

PROGRESSIVE YOUTH CARE & CONSULTANCY

Echoes of Resilience

White Paper

One Village. One Direction.

Clearing the Air, Healing the Sector, and Preparing Together for Reform

A Sector Readiness and Cultural Healing Document prepared in advance of the Queensland Commission of Inquiry Report, anticipated late May 2026

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About This Document

This white paper is not a response to the Queensland Commission of Inquiry. It is preparation for it.

The Commission's report is anticipated in late May 2026. It will contain findings and recommendations. Some will be welcomed by parts of the sector. Some will be contested. Some will challenge existing practices and relationships in ways that will be uncomfortable. Whatever it contains, its impact will be determined not primarily by the quality of its recommendations but by the cultural conditions of the sector that receives it.

A sector that is fractured — divided by accumulated grievance, distrust, and competing narratives about who is responsible for what — will fragment further under the pressure of a reform report. Each group will defend its position. Recommendations will be selectively embraced or resisted according to whether they serve each group's existing story. Implementation will be slow, partial, and contested. The children at the centre of everything will experience whatever change results after all of that.

This white paper has a different purpose. It is a sector healing and readiness document. It exists to name the toxic culture that can exist within and between the groups that make up Queensland's child protection sector. To offer a framework for addressing that culture before the Commission report arrives. To demonstrate, through the shared stories of every voice the system touches, that we are all impacted by the same decision — and that healing that impact together is both possible and necessary.

It is a document about how the sector relates to itself. And it is, at its core, an argument for one sector rather than a collection of competing interests defending separate ground.

Sections marked [TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM] will be populated from the Echoes of Resilience forum. This outline is the architecture. The Village provides the content.

Who This Document Is For

This white paper is written for everyone in Queensland's child protection sector — not just policy makers or practice leaders. It is written for the Department worker who goes home carrying the weight of a removal they conducted that morning. For the carer who stopped calling because no one answered. For the parent who stopped trusting because trust was never repaid. For the teenager in a fostering household who has never been asked how they are doing. For the sector leader who knows the culture is broken and does not know where to start fixing it.

It is also written for the Commission — not to lobby for particular recommendations, but to say: whatever you recommend, here is the cultural ground it will land on, and here is the work we are doing to prepare that ground.

Part One: The Moment We Are In

The Commission Report Is Coming

Queensland has committed to a process of serious inquiry into its child protection system. The Commission is doing the work it has been asked to do. PYCC acknowledges and respects that process. This document does not seek to pre-empt its findings, advocate for particular outcomes, or position any part of the sector to benefit from its recommendations at the expense of another.

What PYCC has observed — across 28 years of frontline and leadership practice — is that reports of this kind create a predictable pattern in sectors like this one. In the period before publication, anxiety rises. Groups begin to anticipate the findings and prepare their positions. In the period after publication, those positions harden around whatever each group agrees with or disagrees with. Implementation becomes a negotiation between competing interests rather than a collective project. Years pass. Some things improve. Much stays the same.

PYCC is proposing a different pattern. Not instead of the Commission — alongside it. The Echoes of Resilience process is designed to run in parallel with the Commission, preparing the cultural ground so that when the report lands, the sector is in a different relational state than it has been for every previous report.

What Culture Actually Does to Reform

It is tempting to think of culture as something soft — an attitude, a climate, a vibe — as opposed to the hard structural work of policy, legislation, and funding. This framing consistently underestimates how much damage fractured culture does to the implementation of structural reform.

When a carer does not trust the Department enough to call before a placement breaks, no policy change about carer support will fix the outcome for the child in that placement. When a Department worker has been so bruised by public and sector criticism that they stop exercising professional discretion and default to the minimum defensible decision, no policy change about worker autonomy will change that. When a parent has been so stigmatised by their contact with the system that they disengage from family support services before they are needed, no early intervention funding increase will reach them.

Culture operates at the level of the individual relationship, the daily phone call, the night-time decision, the case conference dynamic. It is where reform either lives or dies. It is what this white paper is designed to address.

Why Now — The Window and What It Requires

The window between the current moment and the Commission report is precisely the right time for this work. It is before the positions have hardened around the report's specific findings. It is before the sector has chosen — by default or by design — which recommendation it will champion and which it will resist.

In this window, the sector has a rare opportunity to choose its culture consciously. To name what has not been working in the relationships between its parts. To do the emotional and relational work that clears the accumulated damage of years of operating under pressure without adequate support. And to make a collective commitment — before the report, witnessed by all parts of the Village — that whatever comes next will be received together.

That commitment, made before the report rather than in response to it, changes what the report can do.

The sector that receives a Commission report already unified is fundamentally different from the sector that receives it already divided. Only the first can implement it well. The choice about which sector Queensland will be is made now — not in May 2026.

Part Two: Naming the Toxic Sector Culture

This part of the white paper does something that sector documents almost never do: it names the toxic culture that exists within and between the groups that make up Queensland's child protection sector. It names it without assigning it to any single group. It names it as the accumulated product of years of operating in a high-pressure, under-resourced system where people have been hurt, dismissed, blamed, and unsupported — and where those experiences have never been adequately processed or healed.

Naming this is not comfortable. It is necessary. You cannot heal what you will not name. And a sector that continues to politely avoid naming its own relational dysfunction is a sector that will continue to reproduce that dysfunction regardless of what any Commission report recommends.

