

Annual Report  
2023–24

## Availability and access

This Annual Report and previous reports are available online at [www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au).

For more information, contact:

### Office of the Public Guardian

Postal address: PO Box 13554  
George Street Brisbane QLD 4003

Telephone: 1300 653 187  
Email: [comms@publicguardian.qld.gov.au](mailto:comms@publicguardian.qld.gov.au)  
Website: [www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au)

## Disclaimer

The views or opinions in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General or the Queensland Government. Every effort has been made to ensure this document is accurate, reliable and up to date at the time of publication, however the Office of the Public Guardian will not accept any responsibility for loss caused by reliance on this information.

## Attribution

Content from this Annual Report should be attributed to:  
The State of Queensland (Office of the Public Guardian) Annual Report 2023–24.

## Licence



This Annual Report is licensed by the State of Queensland (Office of the Public Guardian) under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 International licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this Annual Report, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Office of the Public Guardian). To view a copy of this licence, visit [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

## Interpreter service



We are committed to providing accessible information to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this Annual Report, you can contact us on 1300 653 187 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you free-of-charge.

ISSN: 2207-5186 (Print) 2205-8621 (Online)

© The Office of the Public Guardian 2024.

31 October 2024

The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP  
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence  
1 William Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Attorney-General,

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2023–24 for the Office of the Public Guardian.

This report is made in accordance with the requirements in section 126 of the *Public Guardian Act 2014* and provides information on the performance of the Public Guardian's functions in 2023–24.

Under section 127 of the *Public Guardian Act 2014*, the Office of the Public Guardian is not considered to be a statutory body for the purposes of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* or the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*. The Public Guardian is not required to comply with the *Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies*, however these requirements have guided the creation of this Annual Report.

Yours sincerely,



**Shayna Smith**  
Public Guardian



## Acknowledgements

### Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians throughout Queensland of the lands on which we leave a footprint. We acknowledge and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We recognise you, the First Nations people and your continuing connection to the land, sea and waterways and acknowledge your ongoing contribution in caring for Country since time immemorial. We acknowledge your Dreamtime stories and your ancient and recent history of struggles, your strength of perseverance towards overcoming adversities and your resolve towards maintaining survival of the oldest living cultures on Earth.

### Acknowledgement of living and lived experience

We acknowledge the living and lived experience of our clients, whose rights and interests we strive to promote and protect. We thank them and their support networks for engaging with us while we strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people we serve.

We also acknowledge the living and lived experience and expertise of our staff who directly support adults with impaired decision-making ability and vulnerable children and young people in either a professional or private capacity.

## Annual Report design

The visual identity of our office is based on the Birrang artwork, which was hand painted on canvas by contemporary Wiradjuri artist Jordana Angus. Though her traditional land is Narrandera in New South Wales, she was born and raised in Redcliffe, Queensland, where “the land meets the sea”. Jordana has incorporated these influences into her painting, which is dominated by vivid shades of green and blue.

‘Birrang’ means journey, and the artwork shows the journey of our clients who are adults with impaired decision-making ability and children and young people in care, using the Aboriginal symbol for journeys.

The design of this Annual Report features the ‘people meeting’ symbol from the Birrang artwork. This symbol represents the interactions between our office and the community. It’s connection to the other symbols means our office and staff are friendly and approachable. By acknowledging cultural needs, OPG creates a bond of trust with the Indigenous community.

The report design also features inward and outward facing triangles along the journey’s path. These triangles represent people travelling towards and away from the centre journey line. This symbolises that we help our clients when needed.

## Terms used in this report

In this report we use the term ‘decision-making ability’ when talking about the ability of a person to make a decision, with or without appropriate support.

The term ‘decision-making capacity’ is used in this report when talking about a person’s decision-making ability in a legal context. Under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* a person is legally considered to have impaired decision-making capacity for a decision if they are unable to do one or more of the following:

- understand the nature and effect of the decision, and
- freely and voluntarily make the decision, and
- communicate the decision in some way.

The *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* acknowledges that a person may have capacity to make some decisions, but not all, depending on the complexity of the decision and the support available to the person.

The term ‘decision-making capacity’ is used in situations where there is a need to test a person’s decision-making ability. This test is known as a ‘capacity assessment’ and it may be undertaken when there is a need to decide:

- if a person needs additional support to make decisions
- if a person can consent to medical treatment
- if an attorney’s power under an enduring power of attorney or advance health care directive can commence
- whether to apply, or provide evidence, for a guardian or administrator to be appointed.

### The following abbreviations are used in this report:

<b>AMHS</b>	Authorised mental health service
<b>DJAG</b>	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>OPG</b>	Office of the Public Guardian
<b>QCAT</b>	Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal



# Table of contents

Public Guardian’s message .....	1
Office of the Public Guardian .....	4
Celebrating 10 years .....	6
Our strategic plan .....	8
Our operating environment .....	10
Service Delivery Standards .....	13
Our achievements .....	14
Guardianship .....	19
Investigations .....	28
Community visiting and advocacy .....	31
Child advocates .....	40
Our contributions to reform .....	42
Our community education .....	45
Our people .....	47
Our governance and information management .....	54
Our financial performance .....	56
Appendix 1 – Publicly available submissions .....	57
Appendix 2 – Other contributions to reform .....	58

# Public Guardian's message

It gives me great pleasure to present the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) Annual Report for 2023–24.

This year's report reflects the outstanding contribution made by our agency in providing adult guardianship, community visiting, child advocacy and investigations services to Queensland. While OPG continued to navigate a complex external environment and social and policy change, this report demonstrates the breadth and depth of our successes in improving the lives of vulnerable Queenslanders. At its heart, OPG is an agency that champions their rights, interests, and wellbeing – it is what we are passionate about, and what we do exceptionally well.

Some of our key achievements in 2023–24 were:

- conducting 18,741 visits to children and young people at visitable locations, raising 15,122 issues on their behalf
- conducting 3,507 visits to adults at visitable sites, raising 2,588 issues on their behalf
- providing decision-making services to a record number of 4,490 adults with impaired decision-making capacity
- providing decision-making services as statutory health attorney of last resort for 639 adults with impaired decision-making capacity
- providing child advocacy services to 453 children and young people, and
- finalising 102 investigations into allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation, or inappropriate or inadequate decision-making arrangements of adults with impaired decision-making capacity.

These achievements were also reflected in excellent performance against our Service Delivery Statement measures for 2023–24, with OPG exceeding both target measures. I am grateful to all our staff, who brought the best of themselves every day for clients and colleagues alike. These achievements are a testament to their engagement and commitment to the services we deliver. To the staff of OPG, I sincerely appreciate your contribution over the past year.

## Change as a powerful opportunity

Since writing last year, several landmark reform processes have signalled real progress towards a fairer and more inclusive society for vulnerable adults, particularly those with disability. Nowhere was this better reflected than the release of the final reports of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) and the independent National Disability Insurance Scheme Review. Both processes made clear that the community expects public institutions to actively champion the choice and participation of people with disability in all aspects of their lives.



These changes in the external landscape coincided with a special milestone in our history – on 1 July 2024, OPG celebrated 10 years of operation. On 1 July 2014, the functions of the former Office of the Adult Guardian were amalgamated with the child community visitor function of the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, creating the agency we know today. Since then, OPG has navigated legislative, policy and social change across all the service systems we operate in. Our 10-year anniversary was an occasion to take stock of OPG's evolution over that time, acknowledge our collective impact, and celebrate our many successes for our clients.

It was also a time for OPG to renew our commitment to our organisational values and strategic direction. As we move into a period of major systems reform, we have turned our focus to our role in driving that change forward. For OPG, this is a fantastic opportunity to facilitate meaningful and lasting change for many of the people we support. As OPG begins its second decade, one thing is clear – we have never been more committed to being an enabler of positive change for our clients. OPG will move in step with the systems reform journey underway and work closely with our clients and stakeholders to bring this change to fruition.

## **An agency focused forward**

Having devoted the last several years to service delivery improvements and internal efficiencies, over the last 12 months we laid the groundwork to move into this next exciting phase. We invested in the areas that will empower OPG to deliver the best possible outcomes – our objectives, resourcing, technology and workforce. In late 2023, OPG undertook a major project to analyse current and future demand for each of our frontline service delivery functions. This operated as the foundation for a submission to government to seek additional funding to secure the resources needed to deliver high-quality, critical services as demand continues to grow. OPG was successful in securing additional funding for new temporary positions, a welcome injection which will bolster frontline capability both in metropolitan and regional areas. However, we will continue to advocate for longer-term funding to stay well-positioned to support a growing number of Queenslanders who rely on our services.

Concurrent with this work, OPG launched a new Strategic Plan 2024–2029 – a roadmap for the agency's strategic objectives over the next five years. In parallel with the new Strategic Plan, we also finalised the Strategic Workforce Plan 2024–2029, a template for action to ensure our office can attract, recruit, and retain a skilled, future-ready workforce. We also continued our cultural capability journey, dedicating resources to map the agency's operational response to Path to Treaty, in conjunction with our First Nations Yarning Circle. From a technology perspective, we made significant progress towards completing our Child Sector Enhancement ICT project, which will provide staff with a single, contemporary client management system.

This ambitious program of work has given OPG a path forward to make the most of every opportunity that systems reform will bring.

## Promoting and protecting rights and interests – for all

While this national disability reform agenda is a time for optimism for our adult clients with impaired decision-making capacity, this same opportunity must be extended to everyone OPG supports – including children and young people. It has been a challenging environment for children and young people in the youth justice system over the last 12 months. In facing complex issues as a society, we must continue to uphold the rights and dignity of all children and preserve their chance to reach their full potential. The *Public Guardian Act 2014* creates a legislative responsibility for the Public Guardian to promote and protect the rights and interests of children in out-of-home care and staying at visitable sites, including those detained in police watch houses and youth detention centres. This mandate is one we are committed to. We will continue to advocate for the voices of children and young people in all these settings to be heard regardless of the circumstances, so that they know they matter.



**Shayna Smith**  
Public Guardian



# Office of the Public Guardian

The Public Guardian and the Office are established by the *Public Guardian Act 2014*. The Public Guardian is an independent statutory officer who is not under the direction or control of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice.

The *Public Guardian Act 2014* and the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000*, set out the roles, responsibilities and powers of the Public Guardian. Additionally, the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998* allows adults in Queensland to appoint decision-makers through an enduring power of attorney or advance health directive.

Our office is dedicated to promoting and safeguarding the rights and interests of some of the most vulnerable, at-risk, and disadvantaged Queenslanders. This includes adults with impaired decision-making capacity, and children and young people within the child protection system or staying at visitable sites across the state (including authorised mental health services, youth detention centres, and police watch houses).

We support people (over 18 years of age) who do not have the ability to make their own decisions, through our guardianship, investigations and community visiting and advocacy services. We:

- provide decision-making services for personal matters when appointed by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), or appointed by a person as their attorney under an enduring power of attorney, or as the statutory health attorney of last resort
- investigate allegations that a person with impaired decision-making capacity has been, or is being neglected, exploited or abused, or has inappropriate or inadequate decision-making arrangements in place, and
- independently monitor visitable sites and identify, escalate and resolve complaints by or on behalf of the people with impaired decision-making capacity staying at those sites.

We also provide individual advocacy that gives an independent voice to children and young people. We do this by:

- providing person-centred advocacy for relevant children and young people in the child protection system. This elevates the voice and participation of children and young people in decisions that affect them, and
- conducting community visits to monitor and advocate for the rights of children and young people in out-of-home care or staying at a visitable site.

Our work is guided by the general principles and health care principles in the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* for adults with impaired decision-making capacity, and by the standards in the *Public Guardian Act 2014* and the *Child Protection Act 1999* for children and young people. We uphold the *Human Rights Act 2019* by ensuring our decisions and actions are consistent with the rights it protects. In addition, our Child and Adult Safeguarding Framework ensures the safety and wellbeing of the people we support.

We are committed to empowering our clients and advocating for their rights and interests. When making decisions for adults with impaired decision-making capacity, we work within a structured decision-making framework. We advocate for the rights of children and young people, their access to services, and, where appropriate, their independence and choice. This includes seeking to ensure their views and wishes are considered by decision-makers.

Our office is committed to our cultural journey and to promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults with impaired decision-making capacity from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



## Celebrating 10 years

OPG officially commenced operations on 1 July 2014 following the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. Our office is an amalgamation of the role of the former Office of the Adult Guardian and the child community visitor function of the former Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. The establishment of the Public Guardian's functions and OPG signalled significant changes to Queensland's child community visiting program and introduced a new individual child advocacy service.

