



Ian's story

Disclaimer: *This is the story of a person who shared their personal experience with the Commission of Inquiry through a submission or interview. The names in this story are pseudonyms and identifying details have been removed. The person who shared this experience may not have been a witness and their account is not evidence. They did not take an oath or affirmation before providing the story.*

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.

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This submission draws on my interactions with Child Safety over a 15-year career working within Queensland's Out of Home Care system, including frontline, regional, and statewide leadership roles.

It focuses on the question posed, "Is the Department an effective corporate parent?" In doing so, it highlights the importance of consistency—an element that is critical to effective corporate parenting but is often absent in practice. This submission reflects on variability in practice, culture, and partnership across Child Safety Service Centres. While there are strong examples of effective corporate parenting within the Department, these practices are not applied consistently across regions.

This submission reflects on practices experienced as cohesive, responsive, and partnership-driven, demonstrating that effective corporate parenting is achievable within existing systems. Improving consistency, replicating effective regional practice, and strengthening genuine partnerships with sector agencies will improve outcomes for children and young people in care across Queensland.

My name is Ian. This submission relates to Residential Out of Home Care services and my professional interactions with the Queensland Department of Child Safety across the state.

Since [REDACTED], my role has involved regular interaction with Child Safety Service Centres across Queensland.

I would like to briefly respond to the question: "Is the Department an effective corporate parent?" I acknowledge that this is a broad and complex question, and one that the Commission itself is tasked with. By way of comparison, if we were to ask, "Are biological parents effective parents?" the honest answer would be yes, no, sometimes, or not all the time. While safe, present, and caring biological parents are the ideal caregivers for

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children, we also recognise that circumstances vary and that not all parents are able or willing to meet the responsibilities of the parenting role.

It is within this same context that I believe the question of the Department's effectiveness as a corporate parent should be considered. Across my career, I have had both positive and challenging experiences working with Child Safety Service Centres throughout Queensland. What has become evident is that each Service Centre operates with its own distinct:

- Workplace culture
- Staff morale
- Interpretations of legislation
- Understanding of the corporate parent role and its responsibilities
- Perception of who the primary client is
- Approach to financial oversight and expenditure
- Compliance and auditing practices
- Interpretations of "Outcomes"
- Interpretation of what constitutes a Standard of Care concern
- Expectations regarding how government and sector agencies should work together

Reflecting on a simple analogy, organisations such as McDonald's understand that consumers value consistency. Whether one enjoys the product or not, the experience is largely the same regardless of location. This consistency allows people to form a clear assessments of the product. In contrast, the effectiveness of the Department as a corporate parent is more difficult to assess due to the significant variability in practice and approach across Child Safety Service Centres (CSSC).

At times, these differences between Child Safety Service Centres are substantial. This variability can influence whether relationships with sector agencies are experienced as collaborative partnerships or as more funder-provider arrangements. In turn, this shapes sector agency priorities and ultimately impacts the quality and consistency of care experienced by young people in residential settings.

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I have worked with young people in care whose Child Safety Officer visits consistently every fortnight, without exception. Conversely, I have also heard frequent concerns from young people who report limited or no contact with their Child Safety Officer, and in some cases are unable to name their current CSO.

Focusing on positive practice, my experience stands out as a benchmark for strong corporate parenting. While it would be inappropriate to describe any system supporting traumatised and vulnerable children as “perfect,” my demonstrates a consistently higher level of cohesion, responsiveness, and genuine partnership. I have observed greater alignment in practice standards, more accessible and responsive Child Safety Officers, and stronger leadership engagement from Team Leaders within this region compared to many others.

Is the Department an effective corporate parent? In my experience, some parts of the Department, and some Child Safety Service Centres, demonstrate strong and effective corporate parenting. Regrettably, others do not. While many Child Safety Officers, Team Leaders, and Managers actively promote partnership, proactive practice, strengths-based approaches, and trauma-informed care, there remain instances where morale, culture, and collaboration are diminished by excessive bureaucracy or an emphasis on administrative priorities.

I offer this submission in the spirit of constructive contribution. The Department of Child Safety is made up of many dedicated professionals who care deeply about children and young people, and there are clear examples of effective corporate parenting already in practice—in my experience. The opportunity before the Commission is to identify, strengthen, and replicate these examples of good practice across the state, so that all children in care, regardless of location, can experience consistent, high-quality support, stability, and genuine advocacy from their corporate parent.

I am receptive to being contacted about this submission and its contents, or other matters that I can support.

I leave the commission with a quote that I have held close for many years, in hopes that it says more than my submission has been able to:

“Much of our work is presented as a science, but it relies on judgment, experience, and human understanding, making it, at its core, an art”.