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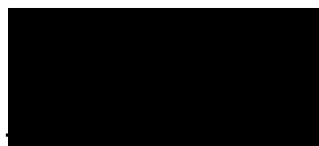
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**CHILD SAFETY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
STATE OF QUEENSLAND**

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL JAMES DRANE

I, Michael James Drane, of care of Crown Law, Level 11, 50 Ann Street, Brisbane, a Director-General in the State of Queensland state as follows:

1. I am currently the Acting Director-General of the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS). I commenced acting in this role on 29 January 2026.
2. I am substantively employed as the Deputy Director-General, Youth Justice Services within the DYJVS and have fulfilled that role since 29 April 2024.
3. From February 2021 to 29 April 2024, I was the Senior Executive Director, Youth Detention Operations and Reform, within the DYJVS. In this role, I was responsible for managing the operations of the Youth Detention Centres in Queensland.
4. I have completed a Bachelor of Justice degree with double majors in public administration and critical criminology. I have also completed a Bachelor of Laws degree and Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and I am admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland. I have 23 years' experience working directly in youth justice system.
5. I was previously the Executive Director of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre from 2018 to 2021. I also worked as a Director on the Commission of Inquiry into Youth Detention in Queensland in 2016.
6. Throughout my career I have worked predominantly in youth justice and youth detention centres, having fulfilled many roles including Detention Youth Worker, Section Supervisor, Shift Supervisor, Caseworker, Unit Manager, Deputy Director and Executive Director.


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7. This statement is to be read in conjunction with proactive statement 12 of Kate Connors, former Director-General, DYJVS, dated 1 September 2025 which I fully affirm.
8. This statement has been prepared in response to the Commission's letter to Crown Law dated 2 February 2026.

The background and demographics of youths subject to dual orders

9. As outlined in Ms Kate Connors' statement to the Commission (proactive statement 12, dated 1 September 2025), children and young people under the supervision of the DYJVS and with an active children protection order (CPO) under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (also referred to as 'dual order' children), comprise approximately 24 per cent of the total youth justice client cohort. This data is current as at 31 March 2025 however it fluctuates frequently.
10. DYJVS works with a smaller cohort of youths than the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (DFSDSCS).
11. As at 31 December 2024, there were approximately 581,370 youths in Queensland aged between 10 and 17 years. In the 12 months ending 30 November 2025, there were approximately 3,410 distinct youths with criminal charges finalised, and 2,865 youths with proven offences finalised, or less than 0.6 per cent and 0.5 per cent respectively of this age group. During this same period, on an average day, there were approximately 2,413 distinct youths under youth justice supervision, with an average daily number of youths subject to a supervised youth justice court order of approximately 1,435.
12. In the 12 months to 30 November 2025, 1,088 distinct youths were in youth justice custody, with approximately 295 youths remanded in custody on an average day. Of these, only approximately 11.2 per cent of youths in Queensland's youth detention centres are in sentenced custody, with the remaining 88.8 per cent held on remand.
13. Dual order young people represent a very small proportion of children subject to an active child protection order. In 2024-25, there were approximately 1,494 youths subject to a supervised youth justice court order of DYJVS on an average day,

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compared to the 13,336 children subject to CPOs as at 31 March 2025. Of these 13,336 children, 7,215 were aged 10 to 17 years – the age bracket of youth in the youth justice cohort.

14. The extent and nature of formal supervised youth justice orders made by courts results in short term engagement with the DYJVS, typically around 3-6 months in duration depending upon the seriousness of offending and order types. This engagement is only with young people subject to the age of criminal responsibility (10-17 years) and contrasts with the scope of child safety cohorts from birth to 18 years, and with longer enduring orders. DYJVS' role is focused on the administration of youth justice supervised orders and the delivery of programs and supports to address the risk of reoffending.
15. DYJVS conducts an annual census which is a collection of demographic information relating to all young people subject to youth justice orders on a particular date. The information is largely populated by frontline caseworkers using knowledge of individual characteristics of young people under their current caseloads. This data is used to inform both operational and policy responses when considering characteristics and common factors within this cohort. The data has some limitations given the point in time nature, and method of its collection. The data is not exclusive to dual order young people, although my experience leads me to believe that many of the complex challenges facing these young people are multifaceted and many within the dual order cohort.
16. In the 2024 census data, approximately 76 per cent of youth under supervised youth justice orders identified as male, and 63 per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Approximately one quarter (24 per cent) were living in unstable and/or unsuitable accommodation, and 50 per cent were completely disengaged from education, training or employment. Approximately one third (30 per cent) had a parent who had been held in adult custody, and more than half (59 per cent) had experienced or been impacted by domestic and family violence.
17. By contrast, over this same period, almost 90 percent of youths in custody identified as male, and 75 per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Approximately one third (33 per cent) were living in unstable and/or unsuitable

accommodation, and 55 per cent were completely disengaged from education, training or employment. Thirty eight per cent had a parent who had been held in adult custody, and approximately 70 per cent had experienced or been impacted by domestic and family violence.