Changes in the legislative, policy and regulatory aspects of various service systems has shaped our operating environment over the past 10 years and will continue to shape our future. Our office has navigated and adapted to the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), improvements to guardianship and mental health legislation, commencement of human rights legislation and changes to other service systems including child protection and youth justice. We have always seized the opportunity to contribute to the reforms impacting our clients and office. To this end, we have contributed and responded to many Royal Commissions, government consultations and Parliamentary inquiries over this period.

Demand for our services has consistently increased over the past 10 years due to a range of systemic pressures, demographic trends and societal challenges. We have seen a greater number of interim and longer-term guardianship orders, more requests for investigations, increased referrals for child advocacy, increases in the number of adult visitable sites and more children and young people eligible for community visits. Demand has also increased because of growth in the guardianship, youth justice and child protection systems, and complexity of systems such as the NDIS and aged care. Other factors such as an ageing population and increased prevalence of various health and mental health conditions, including dementia, have also contributed to the ever-growing demand for our services.

Since commencing operations in 2014 we have supported thousands of Queenslanders by:

- making 12,371 guardianship decisions about health care
- closing 2,044 investigations into alleged abuse, neglect and exploitation, or inappropriate or inadequate decision-making arrangements for people with impaired decision-making ability
- conducting 321,049 visits to children and young people in visitable locations
- raising 161,795 issues on behalf of children and young people at visitable locations, and
- conducting 43,519 visits to adults in visitable sites and raising 23,792 issues on behalf of those staying at those sites.

There have been times when our ability to deliver services has been impacted by environmental factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, cyclones, floods and other extreme weather events. While these presented a range of operational and service delivery challenges, our staff always proved to be resilient, creative and optimistic.

Our office now employs around 299 full time equivalent staff who provide services right across Queensland. We proudly operate offices in Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich and Brisbane. Our culture is centred on our clients and staff; we are dedicated to their rights, wellbeing and cultural safety.

Monday 1 July 2024 marked the official 10-year anniversary of our office. We have internally acknowledged this milestone throughout 2024, recognising our collective achievements as an office. We have celebrated our successes over the past 10 years and look toward to our future and the opportunities that lie within it.



# Our strategic plan

Our Strategic Plan 2019–2024 sets out our priorities and direction over five years. It guides the allocation of our efforts and resources and provides a sense of collective responsibility and collaboration. This year marked the final year under our current strategic plan.

## Our ambition

A strong, accountable, human rights focused Queensland where the OPG gives a voice to the voiceless through staff that feel empowered to do so.

## Our objective and organisational goals

The objective of our office is to empower our clients and advocate for their human rights.



This Annual Report allows us to reflect on, and showcase, our performance against our organisational goals. We will extend this work during our next strategic planning cycle.

## Strategic Plan 2024–2029

In June 2024, the Public Guardian launched OPG’s new Strategic Plan 2024–2029, which took effect from 1 July 2024. The Strategic Plan clearly defines what we aim to achieve over the next five years. It includes measurable goals that align with our purpose and role, and it describes how we will achieve them. This plan aligns with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General’s (DJAG’s) Strategic Plan 2022–26 and the Queensland Government’s objectives for the community.

**Our new Strategic Plan is not a symbolic document. It is being embedded in our daily work and will guide how we deliver our services and allocate resources. We will track our progress against our objectives and acknowledge our success in achieving those objectives over time.**

The Strategic Plan is underpinned by four pillars that represent OPG as an office:

- 1** People centred service delivery  
We will continually improve our service delivery to achieve positive human rights outcomes for our clients
- 2** Resilient and empowered workforce  
We will support a workplace where staff feel respected, engaged and empowered
- 3** Stronger regional connections  
We will strengthen community connections and maximise our impact in regional Queensland through strategic partnerships
- 4** Innovative ways of working  
We will streamline our internal processes and drive innovation to maximise efficiency, collaboration and effective outcomes

Each year we develop a Business Plan which supports the achievement of our five-year Strategic Plan. Our Business Plan supports us to accomplish our strategic goals, drives our priorities and performance, and lays the groundwork for innovation, partnerships, and capability-building.



# Our operating environment

Over the last year we have seen significant reforms in many of the service systems in which we operate. A common theme across many of the reforms is an improved focus on the people who are supported by these systems, and upholding and protecting their rights and interests, including their human rights – something we are very passionate about. We have actively contributed to the progression of many of these systems reforms and will continue to do so in the coming year.

## National disability sector reform

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (known as the Disability Royal Commission) released its final report in September 2023. The Royal Commission made 222 recommendations aimed at improving laws, policies, frameworks and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability.

The Disability Royal Commission report was followed by the final report from the Independent Review into the NDIS, which was released in December 2023. The NDIS Review Panel put forward 26 recommendations and 139 actions to improve the way in which the NDIS supports people with disability. Collectively, the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review propose extensive reforms across all aspects of many of our clients' lives, including their human rights, inclusion and accessibility, disability services, guardianship and administration, cultural safety, health, housing, education, employment and criminal justice. These reforms have the potential to transform both our own services and our advocacy about the services provided to many of our clients by other sectors.

At the time of preparing this report, the Australian Government released its response to the Disability Royal Commission. This was closely followed by the Queensland Government's response to the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review, referred to as the Queensland Disability Reform Framework. The joint response of the Australian, state and territory governments to the NDIS Review is expected in late 2024. The implementation of these government responses will commence in 2024–25.

These two significant examinations of the systems that support people with disability provide an ideal opportunity to make meaningful and lasting changes to those systems, and in turn to the lives of people with disability. We will seize opportunities to contribute to the improvements to the legal, policy and service aspects of the systems that support people with disability, including the disability and guardianship systems.

## Restrictive practices reform

The Queensland Government's review of its positive behaviour support and restrictive practices authorisation framework for adults receiving funded disability supports is complete. The review sought to better align Queensland's authorisation framework with the NDIS and the Principles for nationally consistent restrictive practices authorisation processes, and to expand the scope of the framework to include NDIS participants who are children.

In June 2024, the Queensland Government introduced the Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 into Parliament. The Bill proposes a reformed authorisation framework for the use of regulated restrictive practices on adults and children with disability receiving NDIS or state disability services. The use of restrictive practices is a severe infringement on a person's human rights and must be subject to the highest standard of regulation and oversight. The Bill is a welcome reform that proposes significant improvements to Queensland's disability restrictive practices regime and underpins an important move from a 'consent' to an 'authorisation' framework.

The Bill transfers responsibility for decisions about the use of restrictive practices from Queensland's guardianship system to a clinical Senior Practitioner model and extends the framework to all adults and children with disability. While our guardians will no longer have a decision-making role under the new framework, we will continue to provide decision making services to adults who are also subject to the use of restrictive practices, if appointed as their guardian or attorney for related personal matters. We will also continue to provide community visitor oversight for adults staying at visitable sites where restrictive practices may be used under the new framework, including places where adult NDIS participants live and receive relevant services. For children with disability who are subject to the use of restrictive practices, our role under the new framework will include community visitor oversight for children with disability staying at visitable locations, and child advocate support for children with disability in the child protection system who wish to seek a review of a Senior Practitioner decision.

Our office was pleased to see our feedback reflected throughout the proposed new framework. The Senior Practitioner model will provide independence, consistency and clinical expertise in decision-making about restrictive practices. Its extension to child NDIS participants will also safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children and young people with disability who are outside the current framework's protection and oversight.



## Aged care reform

The Australian Government's development of a new Aged Care Act is ongoing and aims to create a simplified, rights-based legislative framework focused on the safety, health, wellbeing, needs and preferences of older people.

The new aged care legislative framework will comprise the proposed new Act and a single set of subordinate legislation, known as the Rules. We understand the Rules will replace the aged care restrictive practices framework under the *Quality of Care Principles 2014*, including the temporary consent arrangements which are scheduled to expire on 1 December 2024. We are hopeful there will be an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Rules and support an expansion of the proposed Queensland Senior Practitioner model to include decisions about the use of restrictive practices in aged care. This would help ensure people of all ages and service settings receive equal standards of rights protection, decision-making and safeguards. In the meantime, where the Public Guardian is appointed to provide decision making services for a person's restrictive practice matters in aged care, we will continue to operate within the current legislative framework and our policy which outlines our structured decision-making approach to considering consent for the use of restrictive practices.

## Youth justice reform

We have continued to prioritise our individual and systemic advocacy on behalf of children and young people detained in police watch houses and youth detention centres. Over the last year, we have seen a number of reforms to the youth justice system that are expressly incompatible with the human rights of children and young people. We are concerned these reforms will cause harm to vulnerable children and young people and will not achieve their intended purpose of keeping the community safe.

In September 2023, the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023* received assent. The Act overrode the *Human Rights Act 2019* and enables police watch houses and adult corrective services facilities to be established as youth detention centres.

We have significant concerns about the use of the override provision to enable the detention of children and young people in police watch houses and adult corrective services facilities. These are high-risk environments that are not conducive to the safety and psychological wellbeing of children and young people. We believe that children and young people detained in police watch houses must be afforded the highest standard of rights protection.

In the coming year we will continue to take advantage of opportunities to enhance the legal, policy, and service aspects of the youth justice system, and to help shape a youth justice system that prioritises children and young people's rights, dignity and wellbeing.

# Service Delivery Standards

In 2023–24, we contributed to the DJAG service delivery statements through two new service delivery standards.

One of these standards is centred on our goal to ensure our clients participate as fully as possible in the decisions that impact them. Our office exceeded this service standard target, with 97.3% of included guardianship decisions being made in consultation with our clients. This reflects our ongoing efforts to genuinely engage with our guardianship clients to understand their views and wishes.

The average hourly cost of our operations was under our target of \$71.00 per hour. This reflects our effective use of resources while providing community visiting, child advocacy, guardianship and investigation services to thousands of Queenslanders across the state.

**Table 1: Service Delivery Standards 2023–24**

Service standards	2023–24 Target	2023–24 Actual
Percentage of guardianship decisions made in consultation with our clients	80.0%	97.3%
Average cost per hour of the Office of the Public Guardian operations	\$71.00	\$70.20

**Note:** Some guardianship decisions are excluded from the calculation of the “Percentage of guardianship decisions made in consultation with our clients” service standard due to reporting limitations.



# Our achievements

As part of delivering our services in 2023–24, we:

undertook pre-appointment advocacy in relation to 786 QCAT applications

provided decision-making support to 4,490 adults with impaired decision-making capacity

acted as attorney under an enduring power of attorney for 70 adults with impaired decision-making capacity

received 2,200 orders to act as guardian of last resort

received 537 interim orders to act as guardian of last resort for three months

made over 22,000 decisions with our guardianship clients

made over 1,062 decisions in relation to health care

received 410 requests for investigations

closed 102 investigations

completed 3,507 visits to adult visitable sites

raised 2,588 issues on behalf of adults at visitable sites

completed 18,741 visits to children and young people at visitable locations

raised 15,122 issues on behalf of children and young people at visitable locations

advocated for 453 children and young people through our child advocates

## Continuously enhancing our practice and operations

We diligently worked to enhance our services and operations this year. Our commitment to the rights of our clients and our desire to achieve positive outcomes for those we support drives us to consistently elevate our practice and performance.

In 2022–23, we realigned our internal geographical boundaries to better target our guardianship resources to areas of growth. The benefits in 2023–24 of this realignment included more clients with guardians physically located in their region and more evenly distributed workloads among our guardianship teams.

In 2023–24, we implemented a range of other practice improvements. These included the introduction of new operational guidance material for staff, improving many of our client-facing procedures, providing new peer learning opportunities, mentoring our emerging leaders and removing unnecessary ‘red tape’. We also refined our internal processes for identifying guardianship clients who may no longer require a formal decision-maker. We took proactive steps to request QCAT review the guardianship orders, with a view to them being revoked where appropriate, in support of the person’s rights and interests.

Following the positive outcomes achieved by our inpatient guardians that primarily work out of hospitals, we commenced a peer practice group to further develop their work and ensure consistency in practice. We are also centralising the data provision and reporting of inpatient guardians to better share information with our partners and ensure the value of inpatient guardians is understood and promoted.

We have enhanced our investigations practice over the past year through professional development and training in best practice investigation methodologies. We also continued to prioritise engagement with stakeholders such as banks and the Queensland Police Service to share prevention and early intervention strategies, raise awareness of abuse ‘red flags’, increase understanding of our investigations process, and support effective referral pathways.

