

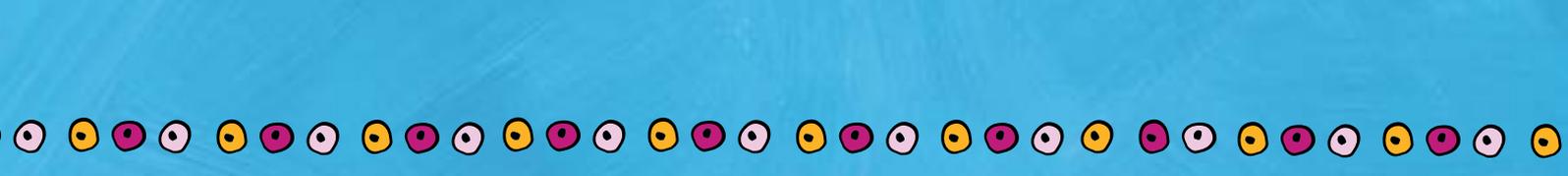
Changing Tracks Report card

JANUARY – JUNE 2019



Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2019 and Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2020-2022 focus on the changes needed to deliver the systems and policy settings required to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system by 2037, and to close the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.





Message from the Queensland First Children and Families Board

With the launch of *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* in 2017, the Queensland Government, in partnership with Family Matters Queensland, committed to set the foundations for change across the child protection system in Queensland to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up safe, loved and cared for in family, community and culture.

The Queensland First Children and Families Board (QFCFB), established in 2018, guides and oversees the implementation of the Our Way strategy. This report card is the Board's second report and builds on the progress reported in the *Changing Tracks Progress Report May 2017–December 2018*.

During 1 January–30 June 2019*, the focus has been on delivering the 12 outstanding actions under the Changing Tracks 2017–19 and developing the Changing Tracks action plan 2020–22.

A key priority going forward will be the adoption of strategies to address systemic, social and policy barriers that have contributed to the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

Mr Mick Gooda
Co-chair

Professor Boni Robertson
Co-chair

January – June 2019 Highlights

The Queensland Government launched *Queensland's Framework for Action: reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence*. The Framework for Action sets out a new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the spirit of reconciliation to address the causes, prevalence and impacts of domestic and family violence.

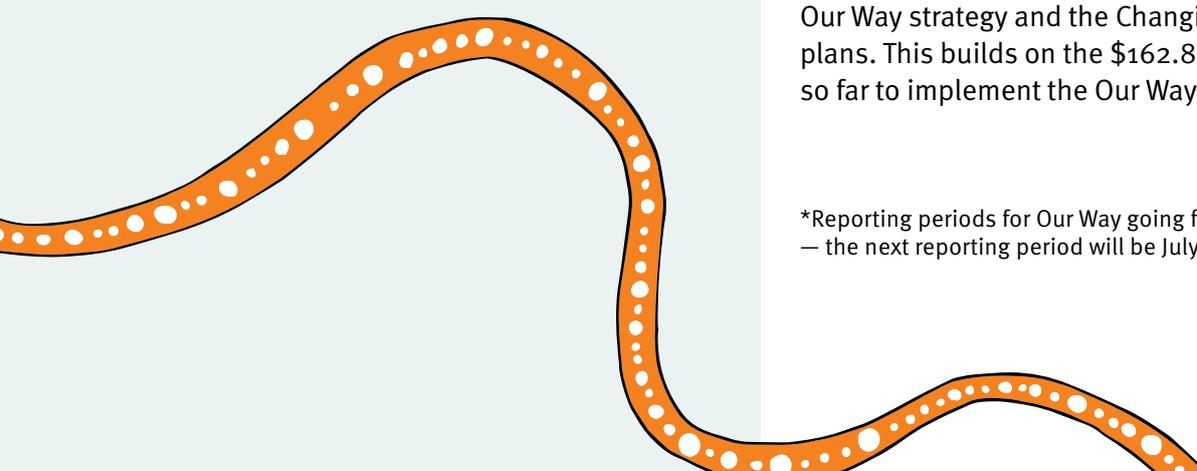
The Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, was contracted to co-design with community a healing strategy to address the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

Winangali Pty Ltd, a Queensland based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation, was contracted to co-design an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people Wellbeing Outcomes Framework.

