



Commission for
Children & Young People



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Queensland Government

Children and young people in Queensland: a snapshot 2003

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Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CCQ	Childrens Court of Queensland
DoF	Department of Families
DSQ	Disability Services Queensland
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
KHL	Kids Help Line
LGA	Local Government Area
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
QCC	Queensland Crime Commission
QH	Queensland Health
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
SIDS	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
na	not available
–	nil or rounded to zero
..	not applicable

Foreword

The Commission for Children and Young People is an independent statutory authority with both ombudsman and advocacy functions. The Commission's vision is to promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people. To work towards improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people, we need to report on their current status and look for changes in that status. We can better identify vulnerable groups in the community and assess the impact of policies and practices on their lives by understanding the demographic mix of children and young people in the state and monitoring aspects of their wellbeing.

Most children and young people in Queensland live happy, healthy lives, attend school, participate in sport or other activities and do not come into contact with the justice system as victims or offenders. However, this is not the case for some children and young people. Some have disabilities or long term health conditions that affect their ability to participate in education and other activities. Some struggle at school and are not well supported at home. Some live in families with low incomes, or with parents who have never had steady employment. Some live in families where alcohol, drugs or violence can seriously affect their health and wellbeing and may result in long term harm; some find they are not able to live with their family; some become homeless; and some need to be placed away from their families to protect them from harm.

It is difficult, sometimes even impossible, to show the many positive aspects of children's lives, whereas data are available on the more negative aspects of health and wellbeing. Information is available on those who come into contact with government agencies such as health, child protection, police and justice. It is the children and young people who are not doing so well that concern us most. Examining the information available clarifies risk factors for children and helps to identify where support, intervention and education are still needed for vulnerable children and young people.

Positive feedback on the release of the first Snapshot report, *Children and young people in Queensland: a snap shot 2002*, confirmed that there is a need for regular reporting focused on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. This report summarises the key statistics available and continues and expands on the findings of the first Snapshot report. It analyses trends and highlights groups most in need of special attention.

In future, the Commission plans to produce smaller issues papers which summarise statistics on particular topics, as part of its ongoing role of monitoring and reporting on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. This will allow us to flag issues of concern as data become available and to release information in a more timely way than can be achieved by an annual Snapshot report.

The recently released Crime and Misconduct Commission report *Protecting children: an inquiry into the abuse of children in foster care* recommended an increased role for the Commission for Children and Young People in the monitoring of children in the care of the state and of child deaths. The implementation of these recommendations will give us more information, which will be included in future reports.

We trust that this report is of interest and of use to government and non-government agencies, and to all those interested in the wellbeing of children and young people in Queensland.



Robin Sullivan
Commissioner for Children and Young People