In November 2023, we implemented refreshed practice guidance to support our advocacy for young people transitioning from out-of-home care to adulthood. As part of this work, we visited young people at key touchpoints to see how their transition planning was progressing, their level of participation in the planning process, support needs and their views and wishes. Young people with impaired decision-making ability are now referred to our senior advocacy officers for specialist advocacy in relation to accessing support services, building independent living skills, exercising choice and control, and accessing support for income, accommodation and decision-making. Between 1 November 2023 and 30 June 2024, there were 88 referrals for specialist advocacy and our community visitors raised 743 issues on behalf of young people as part of our advocacy to support young people transitioning to adulthood.



In 2023–24, we developed an online reporting tool to support our work in the youth justice sector. Our reporting tool provides timely updates about the number of children and young people in police watch houses, along with the watch house locations, the age and sex of the children and young people detained, their length of detention and more. The transition from a manual data process to online reporting helps our office, and other sector stakeholders, to monitor the occurrences of children and young people being detained in police watch houses in a timelier way. It also helps our office to provide support to those children and young people more efficiently and effectively.

Over the last year, we enhanced our internal reporting and analysis capabilities to support our ability to respond to demand for our community visiting service and better meet our legislative remit to direct our resources to help safeguard the most vulnerable children and young people. This work resulted in improved and more timely information being provided to our community visitors and more streamlined and efficient allocation of work to them.

## Building our cultural capability

Over the past year, we have continued our journey to reframe our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which included building our cultural capability as an office. In 2023–24, we continued to contribute to the Queensland Government’s Path to Treaty journey and *Reconciliation Action Plan 2023–2025*. We look forward to further advancing both initiatives in the coming year.

Our First Nations priorities are proudly embedded in our new Strategic Plan 2024–2029. The plan acknowledges that our work is informed and guided by our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. We recognise that outcomes built on strong relationships create a positive shared future for everyone.

**We are committed to providing culturally safe and responsive services and workplaces for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

In January 2024, we established a First Nations Practice Leader position. This position was created to champion strategies and initiatives across our office in relation to our First Nations clients and staff. Since then, the Practice Leader has:

- facilitated our inaugural OPG First Nations workshop
- chaired and led our First Nations Yarning Circle comprising of staff from across the office
- promoted the role of our office to First Nations stakeholders and communities
- advocated for and promoted the implementation of processes to better support the cultural lens on our practice
- represented our office at First Nations events such as National Sorry Day, Apology to the Stolen Generations and the Cherbourg Disability Forum
- provided a central point for First Nations queries and consultation and ensured queries were directed and responded to in a culturally informed manner in consultation with our First Nations Yarning Circle and OPG Elders.

In April 2024, we held our inaugural First Nations workshop in Brisbane, which was also live streamed to attendees across Queensland. The workshop was designed to bring together our office, our partner agencies and stakeholders to hear First Nations perspectives in shared systems, the concept of allyship, and how we can continue to build practical allyship within our office. Over 150 people participated in the three-day workshop either in-person or online. The workshop included a Welcome to Country by Aunty Deb Sandy, a range of impressive guest speakers from both Queensland Government agencies and the non-government sector, and a special yarning session with OPG Elders Uncle John Currie, Aunty Kathy Ware and Aunty Debra Clark. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the workshop and its value to our staff and stakeholders. We intend to build on this momentum and support the cultural journey of our staff by holding future workshops.

Our staff were asked about their highlights from the workshop:

***“The opportunity to hear from our First Nations staff in OPG and people working in our sector to better understand the current context in which they are working today and the issues faced by First Nations people in Queensland today in a very deep and engaging way.”***

***“Connecting face-to-face with fellow allies and our First Nations brothers and sisters within our organisation to strengthen our First Nations space.”***

***“What is allyship. The visual resources and video really assisted me consider allyship from a different perspective. The speaker was informative and clear and provided clear ways which I can actively try to be a better and more mindful ally. The speakers on the allyship panel discussion and Q&A were informed and very knowledgeable.”***

***“Hearing directly from our elders.”***

***“I found the entire workshop to be educative and informative. I am so appreciative of being provided with the opportunity to attend.”***

***“I have worked in various government departments and other areas but I have never experienced the level of respect and genuine acceptance of our First Nations feelings and experiences. It showed me how far we as an organisation have come.”***



The First Nations Yarning Circle comprises our staff who identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and provides a culturally safe space to connect and yarn on a regular basis. The Yarning Circle also promotes and facilitates a culturally safe workspace for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and culturally safe services for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

In 2023–24, our Yarning Circle changed their name from the Murri Yarning Circle to the First Nations Yarning Circle. The Yarning Circle prides itself on inclusivity and therefore changed its name to ensure those from a mob whose Country is outside Queensland or Northern New South Wales, or from the Torres Strait, were fully represented.

Over the past year our First Nations Yarning Circle undertook a range of communication and education activities within our office, supported the cultural journeys of our staff and helped build our collective cultural capability. Members of the Yarning Circle have presented at internal meetings, provided online resources and supports to our staff and facilitated connections and relationships between Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and First Nations staff across our office.

**We are deeply grateful to our First Nations staff for their invaluable support and guidance as we work to enhance our cultural capabilities. Your collaboration and insights are essential to our understanding and growth.**

From 2024–25, our staff excellence awards will also include a new workplace culture award called the Deadly Award. ‘Deadly’ is an Aboriginal English term meaning ‘excellent’, ‘great’ or ‘awesome’. This new award was announced at the 2024 OPG Staff Excellence Awards by our First Nations Yarning Circle. The Deadly Award will recognise staff who demonstrate a commitment to closing the gap and reconciliation, including reframing our relationship with First Nations people and being an ally to First Nations people. This is a symbol of our commitment to recognise and reward our staff who show leadership in progressing the cultural journey of our office.

# Guardianship

If a person doesn't have the ability to make their own decisions about personal aspects of their life, even with support and doesn't have an attorney, a guardian can be appointed to provide decision-making services. Ideally, a person's guardian should be a trusted family member or friend who knows them and understands their views, values, and what the person likes and wants. If there is no one in a person's life who is appropriate and competent to be their guardian, as a last resort QCAT may appoint the Public Guardian. The Supreme Court can also appoint the Public Guardian when there is no one else appropriate and competent.

QCAT can also appoint the Public Guardian to make representations about the use of restrictive practices for a person who is the subject of a containment or seclusion approval under Chapter 5B of the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000*.

**Making choices about your own life is a fundamental human right. That's why the decisions made by our guardians should always reflect the rights, views and wishes of the people we support.**

When we make decisions as a person's attorney or guardian, we follow a structured decision-making framework. This framework helps to ensure that our decision-making upholds a person's rights to the maximum extent possible and reflects what the person values, wants, or prefers. Our structured decision-making process fulfils the requirements of the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* and includes five broad steps:

- Identify the need for a decision
- Ascertain the views, wishes and preferences of the person
- Consult with others who may be impacted by the decision
- Assess the benefits and risks of the decision, and
- Implement the decision.

In 2023–24, we provided decision-making services to 4,490 people with impaired decision-making ability (up 6% on 2022–23). This includes people for whom the Public Guardian was appointed by QCAT and those for whom we acted as attorney under an enduring power of attorney.

Interim orders are made by QCAT when there is an immediate risk of harm to a person's health, welfare, or property, including the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect (including self-neglect). In 2023–24, QCAT made 537 interim orders appointing the Public Guardian as the guardian of last resort (Table 2). The number of these orders has sharply increased over the last two years, jumping 31% between 2021–22 and 2022–23 and a further 43% between 2022–23 and 2023–24.



QCAT made 2,200 orders (with a duration of over 3 months) appointing the Public Guardian as the guardian of last resort in 2023–24 (Table 2). While the overall number of orders being managed remained relatively stable between 2022–23 and 2023–24, there was an 8% increase in the number of new orders (i.e. orders appointing the Public Guardian as person’s guardian for the first time) and a 7% decrease in the number of orders re-appointing the Public Guardian for a person.

In 2023–24, approximately half (48%) of interim orders appointing the Public Guardian were followed by a longer-term guardianship order appointing the Public Guardian.

**Table 2: QCAT orders appointing the Public Guardian**

	Number of QCAT orders	
	2022–23	2023–24
Interim orders (up to 3 months)	375	537
New orders (over 3 months)	818	882
Re-appointment orders (over 3 months)	1,420	1,318
<b>Total orders (over 3 months)</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>2,200</b>

The year-on-year decline in the number of re-appointment orders and orders overall is partly attributable to delays in QCAT undertaking hearings to review the ongoing need for individual guardianship orders. At the time of producing this report, the review of many guardianship orders appointing the Public Guardian were overdue. The Public Guardian remains appointed until further order of the Tribunal for our clients waiting for their order to be reviewed. Having a guardian appointed when there is no longer a need is a concerning infringement of a person’s human rights. Further, the delay in QCAT reviews and hearings is also a likely contributor to the sharp increase in interim guardianship appointments.

We understand that QCAT is allocating resources in 2024–25 to reduce the wait time for guardianship hearings. We anticipate these efforts will reduce the number of interim orders being made because of lengthy wait times and increase the number of orders re-appointing the Public Guardian.

On 30 June 2024, the Public Guardian was the guardian of last resort for 3,881 people (up 8% on 30 June 2023). Of these, 3,009 people aged between 18 and 65 years were registered NDIS participants (up 7% on 30 June 2023).

The Public Guardian can be appointed to make one or more types of personal decisions for a person. In 2023–24, most (83%) of the guardianship orders we received related to a person needing decisions about their service provision. Over half (56%) of the orders we received related to a person needing decisions about their accommodation. Decisions about health care were included in 20% of orders, restrictive practices were included in 12% of orders, legal matters (excluding finance or property) were included in 9% of orders and decisions about contact arrangements were included in 6% of orders.

In 2023–24, we made over 22,000 decisions for our guardianship clients (up 11% on 2022–23). This includes people for whom the Public Guardian was appointed by a QCAT order and those for whom the Public Guardian acted as attorney under an enduring power of attorney.

The Public Guardian consented to three forensic examinations in 2023–24. A forensic examination can be undertaken, for example, to obtain evidence that a criminal offence has been committed against a person with impaired decision-making ability. The Public Guardian can only consent to a forensic examination of an adult with impaired decision-making ability if particular conditions under the *Public Guardian Act 2014* are satisfied.

In support of the rights of our clients, we continued to proactively identify clients who may no longer require us to act as their guardian. In 2023–24, we made 92 submissions to QCAT seeking to be removed as a person’s guardian. On 30 June 2024, there were 24 applications pending an outcome; however, all the applications that had been considered by QCAT resulted in the Public Guardian’s appointment being revoked.

We dedicated resources to identify guardianship clients who may have someone in their life who could act as a decision maker instead of the Public Guardian. These endeavours differ from our efforts to seek revocation of a guardianship order, because this work focusses on people who are likely to require an ongoing decision maker, but it may not need to be the Public Guardian. We provide education and try to help build the capacity of potential decision makers to be a guardian, attorney, or informal decision maker.

A person who made a submission to the Disability Royal Commission said,  
***“I am an independent thinker, and am the decision maker in my life.  
I know how I would like things to happen in my life...”***<sup>1</sup>

All people with disability should make their own decisions even if an attorney or guardian is appointed. That is why we are committed to ensuring our services are informed by our clients, and their voices are heard.

In 2024–25, we will also pilot a new practice approach to identifying our clients’ views, wishes and preferences. The pilot will involve detailed and meaningful conversations with our new clients regarding their views and wishes about various aspects of their life at the outset of our engagement with them. This will enable us to have a more detailed and holistic understanding of our clients to inform our decision-making as a person’s guardian or attorney.

---

<sup>1</sup> Annie Norton, Submission, 1 March 2022, SUB.001.01628, p 1, in *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability* (Final Report, September 2023) vol 6, 9.



In 2024–25, we will implement a formal guardianship practice review framework that will help us to proactively identify opportunities to improve our service delivery and processes. As part of the new framework, we will conduct in-depth reviews of the decision-making we undertake for our clients. Our learnings from these reviews and other activities under the framework will ensure our service delivery continually evolves and improves.

