

Migrant and Refugee communities of Logan – Submission to the QLD Child Safety Commission of Inquiry

To whom it may concern,

The Child Safety system in Queensland and the processes surrounding it have not been designed and are not being delivered in a way that considers the needs and experiences of the migrant and refugee community in Logan. The community is calling on the Commission to hold a hearing specifically on the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community in the Child Safety system.

With over 392,000 residents and more than 242 cultural backgrounds, Logan is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Australia. Logan has been a major settlement city for humanitarian entrants to Australia since the 1960s. Humanitarian settlement increased considerably during the mid-2010s following the rise in the humanitarian program intake by the Australian government in response to global conflict¹. Unlike many local government areas, Logan's humanitarian intake is described as incredibly diverse, accommodating people from numerous cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Logan has demonstrated the ability to quickly mobilise support systems in response to sudden global events. During the evacuation of Afghanistan, Logan organisations rapidly adapted programs to meet the complex needs of Afghan arrivals². This adaptability is part of what makes Logan not just a settlement location, but a strong and resilient community. Logan is a city whose identity has been shaped and enriched by the refugees and migrants who have made it home.

In October 2025 members of the Logan migrant and refugee community came together for a forum on Child Safety with the purpose of gathering experiences and perspectives to create this submission to the Commission of Inquiry.

The key problems identified by community are:

1. There are barriers to understanding the system
2. Children and families are experiencing trauma from the system
3. Assumptions and bias are embedded in the system
4. Community is not centred

1. There are barriers to understanding the system

Understanding child safety as a role that government plays is difficult for the community. The function doesn't exist in many home countries where responsibility for children's safety sits with families and communities, not with governments. For some families, the role of government in their lives has been something they have tried to

¹ [Logan 7th largest refugee city in Australia - MyCity Logan](#)

² [Logan 7th largest refugee city in Australia - MyCity Logan](#)

protect their children from, not a source of protection. In addition, the Child Safety system in Australia requires understanding complex, multi-step processes, with unfamiliar language. Language such as ‘mandatory reporting’ and ‘statutory authority’ is difficult to understand for many people.

Language is the first barrier to understanding. There is limited availability to translation and interpreting services. Child Safety officers do not visit with interpreters, often relying on someone in the house with enough English to translate. Sometimes those with the most English are the children.

Even with some English or an interpreter available, for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, sense-making work is required to understand new terms, new processes and the roles of people involved. The way Child Safety communicates with families does not provide enough sense-making to support the family to understand the Child Safety process. Community members report there is not enough information available to them and what exists is very complicated.

Fear is a significant barrier to understanding the system. The community reported that their understanding of Child Safety is just to remove children. Families who are fearful are less likely to engage in processes that could support them. Some people reported they had experienced an escalated police response due to cultural misunderstandings. Fear in the community of people in uniform coming to take their children comes from the lived experiences of their home countries and needs to be understood.

The community also reported they feared being judged for the way they parent or live their lives. They feared that if they asked for support children might be taken away. Shame and stigma are also strong drivers for the community, where they feel asking for support is a weakness, but if Child Safety visits they feel significant shame. This often results in families hiding away from community, without the support they need.

The community reported limited understanding of their rights in situations with Child Safety. Humanitarian entrants have access to 8 hours legal support through the Australian legal system, but many are unsure whether that can be used to support Child Safety interactions. Skilled migrants don’t have access to that legal support. Families report having no experience with services that can help them navigate the Child Safety system.

2. Children and families are experiencing trauma from the system

Families from migrant and refugee backgrounds often already carry trauma from their past experiences. The community reported that their experiences with Child Safety do not demonstrate that Child Safety is taking a trauma-informed approach to the way they interact with families. The experience of the Child Safety system for the CALD community is re-traumatising or creating new trauma.

Children often hold fear of authorities. Unlike children in Australia who grow up learning that people in uniform are safe people who will help them if they get lost, children from migrant and refugee backgrounds often have lived experience of people in uniform causing them or their family and community harm.

Community leaders reported that removing CALD children from parents and community creates trauma, by taking them away from their cultural and religious connections. The community also expressed concern about placement decisions for those children who are removed. CALD children are at risk of inappropriate placements and harm while in care if there is a lack of cultural understanding about the children's needs. The community also expressed that for a child to live in residential care is traumatic as they are used to having a connection to their family and community.

Children being used as interpreters for their parents by Child Safety, Service Providers, or mandatory reporters such as schools, is an inappropriate burden for a child to carry and can create trauma through exposure to inappropriate language and situations. The community reported instances of schools communicating through the child to parents and Child Safety officers and service providers asking children to translate and sense make during conversations. They also reported sometimes children are required to report incidents because of their greater English skills and understanding of the systems. Experiences such as this rob CALD children of their childhood, which evidence shows can lead to poorer mental and physical health in the long term.

3. Assumptions and bias are embedded in the system

The Child Safety system (including service providers) lacks the cultural knowledge and skills to work effectively and safely with CALD communities. CALD communities are complex - they are not homogenous, but made up of different cultures, religions, ways of living and understanding the world.

