

Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Child Safety System

Recognition and better support for sibling kinship carers

29 March 2026

Foreword

This submission adopts an approach that centres lived experience as a vital form of evidence. It has been led by a PeakCare project officer, supported by colleagues, with direct experience as a sibling kinship carer. This perspective brings insight grounded in the realities of care, responsibility, and navigating complex systems.

PeakCare supports this submission in its role as Queensland's peak body for child and family services and recognises the importance of ensuring reform is informed by those most directly impacted. Lived experience strengthens the evidence base, highlighting both the strengths of, and gaps within, current systems.

This submission is directly informed by the lived experience of sibling kinship carers. PeakCare acknowledges their significant and under-recognised contribution in caring for their siblings while maintaining essential connections to family, community, and culture, often in very challenging circumstances.

In presenting this work, we have sought to retain the authenticity and integrity of the multiple authors, while supporting its translation into a format aligned to the expectations of a formal Inquiry. We do so with deep respect for lived expertise and a commitment to ensuring it informs policy, practice, and reform.

PeakCare commends this submission to the Inquiry and encourages careful consideration of the perspectives it presents.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people as the Traditional Custodians of Meanjin (Brisbane), the lands on which PeakCare is physically located - where we meet, work and learn - and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of all lands across Queensland. We pay respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to emerging leaders.

We acknowledge the strength, wisdom and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, and communities, who continue to nurture their cultures, share their stories and uphold their knowledge systems.

At PeakCare, we honour the enduring connection First Nations peoples have to land, waters, skies and community. We remain committed to listening deeply, walking alongside, and creating a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard, valued and respected.

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Introduction

PeakCare Queensland Incorporated (PeakCare) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety System (Inquiry) and the important work to support families keep their children safe and to better support children in the care system.

This submission brings to the Inquiry's attention a cohort of kinship carers known as 'sibling kinship carers' who assume the caring responsibility for their sibling/s placed in care. Sibling kinship carers are often much younger than most kinship carers and are at a different life stage – often at the beginning of their careers or completing higher education. Sibling carers have many of the same needs for support as all home-based carers (kinship and foster carers) do, such as timely access to health, mental health, educational and other services to best support the children in their care. However, sibling carers are often navigating their own transition to adulthood while taking on the responsibility of care for younger siblings, and need targeted assistance to effectively support them to meet the needs of the siblings in their care - while also keeping themselves healthy and well.

This submission focuses on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference to make practical and feasible recommendations in respect of the system design to support and facilitate kinship care in a modern best practice.¹ PeakCare proposes that, as a first step in designing effective supports and systems for kinship carers, the Child Safety Department formally recognise sibling kinship carers as a distinct cohort. This should include systematically capturing data on their characteristics, circumstances, and specific support needs.

Undertaking a targeted engagement and consultation process with sibling kinship carers will provide critical insights into how best to support them in their roles. In turn, this will help ensure that the children in their care are able to thrive. And vitally, remain together.

In partnership with the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), PeakCare has established a *Sibling Kinship Carer Initiative*, which aims to better understand the experiences, needs, and supports required to assist sibling kinship carers and the children in their care to be healthy, safe, and thriving.

This submission is directly informed by the lived experience of sibling kinship carers. PeakCare acknowledges their significant contribution in caring for their siblings and maintaining their connections to family, community, and culture.

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.

¹ Queensland Government, *Commission of Inquiry into Queensland's Child Safety System Terms of Reference*, Extraordinary Gazette No. 16, 23 May 2025 <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/20a4ca84-077f-4bab-bc99-09e2517ce1aa/23.05.25-16-extra-gazette.pdf?ETag=901b06f5cca7b23a3359024da03f9c9e>

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

The Commission of Inquiry into Queensland’s Child Safety System

The Inquiry was announced by the Queensland Government in in May 2025.² Terms of Reference include making appropriate and feasible recommendations on supporting and facilitating kinship care in a modern, best practice setting, and achieving the best possible outcomes to protect and support children.³

Kinship Care in Queensland

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld) a child is removed from their parents and placed in care when they have experienced serious harm or are at unacceptable risk of significant harm. Removal is often immediate and unplanned. In these circumstances, kinship carers often step in at short notice, opening their homes to care for children with little time to prepare.⁴

Queensland Government performance data provides insight into the profile of kinship carers in Queensland. As at June 2024, 2,275 children were living in formal kinship care arrangements, with approximately 72 per cent of kinship carers aged 55 years and over (1,628 carers).⁵ However, a person can be a kinship carer from 18 years of age and many of these younger carers are caring for their siblings in care.

