



# Queensland Youth Strategy: Building young Queenslanders for a global future

*Highlights Report 2020–21*



Queensland  
Government

## Acknowledgement of country

The Department of Environment and Science acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



*Design developed by Boyd Blackman, a Butchulla and Birri Birri man, featuring the artwork of Elaine Chambers, a Koa (Guwa) and Kuku Yalanji woman.*

# Minister's message

Since the release of the *Queensland Youth Strategy: Building young Queenslanders for a global future* (QYS), significant progress has been achieved in delivering on the Palaszczuk Government's commitments to improving outcomes for young people. I am pleased to report on progress made during the 2020-21 period. We continue to provide opportunities for young people to succeed in all aspects of their lives and realise our shared vision for young people to be active participants in Queensland's economic, civic and cultural life.

This Highlights Report provides a snapshot of the many achievements across key priority areas including the support we are providing for those who need it most, housing, education and employment, healthy futures, and youth engagement. We continue to improve outcomes for young Queenslanders and demonstrate our commitment to address issues that young people tell us are important to them.

Undoubtedly, the global COVID-19 pandemic has seen us face unprecedented challenges over the past year. We know that young people are one of the groups of people most affected. The pandemic has interrupted nearly every aspect of life as we know it, yet the resilience young Queenslanders have demonstrated through these challenging times continues to inspire me.

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting all Queenslanders through the pandemic response and recovery. We will continue to ensure young people are provided every opportunity to tell us how and what they need to be supported to achieve their aspirations as they make their important transition to adulthood.

Young people want and expect to be partners with government. I am committed to ensuring the voices, ideas and experiences of young Queenslanders are reflected in the policies, programs and services that impact them.

I will continue to work with my Ministerial colleagues to ensure young people have their say and their contributions, skills, and ideas are heard and valued in building a stronger future. Together we will work to improve the policies and programs that matter to young Queenslanders, so their futures are bright and full of endless possibility.

## **Meaghan Scanlon**

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef  
and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs





# Giving young people a voice

We know that involving young people in policy development results in better outcomes for them and the broader community.



## What we have been doing

By recognising young people are experts in their own life experiences, we have built their capacity to participate and become agents of positive change in their own lives and communities. We acknowledge their right to participate in decisions that affect them regardless of their race, religion, culture, language, gender, sexuality, regional, rural or remote locality or circumstance. The Queensland Government is providing opportunities to involve young people in conversations around important issues that affect them, and we will continue to engage young people through mechanisms including the Speak Out series, the Queensland Government Youth eHub, and targeted issues-based consultation so young people can help shape their future, and the future of our state.



Top: Speak Out event in Brisbane.  
Bottom: Speak Out event in Rockhampton.

## Key 2020–21 highlights

- Launched the inaugural **Speak Out series** during Queensland Youth Week 2021 in Rockhampton, Mossman Gorge and Brisbane to provide a platform for young people to have their say on issues of most importance to them. Key issues young people spoke about included the environment and climate change, mental health, consent, youth engagement and issues specific to their local communities.
- **Surveyed over 8,000 children and young people** to seek their thoughts, views and opinions about their community, hopes and dreams through the Queensland Family and Child Commission's 2020 Growing Up in Queensland survey. Young Queenslanders told us that mental health, the impacts of COVID-19 on education, and the cost of living were issues of concern for them.
- Supported delivery of the **25th annual YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament**, providing 93 young people from each electorate across the state the opportunity to develop eight 'Youth Bills' on matters of importance to them, which were assented to and shared with Ministers whose portfolios have relevance, for consideration by government.
- The Minister for Education met with the **16-member Student Advisory Council** twice in 2020-21 to hear directly from students on key matters including respectful relationships and the impacts of COVID-19 on student learning and wellbeing. Their feedback and ideas will be used to inform future government policy and programs.

# Supporting our most vulnerable young people

Some young people experience challenges in their lives, which means they may, at times, require more targeted support to be able to fully participate in Queensland's economic, civic and community life.

## What we have been doing

The Queensland Government acknowledges that when people experience specific challenges in their lives it can affect their mental health and overall wellbeing. This impacts on their ability to thrive and achieve their goals.

We are providing extra support for young people who need it, especially those who are leaving the justice or child protection systems, and those who need support to find safe and secure housing. We will continue to work across government to ensure our young people are supported and their needs are met.

