

ANNUAL REPORT 2022–23



Purpose

This annual report presents information about the performance of the Director of Child Protection Litigation for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. It contains a record of the activities and achievements for the financial year.

Availability and access:

Electronic copies of this annual report can be obtained at:

<https://www.dcpl.qld.gov.au/resources/directors-guidelines-annual-reports-delegations>

For a printed copy of the annual report, or for more information, contact:

Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation

State Law Building
Level 1, 50 Ann Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Postal address:

GPO Box 2939, Brisbane Qld 4001

Telephone: 07 3738 9180

Email: enquiries@dcpl.qld.gov.au

Website: www.dcpl.qld.gov.au

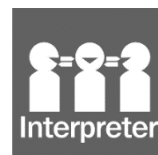
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Acknowledgment of Country

The Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (ODCPL) respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of the State of Queensland, and their special cultural, historical, and spiritual connection with the lands across the State. The ODCPL respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as two unique and diverse peoples with their own rich and distinct cultures, traditions, and customs. The ODCPL pays our respects to the Elders past, present, and emerging.

Interpreter service

The ODCPL is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding the annual report, you can contact us on telephone (07) 3738 9180 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the report to you.



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Attribution

Content from this annual report should be attributed as: The State of Queensland (Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation) annual report 2022-2023.

31 October 2023

Director of
Child Protection Litigation

The Honourable Yvette Death MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
Leader of the House
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Attorney-General

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament the Annual Report 2022-2023 for the Director of Child Protection Litigation.

The Director of Child Protection Litigation has now been operating for seven years. It was created on 1 July 2016, implementing recommendation 13.17 made by the *Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry*.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with:

- section 40 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*, and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

The Director of Child Protection Litigation is not considered a statutory body for the purposes of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* or the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

A checklist outlining the annual reporting requirements is provided at Appendix 4 (page 172) of this annual report.

Yours sincerely



Nigel A. Miller
Director of Child Protection Litigation
Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation

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Director of Child Protection Litigation's overview

It is with pleasure that I present the Annual Report of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) for the financial year 2022-23.

The DCPL delivers on the Queensland Government's commitment to provide world-class frontline services in the area of community safety by assisting in the State's child protection activities as a key part of Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model.

This report provides information about the DCPL's performance and records the DCPL's contribution to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families across Queensland by providing greater accountability and oversight for child protection order applications proposed by Queensland's Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (Child Safety), by ensuring that applications filed in the Childrens Court of Queensland (Court) are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision-making.

The DCPL and the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (ODCPL) which was established to help the DCPL perform the DCPL's functions, have now operated for seven years.

The following is a high level summary of what is outlined in the Performance part of the report in respect of 2022-23:

Referred *child protection matters* received by the DCPL

- the DCPL received an increase of 3.2% in the number of new *child protection matters* (*matters*) received from Child Safety, up 108 *matters* to an overall total of 3,494 *matters*
- concerning, there was a further increase in the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on the new *matters* received from Child Safety, increasing from 1,454 *matters*, or 42.9% of the total *matters* in 2021-22, to 1,616 *matters*, or 46.3% of the total *matters* in 2022-23, an increase of 162 *matters*

Type of intervention in place for children at the time *matters* are referred to the DCPL

- in terms of the types of intervention in place for children at the time the *matters* were received by the DCPL, in summary, the overall increase in new *matters* seen in 2022-23 is attributed to a marked increase in the number of *matters* concerning children already the subject of existing child protection orders, as follows:
 - the number of *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order increased by 19.9%, up 269 *matters*. This expanded these types of *matters* to 38.0% of the total *matters* received, up from 31.7% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22. As outlined within this report, this was due to a significant increase of 268 *matters* concerning children who were subject to an existing child protection order that granted custody of them to the chief executive, which is related to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

- there was also a marked decrease of 19.4% in the number of *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and their parents, or an order at the time the DCPL received the *matters*, down 86 *matters*. It is notable that this decrease followed earlier significant increases in these types of *matters* across the last three years, and
- in the other substantial types of intervention categories, there were continued decreases in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders, down 10.0%, or 47 *matters*, and in respect of children on court assessment orders, down 5.6%, or 11 *matters*

Timeliness of *matters* referred to the DCPL

- there were continued improvements in the timeliness of referred *matters* received from Child Safety, with the number of referred *matters* that the DCPL had to deal with on the day they were received reducing from 6.4% in 2021-22, to 5.2% in 2022-23, and in respect of *matters* concerning children subject to emergency orders that met the prescribed timeframes, these were up from 88.5% in 2021-22, to 89.3% in 2022-23. However, in respect of referred *matters* concerning children subject to existing child protection orders, noting the marked increase in these types of *matters*, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of them that met the timeframe, down from 34.6% in 2021-22, to 28.0% in 2022-23

Referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL, including *matters* referred back to Child Safety

- an essential part of Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model is that before deciding how to deal with a referred *matter*, the DCPL may ask Child Safety to provide further evidence or information about the *matter*. This ensures that the State only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances, and that applications which are made are supported by sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence, which has been independently considered and assessed by the DCPL. In 2022-23, the DCPL requested Child Safety provide further evidence and information in respect of 61.8% of the total *matters* the DCPL dealt with, up from 55.6% of the total *matters* the DCPL dealt with in 2021-22
- another essential part of the innovative child protection litigation model is that in respect of each referred *matter*, the DCPL can either deal with it by applying for a child protection order or by referring the *matter* back to Child Safety. In total, the DCPL dealt with 3,506 *matters*, which was a 4.5% increase on 2021-22. This included referring 50 *matters* back to Child Safety (outlined in the next paragraph) and making 3,456 child protection applications (outlined in the next section)
- the number and percentage of *matters* that the DCPL dealt with by deciding to refer the *matters* back to Child Safety rather than making a child protection order application decreased slightly, from 52 *matters*, or 1.6% of all *matters* dealt with in 2021-22, to 50 *matters*, or 1.4% of all *matters* dealt with in 2022-23. It is notable that there was a small rise in the number of *matters* the DCPL referred back to Child Safety without their agreement, increasing from 7 (0.2% of the total *matters* dealt with) to 15 *matters* (0.4% of the total *matters* dealt with)

- in respect to the 483 *matters* that the DCPL has referred back to Child Safety over the last seven years, the DCPL has had no further involvement in relation to 177 of the children (36.6% of the total *matters* referred back). Further, as at 26 October 2023, of the 50 *matters* the DCPL referred back to Child Safety in 2022-23, the DCPL had not received a further referred *matter* relating to 36 of these children (72.0% of the total *matters* referred back)

Child protection order applications made by the DCPL

- linked to the increased number of new *matters* received from Child Safety, there was an overall increase of 4.7% in the number of child protection order applications made by the DCPL, up 154 applications to a total of 3,456 applications
- a further essential part of Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model is that in deciding whether to apply for a child protection order, the DCPL may apply for an order of a different type, or a child protection order that is otherwise different, from the child protection order that Child Safety at the point of referring the *matter* to the DCPL considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection. In 2022-23, the percentage of *matters* that the DCPL dealt with by applying for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment increased from 12.3% of the total *matters* dealt with in 2021-22, to 13.5% of the total *matters* dealt with, an increase of 59 applications. Within this, there was a rise in the number of *matters* that the DCPL dealt with differently without Child Safety's agreement, increasing from 50 *matters*, or 1.5% of the total *matters* dealt with in 2021-22 to 75 *matters*, or 2.1% of the total *matters* dealt with in 2022-23. That said, this is still a relatively small number of the overall *matters* dealt with
- in terms of the the number and types of child protection order applications made, there was:
 - a notable decrease of 16.2% in respect of child protection order applications made that sought orders that would see children remain with their families (in-home orders), which aligns with a decrease in new *matters* received concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and their parents, or an order. These types of applications went from 487 applications, or 14.7% of the total applications made in 2021-22, to 408 applications, or 11.8% of the total applications in 2022-23. This decrease was against a trend where these types of applications had risen in recent years. In 2018-19, only 208 applications, or 7.5% of the total applications made sought in-home orders. The earlier upward trend in child protection order applications made for in-home orders had corresponded with an increase in the referred *matters* that the DCPL had received that concerned children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and their parents, or an order
 - there was a continuation of a downward trend in respect of the child protection order applications made that sought orders granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children (short-term out of home orders). In 2022-23, as compared with 2021-22, there was a 2.2% reduction in the number of applications seeking these types of orders, reducing from 1,649 applications, or 49.9% of the total application made to 1,613 applications, or 46.7% of the total applications made. In 2019-20, 1,808 applications, or 55.6% of the total applications, and in 2020-21,

1753 applications, or 53.3% of the total applications sought short-term out of home orders, and

- there was a 23.3% increase in the number of applications made seeking the various types of orders that grant long-term guardianship of children, with the 1,415 applications made seeking these orders making up 40.9% of the total applications made. This was well up on the 1,148 applications, or 34.8% to the total applications made in 2021-22, and 1,074 applications, or 32.7% of the total application made in 2020-21 seeking long-term guardianship orders. Within these types of applications in 2022-23, there was a 24.5% increase in applications seeking long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive, rising from 956 applications in 2021-22 to 1,190 applications in 2022-23. There was also a significant increase of 43.2% in the number of applications seeking permanent care orders, rising from 74 in 2021-22 to 106 in 2022-23.
- the DCPL was named as a respondent to 36 applications made by children's parents in 2022-23 (consistent with the number of applications in 2021-22)

Child protection order applications determined by the Court

- in 2022-23 there was an 8.8% decrease in the number of applications determined by the Court on a comparison with 2021-22. This decrease came after an earlier decrease of 5.5% in 2021-22. These decreases followed earlier increases of 15.0% in 2019-20, and 36.8% in 2020-21. The earlier increases were because of the implementation of the changes to the child protection litigation model that commenced on 1 July 2019, the most significant being that the DCPL now manages all *proceedings* in direct consultation with Child Safety frontline staff. The decrease in 2021-22, was reflective of a number of applications that would have been determined across April to June 2020, shifted into 2020-21 as a result of the effect of the Guidelines issued in March 2020 by the Magistrates Court (including Childrens Court) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The applications shifting into 2020-21 increased the overall numbers of applications that were determined in 2020-21
- in respect to the decrease in applications that were determined in 2022-23, the statistics outlined within the performance part of this report show that it relates to the overall increase in the number of child protection applications made that seek long-term guardianship orders to the chief executive, and also due to the increasing number of applications that are being adjourned for Child Safety to convene Family Group Meetings (FGMs) to develop initial case plans for subject children, or to review subject children's case plans and develop revised case plans
- the statistics show that in respect of the applications that were finalised in 2022-23, orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive on average required 1.3 more court events between lodgement and determination above the overall average of all applications, and took on average 60.4 days more, as compared with the statewide overall average for all applications. The statistics also show that across the 2022-23, the primary reason for the adjournment of all applications before the Court was for Child Safety to convene FGMs, amounting to a yearly total of 39.7% of all adjournments, up from 34.8% in 2021-22, and that applications can be adjourned for a FGM on a number of occasions

- in respect of the types of child protection orders made, the Court made orders consistent with the type of orders sought by DCPL at the time the applications were determined in 99.5% of applications, showing that DCPL has been effectively dealing with child protection applications to an exceptionally high standard. The following is noted in terms of the number and types of child protection orders made:
 - as with the applications made, there was a notable decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home orders made, 377 orders, or 12.1% of the total orders made, down from 443 orders, or 13.0% of the total orders made in 2021-22
 - consistent with the decrease in the number of applications made seeking short-term out of home orders, there was a marked reduction in the number of applications determined making these types of orders, down 20.0%. The numbers decreased from 1,636 orders, or 48.0% of the total number of applications determined in 2021-22, to 1,309 orders, or 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and
 - corresponding with the increase in applications made seeking orders granting long-term guardianship of children (including permanent care orders), in 2022-23, there was an increase in these types of orders made to a total of 1,192 orders, or 38.2% of the total applications determined. This was up from the 1,091 orders, or 31.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22
- on a comparison of the number of applications determined (3,111) with the number of applications made (3,456), the DCPL's clearance rate for 2022-23 was 90.0%, and
- in terms of the number of appeals, there was a 17.4% decrease in the number of appeals filed, 19 down from 23 filed in 2021-22, and a 14.2% increase in the number of appeals determined 2022-23, up from 21 in 2021-22.

The increase in new referred *matters* concerning children already the subject of existing child protection orders in 2022-23 was against what had been a clear downward trend in these types of *matters* across the first five years of Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model, where year on year, there had been a consistent decrease in these *matters* as a percentage of the total *matters* received. In 2016-17, these *matters* totalled 40.2% of the total *matters* received. In 2017-18, this type of *matter* reduced to 35.7% of the total *matters*, in 2018-19, there was a further reduction to 31.6%, in 2019-20 it was 27.4% of the total *matters*, and in 2020-21 it was 25.4% of the total *matters*.

The increase in these types of *matters* in 2021-22, up 147 *matters*, was because of a significant increase in the number *matters* that concerned orders granting short-term out of home orders for children. As outlined above, this then continued in 2022-23, with a further increase of 269 of these types of *matters*. This increase, particularly within the July to September 2022 quarter, is related to the earlier increase in child protection applications determined across July to December 2020 that aligned with the end of the initial lengthy period of lockdown associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, there was an increased number of short-term out of home child protection orders made, which can have a maximum duration of two years, and require Child Safety to work with the children and their families with the aim for the children to be returned. The increase in these types of *matters* in 2022-23 evidences that an increasing number of children have not been safely reunified with their families.

The result of the increase in new *matters* concerning children on short-term out of home orders is that there has been the significant increase of 23.3% in the number of applications made seeking the various types of orders that grant long-term guardianship of children, with applications seeking long-term guardianship to the chief executive, worryingly up 24.5%, and applications seeking permanent care orders for children up 43.2%. In respect of the applications seeking orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive, as outlined above, on average they require more court events and are before the Court for longer periods of time.

As outlined in earlier Annual Reports, on 1 July 2019, the DCPL, Child Safety and the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) implemented a number of key strategies designed to improve inter-agency communication, and to streamline business processes to deliver greater efficiencies within service delivery. The ongoing contribution that these changes have made to Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model are outlined within the performance part of this report, with the statistics indicating, within the context of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the strategies and changes have been successful in delivering greater efficiencies in service delivery.

Acknowledgements

It has been my privilege to lead the ODCPL throughout another challenging year of operation. Once again, the achievements of the DCPL and ODCPL continue to be based on the steadfast work of all staff.

All staff, from Litigation Support Officers and Legal Clerks through to Lawyers and the Executive Management Team, have worked together to deliver the DCPL's functions of representing the State in respect of children who need to be protected.

The ODCPL operates because of the significant contributions of all its staff. I would like to acknowledge the continued engagement, flexibility, and efforts of all staff, especially in response to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year, and thank each and every member of staff within the ODCPL for their unwavering commitment, cooperation, and support in the pursuit of the DCPL's functions and contributing to our achievements.

Throughout our seventh year of operation, DCPL Lawyers built on their significant expertise in the specialist area of practice of child protection law, which included them travelling throughout Queensland to undertake the DCPL's functions. Staff did this, combined with the increased workload and ongoing pressure of deadlines set by the type of existing intervention that was in place at the time new *matters* were received, and continued to make the required decisions to either refer *matters* back to Child Safety, or to apply for child protection orders, often in a compressed timeframes, and conducting the resulting litigation. This is once again recognised.

Throughout the seventh year of the DCPL's operation, Child Safety staff, OCFOS Legal Officers and DCPL Lawyers have worked together in collaboration to further embed Queensland's innovative child protection model. The positive impact of the innovative shift in policy and practice that occurred by creating a professional separation between the decision to apply for a child protection order and the related frontline Child Safety casework is seen within this report.

As with the ODCPL, Child Safety had another year where it experienced the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is within this context, that once again, I would like to acknowledge the expertise of Child Safety's frontline staff across the State. The decisions of DCPL Lawyers in respect of Queensland's most vulnerable children are based on their professional assessments. On behalf ODCPL's staff, I express our continued gratitude for the commendable role they perform in investigating child protection concerns relating to children who have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, and the ongoing services that they provide to those children.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the legal officers employed within OCFOS, and offer my thanks for the continued assistance that they have provided to the DCPL throughout the year. OCFOS Legal Officers provide critical early legal advice and legal services to Child Safety's frontline staff in respect of their work to keep children safe.

I thank Crown Law and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) for the continued ongoing support provided throughout the year.

I acknowledge and thank the other key stakeholders in the child protection system who provided the DCPL with support, guidance and feedback, including the members of the Judiciary, Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ), the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS), the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), child protection practitioners, separate representatives, and other members of the legal profession.

While I am not subject to ministerial direction in relation to the performance of my statutory functions, I extend my thanks to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and the Director-General of DJAG for their time and support during my seventh year as DCPL, and for the respect shown to the independence of my position.

In the next reporting period, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 in terms of increased workloads will continue to be a challenge for the DCPL's service delivery along with the resulting impact on the types and number of referred *matters*, and the consequential child protection applications. There will also need to be a focus on delivering on the commitment between the Queensland Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community to work together in partnership to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. Further, the DCPL awaits the outcome of Child Safety's comprehensive systems review of Queensland's residential care system announced in July 2023. The other focus of the DCPL in the coming year will be working with Child Safety as they continue with their Unify program, which is replacing their Integrated Case Management System. Unify will improve information sharing and collaboration with the DCPL through allowing for integration with the DCPL's case management system.

About Us

Establishment of the Director of Child Protection Litigation

The DCPL was established under the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016* (the DCPL Act) on 1 July 2016 as an independent statutory officer, within the DJAG portfolio, reporting directly to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. The ODCPL was also established on 1 July 2016, to help the DCPL perform the DCPL's functions.

Background to the establishment of the DCPL

On 1 July 2012, the Queensland Government established the Commission of Inquiry to chart a road map for the state's child protection system for the next decade.

