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## Update: implementing CMC recommendations

The Commission has effectively implemented the key programs associated with the recommendations arising from the Crime and Misconduct Commission's inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care, and the blueprint for reform of Queensland's child protection system.

Recommendations to expand current services and create new functions for the Commission have been finalised within the timeframes set out by the blueprint.

Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People Barry Salmon said he takes the enhanced role of monitoring the provision of services extremely seriously.

"The Commission now has more power to closely scrutinise decisions made about children in Queensland, and we will use these checks to provide the transparency and accountability the system was lacking before the CMC inquiry," he said.

CCYPCG's new Child Guardian role has been introduced and includes a range of systemic monitoring and auditing functions.

In addition, the Commission is finalising recruitment of the Child Death Case Review Committee members. Committee members are expected to be announced in the next edition of CommIssues.

The Commission's complaints handling capacity has also expanded since the Blueprint was handed down, and now the Commissioner can take complaints from or about any child known to the Department of Child Safety.

The Community Visitor Program has also expanded, from 31 to 171 part-time staff, who are preparing to begin visits to children in foster care.

## 15th ISPCAN Congress

The Commission played a key role in the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's 15th Congress held in Brisbane in late September.

As well as having representatives on the organising Committee, the Commission played a key role in co-chairing and organising the Youth Participation Program for the congress.

Around 30 children and young people aged from 11 to 17 came from overseas and throughout Australia to take part in the conference.

The group, many of whom have had contact with the child protection networks in various states around the country, took the opportunity to give adult delegates their view of the system.

The four day congress attracted 1,100 delegates from 71 countries. More than 650 concurrent sessions were held during the conference, including five presentations by Commission staff, ranging from a one hour Masterclass to 12 minute concurrent presentations.

The conference was a great success, and plans are already underway for the 2006 Congress, which will take place in the United Kingdom.

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Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Queensland Government



Young people take part in the ISPCAN conference in Brisbane



## Commissioner's column

It's been another very busy quarter for the Commission, both on the domestic and international front.

Brisbane was privileged to play host to the International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect last month.

The Congress saw delegates from all over the world join together to share information on child protection.

It was not only an opportunity for the Commission to learn more about international trends and developments, but it was also a chance for us to showcase our work with practitioners from all over the world.

Congratulations to the Commission staff who presented at the conference. Our participation highlights the fact that we are contributing to the worldwide agenda to eradicate child abuse, and that our work is receiving international recognition.

Closer to home, the Commission has worked hard over the last quarter to ensure our new functions are up and running in accordance with the timelines outlined in the Blueprint.

I'd like to highlight in particular the commencement of community visits to children in foster care. We look forward to enhancing our relationships with both children and their carers.

I wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution of foster carers, and look forward to combining with them in ensuring children in care all over Queensland continue to be very well looked after.

The Commission is serious about monitoring service provision and detecting any problems in Queensland's child protection system. I am confident that our new stronger powers will ensure improved service provision, particularly for our most vulnerable children.

Finally, with all the changes occurring within the Commission, we felt it was timely to revamp our newsletter as well. I hope you enjoy reading the first edition of CommIssues.

BARRY SALMON

**A/Commissioner for Children and Young People  
and Child Guardian**

## Commission welcomes new Community Visitors

One-hundred and seventy-one Community Visitors converged on Brisbane recently for the largest CV training ever held by the Commission.

Held over four days, the training gave new and existing CVs the opportunity to listen to speakers from the Commission, Department of Child Safety, Foster Care Queensland and the Create Foundation.

A/Commissioner Barry Salmon said the training was crucial to prepare CVs for the expansion of visits to children in foster care.

"Over the coming weeks, our Community Visitors will be contacting and visiting 3,800 children in foster care in over 1,500 homes around the state," Mr Salmon said.

"For the first time, we will be able to ensure Queensland children in foster care receive the services and entitlements they have a right to.

"The Commission believes that foster carers do one of the most important jobs in the community, and we see this new phase as a partnership between the Commission and foster carers.

"Our Community Visitors are all looking forward to meeting them and the children in their care over the coming months."

To meet the challenge of the expanded Community Visitor Program, the Commission joined forces with Microsoft to develop an innovative new information management system - CVIS.

Designed specifically for the program, the prototype will ensure reports about vulnerable children are timely, accurate and secure.

Mr Salmon said the new system will be pivotal in making the program operate smoothly and efficiently, by streamlining the way in which reports on children are sent and stored.

"We will be well placed to respond faster to children's issues, and have greater capacity to share information with other key stakeholders, such as the Department of Child Safety and non-government service providers," he said.

"We need to thank Microsoft, the application development team from Data#3 and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet for getting the system up and running in a very short time.

"This technology places the Commission at the cutting edge of information management in the child protection system."

## Commissions and Ombudsman target multicultural groups

Four Queensland Commissions and the Ombudsman's office have joined forces to make their complaints services more accessible to Queensland's multicultural communities.