Sibling kinship carers are often not accurately captured in the Child Safety Department’s data or reporting systems, meaning their prevalence, characteristics and support needs are not well understood. From consultations and engagements, PeakCare and the QFCC understand that sibling carers are often significantly younger than most kinship cares.

² Queensland Government, *Joint Statement: Commission of Inquiry into Queensland’s broken Child Safety System*, 18 May 2025, <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/102583>

³ Queensland Government, *Commission of Inquiry into Queensland’s Child Safety System Terms of Reference*, Extraordinary Gazette No. 16, 23 May 2025 <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/20a4ca84-077f-4bab-bc99-09e2517ce1aa/23.05.25-16-extra-gazette.pdf?ETag=901b06f5cca7b23a3359024da03f9c9e>

⁴ Queensland Government, *Child Safety Practice Manual: Provide and review care*, available at: <https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/procedures/provide-and-review-care>

⁵ Queensland Government, *Our Performance: Improving care and post care support*, <https://performance.dcssds.qld.gov.au/improving-care-and-post-care-support/who-we-work-with/carer-families>

They are often making their own transitions to adults, balancing caregiving responsibilities alongside engaging in higher education, entering the workforce, and managing limited finances.

PeakCare's work through the Sibling Carer Initiative indicates that sibling carers frequently assume care in response to immediate need without hesitation, but also without time to prepare or plan. The services and supports available often do not meet their needs, or are only provided during business hours, which requires taking time away from work or studies to ensure their siblings can attend. Recognising sibling carers as a distinct cohort within kinship care is critical to ensuring that system responses reflect the full diversity of family-based care arrangements and that appropriate supports are in place to sustain these placements.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) and PeakCare Sibling Carer Initiative

The QFCC, in partnership with PeakCare through the Sibling Carer Initiative, is advocating for reform to ensure sibling carers are recognised and supported within the child protection system. The Sibling Carer Initiative seeks to address longstanding gaps in policy and practice by establishing dedicated supports and programs that reflect the unique needs and circumstances of sibling carers.⁶

A critical first step in this reform is the development of a consistent mechanism within the child safety system to identify sibling carers, capture data on their prevalence, understand their needs and monitor the sustainability of sibling care arrangements. Currently, sibling carers are not formally identified or recorded, limiting the system's ability to understand the scale of sibling care and respond effectively.

PeakCare's work with sibling carers indicates that care arrangements are often established quickly, without formal planning or recognition, structured assessment, and in the absence of consistent financial, practical or therapeutic support. In these circumstances, sibling carers may be required to manage complex behaviours and challenging home environments without guidance or support from the Child Safety Department or support agency, creating a heightened risk of placement breakdown.

Through the Sibling Carer Initiative, PeakCare has heard from sibling carers managing significant responsibilities with little to no external support. Many assume caregiving roles at a younger age, often while establishing independence, navigating education or employment, and with limited financial stability. In many cases, sibling carers also have their own lived experience of the child protection system, further compounding the complexity of their role.⁷

Improving how sibling carers are identified and understood will enable more informed planning, targeted investment, and more effective, responsive service support. In turn, it will also support greater accountability in ensuring sibling care arrangements are safe, sustainable, and aligned with best practice.

