

2026-27 Budget - PeakCare submission

**PeakCare's Submission to Queensland
Treasury on priorities for the 2026–27
Queensland Budget**

5 February 2026

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Introduction

PeakCare welcomes the opportunity to provide priorities for the Queensland Child and Family Sector for the 2026–27 Queensland Budget.

The 2026-27 financial year will be a significant year for Queensland. With only five years until the Olympic and Paralympic Games are held in Brisbane and across Queensland, the eyes of the world will be on us. There is much to be done to ensure Queensland, and government, are prepared to showcase our State on the world stage.

About PeakCare

PeakCare is a not-for-profit peak body for child and family services in Queensland, providing an independent voice representing and promoting matters of interest to the non-government sector. Across Queensland, PeakCare represents small, medium, and large local, state-wide and national non-government organisations which provide prevention and early intervention, generic, targeted, and intensive family support to children, young people, families, and communities. Member organisations also provide child protection services, foster care, kinship care and residential care for children and young people who are at risk of entry to, or who are in the statutory child protection system and youth justice systems.

A large network of associate members and supporters also subscribe to PeakCare. This includes individuals with an interest in child protection, youth justice and related services, and who are supportive of PeakCare's policy platform around the rights and entitlements of children, young people and their families to safety, wellbeing, and equitable access to life opportunities.

PeakCare's Submission

As Queensland's peak body for the child and family sector, PeakCare recognises the importance of evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs play in creating hope and opportunity for children, young people, families, and the workforce that supports them, and in strengthening safety and wellbeing across our community.

PeakCare remains committed to our vision of Queensland children, young people, and families, in all their diversity, thriving with access to the right support, at the right time, and in the right place. We are committed to working in partnership with government to realise this vision and to help build stronger, safer communities for all Queenslanders.

PeakCare is intent on improving the wellbeing of Queensland's children, young people, and families by:

- championing innovation
- creating impactful partnerships
- anchoring our actions in evidence
- driving forward-thinking advocacy
- amplifying the voice of our members and the sector.

PeakCare's submission for your consideration is grounded in three foundational pillars that guide our advocacy and service delivery priorities. Together, these pillars are integral to building a safe, supportive, and thriving environment for children, young people and families across Queensland

Early Intervention and Prevention: Addressing the root causes of social disadvantage and adverse childhood experiences is central to our approach. This requires a strong focus on early childhood supports, family-based interventions, and access to essential services including health and mental health care, early education, stable and secure housing and disability support.

Investment in these areas mitigates risk, strengthens family capability, and reduces future involvement with child protection and justice systems. PeakCare and the Alliance partners and critical friends all strongly advocate for the continuation of the Queensland Preventative Peaks Alliance, which enables cross-sector collaboration to deliver place-based, community-focused outcomes that are sector-led, community-centred and evidence-based. The Alliance members and critical friends support this work through their own budget submissions.

