

# QUEENSLAND KINSHIP CARE FORUM II

Towards real support for all Australian kinship children and carers



## FEEDBACK SURVEY FINDINGS REPORT

9 March 2020





The Queensland Kinship Care Forum II was held on Wednesday, 26 February 2020 at the Brisbane International Virginia in Brisbane. The forum was aimed at progressing the national agenda to raise awareness about the lack of recognition and support for extended family members caring for children, and finding a way forward to influence national policy in recognising the rights and unique support needs of these children and their kinship carers.

The forum focussed on children in kinship care, in both informal and formal care arrangements, with grandparents, siblings and other relative kinship carers in all States and Territories of Australia. There was a particular focus on what the Commonwealth Government might be able to consider by way of developing better support for children in kinship care.

The forum was co-hosted by PeakCare Queensland, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) and CREATE Foundation in association with IFYS (Integrated Family and Youth Service).

This report provides an overview of the findings of a feedback survey of those who attended the Queensland Kinship Care Forum II. Of the 101 people who registered for the Conference, 61 – around 60% - responded to the survey.

Thank you to all who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is valued and will be used to inform our planning of future events of this type.

Our sincere appreciation is also extended to all the presenters and kinship carers who contributed to the Queensland Kinship Care Forum II. We gratefully acknowledge your dedication and willingness to share your experience, knowledge and wisdom and applaud the courage it takes to stand before your peers.

## ABOUT THE FORUM

### The forum program

In summary, the forum program included:

- A Welcome to Country delivered by **Tribal Experiences**
- An opening address by **Lindsay Wegener**, Executive Director, PeakCare Queensland
- Addresses by **Tracey Hamilton** (a young kinship carer) and **Jill Green** (a grandparent carer) about their experiences
- A presentation by **Candice Butler**, Practice Development Manager, QATSICPP on the *Findings from recent consultation in relation to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kinship Care model*
- A presentation by **Megan Mitchell**, National Children's Commissioner about *Reflections from the first seven years – learnings for advocacy for children in informal and formal kinship care*
- A presentation by **Sue Elderton**, National Policy Manager, Carers Australia about *The National Young Carers Model of Support – relevant to young kinship carers?*
- An address by **Barbara Woodfine**, a grandparent kinship carer (with **Dulcie Bronsch**, Senior Project Officer, Time for Grandparents Program, UnitingCare) about her experience
- Presentations by **Dr Meredith Kiraly**, University of Melbourne about *Recognition and support for Australia's hidden kinship carers – what will it take?* and *Findings of We're Just Kids As Well research study*
- A presentation by **Tricia Murray**, CEO, Wanslea about *The case for support on the basis of need not status*
- A presentation by **Bev Orr** OAM, kinship and foster carer advocate and researcher about *Legal issues for kinship carers in exercising their parental responsibilities*
- A panel discussion led by **Jo Roff**, Area Manager, IFYS with 5 young kinship carers who participated in the research study (**Hannah Zenner** (WA), **Tracey Hamilton** (QLD), **Kalyra Michelutti** (VIC), and **Laura Box** (VIC))
- A presentation by **Jo Roff**, IFYS about moving *Towards a national support service*
- The launch of the *We're Just Kids as Well* research report by **Megan Mitchell**, National Children's Commissioner.

### Forum attendance

Of the 101 persons who registered for the forum, 87 attended (including 14 who were involved in delivering presentations or participating as panel members).