The Commission of Inquiry's final report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection*, which was presented to the Queensland Government on 1 July 2013 includes at page 481 that:

It was clear to the Commission that there is widespread mistrust and concern in relation to the conduct of proceedings by the department [then named Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services] and its ability to present material that is sufficiently supported by relevant evidence. Those factors that appear to be materially contributing to this mistrust and concern are:

- a blurring in the role of Child Safety workers to include responsibilities usually discharged by a legal officer
- affidavits being prepared and sworn by Child Safety officers with little understanding of the implications of swearing an affidavit including the standards of evidence required
- lack of early 'independent' legal advice, and
- need for professional separation of the department's internal processes linked to child protection proceedings.

The Commission is of the view that a two-pronged approach is necessary to address the concerns. This would involve improving access to early, more independent, legal advice within the department and establishing a new independent statutory office — the Director of Child Protection — to make applications for care and protection orders on behalf of the department.

The Commission of Inquiry made the following two recommendations relevant to the establishment and operation of the DCPL:

Recommendation 13.16

That the [then named] Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services enhance its in-house legal service provision by establishing an internal Office of the Official Solicitor within the department which shall have responsibility for:

- providing early, more independent legal advice to departmental officers in the conduct of alternative dispute-resolution processes and the preparation of applications for child protection orders

- working closely with the proposed specialist investigation teams so that legal advice is provided at the earliest opportunity
- preparing briefs of evidence to be provided to the proposed Director of Child Protection in matters where the department considers a child protection order should be sought.

Recommendation 13.17

The Queensland Government establish an independent statutory agency — the Director of Child Protection — within the Justice portfolio to make decisions as to which matters will be the subject of a child protection application and what type of child protection order will be sought, as well as litigate the applications.

Staff from the Director of Child Protection will bring applications for child protection orders before the Childrens Court and higher courts, except in respect of certain interim or emergent orders where it is not practicable to do so. In the latter case, some officers within the [then named] Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services will retain authority to make applications.

In December 2013, the Queensland Government responded to the Commission of Inquiry's final report, which included an acceptance of recommendations 13.16 and 13.17.

The establishment of the DCPL under the DCPL Act implemented recommendation 13.17 and the establishment of OCFOS administratively within Child Safety implemented recommendation 13.16.

The DCPL Act was assented to on 25 May 2016 and commenced operation on 1 July 2016.

In establishing the DCPL, Queensland became the first jurisdiction in Australia to create a professional separation between the investigation and assessment of child protection concerns on behalf of the State, and the decision also on behalf of the State as to whether or not a child protection order application should be made and the type of order that should be sought.

The responsibility of deciding on behalf of the State whether or not a child protection order application should be made and the type of order that should be sought was transferred from Child Safety to the independent statutory officer, the DCPL.

The transfer of this key decision-making function represents a fundamental innovative shift in policy and practice in child protection litigation within Australia.

Other major child protection litigation reforms

In addition to the establishment of the DCPL, the other major child protection litigation reforms that commenced on 1 July 2016 were the establishment of a court case management framework for *proceedings* and the introduction of a general continuing duty of disclosure.

The objective of the court case management framework is to provide a structure to the Court to actively manage *proceedings*, minimise delay, and improve the quality of evidence and decision-making. This has included the establishment of a court case management committee and the commencement of revised *Childrens Court Rules* (the Rules). The Rules had not been significantly

reviewed since they were made in 1997, and play a key part of the implementation of a court case management framework.

The DCPL has a continuing duty to disclose, to each other party in a *proceeding*, all documents in the DCPL's possession or control that are relevant to the proceeding. Further, Child Safety has a corresponding duty to provide all information relevant to the proceeding to the DCPL, which continues until the proceeding is decided. The duty of disclosure is subject to the provisions of section 191 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* (the CP Act), providing that the DCPL may refuse to disclose particular documents on certain grounds. Where the DCPL refuses disclosure of a document, a party to the proceeding may make an application to the Court, and the Court may order the disclosure on the conditions it considers appropriate. Disclosure occurs between the DCPL and parties to a proceeding and will not involve the Court, apart from its consideration of applications made under the CP Act or the making of directions with respect to disclosure under the Rules.

The DCPL's vision

Promoting safety, protection, and positive futures for Queensland's vulnerable children with independence, fairness, and transparency.

The DCPL's purpose

To improve outcomes for children and families and provide greater accountability and oversight for child protection order applications proposed by Child Safety, by ensuring that applications filed in court are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision-making.

The DCPL's functions and powers

The main purpose of the DCPL Act is to establish the DCPL to apply for child protection orders on behalf of the State and to then conduct child protection proceedings (*proceedings*) representing the State.

The DCPL Act provides the following in respect of the DCPL's functions and powers:

- prepare for and apply for child protection orders, and conduct *proceedings*
- prepare and apply for transfers of child protection orders and *proceedings* to other States or Territories within Australia or New Zealand
- prepare, institute and conduct appeals against decisions about applications for child protection orders and decisions about the transfer of child protection orders and *proceedings* to a participating state, and
- in addition to the above, the DCPL also has functions to provide legal advice to, or appear for Child Safety on its instructions, for the following matters:
 - adoption
 - family law
 - Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) reviews

- Hague Child Abduction Convention, or
- other matters relating to the safety, wellbeing or protection of a child.¹

Principles for the administration of the DCPL Act

The main principle for administering the DCPL Act is that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child, both through childhood and for the rest of his or her life, are paramount.²

The DCPL Act is to also be administered having regard to the following other principles:

- collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety best achieves fair, timely and consistent outcomes for the protection of children³
- in protecting a child, the DCPL should only take the action that is warranted in the circumstances, including, for example, by applying for the least intrusive child protection order⁴
- the DCPL should consider whether sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence is available in deciding whether to make an application for a child protection order⁵
- each principle stated in section 5B of the CP Act for ensuring safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child, to the extent the principle is capable of being applied to a person performing a function or exercising a power under the DCPL Act, including for example:
 - a child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm; and
 - a delay in making a decision in relation to a child should be avoided, unless appropriate for the child⁶
- each principle stated in section 5BA of the CP Act for achieving permanency for a child, to the extent the principle is capable of being applied to a person performing a function or exercising a power under the DCPL Act. The principles provide that to ensure the wellbeing and best interests of a child, the action or order that should be preferred, having regard to the other general principles in section 5B and also the additional principles for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children in section 5C of the CP Act, is the action or order that best ensures the child experiences or has:
 - ongoing positive, trusting and nurturing relationships with persons of significance to the child, including the child's parents, siblings, extended family members and carers, and
 - stable living arrangements, with connections to the child's community, that meet the child's developmental, educational, emotional, health, intellectual and physical needs, and
 - legal arrangements for the child's care that provide the child with a sense of permanence and long-term stability, including, for example, a long-term guardianship order, a permanent care order or an adoption order for the child⁷

¹ Section 5 of the DCPL Act.

² Section 9 of the DCPL Act.

³ Section 6(1)(a) of the DCPL Act.

⁴ Section 6(1)(b) of the DCPL Act.

⁵ Section 6(1)(c) of the DCPL Act.

⁶ Section 6(1)(d) of the DCPL Act.

⁷ Section 6(1)(e) of the DCPL Act.

- each additional principle applying in relation to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child stated in section 5C of the CP Act, which provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination, and the long-term effect of a decision on the child's identity and connection with the child's family and community must be taken into account. Further, the following further principles also apply (together referred to as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle*):
 - the *prevention principle* that a child has the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community
 - the *partnership principle* that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons have the right to participate in—
 - significant decisions under this Act about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, and
 - decisions relating to the development and delivery of services, provided by the department, that support Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander families, or provide for the care or protection of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children
 - the *placement principle* that, if a child is to be placed in care, the child has a right to be placed with a member of the child's family group
 - the *participation principle* that a child and the child's parents and family members have a right to participate, and be enabled to participate, in an administrative or judicial process for making a significant decision about the child, and
 - the *connection principle* that a child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly when the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.⁸

Also, each principle relevant to exercising powers and making decisions under section 5D(1) of the CP Act applies to the extent the principle is capable of being applied to a person exercising a power or making a decision under the DCPL Act. This includes:

- a power under the CP Act should be exercised in a way that is open, fair and respectful of the rights of each person affected by the exercise of the power
- to the extent that it is appropriate, the views of relevant persons should be sought and taken into account before a decision is made under this Act
- if a relevant person for a decision under the CP Act needs help to participate in or understand the decision-making process, or to understand a statutory right relevant to the decision, the relevant person should be given help
- a relevant person for a decision under the CP Act may obtain their own legal advice, or be represented by a lawyer or supported by another person, in relation to the decision-making process, and

⁸ Section 6(1)(f) of the DCPL Act.

- information about a child affected by a decision under the CP Act should be shared only to the extent necessary for the purposes of the CP Act, and in a way that protects the child's privacy.⁹

In addition, the principles relating to obtaining a child's views set out in section 5E of the CP Act apply in relation to giving a child an opportunity to express their views appropriately. This includes ensuring the following in relation to the exercise of a power or the making of a decision:

- the child is given meaningful and ongoing opportunities to participate
- the child is allowed to decide whether or not the child will participate
- the child is given information that is reasonably necessary to allow the child to participate
- the child is advised about what help is available to the child
- the person understands and considers, or makes a genuine attempt to understand and consider, any views expressed by the child
- the child is allowed to express views that are different to views previously expressed by the child
- communication with the child is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the child, and
- a record of views expressed by the child is made that, if appropriate, uses the child's words.¹⁰

If a child decides to participate in the exercise of a power or the making of a decision, the person must ensure that the child is allowed to decide how the child will participate, and the person listens to and engages with, or makes a genuine attempt to listen to and engage with, the child, and the child is given help to participate if the child requires it.

If the child decides not to participate, or is otherwise unable to participate, in the exercise of a power or the making of a decision, the person must ensure the person obtains, or makes a genuine attempt to obtain, the views of the child in another way that is appropriate for the child, and the child's decision, or inability, does not operate to the detriment of the child in relation to the exercise of the power or the making of the decision.

⁹ Section 6(2) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁰ Section 6(3) of the DCPL Act.

DCPL's Guidelines

Under section 39 of the DCPL Act, the DCPL reissued written guidelines on 1 July 2019, a copy is in Appendix 5. The Guidelines were issued to:

- all staff employed in the ODCPL
- Child Safety and all staff working in the following areas undertaking work relevant to the functions of the DCPL:
 - OCFOs
 - Child Safety Service Centres
 - Child Safety's Legal Services, and
- lawyers engaged by the DCPL to carry out the DCPL's functions under the DCPL Act.

Queensland's child protection litigation model in practice

Child Safety receives reports of concerns about child abuse and neglect

Under the CP Act, Child Safety receives reports of concerns about child abuse and neglect.

Child Safety's published data to the end of 30 June 2023 provides that in 2022-23, Child Safety received 139,823 reports of concerns about 85,176 children. The number of reports of concerns was up 7.7% on the 129,785 reports received in 2021-22, with the number of concerned children up 6.7% on the 79,844 in 2021-22.

On considering the reported concerns, if Child Safety reasonably suspects a child is in need of protection, Child Safety must immediately investigate the concerns and assess whether the concerns about abuse and neglect can be substantiated and, if they can, assess the child's protective needs, or take other action Child Safety considers appropriate.

Child Safety classifies the reported concerns that it determines need to be investigated and assessed as a notification. Child Safety's published data to the end of 30 June 2023 provides that in 2022-23, Child Safety recorded 34,279 notifications concerning 30,628 children. This is an increase of 7.1% on the 32,005 notifications recorded in 2021-22, with the number of concerned children also increasing 7.1% (28,587 concerned children in 2021-22).

In 2022-23, Child Safety commenced 28,861 investigations (up 1.7% on 28,370 commenced in 2021-22) to assess whether the children were in need of protection. Child Safety usually conducts investigations with the consent of parents, but where this is not possible or appropriate, Child Safety can seek assessment orders (temporary assessment orders and or court assessment orders) from either Magistrate or a Court depending on the circumstances to authorise actions necessary as part of an investigation. OCFOs Legal Officers provide legal advice to Child Safety's frontline staff in respect to their investigations and assessments, and assists with obtaining assessment orders, by drafting and appearing on these applications. In 2022-23, Child Safety's published data shows that there were 1,353 temporary assessment orders made (up 8.7% on the 1,245 orders made in 2021-22), and 1,532 court assessment orders (up 5.3% on the 1,455 orders made in 2021-22).

In 2022-23, Child Safety completed 34,279 investigations (up 7.1% on the 32,005 investigations completed in 2021-22), with Child Safety recording a substantiated finding in respect to 7,283 investigations (up 10.5% from the 6,592 substantiated findings made in 2021-22). A substantiated finding means that Child Safety had assessed that the child had suffered significant harm, was suffering significant harm, or was at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm.

If Child Safety assesses that a child is in need of protection and that their parents are able and willing to actively work with Child Safety to meet the child's protective needs, Child Safety will work with the parents through an agreement. This is referred to as intervention with parental agreement.

If Child Safety assesses that a child protection order is required to meet a child's protective needs, as outlined in the following section, the *matter* is referred to the DCPL.

When Child Safety must refer a *matter* to the DCPL

Under the DCPL Act, Child Safety must refer the following types of *child protection matters* (*matters*) to the DCPL:

- if Child Safety are satisfied that a child, is a child in need of protection and that a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- if a child protection order is in force for a child, and Child Safety are satisfied the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- if a permanent care order is in force for a child and Child Safety are satisfied that the child's permanent guardian under the order is not complying, in a significant way, with their obligations under the CP Act and the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for promoting the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

In support of each referred *matter*, Child Safety must provide the DCPL with a brief of evidence that includes:

- the reasons why the child is a child in need of protection, and the reasons why an order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection along with the type of order Child Safety considers is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- the reasons why a child protection order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- the reasons why a child's permanent guardian is not complying, in a significant way, with the permanent guardian's obligations under the CP Act and why the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Child Safety must also provide the DCPL with available supporting documents and all other available documents and evidence that are relevant to the referred *matter*. OCFOS Legal Officers assist Child Safety to refer *matters* to the DCPL.

As outlined in the performance part of this report, the DCPL received a total of 3,494 referred *matters* in 2022-23, which was up 3.2% on the total of 3,386 *matters* received in 2021-22.

If Child Safety need more time to decide the most appropriate action to meet a child's ongoing protection and care needs, or the *matter* has been referred to the DCPL, and the DCPL requires further time to decide the most appropriate action to meet a child's ongoing protection and care needs and start taking action, a temporary custody order can be sought by Child Safety. These orders must not be more than three business days in duration, and OCFOS Legal Officers assist Child Safety by drafting and appearing on these applications.

Within the 3,494 referred *matters* received by the DCPL in 2022-23, 1,328 of the *matters* (38.0% of the total) concerned children already the subject of an existing child protection order, with the remaining 2,166 *matters* relating to children on either assessment orders (888 *matters* or 25.4% of the total) or temporary custody orders (791 *matters* or 22.6% of the total), or children subject to a care agreement between parents and Child Safety (22 *matters* or 0.6% of the total), or concern children that are on no order or care agreement (465 *matters* or 13.3% of the total).

How the DCPL deals with a referred *matter*

Once the DCPL receives a *matter*, the DCPL is responsible for independently deciding whether or not an application for a child protection order should be made for a child in the Court, and if so, what type of child protection order should be sought, as well as litigating the applications.

Each referred *matter* that the DCPL receives from Child Safety is allocated to an experienced DCPL lawyer, either Senior Lawyer or Principal Lawyer, referred to as an Applicant Lawyer, to be dealt with under the DCPL Act. If the Applicant Lawyer decides an application for a child protection order should be made, they draft the application and settle the initial supporting affidavit. The Applicant Lawyer's decision is based on the professional assessment by Child Safety Officers of what order is considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection, and also on the supporting documents and all other available documents and evidence that are relevant to the referred *matter*.

In considering referred *matters*, before deciding how to deal with them, the DCPL may ask Child Safety to provide further evidence or information about the *matter*. This ensures that the State only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances, and that applications made by the DCPL are supported by sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence, which has been independently considered and assessed by the DCPL. In 2022-23, the DCPL sought further evidence or information from Child Safety when dealing with 2,168 *matters*, equating to 61.8% of the total *matters* the DCPL dealt with in the year.

As noted above, under the DCPL Act, in respect of each accepted referred *matter*, the DCPL must deal with it by deciding to either:

- apply for a child protection order for the child; or
- refer the *matter* back to Child Safety.

As outlined in the performance part of this report, in 2022-23, the DCPL made 3,456 child protection applications and referred back 50 *matters* to Child Safety.

In 2022-23, within the 3,456 child protection applications made, the DCPL made 473 applications (13.7% of the of the total child protection applications made) for child protection orders of a different type, or orders that were otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment on the *matters* (this is outlined in more detail within the performance part of this report).

Once the application and initial supporting affidavit are filed, a dedicated DCPL File Lawyer then takes responsibility for managing the resulting *proceedings* in the Court at the particular location that the application has been filed, working directly with the Child Safety frontline staff in the location. This arrangement ensures consistency in file management, with File Lawyers managing the *proceeding* from the point it is filed until the application has been determined. The Applicant Lawyer that reviewed the brief of evidence, decided to commence the proceedings by making a child protection application is then briefed to appear at any complex interim hearings, court ordered conferences and any final hearing.

The Child Safety Officers are not a party to the *proceedings*, rather they are the DCPL's witnesses.

Personal appearances at mentions, court ordered conferences and hearings have been the preferred mode of attendance for DCPL lawyers. However, if a personal appearance was not required, DCPL lawyers have used audio visual and telephone options to appear, for example where at the mention of a proceeding, procedural issues have been dealt with and the proceeding has been adjourned on an uncontested basis.

Also as outlined in the performance part of this report, in 2022-23, there were 3,111 child protection applications determined by the Court.

Enabling legislation & responsible Minister

The DCPL was established under the DCPL Act, which commenced on 1 July 2016.

The DCPL Act is administered by the Attorney-General of Queensland.

The DCPL Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 11 May 2016 in cognate with the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2016*.