The group recently launched the first stage of their joint strategy – a brochure, translated into five languages, aimed at people from non-English speaking backgrounds what kind of complaints each organisation deals with.

The group includes the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, The Health Rights Commission, the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Queensland Ombudsman.

A/Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Barry Salmon, encouraged multicultural communities to make use of the information, and distribute it among their communities.

“We find that people from multicultural backgrounds often aren't unaware of the complaints mechanisms available to them, and many come from cultures where complaining about the government is forbidden,” Mr Salmon said.

“This brochure provides important information on each of the Commissions, and reinforces the fact that it's OK to complain.”

The brochure is available in English, Vietnamese, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Samoan. Copies are available from the Commission.



(back row l-r) Barry Salmon, A/Commissioner for Children and Young People; Susan Booth, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner; David Bevan, Queensland Ombudsman; Brendan Butler, Chairperson Crime and Misconduct Commission; David Kerslake, Health Rights Commissioner. (front row l-r) Agnes Whiten, Senior Vice-Chairperson ECCQ, and Serge Voloschenko, ECCQ Immediate Past Chairman.

## New website on-line!

If you've been to the Commission's website recently, you will have noticed a few changes.

Coinciding with the introduction of its new name, the Commission also recently launched its new website.



The site now contains a corporate area and a 'Kids Zone', giving younger visitors the opportunity to read about the Commission's services and to play fun, educational games.

Principal Communications Advisor Sam Keegan said the Commission had outgrown the old website.

“Since the original site was created, a lot has changed at the Commission, and we felt it was time to revamp the site to make it easier to navigate,” Ms Keegan said.

“We also wanted to make it more friendly for younger visitors – the site now features animation, child-friendly information and some great games in the 'Kids Zone' that a few adults may enjoy as well!”

The new website is at [www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au](http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au)

### Calling all creative kids!

Do you have a piece of artwork you'd like to share? Perhaps you enjoy writing poetry or short stories? If so, the Commission's new website will soon have an area dedicated to showcasing the work of creative Queenslanders under 18 - and we're looking for contributions!

A new bulletin board will soon go on-line to allow you to share your thoughts and ask questions about the Commission.

If you would like to contribute, email [editorial@ccypcg.qld.gov.au](mailto:editorial@ccypcg.qld.gov.au) and leave your name, phone number, and details of your contribution.

This newsletter is also available electronically, so if you would like to receive CommIssues by email, please let us know by emailing [editorial@ccypcg.qld.gov.au](mailto:editorial@ccypcg.qld.gov.au)



## Commission gets out and about

The Commission has had a busy quarter, taking part in a range of events around Brisbane.

The highlight at the Commission's stand at the NAIDOC family fun day in Musgrave Park was face painting, with queues of children – and some adults – keeping the CCYPCG face painter busy on the day.

This gave parents and children the opportunity to ask more about the Commission and take away the free information provided.

The Commission's stand at the Ekka was also very busy, with hundreds of adults, children and young people passing through the Frank Nicklin Pavilion during the ten days. Most stopped at the Commission's stand to try the shooting stars challenge, play Commission computer games and have their photo taken with the giant mural.

In addition, the Commission took part in the Ipswich and West Moreton Health Promoting Schools and Child Care Expo at Bremer State High School. The Expo provided information to students, staff and families on healthy eating, physical activity, behaviour management and alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.



*Kiara was one of many visitors who had their face painted at the Commission's stand at the NAIDOC Family Fun Day in Musgrave Park*

## Staff win child protection awards

Two Commission staff members were honoured for their work at the recent Child Protection Week awards.

A/Commissioner Barry Salmon and A/Manager of Complaints Paula Cumner were part of the Foster Carer Audit team, which won the Research Initiative category.

The audit was the most comprehensive of its kind ever done in Australia, carried out in response to allegations of the abuse of children in foster care.

The team was commended for respecting foster carers and departmental staff while conducting the audit, and for acknowledging the complexity of child protection issues, such as lack of resources and the hostile environment facing child protection workers.

The Commission congratulates Barry and Paula for their hard work.

## CCYPCG review of child labour continues

After two months of consultation, the child labour review is moving into its next phase.

Ten forums on the issue were held with organisations including the Queensland Farmers Federation, representatives of the film and television industries and government departments.

The Commission's call for submissions closed in early October, with a final report to be delivered in February.

Project manager Jason Kidd said the final report would provide recommendations based on the consultations and submissions.

"We've received a wealth of information from all over Queensland, and we look forward to examining the advice we have received to provide recommendations to Cabinet," Jason said.

## calendar of events

3 December - International Day of People with a DisAbility. For further information go to [www.nican.com.au](http://www.nican.com.au)

Australian Childhood Foundation's 'Raising Happy and Confident Kids' parenting seminars in Toowoomba, Indooroopilly, Logan City and the Gold Coast. To register go to [www.kidscount.com.au](http://www.kidscount.com.au) or ring toll free on 1800 176 453