⁶ Sibling Kinship Carer Initiative, *PeakCare Queensland*, 2025, <https://peakcare.org.au/initiatives/sibling-kinship-carer-initiative/#:~:text=The%20Sibling%20Kinship%20Carer%20Initiative,View%20the%20factsheet>

⁷ 'We're just kids as well': The experience and support needs of young kinship carers in Australia, Kiraly, M. & Roff, J., 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106967>

While there is a broader need to strengthen supports for all kinship carers in Queensland, sibling carers require tailored and targeted responses that reflect their age, life stage, and unique circumstances. Ensuring appropriate financial and non-financial supports are in place will better enable sibling carers to sustain their role and support the children in their care to thrive.

The QFCC's final submission into the Inquiry, *Fixing the foundations: Seven reset reforms for Queensland's Child Protection System (Principal Commissioner)*, pages 55-56 align with the sibling carer reforms discussed in this submission.

Children's Rights and Sibling Relationships

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the principal instrument setting out the human rights of children. It was ratified by Australia on 17 December 1990 and became legally binding on 16 January 1991. This means that the Queensland Government, responsible for child protection, is obligated to follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that laws and policies align with its principles.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that children, for their full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and to enjoy their own culture.⁸ Sibling kinship carers uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child supporting the siblings in their care to grow up in family, community and culture.

The importance of sibling kinship carers is recognised by the QFCC in their commitment to uphold the specific and unique sibling rights of children in care, including the right to live with their siblings, the right to know their siblings, and the right to be free from pressure to assume caregiving roles.⁹ Together, these rights affirm that sibling relationships are not optional or secondary considerations, but fundamental to children's wellbeing and must be actively upheld within system design and decision-making.

Embedding a children's rights framework within policy and practice will strengthen decision-making, ensuring that sibling relationships are prioritised appropriately, and that both the needs of children and the responsibilities placed on sibling carers are recognised and supported.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Sibling Care

Consideration of sibling kinship care must be understood within the broader context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, who are significantly overrepresented in the child protection system in

⁸United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *UNICEF Australia*, 2026. <https://www.unicef.org.au/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

⁹ Empowering sibling caregivers, *Queensland Family & Child Commission*, 2024. <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/siblingcarers>

Queensland and nationally at levels significantly above their population share (8 per cent as at June 2022).¹⁰

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, sibling relationships are deeply connected to broader kinship systems, cultural identity and community belonging, and play a critical role in maintaining connection to family, country and culture.

“Being able to look after my sibling allows me to be connected to my culture and grow my own knowledge as well” - sibling kinship carer, Qld

Strengthening recognition and support for sibling carers must therefore align with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.¹¹ This includes ensuring that decisions regarding sibling care upholds the elements of prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection, and are grounded in self-determination and culturally informed decision-making.

A rights-based and culturally responsive approach must recognise the importance of sibling relationships while also ensuring that children are not placed in inappropriate or unsupported caregiving roles. Recognition of sibling carers should complement, not replace, broader kinship, community and cultural decision-making frameworks.

Any reform to recognise and support sibling carers must be grounded in the cultural context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. For these children, maintaining sibling connections is not simply beneficial, but central to cultural continuity and belonging. System responses must therefore actively uphold the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and ensure that recognition of sibling carers strengthens, rather than disrupts, culturally led decision-making and the role of extended family and community. Embedding this approach will support stronger alignment between system responses and the cultural rights, identity and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

What Sibling Kinship Carers have told us

Through the Sibling Carer Initiative, PeakCare has heard directly from sibling carers about the realities of providing care within current system settings. These experiences highlight a consistent pattern of unmet need and limited system responsiveness. Sibling carers consistently report experiencing a distinct set of challenges that are not adequately addressed within existing frameworks.

¹⁰ Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, *Queensland Government: Our Performance*, 2026. <https://performance.dcssds.qld.gov.au/meeting-the-needs-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-children/over-representation-in-the-child-protection-system/over-representation-in-care>

¹¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, *Delivering for Queensland*, 2025. <https://www.families.qld.gov.au/our-work/child-safety/parents-families/ongoing-intervention/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-peoples/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-child-placement-principle>

These include significant mental health and wellbeing impacts associated with unsupported care arrangements, including chronic stress, emotional exhaustion and anxiety linked to financial insecurity and housing instability.¹² Many describe reduced connection with peers and limited access to counselling, therapeutic support and respite care.¹³

Case Study 1: Sibling kinship care and system gaps

Ava* has cared for three of her siblings, who are now young adults: Mavis* (18), Rose* (19) and Alan* (21). She is currently still caring for Mavis but no longer has contact with Rose or Alan.