Service delivery statements

In the State Budget 2022-23 service delivery statements, the DCPL had an effectiveness and efficiency measure.

The effectiveness measure shows how effective the DCPL is in applying for child protection orders with the goal that the DCPL has only taken action that was warranted in the circumstances for the protection of children.

The efficiency measure shows the clearance rate (%), which is the number of applications for child protection orders finalised against the number of new child protection applications lodged within the year, with the goal to ensure that the DCPL is efficiently dealing with child protection applications, reflecting the general legal principle in the DCPL Act that a delay in making a decision in relation to a child should be avoided, unless appropriate for the child.

Table 1 – DCPL’s service delivery standards

Service standards and other measures	Notes	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Target	2022-23 Actual
Legal and Prosecutions				
Service: Child protection legal services				
Rate of final child protection orders made by the Childrens Court when determining DCPL child protection applications		100.0%	99.0%	99.8%
Clearance rate (finalisations/lodgments) per cent of application for child protection order		103.5%	100.0%	90.0%
NOTES:				

In 2023-24, in addition the above measures, the DCPL will include an additional efficiency measure, the average number of child protection applications made per DCPL Applicant Lawyer.

Governance - management and structure

Organisational structure

The ODCPL is based in Brisbane, with one lawyer based in Mareeba.

The Queensland Government determined that the ODCPL would be established as a Brisbane based model. The Brisbane based model has continued to be essential to ensure appropriate professional supervision, continuing professional development and support for staff and to promote consistency of approach.

The Brisbane based model has continued to support the ODCPL's culture and drive practice improvements in line with the reforms, and it has also allowed the ODCPL to share support services from across DJAG including Crown Law.

The ODCPL operates three chamber groups of lawyers, with each Chambers allocated specific regions across the State. This ensures the ODCPL is responsive to local service delivery needs, and results in a consistent group of lawyers appearing in the Court in a particular region and working with the local Child Safety Service Centre staff, OCFOS officers, partner agencies and local lawyers.

The Blue Chambers deal with referred *matters* from the following locations:

- Brisbane Court locations, including Brisbane, Caboolture, Cleveland, Pine Rivers, Sandgate, Redcliffe and Wynnum
- Sunshine Coast Court locations, including Caloundra, Gympie, Kingaroy and Maroochydore, and
- Central Queensland Court locations, including Emerald, Gladstone and Rockhampton.

The Longman Chambers deal with referred *matters* from the following locations:

- Darling Downs and South West Queensland Court locations, including Charleville, Dalby, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Warwick, and also undertakes some matters within Brisbane
- Northern Queensland Court locations, including Bowen, Mackay and Townsville, and
- Western Queensland Court locations, including Mt Isa.

The McDonald Chambers deal with referred *matters* from the following locations:

- South East Queensland Court locations, including Beaudesert, Beenleigh and Southport
- Wide Bay Burnett Court locations, including Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Maryborough, and
- Far North Queensland Court locations, including Cairns, Innisfail and Mareeba.

DCPL Lawyers have appeared in the Court during 2022-23 sitting at 62 locations throughout the State, collaboratively working with officers employed within OCFOS, and Child Safety staff employed in 56 Child Safety Service Centres throughout the State.

The ODCPL organisational chart is located at Appendix 1.

Executive Management Team

ODCPL's executive management team comprises the DCPL, the three Assistant Directors of Child Protection Litigation, the Practice Manager, and the Assistant Practice Manager. The executive management team meets regularly and is responsible for formulating the ODCPL's strategic and operational priorities and initiatives in respect of service delivery and stakeholder engagement, and oversees ODCPL's people, learning and development, policies, procedures and business processes. The executive management team is also responsible for overseeing the ODCPL's governance including financial performance and high-level risk.

Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service

For the purposes of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, staff of the ODCPL are bound by the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* (Code of Conduct). All new employees, including contractors, volunteers and work experience students, undertake mandatory face-to-face and online workplace ethics training as part of their induction and the on-line training is repeated annually. All new employees are provided with the Code of Conduct and the DJAG Workplace Policy, and they are also provided to staff of the ODCPL annually.

Human Rights Act 2019

The ODCPL is committed to ensuring our people act and make decisions compatibly with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HR Act). In 2022-23, the ODCPL continued to further embed human rights into the DCPL's service delivery.

Human rights complaints management and reporting

No complaints were received by the DCPL during the 2022-23 year that contained human rights components.

Values

The ODCPL has embraced the five Queensland public service values: customers first, ideas into action, unleash potential, be courageous, and empower people.

These values guide our staff behaviour and support our service commitment.

Governance - risk management and accountability

Risk Management

The ODCPL's risk management framework ensures risk is actively managed as an integral part of decision-making, planning and service delivery of achieving the DCPL's purpose of applying for child protection orders and conducting *proceedings*.

Information systems and recordkeeping

The ODCPL operates under the requirements of the *Public Records Act 2002*. The ODCPL has an obligation to create, maintain, preserve and dispose of records in compliance with legislation, policies and standards. The ODCPL also complies with the Queensland State Archives General Retention and Disposal Schedule.

To assist the ODCPL to manage records and record governance, the services of Crown Law's records team are engaged.

Employee performance management framework

The ODCPL's employee performance management framework includes induction, staff development, expectation agreements and recognition.

Leadership and management development framework

The ODCPL has a leadership and management framework, which includes:

- maintaining our commitment to support staff, promoting excellence in service delivery, through the provision of regular and effective legal supervision and by ensuring accessibility to operational management
- ensuring that the management structure is fit for purpose and promotes continual improvement in service delivery, reflecting our priorities and the shape of the organisation to equip the DCPL to meet future demands, opportunities and challenges at operational and strategic levels
- promoting increased opportunities, succession planning and career and professional development for staff, whilst ultimately maintaining staff retention rates through increased support, accessible line management and strategic planning and priority setting
- facilitating an innovative approach to service delivery, through generating increased scope for greater partnership working and collaboration, better stakeholder engagement and improved strategic communication and corporate messaging, and
- strategic planning, including business planning, and reinforcing the DCPL's ability to deliver its statutory functions effectively and efficiently.

Information security attestation

During the mandatory annual Information Security reporting process, the Director-General of DJAG, attested to the appropriateness of the information security risk management within DJAG to the Queensland Government Chief Information Security Officer, noting that appropriate assurance activities have been undertaken to inform this opinion and DJAG's information security risk position.

Governance - human resources

Our people

The lawyers and litigation support staff employed within the ODCPL have come from a variety of backgrounds, both from Government agencies and private practice, bringing with them a wide breadth of experience and skill.

In addition to ongoing recruitment of new lawyers and litigation support staff, the ODCPL has again seen good stability in its staffing complement as a result of high staff retention levels. This has resulted in the ODCPL being able to retain and develop a highly skilled and competent workforce who have been able to continue to develop their expertise in the area of child protection service delivery and child protection litigation.

Strategic Workforce Planning

ODCPL continues to ensure leaders model and drive inclusive behaviours to ensure we work in a way that enables equity and provides safety and security for everyone where staff feel they belong, and their contributions are valued.

The ODCPL places a strong focus on attracting and retaining a skilled, diverse, and capable workforce, with people from diverse backgrounds including non-English speaking backgrounds, people with disability, women, Aboriginal people, and Torres Strait Islander people being encouraged to apply for positions.

ODCPL's workforce policy and procedure is governed by policies of DJAG and DJAG's Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy 2023-27. ODCPL have a representative on the DJAG Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples working group.

ODCPL is committed to building and encouraging cultural capability in the workforce and improving workforce participation by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disabilities and people with culturally and linguistically diverse background, through embedding equitable and inclusive recruitment practices and ensuring culturally safe onboarding processes.

ODCPL staff have engaged in training and continued education to enhance their cultural capacity and their understanding and respect for diversity, including Strategic Indigenous Awareness Training; First Nations CLE toolkit: engaging with ATSI to create meaningful access to justice; Issues impacting indigenous Queenslanders when coming into contact with the legal system; Diversity and inclusion for mentally healthy workplaces and International Women's Day event: Empower her voice, secure her future.

The ODCPL has a strong focus on providing staff with higher duties opportunities for staff and supports staff to develop their leadership skills.

The ODCPL promotes and actively supports flexible working arrangements in accordance with the Queensland Government's Flex-connect framework, which meant that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ODCPL was able to continue to provide a high-quality service by optimising flexible and remote working arrangements. Being a highly mobile workforce, ODCPL staff when required, have been able to transition to remote working arrangements without major disruption and were able to continue to provide a high-quality service. Whilst increased workloads continued, ODCPL

staff used technology effectively to remain connected, appear at court events, and collaborate with Child Safety.

ODCPL management recognise the ongoing benefits associated with flexible working and are committed to maximising opportunities for staff to work flexibly. Flexible work arrangements are promoted and accessed across all levels of staff from AO3 to SO level; with the majority of staff utilising some form of flexible working arrangement, including flexible working hours, flexible working arrangements, leave arrangements, working from home and telecommuting, and part-time work to promote a healthy work-life balance.

ODCPL management supported the health and wellbeing of staff taking advantage of flexible and remote working arrangements and remained connected with staff working remotely through regular team meetings and leadership provided by Principal Lawyers.

ODCPL are an inclusive workplace that provides reasonable adjustment to support people living with a disability and recognises the value of extending this approach to other employees to assist with the retention of skilled, experienced people. This has included modifications to a role or workplace that better enable individuals to continue to work or to support individuals when returning to the workplace following a period of leave, particularly for women returning from maternity leave.

ODCPL have a high percentage of women in the workforce and continued to promote the representation of women in leadership roles in 2022-23, with one female permanently appointed to an SO role and three females were provided with higher duty opportunities in a PO6 role. As at June 2023, 75% of lawyers in a PO6 Principal Lawyer role were female.

The ODCPL also fosters a healthy and inclusive workplace, coming together as a group to celebrate achievements and social events, promoting positive working relationships, connection and wellbeing. These include, but are not limited to, celebrating Staff and Divisional Excellence Awards, and Years of Services Awards.

In 2022-23, no private lawyers were engaged by the DCPL under section 11 of the DCPL Act to carry out the DCPL's functions.

Workforce profile data

Table 2 – ODCPL’s full-time equivalent (FTE) overview	
	FTE
Total FTE for the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation	83.65
Headcount number of staff	91
Percentage of Frontline and Frontline Support staff (FTE)	100%
Percentage of Corporate staff (FTE)	0.0%
Percentage of permanent staff (FTE)	76.8%
Percentage of temporary staff (FTE)	20.8%
Percentage of casual staff (FTE)	0.0%
Percentage of contract staff (FTE)	2.4%
Percentage of Full-time staff (headcount)	84.6%
Percentage of Part-time staff (headcount)	15.4%
Percentage of Casual staff (headcount)	0.0%

Target group data

Table 3 – ODCPL’s workforce statistics		
Gender	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Woman	73	80.2%
Man	18	19.8%
Non-binary	0	0.0%
Diversity Groups	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Women	73	80.2%
Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Island Peoples*	<5	1.1%
People with disability*	<5	4.4%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English*	<5	1.1%
Women in Leadership Roles	Women (Headcount)	Women as percentage of total leadership cohort (Calculated on headcount)
Senior Officers (Classified and s122 equivalent combined)	1	33.3%
Senior Executive Service and Chief Executives (Classified and s122 equivalent combined)	0	0.00%

* Diversity rates are based on voluntary self-reporting and may not reflect total numbers.

Employee opinion survey

ODCPL Working for Queensland employee opinion survey response rate was 71%.

Early retirement, Redundancy and retrenchment

No redundancy/early retirement/retrenchment packages were paid during the period.

Health, safety and wellbeing

As part of the ODCPL's deep commitment to valuing and promoting staff health, safety and wellbeing, a bespoke wellbeing program was implemented in 2021 – DCPLBeWell. The DCPLBeWell program was continued in 2022-23 and was designed to complement the DJAGBeWell program, which ODCPL were also encouraged to access.

As well as maintaining and strengthening a workplace culture that is underpinned by supporting and valuing staff, the ODCPL's wellbeing program promotes wellness through the following components:

- education and training
- quarterly well-check
- actively supporting flexible working options for all staff
- regular wellbeing program updates
- create opportunities to connect with colleagues through regular social events.

The program was delivered to all staff to ensure that they have the knowledge and resources to stay well. This is within the context that the work of the ODCPL can expose staff to confronting and disturbing material including distressing and offensive content. Further, staff can be required to engage with persons involved with the child protection part of the justice system who have and may continue to experience distressing circumstances, together with managing significantly high workloads.

ODCPL staff are advised of the general DJAG wellbeing seminars, including those provided by Benestar and are encouraged to attend. In addition, the ODCPL also delivered the following three wellbeing seminars by Lauren Phelps, a qualified lawyer and a Culture and Wellness Advisor with Lawganised:

- The Fatigues – *Decision fatigue affects lawyers and this workshop explored this and provides strategies to help*
- Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession – *This workshop looked at signs of vicarious trauma and ways you can help mitigate the risks, and*

- Mental Illness - Why lawyers don't suffer from this– *Workshop to help take charge of your wellbeing and mental health.*

Within 2022-23, the ODCPL also provided staff with the opportunity to participate in two well-check appointments. A well-check is a confidential one-on-one conversation between staff and an experienced Benestar clinician. They were conducted by telephone and were designed to give staff an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen their wellbeing in the context of the sensitive work they do, noting their workload, court advocacy and other pressures that are inherent in ODCPL's work.

During a well-check, staff may be asked to reflect on their role, including:

- considering the nature of their work and how it may be impacting on them and their wellbeing
- reviewing their self-care strategies
- identifying any areas of risk for staff, their team or the ODCPL as a whole
- understanding if there are any areas of their role that are negatively impacting on their health and wellbeing, and
- understanding how these issues may impact on their engagement and consider ways they can strengthen their wellbeing.

The content of discussions at well-checks remains private between staff and the clinician, however, Benestar do report general themes arising from the well-checks and make recommendations to the ODCPL's Executive Management Team so that action can be taken to strengthen safety and wellbeing in the workplace as required.

ODCPL's Executive Management Team

Nigel A. Miller - Director of Child Protection Litigation

Nigel A. Miller is Queensland's first Director of Child Protection Litigation. Nigel has experience across a range of fields, including in the complex area of child protection and public family law.

Nigel was called to the Queensland Bar in 2004 and admitted as a Barrister of the High Court in 2005. His legal practice has specialised in child protection and related areas of law, involving best interests and direct instructions advocacy for children and young people. Nigel has also specialised in acting for parents in the child protection jurisdiction.

Nigel has practised public family law in the United Kingdom with a London-based local authority and as an Independent Children's Lawyer in the family law jurisdiction. Nigel also has experience in domestic and family violence and criminal law, including representing young people in the youth justice jurisdiction.

Prior to his current appointment, Nigel held the position of Assistant Director of LAQ's Family Law Services overseeing the Children and Young People team and the Violence Prevention and Women's Advocacy team, and before that, held the position of Principal Lawyer within the Children and Young People team for five years.

Nigel was a founding board member of the Child Protection Practitioners Association of Queensland and in 2014 was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore the establishment of a child protection law specialist accreditation program in Queensland.

His other memberships have included the Queensland Law Society's (QLS) Children's Law Committee, and representing the QLS on the Children's Court of Queensland Case Management Committee. Nigel has also been a Member of the Forde Foundation Board of Advice.

Qualifications

Bachelor of Laws (Honours) 2002

Bachelor of International Business 2002

Admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland 2004

Entered on the High Court of Australia Register of Practitioners 2005

Churchill Fellow 2014

Appointed as a Separate Representative in child protection matters

Appointed as an Independent Children's Lawyer in family law matters

Danielle Brown – Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation, Longman Chambers

Danielle Brown is an Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation with the ODCPL, responsible for the management and operation of the Longman Chambers, which covers a variety of areas from the Darling Downs and South West Queensland, Northern Queensland and Western Queensland and parts of Brisbane. Danielle was admitted to practice in 2003 and has over fifteen years' experience as a child protection lawyer in Australia, having represented parents, section 113 non-party participants, children and the applicant in child protection proceedings.

Originally from New Zealand, Danielle worked as a Criminal Barrister and Lawyer at the Public Defence Service in New Zealand representing criminal defendants in summary matters, defended hearings and jury trials.

After moving to Australia in 2006, Danielle worked for over seven years in private practice in criminal law, domestic violence law, family law and child protection law. During this time, Danielle developed a strong passion and commitment to promoting the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children through strong advocacy and representation of parents and children. Danielle was appointed as an Independent Children's Lawyer for Family law proceedings in 2014.

Due to her commitment to advocating for children and young people and ensuring their voices are heard within litigation, Danielle joined the Queensland Government in 2014 as one of the original child advocates within the OPG. Prior to joining the ODCPL in 2016 as a principal lawyer, Danielle was a senior legal officer at the Public Safety Business Agency where she provided legal advice and representation to the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Service and the Public Safety Business Agency.

Danielle assumed the position of Acting Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation for Longman Chambers in October 2021 when Assistant Director Georgina Thomas commenced a period of extended leave. Danielle was permanently appointed to the Assistant Director position in Longman Chambers in October 2022.

In 2022 Danielle received a High Commendation award for Performance in the DJAG Staff Excellence awards for her conduct of the longest child protection trial in Queensland, which ran for 27 days of evidence over a 1-year period.

In December 2022 Danielle was appointed as an Ordinary Member of Queensland Civil Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) and has conducted sessional work, in matters other than child protection, in QCAT throughout 2023.

Qualifications

Bachelor of Arts (Criminology) 2002

Bachelor of Laws 2002

Admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor (High Court of New Zealand) 2003

Admitted as a Lawyer to the Supreme Court of Queensland 2006

Entered on the High Court of Australia Register of Practitioners 2007

Appointed as an Independent Childrens Lawyer 2014

Graham Murray - Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation, Blue Chambers

Graham Murray is an Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation with the ODCPL, responsible for the management and operation of the Blue Chambers, which covers a variety of areas including Central Queensland, the South Burnett, the Sunshine Coast and parts of Brisbane.