What Toxic Sector Culture Looks Like in This Sector

It does not look like obvious malice. It does not look like people deliberately harming each other. It looks like this:

- The carer who has stopped calling the Department worker before a crisis because past calls were not returned and the relationship feels adversarial rather than collaborative.
- The Department worker who has stopped sharing their genuine professional concerns in case notes because they have been criticised for exercising judgment and now write only what is defensible.
- The family of origin advocate who enters every case conference already positioned for conflict because in their experience, partnership language from the Department has consistently meant compliance, not genuine collaboration.
- The residential care manager who gives the child safety officer minimum information because the last time they shared more, it was used in ways that damaged the placement.
- The foster carer who privately holds contempt for families of origin — having spent years absorbing the consequences of decisions made before the child arrived in their home — but would never say so in a professional context.
- The Department worker who privately holds contempt for carers who 'give up' — having never had to manage a crisis child with no support at 2am — but would never say so in a professional context.
- The sector leader who knows all of this exists and has stopped trying to address it because the structural pressures are too great and the political will is absent.

None of these people are bad. All of these positions are understandable. All of them, held in place and left unaddressed, produce worse outcomes for children than any policy failure does. Because they corrode the only thing that actually makes the system work: the quality of the relationships between the people who run it.

Where This Toxicity Comes From

Toxic culture in this sector is not a character flaw. It is a predictable consequence of asking human beings to work with extraordinary complexity, profound suffering, and genuine moral difficulty — in conditions of chronic under-resourcing, inadequate support, and systemic

pressure — and then providing no structured mechanism for processing what that costs them.

The parent carries the grief and shame of removal with no adequate space to heal it. The grief becomes bitterness. The bitterness shapes every future interaction with the system.

The Department worker carries the moral weight of decisions they had to make with inadequate information, under time pressure, with consequences they live with. The weight becomes defensiveness. The defensiveness shapes every future relationship with carers and families.

The carer carries the exhaustion and invisibility of doing extraordinary work without adequate recognition or support. The exhaustion becomes resentment. The resentment shapes every future interaction with a system that seems indifferent to what the work costs them.

These are not character problems. They are relational injuries, left untreated in a sector that has rarely prioritised its own healing.

What It Takes to Address This

Addressing toxic culture requires three things that policy cannot provide: honesty, proximity, and witness. Honesty means naming what is actually happening in relationships — not the sanitised version that appears in meeting minutes and case notes, but the human reality of what people carry about each other. Proximity means putting those people in the same room, rather than addressing them separately through training, policy, or performance management. Witness means creating conditions where one person's truth is heard and acknowledged by another person who holds a different piece of the same story.

This is what the Echoes of Resilience forum does. And it is what this white paper documents — not as a model to be observed from a distance, but as an experience that the sector can participate in and repeat.

Part Three: The Shared Wound — Every Voice the Decision Touches

The foundational insight that makes Echoes of Resilience possible — and that makes this white paper different from other sector reform documents — is this: every person in Queensland's child protection sector is responding to the same original event. A child has had to be separated from their family. That separation is a wound. It is a wound in the child. It is a wound in the family. It is a wound in the Department worker who conducted the removal. It is a wound in the foster family that received a traumatised child with minimal preparation. It is a wound in the teenagers in that home who did not choose what happened. It is a wound in the extended networks of everyone involved.

The sector has spent decades arguing about who is responsible for that wound. This white paper argues instead that the wound is shared — and that the people responsible for the system that produced it are the same people who are best positioned to heal it, if they are willing to stop defending their respective roles in it long enough to recognise each other's humanity.

The Family of Origin

A family separated by government decision. The grief is total. The shame is profound. The loss does not diminish — it compounds with every day that the family remains separated and every system interaction that reinforces the message that they were insufficient. The bitterness that can form from this experience is not irrational. It is the predictable human response to a wound that is never fully acknowledged and an injury that is never adequately supported. When family of origin representatives are in the room at the Echoes of Resilience forum, they are not there to be managed. They are there because the sector cannot understand itself without their voice.

FORUM PROMPT

What did you need that the system never provided? Not just at the point of removal — before it, during it, and after it. What would have changed things?

The Children and Young People

Every policy, every case file, every professional meeting, every reform document exists because of them — and they are almost never present when any of those things are happening. They carry the wound of separation, the wound of placement instability, the wound of being moved and moved again. They carry the behavioural consequences of complex trauma and are frequently responded to as though those consequences are character flaws rather than injury markers. Their voice, when it is included in the forum, is not a token gesture toward youth participation. It is the most important voice in the room.

FORUM PROMPT

What did adults in this system get wrong about you? What did they get right? What do you wish the people who make decisions about children like you actually understood?

The Department of Child Safety Staff

This is the group that the sector most often positions as the system rather than as people within it. Department workers carry the legal and moral weight of the most difficult decisions in the sector. They conduct removals — they see the screaming parent, the terrified child — and then return to their desks and open the next case. They are expected to be professional, which in practice often means being required to not feel, or not to show that they feel, the cost of what they are doing. The vicarious trauma and moral injury that accumulates from this is real, significant, and almost completely unaddressed within the system. Naming Department staff as people who are also wounded by this system is not a political move. It is simply accurate. And it is the move that makes cross-sector healing possible.

FORUM PROMPT

What do you carry from this work that no one has ever asked you about? What do you wish other parts of the sector understood about what your role actually requires?

The Foster and Kinship Carers

People who opened their homes in good faith and found themselves navigating the full force of complex trauma without adequate preparation, support, or recognition. The frustration that carers carry about the system — the unanswered calls, the withheld information, the undervaluing of their expertise — is legitimate and documented. The Echoes of Resilience process holds that frustration without amplifying it. It creates the conditions for carers to be genuinely heard by the people who most need to hear them — and for carers to hear, in return, something true about what it costs a Department worker to do what they do. That mutuality is where the relational repair begins.

FORUM PROMPT

What do you wish you had known when you started this? What do you wish the Department knew about what your family carries? What has this work changed in you — not just for the children, but for yourself?