Early Intervention and Prevention

Prevention

<p>\$350,000 per annum (Five year)</p>	<p>Preventative Peak Alliance Queensland – Ongoing delivery of opportunities to improve place based, community focussed investment</p> <p><i>The Preventative Peak Alliance is an alliance with PeakCare, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), QShelter, Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) and Neighbourhood Centres Queensland.</i></p> <p><i>The Preventative Peaks is also supported by over 30 Critical Friends including key leaders in the Housing, Health, Education, Domestic and Family Violence, Youth Justice, Legal and Early Childhood sectors.</i></p> <p><i>The Preventative Peaks Alliance can support the Crisafulli Government in delivering on key election commitments for putting Queensland Families first through:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safety where you live</i> • <i>Health services when you need them</i> • <i>Respect for your money</i> • <i>A place to call home</i> • <i>A government that works for you.</i> 	<p>Focussed on creating and supporting strong families and communities, stakeholders have clearly told the Preventative Peak Alliance at statewide consultation and engagement events, that prevention must be positioned as an ‘upstream’ priority, requiring systemic, sustained investment. Numerous participants noted that current prevention and early intervention investment allocations often come too late, are not preventative and remain low across sectors relative to investment in crisis and intensive responses, with efforts often focused on managing crisis after it occurs.</p> <p>Stakeholders highlight the acute need for a shared framework that distinguishes proactive, upstream strategies from reactive responses, and that helps Queensland invest in areas that will produce meaningful, long-term change. Shifting prevention to the centre of policy and funding decisions will require breaking from the reactive patterns that have typified Queensland’s systems and necessitates a prevention-first focus across all levels of human services policy, commissioning and delivery.</p> <p>The Preventative Peaks Alliance is already delivering place-based community focused evidence of what works supported by the world’s best, research backed youth intervention models. Ongoing support will continue to improve outcomes for children and families and make stronger, safer communities.</p>
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(As part of the Queensland Preventative Peaks Alliance)	<p>QShelter and PeakCare provide guidance and advice to government on supporting families and children with stable and secure housing options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a protocol to prevent homelessness for families and children if exiting or evicted from crisis, social or affordable housing. If families with children are at risk of eviction from social and community housing, activate a protocol to do everything possible to sustain the tenancy through a combination of support and brokerage • Set a target for new housing suitable for families including a target as part of the 53,500 social homes • Develop and implement a poverty reduction plan to achieve generational change that enables more children to thrive and measured through improved educational retention, reduced homelessness, increased workforce participation, reduced involvement in youth justice and child protection interventions. 	<p>Invest in the Queensland Preventative Peaks Alliance to advise on place-based prevention measures involving an integrated approach across Child Safety, Health, Education, Youth Justice, and Housing to ensure the early identification of families and children at risk leading to interventions across food security, early childcare, a housing guarantee, retention in education, participation in community activities and the prevention of the abuse and neglect of children and young people.</p>
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Early Intervention

\$750,000 (\$250,000 per annum per Agency) (Three year)	<p>Three-year Partnership with Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP), QATSICPP and PeakCare for Prevention Reinvestment Programs with a shared focus for healthy development, wellbeing, cultural connection and safety of Queensland children and young people, and their families and communities.</p>	<p>Commission a <i>Child, Youth and Families Investment Impact Taskforce</i> to undertake a review, and report back to CBRC by early 2027, on existing and proposed State Government funded child and youth early intervention programs, and parenting, and family supports and identify opportunities for efficiency and impact improvements.</p> <p>Early experiences shape children's brain development and set strong foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing. The evidence is clear. Children need stable relationships, safe environments, community support and access to quality early learning, education and healthcare to flourish. When families and communities are well supported, children are more likely to thrive and the benefits ripple throughout society.</p>
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<p>\$120,000 Per annum to BeyondDV</p>	<p>Hope 4 Life Program Supporting 8-13-year-olds with connection, counselling, mentors and tutoring to address violence and behaviour including re-engagement with education.</p>	<p>Supported by partnerships with Brisbane Lions and work with Scouts Qld, this program provides direct support to children and young people 8-13 and extend wrap around family supports for the Health and Wellbeing of families and children.</p> <p>Focused on continued engagement with education, regular participation in social activities with peers and mentors and access to therapeutic supports aimed to minimise the long-term impact of trauma experienced by children and young people exposed to domestic and family violence. The Hope 4 Life program has been running since 2019, is evidence based and trauma informed, and has been successfully evaluated by Griffith University.</p>
<p>\$200,000</p>	<p>Partnership with PeakCare and Community Controlled Organisations such as QATSICPP, Queensland's youth justice peak body, to deliver culturally safe and specific training programs to service providers working with First Nations families and young people to ensure appropriate and culturally safe practices are in place.</p>	<p>In Queensland's annual report on Closing the Gap implementation snapshot 2023, only four of 19 outcomes are on track. We continue to fail in reducing the over-representation of First Nations people in the criminal justice and child protection systems.</p> <p>This investment will see delivery of face-to-face training programs, supported with culturally appropriate online training as part of the Hope and Healing expansion.</p>

Child Safety and Protection: The Crisafulli government's key election commitments in 2024 were through the Safer Children, Safer Communities plan, as the peak body for the sector we continue our commitment to support the government in delivering for Queensland children on these commitments. Our initiatives under this pillar aim to provide comprehensive support systems for children at risk and those in care, ensuring their holistic development and successful transition into adulthood. Key priorities include expanding the State's Hope and Healing training, enhancing educational and training opportunities, and supporting the carers and care workforce that care for Queensland's most vulnerable children.