Graham has over fifteen years' experience as child protection lawyer, during which time he has represented state welfare authorities in a variety of litigation and mediation settings, in both England and Queensland. Graham was called to the Bar (England and Wales) in 2004 and more

recently, in 2016, was admitted as a lawyer in the Supreme Court of Queensland. He has extensive post admission experience working within crime, private family law and child protection.

Originally from the United Kingdom, Graham has worked as part of an in-house legal team for a large London Borough, advising in relation to child protection matters and family law, bringing applications for Care Orders, Placement Orders and Adoptions in the Magistrates, County and High Courts in England. He has authored numerous publications with respect to family law and child protection, including several chapters of the Magistrates' Court Manual (England and Wales) and was part of the editorial board of 'Family Matters', a specialist journal for specialist family magistrates. As a trustee Graham also managed the legal portfolio of a charity which provided accommodation to offenders following release from custody.

Within Queensland, Graham has worked within Child Safety's Court Services Unit and undertook a brief period at the Office of the Public Guardian, where he managed a state-wide team of child advocates providing legal services to children in care. Graham has provided advice to Child Safety Service Centres and Regional Directors, in respect of child protection litigation, the interplay with the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), reviewable decisions relating to contact and placement, QCAT proceedings and the regulation of care. Within both England and Queensland, Graham has facilitated training in family law and child protection to a variety of audiences, including legal professionals, the judiciary, social workers, child safety officers and mental health practitioners. Recently Graham was a guest speaker at the Queensland Health 14th Annual Child Protection Workshop.

Since commencing in 2016 with the ODCPL, Graham has had responsibility for the management of Blue Chambers and in addition to managing and supervising over 20 lawyers, has conducted complex and novel child protection litigation representing the DCPL in hearings, including multi-day hearings with significant examination and cross examination of experts and professionals, including paediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers in contested proceedings involving non-accidental injury, allegations of sexual abuse and chronic neglect. Graham has also represented the DCPL in numerous appeals, many of which involve novel or complex legal argument.

Committed to continual improvement in his approach to leadership, in 2022 Graham secured a scholarship through the Public Service Commission to study an Executive Master of Public Administration with the Australian and New Zealand School of Government. Further, within DJAG Graham has worked alongside People and Engagement to develop resources and training to support staff in leadership roles.

Qualifications

LLB (European Legal Studies) (Dunelm) 2002

Called to the Bar (England and Wales) 2004

Admitted as a Solicitor (England and Wales) 2011

Admitted as a Lawyer of the Supreme Court of Queensland 2016

Philip Scott - Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation, McDonald Chambers

Philip Scott is an Assistant Director of Child Protection Litigation with the ODCPL, responsible for the management and operation of the McDonald Chambers, which covers a variety of areas from

Far North Queensland, Wide Bay Burnett and South East Queensland, including Beenleigh and the Gold Coast. In addition to managing a large team of lawyers, Philip also manages the ODCPL's internal CPD and is committed to focusing on building the development of ODCPL lawyers across all aspects of their role and responsibilities.

Philip has more than 10 years' experience in child protection law, having devoted the majority of his legal career in this area, and through this experience he is committed to providing better outcomes for children and families in Queensland. In his prior role, as a Senior Principal Lawyer at Crown Law, Philip led a small group of lawyers primarily undertaking complex legal matters representing the Chief Executive of the then Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in *proceedings*.

Philip also has experience in criminal law having been a serving member of the Queensland Police Service and prosecutor for approximately 8 years, and also has experience in a number of other areas of law including Native Title and Resources, Dangerous Prisoners, family law, coronial matters, cy-pres matters, Hague Convention matters, special medical procedures and mental health.

Qualifications

Bachelor of Business/Laws 2007

Admitted as a Lawyer of the Supreme Court of Queensland 2007

Entered on the High Court of Australia Register of Practitioners 2008

Stacy Ellis – Practice Manager

Stacy has over 20 years' experience working in Local Government, over 10 years in private enterprise and over 8 years in the Queensland Public Sector. Stacy has undertaken various positions during this time including Executive Assistant to CEO supporting the Mayor and 10 Councillors, Customer Service Coordinator, HR/Payroll Coordinator and Executive Officer.

Stacy joined the ODCPL in June 2016 as a Senior Legal Secretary and was then successful in gaining the positions of Executive Officer and Assistant Practice Manager. In March 2022 Stacy was appointed to the position of Practice Manager and is responsible for providing strategic and business support to the ODCPL. This includes financial management, human resource management, information technology and business system support, and management of corporate administration.

In 2022 Stacy was awarded the overall DJAG Excellence Award for Excellence in Leadership.

Sharlene Schluter – Assistant Practice Manager

Sharlene has over 27 years' experience within legal firms in Queensland, and over 6 years in the Queensland Public Sector. Sharlene has undertaken various roles during this time including Secretary, Conveyancing Clerk, Paralegal, Staff Trainer and Online Training Course Developer.

Sharlene joined the ODCPL in October 2017 as a Litigation Support Officer, progressed to the role of Executive Assistant and Business Support Officer until successfully gaining the position of Assistant Practice Manager. Sharlene is responsible for assisting the Practice Manager in the day-to-day operations of the ODCPL, as well as managing a small team of Legal Clerks and a Travel Coordinator.

Learning and development

The ODCPL maintains a strong commitment to the continuing professional development (CPD) of its staff. As well as the mentoring of early career lawyers by more experienced practitioners, the commitment to building the knowledge and skills of staff is reflected in our CPD program.

The ODCPL's internal CPD program forms part of a wider supervision and practice management framework. The CPD program reflects the ODCPL's ongoing focus on building the proficiency of its lawyers across all aspects of their role and responsibilities. Through the CPD program, lawyers are encouraged to maintain a high standard of practice through a commitment to continued learning in their discipline. Further, the CPD program empowers lawyers at all levels through the provision of targeted practice resources. This facilitates the sharing of good practice across the ODCPL and fosters a growing understanding of what works well in the delivery of child protection litigation.

The CPD program assists ODCPL lawyers to continually develop their skills and competence through attendance at a range of learning and development sessions.

The CPD program also requires ODCPL lawyers to complete at least 10 CPD units per year (1 point is 1 hour), which mirrors the rules of the QLS and the Bar Association of Queensland relating to CPD.

CPD sessions are often recorded and are made available for staff who are unable to attend the live sessions to watch at a later date via the ODCPL's Learning and Development site. Training resources, including PowerPoint presentations and research articles, for each session are also made available to all staff through the site.

The program over the last seven years has included CPD sessions presented by a variety of presenters, both in-house and from external agencies, with a focus on skills and/or knowledge relevant to the work of the DCPL. In developing the CPD program, input is sought from staff employed in the ODCPL about suggested topic areas and has involved lawyers employed in the ODPCL with a particular interest and expertise in a relevant area presenting CPD sessions for their colleagues.

CPD sessions in the 2022-23 year included a focus on substantive law, practice and procedure, wellbeing, and management/supervision, including the following in-house sessions:

- Strategic Indigenous Awareness Training
- Mental Illness – Why lawyers don't suffer from this
- Introduction to Child Protection Conferencing
- File Management for File Lawyers
- Effective Supervision: Hints, tips and tricks for supervisors
- Domestic and Family Violence in Child Protection Proceedings

- The Fatigues
- Child Protection and Family Law interface
- Impaired Capacity
- Management Training
- Working with children and young people in domestic violence proceedings
- QCAT and Interstate Liaison Team Issues
- Professional Development: The Role of Supervision, and
- Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession.

The ODCPL also supported staff to participate in the learning and development program offered by DJAG and to attend external courses, such as supporting a delegation of staff to attend the National Child Protection Forum.

A full list of CPD sessions that staff were offered or supported to attend within the year can be found in Appendix 2. This includes the general wellness webinars and targeted wellbeing seminars that were offered as part of the DCPLBeWell program outlined above the Health, Safety and wellbeing part of this report.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is critical to promote strategic thinking, plan and analyse service delivery, deploy resources effectively and efficiently, design coherent services that bridge agencies and evaluate the DCPL's success. Since establishment in 2016, the ODCPL has been committed to stakeholder engagement, delivering on the policy intent of the reforms, fostering and developing effective partnerships with Child Safety, as well as other stakeholders from across the sector.

The effective performance of the DCPL's statutory functions requires the development of strong and constructive working relationships with Child Safety, including OCFOS legal officers and Child Safety Service Centre frontline staff, along with other key partner agencies. This is central to achieving the collaboration as envisaged in the DCPL Act, and to the promotion of fair, timely and consistent outcomes for the protection of children that are the subject of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL.

In 2022-23, the ODCPL staff proactively engaged with OCFOS legal officers and Child Safety Service Centre frontline staff across the State. Throughout the year, ODCPL lawyers were engaged in local initiatives and partnership working, which included lawyers working from Child Safety Service Centres, facilitating face-to-face conferencing, and fostering positive and collaborative working relationships. Where face-to-face meetings have not been possible, videoconferencing has greatly assisted in developing productive working relationships with Child Safety staff.

As well as this, ODCPL staff engaged with other local stakeholders across Queensland including Magistrates, court staff, non-government agencies, legal representatives and other relevant agencies.

The purpose of this engagement is to develop and maintain relationships, promote an awareness and understanding of the DCPL's role and responsibilities, and to develop a culture of continuous improvement in service delivery. Such engagement also allows the DCPL to better understand the priorities and service delivery models of our key stakeholders and equips the ODCPL to be more responsive to their needs.

Stakeholder engagement in the 2022-23 year included:

- Regular meetings between DCPL Assistant Directors and the OCFOS leadership team
- Ongoing engagement and collaboration with OCFOS legal officers and Child Safety Service Centre staff across the State, including meetings between ODCPL's Principal Lawyers and management Teams from Child Safety Service Centres
- Meetings between Child Safety Regional Directors and Assistant Directors from ODCPL
- Meeting with Magistrates, non-government agencies, legal representatives and other relevant agencies
- Participation in regular strategic meetings with child protection legal stakeholders and participation in local court legal stakeholder meetings, and

- Presenting at relevant training events, symposiums, and workshops, including delivering training to frontline Child Safety staff.

ODCPL look forward to further building this stakeholder engagement in the coming financial year, with a number of initiatives to harness communities of practice, including the co-delivery of training and professional development seminars across agencies, as ODCPL continues to invest in continued professional development of the sector.

Performance

Statistical information used in this part of the report has been collected and prepared by the DCPL, from operational data collected in DCPL's Visualfiles case management system.

The Visualfiles case management system is a 'live' operational system in which records are constantly updated as the status of a *matter* changes in the system. This constant updating and data verification may result in a slight variance of figures over time. Percentage totals in this report may not add to 100% due to rounding to one decimal place.

Implementation of a number of key strategies and business process changes

This is the fourth year since the DCPL, Child Safety and OCFOS implemented a number of key strategies designed to improve inter-agency communication, and to streamline business processes to deliver greater efficiencies within service delivery in Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model.

The following strategies and business process changes, which took effect on 1 July 2019, are intended to promote statewide consistency and further embed model:

- the implementation of direct communication between DCPL lawyers and Child Safety's frontline staff to support DCPL managing *proceedings* in direct consultation with the frontline staff through to finalisation without the ongoing involvement of OCFOS legal officers. This change also supported OCFOS legal officers to focus on the provision of early legal advice to Child Safety's frontline staff and manage emergency order applications, along with improving the timeliness of the referral of *matters* to the DCPL
- the issuing of jointly agreed business processes with respect to the child protection litigation model, including the establishment of a clear dispute resolution process that promotes resolution of any issues at a local level through actively encouraging partnership and collaboration
- the allocation of a DCPL Principal Lawyer to each of Child Safety's service centres, providing a single point of contact to support the changes
- a move to a single initiating affidavit, which amongst other things, is designed to result in a more streamlined process to ensure that only direct relevant evidence is before the Court at the time a child protection application is filed, and
- following a joint planning day and workshop that was held between Child Safety, OCFOS and the DCPL, attended by Child Safety Service Centre managers, Senior Legal Officers from OCFOS and Principal Lawyers from the DCPL in June 2019, DCPL have continued to hold meetings at the Senior Executive and Senior Officer levels within Child Safety to ensure these changes were embedded and greater efficiencies gained.

The key strategies and business process changes that were implemented have the following intended benefits:

- Building greater capacity for early legal advice to be provided by OCFOS prior to a *matter* being referred to the DCPL
- Improving the timeliness of the referral of *matters* to the DCPL whilst ensuring good quality briefs of evidence and more targeted affidavits
- Reducing the number of amended applications and improved decision making
- Reducing unnecessary delays in proceedings as material will be filed and served ahead of Court mentions
- Limiting the need for updating affidavits whilst encouraging the timely sharing of information between the DCPL and Child Safety
- Removing duplication and mitigate against inconsistent legal advice, and
- Synthesising the social work and legal disciplines to promote better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The continued contribution that these changes have made to a more streamlined child protection litigation model are outlined throughout the performance part of this report, with the statistics indicating, within the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the strategies and changes have been successful in delivering greater efficiencies in service delivery.

Referred child protection matters

The DCPL receives referred *child protection matters* from Child Safety. Each referred *matter* relates to an individual child, however, it should be noted that the same child may be subject to two or more referred *matters* within the reporting period.

Child Safety under the DCPL Act,¹¹ must refer a *matter* to the DCPL when:

- Child Safety is satisfied that a child is in need of protection and have assessed that a child protection order is appropriate and desirable to meet the child's protection and care needs, or
- if a child protection order is in force for a child, and Child Safety is satisfied that the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, with Child Safety assessing that either a child protection order is no longer required for the child, or that a different child protection order is required to meet the child's protection and care needs, or
- if a permanent care order is in force for a child, and Child Safety is satisfied the child's permanent guardian is not complying, in a significant way, with their obligations under the CP Act, and Child Safety have assessed that the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Each referred *matter* must comply with the DCPL Act and the DCPL's Guidelines,¹² which require Child Safety to provide to the DCPL a completed 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form' (Form A) and a brief of evidence that includes:

- the reasons why the child is a child in need of protection, and the reasons why an order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection along with the type of order Child Safety considers is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- the reasons why a child protection order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
- the reasons why a child's permanent guardian is not complying, in a significant way, with the permanent guardian's obligations under the CP Act, and why the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Child Safety must also provide to the DCPL available supporting documents and all other available documents and evidence that are relevant to the referred *matter*.¹³

¹¹ Section 15 of the DCPL Act

¹² The DCPL issues Guidelines under section 39 of the DCPL Act

¹³ Section 16 of the DCPL Act

Referred *child protection matters* received by the DCPL in 2023-23

The following table sets out the total number of referred *matters* received by the DCPL across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 4 - Referred <i>child protection matters</i> received by the DCPL		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3,341 (0.4%) ↑	3,386 (1.3%) ↑	3,494 (3.2%) ↑

In 2022-23, statewide the DCPL received 3,494 referred *matters* from Child Safety by way of completed Form As, which in a year-on-year comparison, was a 3.2% increase (108 *matters*) on the 3,386 *matters* received in 2021-22.

In terms of a two-year comparison, there was a 4.6% increase (153 *matters*) on the 3,341 *matters* the DCPL received in 2020-21.

The following tables set out the number of referred *matters* the DCPL received on a monthly and quarterly basis across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 5 – Monthly referred <i>matters</i> received by the DCPL based on receipt of Form A													
Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	320	332	266	253	253	284	214	242	309	250	286	332	3,341
2021-22	325	281	301	273	363	230	187	284	287	261	273	321	3,386
2022-23	242	360	330	263	316	275	203	249	358	284	290	324	3,494

Table 6 – Quarterly referred <i>matters</i> received by the DCPL based on receipt of Form A							
Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*
918	13.9%	790	-4.0%	765	2.7%	868	-8.9%
Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*
907	-1.2%	866	9.6%	758	-0.9%	855	-1.5%
Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*	Referred <i>matters</i> received	Var.*
932	2.8%	854	-1.4%	810	6.7%	898	5.0%

*Variance is a comparison with corresponding quarter in the preceding year

During 2022-23, the above tables show that there continued to be large variances month to month in the numbers of new *matters* received by the DCPL, and further, there were also notable variances when a direct comparison is made across the years.

When viewing the number of new *matters* received on a monthly and quarterly basis across 2022-23, the 932 *matters* received in the July to September 2022 quarter represents the second largest number of *matters* that the DCPL has received in a quarter since commencing operations on 1 July 2016. The largest quarter was in April to June 2020, where the DCPL received 953 *matters*. The high number of *matters* received across both of these quarters relates to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The April to June 2020 quarter (the largest quarter since commencing) is aligned with the initial lengthy period of lockdown associated with the pandemic, where the DCPL received on average 317.2 new *matters* per month across March 2020 through to August 2020.

As will be outlined below, this resulted in an average of 309.8 child protection applications made, based on the referred *matters*, per month across April to August 2020, which when combined with the decrease in applications that were able to be finalised across April to June 2020 related to the Court's response to COVID-19, led to an average of 316.2 applications per month being determined across July to December 2020.

The increased number of applications determined included an increase in the number of child protection orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of children (short-term out of home child protection orders), which can have a maximum duration of two years, and require Child Safety to work with the children and their families with the aim for the children to be returned.

As will be seen through this performance part of this report, the large number of new *matters* then received within the July to September 2022 quarter relates to an increased number of new *matters* that concerned children already on existing child protection orders. It is noted that across June to September 2022, on average 313.3 *matters* were received each month (a total of 1,253 *matters*), with 35.2% of these *matters* concerning children on existing short-term out of home child protection orders (441 *matters*). As a comparison, whilst a similar number of new *matters* were received across June to September 2021, on average 309.8 *matters* per month (a total of 1,239 *matters*), only 26.6% of these *matters* concerned children on existing short-term out of home child protection orders (330 *matters*).

The high number of *matters* received across June to September 2022 concerning children on existing short-term out of home child protection orders, indicates that the reunification of these children to their families was not achieved during these orders, with the result being there was then an increase in 2022-23 in the number of child protection applications made by the DCPL seeking child protection orders that grant long-term guardianship of children.