Family structures in the CALD community can be different, as can hierarchies of who speaks or makes decision for the family. All families, regardless of their cultural background, have different parenting styles based on how they were raised and the culture and environment when they were growing up. CALD families feel judged for this in their interactions with Child Safety. Judgment undermines the community's trust. If Child Safety wants to build trust to reduce the fear and have better interactions, the judgement must change.

The community leaders reported that the existing CALD training for staff contains too much tokenism. Working with CALD families requires more than 'awareness' – it requires skills. Staff training needs to be more than 2- 5hrs online to be genuinely effective, especially given the breadth of cultures in Logan. The lack of staff from diverse cultural backgrounds is also contributing factor.

The community reported that how people perceive safety can be problematic for families. They reported experiences where childcare centres and schools have made assumptions about a family and reported directly to Child Safety. They have then referred the family to services to seek more information or perspectives. Community leaders expressed frustration with not being called upon to support situations such as this where good communication could help resolve issues before escalation.

The community reported that the way Child Safety approach their interactions with them feels like punishment, not help. The community has witnessed aggressive behaviour from Police and Child Safety, which they believe are a result of not understanding CALD communities.

The community reported that 9-5 services don't work to support the CALD community. Services do not have interpreters available. Families experience rigid protocols from services that can't be changed to accommodate differences. The community reported that their experience of services is that they have not been designed to consider the needs of the CALD community and as such are not fit for purpose.

4. Community is not centred in policy and decision making

The community reported that they felt that Child Safety policies are written about CALD communities but not written with them, as they do not adequately understand or meet their needs. The community reported that parents feel disempowered by the system. Community leaders reported feeling disempowered by the system.

Community leaders expressed frustration with the lack of communication or consultation with the CALD community and community leaders in Logan. Leaders want to do the work to support their community, but they feel Child Safety is not engaging with them to problem solve. This is particularly important when removing a child from the community – leaders want to play a role in these conversations and processes.

Community-led solutions could foster trust and understanding across the whole system and lead to better outcomes. Child Safety needs to include community in conversations about what's working and what's not and designing new processes.

Community led solutions

The community has ideas for how to improve the current situation and wants to be part of achieving it.

- Resource community to educate and train their members. For example, develop handbooks in language, teach people about the Child Safety system, use visual adaptations to assist understanding, teach people about their rights in situations with Child Safety.

- Include community in problem solving. Use the connections Child Safety has with community leaders and reach out to design ways of working, processes, staff training or other. Work with community leaders to do outreach activities that build understanding and trust.
- Work with community to develop culturally appropriate communication and processes. Change the framework and include cultural lens – not a one-size-fits-all approach. The approach needs to be a tailored approach to each community. Seek feedback regularly from families and children with lived experience to ensure cultural learning and adaptation is an ongoing process.
- Work with community organisations that have strong relationships and trust with community to support relationship building and working together.
- Services need to be trauma-informed and culturally safe. Provide training beyond an online course and used lived experience to shape this training.
- Recruit for cultural diversity across Child Safety and Service Providers. Reflect the diversity of QLD. Hire cultural advisors to support process and practice design.
- Better screening for carers to ensure they are culturally safe for children. Provide carers with high quality training and support to increase their cultural capability.
- Residential care as a last resort. Work with community to design approaches where community could step in and support the child staying in community.
- Increase early intervention efforts across the system. CALD families face complex challenges and require a holistic approach.

Efforts underway in Logan

The Logan community is strong and practiced in leading the way to make their community better. They are working hard to reduce the number of CALD children in out of home care and are committed to improving how community and Child Safety work together. The programs described below were co-designed by community to ensure they meet the needs of the community.

In 2025 Settlement Services International (SSI) launched a Multicultural Family Based Care program that works with and supports kinship and foster carers in Brisbane, Logan and Ipswich [Multicultural Family Based Care Program – Logan - SSI](#).

Kinship carers are approved to provide care in their own homes for a child or young person they are related to, or who knows them as part of their extended family or community. A kinship carer may be:

- A grandparent
- An aunt or uncle
- Another relative
- A close family friend

For children from CALD communities kinship care may also include someone who is known to the child and shares the child's community, culture, or language group.

Village Connect has a foster and kinship care service for Pasifika and Māori families in Logan, working with the Child Safety Service Centres in Logan Central, Loganlea, Browns Plains, Beenleigh and Beaudesert [Pasifika & Māori Foster and Kinship Care — Village Connect](#).

Kinship carers are approved by Child Safety to provide care in their own homes for a relative, family member, close friend, or a member of the child or young person's community. A kinship carer is a person related to the child, or is considered part of the family or a close friend, including:

- grandparent
- aunt or uncle
- other relative or close friend.

For Pasifika and Māori children, kinship care may include another Pasifika or Māori person who is a member of, or compatible with the child's community or language group.

When Pasifika or Māori children and young people need to live away from their home for their own protection, Child Safety is committed to ensuring their cultural identity and relationship with their families and communities is maintained.

Conclusion

The Child Safety system does not operate in a way that is safe and accessible for CALD communities. The needs and experiences of the CALD community interactions with Child Safety have not been heard, because they have not been asked for. For the Commission to truly understand how the Child Safety system is operating in QLD and to consider ways to improve the system to protect children from harm, the voices of the CALD community must be heard. The Logan community is calling on the Commissioner to hold a hearing where the CALD community can speak directly to those with the power to change things.