Ava has a total of 11 siblings in care and is not in contact with any of them. She is largely disconnected from her siblings and family and has no contact with either of her biological parents.

Due to her caring responsibilities, Ava has had to take time off work, resulting in lost income. On one occasion, Rose became escalated after Ava explained she could not wait for her to finish at the gym, despite offering to drive her. Rose punched a hole in the wall, breaking her wrist in the process. Ava was then required to miss work the following day due to the incident. This, along with damage caused by all three siblings, also created rental stress.

Mavis, whom Ava continues to care for, initially presented challenges in becoming an approved carer. Ava lodged complaints with Child Safety due to the lack of an appropriate bedroom in her two-bedroom apartment. Mavis had intended to run away from residential care, with plans to stay with a 40-year-old man. Ava intervened and offered her a safer alternative.

Ava also received limited financial support from Child Safety. Ava received a single \$200 Woolworths gift card for the three months Mavis stayed with her without formal approval. Mavis also had very limited clothing, requiring Ava to purchase essentials such as underwear, socks and bras.

There was also significant drug use within the apartment, which made rental inspections difficult. During periods of intoxication, Ava's personal belongings, including sentimental items, were damaged.

Although Ava is no longer in contact with Rose or Alan, Mavis is now doing well and is completing a Diploma of Nursing. However, due to the lack of support she received, Ava has stated she would not take on care of additional siblings in the future.

*Names have been changed

¹² 'We're just kids as well': The experience and support needs of young kinship carers in Australia, Kiraly, M. & Roff, J., 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106967>

¹³ Unrecognized: Kinship care by young aunts, siblings and other young people, Kiraly, M., Humphreys, C. & Kertsz, M. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12814>

Case Study 2: Access to support and system navigation

Jordan* (20) and her sister Leah* (18) were at risk of losing their housing due to falling behind on their rental payments. They were unaware of any supports that were available to them and had not heard of Extended Post Care Support (EPCS), or how to access it.

Through the Sibling Carer Initiative, Jordan and Leah were connected with PeakCare, where they were supported to understand what assistance they were entitled to. Prior to this, Jordan had been managing everything on her own, including significant financial stress and the fear of eviction, which was taking a toll on her mental health. Leah had recently exited care, and both were navigating their circumstances without any guidance or support.

PeakCare referred Jordan and Leah to a local service provider, who assisted them to access EPCS and supported them to talk to their landlord so that they could stay in their home. Jordan noted that without this support, she is certain her and Leah would have become homeless.

Jordan reflected that she found it difficult to access clear information about what support was available and how to navigate the system. She also shared that she did not seek help earlier because she was concerned it would be perceived as her not coping on being unable to care for her sister.

Jordan was incredibly thankful for PeakCare's assistance in helping her understand what supports are available and how to access them. She said it's hard trying to work out all of this on your own and really easy to just fall through the cracks.

*Names have been changed

Supporting Sibling Carers to Engage in Workforce Participation and Progress

Sibling kinship carers are not afforded specific leave entitlements under the National Employment Standards (NES), nor are they recognised within the Paid Parental Leave scheme, despite often undertaking full-time caregiving responsibilities. This limitation is not unique to sibling carers and reflects a broader gap across the out-of-home care system, where foster and kinship carers are not recognised within parental leave settings.

The impact of this gap can be particularly acute for sibling carers. Unlike many traditional carers, sibling carers are younger and completing further education or are at an early stage of establishing their career. As a result, they are more likely to experience significant disruption to study, employment, reduced earning capacity and long-term financial impacts.

Sibling carers must rely on personal and carer's leave provisions, which are limited in duration and design for short-term or intermittent care rather than ongoing parental responsibility.

This creates a significant gap, where individuals performing a parental-level role are not supported within the workplace protections or leave arrangements required to establish and sustain stable care.