The 87 attendees comprised of:

- 9 kinship carers (10.34%)
- 68 non-government agency staff (78.16%) from 29 non-government agencies, including 12 from Peak and representative bodies: PeakCare, QATSICPP, CREATE Foundation, Queensland Foster and Kinship Care, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies NSW and Carers Australia (13.79%)
- 1 academic/university (1.15%)
- 1 consultant (1.15%)
- 6 Queensland Government staff (6.90%), including 5 from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (5.75%) and 1 from Evolve Therapeutic Services Queensland Health (1.15%)
- 1 Commonwealth Government staff member, the National Children's Commissioner (1.15%)
- 1 Member of Parliament (MP), the Shadow Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (1.15%)

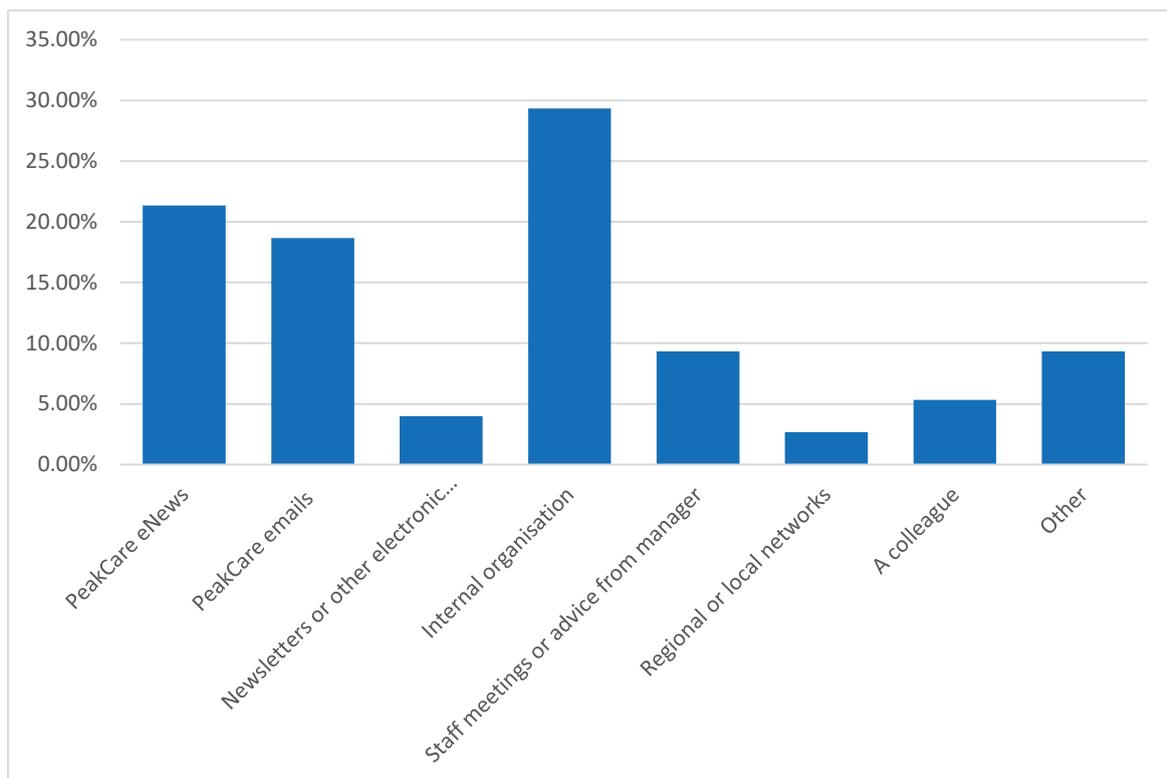
## THE SURVEY FINDINGS

### How did you find out about the forum?

40% of the survey respondents identified PeakCare's eNews, a weekly electronic newsletter (21.33%), or PeakCare emails advertising the event (18.67%) as the source of finding out about the forum.

29.33% of respondents found out about the forum from internal organisational/ office memos or

