



QIFVLS

Queensland Indigenous
Family Violence Legal Service

Rethinking Child Safety in QLD

Presented by: Kulumba Kiyingi, Senior Policy Officer



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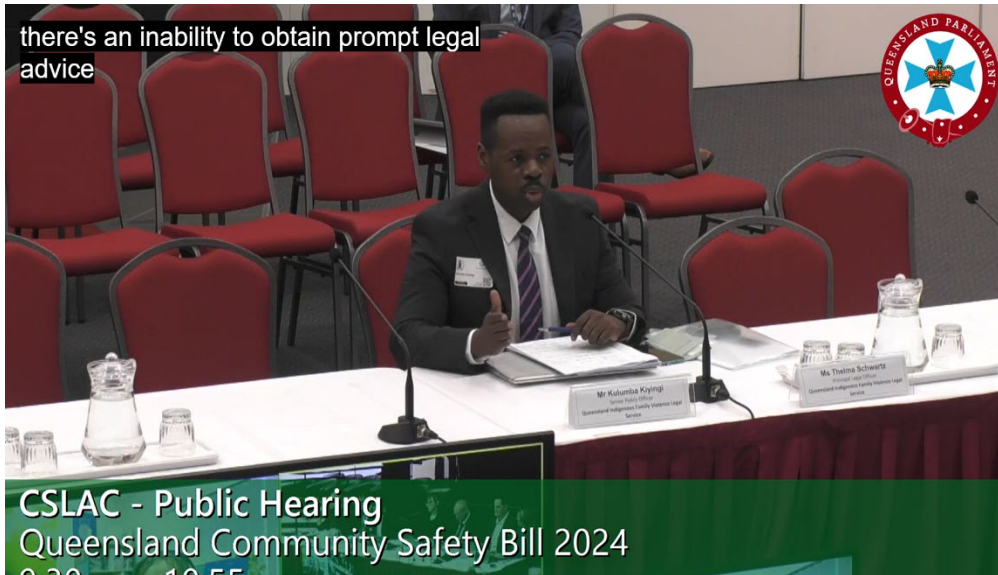
Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are situated for our meeting today, the Djabugay and Yirrgandjyi Peoples, the traditional custodians of the lands on which I stand and we pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of the First Australians.

QIFVLS recognises that First Nations peoples have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65,000 years and continue to do so, as they are spiritually and culturally connected to this country.



Who I am



- Current role: Senior Policy Officer, QIFVLS
- Townsville schooling, Law at UQ
- Career across Legal Aid Queensland, Bravehearts, TMR, Victoria Legal Aid and private practice

QIFVLS - Our Practice

Practice areas:

- Domestic & Family Violence;

- Family law;

- Child Protection;

- Victims Assistance Qld Applications;

