

29 March 2026

Commission of Inquiry
Child Safety System
Reply Paid 89453
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Commissioner Anastassiou

About Q Shelter

Q Shelter is Queensland's peak body working to address unmet housing needs and homelessness. We envision a future in which every Queenslanders has a home. Incorporated in 1993, Q Shelter is a membership-based organisation that works to strengthen system capacity and influence policy and investment to support effective and sustainable solutions. We engage across all levels of government and work collaboratively with the public and private sectors, the community services sector, and the wider community to support solutions that are practical, evidence-informed, and capable of successful implementation.

Our membership includes Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), Community Housing Providers (CHPs), the broader human services sector, academic institutions, other peak organisations, people with lived experience of homelessness, and private sector stakeholders. Q Shelter maintains ongoing engagement with the sector and community to inform our policy positions. Our approach to policy development draws on both evidence and stakeholder engagement, ensuring our work reflects lived experience, service delivery insights, and system-level understanding.

Statement of interests

Q Shelter is aware that people experiencing complex homelessness in later life have a higher likelihood of exposure to the child protection system in childhood.

We refer to a meta-analysis of research into the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACES). Analysis of twenty-nine studies demonstrated that children exposed to ACES were more likely to experience homelessness in adulthood. The more ACES that children were exposed to, the greater the likelihood that they would experience homelessness later in life. Specifically:

- The lifetime prevalence of one ACE among people experiencing homelessness was 89.8% and 53.9% for four or more ACES (compared to 38% and 3-5% respectively for the general population.
- The researchers emphasised the 'near universality of ACEs in the homeless population as well as their association of poor outcomes in adulthood.'

Source: [Koh et al, 2021](#).

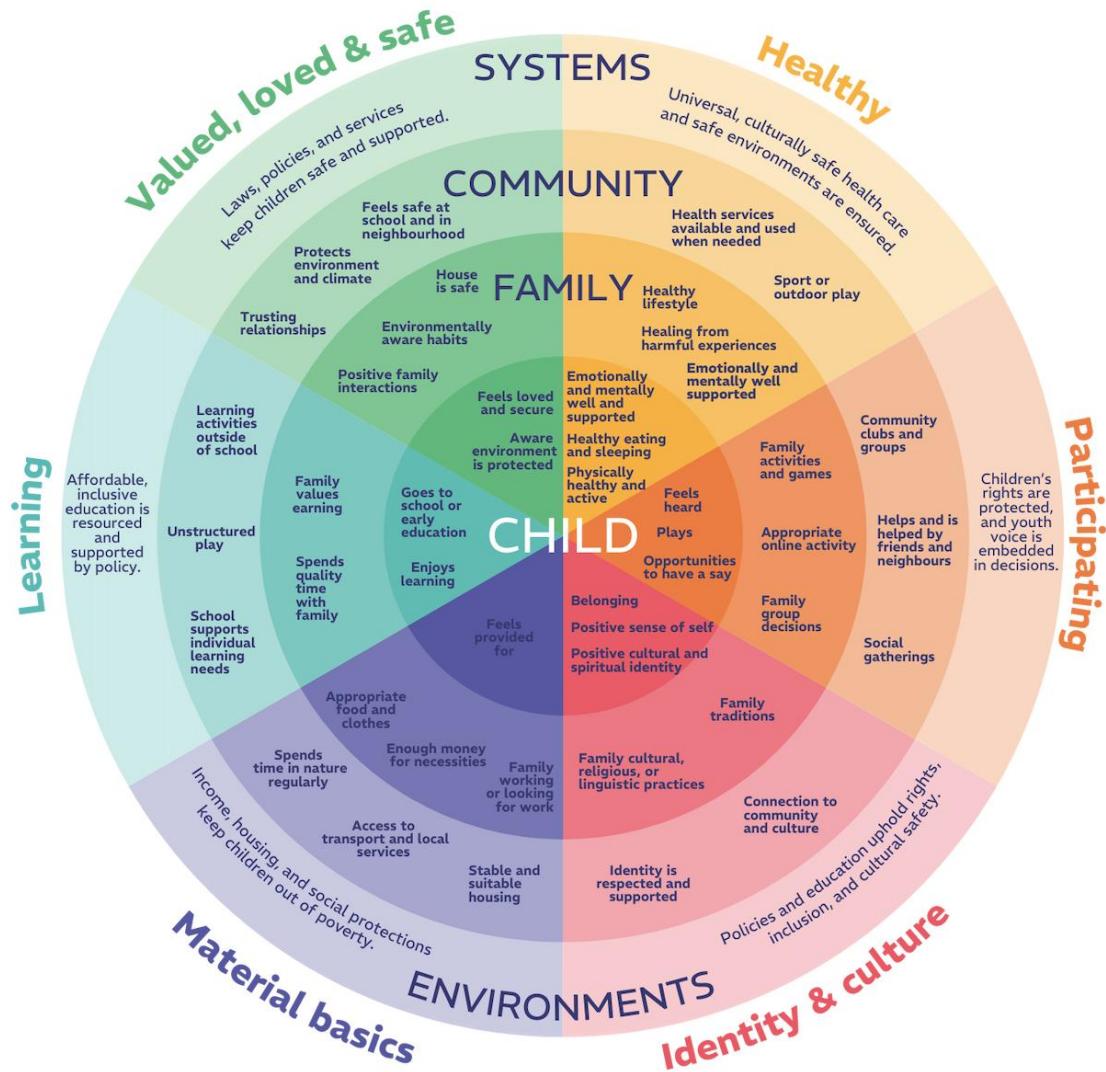
Our view is that preventing childhood exposure to ACES would have downstream, positive impacts such as a reduction in complex homelessness and a reduction in other exposure to systems such as the youth justice system. We consider that preventing exposure to ACES would contribute significantly to wider societal outcomes such as increased community safety, reduced costs of emergency services, a reduction in exposure to and the costs associated with the criminal justice system, higher levels of community cohesion and economic participation. Most importantly, upstream prevention of ACES would reduce harm to children and help them to thrive.