The Children of Foster Families

This white paper names this group with particular care because they are named almost nowhere else. They are the children who made no decision and were never asked. The ones whose bedrooms were sometimes given away, whose parents' attention was rerouted, whose sense of home was altered without warning. The emotional and developmental cost of what is routinely asked of them is almost completely undocumented. Including their voice in this process is not supplementary to the reform agenda. It is, arguably, the most important gap this white paper is filling.

FORUM PROMPT

What was it like in your home? What did you learn from it? What did it cost you? What do you wish the adults around you had known to ask?

Extended Networks and Sector Workers

Grandparents who grieve in silence. School counsellors who hold children who have moved schools three times in a year. Youth workers who build relationships and then watch

placements end overnight. Advocates who fight bureaucratic walls for families who have no voice. The breadth of this group is itself a statement about how far the impact of a single decision reaches. Including their perspective in the white paper ensures that reform thinking is not artificially constrained by the boundaries of what the system formally recognises.

FORUM PROMPT

What do you see that the formal system does not? What do you carry that you have nowhere to put? What would need to change for the people you support to have a genuinely different experience?

Part Four: What the Forum Created

This section documents the lived experience of the Echoes of Resilience forum itself — what happened in the room, what was heard, what shifted, and what participants committed to. It is the primary evidence base for the cultural healing work this white paper advocates.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This entire section is to be completed post-forum. The sub-headings below provide the structure. The content comes from the room.

4.1 What We Heard — Stories Across the Circle

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Document 10–15 de-identified stories from all voice groups using the three-part narrative structure: what happened, what it felt like, what was needed. Preserve the emotional register. Include stories that show where the system failed and stories that show where it worked. The full picture requires both.

4.2 What We Heard About Each Other — The Clearing Table

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Document the themes from the Clearing Table exercise — the assumptions, resentments, and judgements that sector participants named about other parts of the sector. Present these as patterns, not individual attributions. Give each pattern the honest analysis it deserves: where does it come from? What experience does it reflect? What does it cost the sector that it remains unaddressed?

4.3 The Moment of Mutual Recognition — Cross-Group Echo Reflections

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Document the moments in the cross-group echo exercise where genuine mutual recognition occurred. The specific instances where a Department worker echoed a parent's story and the parent said: yes, you heard me. Where a carer echoed a worker's story of moral injury and the worker visibly changed. These moments are the evidence that cultural healing is possible — not as an aspiration but as a lived, witnessed event.

4.4 What the Room Agreed About Itself

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Document the patterns that the full room identified when asked: what did you hear repeated across different stories? What is the shared wound? What are the shared conditions that produced all of these different experiences? This collective pattern recognition — the moment the room sees itself as a system rather than a collection of individuals — is the pivot point of the forum.

4.5 The Echo Card Commitments — Mutual, Across All Groups

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Document the commitments made on Echo Cards, grouped by theme and by voice group. Note the commitments that were made across multiple groups pointing at the same need — these represent the priority intersections where cultural change is most possible and most necessary. Note the tone of the commitments: are they defensive or generous? Specific or vague? The quality of the commitment language is itself data about the forum's cultural impact.

Part Five: The Patterns — What the Stories Tell Us About Culture

This section moves from individual story to systemic pattern. The purpose is not to produce a comprehensive list of system failures but to identify the specific cultural and relational dynamics that the forum's stories illuminate — the places where the toxic culture that exists between sector groups is most damaging and most amenable to deliberate repair.

These patterns are distinct from the structural reform recommendations that the Commission will produce. They are about how people relate to each other within existing structures — and they are within the sector's power to address without waiting for a Commission report or a policy change.

5.1 The Information Hoarding Pattern

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Analyse the pattern — present across multiple voice groups — of information being withheld, minimised, or strategically managed across sector relationships. The Department worker who shares minimum information with the carer. The carer who does not share concerns with the worker until the situation is critical. The residential service that gives the child safety officer minimum access. Identify this as a trust symptom rather than a compliance failure — and describe what cultural conditions would have to exist for information sharing to become the default rather than the exception.

5.2 The Blame Circulation Pattern

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Analyse the pattern of blame that circulates through the sector — each group holding another group responsible for the outcomes they are experiencing. Carers blaming the Department. The Department blaming families. Families blaming the system. Sector organisations blaming government. Identify how this circulation of blame functions as a way of managing the intolerable weight of working with suffering without adequate support — and how it prevents the sector from doing the collaborative thinking that genuine improvement requires.

5.3 The Performed Partnership Pattern

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Analyse the gap between partnership language and partnership reality across the sector. The case conference that is structured as a decision-making meeting but where the decision has already been made. The carer consultation that happens after the placement matching decision. The family engagement that occurs within a framework that does not actually give families meaningful power. Describe how performed partnership — partnership as language rather than practice — erodes trust faster than acknowledged hierarchy does, because it adds the injury of dishonesty to the injury of powerlessness.

5.4 The Invisible Load Pattern

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Analyse the pattern of unacknowledged emotional and relational load carried by multiple groups within the sector. The moral injury of Department staff. The grief of carers at

placement endings. The unprocessed trauma of families of origin. The silent weight carried by children in fostering households. Identify how the systematic invisibility of this load — its absence from supervision structures, performance frameworks, and sector discourse — is both a cultural failure and a strategic one: a sector that does not acknowledge what it costs its people to do this work will lose those people.

5.5 The Cultural Readiness Gap

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Synthesise the above patterns into a composite picture of the cultural readiness gap the Commission report will encounter if the sector does not do this work. What does a sector in this relational state actually do with a reform report? How do these patterns translate into specific implementation risks? And — the key question — what would a sector without these patterns look like in practice? What would it do differently with the same report?