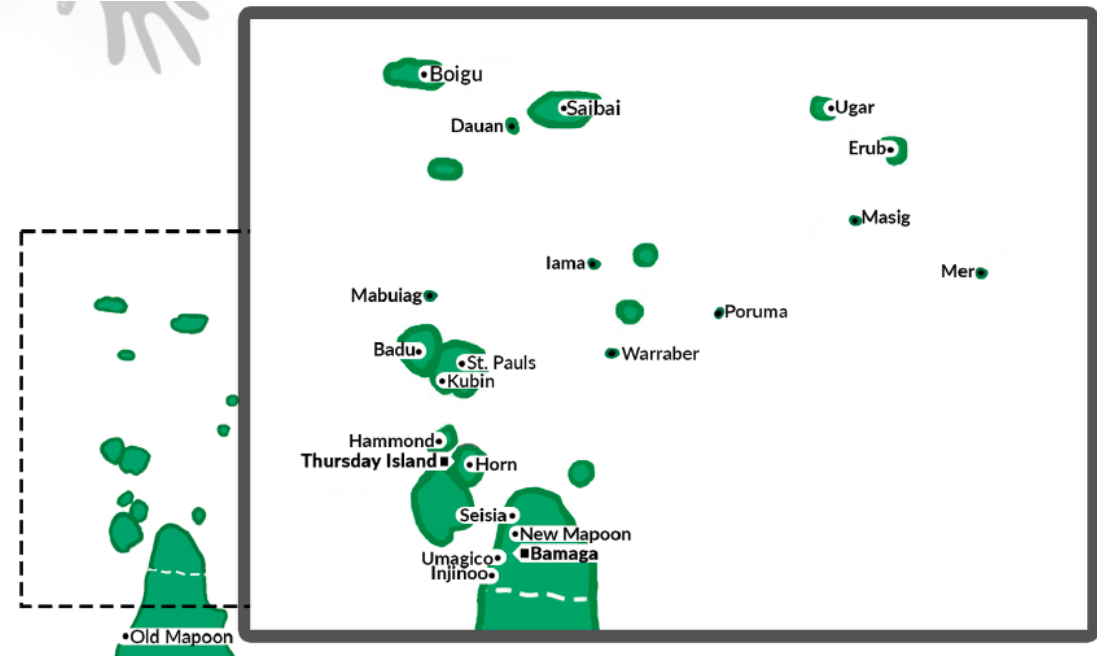
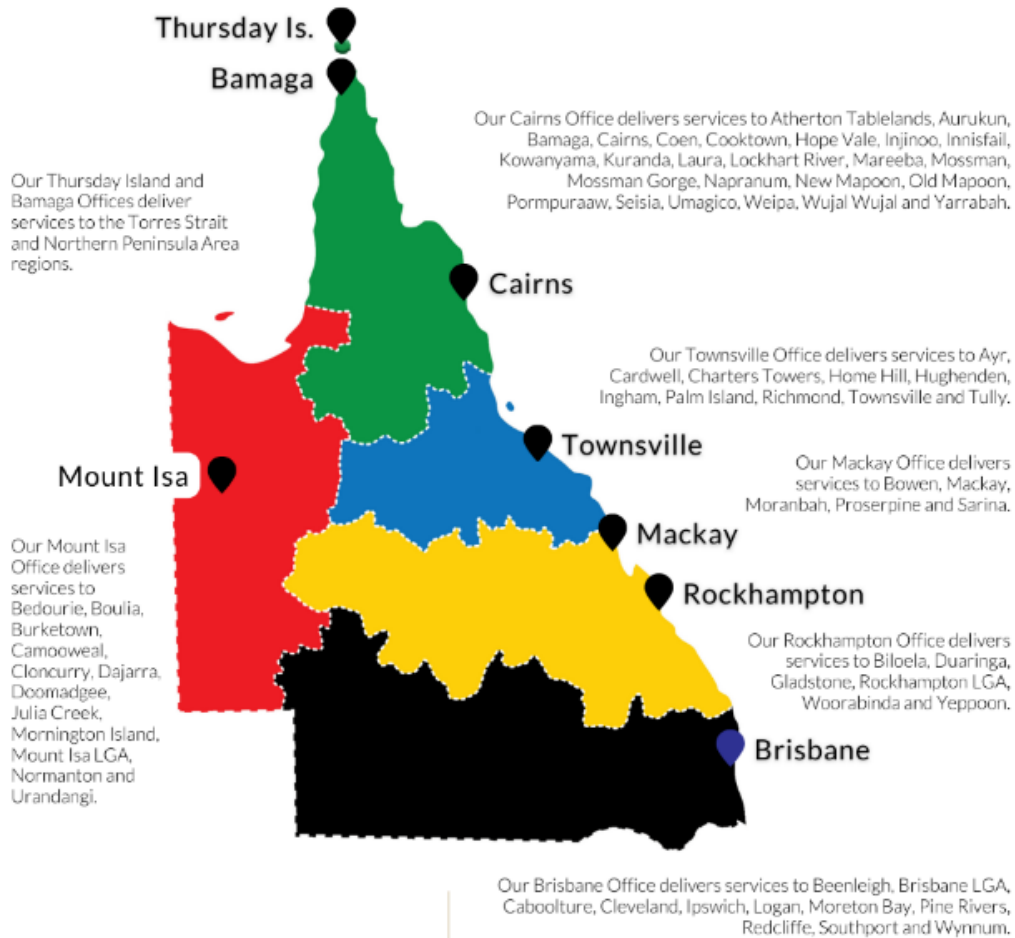
- Support to victims of Sexual violence;

- Minor civil law matters (QCAT – Blue cards etc).

- Support to families accessing cultural recognition orders.