## Pre-appointment advocacy

Throughout 2023–24, we continued our pre-appointment advocacy to uphold the rights of people who may experience impaired decision-making ability. We provided information and education before and during QCAT hearings where the appointment of the Public Guardian was proposed. We advocated for less-restrictive alternatives to a public guardianship order, such as the person’s existing support network helping them make their own decisions or acting as the person’s informal decision-makers. We also made submissions to QCAT about the necessity of a proposed guardianship appointment when an interim (urgent) appointment of the Public Guardian was sought.

**Everyone has the right to make decisions about how they live their life. Our support of this right drives us to advocate for orders appointing the Public Guardian only when absolutely necessary, for the range of decisions to be limited to those that are essential, and orders are in place for the shortest time possible.**

Like last year, our pre-appointment advocacy yielded significant benefits in 2023–24. We undertook pre-appointment advocacy in relation to 786 QCAT applications proposing the appointment of the Public Guardian and participated in 464 QCAT hearings. We were involved in slightly fewer applications and hearings compared to last year, which we attribute to delays in QCAT holding hearings to review guardianship orders and the extended wait time for hearings about proposed new appointments. We expect to be involved in a greater number of applications and hearings in 2024–25 as QCAT works to reduce the wait time for guardianship reviews and hearings.

As seen in Table 3, the Public Guardian was appointed as guardian of last resort in 55% of the hearings we provided pre-appointment advocacy (where it was initially proposed that the Public Guardian be appointed). Around one-quarter (24%) of the hearings resulted in the application for the appointment of a formal guardian being dismissed. In addition to these advocacy activities, we provided interim comments on nine QCAT applications at the tribunal’s request.

**Table 3: Hearings where the Public Guardian undertook pre-appointment advocacy in 2023–24**

Hearing outcome	Percent
Public Guardian was appointed	55%
Application was dismissed	24%
Hearing was adjourned	9%
Member of the person’s support network was appointed	7%
Application for guardianship was withdrawn	3%
Tribunal issued directions or there was another outcome	2%

**Note:** The outcome of tribunal hearings is influenced by many factors outside of OPG’s pre-appointment advocacy.

Similar to last year, people aged 18 to 65 years were at the centre of over half (57%) of the 786 applications proposing the appointment of the Public Guardian where we undertook pre-appointment advocacy. The remaining 43% of applications related to people aged over 65 years.

For those hearings where we undertook pre-appointment advocacy, there was little change in the profile of QCAT applicants between 2022–23 and 2023–24. Table 4 shows that, in relation to the QCAT applications where we undertook pre-appointment advocacy in 2023–24, the applicants seeking the appointment of the Public Guardian were most commonly social workers and hospital staff (29%), family and/or friends of the person who was the subject of the application (17%), the Department of Child Safety (12%) or mental health professionals (11%).

**Table 4: Initiators of QCAT applications where we undertook pre-appointment advocacy**

Type of applicant	Percent
Social workers/hospital staff	29%
Family and/or friends of the adult who was the subject of the application	17%
Department of Child Safety	12%
Mental health professionals	11%
Community-based service provider	9%
Residential aged care facility	7%
NDIS Support Coordinator	5%
Other/unknown applicant	9%

**Base:** QCAT applications for which OPG undertook pre-appointment advocacy in 2023–24.



## Decision-making about health care

Health care providers must obtain informed consent before treating adults who don't have the ability to make their own health care decisions because of disability, injury, or illness. The Public Guardian can make a decision to provide consent for health care matters:

- when appointed by QCAT to provide decision making services for health care matters
- when designated as an attorney under an active enduring power of attorney, and
- as the Statutory Health Attorney of last resort under the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998* if no other suitable adult is available.

**We strive to make well-considered health care decisions that reflect the views and wishes of our clients. We prioritise their rights and ensure that every decision is made with the utmost care and respect for their individual needs and perspectives.**

We made 1,062 health care decisions in 2023–24, a similar number to the previous year. Of the health care decisions we made in 2023–24, 60% were made while acting as a Statutory Health Attorney, 37% were provided under a guardianship order and 3% made under an enduring power of attorney. We consented to almost all of the health care treatments proposed for our clients; however, we refused two requests for surgery, two requests to withhold life-sustaining treatment and one request for a proposed medical treatment, based on the particular circumstances of those people.

In 2023–24, we made 155 health care decisions after hours and received 146 general health care enquiries after hours.

In 2023–24, our partnerships with individual Queensland Hospital and Health Services to locate a guardian(s) in hospitals expanded to six hospital and health services. Inpatient guardians provide guardianship decision-making, and advice and information about the guardianship system, the rights of adults with impaired decision-making ability and the role of our guardians. They meet with hospital patients in person, talk to them about their rights and seek their views about decisions that may need to be made, and promote linking patients with independent advocates. They also engage with stakeholders and where appropriate, work closely with medical and health professionals to ensure QCAT applications seeking the appointment of the Public Guardian are only made as a last resort, in line with legislation.

Consent for special health care for adults with impaired decision-making ability can only be given by QCAT. Special health care matters include removal of tissue for donation, sterilisation, termination of pregnancy and special medical research or experimental health care. QCAT may appoint the Public Guardian to represent the person's views, wishes and best interests as part of its consideration of special health care matters. In 2023–24, the Public Guardian was appointed by QCAT to be a representative in seven matters where special health care was proposed.

We can make health care decisions about withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatments, if the commencement or continuation of the treatment is inconsistent with good medical practice, and relevant legislative requirements and human rights considerations are met. In 2023–24, we consented to 102 requests to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment.

## Decision-making about restrictive practices

We make decisions and advocate in relation to restrictive practices when the Public Guardian:

- is appointed by QCAT to provide decision-making services for the use of restrictive practices (general or respite) or when a person is subject to restrictive practices and receives NDIS funding
- is appointed by QCAT for decision-making services for the use of restrictive practices in residential aged care
- has been asked to consider an application for a short-term approval to use containment and/or seclusion, and other associated restrictive practices by a service provider in relation to a person receiving NDIS funding
- is appointed to seek help and make representations about restrictive practices for a person subject to containment and/or seclusion approved by QCAT
- is an active party to all guardianship proceedings that occur in QCAT, or
- is appointed by QCAT under an advanced appointment for a person who is at least 17 ½ years old and who may be subject to the use of restrictive practices prior to turning 18 years old. Decision-making authority does not commence until the person turns 18 years of age; however, the Public Guardian can make representations on their behalf under this appointment.

**Our focus on human rights and person-centred service delivery underpins our commitment to the elimination of restrictive practices. We support alternative approaches that respect a person’s dignity and rights in all environments, including disability, aged care, and health care settings.**

On 30 June 2024, there were 401 people for whom the Public Guardian was appointed to provide decision making services for restrictive practice matters, a 4% increase on 30 June 2023. Our appointments included people for whom we made a decision to authorise the use of restrictive practices, where:

- QCAT approved the use of containment and/or seclusion and other restrictive practices, or
- the person was subject to a short-term approval by the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services.



In 2023–24, we made 293 decisions as guardian for restrictive practice matters. We received 62 applications for short-term approval of the use of containment and seclusion restrictive practices and approved 20 of those applications.

We made 19 decisions about the use of restrictive practices for people living in residential aged care in 2023–24 and on 30 June 2024, we had 25 active guardianship appointments to provide decision-making services about the use of restrictive practices in aged care settings.

We have policy and processes in place to:

- educate aged care providers about our views on minimising or removing the use of restrictive practices, our role and the information we need to consider a decision about consenting to restrictive practices
- guide our decision-making about the use of restrictive practices in aged care to ensure the human rights of the people we support are upheld, and
- inform aged care providers about the information we need to inform a decision about the use of restrictive practice in residential aged care.

## Decision-making about legal matters

QCAT can appoint the Public Guardian to provide decision-making services about legal matters for people with impaired decision-making ability (excluding legal matters relating to property or finance). We play a crucial and distinct role to our clients' legal representatives. We help our clients to understand legal procedures, ensure they have access to justice and support them in providing instructions to their legal representatives about their legal matters. Our advocacy ensures that our clients' legal representatives and others in the court process fully understand each client's impairment and its impact on their ability to participate in legal processes.

**All people should be treated equally under the law and have the same rights and protections. We work diligently to protect the rights of our clients and to ensure these rights are not negatively affected by their disability, injury, or illness.**

In 2023–24, we made 762 decisions relating to legal matters for our guardianship clients. Of these, 60% related to criminal matters, 10% related to domestic and family violence issues, 5% related to child protection issues and 5% related to bail.

## Decision-making under an enduring document

An enduring power of attorney and an advance health directive are documents a person can complete to nominate someone they trust (known as an attorney) to make decisions on their behalf if they ever become unable to make their own decisions. A person can nominate the Public Guardian to be their future attorney for personal decisions including health care, if there is no one else appropriate to provide this support.

The Public Guardian acted as attorney for 70 people in 2023–24 and held 2,407 inactive enduring power of attorney nominations on 30 June 2024. An inactive enduring power of attorney is one that has been created but has not been activated because the person is still able to make their own decisions.

It is important that we understand the views and wishes of the people who nominate the Public Guardian to be their future attorney. If an enduring document appointing the Public Guardian does not clearly articulate the person's views and wishes, we contact the person to obtain this information. We are unable to be an effective attorney for the person without this information.

In some circumstances, we may not accept a nomination to be a person's attorney. For example, if we identify an issue with the validity of the form or if we are unable to confirm aspects of the form with the person, including their views and wishes.



# Investigations

Everyone deserves to live a life free of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. We uphold this right by investigating claims of abuse, exploitation, neglect, and inappropriate or inadequate decision-making arrangements for adults with impaired decision-making ability.

The Public Guardian is provided with powers under the *Public Guardian Act 2014* to support investigative activities. These include the power to:

- require people to produce financial records and accounts
- access any relevant information, such as medical files
- cross-examine witnesses, and
- issue a written notice requiring a person to attend at a stated time and place, to give information or answer questions and/or produce documents.

Importantly, our office does not replace the role of the Queensland Police Service in responding to domestic and family violence or suspected criminal behaviour. If we identify these issues, we refer them to the police to investigate and determine the need for criminal charges. Our focus is on identifying whether a person needs support with personal or financial decision-making, and that if required, the support they receive is adequate and appropriate.

The number of requests for investigations received by our office has remained relatively stable over the past couple of years, with 410 investigation requests received in 2023–24. Our focus is always on the rights and interests of people with impaired decision-making ability who may be adversely impacted by the actions of their decision-maker(s) and others. We thoroughly assess each request for an investigation to identify whether an investigation is the most appropriate course of action for the person. We strive to identify pathways and implement strategies to facilitate a quick resolution to the issues of concern, where it is appropriate to do so. Sometimes this involves educating decision-makers so they can provide more rights-based support or referring people to appropriate organisations to address issues outside of our remit and therefore achieve more comprehensive outcomes. We may also refer individuals and those in their lives to relationship mediation, legal, or advocacy services.

In 2023–24, we opened 69 investigations, a slight increase on the previous year. Around two-thirds (48 investigations) of the investigations we opened related to people aged 65 years or older. Over the past few years, the proportion of investigations that we opened to examine the circumstances of people aged 65 years and older has steadily increased. This correlates with our ageing Queensland population and ongoing prevalence of ageism and elder abuse in our community. Eight of the investigations we opened were to investigate claims about abuse, neglect or harm of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Almost half (31 investigations) of the investigations our office opened in 2023–24 were requested by members of the public. Other common sources of requests were family members and service providers. In comparison to 2022–23, our office opened a greater number of investigations requested by members of the public and fewer investigations requested by service providers.

**Table 5: Source of request for investigation for opened investigations**

Source of investigation request	Number of investigations opened	
	2022–23	2023–24
Member of the public	10	31
Family member	15	17
Service provider	29	14
OPG (e.g. community visitor, guardian)	1	1
Other	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>

Like previous years, attorneys were the most common type of decision-maker to be investigated in 2023–24, accounting for 41 of the investigations opened by our office. The actions of informal decision-makers were examined in 19 of the investigations we commenced, while private guardians were examined in two investigations and a private administrator was examined in one investigation.

Many of the investigations we commenced in 2023–24 involved allegations relating to multiple forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or inappropriate decision-making arrangements. Similar to last year, financial abuse or incompetence was the most common type of allegation investigated and was a factor in 18 of the 69 investigations we commenced. Providing inadequate support and care was a factor in 16 of the investigations we commenced, neglect was a factor in 11 investigations and restricting a person’s contact with other people was a factor in 8 investigations.