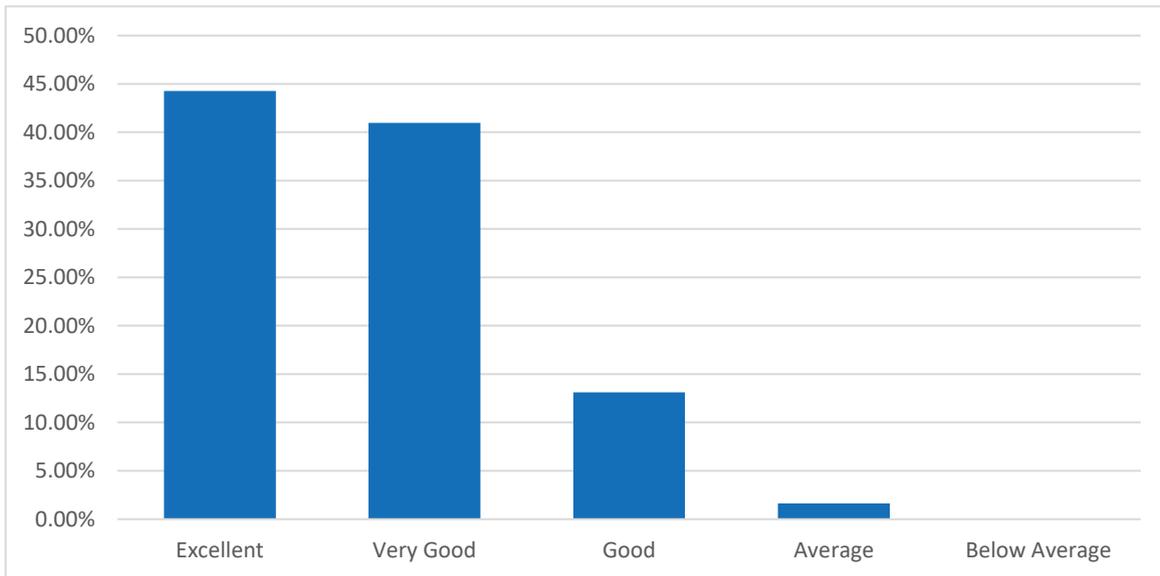
emails; 5.33% from a colleague; 9.33% from staff meetings or advice from their manager; 4% from newsletters or other electronic communications by other peak bodies or similar organisations in Queensland or elsewhere; 2.67% from regional or local networks; and 9.33% from other sources.



## How would you rate presentations the and panel discussion?

A majority of respondents (85.24%) rated the presentations and panel discussion as either *excellent* (44.26%) or *very good* (40.98%).

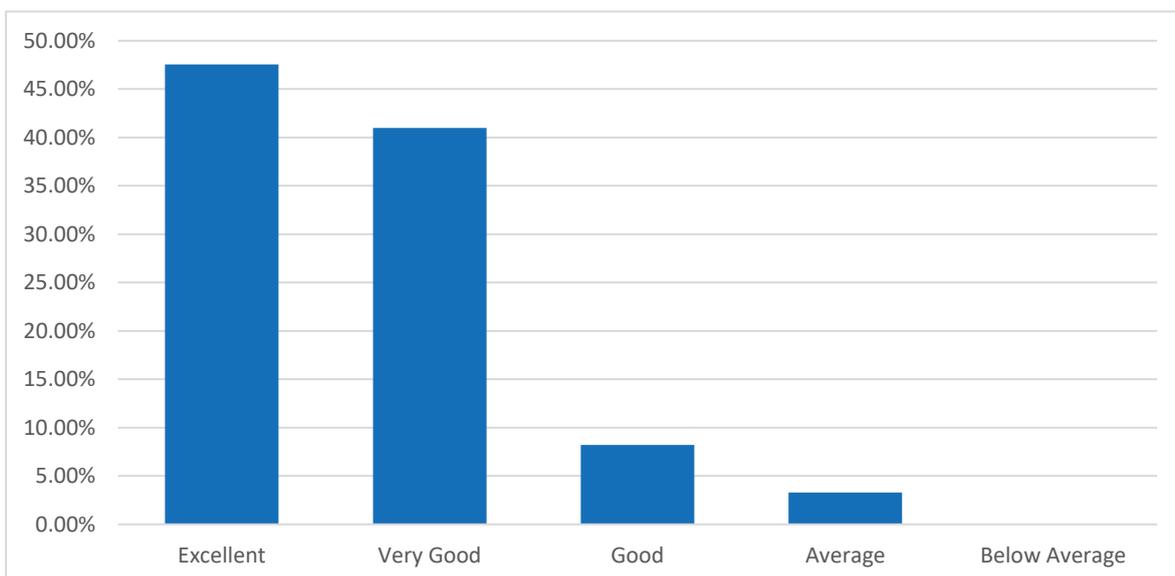
13.11% rated the presentations and panel discussion as *good* and 1.64% rated them as *average*.