The absence of parental leave entitlements is particularly stark given that, had the child remained in the care of their parent, that parent would have been eligible for this leave. In contrast, sibling carers are required to balance caregiving with employment without access to equal support, often forcing them to reduce working hours or exit the workforce altogether.

While this is a matter for the Commonwealth, it is important to note this approach is inconsistent with the intent of the NES, which are designed to provide a minimum safety net of leave entitlements. These standards exist to support employees to balance work and caring responsibilities, sustain workforce participation, and protect long-term employment.

PeakCare has heard from many sibling carers who have been required to take time off work or study due to escalating care needs, resulting in lost income and increased financial and mental stress.

“My siblings had some really complex behaviours that I had to manage, like substance use and damage to my personal belongings.

On one occasion, my sister punched a hole in the wall and broke her wrist. I had to miss work the following day, which meant I didn't get paid.

I was also really stressed about my rental property, as there was significant damage caused by all three siblings I had cared for.” – sibling kinship carer, Qld

Experiences like this highlight a broader systemic issue, where sibling carers are required to absorb the financial costs of care, despite performing a role that would otherwise be supported through formal employment protections. Addressing this gap is imperative to supporting both the sustainability of sibling care arrangements and the long-term economic participation of sibling carers.

Targeted data collection will ensure there is a clearer understanding of the work and study arrangements for sibling carers. This data and information can then be used to design support models that enable sibling carers remain engaged in employment and education while undertaking their caregiving role.

Supporting Sibling Carers to Meet the Needs of Children in Their Care

Children in out-of-home care often present with significant, multiple and complex health needs, including poorer physical health, developmental delays and compromised mental health compared to the general population.¹⁴ In recognition of this, the *National Clinical Assessment Framework for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care* sets out clear expectations for timely and comprehensive health and developmental assessment and support.

These requirements are essential to ensuring children in care receive the support necessary to improve their health, wellbeing and long-term outcomes. However, they also place significant practical, financial and coordination demands on carers. For sibling carers, meeting these requirements often involves navigating multiple service systems, attending frequent appointments, coordinating care plans, managing transport, and covering out-of-pocket costs associated with healthcare and developmental supports.

“Having to take time off work to take my siblings to medical and therapy appointments has caused me to fall behind on work tasks. It takes up a lot of time, and I feel really unappreciated”

– sibling kinship carer, Qld

While limited leave entitlements contribute to this pressure, the challenge extends beyond time alone. Fragmented service delivery, limited flexibility in appointment scheduling, and a lack of coordinated casework or navigation support can make it difficult for sibling carers to meet system expectations. In practice, this can require sibling carers to absorb both the logistical and financial burden of care, often resulting in unpaid leave, reduced working hours, or disengagement from employment altogether, leading to increased financial stress.

Addressing these pressures requires a more coordinated and responsive system approach. This includes improved service integration, flexible delivery models, practical supports such as transport assistance, and access to casework or navigation support to assist carers in managing complex care requirements. Strengthening these supports will better enable sibling carers to meet the needs of children in their care while maintaining their own stability and wellbeing.

Where sibling carers are already maintaining stability, connection and continuity for children, there is a clear opportunity for the system to better align its responsibility with the realities of care by ensuring these arrangements are formally recognised, appropriately assessed and adequately supported to meet the complex needs of children in their care.

¹⁴ National Clinical Assessment Framework for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care, 2011. [national-clinical-assessment-framework-for-children-and-young-people-in-out-of-home-care.pdf](#).

Supporting Sibling Carers to Meet Their Own Needs

Sibling carers often step into caregiving roles to maintain connection and continuity for their younger siblings where alternative placements are not available or appropriate. In many cases, sibling carers have their own lived experience of family instability and may still be navigating complex intrafamilial relationships while providing care.¹⁵ Evidence further highlights that young carers are managing these complex family dynamics with limited external support, particularly in comparison to the structured assistance and support available to formal kinship carers and foster carers.

In this context, sibling carers require a dedicated and tailored model of support that recognises their dual role as both young people and primary caregivers. This includes access to counselling, mental health and wellbeing supports, and services that are responsive to their unique circumstances and life stage.