Part Six: Cultural Repair — What the Sector Can Do Now

This section is the practical heart of the white paper. It does not contain policy recommendations — that is the Commission's work. It contains cultural repair commitments: specific, actionable changes in how the sector's component groups relate to each other, which are within the sector's power to implement immediately, without waiting for policy change, additional funding, or Commission recommendations.

Each commitment is addressed to a specific group, drawn from the forum's Echo Card exchange. Each is mutual — no group is asked to change without being asked to acknowledge what change from another group would make their own change easier. This mutuality is the architecture of genuine cultural repair, as distinct from the one-directional accountability that reform documents typically produce.

What Department Staff Commit To the Sector

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Draw from Echo Card commitments made by Department staff participants. Focus on commitments that address the specific cultural patterns identified in Section 5: commitments to information sharing, to genuine consultation rather than performed partnership, to acknowledging the expertise of carers, to being honest about constraints rather than disappearing behind them.

- Example placeholder: To call back within two hours — not because policy requires it, but because the person on the other end of that call is carrying a child's life.
- Example placeholder: To say 'I don't know' when I don't know, rather than giving an answer that maintains an appearance of control.
- Example placeholder: To bring carers into decisions about children before those decisions are made, not after.

What Carers Commit To the Sector

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Draw from Echo Card commitments made by carer participants. Focus on commitments that address the toxic patterns carers contribute to — including the assumptions carers can carry about Department workers, and the ways carer burnout can translate into adversarial relationship management that makes the worker's job harder and ultimately harms the child.

- Example placeholder: To call before the crisis, not during it — even when experience tells me the call may not be returned.
- Example placeholder: To separate my frustration with the system from my relationship with the worker in front of me.
- Example placeholder: To tell the truth about what is happening in my home before it is too late to change it.

What the Sector Commits to Families of Origin

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM]

Draw from cross-group commitments that specifically address the way families of origin have been excluded from, or managed within, sector relationships. These commitments are perhaps the most politically significant in the document because they require the sector to acknowledge what it has not provided to the most powerless group in the system.

- Example placeholder: To hear the grief of removal as love, not evidence of risk.
- Example placeholder: To tell families what they need to do to be reunified — in plain language, in writing, at the beginning.
- Example placeholder: To stop treating family engagement as a risk management activity and start treating it as a relationship.

What the Sector Commits to the Children of Foster Families

Draw from commitments that specifically address the invisible group whose experience this white paper has named. Even symbolic commitments here — a commitment to ask, to see, to acknowledge — carry enormous weight because this group has been acknowledged so rarely.

- Example placeholder: To include preparation for carers' own children as a non-negotiable element of all carer training.
- Example placeholder: To create an accessible, independent support pathway for young people in fostering households — separate from placement support.
- Example placeholder: To ask them how they are. Regularly. And mean it.

Part Seven: Commission Readiness — How a Healed Sector Receives a Report

The Commission of Inquiry report will be published in late May 2026. This section of the white paper is addressed directly to that moment — and to the question of what difference the Echoes of Resilience process will make to how that report is received.

This is not a question about the content of the recommendations. It is a question about the cultural conditions in which those recommendations will be interpreted, negotiated, and implemented. And those conditions are determined by the work the sector has or has not done on itself before the report arrives.

What a Divided Sector Does With a Reform Report

A sector that has not done this work will fragment around the Commission report along predictable fault lines. Each group will identify the recommendations that validate their existing narrative and advocate loudly for those. Each group will find reasons — often legitimate reasons — to resist the recommendations that challenge them. The implementation process will become a negotiation between competing interests, mediated by government, producing the minimum of each recommendation that each interest group will accept. Progress will be made. It will be less than was possible.

This is not cynicism. This is what happened with previous reports. PYCC names it plainly because the sector deserves honesty about the cost of the default.

What a Unified Sector Does With a Reform Report

A sector that has done this work — that has sat together, named the toxic dynamics, cleared the accumulated resentments, heard each other's stories, and made mutual commitments — will receive the report from a fundamentally different starting position. Disagreements about specific recommendations will still exist. They will be navigated, however, from within a relationship rather than across a divide.

In practice this means: when a recommendation challenges existing carer practice, carers who have sat in a room with Department workers and families and heard each other's stories are less likely to defend that practice as a matter of identity and more likely to ask honestly what it would take to change. When a recommendation challenges Department practice, workers who have heard carers describe the 3am call that went unanswered are less likely to retreat behind compliance language and more likely to advocate for the structural conditions that would let them do it differently.

The report becomes a shared project rather than a contested terrain. That is not a small difference. For the children at the centre of this system, it is everything.

The Commitment This White Paper Makes

This white paper is itself a public commitment from PYCC. A commitment that the Echoes of Resilience process is not a one-off event but an ongoing mechanism — something that can be replicated across Queensland regions, that can be used as part of Commission implementation planning, and that can serve as the cultural repair infrastructure alongside whatever structural reforms are recommended.

PYCC does not position itself as the only organisation capable of this work. PYCC positions itself as the organisation that has designed this model, tested it, documented it, and is prepared to support the sector to use it as widely as the sector is willing.

This white paper is the invitation. What the sector does with it is the reform.

Part Eight: What the Sector Gets Right

This white paper has named hard things. It would be dishonest to close it without naming something equally true: this sector contains extraordinary people doing extraordinary work, often under impossible conditions, sustained by genuine care for children and families that no structural analysis can fully account for.