## How would you rate the facilitation and identification of issues relevant to kinship care and the potential opportunities to address these issues?

88.52% of the survey respondents rated the facilitation and identification of issues relevant to kinship care and the potential opportunities to address these issues as either *excellent* (47.54%) or *very good* (40.98%).

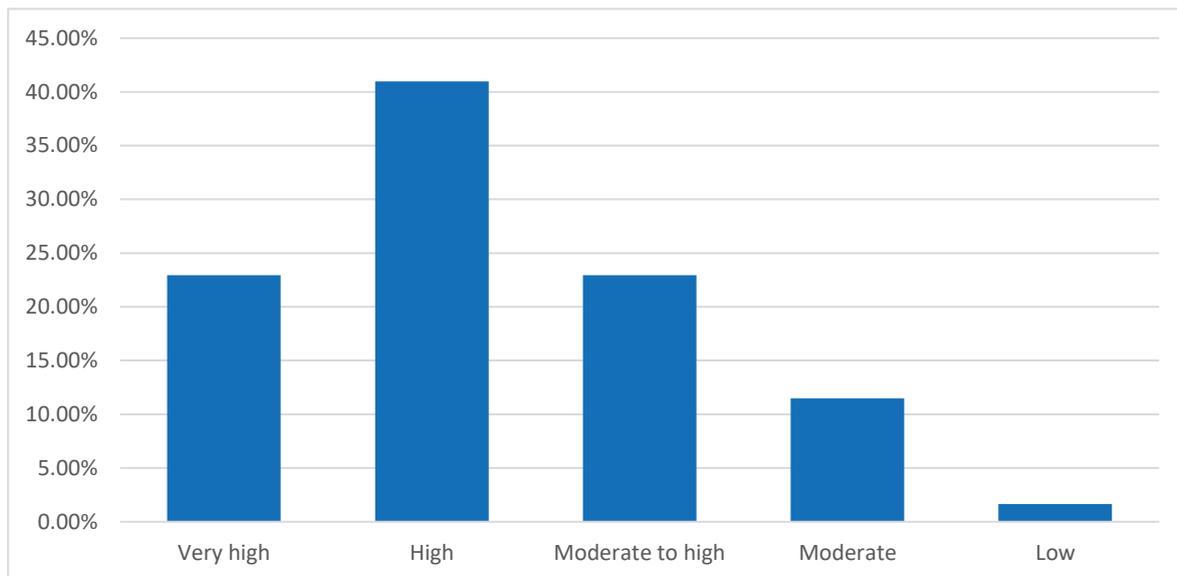
8.20% rated the facilitation and identification of issues as *good* and 3.28% rated them as *average*.



## How would you rate the level of improvement to your knowledge obtained from your attendance at the forum?

63.93% of the survey respondents rated the level of improvement to their knowledge obtained from their attendance at the forum as either *very high* (22.95%) or *high* (40.98%).

34.43% rated it as *moderate to high* (22.95%) or *moderate* (11.48%), and 1.64% rated it as *low*.



