



commission for
children and young people
and child guardian

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Media Release

Commission welcomes drop in child sexual abuse in care

The Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has welcomed a sizeable drop in substantiated cases of sexual abuse or risk of sexual abuse to children in out-of-home care in Queensland in 2005-06.

Elizabeth Fraser has applauded the drop from 100 cases in 2004-05 to 12 in 2005-06.

Ms Fraser said the figures out today in the Department of Child Safety's *Child Protection Queensland 2005-06 Performance Report* are heartening.

"I find the drop in the number of cases of substantiated sexual harm especially encouraging," the Commissioner said.

As the watchdog of the system, the Commission has worked with the department since 2004 to improve systems, policies and procedures, particularly around preventing sexual abuse in out-of-home care, including:

- a review of 26 cases of sexual abuse of children and young people in out-of-home care between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004 resulting in 83 recommendations, including improved training of Child Safety Officers to ensure they record sexualised behaviours
- reporting by Community Visitors of allegations about sexual harm in care
- a recommendation that the department consider an accreditation scheme for those who counsel children who are victims of sexual abuse
- the introduction of Working with Children Checks (and issuing blue cards) for foster and kinship carers, and
- referring complaints about sexual abuse to the Department of Child Safety, Police, and where appropriate, the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Ms Fraser said the Commission will continue working with the department to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in care.

For more information please contact Samantha Keegan on 3247 5346