The forum will produce stories of what went wrong. It will also produce stories of what went right — of the worker who drove three hours to make sure a child's cultural connection was maintained, of the carer who stayed when every expert said to let go, of the family of origin who found their way back to their child because one sector worker refused to give up on the relationship. These stories are as important as the others. They are the proof that the sector the Echoes of Resilience process is building toward is not a fantasy. It already exists in moments, in relationships, in individual decisions made with care rather than compliance.

The work is to make those moments the norm rather than the exception. To build the conditions — cultural, relational, structural — where what currently happens in the best interactions is what happens in all interactions. That is the reform agenda. And it begins with the sector recognising that it already knows how to do this. It just does not yet do it consistently.

FORUM PROMPT

Tell us about a moment when it worked. What was different? What made it possible? What would need to exist for that to be how it always works?

Appendices

Appendix A — The Echoes of Resilience Forum Model

Full documentation of the seven-phase facilitation framework, including the Clearing Table technique, the Cross-Group Echo methodology, and the Echo Card design for all participant groups. Designed for replication across Queensland regions and other jurisdictions.

Appendix B — Voice Group Preparation and Safety Protocols

How each voice group was recruited, prepared, and supported to participate safely. Includes independent advocacy protocols for families of origin and young person participants, and briefing materials for Department staff participants.

Appendix C — The Clearing Table — Thematic Analysis

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM] — Analysis of the assumptions, resentments, and judgements named by participants across all voice groups. Presented as patterns with no individual attribution. Used in Section 5 and referenced in cultural repair commitments.

Appendix D — Echo Card Commitments — Full Record

[TO BE COMPLETED POST-FORUM] — Photographed and transcribed Echo Card commitments from all participant groups, grouped by theme and by voice group. 60-day follow-up findings appended at Day 60.

Appendix E — Literature and Context

Relevant research, policy documents, and sector context. Includes:

- Queensland Commission of Inquiry — terms of reference and preliminary publications.
- Previous Queensland child protection review findings and implementation tracking.
- AIHW data on out-of-home care: placement stability, reunification, care leaver outcomes.
- Research on vicarious trauma and moral injury in child protection workforces.
- CREATE Foundation Report Cards on the experience of children in care.
- Research on children in foster families — a review of the existing literature and its significant gaps.
- Restorative practices in child welfare and justice settings.
- Village Model philosophy and Village-based service design.
- Trauma-informed organisational culture frameworks.

Appendix F — 60-Day Follow-Up Report

[TO BE ADDED 60 DAYS POST-FORUM] — Follow-up findings on Echo Card commitment progress across all participant groups, with analysis of what has and has not shifted in sector relationships since the forum.

Production and Publication Timeline

Milestone	Action	Lead
TBA This is the architecture document being submitted in advance of the forum with a commitment to provide the completed version within 30 days post-forum and again reviewed post Commission report finding to reflect recommendations for potential inclusion May-June 2026	White paper outline distributed to sector partners and Department for endorsement. Forum recruitment begins.	PYCC
TBA	Voice group preparation sessions. Carer storytelling preparation. Independent advocacy confirmed for families of origin.	PYCC + Sector Partners
TBA	Echoes of Resilience forum delivered. Forum data captured — stories, Clearing Table themes, Echo Card commitments.	PYCC Facilitation Team
Within 30 Days Post-Forum	White paper Sections 4–6 completed. Draft circulated to all voice group representatives for review.	PYCC Director
Day 30–45	Review and feedback from all groups. Final draft produced.	PYCC + Representatives
Within 60 Days Post-Forum	60-day Echo Card follow-up. Appendix F added.	PYCC Director
Before May 2026	Final white paper published and distributed — to Department, sector, Commission, and community.	PYCC + Partners
May 2026 +	Commission report published. Sector receives it from a place of shared understanding and prior commitment.	The Village

A Note from the Director

I have been in this sector for 28 years. I have been the carer. I have been the leader. I have been in rooms with Department workers, families, sector executives, advocates, and young people. I have seen what this work does to all of us, the good of it and the cost of it.

What I know, with certainty, after 28 years, is that the quality of outcomes for children is determined more by the quality of relationships in the sector than by any single policy, funding decision, or Commission recommendation. A sector that trusts itself, that has done the work of clearing its own relational damage, hearing its own stories, making its own commitments, implements reform faster, more faithfully, and with less harm to the people it is supposed to serve.

The Commission report is coming. Queensland has an opportunity, right now, to decide what kind of sector will receive it. A sector of differences, defending its corners. Or one Village, moving in one direction.

This white paper, and the forum it documents, is PYCC's contribution to making the second choice possible.

I believe it is possible. I have seen what happens in a room when the truth gets told and someone says: yes, I hear you. I have seen the walls come down. I know the sector is capable of this.

The only question is whether it is willing.

Nicole Hague (PGDip)

Queensland, 2026

PROGRESSIVE YOUTH CARE & CONSULTANCY

Echoes of Resilience

A Sector Healing and Cultural Readiness Forum

One Village. One Direction.

FORMAL EVENT PROPOSAL

Submitted to: Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
Prepared by: Nicole Hague (PGDip) | Director, Progressive Youth Care & Consultancy
(PYCC)
Queensland, Mar 2026

Prepared in anticipation of the Queensland Commission of Inquiry Report, expected late May 2026

Executive Summary

Queensland's child protection sector is approaching a pivotal moment. The Commission of Inquiry currently underway will publish its report in late May 2026. That report will contain findings and recommendations that will shape the system for years to come. What it cannot contain and what no Commission report ever has is the cultural conditions necessary to implement those recommendations well.

Culture is not changed by a report. Culture is changed by people and only when those people have done the interior work of understanding each other, releasing the resentments and assumptions they have carried, and choosing to move forward together rather than defending the ground they have always stood on.

