



Media Release

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Report reinforces work to be done for Indigenous children

A report out today will reinforce the level of disadvantage faced by Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's Annual *Snapshot* shows Indigenous children and young people have higher rates of abuse, neglect and Indigenous infant mortality is twice the Queensland average.

Commissioner Elizabeth Fraser says the report's data on the health and wellbeing of under 18s emphasises the importance of engaging with families and service providers to better protect and support this vulnerable group of children and young people.

Ms Fraser said trend data to 2005 shows around 11 Indigenous infants died per 1,000 live births, compared with a Queensland rate of around 5 per 1,000 - despite significant under-reporting of Indigenous mortality.

"I'm concerned about these figures, and also about data showing that the safety, health, education and social outcomes remain poor for too many of our Indigenous children and young people," the Commissioner said.

Snapshot 2007 shows:

- the Indigenous youth detention rate was almost nine times the Queensland rate
- Indigenous children were twice as likely to be abused or neglected and nearly four times more likely to be in alternative care
- teen pregnancy was three times higher than the Queensland average, and
- primary students were performing, on average, two years below the literacy and numeracy levels of non-Indigenous students.

"If we're going to see improvements to these figures in future, we need to focus prevention and intervention strategies on addressing identified risk factors early," Ms Fraser said.

"These strategies need to strengthen support to young parents and parents who were victims of abuse as children, substance abusers and those coping with domestic violence, marital conflict, social isolation, low incomes and financial stress.

"The key message is the need for effective prevention and early intervention programs to protect children from harm," the Commissioner said.

"In particular, better access to quality early childhood services to effectively support vulnerable children develop the skills they need for life, learning and to realise their full potential."

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