

# 2017-18 in review



We made **34,242** visits to **8,607** children and young people.

This is a **5 percent** increase in the number of visits since 2016-17, and a **19 percent** increase since 2015-16.



Child Advocate Legal Officers opened **344** new issues and advocated for children and young people at **633** court/tribunal-related proceedings.

This is **90** more proceedings than last year.



We had **858** new people come under the guardianship of the Public Guardian with a total of **3214** adults under our guardianship in 2017-18.

This is a **5 percent** increase in new clients from 2016-17, and a **3 percent** increase in the total number of clients.



We gave **1,309** health care consents.

This is a **14 percent** increase from 2016-17.



Community Visitors raised **20,091** issues on behalf of children and young people.

This is a **6 percent** increase from 2016-17 and a **69 percent** increase since 2015-16.



**98 percent** of the issues closed for children and young people were resolved at a local level.

This is a **11 percent** increase from 2016-17, and an **85 percent** increase since 2015-16.



We visited **6,585** adults at **1,378** disability services, mental health units and hostels.

This is a **1 percent** increase in adults visited and **6 percent** increase in sites visited from 2016-17.



We opened **211** investigations into reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

## What we have done this year

- ✓ Yet again increased performance across all areas of human rights advocacy to **achieve unprecedented performance** (for the second year in a row).
- ✓ Helped **even more clients get access through the National Disability Insurance Scheme** to the supports they need to improve quality of life
- ✓ Repeatedly saw submissions from OPG directly reflected in **national policy and legislation**.
- ✓ Launched the **Public Guardian Excellence Awards** to recognise service providers who uphold the human rights of their clients and act in ways that are 'uncharacteristic' of 'regular' practice, in the mental health, disability and child protection sectors.
- ✓ Acted on our **commitment to total transparency** in our decision making by publishing our policies and decision-making frameworks.
- ✓ Helped more children, young people and adults than ever before to **participate in decisions** made about their lives.

## What we do

Queensland's Public Guardian advocates for the human rights of vulnerable Queenslanders. This is done through a committed team of Delegate Guardians, Legal Officers, Investigations Officers and Community Visitors.



**Community Visitors** and **Child Advocate Legal Officers** help young people by making sure their voice is heard, and advocating on their behalf to raise and resolve issues that are affecting them. This could be in regard to placements, contact with family, legal hearings, education and healthcare, and much more.



**Community Visitors** also visit adults with impaired decision making capacity residing in certain types of sites to monitor and advocate for the rights and interests of people living at these sites, and make complaints for, and on behalf of, these adults.



**Delegate Guardians** make personal and legal decisions for people who do not have the capacity to do this themselves. Wherever they can, they make these decisions together with the person. They advocate for their clients and encourage them to have a say in decisions about their lives



**Investigations Officers** have extensive powers to investigate allegations of abuse (including financial abuse) exploitation or neglect against adults with impaired decision making capacity, and are able to take a range of actions to ensure the adult is protected.

## What we will be doing next year

- ✓ **Intensifying our efforts** to ensure all eligible guardianship clients not only enter the **National Disability Insurance Scheme**, but get the best results possible from it.
- ✓ Questioning how agencies are truly **identifying and responding to trauma**, as opposed to just responding to the behaviours that stem from it. We will take this approach in relation to our adults under guardianship and the **children and young people for whom we advocate**.
- ✓ Consistently advocating for the **'dignity of risk'** to be a primary consideration in the recovery and treatment of our clients.
- ✓ Promoting the **psychological safety of staff** by introducing trauma debriefing and resilience programs.
- ✓ **Profiling our unique powers** of investigation and intervention with respect to **elder abuse**. We will also continue to take a strong stance regarding the treatment of people by the aged care sector.
- ✓ **Increasing our oversight** on the use of restraints in authorised mental health services, particularly their use on children and young people.

**"2017-18 saw more issues raised and resolved on behalf of children and young people than at any other time in the history of the child guardian function."**