Child Safety and Protection

Workforce and Training

<p>\$500,000 per annum (Three Year)</p>	<p>24hr dual carer supervision model for Residential Care PeakCare to lead the development of the Residential Care sector-based dual carer model including workforce strategy and implementation of varied models for organisations.</p>	<p>Develop a Workforce Plan for the Residential Care sector to implement the dual carer model.</p> <p>A capability uplift for the whole care sector workforce, leveraging proven training models such as Hope and Healing, to deliver improved outcomes for children by professionally enriching workers.</p>
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<p>\$65,000 (Discovery Phase)</p>	<p>Reform Residential Care system</p> <p>Progress development of a dedicated Training Centre of Excellence: “Residential Care Learning and Development Centre (RCLADC)”, a sector-led, practice-informed, and purpose-built initiative to strengthen the capability, confidence and consistency of Queensland’s residential care workforce. It responds to significant gaps in the current training and development landscape and outlines a case for investment in a central hub to support workforce growth, retention, and quality of care.</p> <p>Following the Discovery Phase and implementation plan, a budgeted business case would be developed for Treasury consideration.</p>	<p>Establishment of a RCLADC offers a clear, practical and strategic response to the challenges identified Foundations of the future – building a workforce that cares, connects and evolves.</p> <p>The Centre as a central hub for developing, coordinating and delivering workforce learning across Queensland’s residential care system, guided by the voices of young people, practitioners, and cultural leaders. The Centre would aim to build capability, cohesion and confidence in the residential care workforce. Workers are not only equipped to do their jobs but are also supported to develop and remain in the sector.</p>
<p>\$60,000 Caring for Those That Care Strategy</p>	<p>Undertake the opportunities identified in the Foundations of the Future – building a workforce that cares, connects and evolves for residential care workforce that could be transformed into a broader, system-wide strategy ‘Caring for Those That Care’ for all people directly supporting children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC).</p>	<p>The current Foundations of the Future strategy already provides a values-based, outcome oriented and relational model that could anchor a broader approach. Expanding this into Caring for Those That Care presents an opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consistency in expectations, support and recognition across care types • Address common workforce capability issues • Create a unifying framework for recruitment, development and retention • Strengthen the Governments role as a system leader. <p>By positioning workforce and relational culture as central to reform, the strategy offers a coherent narrative that can align multiple initiatives from residential care redesign to carer support enhancements and early intervention workforce development.</p>

<p>\$100,000 (aligns to the other two prior activities to implement the Foundations of the future – building a workforce that cares, connects and evolves Strategy)</p>	<p>Advancing implementation and delivery of the opportunities in Foundations of the future – building a workforce that cares, connects and evolves Strategy.</p> <p>Children and young people in residential care thrive when supported by a consistent, trusted and capable workforce. Over the past 12 months, Queensland's residential care sector has undertaken extensive consultation and reflection to understand the enablers and barriers to such a workforce.</p> <p>Responsibility for action does not fall on one single stakeholder, agency or organisation. Long lasting change envisioned in the Strategy will require a joint effort between government agencies, child safety staff, providers and peak bodies.</p>	<p>Continual growth in the numbers of children and young people in Residential Care and with the equal decline in new Foster Carers we need to act now to address this critical workforce issue facing Queensland child and family sector.</p> <p>While the Strategy articulates a long-term vision for a stable, skilled and supported workforce, implementation on the practical actions needed to begin moving towards that vision needs to be commenced now.</p> <p>Responding to a consistent message heard across sector consultations: we know what good care looks like, and we know what workers need to deliver it, what is missing are the conditions to make it possible.</p>
<p>\$150,000 (discovery and Pilot establishment)</p>	<p>PeakCare as a finalist in the Premiers Excellence Training awards to work with Department of Finance, Trade, Employment and Training to develop a pilot based on the Victorian Government's <i>Raising Expectations</i> program.</p>	<p>Ensure young people from out of home care who may be at risk of disengagement from education are effectively supported and re-engaged in education, training, or employment.</p>