While Queensland will always require interventions that provide social, affordable, and supportive homes to vulnerable Queenslanders, we consider that the right prevention measures at the right time, could reduce the complexity of people's needs, improve their wellbeing and participation, and reduce the growing costs of highly subsidised.

Framework

Q Shelter embraces the Nest Wellbeing Framework to guide interventions that support the well-being of children and the prevention of complex threats to well-being in later life. The Nest Wellbeing Framework is embraced and applied by the Queensland Kids Partnership (QKP).

Figure 1: The Nest Wellbeing Framework



Source: [ARACY 2013](#)

We also acknowledge the adoption of the Resilience Scale by QKP, highlighting the important principles of:

- Reducing adversity
- Improving skills and abilities
- Adding positive supports.

Recommendations

Our recommendations relate to population-based, longer-term upstream measures. We also include recommendations to assist families currently residing in temporary accommodation provided through the Queensland Government's Immediate Housing Response (IHR).

Long-term prevention

1. Develop a statewide family support plan that is integrated and holistic across key domains essential to wellbeing, reflecting the Nest Wellbeing Framework:
 - 1.1. Being valued and safe: feeling and being safe at home, in the community and school
 - 1.2. Being healthy: access to healthcare, physical activity
 - 1.3. Participating (community clubs, groups, activities, gatherings)
 - 1.4. Material basics: housing, food, clothes, transport, employment)
 - 1.5. Learning: unstructured play, activities outside of school, quality time with family, going to school, access to quality childcare
 - 1.6. Identity and culture: connections to community and culture, belonging, cultural identity.

A whole-of-system plan for the wellbeing of families and children must recognise that children's wellbeing is impacted by domains such as health, education, childcare, housing, inclusive and empowered communities, and intersectional supports.