## Key 2020–21 highlights

- Provided \$23.4 million to more than **90 youth support services across Queensland** to deliver information, advice, referral and case management support to young people at risk of disconnection from family/friends, education/employment, and community. Nearly **16,000 young people** benefited directly from this service.
- Supported **4,422 disengaged students** through regional youth engagement hubs resulting in 2,410 young people successfully transitioning into education, training and employment as part of the Youth Engagement Project.
- Established **FlexiSpaces in 32 schools**, with a further 20 schools selected for delivery by 2022, to provide inclusive solutions to support students who are at-risk of disengaging to remain connected and succeed in their mainstream school.
- Launched **two new websites** to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from education, training or employment. The **We the Differents** ([www.wethedifferents.qld.edu.au](http://www.wethedifferents.qld.edu.au)) targets disengaged young people and **Spark their Future** ([www.sparktheirfuture.qld.edu.au](http://www.sparktheirfuture.qld.edu.au)) supports parents of disengaged young people.



# Housing

Access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is a fundamental human right, and is key to ensuring the best start for young people on their journey to independence. A safe place to call home affords young people a greater capacity to pursue education, training and employment opportunities, improving overall social and economic participation.

## What we have been doing

The Queensland Government is committed to reducing the number of young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness by providing access to stable, affordable housing. We're also working to transform the way housing services are delivered to better support those people in need, especially young people.

## Key 2020–21 highlights

- Provided over **\$36.1 million in Homelessness Program funding** to 39 non-government organisations to deliver 61 specialist homelessness services across Queensland to provide temporary supported accommodation for young people.
- Established a new **\$12.3 million Youth Foyer on the Gold Coast** to provide up to 40 young people at risk of homelessness a place to call home with professional support staff onsite to provide practical and emotional support if needed.
- Supported up to **50 young First Nations women** from remote communities to complete their high school education and enable their future participation in higher education, training and employment through the NRL Cowboys House girl's campus in Townsville.
- Continued to deliver the **Sustaining Young Tenancies program**, supporting 86 young people living in social housing and private rental to help maintain their tenancy.





# Healthy futures

Maintaining good mental and physical wellbeing is vital for young people to be strong and resilient, and to keep pace with rapid and continuous local and global challenges.

## What we have been doing

Young Queenslanders have made it clear they want government to prioritise the pervasive issues affecting their futures, including mental health and wellbeing, and respectful relationships.

The Queensland Government is working to create healthier futures for young Queenslanders. We continue to improve the skills of those who work with and support young people to better respond to mental health concerns and deliver resources and programs that encourage healthy lifestyle choices for Queensland's young people.

## Key 2020–21 highlights

- Continued to deliver **299 initiatives that support girls and young women** across the priority areas of participation and leadership, economic security, safety, and health and wellbeing—helping achieve gender equality through the Queensland Women's Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- Delivered **41 education sessions to 5,000 Year 12 students** across South East Queensland through the Safer Schoolies Program, providing important information aimed at encouraging safe and responsible behaviour as they prepare for Schoolies, and their lives ahead as young adults.
- Provided over **54,700 Fair Play vouchers** to children and young people to support them to participate in local sport and recreation activities.
- Continued to deliver **\$46.55 million Mental Health and Wellbeing Community packages** to support localised mental health services.
- Worked across government to advocate for and support the **Shifting Minds Implementation Roadmap** to ensure improved health outcomes for young people.



# Educating into Employment

Young people need support to gain the knowledge and skills to successfully navigate economic and social pathways to employment in a changing job market. We know that education is key to finding stable employment that will enable financial security into the future.



## What we have been doing

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting Queenslanders at every stage of their learning journey—from the early years through to their transition into the workforce or further education. We are supporting young people to get a good education that prepares them for employment and independence.

## Key 2020–21 highlights

- Assisted over 36,000 young people under the **free apprenticeships and Free TAFE for under 25's programs**.
- Engaged 65 schools in the **Agribusiness Gateway to Industry Schools Program** where students are exposed to a breadth of agribusiness careers in the supply chain.
- Delivered the **Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program** to support young First Nations peoples, including 36 participants and 10 mentors and facilitators, to build skills, knowledge and experience to position themselves as our state's future leaders.
- Engaged with 259 schools and reached **over 5,400 students** through their Youth Ensemble, Theatre Residency Week, Young Writers Group, professional skills workshops and work experience programs through the Queensland Theatre—the largest education and youth program of any state.
- Provided **2,071 young people** with financial assistance to complete apprenticeships and traineeships (excluding school-based) through the provision of travel and accommodation subsidies when having to attend off-the-job training.
- Continued delivery of the **Skilling Queenslanders for Work program** to assist Queenslanders, including young people, to gain skills, qualifications and experience to enter and stay in the workforce.
- Continued delivery of the **Back to Work program** to support improved employment opportunities across Queensland, including for young job seekers in regional communities.
- Supported Queenslanders, including young people, through the **Micro-credentiaing Pilots Program** to upskill existing workers, new entrants or job seekers in industries, regions and enterprises.





**More information:**

[www.des.qld.gov.au/youth](http://www.des.qld.gov.au/youth)

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