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Child Safety Commission of Inquiry
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To the Honourable Paul Anastassiou KC,

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this very valuable inquiry into Child Safety within Queensland.

Our submission seeks to contribute to *“Fixing a broken system: reviewing the effectiveness of Queensland’s child safety system to keep children safe.”*

Youth and Families Association of Pine Rivers Inc (YAFA) is a niche not-for-profit organisation based in the Northern suburbs of Brisbane. YAFA’s counselling service are primarily funded by the Queensland State Government to provide **free** counselling for young people, adults and families in the Moreton Bay Region. YAFA strives to support youth and families through care, support and self-development as early intervention to help avoid needing child safety intervention. We are also a registered charity.

Our Mission is to provide to children, youth and families an environment of support, and to encourage positive personal and social development through the channelling of energies, educational programs, counselling and avenues of social integration. We have been doing this since the early 1990’s.

We are grateful for the funding we receive and could not deliver the services we do without it. However, we are chronically underfunded, relying on volunteers to carry out back-office processes and a very hands-on Management Committee to keep our Policies and Procedures in line with best practice. We also heavily rely on additional donations and small relevant grants to ensure our services delivery are to our client’s expectations.

Departmental funding for YAFA has not significantly increased beyond the award wage indexation for many years placing enormous pressure on our budget. Increases in rent, energy, counselling resources and office supplies have outpaced our funding indexation. As a result, we have sought small grants to cover this gap, however, these grants are never able to be used to support the employment staff.

We urge the inquiry to consider the funding model for organisations such as YAFA, which offer early intervention services and are niche, highly efficient and well embedded in the community, to ensure they not only ‘survive’, but proposer to better support the health and well-being of the local communities they serve.

We would be happy to provide evidence to the committee or present our situation in more detail if you believe that this would add to your inquiry.

Thanks

Dr Geoff Bongers

President