18. The majority of youths in contact with the youth justice system present with a range of complex needs, such as childhood trauma (including abuse and neglect and exposure to domestic and family violence), disability, mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, unsuitable housing and disengagement from education. More than half of youth on supervised youth justice orders (55 per cent) and 75 per cent of youths in custody have at least one disability, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) (13 per cent and 25 per cent respectively). Approximately 49 per cent of youths on supervised orders, and 54 per cent of youths in custody, have at least one mental health disorder and/or behavioural disorder including anxiety (31 and 33 per cent respectively), depression (24 per cent for both youths under supervision and youths in custody), or post-traumatic stress disorder (20 and 25 per cent respectively).
19. According to DYJVS analysis of available data, as at 31 March 2025, 219 or approximately nine per cent of youths supervised by DYJVS were dual order youths. The significant majority of these were aged between 14 and 17 years, with 33.3 per cent in the 14 to 15 year old age bracket, and 59.4 per cent in the 16 to 17 year old age bracket. Almost two thirds were male (65.3 per cent) and 70.3 per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
20. As explained by Ms Connors in proactive statement 12, many children in the child protection system experience the same intergenerational issues of poverty, domestic and family violence, mental health and drug and alcohol misuse as children on supervised youth justice orders. These common factors may contribute to children entering both systems and their complex needs remain a challenge for DYJVS in delivering offence-focussed behaviour change interventions.

The systems failures that have led to, or contributed to, youths being subject to dual orders

21. On the basis of my professional experience and expertise, I have observed common risk factors present in the lives of young people who subsequently interact with both the child protection and youth justice systems. Factors such as adverse childhood experiences or trauma, developmental delays or disability, cognitive impairments or acquired brain injuries, drug, alcohol or substance misuse, or behavioural disorders. I have no basis upon which to draw a conclusion that one system leads young people to, or contributes to, the interaction with another system.

The systems failures underpinning the initiatives referred to in paragraphs 20-22 and 28-30 of the proactive statement, together with an explanation of what constitutes success for each initiative and the manner in which that success is measured

21. The nature of youth offending in Queensland is complex. Whilst over time, consistent trends show a reduction in distinct numbers of young people offending, there were particular types of offences where a disproportionate amount of offending was being committed by a small number of young people. Furthermore, the nature of this offending by this cohort is extremely visible, often involving high risk activities and in very confronting ways, causing significant concerns about community safety and resulting in serious harm to victims. The complex individual factors contributing to this offending as noted earlier in this statement, in addition to the impulsive behaviour of youth generally, can result in rapid escalations of behaviour and extremely violent offending patterns.
22. Proactive statement 12 discusses in some detail (paragraphs 20 – 22 and 28 – 30) ongoing programmatic responses and new election commitments implemented under the current Government. These programs are proactive initiatives designed to address the harm being caused by youth offenders and restore community safety and public confidence. They are designed to reduce the number of youths entering the youth justice system, and both the volume and seriousness of youth crime in Queensland to improve community safety. The programmatic responses apply DYJVS’ knowledge of risk and escalation of offending behaviours to deliver crime prevention focused models and rehabilitative, behavioural change or practical support programs targeted

at young people and their families. They are initiatives that have been introduced to strengthen Queensland's youth justice system and address changing social trends, and not necessarily in response to systems failures.

23. New programs currently being implemented by DYJVS are current government election commitments deigned to better address known gaps within the youth justice system and are based on strong evidence about what works to address offending and reduce youth crime. The Staying on Track program is a good example of this and delivers a practical and holistic support to support young people and their families for up to twelve months following their exit from custody. The program commenced in late 2025 and although in its infancy, its performance and efficacy will be measured over time through reductions in reoffending, and reductions in the frequency and severity of offending committed by youth.
24. The success of the programs outlined in proactive statement 12 will ultimately be measured by reductions in youth offending, indicated by less young people having contact with the youth justice system, lower numbers of proven offences committed by young people, and reduced reoffending by young people. The programs will also be measured against those measures set out in the DYJVS 2025-26 Service Delivery Statements.