- Full legal case work representation
- Legal Advice
- Policy & Law Reform
- Community Legal Education
- Community Education sessions
- Outreach Engagement
- Training

QIFVLS footprint



Family violence as cornerstone

3 in 5 First Nations women experienced physical or sexual abuse by a male intimate partner (AHRC)

53% of youth in detention impacted by DFV

88% of First Nations children in care exposed to DFV

Family Violence as a connector across systems

National Agreement

CLOSING THE GAP
IN PARTNERSHIP

NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON CLOSING THE GAP

JULY 2020

An Agreement between:

- the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations, and
- all Australian Governments, being:
 - the Commonwealth of Australia
 - New South Wales
 - Victoria
 - Queensland
 - Western Australia
 - South Australia
 - Tasmania
 - the Australian Capital Territory
 - the Northern Territory
 - the Australian Local Government Association

Priority Reform One

Formal partnerships and shared
decision-making

Priority Reform Two

Building the community-
controlled sector

Priority Reform Three

Transforming government
organisations

Priority Reform Four

Shared access to data and
information at a regional level



CTG – Socio economic targets

19 targets under 17 socio-economic outcome areas to be achieved by 2031.

4 are critical in the Justice space:

- Target 10;
- Target 11;
- Target 12;
- Target 13.

CTG targets

TARGET 10

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.

Outcome 10 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

[READ MORE](#)



TARGET 11

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by 30 per cent.

Outcome 11 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

[READ MORE](#)

The Justice Targets



CTG Targets linked to Justice targets

TARGET 12

By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

Outcome 12 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.



[READ MORE](#)

TARGET 13

By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

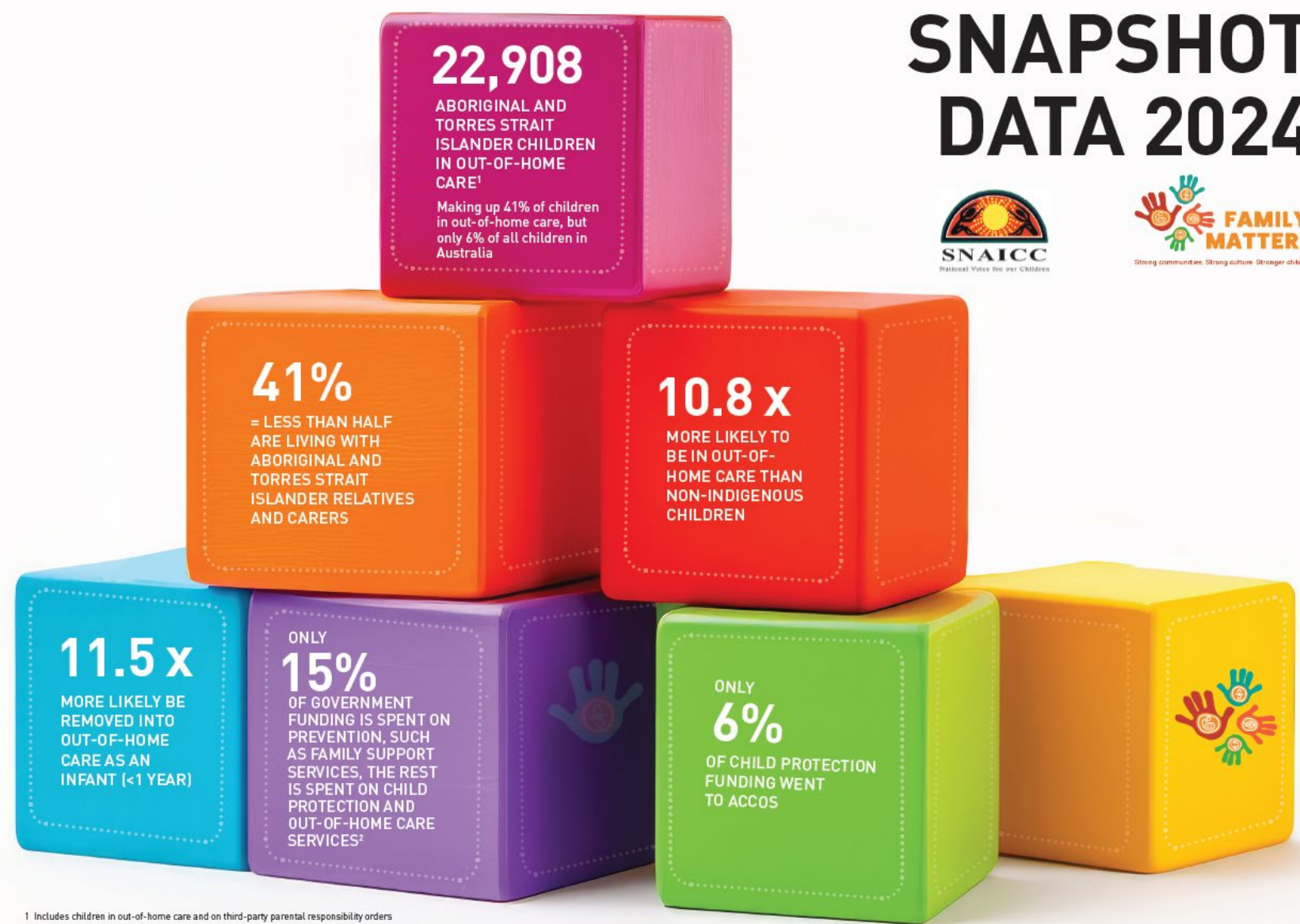
Outcome 13 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.



