

7 July 2026

Migration Queensland
Department of Trade, Employment and Training

RE: Consultation on the Queensland Skilled Occupation List (QSOL) and proposed State-led Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the 2026–27 Queensland Skilled Occupation List (QSOL) and the proposed State-led Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA).

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 that 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, support for foster and kinship carers, 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.

PeakCare strongly supports the inclusion of **Residential Youth Worker** on both the Queensland Skilled Occupation List and the proposed State-led DAMA.

Residential Youth Workers play an essential role in supporting children and young people living in statutory residential care, many of whom have experienced significant trauma and present with highly complex needs. Maintaining a stable, skilled workforce is essential to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and therapeutic care of these children and young people.

PeakCare's recommendation is informed by three complementary sources of evidence:

1. *Foundations of the Future – Building a Workforce that Cares, Connects and Evolves*¹ - developed by PeakCare through extensive consultation with providers, workers and stakeholders across Queensland, identifying significant and persistent workforce challenges affecting the residential care sector.
2. *Residential Care Workforce: Insights & Opportunities*² - led by PeakCare to detail workforce challenges across our sector, including recruitment and retention difficulties, workforce instability and increasing demand continue to impact providers' ability to attract and retain suitably skilled staff.
3. *From Pressure to Purpose*, Queensland Child Safety Commission of Inquiry final report³, which highlights widespread workforce instability, high turnover and ongoing difficult attracting and retaining suitably skilled workers to provide therapeutic care for children and young people with increasingly complex needs. Demographic modelling in the report shows that, while reforms are intended to reduce reliance on residential care over time, this transition will require sustained

¹ PeakCare Queensland. (2025). [*Foundations of the future: Building a workforce that cares, connects and evolves – Workforce strategy*](#).

² PeakCare Queensland. (2025). [*Queensland's residential care workforce: Insights & opportunities*](#).

³ Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Child Safety System. (2026). [*From pressure to purpose: Final report*](#). Queensland Government.

investment in family-based care and early family supports before reduction in demand can be realised and that residential care will continue to play a critical role in the system.

PeakCare also notes the recent transition to the new Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA), under which Residential Youth Worker has become a standalone occupation. In discussions with HumanAbility and correspondence with the Australian Government, we understand that this new classification is currently listed as experiencing 'No Shortage' on the Occupational Shortage List. We are concerned that, given the recent introduction of this occupation and the acknowledged limitations in available workforce data, the current classification may not yet fully reflect the workforce challenges experienced by Queensland's residential care sector.

We strongly encourage Migration Queensland to consider the available, sector-specific evidence alongside national labour market data when determining the inclusion of Residential Youth Worker on the QSOL and the proposed State-led DAMA.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide any further information that may assist in your consideration, including evidence for the Queensland Residential Care Workforce Strategy and broader engagement with the child and family sector.

Yours sincerely,



Kelly Jebb
Chief Executive Officer