It is also noted that there was a high average number of new *matters* received across the months of March to June 2023, with a monthly average of 314.0 *matters* per month (a total of 1,256 *matters*). However, only 30.5% of these *matters* concerned children on existing short-term out of home child protection orders (383 *matters*).

Referred *matters* concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The following table shows the number of *matters* referred to the DCPL that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 7 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred <i>matters</i>						
Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	1,123	33.2%	1,229	36.3%	1,383	39.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	153	4.6%	161	4.8%	166	4.8%
Torres Strait Islander	70	2.1%	64	1.9%	67	1.9%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1,994	58.1%	1,926	56.9%	1,875	53.7%
Not stated	1	2.0%	6	0.2%	3	0.1%
Total	3,341	100%	3,386	100%	3,494	100%

Concerningly, the above table shows that there was a further increase in the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received in 2022-23 as compared to 2021-22. There was an increase to 1,616 *matters* (46.3% of the total *matters*), up from 1,454 *matters* (42.9% of the total *matters*). This is an increase of 162 *matters* concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In terms of a two-year comparison, it was a substantial increase on the 1,346 *matters* (40.3% of the total *matters*) received in 2020-21 that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. An increase of 270 *matters* across the years.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system, the DCPL is committed to the reforms introduced through the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017* and the more recent reforms introduced through the *Child Protection Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022*. These reforms are supported by the co-developed *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037* (Our Way) and the *Changing Tracks* action plans, including the latest action plan: *Breaking Cycles – Co-designing, developing and implementing services with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families*. These reforms represent a generational strategy approach, which involves a long-term commitment between the Queensland Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community to work together in partnership with a key priority being the elimination of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. It is noted that the implementation of Our Way and the action plans is overseen by the Queensland First Children and Families Board that includes highly respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members from across Queensland.

Further, the DCPL also supports and endorses the work of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), which is undertaking a comprehensive program of work to examine the dynamics and drivers of this issue to understand the causes and situational influences. This will involve an in-depth, rights-based analysis of the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles (prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection) in Queensland's child protection system as the means to address the disproportionate

representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the system. The QFCC is focussing on Queensland specific data at a State, regional and local level to better identify iterative improvements as well as to establish a more nuanced picture of both the drivers and dynamics of over-representation in different parts of Queensland.¹⁴ To support this, the DCPL provides data to the QFCC and also within this report has outlined the number of *matters* the DCPL has received, and then the number of applications made along with the number of applications finalised that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander by reference to each of Child Safety's six regions.

Age of children subject to referred *matters*

The following table sets out the age of children the subject of referred *matters* at the point in time the DCPL received the *matters* across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 8 – Age of children at time *matters* received by the DCPL

Age	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under 1 year of age	503	15.1%	512	15.1%	475	13.6%
1 year of age	217	6.5%	189	5.6%	198	5.7%
2 years of age	252	7.5%	254	7.5%	284	8.1%
3 years of age	253	7.6%	239	7.1%	242	6.9%
4 years of age	219	6.6%	178	5.3%	218	6.2%
5 years of age	188	5.6%	210	6.2%	211	6.0%
6 years of age	165	4.9%	196	5.8%	203	5.8%
7 years of age	174	5.2%	185	5.5%	192	5.5%
8 years of age	164	4.9%	175	5.2%	170	4.9%
9 years of age	175	5.2%	168	5.0%	198	5.7%
10 years of age	156	4.7%	175	5.2%	162	4.6%
11 years of age	170	5.1%	147	4.3%	165	4.7%
12 years of age	154	4.6%	151	4.5%	159	4.5%
13 years of age	182	5.4%	157	4.6%	171	4.9%
14 years of age	124	3.7%	172	5.1%	180	5.1%
15 years of age	137	4.1%	139	4.1%	134	3.8%
16 years of age	81	2.4%	98	2.9%	86	2.5%
17 years of age	27	0.8%	41	1.2%	46	1.3%
Total	3,341	100%	3,386	100%	3,494	100%

¹⁴ QFCC's Principle Focus accessed at <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/sector/monitoring-and-reviewing-systems/principle-focus> on 26 October 2023

In terms of the age of children at the time new *matters* were received by the DCPL, the above table shows that as a percentage of the total number of children, there was a slight decrease in children aged three and under in 2022-23 as a percentage of the total number of *matters*, decreasing from 35.3% of the total in 2021-22 (1,194 children) to 34.3% of the total (1,199 children). It is noted that 36.7% of the total in 2020-21 (1,225 children) were children aged three and under.

The other noticeable trend was that as a percentage of the total, children aged 14 and over amounted to 12.8% of the total (446 children) in 2022-23, which was just down from the 13.3% of the total (450 children) in 2021-22, but noticeably up from 11.0% of the total (369 children) in 2020-21.

Type of intervention in place at the time a *matter* is referred to the DCPL

The DCPL has classified the existing types of intervention in respect of a child that can be in place at the time a referred *matter* is received by the DCPL into the following seven categories:

1. no order or statutory care agreement: this category encapsulates *matters* that concern children where there is no order or no statutory care agreement in place, which means the child is not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents under the CP Act, or an order made by either a Magistrate or the Court under the CP Act.
2. an assessment care agreement: this is an agreement between Child Safety and a child's parents under section 51ZD of the CP Act, which includes the child being temporarily placed in the care of someone other than the child's parents, and must not be more than 30 days in duration. An assessment care agreement is entered into by Child Safety when satisfied that the child's parents are able and willing to work with Child Safety to meet the child's interim protection needs while an investigation is carried out.
3. a temporary assessment order: this is an order obtained by Child Safety from a Magistrate under section 27 of the CP Act, which can be up to three business days in length, and can be extended by one business day. A temporary assessment order is made to authorise actions necessary as part of an investigation to assess whether a child is a child in need of protection, if the consent of a parent of the child to the actions has not been able to be obtained or it is not practicable to take steps to obtain the parent's consent.
4. a court assessment order: this is an order obtained by Child Safety from the Childrens Court under section 44 of the CP Act, which can be up to 28 days in length, and can be extended for a further 28 days. A court assessment order is made to authorise actions necessary as part of an investigation to assess whether a child is a child in need of protection, if the consent of a parent of the child to the actions has not been able to be obtained or it is not practicable to take steps to obtain the parent's consent, and more than three business days is necessary to complete the investigation and assessment.
5. a child protection care agreement: this is an agreement between Child Safety and a child's parents under section 51ZD of the CP Act, which includes the child being temporarily placed in the care of someone other than the child's parents. The initial agreement must not be more than 30 days, but can be extended by agreement to not more than six months within a 12-month period. A child protection care agreement is entered into by Child Safety when satisfied that the child's parents are able and willing to work with Child Safety to meet

the child's protection and needs, and it is likely by the end of the intervention, the child's parents will be able to meet the child's protection and care needs.

6. a temporary custody order: this is an order obtained by Child Safety from a Magistrate under section 51AE of the CP Act, which can be up to three business days in length, and can be extended by one business day. The purpose of a temporary custody order is to authorise the action necessary to ensure the immediate safety of a child whilst either Child Safety works with the DCPL if a *matter* has been referred about the child, or for Child Safety to decide the most appropriate action to meet the child's ongoing protection and care needs, and
7. a child protection order: this is an order obtained by the DCPL from the Childrens Court, which can be any of the orders provided by section 61 of the CP Act, including long term orders. A child protection order is made to ensure the protection of a child the Childrens Court decides is a child in need of protection.

Types of intervention in place at the time the DCPL received the referred *matters*

The following table sets out the statewide total types of existing interventions at the time referred *matters* were received by the DCPL with a year-on-year comparison across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 9 – Types of intervention in place at the time the DCPL received the referred <i>matters</i>								
Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory agreement	487	14.6%	551	16.5%	13.0%	465	13.3%	-19.4%
Assessment care agreement	18	0.5%	31	0.9%	80.0%	12	0.3%	-66.7%
Temporary assessment order	5	0.1%	2	0.1%	0.0%	4	0.1%	0.0%
Court assessment order	1,131	33.9%	895	26.8%	-20.9%	884	25.3%	-5.6%
Child protection care agreement	9	0.3%	10	0.3%	0.0%	10	0.3%	0.0%
Temporary custody order	842	25.2%	838	25.1%	-0.4%	791	22.6%	-10.0%
Child protection order	849	25.4%	1,059	31.7%	24.8%	1,328	38.0%	19.9%
Total	3,341	100%	3,386	100%		3,494	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

In 2022-23, as compared to 2021-22, there was a 19.9% increase (269 *matters*) in the number of referred *matters* received that concerned children who were already the subject of an existing child protection order. This is in addition to an earlier increase of 24.8% (210 *matters*) in 2021-22, as compared to 2020-21, with the overall increase across the last two years amounting to 49.6% (479 *matters*).

In respect of the increase in referred *matters* that concerned children already the subject of an existing child protection order, 2021-22 was the first year since the DCPL commenced operations on 1 July 2016, where there was an increase in this category of *matters*. Across the first five years

of operation, year on year, there had been a consistent downward trend in these *matters* as a percentage of the total *matters* received. In 2016-17, *matters* concerning children on an existing child protection order totalled 40.2% of the total *matters* received. In 2017-18, this type of *matter* reduced to 35.7% of the total *matters*, in 2018-19, there was a further reduction to 31.6% of the total *matters*, before further reducing in 2019-20 to 27.4% of the total *matters* and then 25.4% in 2020-21. It is further noted that in all but 2018-19, there was an actual decrease in the total number of these *matters* year on year in this type of category.

The increases in 2021-22 and then 2022-23 in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order, as was outlined above, is related to the increase in *matters* concerning children on existing child protection orders that granted either custody or short-term guardianship. This will be discussed in further detail throughout the performance part of this report.

In addition to the increase in *matters* concerning children on existing child protection orders, the following is noted in terms of the other types of existing intervention in place at the time referred *matters* were received by the DCPL:

- there was also a 19.4% decrease in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents, or an order at the time the DCPL received the *matters* (down 86 *matters*). It is notable that this decrease followed earlier significant increases in this type of category across the last three years, having seen an increase of 49.4% (160 *matters*) in 2019-20, a further 23.7% increase (95 *matters*) in 2020-21, and then another 13.0% increase (64 *matters*) in 2021-22. It is noted that unlike last year, where the increase in this category had coincided with a decrease in the number of children subject to Child Safety intervention with parents' agreement (IPA), there was no increase in the number of children subject to an IPA in 2022-23 – as per Child Safety's published data to the end of 30 June 2023, there was a 1.9% decrease (2,043 to 2,005) in the number of children subject to an IPA between 30 June 2022 and 30 June 2023
- there was a 10.0% decrease in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders (down 47 *matters*), which was a much larger decrease than the 0.4% (4 *matters*) seen in 2021-22, with the total decrease in these types of *matters* across the last two years down 10.3% (51 *matters*)
- there was a 5.6% decrease in *matters* concerning children subject to court assessment orders (down 11 *matters*), which followed earlier decreases of 20.9% (236 *matters*) in 2021-22, and 4.8% (54 *matters*) in 2020-21
- there was a 66.7% decrease in *matters* concerning children subject to assessment care agreements (down 19 *matters*), however, this was against an 80% increase (13 *matters*) in 2021-22, and overall, this category equates to a relatively small number of *matters* out of the overall total number of *matters* received, and
- across the other two categories, temporary assessment orders and child protection care agreements, there was little variance.

Types of existing child protection orders in place at the time *matters* referred

The below table sets out the statewide total of the types of existing child protection orders in place at the time the *matters* were received by the DCPL with a year-on-year comparison across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 10 – Types of existing child protection orders in place at the time the DCPL receives a *matter*

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of orders	% of total	Number of orders	% of total	Number of orders	% of total
Directive order – other	1	0.1%	9	0.8%	6	0.5%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	2	0.2%	16	1.5%	5	0.4%
Supervision order	8	0.9%	10	0.9%	16	1.2%
Custody to a suitable person	6	0.7%	10	0.9%	7	0.5%
Custody to the chief executive	664	78.2%	811	76.6%	1,079	81.3%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	48	5.7%	49	4.6%	36	2.7%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	8	0.9%	1	0.1%	13	1.0%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	16	1.9%	11	1.0%	25	1.9%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	96	11.3%	142	13.4%	141	10.6%
Permanent care order	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	849	100%	1,059	100%	1,328	100%

In respect of the types of existing child protection orders that were in place for children at the time referred *matters* were received by the DCPL, across the years, there has been a noticeable variance in the number and types of orders.

Up until 2020-21, there had been a notable decrease occurring in respect of *matters* concerning children who were subject to an existing child protection order that granted custody of them to the chief executive. However, as referred to above, over the last two years there has been a significant increase of 62.5% (664 *matters* in 2021-22 to 1,079 *matters* in 2022-23), with these types of orders making up 81.3% of the total *matters* concerning children on an existing child protection order in 2022-23.

As referred to above and as outlined in last year's Annual Report, relevant to understanding the increase in the number of new *matters* concerning children on existing child protection orders granting custody to the chief executive, is the overall increases seen in new *matters* received across 2018-19 (up 16.7%) and in 2019-20 (up 13.6%). These increases in new *matters* led to an increase in child protection applications made that sought orders granting custody to the chief executive in 2019-20 (up 243 applications on 2018-19), and again in 2020-21 (up 141 applications on 2018-19). This then resulted in increases to the number of these types of orders being made by the Court in 2020-21 (up 522 orders on 2019-20), and again in 2021-22 (up 406 orders as

compared with 2019-20). Again, the point is made that orders granting custody of children to the chief executive are limited under the CP Act to a maximum of two years in duration.

As noted in last year's Annual Report, whilst it is unclear what caused the significant increase in the monthly average number of new *matters* received across March to May 2019, it is very clear that the subsequent significant increases seen across March to August 2020 were as a direct result of the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. As referred to above, this aligned with the initial lengthy period of lockdown, along with the flow on increases in new *matters* received through to August 2020. With this period sitting either side of the financial year divide, these significant increases caused the overall numbers in each year to rise, noting that this period represents the largest number of average *matters* per month the DCPL has received since commencing operations on 1 July 2016.

Then, as outlined above, the increase in the overall number of new *matters* in 2022-23, was as a direct result of the increase in the number of *matters* that concerned children already the subject of an existing child protection order that granting custody of them to the chief executive.

The other noticeable trend has been a further increase in respect of *matters* concerning children who were subject to an existing child protection order that either granted long-term guardianship of them to a suitable family member (up 12 *matters*, or up 1200%, although concerning a relatively small number of *matters*) or to another suitable person (up 14 *matters*, or up 127.3%). The increase in these types of *matters* is reflective of the reforms focussed on promoting positive long-term outcomes for children in the child protection system that commenced on 29 October 2018 as a result of the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*. These reforms removed the need for the Court to reconsider certain matters it has previously determined when varying or revoking a long-term guardianship order for a child and making another long-term guardianship order or a permanent care order for the child (unless satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances in the best interests of the child). As a result, there has been an increase in *matters* where Child Safety has assessed that child protection orders granting long-term guardianship of the children to the chief executive, should be varied to grant long-term guardianship or the permanent care of these children to named people, which provides these children with permanency and stability. However, in identifying an increase in *matters* concerning existing child protection orders that either granted long-term guardianship of them to a suitable family member or to another suitable person, it must be noted that there was no overall increase in *matters* concerning children on child protection orders that granted guardianship of them to the chief executive. This is within the context of these types of orders accounting for well over a quarter of all child protection orders made over the last four years.

Finally, the other notable change in the number and types of existing child protection orders in place for children at the time DCPL receives new *matters* is the decrease in in-home child protection orders, that is, orders ranging from directive orders through to orders requiring the chief executive to supervise children's protection. These types of orders can only be up to one year in duration. In 2022-23, there was a 22.8% decrease as compared with 2021-22 (27 *matters* as compared to 35 *matters*), however, there had been an earlier 218.2% increase for these types of *matters* in 2021-22 as compared with 2020-21 (35 *matters* as compared to 11 *matters*).

Types of intervention in place at the time *matters* received by month

The following tables set out the types of intervention in place on new referred *matters* by month across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 11 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on No order or statutory care agreement

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	40	57	34	23	34	47	29	30	46	50	50	47	487
2021-22	53	49	60	52	81	30	18	30	30	35	48	65	551
2022-23	30	49	36	32	51	44	31	33	36	25	37	61	465

Table 12 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Assessment care agreements

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	2	1	4	1	1	2	2	0	1	1	1	2	18
2021-22	4	0	0	0	2	8	0	6	3	7	0	1	31
2022-23	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	5	0	2	12

Table 13 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Temporary assessment orders

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5
2021-22	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2022-23	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

Table 14 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Court assessment orders

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	140	135	89	90	79	103	72	92	93	86	81	71	1,131
2021-22	108	60	90	65	80	91	65	79	75	62	57	63	895
2022-23	52	82	75	54	63	102	51	60	121	79	78	67	884

Table 15 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Child protection care agreements

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	9
2021-22	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	4	0	0	10
2022-23	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	10

Table 16 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Temporary custody orders

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	74	66	59	65	64	71	50	72	82	61	71	107	842
2021-22	70	59	75	71	88	64	35	65	70	81	69	91	838
2022-23	47	84	69	59	82	70	49	61	64	84	59	63	791

Table 17 – Monthly referred *matters* concerning children on Child protection orders

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	60	72	79	73	73	61	60	47	86	52	83	103	849
2021-22	90	112	76	85	111	34	69	102	108	72	99	101	1,059
2022-23	111	144	149	116	116	57	72	92	135	91	114	131	1,328

The above tables show the variances, both increases and decreases in the types of *matters* across the last three years. Most notably, as outlined above, the increases in new *matters* concerning children the subject of existing child protection orders is clearly seen when comparing months across the three years.