This is what *Echoes of Resilience* is for.

This forum is not a response to the Commission. It is preparation for it. It is an invitation to every person in Queensland's child protection Village the families, the young people, the Department staff, the carers, the children of carers, the sector workers to come together before the report lands, to clear the air of the toxic dynamics that have fractured relationships across the sector, and to decide, collectively, that they will receive whatever comes next as one sector rather than a collection of competing interests.

The forum uses structured storytelling, restorative practices, and the Village Model philosophy to achieve something that policy cannot: genuine human understanding across the divides that have formed between the people this system is built from. When those divides are named, witnessed, and consciously set aside, the sector becomes capable of implementing reform together not just complying with it separately.

Event Title	Echoes of Resilience: One Village. One Direction.
Strategic Purpose	Sector cultural healing and readiness for Commission of Inquiry report implementation
Core Philosophy	The Village Model we are all impacted by the same moment; we heal it together
Timing	Proposed delivery prior to the Commission report, anticipated late May 2026
Participants	Cross-sector: families of origin, young people, carers, Department staff, sector workers
Facilitator	Nicole Hague (PGDip) Director, Progressive Youth Care & Consultancy (PYCC)
Key Outcome	A sector that receives the Commission report with shared understanding, cleared air, and collective commitment — not entrenched division
Classification	Collaborative Trauma-informed Restorative Culturally healing

The Moment We Are In

A Commission Report Is Coming

Queensland's child protection sector has been here before. Reviews, inquiries, and commissions have come and gone. Reports have been published, tabled, and — in varying degrees — implemented. Some have changed things. Some have changed less. What is consistent across all of them is this: the quality of implementation is determined not by the quality of the recommendations but by the state of the relationships between the people who must carry them out.

A sector that receives a reform report from a place of distrust, division, and accumulated grievance will find ways — consciously and unconsciously — to resist it, reinterpret it, or reduce it to the minimum required for compliance. A sector that receives the same report from a place of shared understanding, cleared resentment, and collective purpose will find ways to exceed it.

The Commission of Inquiry report expected in late May 2026 represents a genuine opportunity. PYCC's position is that the most important work the sector can do right now is not to lobby for recommendations, it is to prepare the culture that will receive and implement whatever recommendations emerge.

Reform is not what the report says. Reform is what the sector does with what the report says. And what the sector does depends entirely on who the sector has decided to be to each other.

The Toxic Culture Problem — Named Honestly

There is a toxic culture that can exist within and between the groups that make up Queensland's child protection sector. This is not a comfortable thing to name in a formal proposal document. It is named here because naming it is the first act of dismantling it.

This toxicity does not belong to any single group. It is not the Department's fault, or the carers' fault, or the advocacy sector's fault. It is the accumulated residue of years of operating in a high-pressure, under-resourced system where people have been hurt, dismissed, blamed, and unsupported — and where those experiences have calcified into assumptions, resentments, and competing narratives about who is responsible and who is the problem.

It lives in the carer who no longer trusts the Department worker enough to call before the placement breaks. In the Department worker who has learned not to show emotional investment in front of sector partners because it will be used against them. In the family of origin who has been told so many times that they are the problem that they have stopped trying to be heard. In the sector worker who has stopped bringing families to the table because it is too hard to navigate the power dynamics in the room.

It is not malicious. It is relational scar tissue. And like all scar tissue, it limits movement without anyone intending for it to.

This forum is a structured, safe, and professionally facilitated opportunity to soften that scar tissue, to allow the sector to move more freely than it has been able to, in time to make the most of whatever reform comes next.

Why This Cannot Wait Until After the Report

There will be a temptation to wait. To see what the Commission recommends and then decide how to respond. PYCC's position is that this approach will cost the sector the opportunity this moment represents.

If the sector receives the Commission report divided each group primed to defend its interests, shaped by unresolved grievance, ready to interpret recommendations through the lens of their accumulated pain, the report will become another battleground. Each group will fight for the recommendations that serve their narrative and resist the ones that challenge it. Implementation will be fractured. The children at the centre of all of this will experience whatever change results at the end of that process, diminished by it.

If the sector receives the report having done this work having sat together, named the toxicity, heard each other's stories, cleared the air, and made mutual commitments then every recommendation that emerges becomes a shared project. Disagreements will still exist. Differences in emphasis and priority will still exist. But they will be navigated from a position of genuine relationship rather than entrenched opposition.

The window for this work is now. Before the report. Before the positions harden around its findings. Before the sector chooses, by default, to be divided.

The Village Model: One Shared Wound

The Village Model begins with a question the system rarely asks: who else is in this room? Not just the child and the Department. Not just the carer and the worker. But every human being whose life is shaped by the moment a child comes into care.

PYCC's foundational insight — built from 28 years of frontline and leadership experience — is that every person in the child protection system is responding to the same original wound. A child has had to be separated from their family. That is a failure — not of any individual, but of the conditions in which families live and the systems designed to support them. Every person in the room, regardless of their role, is living in the aftermath of that failure. Their responses differ. Their pain differs. Their power differs. But they share the same origin.

When the sector understands this — when a department worker can hear a carer's story of 3am isolation and recognise it as part of the same wound they carry from the removal they conducted last Tuesday — the adversarial architecture of the sector begins to dissolve. Not because the structural differences disappear, but because the human commonality becomes visible enough to stand on.

That is what this forum is designed to create: enough shared visibility of the common wound that the sector can stand on it together, rather than fighting over who it belongs to.