## What did you like most about the forum?

Comments entered by the survey respondents included:

- *The speakers were very informative and truly cared about this subject*
- *The relevant information and awareness of real issues*
- *Hearing the different stories from other kinship carers*
- *Everything*
- *The legal presentation was fantastic*
- *The testimonials from all the kinship carers*
- *Lived experience, focus on action*
- *Hearing stories, expanding knowledge of research, clarity on definition of problem, seeing what one organisation is doing to make a difference (WA)*
- *Listening to the young kinship carers and their experience*
- *Young carers' voices*
- *Q&A session, kinship carers voices*
- *Guest speaker variety, personal narratives, discussion of policy and avenues to advocate*
- *Hearing the real stories of kinship carers – both grandparents and young carers*
- *The statistics and hearing about peoples' experiences*
- *Good location, plenty of parking, good variety of knowledgeable speakers*
- *The panel and their personal reflections*
- *Personal stories, panel, differences between grandparents and young carers*
- *Hearing from the experience and the guidance in what they would like the future of kinship*
- *Practical resources, kin carer insights*
- *Lived experiences of young and grand carers*

- Panel of young carers
- Excellent research presentations, precise and well aimed, also liked individual stories from young women carers
- The carers' personal stories – amazing!!!
- Young carers panel, carers voices, Bev and Meredith
- The mix of lived experience / testimonies of carers and professional expertise and the practical nature of the presentations
- Experiences shared, legal issues discussion, Bev's information helpful and informative
- The opportunity to talk about much needed national issues and see how many people are united in their passion for this issue. It was also amazing to hear from kinship carers.
- Young carers and grandmothers' stories, practical tips from Bev, Meredith's research
- Information about legal issues, looking towards future change and raising awareness for kinship carers nationally
- The stories of kinship carers and the reality of this situation – showed the challenges financially and emotionally
- The voice of the panel – the young kinship group
- Hearing from the young kinship carers
- Kin carer stories – realizes/normalises what we hear
- Wealth of information, great speakers
- Action based and inspiring, good political strategies and stories and stats to help the cause, great coverage of the topic, good speakers
- The insightful information and statistics and also the additional information that was provided in relation to services that are available to foster and kinship carers
- Hearing from the young carers
- Stories of carers and new research
- Good venue, good food, young carers, question and answer session, National Children's Commissioner presence
- The issues faced by kinship carers
- Kinship carer presentations, Meredith Kiraly presentation, Jo Roff presentation
- Better understanding and awareness of how many kinship carers (informal) are in need of support and recognition, considering I work in the industry
- I now know so many others are invested in improving the system for kin carers as well (not just foster carers). Working Party for change is a great idea.
- Young kinship carer panel real stories
- Young carer stories
- Well educated carers speaking, research with solid recommendations, establishment of a working party
- Panel
- Discussion from Dr Kiraly and Commissioner Mitchell
- The personal stories
- The kin carer guest speaker – their stories
- Guest speakers – kin and grand carers
- Hearing from the young kin carers and also the grandparents' experiences
- The real life stories
- That there were persons present with the lived experience, the stories resonated with the supports I am involved in
- Presentations and Q&A panel from young kin carers
- Hearing the stories from the kinship carers
- Hearing from young carers
- Kinship carer stories, a copy of the report

## **The forum could have been better if...**

Comments entered by the survey respondents included:

- All good
- We had a politician present
- More problem-solving balance, more information shared from attendees – what people are currently doing in this space across Australia, more idea generating structured discussion, maybe journey mapping for a carer and identification of potential
- More focus on solutions – deep dives into how we provide more support – how we should assess carers – is assessment different for young carers with no parenting experience etc
- Group work between attendees and speakers
- Formal introduction of attending services and what they offer
- Can't think of anything