In addition to direct support, sibling carers consistently report limited awareness and understanding of the supports available to them and the children in their care. Barriers to accessing information, navigating services, and understanding eligibility further compound the challenges they experience.

Consultation with sibling carers is critical to designing accessible and effective information pathways. This includes recognising that sibling carers may require different forms of communication and engagement compared to other kinship carers. Digital or mobile-based platforms may better align with preferences and circumstances of sibling carers. Strengthening how information is communicated, alongside the provision of tailored supports, would better enable sibling carers to meet their own needs while sustaining their caregiving role and supporting more stable outcomes for children and young people.

¹⁵ 'We're just kids as well': The experience and support needs of young kinship carers in Australia, Kiraly, M. & Roff, J., 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.106967>

Recommendations for the Inquiry

To understand and effectively meet the needs of sibling kinship carers and better support the children in their care to heal, be healthy, safe and well, PeakCare makes the following recommendations for the Inquiry's consideration.

Strengthen data capturing and engagement with sibling kinship carers

1. The Child Safety Department:
 - a. Formally define and recognise *Sibling Kinship Carers* as a distinct cohort within kinship care, acknowledging their unique life stage, circumstances and support needs, which differ from those of traditional kinship carers such as grandparents, aunts and uncles;
 - b. Capture and publicly report on the number of formal sibling kinship carers statewide on a quarterly basis;
 - c. Establish an advisory group in the implementation of any home-based care reform, including sibling kinship carers with lived experience, the young people in their care, peaks bodies, cultural wisdom and experience, non-government and community-controlled providers of kinship carer support services;
 - d. Conduct a baseline survey for sibling kinship carers and undertake interviews, to better understand their characteristics and needs;
 - e. Undertake annual sibling carer surveys and report on the annual survey against the Baseline Year Sibling Kinship Care Survey and Interviews methodology

Establish a Sibling Kinship Carer Recognition Framework within Queensland

2. The Child Safety Department co-design a *Sibling Kinship Carer Framework* to guide services and supports designed to assist them. This includes:
 - a. engaging with the established advisory group, including sibling kinship carers with lived experience and young people in the care of a sibling;
 - b. diverse sibling care contexts, such as First Nations kinship arrangements and varying ages of carers and siblings;
 - c. embedding trauma-informed and culturally safe principles into the framework;
 - d. clear guidance on engaging with sibling carers in ways that uphold their rights to informed choice, ensuring they are supported to decide freely and provided meaningful supports.

Co-design dedicated sibling kinship care supports and assistance

3. The Child Safety Department co-design and fund a program of specialist supports that target and effectively meet the unique needs of sibling kinship carers.

Conclusion

Sibling kinship carers represent a vital under-recognised component of Queensland's child protection system. They are sustaining family-based care arrangements, maintaining sibling connection, and contributing to placement stability, often in the absence of formal recognition or adequate support.

The challenges experienced by sibling carers are not incidental, but a reflection of systemic gaps in how care is identified, planned and supported.

The Child Safety Commission of Inquiry presents a critical opportunity to address these gaps and ensure the system is designed to recognise, support and sustain sibling care. Without change, sibling carers will continue to operate at the margins of the system, absorbing the emotional and practical burden of care without the supports required to do so safely or sustainably.

Implementing the recommendations outlined in this submission could strengthen placement stability, uphold children's rights to connection and belonging, and better align system responses with the realities of care.

Supporting sibling carers and keeping siblings together, is not only a necessary step toward a more effective, sustainable child protection system – it is also the right thing to do.

***Protecting sibling relationships is not only a matter of relational wellbeing
- it is a critical component of broader child protection outcomes.***

***Children who maintain strong connections with siblings are more likely to
experience a sense of continuity, stability, and belonging, which in turn
supports resilience, healthy emotional development,
and positive long-term outcomes.***

*QFCC Final Commission of Inquiry submission - Fixing the Foundations: Seven reset reforms for
Queensland's Child Protection System, 2026*

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