

Overview

The Queensland Family and Child Commission's (QFCC) Young Person's Council met on 21 November 2024, attended by 21 young people and 11 QFCC staff, including Principal Commissioner Luke Twyford.

Commissioner Natalie Lewis was an apology. Rourke Osborne, QFCC Engagement Support Officer Chaired the meeting.

There were lively and engaging discussions on issues affecting young people, including anaphylaxis safety, civics education, and proposed social media restrictions. The meeting highlighted the importance of involving young Queenslanders in initiatives that affect them.

Advocacy Presentations

Anaphylaxis Safety in Our Community

Youth Advocate Siobhan presented on the prevalence of food allergies in Australia. With over 5 million Australians living with food allergies, our country has the highest occurrences in the world. Notably, 1 in 10 infants, 1 in 20 children and 1 in 50 adults have allergies. Tragically, these allergies lead to around 2,400 hospital admissions and 20 deaths annually. To address these issues, several actions were proposed:

- **Increase Awareness and Education:** Particularly within the food service industry, where staff must be better trained to handle allergies.
- **Create an "Adrenaline Protection' Mandate:"** Advocate for public spaces, including restaurants, to adopt policies where adrenaline auto-injectors are available, with catchy slogans like "Where there's cuisine, adrenalines seen."
- **Reduce Stigma:** Combat the stigma surrounding food allergies through media campaigns, including the involvement of influencers and sports figures who can normalise the conversation.
- **Regulations in Schools:** Propose legislation that would allow children to carry their medication directly on them, rather than leaving it in the school office.
- **Research:** Encourage more studies on food allergies to better understand and mitigate the issue.

Civics Education

Youth Advocates Rhea and Samuel discussed civics education in Queensland, including the lack of resources in regional and remote areas. They noted that current educational resources are often inadequate for young people and emphasised the need for clear, unbiased, and accessible resources that reflect youth and multicultural perspectives.

It was also raised that young people must be actively involved in creating educational content and using accessible digital platforms for delivery. They believe education should integrate life skills, with special emphasis on enhancing teachers' capacity to teach the subject. The presentation also highlighted a missed opportunity before the recent State election to educate Year 12 students about government processes, with discussion highlighting that young people are often required to educate adults or peers.



Young People's Forum

The forum posed three questions to participants:

- What are your top two issues related to young people in Queensland today?
- What are the challenges related to your top two issues?
- What are the opportunities you would like to see in these issues?

The forum questions generated a wide range of issues with key topics discussed including the challenges of proposed social media regulation, the ongoing housing crisis for young people and carrying knives.

Many young people voiced their concerns about the proposed social media restrictions, which they feel unfairly target youth and saw themselves as an easy target to demonise. They pointed out the double standards in how young people are portrayed in the media, the lack of oversight by social media companies who don't do

enough to protect users or remove harmful content, and the risks associated with regulating platforms they rely on heavily for connection, particularly marginalised groups including those who are neurodiverse, queer, or facing bullying.

Young people also viewed the proposed restrictions as a form of victim blaming, a potential weapon for child groomers, and believed it would drive young people from platforms with protections in place to websites with zero oversight. Participants raised concerns about the lack of affordable housing for young people. Several international models were cited as potential solutions addressing youth homelessness. Young people also discussed the carrying of knives, an emergent issue not previously raised put widespread in media coverage these days.





Principal Commissioner update

The Principal Commissioner informed attendees about the upcoming SEEN documentary, to be released in February 2025. SEEN explores the transformative power of personal healing on parenting and child brain development. Youth Advocates were also encouraged to submit proposals for paid content creation opportunities, including blogs to (YAC@qfcc.qld.gov.au) for consideration.

2025 QFCC Youth Summit

Looking ahead to the future, the 2025 Youth Summit will take place on 10 April 2025. An application process for speakers will open soon, and a speaker information session will be held to provide further details. A Youth Summit newsletter will also be published.



Other Business

In other business it was agreed that the QFCC will explore the opportunity to invite the e-safety commissioner to Queensland to discuss online safety education for youth.

The next Young Person's Council meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday, 20 February 2025 at 3:30pm

Please register by 10 February 2025 by emailing YAC@qfcc.qld.gov.au