

# Growing Child Safe Organisations in Queensland – yourtown's advocacy submission



## What is it about?

The Queensland Government is considering options for the implementation of child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme in Queensland in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

## Why is it important?

The Queensland Government's goal is to prevent abuse and reduce the severity of harm children experience in Queensland institutions, by firstly ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children accessing services or facilities in Queensland institutions, recognising that no amount of abuse is acceptable, and all children deserve to grow up safe from harm, and also ensuring children who are at risk of experiencing, or have experienced, abuse in institutional settings are supported early, in a trauma-informed and appropriate way. As acknowledged by the Royal Commission, when abuse does occur, improper responses from institutions can exacerbate the harm experienced by children.

## Some of **yourtown's** key messages:

### 1. Proposed options for reform do not go far enough

Action also needs to be taken to address abuse of children in family and community contexts. While this was outside the terms of reference of the Royal Commission, this form of abuse was widely acknowledged throughout the inquiry. The proposed reforms provide opportunity for the Queensland Government to establish a system that improves the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people regardless of their setting.

### 2. Developing a consistent and comparable approach

**yourtown** strongly supports the creation of a legislative scheme in Queensland that establishes an integrated child safe organisational system to implement the child safe standards (CSS), establishes an oversight body to receive and investigate complaints under a reportable conduct scheme (RCS) aligned with the Royal Commission recommendations, and aligns with the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse themes to protect children and young people.

### 3. Implementing legislative mechanisms

**yourtown** supports the creation of a legislative scheme that provides for an integrated child safe organisational system to implement the child safe standards, aligning with the recommendation of the Royal Commission. Compelling organisations to share information with the Blue Card Check services in Queensland and the equivalent in other states and territories, enable information sharing between organisations and jurisdictions of pending investigations into reportable conduct, and ensure privacy principles that enable information-sharing. Further, the establishment a co-regulatory model that implements one oversight body in Queensland to support organisations and administer the RCS reduces the risk of information not being shared when there are multiple oversight entities across departments.

### 4. Using human centred and co-design

**yourtown** recommends working with survivors of child sexual abuse, and adopting the learnings from the Royal Commission in its design of the new RCS oversight body to ensure it supports them on their journey, conducting targeted consultation with more stakeholder groups who may be affected by the system.

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