Types of intervention in place and cultural by reference to Child Safety's six regions

The types of existing intervention in place at the time referred *matters* were received by the DCPL by reference to Child Safety's six regions are set out below in tables along with tables that show the number of *matters* referred to the DCPL that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander from each region. A full list of Child Safety's Child Safety Service Centres in each region can be found in Appendix 3.

Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Table 18 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	99	15.5%	91	13.7%	-11.6%	74	10.7%	-21.9%
Assessment care agreement	1	0.2%	9	1.4%	600.0%	2	0.3%	-78.6%
Temporary assessment order	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a	0	0.0%	n/a
Court assessment order	232	36.4%	173	26.0%	-28.6%	162	23.3%	-10.4%
Child protection care agreement	4	0.6%	3	0.5%	-16.7%	3	0.4%	-20.0%
Temporary custody order	145	22.8%	203	30.5%	33.8%	166	23.9%	-21.6%
Child protection order	156	24.5%	187	28.1%	14.7%	287	41.4%	47.3%
Total	637	100%	666	100%		694	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 19 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	175	27.5%	174	26.1%	214	30.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	13	2.0%	9	1.4%	17	2.4%
Torres Strait Islander	7	1.1%	5	0.8%	5	0.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	442	69.4%	476	71.5%	458	66.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	637	100%	666	100%	694	100%

From Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region, there was an increase of 28 *matters* (up 4.2%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. This was on top of an earlier increase of 29 *matters* (up 4.6%) in 2021-22. In terms of a two-year comparison, the overall increase was 57 *matters* (up 8.9%).

In respect to the types of intervention categories, there were the following notable variances in 2022-23:

- consistent with, albeit well above the statewide numbers, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (up 100 *matters*, or 47.3%)
- there was a decrease in the number of *matters* concerning children not subject to a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order, which was consistent with the statewide statistics (down 17 *matters*, or 21.9%)
- there was also a noticeable decrease in the number of *matters* concerning children the subject of temporary custody orders (down 37 *matters*, 21.6%), which was above the statewide decrease, and
- there was also a decrease in the number of children the subject of court assessment orders (down 11 *matters*, or 10.4%) that was also greater than the statewide decrease.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children the subject of new *matters* received from the Brisbane and Moreton Bay region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was an increase from 188 *matters*, or 28.3% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 236 *matters*, or 33.9% of the total *matters* received in 2022-23, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was also up from the 195 *matters*, or 30.6% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

Table 20 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central Qld region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	62	11.5%	56	12.3%	7.0%	80	15.0%	22.0%
Assessment care agreement	3	0.6%	3	0.7%	16.7%	2	0.4%	-42.9%
Temporary assessment order	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a	0	0.0%	n/a
Court assessment order	181	33.6%	101	22.1%	-34.2%	82	15.3%	-30.8%
Child protection care agreement	0	0.0%	4	0.9%	Infinity	1	0.2%	-77.8%
Temporary custody order	145	26.9%	110	24.1%	-10.4%	143	26.7%	10.8%
Child protection order	148	27.5%	182	39.9%	45.1%	227	42.4%	6.3%
Total	539	100%	456	100%		535	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 21 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	172	31.9%	159	34.9%	197	36.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	25	4.6%	14	3.1%	14	2.6%
Torres Strait Islander	6	1.1%	10	2.2%	9	1.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	336	62.3%	273	59.9%	315	58.9%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	539	100%	456	100%	535	100%

From Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland region, there was an overall increase of 79 *matters* (17.3%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which was almost consistent with the total of 539 *matters* in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of intervention categories, there were the following notable variances in 2022-23:

- consistent with, albeit well below the statewide numbers, there was an increase in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (up 45 *matters*, or 6.3%)
- against the statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order (up 24 *matters*, or 22.0%)

- in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders, there was a noticeable increase that was not consistent with the overall statewide decrease (up 33 *matters*, or 10.8%), and
- there was a noticeable decrease in the number of *matters* concerning children the subject of court assessment orders (down 19 *matters*, or 30.8%), which was a much larger decrease than the overall statewide decrease.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received from the Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was an increase from 183 *matters*, or 40.2% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 220 *matters*, or 41.1% of the total *matters* received, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was also up from the 203 *matters*, or 37.6% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

Table 22 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's North Queensland region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	37	10.3%	56	14.4%	39.8%	71	15.4%	6.9%
Assessment care agreement	5	1.4%	6	1.5%	7.1%	1	0.2%	-86.7%
Temporary assessment order	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a	4	0.9%	Infinity
Court assessment order	114	31.8%	111	28.5%	-10.8%	123	26.7%	-6.3%
Child protection care agreement	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	0.0%	3	0.7%	133.3%
Temporary custody order	112	31.2%	105	26.9%	-13.8%	102	22.1%	-17.8%
Child protection order	90	25.1%	111	28.5%	13.5%	157	34.1%	19.6%
Total	359	100%	390	100%		461	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 23 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	187	52.1%	177	45.4%	258	56.0%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	17	4.7%	31	7.9%	22	4.8%
Torres Strait Islander	6	1.7%	8	2.1%	7	1.5%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	149	41.5%	174	44.6%	174	37.7%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	359	100%	390	100%	461	100%

From Child Safety's North Queensland region, there was an increase of 71 *matters* (up 18.2%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. This was on top of an earlier increase of 31 *matters* (up 8.6%) in 2021-22 as compared with 2020-21, so in terms of a two-year comparison, there was an overall increase of 102 *matters* (up 28.4%).

In respect to the types of intervention categories, there were the following notable variances in 2022-23:

- consistent with the statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (up 46 *matters*, or 19.6%)
- against the statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order (up 15 *matters*, or 6.9%), and

- in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders, there was a noticeable decrease above the overall statewide decrease (down 3 *matters*, or 17.8%, when considering the overall increase in *matters* received from the region).

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received from the North Queensland region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was an increase from 216 *matters*, or 55.4% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 287 *matters*, or 62.3% of the total *matters* received in 2022-23, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was well up on the 210 *matters*, or 58.5% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

Table 24 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's Far North Queensland region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	129	29.9%	163	34.4%	15.1%	65	14.6%	-57.6%
Assessment care agreement	4	0.9%	11	2.3%	155.6%	7	1.6%	-30.4%
Temporary assessment order	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	n/a	0	0.0%	n/a
Court assessment order	158	36.6%	118	24.9%	-32.0%	105	23.5%	-5.6%
Child protection care agreement	3	0.7%	1	0.2%	-71.4%	1	0.2%	0.0%
Temporary custody order	57	13.2%	71	15.0%	13.6%	76	17.0%	13.3%
Child protection order	81	18.8%	110	23.2%	23.4%	192	43.0%	85.3%
Total	432	100%	474	100%		446	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 25 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	171	39.6%	225	47.5%	216	48.4%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85	19.7%	75	15.8%	92	20.6%
Torres Strait Islander	39	9.0%	33	7.0%	35	7.8%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	137	31.7%	141	29.7%	103	23.1%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	432	100%	474	100%	446	100%

From Child Safety's Far North Queensland region, against the overall statewide increase, there was a decrease of 28 *matters* (down 5.9%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. However, on a two-year comparison with 2020-21, there was an overall increase of 14 *matters* (up 3.2%).

In respect to the types of intervention categories, there were the following notable variances in 2022-23:

- well above the increase seen in the statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (up 82 *matters*, or 85.3%)
- also, well above the decrease seen within the statewide statistics, there was a significant decrease in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order (down 98 *matters*, or 57.6%), and

- in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders, there was a noticeable increase as compared with decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics (up 5 *matters*, or 13.3%, when considering the overall decrease in *matters* received from the region).

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received from the Far North Queensland region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was an increase from 333 *matters*, or 70.3% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 343 *matters*, or 76.8% of the total *matters* received in 2022-23, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was well up on the 295 *matters*, or 68.3% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

Table 26 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's South East region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	120	16.3%	125	16.4%	0.6%	85	11.2%	-31.7%
Assessment care agreement	5	0.7%	1	0.1%	-85.7%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Temporary assessment order	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	0	0.0%	n/a
Court assessment order	273	37.2%	211	27.7%	-25.5%	233	30.6%	10.5%
Child protection care agreement	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	Infinity	2	0.3%	200.0%
Temporary custody order	125	17.0%	122	16.0%	-5.8%	110	14.5%	-9.4%
Child protection order	209	28.5%	301	39.6%	38.9%	253	33.2%	-16.2%
Total	734	100%	761	100%		683	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 27 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	196	26.7%	242	31.8%	218	31.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6	0.8%	22	2.9%	9	1.3%
Torres Strait Islander	4	0.5%	3	0.4%	1	0.1%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	527	71.8%	492	64.7%	453	66.3%
Not stated	1	0.1%	2	0.3%	2	0.3%
Total	734	100%	761	100%	683	100%

From Child Safety's South East region, against the overall statewide increase, there was a decrease of 78 *matters* (down 10.2%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. On a two-year comparison with 2020-21, there was an overall decrease of 51 *matters* (down 6.9%).

In respect to the types of intervention categories, the following were some notable variances in 2022-23:

- against the significant increase seen in the overall statewide statistics, there was a noticeable decrease in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (down 48 *matters*, or 16.2%)
- also, against the decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children the subject of court assessment orders (up 22 *matters*, or 10.5%), and

- well above the decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, there was a significant decrease in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order (down 40 *matters*, or 31.7%).

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received from the South East region in 2022-23, against the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was a decrease from 267 *matters*, or 35.1% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 228 *matters*, or 33.3% of the total *matters* received in 2022-23, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was still above the 206 *matters*, or 28.0% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

Table 28 – Types of intervention in place for *matters* received from Child Safety's South West region

Type of existing intervention	2020-21		2021-22		Var.*	2022-23		Var.**
No order or statutory care agreement	40	6.3%	60	9.4%	49.2%	90	13.3%	41.5%
Assessment care agreement	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	Infinity	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Temporary assessment order	3	0.5%	2	0.3%	-40.0%	0	0.0%	-100.0%
Court assessment order	173	27.0%	181	28.3%	4.8%	179	26.5%	-6.4%
Child protection care agreement	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	-100.0%	0	0.0%	n/a
Temporary custody order	258	40.3%	227	35.5%	-11.9%	194	28.7%	-19.2%
Child protection order	165	25.8%	168	26.3%	1.9%	221	31.4%	19.4%
Total	640	100%	639	100%		675	100%	

*Variance between 2020-21 and 2021-22 percentages of overall total

** Variance between 2021-22 and 2022-23 percentages of overall total

Table 29 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on referred *matters* from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	225	35.2%	252	39.4%	280	41.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	7	1.1%	11	1.7%	12	1.8%
Torres Strait Islander	8	1.3%	4	0.6%	10	1.5%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	400	62.5%	370	57.9%	372	55.1%
Not stated	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	1	0.1%
Total	640	100%	639	100%	675	100%

From Child Safety's South West region, consistent with the overall statewide increase, there was an increase of 36 *matters* (up 5.6%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. On a two-year comparison with 2020-21, there was an overall increase of 35 *matters* (up 5.5%).

In respect to the types of intervention categories, the following were some notable variances in 2022-23:

- consistent with the statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children already the subject of an existing child protection order (up 53 *matters*, or 19.4%)
- against the decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, there was a noticeable increase in *matters* concerning children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents or an order (up 30 *matters*, or 41.5%), and

- in *matters* concerning children subject to temporary custody orders, there was a noticeably larger decrease as compared with decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics (down 33 *matters*, or 19.2%).

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received from the South West region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, the following is noted:

- there was an increase from 267 *matters*, or 41.7% of the total *matters* received in 2021-22, to 302 *matters*, or 44.8% of the total *matters* received in 2022-23, and
- in terms of a two-year comparison, the 2022-23 total was well up on the 240 *matters*, or 37.6% of the total *matters* received in 2020-21.

As outlined above, at a regional level, the above tables show there were significant differences between the existing types of intervention in respect of children that were in place at the time *matters* were received by the DCPL across the regions. It is noted that in comparing the seven categories of existing types of intervention across the six regions, it is difficult to identify any consistent trends across each region or at an individual Child Safety Service Centre level.

Timeliness of referred *matters* to the DCPL in 2022-23

Under the DCPL's Guidelines, Child Safety must refer the following types of *matters* to the DCPL within prescribed timeframes:

- if a *matter* concerns a child that is subject to an emergency order, defined to include children the subject of either a temporary assessment order, court assessment order or temporary custody order, the *matter* should be referred as soon as practicable and where possible, no later than 24 hours before the emergency order ends (Guideline 31), and
- if a *matter* concerns a child that is subject to a child protection order, the *matter* should be referred as soon as practicable and where possible, not less than 20 business days before the child protection order ends (Guideline 30).

The prescribed timeframes are predominantly about ensuring that there is sufficient time for Child Safety and the DCPL to take action to ensure the child's ongoing protection. They ensure that Child Safety has sufficient time pre-referral of a *matter* to complete investigations and assessments to a high standard, or where a further child protection order is assessed as appropriate and desirable, to provide a comprehensive brief of evidence that contains the supporting documents that details the case work undertaken during the previous order.

The timeframes also assist the DCPL and Child Safety to collaborate in a manner that ensures there is sufficient time for the DCPL to deal with a referred *matter*, by either applying for a child protection order or by referring the *matter* back to Child Safety. Further, it provides sufficient time for DCPL to properly consider all relevant information and evidence, and ensures that the decision-making by the DCPL is fully informed and consistent with the principles in the DCPL Act and the CP Act. That is, timeliness and avoiding unnecessary delay in decision-making reflects the principle that it is in a child's best interests for a decision to be made as soon as possible, and that a delay in making a decision for a child should be avoided, and that the State takes the least intrusive action warranted in the circumstances.

The DCPL must deal with a referred *matter* under section 17 of the DCPL Act by either applying for a child protection order or referring the *matter* back to Child Safety.

The actual time available for the DCPL to deal with a *matter* is dependent on the type of existing intervention that is in place at the time the referred *matter* is received, and the particular circumstances that relate to that *matter*. In effect, the DCPL must ensure that any application for a child protection order is made as quickly as possible, prior to the ending of any existing intervention for the child. Where no intervention is in place (no order or statutory agreement) at the time the *matter* is referred, and DCPL assess that there is no immediate risk to the child's safety, the *matter* is dealt with as soon as practicable, and in any event within 14 days, unless further evidence or information is requested from Child Safety. This ensures compliance with the statutory presumption that delay is contrary to the child's best interests.¹⁵

¹⁵ Section 5B(m) of the CP Act

Referred *matters* the DCPL needed to deal with on the same day they were received

In 2022-23, the DCPL had to deal with 182 *matters* (5.2% of all *matters* received) on the day that they were received. This was a reduction from 2021-22, where the DCPL had to deal with 217 *matters* (6.4% of all *matters* received) on the day that they were received, and also against 2020-21, where 273 *matters* (8.2% of all *matters* received) had to be dealt with on the day they were received.

Table 30 – Referred <i>matters</i> for children that needed to be dealt with on day received					
2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Number of <i>matters</i> DCPL needed to deal with on day received	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> DCPL needed to deal with on day received	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> DCPL needed to deal with on day received	% of total <i>matters</i> referred
273	8.2% ↓	217	6.4% ↓	182	5.2% ↓

With 5.2% of the total *matters* equating to 182 *matters*, the critical decision about whether to apply for a child protection order must be made on the day, resulting in reduced time being available for the DCPL and Child Safety to collaborate, and for requests and provision of further evidence or information. It also creates significant workload challenges for DCPL Lawyers who are required to reprioritise work to accommodate the work required to meet the DCPL's statutory obligations to deal with these *matters*.

Temporary custody orders, or the extension of temporary custody orders after a *matter* has been received by the DCPL

In considering the above statistics, it must also be noted that where Child Safety have referred a *matter* to the DCPL, Child Safety in collaboration with the DCPL, can still seek a temporary custody order to be made, which can be up to three business days in length.

A magistrate can make a temporary custody order on a *matter* that has been referred to the DCPL if satisfied:

- the child would be at unacceptable risk of suffering harm if the order is not made, and
- that during the order, the DCPL will decide the most appropriate action to meet the child's ongoing protection and care needs and start taking that action.¹⁶

Child Safety can also seek to extend a temporary custody order by a further business day, which a magistrate may grant if satisfied that the DCPL intends to apply for a child protection order for the child within the extended term of the order.¹⁷

The following two tables set out then number of temporary custody orders that have been made on *matters* that the DCPL has already received, and the number of temporary custody orders that have

¹⁶ Section 51AE of the CP Act

¹⁷ Section 51AH(4) of the CP Act

been extended for the DCPL to apply for a child protection order by month across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 31 – Number of temporary custody orders made on *matters* post the DCPL receiving them

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	11	6	7	5	7	10	2	10	5	15	24	14	116
2021-22	5	14	0	6	8	8	2	9	5	9	0	5	71
2022-23	1	6	4	0	2	4	1	8	0	6	3	0	35

Table 32 – Number of temporary custody orders extended for the DCPL to apply for a child protection order

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	29	22	25	34	27	27	15	21	23	16	34	35	308
2021-22	24	32	20	27	28	20	8	16	26	19	33	40	293
2022-23	13	26	17	13	19	9	18	24	7	28	15	8	197

The above tables show that in 2022-23, in respect of the *matters* the DCPL dealt with by making child protection applications (3,456 applications), Child Safety sought and were granted 35 temporary custody orders post the referral of the *matters* to the DCPL. This was significantly down from the 71 temporary custody orders that Child Safety sought and was granted in 2021-22, and well down from the 116 temporary custody orders sought and made in 2020-21 in respect of *matters* already referred to the DCPL.

The tables also show that in 2022-23, Child Safety sought and was granted the extension of 197 temporary custody orders, which was correspondingly to temporary custody orders, significantly down from the extension of 293 temporary custody orders that Child Safety sought and were granted in 2021-22, and further, below the earlier 308 temporary custody orders that were extended in 2020-21 in respect of *matters* already referred to the DCPL.