The QFCFB convened twice during this period. In March 2019 the QFCFB members were joined by Senior Executives from partner Queensland Government agencies who presented on a range of Changing Tracks action plan 2017–19 actions and key initiatives supporting Our Way. In June 2019 the QFCFB hosted a facilitated forum with partners from government agencies, non-government organisations, peak organisations and community representatives from the child protection and family support sector. This forum informed the co-design of the second Changing Tracks action plan 2020–22.

In the 2019–20 Budget a further \$14.6 million over four years, plus other investments, were allocated to implement new and enhanced initiatives under the Our Way strategy and the Changing Tracks action plans. This builds on the \$162.8 million committed so far to implement the Our Way strategy.

*Reporting periods for Our Way going forward will be annual – the next reporting period will be July 2019 – June 2020.



Progress snapshot

Child protection system reforms are helping to decrease the growth in numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care

For the sixth consecutive quarter, the proportion of children in care in Queensland who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has remained relatively steady at 42%, a reversal from the trend of growing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system

93.8% of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were **enrolled in a kindergarten in 2018** — up from **89.6%** in 2016

Department of Education — Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: An action plan for Queensland

At 30 June 2019, the **immunisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 5-year-old children** was **97.2%** compared to **94.5%** of **non-Indigenous children**.

Early evidence shows a high level of success by community controlled Family Wellbeing Services in de-escalating risks in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

The 33 Family Wellbeing Services received a total of 3,965 referrals for the 12 month period to 30 June 2019

The Queensland Government has committed \$6.38 million over 2 years for Youth and Family Workers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services to provide family focused support to adolescents in the youth justice system

The Queensland Government has also committed an additional \$2.1 million over 3.5 years from January 2020 to support specialist domestic violence workers in Family Wellbeing Services

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women 2019–20 Budget initiatives — Our Way strategy and Changing Tracks

Families are best placed to identify their own strengths and to develop strategies to resolve child protection concerns with support of kin networks ensuring children remain connected to family, community and culture

The Family Participation Program (FPP) was introduced in November 2018. As at the end of March 2019, 207 families had been supported by the FPP services

An additional \$2.5 million over 2.5 years will be allocated from 1 January 2020 to enhance the existing FPP services to enable increased access to family-led decision making at significant decision points, such as where a child will live, how to get them home and transition to adulthood

Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women 2019–20 Budget initiatives — Our Way strategy and Changing Tracks

Why more needs to be done

National data

Analysis of 2016 Census data (national data) demonstrates that:

- nearly one in three (31.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living below the poverty line (Markham & Biddle, 2018)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander householders are almost twice as likely to experience rental stress

In 2017–18, emotional abuse, which includes exposure to family violence, was the most common type of substantiated harm for all children (AIHW, 2019d)



The most recently available data from 2016–17 indicates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were over three times more likely than the non-Indigenous population to use state and territory governments' specialised public mental health services (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision [SCRGSP], 2019)

www.familymatters.org.au/the-family-matters-report-2019

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care living with kin increased from 36.5 % at 30 June 2013 to 42% at 30 June 2019, while the number living in foster care or residential care decreased from 63.5 per cent at 30 June 2013 to 58% at 30 June 2019

Queensland is trending against a national prediction that the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care will more than double in size in the next 10 years by 2028

www.familymatters.org.au/the-family-matters-report-2019

The rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children substantiated and in need of protection decreased from

- 17.7 per 1,000 in 2012-13 to
- 17.3 per 1,000 in 2018-19

Links to other key supporting documents and more information

Further information on the Our Way strategy, Changing Tracks action plan and progress report, and the Queensland First Children and Families Board is available at www.qld.gov.au/supportingfamilies