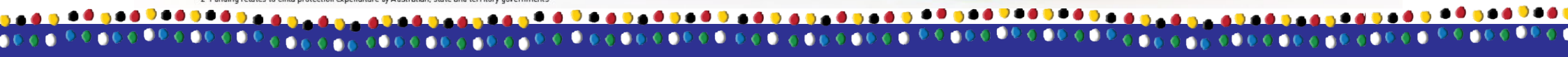
[READ MORE](#)

The system connection between DFV and Child protection

SNAPSHOT DATA 2024



¹ Includes children in out-of-home care and on third-party parental responsibility orders
² Funding relates to child protection expenditure by Australian, state and territory governments



Child Protection – our principal casework

Child protection matters are our largest area of legal practice. They are the steady centre of our caseload. That reality is a stark reflection of the intersectional harms our clients experience.

Our lived experience is supported by data

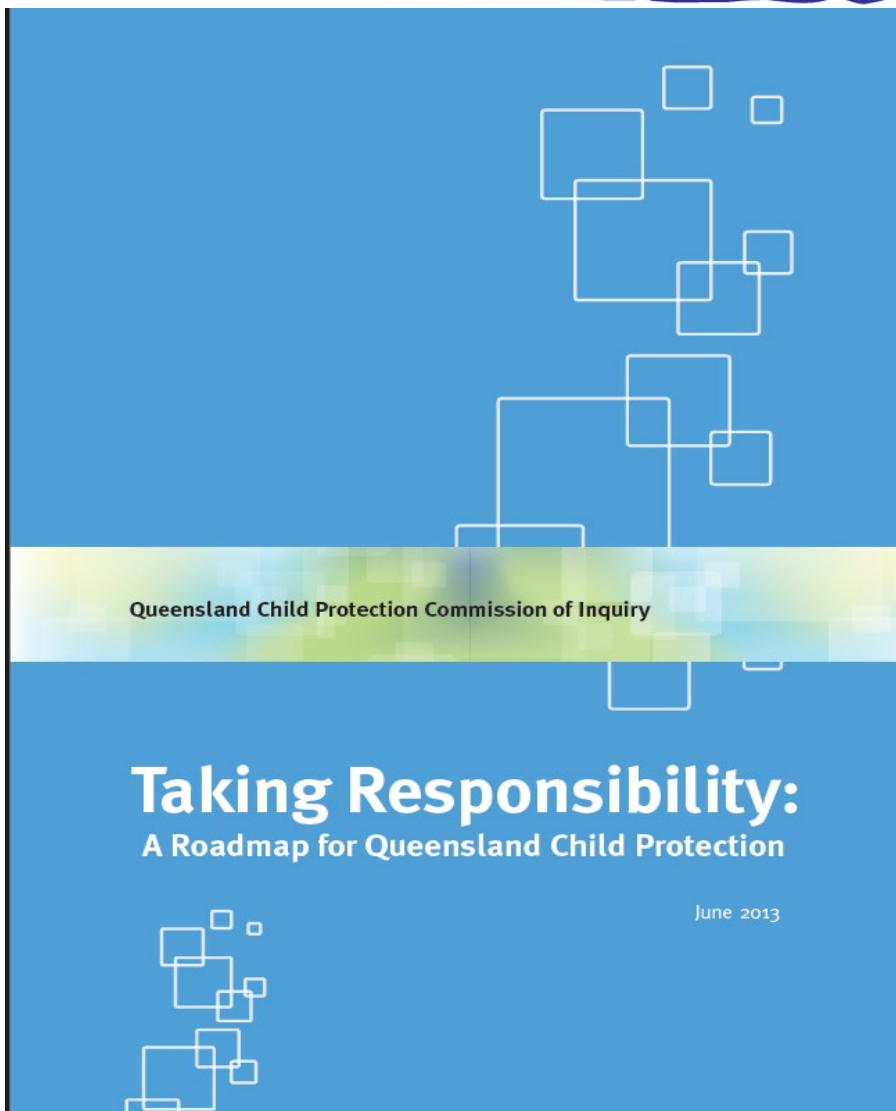
- **2019–2020:** child protection - **31.3%** of new legal cases.
- **2020–2021:** child protection - **31.0%** of new cases (second to domestic and family violence at 33.5%).
- **2021–2022:** child protection - **32.4%** of new cases.
- **2022–2023:** child protection - **37.1%** of new cases.
- **2023–2024:** child protection - **31.5%** of new cases.
- **2024–2025:** child protection - **31.3%** of new cases.

