

Annual Report

Deaths of children  
and young people  
Queensland  
2023–24



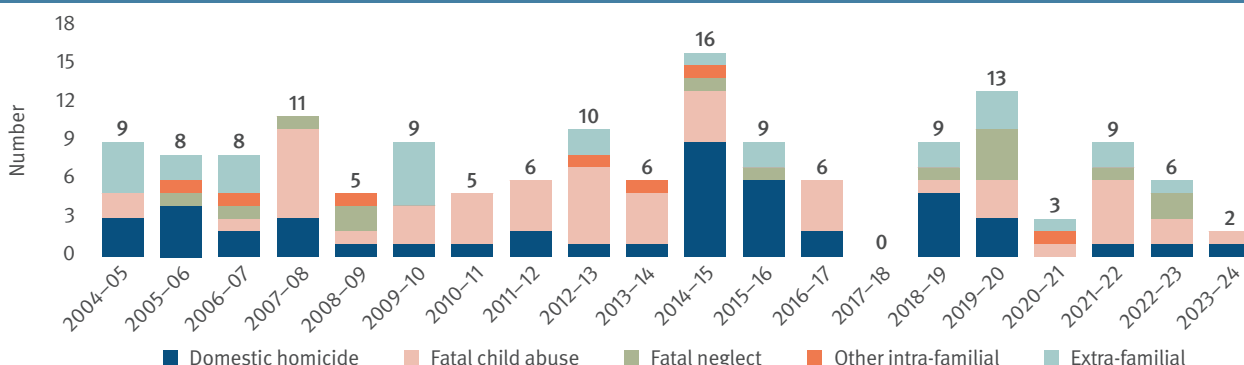
Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