2. Achieve the early identification of children and families at risk through engagement in health systems, including ante-natal care and post-natal care. Include high-quality holistic assessments to identify needs and build a 'whole child/whole family plan (QKP Submission).
3. Reflecting holistic child and family plans, develop regional, integrated Thriving Kids and Thriving Families Plans to engage varied sectors and stakeholders in identifying.
4. Provide universal post-natal visiting programs to assess needs, provide support, and provide intensive active referral for specialised support as required.
5. Sustain specialised home visiting programs for the duration of need for families and children identified through universal in-home support.
6. Commit to a housing guarantee for all children combined with a food security guarantee and an education/childcare guarantee.
7. Build the capacity and capability of wider systems such as homelessness, housing, health, community centres, and sporting clubs to actively recognise and address the needs of children and young people. Include expansion of the QKP-facilitated Enabling Workforce and Organisations initiative through QKP.
8. Adopt the Promise Scotland as the basis for an independent cross-sectoral vehicle for implementing and guiding transformative reform.
9. Introduce legislation based on Victoria's Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2025 to mandate a whole-of-government approach to child safety and wellbeing and to enable community parenting based on Victoria's *Children, Youth and Families (Supporting Stable and Strong Families) Bill 2025*.

10. Work with the Department of Housing and Public Works to rapidly expand Supportive Housing for Families including through currently accessible scattered sites. Commit support funding to enable the expansion of Supportive Housing throughout the State.
11. Engage with housing peak organisations and the Department of Housing and Public Works to establish a target and strategy for building family homes that respond to the needs of people eligible for the social housing wait list.
12. Reform social housing eligibility criteria so that families with high and complex needs on income support and low-moderate incomes are included and eligible.
13. Work with community housing providers to include family homes in their forward pipeline of growth projects.
14. Develop an affordable housing funding program to provide more subsidised rental homes and more pathways to home ownership for families.
15. Work with peak bodies to build the capacity of wider support systems such as community centres, mental health services, disability services, and youth support services to be housing literate and understand how to intervene early to identify and address housing needs.
16. Develop an outcome and impact framework for measuring implementation success.

Responding to the needs of families and children accommodated through IHR

1. Immediately convene key state departments, including the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, Education Queensland, and the Department of Health, together with peak organisations, to develop an immediate and integrated response to the well-being needs of children and families in IHR accommodation. Include a framework for measuring outcomes based on the Nest Wellbeing Framework.
2. Ensure this response includes individualised, holistic *support and housing* plans where a qualified lead agency is clearly identified.
3. Embed funded, specialised family support capabilities within IHR providers.
4. Ensure that all families within IHR accommodation have:
 - 4.1. A food security guarantee to ensure children have access to high-quality food that is sufficient to meet their nutritional needs.
 - 4.2. A childcare and education guarantee where children attend high-quality childcare or education through the provision of transport and other practical support.
 - 4.3. A healthcare guarantee where children in IHR are offered health assessments and interventions including specialised testing based on individual needs.
 - 4.4. Safe sleeping equipment and support for all children aged two years and younger
 - 4.5. An assessment by schools of the individual learning and other needs of children in IHR as the basis for an individualised plan
 - 4.6. A package of individualised support funding to facilitate education, health care, nutrition, and participation in community activities.
 - 4.7. Access to housing pathways through either a fast-track to social housing or subsidised private rental housing sustained for the duration of need.
 - 4.8. A coordinated support guarantee if moving across jurisdictions to access homes.

5. Base an integrated response to children housed through IHR on the Nest Wellbeing Framework to ensure a holistic approach.
6. Sustain IHR funding in the forward estimates to ensure families have access to assistance while wider housing supply measures unfold.

Acknowledgements

Q Shelter acknowledges the contributions of the Queensland Kids Partnership and the Peaks Preventative Alliance. We have incorporated the expertise and content reflected in each initiative.

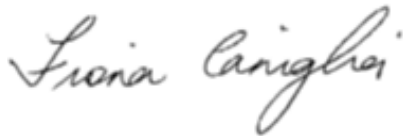
Contact and offer of assistance

Q Shelter can be contacted through me (fiona.caniglia@qshelter.asn.au / 0400 1964 92) or Maya Glassman (maya.glassman@qshelter.asn.au or 3831 5900).

Q Shelter is committed to assisting with the development of an integrated approach responding to the needs of families. We can also play a role in capacity building and training activities to support the implementation of child-centred housing interventions across human services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Inquiry. We look forward to assisting with future reforms that build generational change through genuine prevention.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Caniglia
Chief Executive Officer