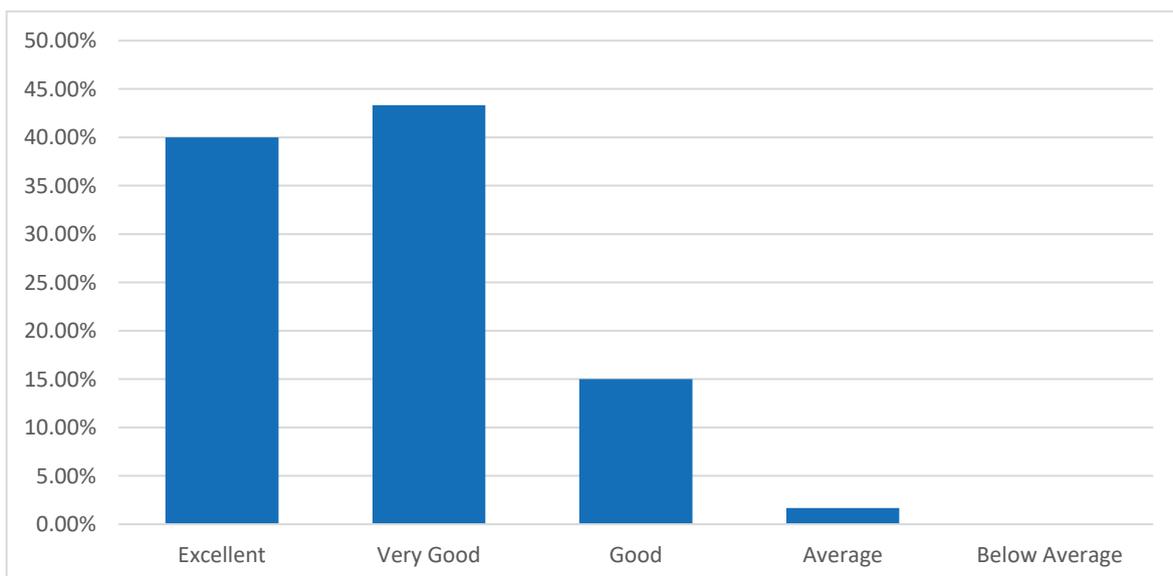
- *More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship speakers*
- *Include a speaker who had a positive kinship care experience and why*
- *There was greater commitment from the state government to attend the event*
- *Questions from the floor directly after presentations*
- *It was really excellent*
- *Space for kin carers attending to share with others – small group*
- *Nothing – it was perfect*
- *It was fantastic!*
- *Contributions from the floor*
- *I found this informative and engaging, presentation from Commission would have been better if more succinct as information provided by Megan later on was great*

- *Maybe more data handouts*
- *Centrelink attended to chat with kin carers*
- *More people in real decision-making positions present, but liked the action being taken on putting the issues forward to government*
- *Possibly some formal involvement from DCSYW and QFKC – get everyone singing the same song*
- *Possible Q&A with government representative and department representatives that might be able to comment on stories they would hear*
- *Industry direction*
- *Would like to hear more strategies around practical supports agencies can offer kin carers – implementing practice changes for support going forward*

## How would you rate the forum overall?

83.33% of the survey respondents rated the forum overall as either *excellent* (40%) or *very good* (43.33%).

15% rated it as *good*, and 1.67% rated it as *average*.



## Are there other follow up actions you would like to be taken?

Comments entered by the survey respondents included:

- *Talk about it at every appropriate opportunity*
- *How do we change the census form?*
- *Share presentations*
- *Perhaps compilation and distribution of what services, projects etc are being offered – through email etc*
- *Working group is a great idea*
- *The PeakCare Qld working party being established as discussed*
- *Keep everyone, including carers, informed and up to date*
- *Collective email contacts to facilitate (attending services)*
- *Keep up to date on information, thank you*
- *I would love copies of the presentations to be sent electronically*
- *Develop resources eg website, flyers, flow charts etc for new kinship carers*
- *Thank you*
- *What legal remedies could assist other than stat dec*
- *I like the idea of a working party*
- *Glad there will be a working party co-chaired by Jo and Lindsay to examine key areas and priorities*
- *Working group*
- *Read PeakCare blog, take back information to our office*
- *Perhaps gather more life stories of young and grandparent carers for influential bodies*
- *Government to be approached with recommendations*
- *Update on working group outcome*
- *Not all grandparent kin carers need to be visited monthly as per the current Qld requirements, would like to see that carer agencies discuss visits and support to carers and that the agency is funded accordingly, not just blanket rule for everyone where the support is not needed*
- *A “beginners guide” style resource for all new kin carers – published far and wide, resources, supports, advocacy, rights etc*
- *Would like to have follow up information as the actions are set in motion. I do hope the policy/law makers and Child Safety listen.*