We take prompt action to protect people with impaired decision-making ability when there is an immediate risk to their health or welfare. Some of the protective actions we can undertake include suspending an attorney’s powers, making urgent applications to QCAT for the appointment of a guardian and/or administrator, or in extreme cases, applying for a warrant to remove the vulnerable person from a dangerous situation. If a power of attorney is suspended for personal decisions, the Public Guardian is automatically appointed as the adult’s attorney for those decisions for up to three months. If a power of attorney is suspended for financial decisions, the Public Trustee is automatically appointed for the same period.

In 2023–24, we finalised 102 investigations. Of these, 25% were closed within six months, 22% within six to twelve months, and 53% took more than twelve months to complete. The high number of lengthier investigations closed in 2023–24 was the result of our concentrated effort to finalise the backlog of aged cases.

Of the investigations we finalised in 2023–24, we suspended the financial powers of 12 attorneys and all powers (financial and personal matters) of one attorney. We also made applications to QCAT for the appointment of a decision-maker for 13 adults during the course of investigations; seven of those by application for an interim order.



Our closed investigations broadly fell into two categories: discontinued investigations (64%) and completed investigations (36%). Over one quarter (27%) of the discontinued investigations resulted in the person with impaired decision-making ability and/or their decision-maker(s) connecting with appropriate supports through referrals to other agencies that assisted with addressing the issues of concern. Three-quarters (75%) of the completed investigations involved protective action being taken by the Public Guardian.

On 30 June 2024, we had 48 investigations in progress. The majority of these (34 investigations) related to concerns for people aged 65 years or older and six investigations related to concerns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Over the past year we have continued our commitment to enhancing our investigative work to achieve positive outcomes for the people that we safeguard. We have been engaging with the person with impaired decision-making ability and their decision-makers earlier in our investigation process. It has helped us to identify opportunities where education, advice and appropriate supports may be able to address the issue(s) at hand, rather than a lengthy and involved investigation process. In addition to benefiting the parties involved, this approach has enabled our finite resources to be allocated to other priority cases involving people at significant risk of abuse or exploitation.

In the coming year we will be further enhancing our investigations practice to better incorporate the views and preferences of our clients, particularly in relation to what they would like to happen after we receive a request for an investigation that includes concerns about them. This will help us explore the most appropriate course of action for the person. This exercise will be undertaken while carefully managing any risks to the person's safety, health, wellbeing and assets.

# Community visiting and advocacy

Our community visitors perform unique and independent visiting functions under the *Public Guardian Act 2014*. Community visitors:

- visit a visitable location, inspect information, inquire into the appropriateness of accommodation, services and supports for a person, and provide the person with support and information to exercise their rights and to have a say in decisions made about them
- educate the children, young people and adults visited about their rights and ensure they have access to adequate information about their rights
- report on observations and information obtained during a visit
- identify issues or complaints affecting the rights and interests of children, young people and adults
- refer matters to other agencies to advocate for an individual's rights and interests where these are not being met, and
- monitor to ensure matters referred and complaints are resolved in a timely manner.

## Visiting and advocacy for adults

Our community visitors have legislated inquiry and complaint facilitation responsibilities for specific places that support people aged over 18 years. These are referred to as 'visitable sites' and include:

- inpatient services at authorised mental health services (AMHSs)
- the Forensic Disability Service
- premises where an adult participant lives and receives services or supports paid for wholly or partly from NDIS funding and are:
  - provided under the participant's NDIS plan
  - provided by a registered NDIS provider that is registered under section 73E of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* to provide a relevant class of supports
  - within the relevant class of supports, and
- a place prescribed by regulation, which includes:
  - a residential service with level 3 accreditation
  - live-in facilities that are funded or delivered by Health or Disability Services departments (including Community Care Units).

The inquiries undertaken by community visitors focus on the adequacy and accessibility of information available to people about their rights and complaint processes, and the appropriateness and standard of the services they need. The complaints activities of community visitors include inquiring into and seeking to resolve complaints and making referrals including to external agencies, such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, to resolve issues where appropriate.



**Community visitors are a crucial oversight service in promoting and safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people staying at visitable sites. They identify issues that people may not report themselves and serve as an independent set of ‘eyes and ears’ and early warning system to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation.**

Generally, community visits occur annually for NDIS-funded visitable sites where there are no restrictive practices in use and six-monthly for all other visitable sites. When determining our visiting schedule, we consider whether these sites are regulated or overseen by other agencies, such as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. We may increase the prioritisation or visiting frequency to sites when significant concerns are raised, or if there are ongoing issues raised by a community visitor from a previous visit which require further visits to resolve.

Five years ago, the *Public Guardian Act 2014* was amended to include designated places where NDIS participants live and receive specified classes of support as visitable sites. Since then, the number of visitable sites in Queensland has increased 60%, from 1,380 to 2,214 sites. Most recently, there was a 13% increase in the number of visitable sites (between 2022–23 and 2023–24).

In 2023–24, we conducted 3,507 community visits to 2,222 sites, which represented a 10% year-on-year increase in the number of visits conducted. We conducted 16 visits outside of normal visiting hours in 2023–24. Normal visiting hours are defined as 8am-6pm under the *Public Guardian Act 2014*. In 2023–24, most visitable sites were in the disability sector (91%), with smaller proportions being AMHSs (4%), level 3 supported accommodation services (4%) and the Forensic Disability Service (one site).

**Table 6: Community visits and issues raised and closed**

	2022–23	2023–24
Visitable sites	1,966	2,214
Adults in visitable sites	7,591	7,660
Visits to adult visitable sites	3,189	3,507
Issues raised on behalf of people at visitable sites	2,376	2,588
Issues closed on behalf of people at visitable sites	2,398	2,735

**Note:** Some of the issues that were closed in 2023–24 were raised in a previous financial year.

A person staying at a visitable site, or a person acting on their behalf, can request a visit from a community visitor at any time. This is an important safeguard, so we work with service providers to ensure they understand their obligations in response to a request for a visit from a community visitor. In 2023–24, we conducted 299 visits at the request of a person staying at a visitable site or a person acting on an adult’s behalf, and 244 visits at the request of QCAT.

We raised 2,588 issues on behalf of people staying at visitable sites in 2023–24. We also resolved or closed 2,735 issues during the same period. This represented increases of 9% and 14% respectively on 2022–23.

The types of issues raised by community visitors in 2023–24 were similar to those raised in the previous year. As seen in Table 7, the most commonly raised issues by community visitors in 2023–24 were about the support provided to people staying at the site (24%), wellbeing of people staying at the site (18%), the provision of services in a least restrictive manner (18%) and aspects of the people’s accommodation (13%).

**Table 7: Type of issues raised by community visitors in 2023–24**

	Percent
Support for a person staying at a visitable site (e.g. the adequacy of services for the assessment, treatment and support of the person)	24%
Wellbeing of a person staying at a visitable site (includes choice and consideration of personal wishes and preferences, personal effects, privacy, and prevention of abuse, exploitation and neglect)	18%
Provision of least restrictive services (the use of unauthorised restrictive practices and provision of supports that are least restrictive of the person’s human rights)	18%
Accommodation of a person staying at a visitable site	13%
Treatment of a person staying at a visitable site	10%
Assessments of a person staying at a visitable site (about health care, decision-making ability, communication needs)	7%
Health of a person staying at a visitable site	9%
A person’s access to information	1%

Community visitors visit inpatient AMHSs and Community Care Units to oversee the services being provided to people staying at these sites and to advocate where appropriate on their behalf to resolve issues. An AMHS can be a public or private health service providing inpatient care to voluntary or involuntary patients. Queensland Health Community Care Units provide medium to long term mental health care and rehabilitation to people diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Community Care Units help these people to develop skills to live in the community and transition to independent living. In 2023–24, we conducted 236 visits across 91 AMHSs and Community Care Units, raising 270 issues on behalf of the people staying at those services.

In 2023–24, community visitors raised 29 issues in relation to the Forensic Disability Service, a purpose-built medium security residential service that supports people with intellectual or cognitive disability who have been found unfit to stand trial or not guilty due to their disability. The people detained at the Forensic Disability Service are typically under forensic orders issued by the Mental Health Court.



## Visiting and advocacy for children and young people

For children and young people, community visitors inspect and report on the appropriateness of accommodation in visitable locations, which include visitable homes and visitable sites. Community visitors also advocate for:

- the participation of children and young people at visitable locations in decision-making
- their views, wishes and rights to be upheld, and
- their access to information and the services they need.

A visitable home for a child or young person can be a foster home with general or kinship carers if the child or young person is in the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services under the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Visitable sites for children and young people can be a:

- residential care service
- detention centre
- police watch house
- mental health inpatient service, and
- a place where respite services are provided to a child NDIS participant.

In 2023–24, we undertook 18,741 visits to 9,338 children and young people. The decline in the number of community visits and the number of children and young people we visited is attributable to meeting the demand for adult community visiting and advocacy services.

Community visitors ‘must’ regularly visit adults staying at visitable sites. As outlined above, the number of visitable sites where NDIS participants live and receive specified classes of support has increased by 60% since 2019 and 13% in the last 12 months. Directing resources towards mandatory visits means that children residing in discretionary visitable locations such as foster and kinship care homes were visited less frequently, or not at all.

In response to this demand, we have continued to reprioritise our community visiting resources to target the children and young people who are most vulnerable and to ensure the visits undertaken are best practice. This approach has been successful as the number of issues raised by community visitors in 2023–24 increased by 2,129 on the previous year.

**Table 8: Community visits and issues raised and closed**

	2022–23	2023–24
Visits to children and young people	23,789	18,741
Children and young people who were visited	9,909	9,338
Issues raised on behalf of children and young people	12,993	15,122
Issues closed on behalf of people and young people	12,999	15,222

**Note:** Some of the issues that were closed in 2023–24 were raised in a previous financial year.

Children and young people who are eligible to be visited can request a visit from a community visitor. In 2023–24, there were 55 children and young people who requested a visit from a community visitor.

In 2023–24, our community visits were relatively evenly divided between visitable homes (53%) and visitable sites (47%). Visits to different types of visitable sites increased between 2022–23 and 2023–24 because of our focus on visiting mandatory sites. The largest increase in visits was an 8% increase the number of visits to residential care services.

**Table 9: Location of community visits to children and young people**

	2022–23	2023–24
Visitable home	64%	53%
Visitable site – residential care service	23%	32%
Visitable site – youth detention	6%	7%
Visitable site – police watch house	4%	6%
Visitable site – externally supported site e.g. youth homeless shelter	3%	2%

These were respective increases of 16% and 17% on 2022–23. Almost a third of issues related to youth detention. As seen in Table 10, among the most common issues were those associated with the risk of the child or young person entering youth detention, contact arrangements with family or other significant people, concerns with youth detention centres and the placement of the child or young person in the child protection system. In 2023–24, we made 137 formal complaints on behalf of children and young people to the Department of Youth Justice, Department of Child Safety, Queensland Police Service, and other agencies.

**Table 10: Main issues raised on behalf of children and young people in 2023–24**

	Percent
Issues associated with the risk of children or young people entering youth detention	15%
Contact arrangements of the child or young person (e.g. contact with their family or other significant people)	13%
Issues associated with youth detention centres	12%
Placement of the child or young person in the child protection system	11%
Transition from care	10%
Health needs of the child or young person	8%



In 2023–24, community visitors made 146 internal referrals for complex advocacy to help ensure young people have a smooth transition to adulthood. This was a significant increase on the previous year and the result of our targeted visits to young people who will soon transition to adulthood. Community visitors will make a complex advocacy referral if they identify that a young person who is about to transition to adulthood may have impaired decision-making ability or if Child Safety is considering making an application for an advance guardianship appointment.

## Authorised Mental Health Services

Under the *Mental Health Act 2016*, Queensland Health must notify our office when a child or young person is admitted to a high-security mental health unit or an inpatient mental health unit of an AMHS other than a child and adolescent unit (i.e. an AMHS for adults). In 2023–24, we received 105 notifications from Queensland Health (down from 160 notifications in 2022–23).

Our community visitors typically visited children and young people admitted to an adult mental health unit within 72 hours of being notified about the admission. Many admissions of children and young people to adult mental health units are for short periods of time so some children and young people are discharged before a visit can be arranged.

When visiting a child, community visitors can inquire into the appropriateness and responsiveness of the delivery of services relating to their care, treatment, and recovery. They can also request to see information or records concerning the child or young person to help the visitor better understand the delivery of services and the child or young person's treatment while staying at an adult mental health unit.

