



Media Release

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Young people in residential care have their say

The Queensland Commission for Children and Young People has released the findings of its second survey of young people in residential care facilities.

Commissioner Elizabeth Fraser said: "The views of young people as expressed in this report provide a unique and essential perspective on the effectiveness of Queensland's residential care system."

"The survey provides an opportunity for the community and government to hear directly from young people. Supporting these young vulnerable people to have their say ensures greater systems' transparency and assists us all to learn about how we can better target and improve our support services," Ms Fraser said.

"I believe it is important to listen carefully to what young people have to tell us about their experiences.

"We need to learn from past history when children were seen but not heard. Such secrecy allowed abuse and poor service to go undetected for too long, causing untold damage to far too many people reliant on protection."

The Commission's survey of young people in residential services conducted last year includes the views of those in youth shelters and mental health facilities across the state, with 221 young people sharing their views.

The young people who participated told the Commission both what they find works for them and what they would like to see improved.

On the positive side, nine out of 10 young people who took part in the survey reported feeling safe and well treated in their residential care environments. Four out of five said that staff at the facilities listen to them and understand them and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried about something.

The Commissioner said this is very reassuring, coming six years after the Crime and Misconduct Commission's investigation into the abuse of children in foster care and 10 years after the Forde Inquiry into the abuse of children in Queensland institutions.

The areas that young people are least happy with are having sufficient contact with their families and being able to do the same sort of things that young people outside the residential care system can do.

For those young people on care and protection orders living in residential facilities, the main request was to have greater contact with their caseworker and being more involved or informed in decisions being made about their care.

The Commission conducts biennial surveys with young people in foster care, residential care facilities and detention to assist in both monitoring their current levels of safety and wellbeing, and reviewing service response improvements being made on the issues young people raise.

The *Views of Young People in Residential Care* report is available on the Commission's website at www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au under Publications.

For more information, please call the Commission on 3211 6977