



1 October 2025

Far North Queensland youth have their say on child protection system

The Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety held its first private youth forum in Far North Queensland with more than 25 young people attending the meetup.

Held in the final week of the Commission's public hearings in Cairns, the 'Youth Voices' session provided a platform for young people to highlight their experiences of the child protection system with the Commissioner, the Honourable Paul Anastassiou KC, and his legal team.

The private session was attended by children and young people from Far North Queensland ranging in age from primary school through to late high school, and from a variety of cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Mr Anastassiou thanked the young people for putting their voice forward.

"As I said in my opening remarks in Cairns, comprehensive engagement is vital to ensure that the Commission fully understands the issues, which confront the child safety system," Mr Anastassiou said.

"And no voice is more important than the voices of young people. To see the child safety system through their lens and through their experience is critical."

Mr Anastassiou said the young people spoke candidly and courageously about the challenges they have experienced within the child safety system.

"I want to thank each one of them for attending the session. It is not an easy feat speaking to strangers on a sensitive topic, but each young person spoke with such honesty and sincerity."

Mr Anastassiou said some issues raised by the young people at the session included:

- feeling voiceless and powerless
- delayed support from Child Safety, ranging from needing immediate protection from abuse or neglect, to waiting lengthy periods of time to access education, school supplies, and essential clothing
- lack of meaningful connections with Child Safety Officers, due to constant rotation of staff
- inaccessibility of Child Safety Officers or other support, particularly for urgent or after-hours help
- wanting Child Safety to facilitate more visits and bonding time with their siblings
- lack of support for the transition out of care, including into adulthood
- children being removed from their homes or families without notice, a plan, or available placement
- unstable placements and feeling unsafe in care.

Mr Anastassiou said he was looking forward to hearing from more young people around the state as the Commission continues and encouraged young people to share their views with the Commission on what needs to change in the child safety system.



To facilitate this, the Commission has released an online survey for young people in out-of-home care, or with other experience of the child safety system.

The survey guides young people through a series of optional questions about residential care, foster care, kinship care, self-placing, Child Safety Officers, Child Protection Orders, access to education and schooling, the rights of children in care, making complaints and having a voice, as well as specific questions on cultural connection for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in care.

Young people can visit the [Commission website](#) to complete the survey, or to have their say on the child protection system in other ways including:

- emailing or writing to the Commission
- sending the Commission a message on social media
- recording a voice note or audio message
- taking a video recording
- creating artwork, picture, or photo
- using the full online submission form.

ENDS

Media contact: 0475 281 861