EY assessment covers areas of culture, governance and policies, risk management framework, learning, and recruitment and employee screening to assist the department to address underlying risks, and identify opportunities to enhance interactions with children and young people. In short, it provides a useful stocktake of current policies and practices.
- 3.29 DCCSDS is committed to further embedding Child Safe practices within the department and, in addition to the work by EY, will further consider the ten elements of a child safe organisation proposed by the Royal Commission between now and the final recommendations of the Royal Commission later this year.
- 3.30 Many of the elements identified by the Royal Commission for child safe institutions are included in the DCCSDS HSQF. The HSQF requires that institutions funded by the department (including licensed residential care services and foster care services) have processes for reporting and responding to potential or actual harm, abuse and/or neglect that may occur for people using services. Central to the HSQF is the Human Services Quality Standards which include governance and management, service access, responding to individual need, safety wellbeing and rights, feedback, complaints and appeals and human resources.
- 3.31 DCCSDS is also investigating the levers available to enhance child safe environments for funded NGOs through the HSQF, Child Safety Licensing and contracting arrangements.

Strengthening the Sector Strategy – a strategy for working together for a responsive and sustainable service system across the child protection and family support sector

A framework for hope and healing

- 3.32 With reference to paragraph 3.5.108 of the August 2016 Statement, the Hope and Healing Framework includes a focus on child sexual abuse and children with sexually reactive behaviours.
- 3.33 DCCSDS has contracted PeakCare to work with all residential care services to implement the new Hope and Healing Framework. The framework will be fully implemented across the residential care sector by 2018.

Current action post 2015 – Case Study 26

- 3.34 With reference to paragraph 3.6.12, throughout 2016, DCCSDS in partnership with the Queensland Council of Social Service has continued to progress roll-out of the HSQF to NGOs funded by DCCSDS under the Community Services and Child and Family service streams. All in-scope organisations are anticipated to have completed their initial HSQF audit by January 2018.

Requisite elements of a 'child safe' institution

- 3.35 With reference to paragraph 3.6.23 of the August 2016 Statement, the Public Safety Business Agency Blue Card Services Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit has been renamed the Blue Card Services Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit, to reflect the transfer of the administration of the blue card check from the Public Safety Business Agency to DJAG.

Further information not included in August 2016 Statement

4 Out-of-home care – Data Collection

- 4.1 Please refer section 3 Case Study 24: Out-of-home care.

5 Reportable Conduct and Mandatory Reporting

- (a) **Reportable conduct schemes**
 (b) **National consistency in oversight of institutional complaint handling and reporting**
 (c) **National consistency of mandatory reporting requirements**
 (d) **Strengthening training, education support and guidance on mandatory reporting obligations**

- 5.1 On 1 April 2016, the Council of Australian Governments agreed in-principle to harmonise reportable conduct schemes across jurisdictions, similar to the model in New South Wales.
- 5.2 On 25 September 2016, the Premier of Queensland announced that Queensland will work with other states on a proposal to progress a national reportable conduct scheme to improve how jurisdictions respond to allegations of child abuse and neglect across jurisdictional borders.
- 5.3 A reportable conduct scheme in Queensland would introduce a mechanism for central oversight of the responses of government agencies and NGOs to allegations of harm to children, including child sexual abuse by their employees and volunteers.
- 5.4 There is currently no national framework or body that provides national consistency in complaints handling and reporting. Each state has its own arrangements that determine how complaints are managed within the public sector and the sectors it funds, for example, NGOs.
- 5.5 In Queensland, section 219A of the *Public Service Act 2008* requires departments to have a complaints management system for customer complaints which comply with any Australian Standard about handling of customer complaints.

Mandatory reporting in the context of the Queensland child protection system

- 5.6 As noted in the research commissioned by the Royal Commission on mandatory reporting, mandatory reporting requirements are not consistent across jurisdictions.
- 5.7 In Queensland, mandatory reporting laws for child protection were extensively considered by the 2013 Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. The final report recommended government review and consolidate all existing legislative reporting obligations to Child Safety into one legislative framework.
- 5.8 In response to the report's recommendations, legislation was passed by Parliament in May 2014, which consolidated into the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Chapter 2, Part 1AA, Divisions 1 and 2), policy and legislative requirements for reporting to Child Safety for doctors and nurses, teachers in schools, police, departmental or licensed out-of-home care services employees, and staff of the Office of the Public Guardian.

- 5.9 From 1 July 2017, these mandatory reporting obligations will be extended to the early childhood education and care sector.
- 5.10 DCCSDS has contracted National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) approximately \$2 million over three years to deliver training and information sessions for early childhood education and care professionals across Queensland, commencing from February 2017.
- 5.11 Mandatory reporting provisions in the context of Section 10 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* relate to a child in need of protection who (a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and (b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

Sexual abuse mandatory reporting in the context of schools

- 5.12 Queensland also has broader mandatory reporting obligations for sexual abuse in the context of schools.
- 5.13 The *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Chapter 12, Part 10) requires staff members of state and non-state schools to immediately provide a written report of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of a student less than 18 years to the principal of the school, or a director of a non-state school, regardless of who is suspected of causing the abuse.
- 5.14 This report must then be immediately provided by the principal of the school, or a director of a non-state school, to police. Child Safety would be involved in these reports only where a parent was not willing or able to protect the child.
- 5.15 The Queensland Government acknowledges the consideration of the Royal Commission in its criminal justice policy work on third party criminal offences for failure to report child sexual abuse to police, and failure to protect a child from sexual abuse. The Queensland Government will consider any findings or recommendations in relation to this matter.