Framing the central point of primacy



- Family violence is a key driver of child protection involvement.
- System often weaponises disclosure.
- Consequences: delays, distant placements, bedside removals, suppressed help-seeking.

Carmody Report – What happened?



Why progress stalled:

Risk aversion

Centralisation

Staff turnover

Under-resourced ACCOs

Litigation-first reflex



Intersectionality

- Overlapping drivers: colonisation, trauma, poverty, disability, discriminatory policies
- Disclosures punished → silence, removal



Frontline Realities

- *Outreach model: legal and non-legal supports*
- *Patterns:*
 - *Delayed case plans*
 - *Stalled kinship assessments*
 - *Sibling separation*
 - *Bedside removals*
 - *Residential placements for very young children*



Four structural fault lines

Fault line one:

Culture and capability.

Fault line two:

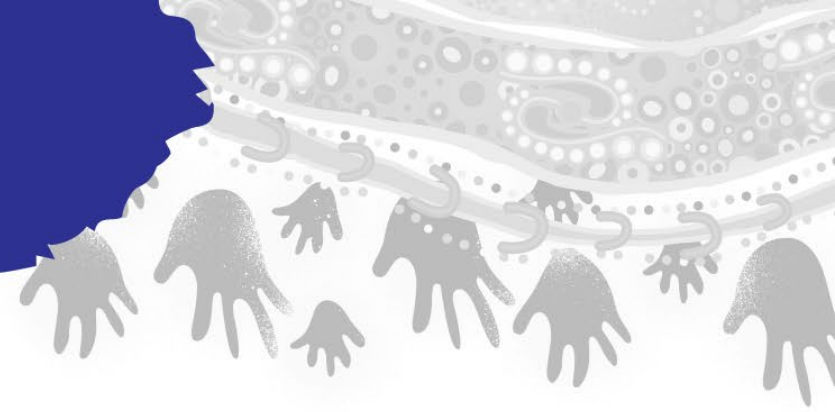
Centralisation and churn.

Fault line three:

Kinship and placement failures.

Fault line four:

A litigation-first architecture.



Recommendations

- ACCO-designed training
- Fund culturally appropriate programs
- Elevate Cultural Practice Advisors
- Trauma-informed practice
- Delegated authority pilots
- Stabilise staffing
- Warm referral notification scheme
- Specialist FNQ child protection court pilot
- CPL model redesign
- Central role for FCFCOA in contested performance

A decorative graphic in the top left corner featuring a stylized brain with neural connections above a row of hands of various sizes and orientations, suggesting a focus on human health and care.

Guardrails

Do no harm principle

Statutory protections: culture, siblings, placement principle

Transparent community dashboards

Independent oversight with power to name progress/failure

ed to live free.



Closing

- “Muscular prevention” – strong, smart, humble
- Success = fewer removals, more kinship placements, cultural safety in practice
- QIFVLS/QATSIC/ACCOs ready to co-design, deliver, evaluate
- Choose prevention. Choose culture. Choose repair. Choose restoration.



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Any Questions?

If you think of any questions or have suggestions, please feel free to contact kkiyingi@qifvls.com.au

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