*We do not need to agree on every policy position to recognise each other's humanity.
We only need to have sat in the same room and told the truth at the same time.*

The Full Circle — Every Voice the System Touches

One of the most important design decisions in this forum is who is in the room. Previous sector dialogues have tended to involve the 'official' parties — carers and Department, or service providers and government. Echoes of Resilience is designed around the full circle of people whose lives are altered when a child comes into care. This is not about adding more voices for the sake of inclusivity. It is because the toxic culture that exists in the sector is partly a product of each group having only ever seen the impact through their own eyes. Healing requires that they see it through each other's eyes too.

The Family of Origin

The family that was separated. Parents, siblings, grandparents. People who carry the wound of removal — the grief, the shame, the disorientation — and who are most frequently absent from sector conversations about reform. Their presence here is not about assigning blame. It is because no one in this room can fully understand what they are working on without hearing from the people at the centre of it.

The Children and Young People

The people the entire system exists to protect, who almost never have a seat at the table where decisions about their lives are made. Represented here through their own voice or through trusted advocates. Their stories are not illustrations of the problem. They are its most important data.

The Department of Child Safety Staff

The workers who carry the legal and moral weight of the system's most difficult decisions. Who witness removal and carry it home. Who are often positioned as the system rather than people within it — shaped by it, constrained by it, and frequently wounded by it. Their presence here as full human beings rather than institutional representatives is itself an act of cultural repair.

The Foster and Kinship Carers

The families who opened their doors and found themselves navigating complex trauma, systemic indifference, and a telephone that often didn't get answered. Whose expertise is routinely undervalued. Whose burnout is a systemic crisis that the system prefers not to examine too closely.

The Children of Foster Families

The invisible group. Children who made no decision, who signed nothing, who one day found their home altered by the arrival of someone in acute crisis — and who have never had a formal space in which to name what that cost them. Their presence here is, for many of them, the first time the sector has acknowledged that they are part of the Village at all.

Extended Networks and Sector Workers

Grandparents. Family friends. School counsellors. Youth workers. Advocates. The wider network of people who hold pieces of these stories in silence, who encounter the impact of these decisions without a framework for understanding them, and who are never asked what they know.

Forum Design — Seven Phases

The forum is structured across seven phases. The first two phases are entirely focused on creating the conditions for what follows — naming the toxicity, establishing the emotional contract, and grounding every participant in their shared humanity before any stories are told. The middle phases hold the storytelling, witnessing, and cross-group echoing. The final phases move from what has been heard to what each person is willing to change — and to the collective readiness that is the forum's ultimate purpose.

Phase	Title	Description	Duration
1	Opening the Circle	Acknowledgement of Country. The facilitator names every voice in the Village not to create categories but to dissolve them. We begin by naming what we share: every person in this room has been shaped by a decision to bring a child into care.	20 mins
2	Naming the Toxicity — Honestly and Without Blame	A brief, facilitated acknowledgement that a toxic culture can exist between sector colleagues — between carers and Department staff, between services and families. This is not an accusation. It is an act of honesty that makes genuine healing possible. You cannot heal what you will not name.	20 mins
3	The Village Speaks — Stories of Shared Impact	Live storytelling across all voice groups using the three-part structured narrative. The goal is not to establish who suffered most. It is to demonstrate that every person in this room has been marked by the same moment — a child coming into care — and that those marks, while different in shape, are equal in weight.	60 mins
4	Cross-Group Witnessing — The Echo	The Role Reversal Echo across groups. A carer echoes a Department worker's story. A worker echoes a parent's. The carer's child echoes the carer. This is where the walls come down — when you have to say out loud: I heard what that cost you. And the other person says: yes. That is right.	40 mins
5	Clearing the Air — What We Have Carried About Each Other	A facilitated exercise where participants are invited to name — safely, anonymously if needed — one assumption, resentment, or judgement they have carried about another part of the sector. These are written, not spoken. They are placed on a Clearing Table. They are acknowledged and then symbolically set aside. This is the moment the room breathes differently.	25 mins
6	Building the One Sector — What We Commit To	Echo Cards completed as mutual commitments — not just Department staff committing, but every voice group committing to one change in how they relate to another part of the Village. The Wall of Change holds these commitments from everyone.	20 mins
7	Closing — One Village, One Direction	The facilitator closes the circle. The Commission report is named: it is coming. What we decide today about how we will receive it — together or divided	15 mins

Phase	Title	Description	Duration
		— matters more than any single recommendation it contains.	

The Clearing Table — A Purpose-Built Healing Element

Phase 5 introduces an element that is unique to this forum's cultural healing purpose: the Clearing Table. This is a structured, facilitated exercise in which participants are invited to name — anonymously, in writing — one assumption, one resentment, or one judgement they have carried about another part of the sector. Not about a specific person. About a group. About 'the Department.' About 'carers.' About 'family advocacy organisations.' About 'residential care workers.'

These written notes are placed on a central table. The facilitator reads a selection aloud — without attribution. The room hears them. They are acknowledged as real, as understandable, and as the product of genuine hurt rather than malice. Then, symbolically and collectively, they are set aside.

This is not a pretence that the hurt did not happen. It is a decision — made consciously, together, in front of witnesses — that the hurt will not be the operating framework going forward. That decision, made in community, carries a different weight than a policy statement or a training module ever could.

Cross-Group Echo — The Architecture of Mutual Recognition

The Role Reversal Echo technique is extended across all voice groups in this forum. The cross-group pairing is not random — it is designed to create maximum disruption of the assumed us-and-them architecture. A Department worker echoes a parent's story. A carer echoes a worker's story of conducting a removal. A family of origin representative echoes a carer's story of 3am isolation. The carer's teenager echoes a Department worker's story of moral injury.