6 Child Safe Standards

(a) Nationally consistent approaches to child safe standards

(b) Legislating, regulation and oversight of child safe standards

(c) Capacity building and support of institutions

- 6.1 As noted in section 3, Case Study 24: Out-of-home care, Strategy 3 of the *National Framework for Protecting Australian's Children 2009-2020* is the development of a new framework for creating safe environments for children. This work will consider the findings and recommendations from the Royal Commission.
- 6.2 As previously noted in section 1, Working With Children Checks report, on 21 September 2016 the Premier of Queensland requested the QFCC undertake a comprehensive and thorough examination of the blue card and foster care systems in Queensland to identify any improvements which may be required.
- 6.3 The QFCC is working with an expert panel to deliver this six month review. Panel membership includes:
- former Director-General, Queensland Department of Communities – Ms Linda Apelt
 - Bravehearts Founder and Chair – Ms Hetty Johnston AM
 - former Queensland Police Services Assistant Commissioner – Ethical Standards Command – Mr Paul Doyle
 - Foster Care Queensland Executive Director – Mr Bryan Smith.

- 6.4 Its Terms of Reference include:
- explore ways to build and sustain public confidence in the blue card and foster care systems
 - review the blue card system legislation, including its scope, to identify any gaps, barriers, inconsistencies or inefficiencies in meeting the safety needs of children in Queensland.
 - review key blue card system operations to identify opportunities to streamline, innovate and enhance access for members of the community, including Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.
 - audit and review foster carer approval and monitoring processes, to assess their effectiveness as safeguards for vulnerable children and to identify any gaps or inconsistencies in meeting the safety needs of children in Queensland.
 - review Child Safety Services within DCCSDS to determine whether it is operating effectively, including engaging with frontline staff through targeted consultation to determine any capacity issues or pressure points in meeting the safety needs of children in the child protection system.
- 6.5 The implementation of recommendations arising from the Supplementary Review will also contribute to enhanced safety of children in regulated home-based services through improved information sharing (see paragraph 1.1.3).
- 6.6 As previously stated, current arrangements in Queensland require, by law, organisations and self-employed persons whose business activities fall within the scope of the blue card system, to develop and implement child-safe policies and practices (a child and youth risk management strategy), which must be reviewed annually.
- 6.7 These strategies are intended to ensure organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise potential risks of harm to children and young people. There are eight minimum requirements that must be included in a child and youth risk management strategy, which are outlined in the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*:
- a statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
 - a code of conduct for interacting with children
 - capability
 - written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers
 - concerns
 - policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
 - a plan for managing breaches of your risk management strategy
 - risk management plans for high risk activities and special events
 - consistency
 - policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system
 - strategies for communication and support. The child and youth strategy toolkit is designed to provide information and guidance to assist organisations to develop and implement a strategy which satisfies the minimum requirements as well as providing guidance on consultation with key people involved with the organisation including children.

- 6.8 The Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit is available online to assist organisations to develop and implement appropriate child and youth risk management strategies. A series of videos were developed in 2015 to complement this toolkit and are available on the Blue Card Services YouTube channel. The toolkit was last reviewed in April 2015. A Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Self-Assessment Checklist (released in 2016) is also available on the Blue Card Services website to assist organisations to critically assess and strengthen their child-safe policies and procedures.

Application of child safe standards to funded child and family services in Queensland

- 6.9 The Human Services Quality Standards, which underpin the HSQF, continue as the current quality standards for organisations funded by the DCCSDS. The HSQF is currently being rolled out to a broad range of organisations, with the effectiveness of organisations' implementation of the standards monitored through independent third party audits and licensing monitoring activities for out-of-home care providers.
- 6.10 The effectiveness of the standards in supporting safe, high quality service provision is also being monitored, as wider implementation is undertaken. Responsive adjustments are being made to requirements which organisations must address through the standards, where necessary.
- 6.11 The HSQF is a quality improvement framework, with an expectation that organisations operate in a continuous improvement/developmental manner.
- 6.12 With the release of the Royal Commission's Creating Child Safe Institutions Report, it is expected organisations which provide services to children and young people are proactively looking at their existing processes, and working to align to the key elements, moving into the future.
- 6.13 As part of a larger future framework review, consideration will be given to how best to incorporate these elements into the requirements of the standards, in addition to other directions provided by the Royal Commission.
- 6.14 Queensland notes with interest the recently released National Quality and Safeguarding Framework for the National Disability Insurance Scheme includes consideration of safeguards for children and young people with disability with a child safe context. The implementation of these arrangements along with requirements under a national approach to child safe standards will need to consider the impacts for organisations during this period of fundamental reform.
- 6.15 As previously noted, DCCSDS has funded NAPCAN approximately \$2 million over three years to deliver mandatory reporting training to the early childhood education and care sector. This program of work will also include delivering Child Safe Organisations Workshops to a broader group of businesses and organisations in contact with children.