Support for Carers

<p>Approx. \$2.3 million (per annum)</p>	<p>Energy Rebate for Foster and Kin Carers. Queensland's Foster and Kin Carers provide critical support to our State's most disadvantaged children. Improving the impact on these carers through support such as the Energy Rebate scheme make a real and direct difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children and make a significant impact on the cost-of-living impacts for our valuable foster and kin carers.</p>	<p>Electricity continues to be the largest growing cost of living impact for families and carers. As a nation leading opportunity to highlight the important work Foster and Kin Carers do, by including foster and kin carers within the scope of the Queensland Electricity Rebate (\$386) as currently provided to seniors, pensioners and concession card holders.</p>
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<p>\$1.51 Million (over three years)</p> <p>(three-year extension and four-month interim uplift)</p>	<p>Since 2019, PeakCare and the Queensland Government have worked collaboratively to deliver the Hope and Healing framework and associated training to the child protection sector.</p> <p>In 2022, PeakCare was contracted by the Queensland Government to administer, maintain and support the statewide delivery of Hope & Healing (H&H) training, ensuring licensed residential care providers and foster care services can reliably access and complete essential mandatory workforce and carer training, this arrangement ends 30 June 2026.</p>	<p>In proportional terms, the request represents approximately two cents for every \$100 spent on out of home care services in Queensland. On a per-child basis, PeakCare's request equates to approximately \$94 per child over the period of this proposal, or around \$28 per child per year, to support mandatory workforce training and the service infrastructure required to deliver it reliably at scale.</p> <p>The adjustment in funding reflects the program's current scale and operating realities. During the lifetime of the previous funding arrangement, the Hope & Healing program more than doubled to over 40,000 registered learners and expanded nearly fourfold in participating residential care groups (these may be individual organisations or regionally split, separately administered entities), materially increasing the scale, complexity and support requirements of program delivery.</p>
<p>\$200,000</p>	<p>New professional foster care pilot program for kids with complex support needs</p> <p>PeakCare to develop an online training package and implementation approach to create a Professional Foster Care program specifically targeted at children with disabilities and complex needs currently in residential care.</p>	<p>Better support foster and kinship carers including attraction and retention and provide more flexible and professional models of foster care.</p>

Support for Children and Young People

<p>Increase Youth Community Housing Providers funding by 20%</p>	<p>Young People Leaving Care housing support</p> <p>Supporting QShelter's pre-budget submission for stable housing for young people.</p> <p>Providing increased funding to targeted youth community housing providers with an increase of 20% and with increased flexibility for brokerage when working with young people to enable more responsive outcomes into safe and stable housing options.</p>	<p>Young people face considerable barriers to accessing homes due to low incomes. Specific housing programs are needed to overcome financial barriers to access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the subsidy by a further 20% to community housing providers enabling them to house more young people • Monitor and report on the number of subsidies applied • Fast track investment in Youth Foyers to deliver eight additional Foyers in five years • Deliver targeted supportive housing for young people who experience complex needs • Expand tenancy sustainment support so that more young people are assisted to sustain their housing • Prevent all exits to homelessness by young people leaving care by 30 June 2027. <p>Ensure all SHS services are empowered to respond to the needs of young people aged 12-25 so that all locations have a service response regardless of whether specialist agencies are available.</p>
<p>\$100,000 (Best Practice Framework for Secure Care in Queensland)</p>	<p>Secure Care for young people providing a best practice framework for children with significant complex needs, which require therapeutic and who are at significant risk of harm to themselves and/or others.</p>	<p>PeakCare held the Secure Care in Focus – International Insights to inform Queensland Practice webinar with over 200 registered attendees in late 2025.</p> <p>Working with Kate Crowe a 2022 Churchill Fellow and 2023 Creswick Fellow, Kate has studied leading international approaches to alternatives to secure care across Scotland, the Netherlands, Canada, Hawaii, Finland and Iceland. She is also an Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne and an active member of the GIRAF international research network, and with sector professionals, PeakCare would provide the Queensland Government with a blueprint for a Best Practice Framework including legislative considerations for introducing Secure Care in Queensland.</p>