In 2023–24, our community visitors made 30 visits to children and young people in adult mental health units and raised 24 issues on their behalf. During this period, community visitors resolved or closed 26 issues on behalf of children and young people in adult mental health units.<sup>2</sup> The issues most raised by children and young people in adult mental health units related to their health needs and the suitability of their placement in the adult mental health facility.

---

<sup>2</sup> Two issues that were closed in 2023–24 were initiated in 2021–22.

## Youth detention

In 2023–24, we undertook 1,225 visits to Queensland’s three youth detention centres. We are the only independent oversight agency providing individual advocacy to children in the youth justice system.

In relation to children and young people being detained in youth detention centres, we continued to prioritise visits to those:

- held on remand for longer than four weeks
- under the age of 14 and held longer than two weeks
- known to be at high risk of self-harm and/or suicide
- requesting to see a community visitor and/or identified by a stakeholder as needing a visit
- identified as vulnerable (e.g. is pregnant, having a disability or mental health diagnosis, speaks English as a second language, has a culturally diverse background or is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- on dual orders (i.e. Youth Justice Order and Child Protection Order)
- who would like to make a complaint
- who have been sentenced and are due for release within three months, and
- who have spent time in a police watch house.

**Community visitors advocate for children and young people in youth detention and police watch houses to safeguard their rights and ensure their voices are heard.**

The number of issues raised by community visitors on behalf of children and young people in youth detention increased by 33% to 1,943 issues in 2023–24. In the last year, community visitors spent more of their time progressing a greater number of issues for the children and young people they visited.

A broad range of issues were raised on behalf of children and young people in 2023–24. The most common types of issues were about behaviour management and security at the detention centre (25%), the transition of children and young people into the community once their detention ends (16%), the high-risk behaviours of other detainees (15%), the programs and services available to children and young people (15%) and the living conditions at the detention centre (9%). In 2023–24, we made eight formal complaints on behalf of children and young people about youth detention centre issues.

We remain concerned about the use of separation in youth detention centres primarily due to staff shortages, particularly about the regular separation and extended periods of isolation for children. Separation is where a child or young person is placed in a locked cell by themselves. It can happen when a child or young person is involuntarily placed in a locked cell by detention centre staff or when a child or young person chooses to separate themselves from others.



The use of separation:

- restricts children’s movement and their freedom beyond what is normal for their age
- limits their access to and participation in services and support, including education and reintegration services
- results in a decline in mental health for children and young people, particularly those with complex trauma, disability, or histories of abuse
- increases frustration, boredom, anger, and emotional dysregulation, which can manifest as combative behaviours and trigger the use of force and restraints by detention centre staff, and
- limits the ability of children and young people to have contact with family members.

## Police watch houses

In 2023–24, we continued to prioritise visits to children and young people who were:

- detained for more than four consecutive days
- under the age of 14 years and held longer than overnight
- known to OPG to be at high risk of self-harm and/or suicide
- requesting to see a community visitor and/or identified by as being in need of a visit, or
- identified as being particularly vulnerable in a watch house (e.g. is pregnant, has a disability or mental health diagnosis, speaks English as a second language, has a culturally diverse background or is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander).

The Queensland Family and Child Commission’s report *Who’s responsible: Understanding why young people are being held longer in Queensland watch houses* found that:

***“watch houses are not suitable places to detain young people for extended periods due to their design (for example, no access to natural light), lack of trained staff, and lack of youth-focused policies, services and programs designed to uphold the rights of children while detained”.***<sup>3</sup>

Our community visitors play a critical safeguarding role by raising issues associated with the fundamental rights of children and young people detained in police watch houses.

<sup>3</sup> Queensland Family and Child Commission, *Who’s responsible: Understanding why young people are being held longer in Queensland watch houses*, November 2023, p 43.

In 2023–24, we undertook 1,081 community visits to 604 children and young people in police watch houses. This was a 17% and 4% increase respectively compared to the previous year.

Over the last year, there was a considerably larger number of issues raised on behalf of children and young people detained in police watch houses. In 2023–24, there were 2,254 issues raised on their behalf, an increase of 76% on the number of issues raised in 2022–23. This increase in issues raised was largely attributable to higher numbers of both children in police watch houses and those experiencing a prolonged stay in a watch house. In 2023–24, we made 90 formal complaints on behalf of children and young people about watch house issues to agencies such as the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service.

Issues raised by children and young people related to access to appropriate services while in a watch house (for example health, mental health, legal or youth justice supports), overcrowding and staff conduct. The most common issue raised in 2023–24 was the excessive lengths of stay of children and young people in police watch houses (a large proportion of these children were subject to dual orders).

We have observed that when the number of children and young people being detained in police watch houses increases, there is also an increase in the number of allegations raised by children and young people relating to police misconduct. In these circumstances, we also frequently observe a decline in the mental health of the children and young people being detained (e.g. suicidal ideation, self-harm and behavioural incidents resulting in the use of force by police).

As seen in Table 11, there were 120 children aged 10-13 years who spent one night in a police watch house in 2023–24. Concerningly, this represented a 50% increase on 2022–23. During 2023–24, there were 675 children aged between 10 and 17 years who spent more than four consecutive nights in a police watch house, up 5% on 2022–23. These statistics reinforce the need for our community visitors to continue concentrating efforts on advocating for the rights of children and young people in police watch houses.

**Table 11: Prolonged stays of children and young people in police watch houses**

	2022–23	2023–24
Children aged 10-13 years who have spent a night in a police watch house	80	120
Children and young people aged 10-17 who have spent more than four consecutive nights in a police watch house	640	675



# Child advocates

Our child advocates elevate the voices of vulnerable children and young people to ensure their rights, thoughts, and wishes are heard and considered. They do this by independently supporting children and young people to participate in decision-making that affects them. They also strive to ensure the rights of children and young people are upheld in line with relevant legislation, policies and procedures. This often occurs in court and tribunal settings.

Under the *Public Guardian Act 2014* we provide child advocacy to a 'relevant child'. A relevant child is a child or young person who is subject to a care agreement or order under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (such as an assessment order, custody order or child protection order), an intervention with parental agreement, or an application for a child protection order.

**For many children and young people, aspects of the child protection and out-of-home care system can be difficult to understand and feel overwhelming. Children and young people can also feel that they are not listened to or involved in decisions being made about them, especially legal decisions. This is where our child advocates can help.**

Advocacy undertaken by child advocates includes supporting a child or young person to:

- participate in child protection proceedings about them
- seek a review, or participate in the review of a decision before QCAT, for example, a review of a contact and/or placement decision
- seek review of decisions about their education, including decisions to exclude, suspend or refuse to enrol them, and
- transition to adulthood, including exercising their right to information and participating in decision-making about their future.

Child advocates also provide advocacy for relevant children involved in the youth justice system. Child advocates do not act as direct legal representatives, but they can assist defence lawyers and the court to understand the underlying issues affecting the child's involvement in the justice system, such as trauma, experiences in the child protection system or their decision-making ability.

Child advocates may become involved after receiving a referral for advocacy assistance from our community visitors, government departments, non-government organisations, or directly from the children or young people themselves. Our child advocates received 451 referrals in 2023-24, up 5% on 2022-23. The increase was driven by a greater number of referrals being received from external agencies and organisations. In 2023-24, referrals from external agencies accounted for 82% of the referrals received by our child advocates.

In 2023–24, child advocates supported 453 individual children and young people.<sup>4</sup> Of these, 100 were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

In 2023–24, child advocates were involved in 1,195 court and tribunal appearances, mentions and hearings, and participated in 351 meetings to amplify the voices of the children and young people they support. Thirty-six percent of these meetings were Court ordered conferences and a further 36% were family group meetings, which generally focussed on the development of case plans for the children and young people in care.

Around a quarter (26%) of meetings were stakeholder meetings. These are attended by a range of people involved in the child or young person's life (e.g. a Child Safety Officer, foster or kinship carer, residential service provider, youth justice case worker, Education Queensland guidance officer, therapeutic support provider, a cultural practice advisor, outreach support worker and a community visitor). The participation of our child advocates in these meetings is important because they champion the views and wishes of the children and young people who are the centre of discussion but are often not in attendance themselves.

---

<sup>4</sup> The 2023–24 figure is based on a different calculation method used to calculate the corresponding figure in the OPG Annual Report 2022–23. The calculation method was revised to provide a more accurate representation of the children and young people supported by child advocates.



## Our contributions to reform

In addition to advocating for the rights and interests of individual clients, we give voice to the collective experiences of our clients by contributing to discussion about the policy, legislative and service reforms that impact them. We do this by speaking about, and making submissions on, public and internal government matters which may impact our clients and our responsibilities.

In 2023–24, we continued to work closely with the Queensland and Australian governments and key external stakeholders on policy and legislative issues impacting our clients. We advocated for the rights and interests of children and young people in the youth justice and child protection systems through submissions to the Inquiry into Youth Justice Reform in Queensland, the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024, the Residential Care System Review, and the Child Protection Litigation Model project. We contributed extensively to the development of the new Queensland restrictive practices authorisation framework under the Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. We promoted the rights and interests of adults with impaired decision-making ability in relation to aged care, financial matters and accommodation through submissions to the new Aged Care Act, national consistency for financial enduring powers of attorney, and inquiries relating to financial abuse and supported accommodation.

We made 9 publicly available submissions in 2022–24 (see Appendix 1 on [page 57](#)). We actively contributed to 22 other consultations, providing feedback on matters affecting our clients. Appendix 2 on [page 58](#) provides the details of our contributions to matters in the public domain.

We continued to participate in a range of working and advisory groups to represent the views and experiences of our clients and office and effect positive change, for example the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist subject matter expert groups who support the review of Chief Psychiatrist policies and resources. These working and advisory groups also provided an opportunity to discuss current and emerging issues with a view to identifying strategies and actions to help address those issues.

Many of our contributions to reform are outlined in the section of this report called 'Our operating environment'. Other contributions to reform are described below.

### **Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates**

In November 2023, the Australian Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates, including the Queensland Public Guardian, submitted an open letter to the Attorneys-General from each Australian jurisdiction, calling for urgent action to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 without exception or delay, as part of the Raise the Age – Week of Action campaign. In their letter, the Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates highlighted the substantial human rights infringements experienced by children and young people in the youth justice system, including use of detention for remand rather than as a last resort, detention in adult jails and police watch houses, excessive use of solitary confinement, excessive use of force and other restraints, lack of support and rehabilitative programs, and instances of child sexual abuse. It also noted that the use of detention on children under 14 years of age causes them ongoing harm and fails to provide community safety.

In February 2024, the Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates, including the Queensland Public Guardian, issued a joint statement calling for governments to address the harmful practice of isolating children and young people in youth detention. In their statement, the Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates highlighted the need for nationally consistent, minimum standards that accord with international human rights standards, and adequate public reporting and accountability mechanisms regarding the use of isolation in youth detention. The group has called on governments to take several actions, including an independent study into the use of isolation, and the establishment of an independent National Preventative Mechanism in each state and territory to oversight places where children are deprived of liberty.

## Youth justice

In November 2023, the Queensland Family and Child Commission published their report, *Who’s responsible: Understanding why young people are being held for longer in Queensland watch houses*. As a result of our community visitors’ individual advocacy to children and young people detained in police watch houses, we formally referred concerns to the Commission about the systemic issues occurring in watch houses and contributed information and data relating to a sample of 30 children who had spent extended time in watch houses, to inform the Commission’s report.

The Commission identified a set of key drivers for the issue:

- child and family circumstances
- a lack of bail and bail support options
- the presumption against bail for repeat offenders
- the reduced efficiency rate of courts for children on remand
- demand outpacing capacity at the youth detention centres
- the ineffectiveness of detention in preventing future offending, and
- the lack of specific accountability for the duration of a young person’s stay in a watch house.

The Commission made five recommendations to address the issue, including improving cross-agency collaboration, record keeping and public reporting, and identifying strategies to reduce unsentenced detention. We were pleased to assist the Commission with this vital piece of work and to see our insights and feedback reflected in the recommendations.

In October 2023, the former Youth Justice Reform Select Committee was established to conduct an inquiry into ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support for victims of crime. We welcomed the inquiry as an opportunity for innovative bipartisan reform that would protect the rights and interests of children and young people while ensuring community safety and supporting victims. A Deputy Public Guardian appeared as a witness at the public hearing on 6 December 2023 and our office provided a submission to the inquiry in January 2024. In our evidence and submission to the inquiry, we called for increased investment in early intervention and stronger collaboration between service systems to appropriately respond to the needs of children and young people, including First Nations children and young people, those with a disability and those in the child protection system.



