



## Terry's story

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Nothing in this story constitutes a finding of fact by the Commission of Inquiry. Instead, these stories have been published to show how people are experiencing the current child safety system in Queensland. Any views expressed are those of the person who shared their experience, not of the Commission of Inquiry.

**Content warning:** Some material may be distressing. These statements may include references to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, suicide, or self-harming behaviours, and may contain strong or confronting language. Some narratives may be about First Nations people who have passed away. Readers are encouraged to engage with this material in a way that supports their wellbeing.

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I write with deep concern to formally detail the reasons for my submission to the Commission of Inquiry regarding the safety, treatment, and wellbeing of my child while under the care and oversight of statutory child protection authorities.

I am the biological mother of my child and have consistently sought to act in his best interests. Over an extended period, I have raised serious concerns that I believe have not been adequately addressed, despite the seriousness of the issues involved.

There have been numerous reports and disclosures of abuse and harm that my child has communicated directly to me. These disclosures have caused significant distress and have raised serious questions about whether appropriate protective responses were taken. I am concerned that these reports were not met with timely, transparent, or proportionate intervention.

I am also alarmed by my child's exposure to dangerous firearms and weapons-related activities while in care. This includes an incident in which a paintball-style gun (commonly referred to as a gel blaster) was used on my child by a foster carer, resulting in visible bruising. My child was distressed by this incident and disclosed it to me during contact. The bruising was witnessed at the time by my child's Child Safety Officer (CSO). Despite this, I am not aware of any meaningful action being taken in response to this incident, which I find deeply concerning given the physical injury involved and the power imbalance between a child and an adult carer.

# Child Safety Commission of Inquiry



Further compounding these concerns, I was advised by Child Safety that my child was experiencing suicidal ideation however, I was not provided with any meaningful information, safety planning, or guidance on how I could support him. I find it deeply troubling that a child identified as suicidal would be exposed to environments involving weapons, given the significant and well-recognised risks this presents.

There has also been a cessation and lack of support for family contact. Contact has not been maintained in a consistent, supported, or therapeutic manner, nor has it been appropriately encouraged by the carers. I have repeatedly been told that my child does not wish to see or speak with me; however, when my child is away from the carers' presence, his expressed wishes are inconsistent with these claims. This raises serious concerns about whether my child's views are being accurately conveyed and respected.

I am particularly distressed by conduct disclosed during a Family Group Meeting, where foster carers stated that if Child Safety did not "back off," they did not wish to continue caring for my child. During this same discussion, the carers used highly inappropriate and demeaning language about my child, including swearing and referring to him as a "little prick" and an "arsehole." I am deeply concerned about the emotional harm such language causes, what it indicates about the environment my child is living in, and the lack of apparent intervention following these remarks.

Additionally, I have been subjected to extremely serious accusations by carers, including allegations that I was attempting to kidnap my own children.

These allegations were accepted by Child Safety without adequate investigation or procedural fairness. As a result, I have not been informed of my children's place of residence for approximately four to five years. This has had profound emotional consequences for both myself and my children and has significantly impaired my ability to maintain parental responsibility and connection.

Taken together, these experiences raise serious concerns about failures in oversight, accountability, and child-centred decision-making. I am deeply troubled by the apparent acceptance of unsubstantiated allegations, the

# Child Safety Commission of Inquiry



lack of scrutiny applied to carers' conduct, and the absence of effective responses when serious safety concerns were raised.

I am willing to provide further information, documentation, and firsthand evidence should the Commission require it.