When a carer has to say out loud: 'I heard that you felt like a monster. I heard that you went home and couldn't eat. I heard that no one asked how you were,' — to a Department worker — something shifts in the room that no policy reform can create. And when the worker says: 'yes, you heard me' — the carer understands something they did not understand before. That is not a small thing. That is the foundation of a working relationship between people who have historically operated as adversaries.

Psychological Safety and Cultural Protection

The cultural healing purpose of this forum requires that psychological safety is not just a safeguard but the primary design principle. Every element of the forum has been built around the question: what does this person need to feel safe enough to tell the truth? Because only the truth heals. Managed, careful, politically aware presentations of experience do not heal anything. They maintain the performance that sustains the toxic culture.

The Emotional Contract

Before any story is shared, the facilitator establishes a clear, explicit contract with the room. Participants agree to three things: they will not interrupt, they will not correct or rebut, and they will not offer solutions during the witnessing phases. They also agree to one more thing — and this is the element specific to the cultural healing purpose of this forum:

"You may hear something today that challenges the story you have been telling yourself about another part of this sector. You are not required to abandon your experience. You are required to stay in your seat and let the challenge happen. That is the work."

This contract does more than protect storytellers. It protects the process of cultural change, which is inherently uncomfortable and which human beings are wired to avoid. Naming the discomfort as the work — before it arrives — is what keeps the room together when it does.

Safeguards for Specific Voice Groups

Families of Origin

- Supported by an independent advocate (not Department-affiliated) throughout the event.
- No Department worker who has had direct involvement with any participant's family is present.
- Stories reviewed for content that may affect active legal proceedings — independent legal advice sought where needed.
- Participants may withdraw from any element at any time without explanation or consequence.

Children and Young People

- Participation voluntary, supported by a trusted advocate or support person of their choosing.
- Young people choose their own storytelling format — live, written, audio, or symbolic object.
- A dedicated support person for young participants is present throughout the forum.

Department Staff

- Briefed in advance that this is not a disciplinary or performance context.

- Participation is voluntary.
- Staff are explicitly told that the cultural healing purpose of the forum includes healing the wounds the system has created in them — not just the wounds it has created for others.
- Confidential debrief available with wellbeing support person after the forum.

Children of Foster Families

- Participation is voluntary. Parental consent and young person's own expressed willingness are both required.
- Living Library gallery format available as an alternative to live storytelling.
- A dedicated support person present for this group throughout.

Overarching Safety Conditions

- Neutral, non-government venue — not a department office.
- Warm, circular seating — no tables, no laptops, no institutional furniture arrangement.
- Qualified wellbeing support person present throughout.
- Quiet withdrawal space available always.
- PYCC co-facilitator monitoring the room while the primary facilitator holds the centre.
- No case-specific details that could identify an active child, placement, or legal proceeding.

Outcomes — What This Forum Creates

The outcomes of this forum are not primarily measured in policy recommendations or reform documents. They are measured in the quality of relationship and the state of culture within the sector when the Commission report arrives. These are the outcomes PYCC is committed to achieving.

Cultural Outcomes

- Participants leave with a direct, human understanding of the experience of at least one other part of the Village they did not have when they arrived.
- The assumptions and resentments that have calcified across sector groups are named, witnessed, and consciously set aside — not denied, but no longer operating as the default framework.
- The sector has a shared language for describing itself as a Village — a language that will be available when the Commission report lands and the temptation to fragment resurfaces.

Relational Outcomes

- Specific working relationships between individuals across sector groups — carer and worker, family advocate and Department manager — that begin from a place of mutual recognition rather than assumed opposition.
- Echo Card commitments from every participant group: specific, named, and followed up.
- A documented moment of cross-sector mutual commitment that can be referred back to when the pressure of implementation makes the old divisions attractive again.

Strategic Outcomes

- A sector positioned to receive the Commission report as a shared project rather than a contested terrain.
- A published white paper that contextualises the Commission report within the full circle of human impact — giving the sector a shared frame for interpreting whatever recommendations emerge.
- A replicable forum model that can be used in regional contexts across Queensland to extend the cultural healing work beyond a single event.
- PYCC positioned as the sector's reform partner — not its critic.

Resource Requirements

Venue	Neutral, non-government space. Circular seating, warm lighting, Clearing Table space, breakout for wellbeing support.
Participants	Cross-sector: family of origin (with advocates), young people (with support persons), Department staff, foster/kinship carers, carers' children/family, sector workers.

Timing	Proposed delivery TBA 2026 Pending Commission’s report. PYCC recommends 2026 as optimal.
Facilitation	PYCC Facilitator (primary) PYCC co-facilitator Independent wellbeing support person Voice group preparation workers
Materials	Echo Cards Clearing Table materials Wall of Change Living Library gallery Consent forms
Duration	3.5–4 hours facilitated, plus 45 mins setup and post-forum wellbeing support
Follow-Up	PYCC produces thematic summary and white paper within 30 days. 60-day Echo Card follow-up.

An Invitation

The Commission of Inquiry will produce its report. The recommendations will come. Some will be welcomed. Some will be contested. Some will be implemented fully, some partially, and some not at all — and the outcome for children will be shaped, more than by anything in the report itself, by the state of the relationships between the people responsible for implementing it.

PYCC is asking the Department, and the broader sector, to invest in those relationships now before the report, before the positions harden, before the old divisions reassert themselves in response to new pressure.

We are not asking anyone to agree on everything. We are asking everyone to come to the same room, hear the same stories, and make the same decision: that the children at the centre of this system deserve a sector that has done its own healing work.

That is what this forum offers. Not a policy platform. Not an advocacy position. A room where the Village can finally see itself whole and choose to move forward as one.

Nicole Hague

PGDip

Director, Progressive Youth Care & Consultancy

Queensland, 2026