We discussed the need for increased investment in preventative strategies, diversionary options and trauma-informed responses to the underlying causes of offending behaviour, including programs led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help address the overrepresentation of First Nations children and young people in the youth justice system. We also advocated for the minimum age of criminal responsibility to be increased to 14 years of age.

In April 2024, the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee was dissolved and their draft interim report tabled by order of the house, due to a loss of bipartisan support. The Queensland Government subsequently passed the *Queensland Community Safety Act 2024* which removes detention as a last resort and includes an expansion of the electronic monitoring trial and increased media access to Children's Court proceedings. We made a submission to the Bill in May 2024 that raised significant concerns about these proposed reforms and advocated for an integrated multi-service system response to address the underlying drivers impacting children and their families.

## Supported accommodation

In August 2023, the Public Advocate published his report, 'Safe, Secure and Affordable'? The need for an inquiry into supported accommodation in Queensland. The report posed 29 questions grouped under two central concerns relating to the regulatory criteria, monitoring and oversight of the residential services system, and recommended a parliamentary inquiry be conducted into this matter. In October 2023, the Community Support and Services Committee commenced an inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland, in response to the Public Advocate's report. We welcomed the inquiry and acknowledged the important work of the Public Advocate in identifying and advocating for systemic reform.

The Public Guardian appeared as a witness at the public hearing on 13 December 2023 and our office provided a submission to the inquiry in February 2024. In our evidence and submission to the inquiry, we outlined our role in relation to our clients who reside in supported accommodation, and discussed the key issues raised by community visitors on behalf of adults living in level 3 residential services, which relate mainly to resident wellbeing, accommodation and support. We submitted that any reform to the supported accommodation system must place residents' rights at the forefront and take into account their diverse housing needs and preferences. It must also encompass minimum service and accommodation standards and include a sufficiently resourced regulator with strong monitoring and compliance powers, rather than relying on oversight agencies to fill any safeguarding gaps.

The Committee tabled its report *Inquiry into the Provision and Regulation of Supported Accommodation in Queensland* on 7 June 2024. In its report, the Committee made 12 recommendations to address the broad range of issues raised by stakeholders during the inquiry.

The Queensland Government's response to the Committee notes the first recommendation and accepts, or accepts in principle, the remaining 11 recommendations, noting part of one recommendation is directed at the Australian Government. We are hopeful that implementation of the Committee's recommendations will result in critical system and service improvements and safeguards for vulnerable people living in supported accommodation.

# Our community education

We are dedicated to raising public awareness about human rights, the guardianship system, our services and how people can plan for when they may be unable to make their own decisions. In 2023–24, our staff participated in 138 community education events across Queensland, up 22% on the previous year. This was a return to the volume of community education we were undertaking prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We estimate these community education events were attended by approximately 5,600 people.

Most of our community education activities were undertaken with stakeholders in the disability and health sectors and with those who support children and young people. Our community education also reached stakeholders in the legal, aged care and mental health sectors, government agencies, the community sector and First Nations communities and support agencies.

In terms of our community education in the disability sector, we participated in expositions in South-East Queensland and a number of regional locations. We also engaged with different disability service providers to discuss the role of guardians within the NDIS framework, restrictive practices and positive behaviour support plans.

In 2023–24, we continued to collaborate with hospital and health services and provided social workers and other health care professionals with information about decision-making for patients with impaired decision-making ability, and the guardianship and administration systems. Our inpatient guardians based in some hospital and health services worked extensively with health care professionals to educate and advise them on supported and substituted decision-making arrangements for people with impaired decision-making ability.

A significant event every year is NAIDOC Week. This year we participated in community fun days in Cairns, Townsville, Ipswich and Brisbane. We also attended the Mayor's flag raising and community exposition in Toowoomba. These events provided an opportunity to connect with other service providers, discuss our services and build community connections.

We collaborated with various organisations to promote the awareness and prevention of abuse of older people. This included travel to the Southern Downs region, Cherbourg, and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). The Public Guardian was a discussion panellist at an elder abuse forum in November 2023. The themes of the forum were data, practice, reform and connections. The Public Guardian was also a discussion panellist at the Queensland Elder Abuse Prevention and Action Forum in Brisbane, which coincided with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June 2024. The panel talked about the systemic changes needed to reduce the abuse of older people in our community.

In November 2023, a Deputy Public Guardian participated on a discussion panel at the Queensland Public Advocate's round table about the human rights of older people being discharged from hospital to aged care. At the Pasefika Lawyers Collective Conference in July 2023, our Director Guardianship presented on the structure of the guardianship and administration system in Queensland.



During the year we also worked closely alongside a range of legal agencies including Legal Aid Queensland, community legal centres and stakeholders in the health sector and advocacy services. Ongoing quarterly discussions about issues impacting people with impaired decision-making ability were established with members of the Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network from across Queensland. The Public Guardian, Deputy Public Guardians and other staff have participated in these discussions and recognise the value of vulnerable adults having access to independent advocates. These meetings enabled us to provide information about the guardianship system and how we support people through our guardianship, investigations and community visiting services. They also facilitated important discussions about how individual and systems advocates can collectively drive systems improvements and improved services and supports in a range of sectors. Our office will continue to work closely with independent advocates about issues impacting people with cognitive impairment.

We continued our community education about our role in Queensland's child protection system. We delivered education sessions for Child Safety Officers and staff from the Department of Youth Justice about our role in the child protection and youth justice systems. Our staff in North Queensland hosted a forum, where we talked with local stakeholders and agencies about the services provided by our office. The forum helped us to strengthen our relationships for the benefit of our mutual clients.

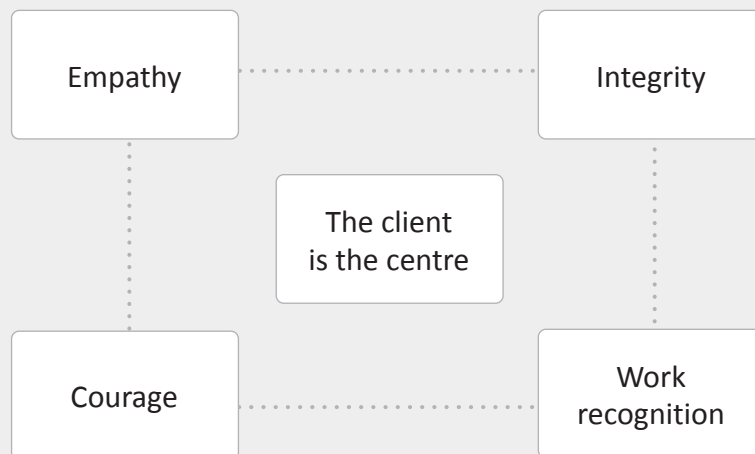
In the coming year our office will shift our focus to better use digital formats to provide education, so people are afforded the opportunity to participate, no matter where they reside in Queensland. This will enable us to reach a larger audience and better meet the demand for community education.

# Our people

## Our values

Our organisational values are not just words on a page. They guide our decisions, actions and interactions. They also define the character and identity of our office and help shape our culture, services and operations.

**Our Strategic Plan 2019–2024 featured five core organisational values which informed our vision and objectives and shaped our organisational culture and behaviours:**



In addition to our organisational values, our staff also uphold the values of the Queensland Public Service.



Alongside the launch of our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan in June 2024, we unveiled our new organisational values:

Integrity

Respect

Inclusion

Courage

Trust

Our staff were recently asked about why it is important for our office to have values:

*“I think values are important because they are something that everyone can get behind no matter what their role. This helps us be cohesive as an organisation. It’s really important to know who we are and what we stand for.”*

*“Values are important for a shared vision and to understand where we fit within the bigger picture of the agency.”*

*“It is important to have values because they are the guiding principles for who we are and what we do.”*

*“When you know your values you try to engage employees that are aligned with the same values.”*

*“It’s a way to attract and retain the calibre of person that we need to do the work that we do”.*

## Our leadership and structure





## Our staff

Our staff are the centre of our office and are essential to the work we do every day for adults with impaired decision-making ability, and children and young people in out-of-home care or staying at visitable sites. We are committed to being an employer of choice where staff have the support and resources they need to do meaningful work that makes a difference in the lives of the people we support.

Most of our staff are employed under the *Public Sector Act 2022*, with community visitors appointed under the *Public Guardian Act 2014*. All our staff are covered by the *Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award – State 2015* and the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*. On 30 June 2024, our office was based on a core establishment of 299 full-time equivalent positions and employed a total of 333 people.

In October 2023, the new *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2023* was certified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The new agreement included our community visitors for the first time. This has improved the employment conditions and entitlements for our community visitors, bringing them more closely in line with other public sector employees.

An important part of our new Strategic Plan 2025–2029 is to develop and maintain a resilient and empowered workforce in which staff feel respected, engaged and empowered. Some of our initiatives under the plan include:

- delivering a Workforce Management Strategy and Action Plan to ensure we recruit, retain and nurture our talent
- developing an evidenced-based psychosocial risk management framework, and
- refreshing our learning and development framework to invest in the skills and knowledge of our workforce.

## Diverse and inclusive workplaces and services

We respect and support diversity and equity in the workplace and recognise the importance of having a workforce reflective of the community we serve. We continue to recruit staff so that our workforce profile reflects the communities we serve. In 2023–24, we created an additional three identified First Nations positions, bringing the total 10 positions. Each of our frontline services has at least one identified First Nations position.

We are proud that 73% of our staff have participated in cultural awareness training. In the coming year we aim to increase the participation rate further to support the cultural capability of our office.

Each year our staff are invited to participate in the Queensland Government's Working for Queensland Survey. The survey enables our staff to have a say about their workplace. The survey findings informed our initiatives to create an even more inclusive and supportive workplace and helped shape aspects of our workforce management strategy.

## Workforce management strategy

We recognise the need to plan our workforce, attract and retain skilled staff with capability for growth and communicate our employee value proposition to highlight OPG as an employer of choice. In 2023–24, we developed a Workforce Management Strategy and action plan for the next five years. The Strategy was developed in parallel with the Strategic Plan 2024–2029 and is a template for action to equip our workforce with the agility, capability and resilience to deliver quality services to Queenslanders into the future. It was important for us to develop the strategy considering current labour market trends, low unemployment rates and competition for high quality staff in the human services sector.

We will implement the Strategy from 2024–25; however, we have already progressed some of the initiatives within it, such as reviewing the format and content of our role descriptions to better communicate information about our workplace, roles and the skills and abilities we are seeking for various positions. We have simplified and enhanced our recruitment processes to make it easier for prospective staff to tell us who they are, what they could contribute to our office and why they want to work for us.

## Learning and development

We remain committed to building and sustaining a capable and engaged workforce and maintaining a culture that supports the development of our staff and the continued delivery of quality services for our clients. As part of our ongoing commitment to growing our staff, over the past 12 months we have focussed on enhancing individual competencies of our staff and streamlining our resources and processes to support staff development. In 2023–24, we also launched a dedicated online learning and development space. It provides our staff with easily accessible information and resources to support their learning and development.

We have prioritised initiatives relating to First Nations people, culture and allyship to build deeper understanding and stronger allyship within our office. Our staff attended several conferences that contributed to our First Nations leadership and allyship across the office. The learnings from these conferences are informing our ongoing training and practice development.

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to focus on building the capability of our staff, in particular our leadership capabilities. We will refresh our Learning and Development Framework to ensure we are equipping our staff with the foundational skills and knowledge they need to perform their roles confidently and effectively, while also ensuring experienced staff are provided opportunities for ongoing development and extension. The new framework will focus on developing skills in areas aligned with our focus on decision-making, human rights and cultural capability.



## Safety, health and wellbeing

We strive to provide staff with a safe workplace that promotes health and wellbeing.

We do this by:

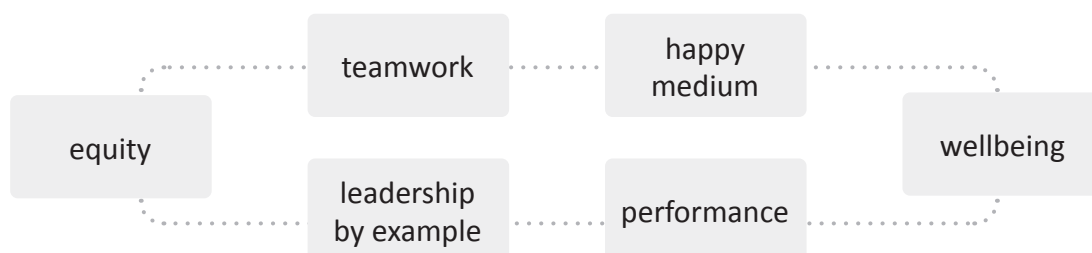
- providing mandatory training to frontline staff in vicarious trauma management and mental health first aid
- training all staff to recognise and respond to domestic violence
- maintaining a culture where preventative management of psychosocial wellness is supported and encouraged
- responding quickly when workplace health and safety issues are raised
- engaging professional support when needed to assist individuals and teams when matters arise
- delivering supports to staff who are injured or ill to support a structured and planned return to the workplace, including early intervention programs and rehabilitation supports where needed, and
- supporting voluntary medical retirement for staff who are unable to return to the workplace due to injury or illness.