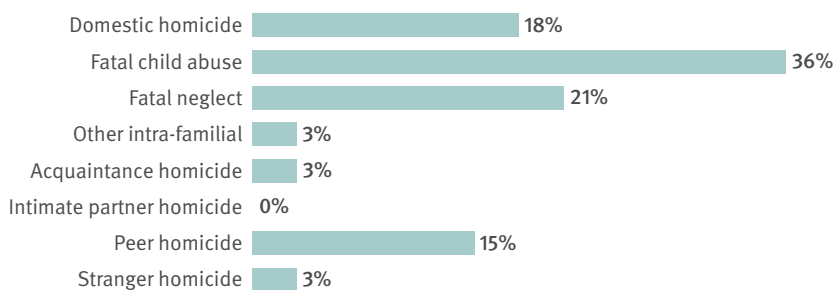
Queensland  
Government

# 7 Fatal assault and neglect

## 2004 to 2024

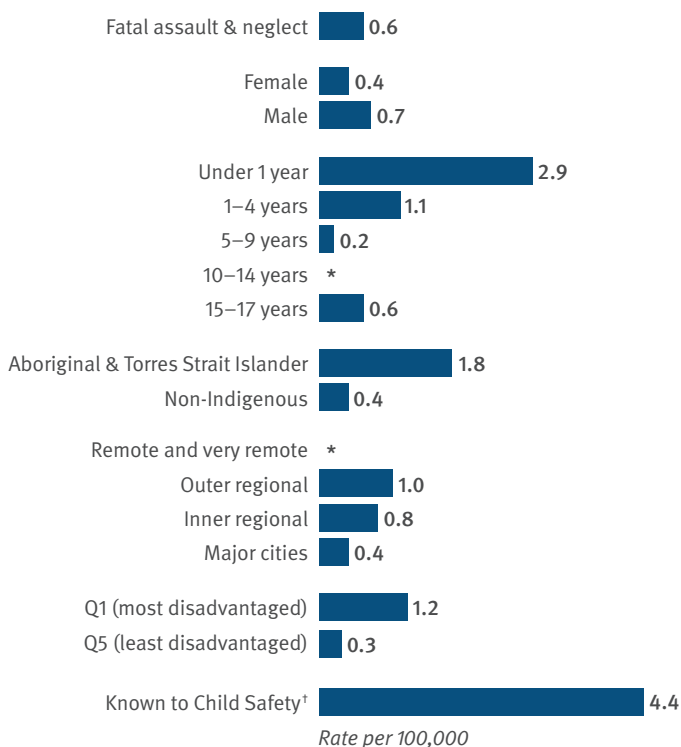


## 5-year summary (2019-24) | Incident type



Proportion of fatal assault and neglect

## Demographics



Rate per 100,000

## Intra-familial fatal assault and neglect risk factors

69% child experienced previous abuse

62% household domestic and family violence

43% alleged perpetrator had history of offending

30% alleged perpetrator had alcohol and/or substance misuse

35% alleged perpetrator had suspected or diagnosed mental health issues

Notes: Counting is by date of death registration. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

\* rate not calculated for numbers less than 4.

† in the 12 months prior to death.

## Key findings

Based on information available to the QFCC at the time of reporting, 2 deaths were identified as being the result of fatal assault and neglect in Queensland during 2023–24.

Deaths are classified as fatal assault and neglect where evidence available to the QFCC indicates the child died as a result of inflicted injury or neglect, irrespective of whether a perpetrator has been identified and/or charged. Definitions for the types of fatal assault and neglect can be found in [Appendix C](#) and a description of the QFCC's screening criteria can be found in [Appendix G](#) (both available at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data)).

Over the last 5 years, 33 children died in 30 fatal assault and neglect incidents. Twenty-six deaths were categorised as intra-familial, meaning that the alleged perpetrator was a parent, family member or person acting in a parental role. Six children died in domestic homicides, including murder-suicide incidents where the alleged perpetrator also took their own life. Twelve children were found to have died as a result of child abuse, 7 died from neglect and 1 was other intrafamilial.

Seven deaths in the last 5 years were extra-familial homicides, including peer homicides (5), acquaintance homicide (1), and stranger homicide (1).

Further summary information on deaths from fatal assault and neglect can be found in [Table A.9](#) in [Appendix A](#).<sup>72</sup>

## Age and sex

Infants under 1 year had the highest rate of death from fatal assault and neglect over the last 5 years (2.9 per 100,000), followed by children 1–4 years (1.1 per 100,000) and 15–17 years (0.6 per 100,000). All children who died in intrafamilial homicides were aged under 9 years, while 6 of the 7 extra-familial homicide deaths were young people aged 15–17 years.

Of the 33 children who died from assault or neglect in 2019–24, 13 were female and 20 were male (a rate of 0.4 and 0.7 per 100,000, respectively). Males are more at risk of experiencing extra-familial homicide, 6 out of the 7 extra-familial homicide deaths were males over the last 5 years.

## Charges and criminal proceedings

Of the 30 fatal assault and neglect incidents during 2019–24, alleged perpetrators for 28 incidents have been charged, while one perpetrator was deceased in the same incident (murder-suicide).

<sup>72</sup> Tables with data for 2004–24 are available online at [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/child-death/child-death-reports-and-data)