Youth Justice: Central to PeakCare's efforts to encourage the government to Do Detention Differently is the transformation and reform of Queensland's youth justice system through evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs and where required therapeutic responses that prioritise rehabilitation and community reintegration for young people and their families.

PeakCare seeks to reduce reliance on detention, expand early intervention and diversionary programs, and strengthen access to education and vocational pathways that empower young people, support long-term positive outcomes, and rebuild community trust.

Youth Justice			
\$100,000	<p>Partnership with PeakCare and QATSICPP to review and evaluate the effectiveness of Youth Justice Information Sharing MOU across Queensland to understand why the <i>Information Sharing and Services Coordination for Children Charged with Offences</i> MOU which is not working as well as it could between successful service providers of Kickstarter and Regional Reset Grants.</p>	<p>Across Cairns agencies who have been funded under Kickstarter grants concerns have been raised as to the information sharing to enable successful delivery of the grants under their contract terms. This includes testing of the PLAICT cost-effectiveness/cost-benefit software.</p> <p>Agencies were unaware of the Government's Information Sharing MOU and local Youth Justice managers have also expressed their frustration that the MOU is not being properly utilised.</p> <p>PeakCare and QATSICPP would provide a review of the Information Sharing MOU for Far North and provide opportunity for improvement across all Queensland Regions to ensure the success of the Kickstarter and Regional Reset grant recipient programs.</p>	
\$200,000 per annum	<p>PeakCare to work with care sector service providers to develop and deliver a community based 12-month step down/transition program, for young people on community orders or exiting youth detention.</p>	<p>Supporting the wraparound service providers in a support-first model specifically for young people who are on bail orders with electronic monitoring devices and provide connections through to both therapeutic and practical support services across Queensland.</p>	

Conclusion

These budget priorities will enable PeakCare to continue to support the Queensland Government in delivering for all Queenslanders. With a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and supporting families and communities, these budget priorities restore community safety where we live and return taxpayers respect for the considered expenditure of our money.

The Queensland Government has an opportunity now to build on the strengths of communities and families to deliver a significant shift in the way our state addresses inequality. Many Queenslanders are struggling with the cost of living; increased rents and housing instability, increasing electricity and grocery prices, and reduced access to services, in particularly in regional Queensland. Government expenditure must be targeted to deliver strong and sustainable outcomes for the Queensland people. Prevention and early intervention offer a dual benefit for governments, particularly in a tight fiscal environment. They improve outcomes for individuals and communities while reducing demand for tertiary services. Queensland communities and families expect their government to deliver and provide support for families early to avoid expensive crisis responses.

With a stronger whole-of-system approach, underpinned by proactive detection, coordinated response, investment in prevention and early intervention, and sustained recovery pathways Queenslander will know that the Crisafulli government is delivering for them. Only by strengthening supports for children and families can we deliver on our responsibility to keep children safer and support them to thrive.

PeakCare welcomes the opportunity to discuss these proposals with your relevant ministers and looks forward to working with the government on an ambitious agenda to deliver safer children, safer communities and improve the lives of all Queensland children and families.

Yours sincerely,



Estelle Abela

Interim Chief Executive Officer