The continued reduction across the three years in the number of temporary custody orders in collaboration with that DCPL that Child Safety has sought and been granted in respect of *matters* already referred to the DCPL, along with the continued reduction in the number of temporary custody orders that were extended, align with the number of changes implemented to the child protection model on 1 July 2019 to streamline business processes to deliver greater efficiencies within service delivery.

Referred *matters* concerning children subject to an emergency order

In 2022-23, overall, the DCPL received a total of 1,679 referred *matters* concerning children on emergency orders, defined to include either a temporary assessment order, court assessment order or temporary custody order, a decrease of 56 *matters* from 2021-22. If a *matter* concerns a child that is subject to an emergency order, the *matter* should be referred as soon as practicable and where possible, no later than 24 hours before the emergency order ends.¹⁸

The following table sets out the number of *matters* and the percentage of the total number that concerned an emergency order that was referred no later than 24 hours before the orders ended across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 33 – Timeliness of referred <i>matters</i> for children on an emergency order					
2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 24 hours	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 24 hours	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 24 hours	% of total <i>matters</i> referred
1,715	86.7% ↑	1,536	88.5% ↑	1,499	89.3% ↑

The number of *matters* and their percentage of the total *matters* concerning children on emergency orders that were referred no later than 24 hours before the orders ended has increased across the three years.

The following table sets out the total received *matters* concerning children on an emergency order along with the number of *matters* that met the timeframe of being referred no later than less than 24 hours before the order ended monthly across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 34 – Emergency order <i>matters</i> received no later than 24 hours before order ended														
Year		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	Not less than 24 hours	189	173	129	118	135	159	109	153	152	126	116	156	1,715
	Total	215	201	148	155	145	174	122	164	176	147	152	179	1,978
2021-22	Not less than 24 hours	164	109	151	118	139	134	94	131	125	127	111	133	1,536
	Total	178	119	165	136	168	157	100	144	145	143	126	154	1,735
2022-23	Not less than 24 hours	86	146	132	104	139	162	83	102	170	127	124	124	1,499
	Total	99	166	144	113	149	172	100	121	185	163	137	130	1,679

¹⁸ Guideline 31 of the DCPL's Guidelines issued under s 39 of the DCPL Act provides that a *matter* concerning a child subject to an emergency order should be referred by Child Safety to the DCPL as soon as practicable and where possible, no later than 24 hours prior to the emergency order ending.

It is noted that on a month-by-month basis, there has been a large amount of variance between the total number of *matters* and the number of *matters* that have met the timeframe of being referred not less than 24 hours before the orders ended. This ranged from a monthly high of 95.4% in June 2023 (124 out of 130 *matters*) through to a low of 83.0% in January 2023 (83 out of 100 *matters*). However, noting that in 2018-19, 85.5% of these *matters* met the timeframe, there has been a continued increase across these three years aligned with the number of changes implemented to the child protection model on 1 July 2019.

The below table sets out the statistics of each type of referred *matter* that concerned a child the subject of an emergency order by order type across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 35 – Types of emergency order *matters* received by 24 hours before order ended

Type of order	2020-21				2021-22				2022-23			
	Number of <i>matters</i> received less than 24 hours		Number of <i>matters</i> received more than 24 hours		Number of <i>matters</i> received less than 24 hours		Number of <i>matters</i> received more than 24 hours		Number of <i>matters</i> received less than 24 hours		Number of <i>matters</i> received more than 24 hours	
TAO	0	0.0%	5	100%	0	0.0%	2	100%	0	0.0%	4	100%
CAO	83	7.3%	1,048	92.7%	29	3.2%	866	96.8%	51	5.8%	833	94.2%
TCO	180	21.4%	662	78.6%	170	20.3%	668	79.7%	129	16.3%	662	83.7%
Total	263	13.3%	1,715	86.7%	199	11.5%	1,536	88.5%	180	10.7%	1,499	89.3%

From a review of the above table, the increase in 2022-23 of referred *matters* concerning children on emergency orders that meet the timeframes, was as a result of improvements in the overall percentage of referred *matters* concerning children on temporary custody orders being received no later than 24 hours before the orders ended.

The following table sets out the timeliness statistics of referred *matters* concerning children on temporary assessment orders received on the day the order ended, the day before and one clear business day in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 36 – *Matters* received concerning children on a TAO by business days before order ended

Time	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total
On the day TAO ended	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Day before TAO ended	5	100%	2	100.0%	4	100%
1 clear business day or more before TAO ended	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	5	100%	2	100%	4	100%

Although the above table shows that 100% of the *matters* concerning children on a temporary assessment order once again met the timeframes in 2022-23, this is within the context that there were only four of these types of *matters* received.

In respect of *matters* concerning children the subject of court assessment orders, the following table sets out the timeliness statistics of these *matters* received on the day the order ended, the day before, one clear business day, between two and three clear business days and then four clear business days across in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 37 – *Matters* received concerning children on a CAO by business days before order ended

Time	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total
On the day CAO ended	83	7.3%	29	3.2%	51	5.8%
Day before CAO ended	384	34.0%	325	36.3%	332	37.6%
1 clear business day before CAO ended	310	27.4%	254	28.4%	233	26.4%
Between 2 & 3 clear business days before CAO ended	244	21.6%	210	23.5%	163	18.4%
4 clear business days or more before CAO ended	110	9.7%	77	8.6%	105	11.9%
Total	1,131	100%	895	100%	884	100%

In 2022-23, in the context of a continued overall decrease in overall number of *matters* concerning children the subject of a court assessment order, there was a decrease in the number of these *matters*, as a percentage of the total, being referred no later than 24 hours before the orders ended. The numbers decreased from 866 *matters* (96.8% of total *matters*) in 2021-22 to 833 *matters* (94.2% of total *matters*) in 2022-23. However, it is noted that the 2022-23 result was higher than the 92.7% achieved in 2020-21. Further, whilst recognising there was a continued increase in the percentage of the total of these *matters* being referred on the day before the orders ended, increasing from 36.3% to 37.6% of the total, there was also an increase in the number and percentage of these *matters* that were referred four clear business days or more to the DCPL.

The following table sets out the timeliness statistics of referred *matters* concerning children on TCOs received on the day the order ended, the day before and one clear business day in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 38 – *Matters* received concerning children on a TCO by business days before order ended

Time	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total
On the day TCO ended	180	21.4%	170	20.3%	129	16.3%
Day before TCO ended	443	52.6%	452	53.9%	500	63.2%
1 clear business day or more before TCO ended	219	26.0%	216	25.8%	162	20.5%
Total	842	100%	838	100%	791	100%

Again, in the context of noting a continued decrease in the overall number of *matters* concerning children the subject of a temporary custody order, in 2022-23, there was an increase in the number

of these *matters* being referred more than 24 hours before the temporary custody orders ended to 83.7%, which was up on the 79.7% achieved in 2021-22 and 78.6% in 2020-21.

Referred *matters* concerning children subject to a child protection order

In 2022-23, the DCPL received a total of 1,328 referred *matters* concerning children on existing child protection orders. If a *matter* concerns a child who is subject to a child protection order, the *matter* should be referred no later than 20 business days before the child protection order ends.¹⁹

The following table sets out the timeliness of referred *matters* concerning children on a child protection order received in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 that were referred no later than 20 business days before the child protection order ended.

Table 39 – Timeliness of referred <i>matters</i> for children on a child protection order					
2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 20 business days	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 20 business days	% of total <i>matters</i> referred	Number of <i>matters</i> referred no later than 20 business days	% of total <i>matters</i> referred
299	35.2% ↑	366	34.6% ↓	372	28.0% ↓

The following table sets out the timeliness of referred *matters* concerning children on a child protection orders by reference to days received in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 40 – <i>Matters</i> received for children on a child protection order by business days before order ended						
Time	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total	Number of matters	% of total
On the day existing CPO ended	1	0.1%	8	0.8%	0	0.0%
Day before existing CPO ended	21	2.5%	18	1.7%	34	2.6%
1 clear business day before existing CPO ended	37	4.4%	35	3.3%	76	5.7%
Between 2 and 3 clear business days before existing CPO ended	60	7.1%	145	13.7%	147	10.9%
Between 4 and 8 clear business days before existing CPO ended	172	20.3%	227	21.4%	323	24.3%
Between 9 and 13 clear business days before existing CPO ended	137	16.1%	116	11.0%	226	16.9%
Between 14 and 18 clear business days before existing CPO ended	122	14.4%	144	13.6%	150	11.6%
19 clear business days and more before existing CPO ended (not less than 20 business days)	299	35.2%	366	34.6%	372	28.0%
Total	849	100%	1,059	100%	1,328	100%

¹⁹ Guideline 30 of the DCPL's Guidelines issued under s 39 of the DCPL Act. It is noted a *matter* is defined to include children subject to a child protection order that Child Safety were satisfied needed to be extended, varied or revoked, or revoked and another child protection order made in its place pursuant to sections 64 and 65 of the CP Act. As a result, this data is not directly comparable with earlier reported DCPL data on timeliness of referred *matters* for children subject of a child protection order.

The above tables show that of the 1,328 *matters* concerning children on child protection orders, only 28.0% of the *matters* met the prescribed timeframe of 20 business days. This was a marked decrease on the 34.6% of *matters* that met the timeframe in 2021-22, and the 35.2% of *matters* that met it 2020-21.

This, however, is in the context of the significant increase seen in the overall number of these types of *matters* over the last two years, with the actual number of these *matters* meeting the timeframe increasing from 299 to 372 over the three years. Further, the 28.0% of the *matters* that met the timeframe in 2022-23, is still well above the 20.1% of these *matters* that met the timeframe in 2018-19, the last year before the changes were implemented to the child protection litigation model on 1 July 2019. It is also noted that consistent with 2021-22, where 80.5% of *matters* were referred with four clear business days, in 2022-23, it was 80.6% of *matters*, which is down from the 86.0% achieved in 2020-21.

The below table sets out the total received *matters* concerning children on a child protection order along with the number of *matters* that met the timeframe of being referred no later than 20 business days before the order ended monthly across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. It shows there was a large amount of variance between the total number of *matters* and the number of *matters* that met the timeframe, ranging from a monthly low of 17.4% in August 2022 (25 out of 144 *matters*) through to a monthly high of 39.7% in October 2022 (46 out 116 *matters*).

Table 41 - *Matters* for children on a CPO received not less than 20 business days before order ended

Year		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	Not less than 20 days	15	28	28	37	16	34	26	16	27	19	24	29	299
	Total	60	72	79	73	73	61	60	47	86	52	83	103	849
2021-22	Not less than 20 days	36	37	19	34	36	11	24	21	43	30	40	35	366
	Total	90	112	76	85	111	34	69	102	108	72	99	101	1,059
2022-23	Not less than 20 days	26	25	45	46	29	19	25	17	47	23	35	35	372
	Total	111	144	149	116	116	57	72	92	135	91	114	131	1,328

These are *matters* where there has been lengthy involvement between Child Safety and the child and their family, and the management of these *matters* within compressed timeframes continues to be a significant challenge. When these *matters* do not meet the timeframe, it results in critical decisions about whether to apply for a further child protection order being made with reduced time being available for the DCPL and Child Safety to collaborate, and for the request and provision of further evidence or information. That said, the DCPL will continue to work collaboratively with Child Safety to promote greater compliance with the prescribed timeframes, supporting better outcomes for children and their families.

Dealing with referred *child protection matters*

Under the DCPL Act, in respect of each accepted referred *matter*, the DCPL must deal with it by deciding to either:

- apply for a child protection order for the child; or
- to refer the *matter* back to Child Safety.

Child protection matters dealt with by the DCPL

Table 42 – <i>Child protection matters</i> dealt with by the DCPL		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3,329 (0.3%) ↑	3,354 (0.8%) ↑	3,506 (4.5%) ↑

In 2022-23, the DCPL dealt with 3,506 *matters*, which in a year-on-year comparison, was a 4.5% increase on the 3,354 *matters* dealt with in 2021-22. In terms of a two-year comparison, there was a 5.3% increase (177 *matters*) on the 3,329 *matters* dealt with in 2020-21.

The following table sets out the referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL monthly across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 43 – Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with by the DCPL by month													
Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	345	274	298	268	274	240	233	248	276	293	273	307	3,329
2021-22	315	290	300	277	314	269	204	295	280	243	256	311	3,354
2022-23	260	372	331	236	357	239	258	223	350	303	266	311	3,506

General consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety about referred *matters*

The following table sets out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL that included general consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 44 – <i>Matters</i> dealt with that included general consultation by the DCPL with Child Safety					
2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL consulted generally with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL consulted generally with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL consulted generally with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
2,296	69.0%	2,292	68.3%	2,572	73.4%

Of the 3,506 *matters* that DCPL dealt with, the DCPL consulted generally with Child Safety in the course of dealing with 2,572 of the *matters* (73.4% of the total *matters*). In 2021-22, the DCPL

consulted generally when dealing with 2,292 *matters* (68.3% of the total *matters*) and in 2020-21, the DCPL consulted generally when dealing with 2,296 of the *matters* (69.0% of the total *matters*).

DCPL's requests for further evidence or information about referred *matters*

Before deciding how to deal with a *matter*, the DCPL may ask Child Safety to provide further evidence or information about the *matter*. This ensures that the State only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances, and that applications which are made are supported by sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence, which has been independently considered and assessed by the DCPL.

The following table sets out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL that included requests for further evidence or information from Child Safety across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 45 – *Matters* dealt with that DCPL requesting further evidence or information from Child Safety

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
1,843	55.4%	1,866	55.6%	2,168	61.8%

In respect of the 3,506 *matters* that were dealt with by the DCPL in 2022-23, the DCPL asked for further evidence or information from Child Safety when considering 2,168 of the *matters* (61.8% of total *matters*). In 2021-22, the DCPL asked for further evidence or information in respect of 1,866 matters (55.6% of total *matters*) and in 2020-21, further evidence or information was requested in 1,843 matters (55.4% of the total *matters*).

Prior to 2022-23, on average over the preceding six years of operation, the DCPL asked Child Safety to provide further evidence or information in respect of 57.1% of *matters* that have been dealt with. The increase in requests to 61.8% of the total *matters* dealt with in 2022-23 is a strong indicator that the child protection litigation model is working to improve the number of child protection applications filed that are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and supporting evidence-based decision making.

DCPL requests for further evidence or information from Child Safety's 6 regions

The following six tables set out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL that included requests for further evidence or information from Child Safety across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 across their six regions.

Table 46 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
315	49.7%	304	45.4%	412	58.9%

Table 47 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety’s Sunshine Coast and Central region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
235	44.0%	182	40.1%	298	56.1%

Table 48 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety’s North Queensland region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
187	51.4%	225	58.6%	356	78.9%

Table 49 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety’s Far North Queensland region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
263	62.2%	302	64.7%	243	52.6%

Table 50 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety’s South East region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
480	65.6%	458	61.4%	378	55.0%

Table 51 – Further evidence or information requested from Child Safety’s South West region

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters DCPL asked Child Safety for further evidence or information	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
363	56.5%	395	62.4%	481	71.2%

The above tables evidence that across the last three years at a regional level, and within each region, there were significant differences in the number of *matters* that the DCPL were required to ask Child Safety for further evidence or information before deciding how to deal with *matters*. It ranged for a low of 40.1% of *matters* dealt with in 2021-22 in the Sunshine Coast and Central region to high of 78.9% of *matters* dealt with in 2022-23 in the North Queensland region.

As outlined within the Organisational structure section above, within the Governance – management and structure part of this report on page 30, the DCPL Applicant lawyers (Senior and

Principal Lawyers) within each of the three Chamber groups within the ODCPL, each consider and deal with referred *matters* from across three of Child Safety's six regions. This approach brings a consistency to how new *matters* are dealt with across Child Safety's six regions, and seeks to ensure that the State only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances, and that the applications which are made across the different regions, are supported by sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence, which has been independently considered and assessed by the DCPL. This as noted above, is a strong indicator that the child protection litigation model increases the number of child protection applications filed that are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision making.

Required consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety about referred *matters*

In deciding whether to apply for a child protection order, the DCPL may apply for an order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order that Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection when referring a *matter* to the DCPL. If the DCPL is considering either referring a *matter* back to Child Safety or applying for an order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order that Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection, the DCPL must consult with Child Safety under section 18 of the DCPL Act to try and reach an agreement in respect of how the *matter* should be dealt with.

The following table sets out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL that included required consultation with Child Safety under the DCPL Act across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 52 – <i>Matters</i> dealt with that required consultation with Child Safety under the DCPL Act					
2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of matters the DCPL was required to consult with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters the DCPL was required to consult with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters the DCPL was required to consult with Child Safety	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
659	19.8%	586	17.5%	696	19.9%

In 2022-23, required consultation under the DCPL Act occurred in respect of 696 *matters* out of the 3,506 *matters* that were dealt with, which equates to 19.9% of the total matters dealt with. It is noted that this was an increase from 2021-22 and is consistent with 2020-21 in terms of the overall percentage of matters requiring consultation. It is, however, a marked reduction from 29.8% of the total *matters* that were dealt with in 2018-19 that required the DCPL to consult with Child Safety, the last year before the changes were implemented to the child protection model on 1 July 2019. As noted above, the changes included supporting OCFOS legal officers to focus on the provision of early legal advice to Child Safety's frontline staff and the preparation of briefs of evidence that are provided to the DCPL when *matters* are referred.

***Child protection matters* the DCPL dealt with by referring them back to Child Safety**

As noted above, under the DCPL Act, in respect of each accepted referred *matter*, the DCPL must deal with it by deciding to either:

- apply for a child protection order for the child; or
- refer the *matter* back to Child Safety.

Matters are referred back to Child Safety by the DCPL because there is either:

- a need for Child Safety to undertake further investigation, which could include Child Safety obtaining further evidence or information, in respect of the reasons why the child is a child in need of protection, and/or the reasons why a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, and/or in relation to the type of order Child Safety has considered was an appropriate and desirable type of child protection order; or
- the DCPL decide that the child, the subject of the referred *matter*, was not a child in need of protection that required a child protection order to be made.