The relationship, if any, between the child safety and the youth justice systems, including whether aspects of the child safety system function as a 'feeder' to the youth justice system

25. On the basis of my professional experience and expertise, I have observed common risk factors present in the lives of young people who subsequently interact with both the child protection and youth justice systems. The most prominent of these factors are adverse childhood experiences or trauma, developmental delays or disability, cognitive impairments or acquired brain injuries, drug, alcohol or substance misuse, and behavioural disorders.
26. Broader factors associated with unstable living environments, intergenerational trauma, intergenerational patterns of criminal offending and incarceration, domestic and family violence, poverty, unemployment, are also well known risk factors that contribute to youth offending. I have no basis upon which to draw a conclusion that

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the child safety system acts as a 'feeder' to the youth justice system, rather there are common risk factors resulting in overlap with the cohorts of young people who interact with both systems.

The use of residential care facilities as a site for the recruitment of youths to engage in criminal activities and sexual exploitation

27. I have limited first-hand knowledge of the operation or practices of residential care facilities. My knowledge of these facilities is limited to accounts of young people in the youth justice system and staff with whom I have interacted throughout my career, or from case files relating to the DYJVS' statutory functions.
28. I am aware of a wide body of research and established evidence about negative peer associations, and how these associations contribute to offending behaviour. I have no direct basis upon which to conclude that this occurs within residential care facilities however my experience working within youth detention enables me to conclude that many youth are adversely impacted by peers who engage in offending behaviour and influence others with dominant pro criminal attitudes. These influences on young people are not exclusive to specific facilities as I have seen young people from very stable home environments impacted by negative peer associations such that they end up offending and entering the youth justice system.
29. I have heard from many parents throughout my career who recount that their child was impacted or influenced by, or fell into 'the wrong circle of friends'.
30. I have observed throughout my career that often dual order young people who have had placements in residential care facilities have entered the youth justice system with charges alleged to have occurred within those facilities. This is however not a unique pattern of behaviour, as I have also seen cases involving parents of young people having been forced to call Police to intervene with their children in home environments when they have been unable to manage volatile behaviour that has also resulted in criminal offending.

Any recommendations for reform

31. Frontline staff in both DYJVS and DFSDSCS work hard to maintain a collaborative response to provide quality services to youth and their families. Despite this collaboration, I offer the following observations about opportunities to improve service delivery and systemic responses to better meet the needs of dual order youths:
- a) Improved access to mental health, drug and alcohol and disability support services, including inpatient, secure, therapeutic supervision options for youths who have a high risk of offending or challenging behaviours. These issues also arise for youths subject to supervised youth justice orders who are not also on a CPO.
 - b) Given the nature and function of the youth justice system which is distinct to the child protection system, there could be improved dedicated capacity and capability to respond quickly to meet the needs of youths when Courts make decisions in youth justice matters. For example, there may be little notice of when a Court may make a decision to release a young person from detention either on bail or as part of a sentence outcome. Once a decision is made, DYJVS can no longer lawfully detain a young person. It is important that a plan is in place for each dual order young person in detention for their transition back into the community prior to their release.
 - c) Given the characteristics and demographics of young people subject to youth justice orders, there is the opportunity to provide additional support and supervision for youths also subject to a CPO who are considered a high risk of offending including after hours and for those in residential care placements, including specialist expertise in engagement and de-escalation of youth with multiple and complex needs to reduce the risk of offending. This includes reducing the risk of offending within child safety placements in relation to carers, staff and accommodation facilities.

Within a residential setting, additional support may take the form of specially trained youth workers who are able to de-escalate conflict situations, reinforce

pro-social attitudes, and re-engage young people with education or employment and positive ways to spend their recreational time.

- d) Improved earlier planning to identify appropriate accommodation and supervision for youths to support applications for bail, the transition of youths from detention back into the community, and the transition of youths into adulthood as they approach the age of 18. Where youth are under the care of DFSDSCS, it is responsible for managing care arrangements including accommodation and supervision of youth.

I make this statement of my own free will believing its contents to be true and correct.

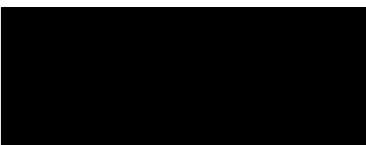
Dated at BRISBANE this 12TH day of FEBRUARY 2026.



Michael James Drane



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Michael James Drane



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