In 2023–24, we provided psychosocial wellbeing support to staff through a series of online sessions on topics including resilience, burnout, team care, emotional intelligence and self-awareness. These sessions were recorded and remain available to all staff to watch on demand. Feedback about the online sessions showed that 72% of the survey respondents agreed that the online sessions gave them greater insight into self-care, and practical strategies they could apply in their daily life.

## Flexible working arrangements

In accordance with the Queensland Government's Flex-connect framework, we continued to support our staff to achieve and maintain an appropriate balance between their work and life by offering agile and flexible work arrangements such as accrued time, compressed hours, purchased leave, part time arrangements, telecommuting, work from home and access to distributed work centres.

**Our staff and their managers are guided by the principles of the Flex-connect Framework when putting flexible work arrangements in place:**



A large proportion (87%) of our staff who responded to the Queensland Government's Working for Queensland survey felt they had the flexibility they needed to manage their work and personal lives.

## Employee Assistance Program

Telus Health is a confidential Employee Assistance Program available free-of-charge to our staff and their immediate family members. Staff can access support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone, a website or smartphone app. The supports available to our staff include counselling sessions and tools to achieve wellbeing, manage relationships, deal with workplace challenges, get legal advice, receive financial guidance and get the nutrition they need. Our staff can generally access four counselling sessions per year. Telus Health also provides an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples support line which provides support from clinicians who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or have in-depth cultural awareness and experience supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. A dedicated manager support hotline is also available to our staff.

## Psychological safety project

In 2023–24, we commenced a project to identify, assess and manage psychosocial hazards in our workplace to ensure compliance with the Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice, which commenced in April 2023 under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

As part of this project, our staff were invited to participate in a People at Work survey to help us identify psychosocial hazards. The findings from this survey indicated that areas of strength for our office include low rates of group relationship conflict, group task conflict and role ambiguity. The areas of higher psychosocial risk identified by the survey include moderate levels of role overload, emotional demands and role conflict.

This information, as well as other staff consultation, current research, policy and legislation will be used to formulate a strategy and action plan that will:

- proactively support staff wellbeing by giving them strategies to increase resilience and reduce stress and burnout
- respond quickly to critical incidents, and
- ensure that when staff do experience psychosocial injury at work, they receive best practice rehabilitation.

## Conduct and ethics

We remain committed to maintaining an organisational culture that values and promotes ethical leadership and strong ethical decision-making. Our staff abide by the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. The ethics, principles and values of the code are embedded in our policies, procedures and performance agreements. All new staff participate in ethics and Code of Conduct training as part of their induction. All staff are required to undertake ethics and Code of Conduct refresher training annually. A large majority (84%) of our staff were up to date with their ethics training at of 30 June 2024.



# Our governance and information management

We have governance policies and processes to ensure we operate with accountability and transparency. They provide us with a clear framework for decision-making, help us manage risks and ensure compliance with relevant requirements. Ultimately, they promote trust and confidence in the way we work.

## Risk management

Risk management is an essential part of achieving our purpose and goals. We integrate risk management into all our organisational responsibilities, such as strategic and operational planning, decision-making processes, the management of fraud and corruption, and workplace health and safety. Our approach to managing risk is underpinned by a desire to deliver consistent, reliable and trustworthy services to our clients, a safe and satisfying workplace for our staff and confidence in the quality of our service delivery for our stakeholders, clients and community. In 2023–24, our management team reviewed and monitored their core risks to ensure a heightened level of accountability and assurance that risks were being well managed. They integrated these insights into ongoing management reporting.

We conducted internal assurance reviews of workplace health and safety, telecommuting and recruitment in 2023–24. Our workplace health and safety review was conducted in November 2023 across all our office locations. The majority (80%) of the issues identified were minor issues and all the identified issues have since been addressed, except from one outstanding issue which we are working through with DJAG.

In March 2024, we commenced a rolling review of recruitment files to ensure all recruitment processes were documented appropriately. Where we found information was missing from our electronic records management system, we obtained this information from the chairs of recruitment panels to ensure high quality record keeping and accountability. This review will be undertaken every three months to support our record keeping processes.

Our telecommuting review was undertaken in April 2024 to gain a greater understanding of how our staff work between our offices and other locations, and ensure our internal records were up to date.

In 2023–24, we continued our regular internal finance audits. These audits are crucial in ensuring financial accuracy, compliance and effective cost management. Our monthly staffing reconciliation audit is undertaken to verify timely report submission, undertake appropriate data checks, and ensure correct allocation of staff labour hours. Our monthly audit of expense reports confirms accurate general ledger and cost centre allocations. Our expenses are verified against our budget and any inconsistencies are addressed.

## Business continuity

Our business continuity plan is crucial for ensuring we can maintain operations and quickly recover in the event of a disruption or disaster. Importantly, it helps us to continue to deliver services to the community in the event of an emergency or disaster. It also helps to minimise downtime, protect critical assets and ensure the safety of employees and clients. This year we developed additional resources to support a greater internal understanding of our business continuity plan.

## Information management

We remain committed to fulfilling our obligations under the *Public Records Act 2002* and adhering to other relevant policies and standards for Queensland public sector agencies. Additionally, we comply with the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule, which governs the disposal of common and administrative records.

A project is underway to improve the compliance and accountability of our records management in accordance with the Queensland Government's Records Governance Policy. The project encompasses our statutory obligations and also addresses the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's recommendations relating to record keeping and information sharing, including the creation, preservation, accessibility, amending, retention and disposal of records.

A key element of our new Strategic Plan is using technology to enable more flexible and tailored service delivery in Queensland's regions. Fit-for-purpose hardware, integrated client management systems, enhanced reporting and a stronger online presence will be key elements of our technology development plans going forward.

## Child Sector Enhancement Project

The Child Sector Enhancement Project continued in 2023–24, focussed on integrating our separate client management systems – Jigsaw (which supports our work with children and young people) and Resolve (which supports our work with adults) – into a single system (Resolve). The project involves reconfiguring our Resolve system so it can support our child client records, migrating data from Jigsaw to Resolve, and ensuring legislative data sharing requirements can be maintained between our office and key child protection systems (such as Unify and Our Child). The project will help us work more efficiently by reducing need to learn multiple systems, streamlining internal referral processes, and reducing administrative burden on our staff, freeing up more time for them to support our clients.

Under the Queensland Government's Portfolio, Program and Project Assurance Framework, two external reviews of the project were conducted in 2023–24 to ensure it was on track to deliver the expected benefits. Following those positive reviews, in May 2024, we engaged a contractor to start the technical build. The project also secured an expanded internal project team to support the technical and change management activities required to prepare for the system deployment. It is anticipated that our teams who support children and young people will be able to transition to Resolve in early 2025.



# Our financial performance

OPG is not a statutory body for the purposes of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* or the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

Funding for the office is appropriated from the Queensland Government as part of the appropriation for DJAG, with the Director-General of DJAG being the accountable officer pursuant to the Financial Accountability Act. In addition to the DJAG appropriation, the Queensland Public Trustee provides an annual grant towards our operating costs, in accordance with section 63A of the *Public Trustee Act 1978*.

Financial details about our operations and reporting can be found in the DJAG Annual Report 2023–24. The information presented in the tables below is an overview of our financial performance in 2023–24. Our office incurred no overseas travel expenditure in 2023–24 and did not engage any consultancies during the year.

We use language interpreters when people engaging with our office have limited English proficiency. In 2023–24, we engaged interpreters on 11 occasions at a total cost of \$1,300.

**Table 12: Income from continuing operations**

Source of income	\$'000
DJAG appropriation	41,270
Public Trustee of Queensland grant	1,405
<b>Total income from continuing operations</b>	<b>42,675</b>

**Table 13: Expenditure from continuing operations**

Type of expenditure	\$'000
Employee expenses	37,609
Supplies and services	4,961
Depreciation and amortisation	105
<b>Total expenditure from continuing operations</b>	<b>42,675</b>

**Table 14: Expenditure by service area**

Type of expenditure	\$'000
Community visiting and advocacy services	12,736
Guardianship services	13,958
Corporate and strategic services	10,321
Legal/investigations services	5,660
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,675</b>

# Appendix 1 – Publicly available submissions

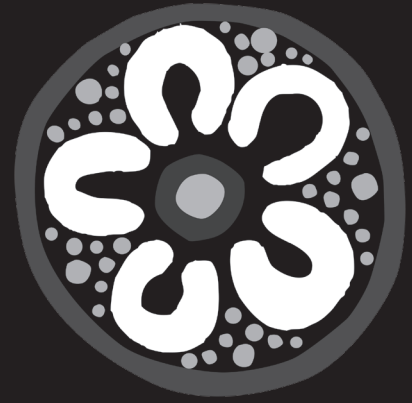
Subject	Submitted to
NDIS Review – Independent OPG submission (July 2023)	Independent Review of the NDIS
Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians open letter: Raise the age of criminal responsibility (November 2023)	Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians self-publication
Consultation Paper: Achieving Greater Consistency in Laws for Financial Enduring Powers of Attorney (January 2024)	Australian Attorney-General’s Department
Inquiry into Youth Justice Reform in Queensland (January 2024)	Youth Justice Reform Select Committee (former)
Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland (February 2024)	Community Support and Services Committee
Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates Joint Statement on Isolation in Youth Detention (February 2024)	Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates self-publication
A new Aged Care Act: exposure draft – Consultation paper No. 2 (March 2024)	Department of Health and Aged Care
Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024 (May 2024)	Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee
Inquiry into Financial Services Regulatory Framework in Relation to Financial Abuse (June 2024)	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services



## Appendix 2 – Other contributions to reform

Subject	Submitted to
'Safe, secure and affordable'? The need for an inquiry into supported accommodation in Queensland	Public Advocate
Australian Human Rights Commission submission to the United Nations Committee Against Torture follow-up procedure to Australia's Sixth Periodic Review	Australian Human Rights Commission
Growing Child Safe Organisations in Queensland: Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
Queensland Child Protection Litigation Model project	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
Queensland Residential Care System Review	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
A New Aged Care Act: the foundations – Consultation paper No. 1	Department of Health and Aged Care
Exposure draft Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024 – roundtable and submission	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Queensland Government response to the Disability Royal Commission Public Hearing 33 Report – Violence, abuse, neglect and deprivation of human rights: Kaleb and Jonathon (a case study)	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Implementation of the Australian Law Reform Commission report, Elder Abuse—A National Legal Response (ALRC Report 131)	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Who's responsible: Understanding why young people are being held for longer in Queensland watch houses	Queensland Family and Child Commission
Inquiry into Youth Justice Reform in Queensland – witness at public hearing, input to Department of Justice and Attorney-General briefing paper	Youth Justice Reform Select Committee (former)

Subject	Submitted to
Inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland – witness at public hearing	Community Support and Services Committee
Chief Psychiatrist policy review project	Office of the Chief Psychiatrist
Adults with cognitive disability in the Queensland criminal justice system – Discussion Paper 1: Policing	Public Advocate
Development of a successor national plan to address the abuse of older people in Australia	Standing Council of Attorneys-General via Department of Justice and Attorney-General
<i>Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2024–25 to 2026–27</i>	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (through Multicultural Affairs Queensland) via Department of Justice and Attorney-General
<i>An Age-friendly Queensland: The Queensland Seniors Strategy 2024–2029 and Action Plan</i>	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services
Update on legislative processes – multiple contributions	Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024
Update on legislative processes	Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024
Update on legislative processes – multiple contributions	Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024
Update on legislative processes	Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023
Update on legislative processes	Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024



**Office of the Public Guardian**

Brisbane office: Level 16  
50 Ann Street Brisbane QLD 4000

Postal address: PO Box 13554  
George Street Brisbane QLD 4003

Telephone: 1300 653 187  
Website: [www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au)