## Vulnerability characteristics

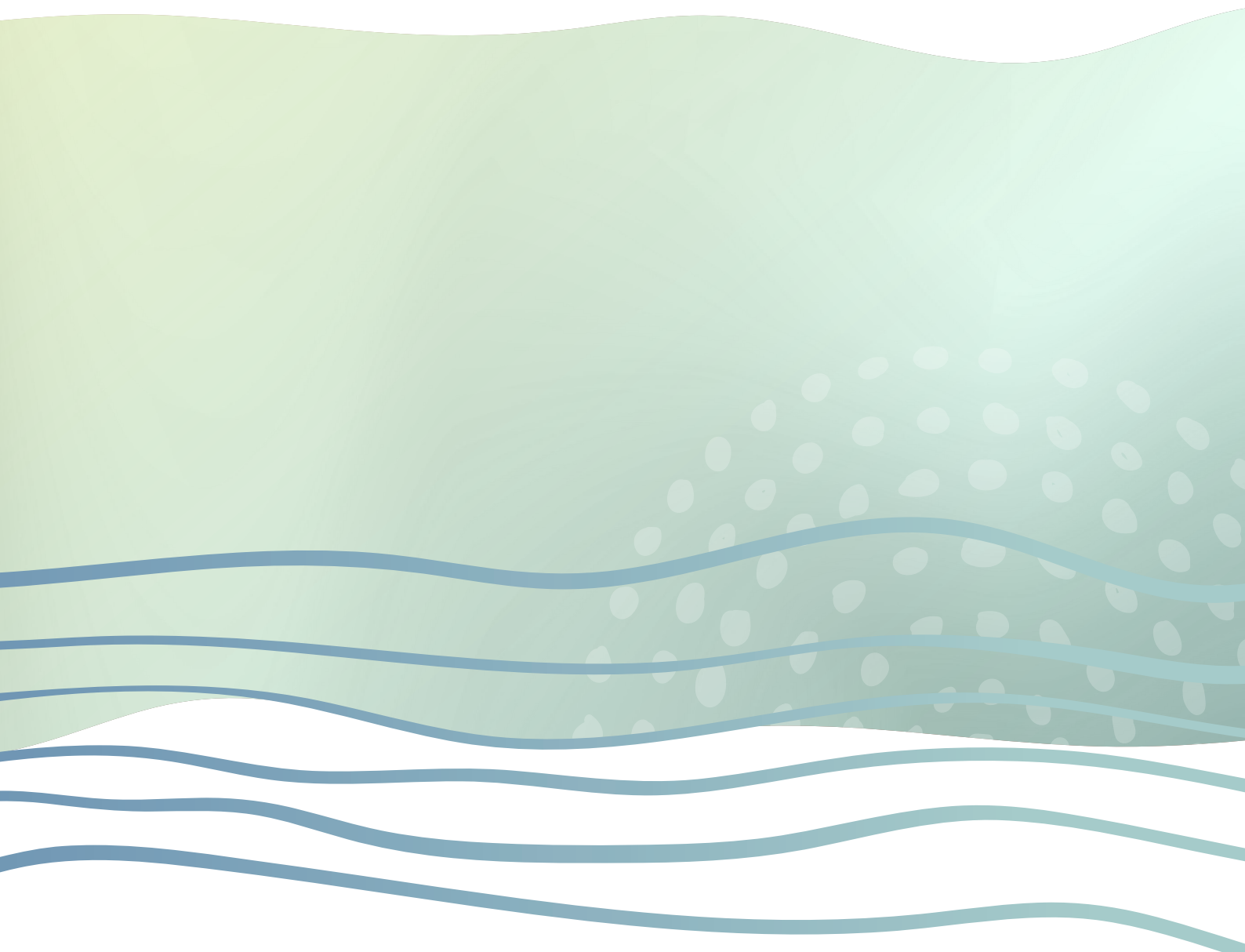
Of the 33 child deaths from assault and neglect during 2019–24, 22 (67%) children were known to the child protection system within the 12 months prior to death and 5 were known outside the statutory review period. It is noted that 3 children were only known to child protection because of the incident leading to their death.

Available evidence indicated the following factors<sup>73</sup> were present for the 26 children who died from intra-familial homicide in 23 incidents over the last 5 years:

- 69% had experienced child abuse prior to the incident (18 of 26 children)
- 62% had evidence domestic and family violence was present in the child's household (16 of 26 children)
- 35% of the alleged perpetrators were identified as either having a diagnosed or suspected mental health issue (8 of the 23 incidents)
- 43% of the alleged perpetrators had a history of criminal offending (10 of the 23 incidents)
- 30% of the alleged perpetrators had a history of alcohol or substance use (7 of the 23 incidents).<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> The QFCC collects information on vulnerability characteristics relating to the child, family and, where relevant, the perpetrator. The information is based on statements of fact or clear statements of opinion by credible external sources, as recorded in source documents (primarily police and coronial reports). The information is subject to limitations, in that it is based on those factors which can be identified in the source information. Given the small numbers in this analysis and these limitations, the findings are considered indicative only.

<sup>74</sup> Alcohol use – evidence the person exhibited problematic drinking behaviours such as binge drinking or the consumption of alcohol in settings or circumstances where it is not appropriate or safe to do so (e.g. while driving). Substance use – evidence of the use of illicit drugs, misuse of prescription medication or volatile substances.



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