Dealing with *matters* by referring them back to Child Safety in these circumstances is an important part of the DCPL's oversight function, giving effect to statutory principles about ensuring there is sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence to support applications for child protection orders and that the DCPL only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances.

The below table sets out the referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL by referring them back to Child Safety across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 53 – Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with by the DCPL referring the <i>matter</i> back to Child Safety						
	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	No. of matters referred back	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters referred back	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	No. of matters referred back	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	42	1.3%	52	1.6%	50	1.4%
With agreement	25	0.8%	45	1.3%	35	1.0%
Without agreement	17	0.5%	7	0.2%	15	0.4%

In 2022-23, the DCPL referred back 50 *matters* to Child Safety, 35 of which were with agreement, and 15 without agreement. This represents 1.4% of all *matters* the DCPL dealt with (*matters* referred back and applications made). In 2021-22, the DCPL referred back 52 *matters* (1.6% of all *matters* dealt with) to Child Safety, and in 2020-21, the DCPL referred back 42 *matters* (1.3% of all *matters* dealt with) to Child Safety.

The table also shows that as a percentage of the total *matters* dealt with by the DCPL, the number of *matters* referred back by the DCPL to Child Safety has been relatively consistent across the last three years. Whilst acknowledging in 2022-23, there was an increase in the number of *matters* referred back without agreement, it is still well below the 28 *matters* or 0.9% that occurred in 2018-19, and is

another indicator reflective improvements made as a result of the changes implemented to the child protection model on 1 July 2019.

The following table details the number of *matters* the DCPL referred back to Child Safety monthly across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 54 – Child protection matters the DCPL referred back to Child Safety by month

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	4	1	10	4	2	0	3	0	1	8	2	7	42
2021-22	1	6	6	2	13	16	4	0	3	0	0	1	52
2022-23	2	10	6	0	10	6	5	1	6	1	0	3	50

Matters referred back that concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The following table shows the number of *matters* concerning children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander that were referred back across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 55 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on *matters* referred back to Child Safety

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	11	26.2%	23	44.2%	18	36.0%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1	2.4%	0	0.0%	6	12.0%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	2.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	30	71.4%	28	53.8%	25	50.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	42	100%	52	100%	50	100%

It is noted the above table shows that the number of *matters* concerning children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander that were referred back to Child Safety in 2022-23 increased to 25 *matters* (50.0% of the total *matters*), up from the 24 *matters* (46.2% of the total *matters*) that were referred back in 2021-22, and up much higher than the 28.6% (12 *matters*) in 2020-21.

Matters referred back to Child Safety across their six regions

The following six tables set out the number of referred *matters* the DCPL referred back to the six Child Safety regions across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 56 – Matters dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	10	1.6%	19	2.8%	1	0.1%
With agreement	7	1.1%	15	2.2%	1	0.1%
Without agreement	3	0.5%	4	0.6%	0	0.0%

Table 57 – Matters dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the Sunshine Coast and Central region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	5	0.9%	4	0.9%	5	0.9%
With agreement	5	0.9%	4	0.9%	2	0.4%
Without agreement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.5%

Table 58 – Matters dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the North Queensland region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	0	0.0%	11	2.9%	9	2.0%
With agreement	0	0.0%	10	2.6%	9	2.0%
Without agreement	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%

Table 59 – Matters dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the Far North Queensland region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	3	0.7%	12	2.6%	8	1.7%
With agreement	3	0.7%	12	2.6%	6	1.3%
Without agreement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%

Table 60 – *Matters* dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the South East region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	9	1.2%	3	0.4%	4	0.6%
With agreement	3	0.4%	3	0.4%	0	0.0%
Without agreement	6	0.8%	0	0.0%	4	0.6%

Table 61 – *Matters* dealt with by the DCPL referring the *matter* back in the South West region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	15	2.3%	3	0.5%	23	3.4%
With agreement	7	1.1%	1	0.2%	17	2.5%
Without agreement	8	1.2%	2	0.3%	6	0.9%

As with the regional statistics relating to when the DCPL was required to ask Child Safety for further evidence or information before deciding how to deal with *matters*, the above tables evidence that across the last three years at a regional level, and within each region, there were significant differences in the number of *matters* that the DCPL referred back to Child Safety with and without their agreement. It ranged from the DCPL referring no *matters* back in 2020-21 in the North Queensland region, to 23 *matters* in 2022-23 in the South West region.

Again, as outlined within the Organisational structure section above, within the Governance – management and structure part of this report on page 30, the DCPL Applicant lawyers (Senior and Principal Lawyers) within each of the three Chamber groups within the ODCPL, each consider and deal with referred *matters* from across three of Child Safety's six regions. This approach brings a consistency to how new *matters* are dealt with across Child Safety's six regions, and is an important part of the DCPL's oversight function within the child protection model, giving effect to statutory principles about ensuring there is sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence to support applications for child protection orders and that the DCPL only takes action on behalf of the State that is warranted in the circumstances.

Matters referred back that the DCPL has had no further involvement with the children

In respect of the 50 *matters* that the DCPL referred back to Child Safety in 2022-23, at the point the performance section of this annual report was finalised on 26 October 2023, the DCPL had not received a further referred *matter* from Child Safety concerning 36 of these children, which equates to 72.0% of the total *matters* referred back within the year.

The following table provides as at 26 October 2023, an overview of the last three years of *matters* that the DCPL has referred back to Child Safety and has not received a further referred *matter* relating to the children.

Table 62 – <i>Matters</i> the DCPL has referred back to Child Safety and had no further involvement with the children			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total <i>matters</i> referred back	42	52	50
Number of <i>matters</i> referred back where the child has not been subject to another referral	23	23	36
% of total <i>matters</i> referred back	54.8%	44.2%	72.0%

Whilst recognising that the Commission of Inquiry's final report, Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection did not identify that the establishment of the DCPL would contribute to reducing the number of children and young people in the child protection system, the above statistics do evidence that the DCPL is achieving the policy objective of providing oversight to applications that have been proposed by Child Safety. Out of the 483 *matters* that the DCPL has referred back to Child Safety from commencement through to 30 July 2023, the DCPL has had no further involvement in respect of 177 of the children (36.6% of the total *matters* referred back), which is another strong indicator that Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model is working, and is providing an assurance that State intervention is occurring only when necessary.

Matters the DCPL dealt with by applying for a child protection order

Child protection applications made by the DCPL

Table 63 – Child protection applications made by the DCPL		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3,287 (1.1%) ↑	3,302 (0.5%) ↑	3,456 (4.7%) ↑

In 2022-23, the DCPL made 3,456 applications for child protection orders, which in a year-on-year comparison, is a 4.7% increase on the 3,302 applications made in 2021-22. In terms of a two-year comparison, there was a 5.1% increase (3,287 to 3,456).

The following tables set out the number of *matters* the DCPL dealt with by the making of a child protection application on a monthly and quarterly basis across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 64 – Monthly child protection applications made by the DCPL													
Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	341	273	288	264	272	240	230	248	275	285	271	300	3,287
2021-22	314	284	294	275	301	253	200	295	277	243	256	310	3,302
2022-23	258	362	325	236	347	233	253	222	344	302	268	306	3,456

Table 65 – Quarterly child protection applications made by the DCPL							
Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*
902	17.0%	776	-3.4%	753	1.6%	856	-8.4%
Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*
892	-1.1%	829	6.8%	772	2.5%	809	-5.4%
Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*	Applications made	Var.*
945	5.9%	816	-1.6%	819	6.1%	876	8.3%

*Variance is a comparison with corresponding quarter in the preceding year

The above tables show that during 2022-23, consistent with the monthly numbers of new *matters* received, there continued to be large variances month to month in the numbers of *matters* the DCPL dealt with by making an application for a child protection order when making direct monthly comparisons across the years.

When viewing the number of applications made on a monthly and quarterly basis across 2022-23, the number of applications made within the July to September 2022 quarter represents the largest number of applications the DCPL has made in a quarter since commencing operations on 1 July 2016. As outlined earlier in this part of the report, the high number of child protection applications made in this quarter relates to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As set out above, during the July to September 2022 quarter, the DCPL received the second largest number of *matters* in a quarter since commencing operations on 1 July 2016. The largest quarter being April to June 2020. The high number of *matters* received across both of these quarters relates to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the July to September 2022, the DCPL received an increased number of new *matters* that concerned children already on existing child protection orders, with 38.4% of the total *matters* concerning children on existing child protection orders that granted either custody or short-term guardianship (358 *matters* out of a total of 932).

The result of this increased number of new *matters* concerning children already on orders granting custody and short-term guardianship is that in terms of the 945 child protection applications made by the DCPL in this quarter, 346 of the applications sought child protection orders granting long-term guardianship of the children to the chief executive, which equates to 36.6% of the total number of applications made. Within the following quarter, October to December 2022, of the 816 child protection applications made by the DCPL, 294 of the applications sought child protection orders granting long-term guardianship of the children to the chief executive, which equates to a slight reduction to 36.0% of the total applications made. Then across January to March 2023, there was a further reduction to 32.1% (263 out of the 819 applications made), before the applications made seeking child protection orders granting long-term guardianship of the children to the chief executive again increased to 32.8% of the total (287 out of 876 applications made) This is important, as set out below, these types of child protection applications on average are before the Court for a longer duration and require more court events to be determined.

Applications made that concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In respect of the *matters* dealt with by the making of an application, the following table shows the number of applications that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 66 – Applications concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander						
Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	1,122	34.1%	1,191	36.1%	1,352	39.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	149	4.4%	161	4.9%	164	4.7%
Torres Strait Islander	68	2.1%	68	2.1%	67	1.9%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1,948	59.3%	1,878	56.9%	1,868	54.1%
Not stated	0	0.0%	4	0.1%	5	0.1%
Total	3,287	100%	3,302	100%	3,456	100%

Consistent with the referred *matters* statistics above, the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications for a child protection order increased in 2022-23, from 1,420 applications or 43.0% of the total applications made in 2021-22, to 1,583 applications or 45.8% of the total applications made. This is an increase of 163 applications, and is a significant increase on 2020-21, where 1,339 or 40.7% of the total applications made concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Types of child protection orders that the DCPL may seek for the Court to make

The DCPL on a child protection application can seek for the Court to make any one or more of the following child protection orders that the court considers appropriate in the circumstances:

- *Directive order to do or refrain from doing something*: an order directing a named parent of a child to do or refrain from doing something directly related to their child's protection. This order can be up to 12 months in duration.
- *Directive order – no contact*: an order directing a named parent of a child not to have contact (direct or indirect) with their child. This order prevents any contact between the named parent and their child. This order can be up to 12 months in duration.
- *Directive order – supervised contact*: an order directing a named parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with their child other than when a stated person, or a person of a stated category is present. This order provides that any contact the named parent has with their child is to be supervised. This order can be up to 12 months in duration.
- *Supervision order*: an order requiring the chief executive (Child Safety) to supervise a child's protection in relation to the matters stated in the order. This order can be up to 12 months in duration.
- *Custody to either a suitable family member or to the chief executive (Child Safety) order*: an order granting custody of a child to either a suitable person, other than a parent of the child, who is a member of the child's family, or to the chief executive. This order provides them with the right to have the child's daily care and the right and responsibility to make decisions about the child's daily care. This order can be up to two years in duration.
- *Short-term guardianship to the chief executive order (Child Safety)*: an order granting short-term guardianship of a child to the chief executive. This order provides the chief executive with all the powers, rights and responsibilities in relation to:
 - the child's daily care and making decisions about the child's daily care, and
 - for making decisions about the long-term care, wellbeing and development of the child.

This order can be up to two years in duration.

- *Long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member, another suitable person or the chief executive (Child Safety)*: an order granting long-term guardianship of a child to either a suitable member of a child's family (other than a parent of the child), or to another suitable person, or to the chief executive. This order provides them with all the powers, rights and responsibilities in relation to:

- the child's daily care and making decisions about the child's daily care, and
- for making decisions about the long-term care, wellbeing and development of the child.

This order ends on the day before the child turns 18 years.

- *Permanent care order*: an order granting long-term guardianship of a child to a suitable person. This order provides them with all the powers, rights and responsibilities in relation to:
 - the child's daily care and making decisions about the child's daily care, and
 - for making decisions about the long-term care, wellbeing and development of the child.

This order ends on the day before the child turns 18 years.

It is also noted that the DCPL on a child protection application can seek for the Court to extend, vary or revoke a child protection order.

Matters the DCPL dealt with differently

As referred to above, in deciding whether to apply for a child protection order, the DCPL may apply for an order of a different type, or a child protection order that is otherwise different, from the child protection order that Child Safety at the point of referring the *matter* to the DCPL considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection.

Matters dealt with by the DCPL applying for a different type of order or otherwise different

The following table sets out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL by applying for a child protection order of a different type, or a child protection order/s that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 67 – Matters the DCPL applied for a different type of order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total matters	435	13.1%	414	12.3%	473	13.5%
With agreement	370	11.1%	364	10.8%	398	11.4%
Without agreement	65	2.0%	50	1.5%	75	2.1%

In 2022-23, the DCPL dealt with a total of 473 referred *matters* by applying for a child protection order of a different type, or a child protection order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment, which represents 13.5% of the total *matters* dealt with. This was a notable increase on the 414 *matters* or 12.3% of the total *matters* dealt with differently in 2021-22, and an increase on the 435 *matters* or 13.1% of the total percentage of *matters* dealt with differently in 2020-21.

In terms of *matters* dealt with differently without agreement, in 2022-23, there was an increase to only 75 *matters*, or 2.1% of the total *matters* dealt with, which also equates to 15.9% of the *matters* dealt with differently (75 out of 473). This was above the 12.1% in 2021-22 (50 out of 414), and just up on 14.9% in 2020-21 (65 out of 435).

The DCPL dealing with *matters* differently across the last three years by applying for different types of child protection orders, or for orders that were otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment, ranging from 12.3% up to 13.5% of all *matters*, evidences the benefit of the DCPL's oversight function and the effectiveness of collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety. Through this collaboration and partnership between specialised child protection lawyers and Child Safety's frontline staff, the DCPL has also fulfilled an educative function, particularly with respect to more complex matters, including those involving the interpretation of contested legislative provisions.

The following tables set out the number of *matters* the DCPL dealt with differently to Child Safety's initial assessment when applying for a child protection order on a monthly and quarterly basis across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 68 – Child protection matters dealt with differently by the DCPL when applying for an order

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	35	46	39	51	45	24	45	27	38	21	44	20	435
2021-22	38	26	46	29	38	33	23	35	38	38	22	48	414
2022-23	45	54	38	34	40	29	43	40	43	40	33	34	473

Table 69 – Quarterly matters dealt with differently by the DCPL when applying for an order

Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*
120	41.2%	120	13.2%	110	50.7%	85	-25.4%
Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*
110	-8.3%	100	-16.7%	96	-12.7%	108	27.1%
Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*	Matters dealt with differently	Var.*
137	24.5%	103	3.0%	126	31.3%	107	-0.9%

*Variance is a comparison with corresponding quarter in the preceding year

It is noted that during 2022-23, consistent with the monthly numbers of *matters* received, there were variances month to month in the numbers of *matters* the DCPL dealt with differently when making applications for child protection orders, and on a direct monthly comparison across the years. When viewing the number of applications made differently on a quarterly basis, the number of *matters* dealt with differently were higher across the first three quarters of 2020-23 as compared with 2021-22, with only a minor decrease in the April to June 2023 quarter.

Matters dealt with by the DCPL applying for a different type of order or otherwise different from Child Safety's six regions

The following six tables set out the number of referred *matters* dealt with by the DCPL applying for a different type of order or otherwise different by Child Safety's six regions across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 70 – Matters DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total matters	89	14.0%	70	10.4%	86	12.3%
With agreement	76	12.0%	53	7.9%	73	10.4%
Without agreement	13	2.0%	17	2.5%	13	1.9%

Table 71 – Matters DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the Sunshine Coast and Central region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total matters	42	7.9%	27	6.0%	63	11.9%
With agreement	33	6.2%	23	5.1%	49	9.2%
Without agreement	9	1.7%	4	0.9%	14	2.6%

Table 72 – Matters DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the North Queensland region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total matters	33	9.1%	45	11.7%	79	17.5%
With agreement	32	8.8%	44	11.5%	73	16.2%
Without agreement	1	0.3%	1	0.3	6	1.3%

Table 73 – *Matters* DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the Far North Queensland region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	82	19.4%	81	17.3%	59	12.8%
With agreement	70	16.5%	73	15.6%	43	9.3%
Without agreement	12	2.8%	8	1.7%	16	3.5%

Table 74 – *Matters* DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the South East region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	127	17.3%	95	12.7%	87	12.7%
With agreement	102	13.9%	83	11.1%	76	11.1%
Without agreement	25	3.4%	12	1.6%	11	1.6%

Table 75 – *Matters* DCPL applied for a different type or order, or for an order that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in the South West region

	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	62	9.7%	100	15.7%	99	14.6%
With agreement	57	8.9%	92	14.5%	84	12.4%
Without agreement	5	0.8%	8	1.3%	15	2.2%

As with the regional statistics relating to when the DCPL was required to ask Child Safety for further evidence or information before deciding how to deal with *matters*, and also in terms of the *matters* that the DCPL referred back to Child Safety, the above tables evidence that across the last three years at a regional level, and within each region, there were significant differences in the number of *matters* that the DCPL dealt with by the DCPL applying for a different type of order or otherwise different from Child Safety's initial assessment, both with and without the agreement of Child Safety. It ranged from a low of 6.0% of the total *matters* dealt with in 2021-22 in the Sunshine Coast and Central region to high of 19.4% of total *matters* dealt with in 2020-21 in the Far North Queensland region.

Again, as outlined earlier in this report, the ODCPL's Applicant lawyers (Senior and Principal Lawyers) within each of ODCPL's three Chamber groups, each consider and deal with referred *matters* from across three of Child Safety's six regions. This approach brings a consistency to how

matters are dealt with across the regions, and seeks to ensure that the State only takes action that is warranted in the circumstances, and that the applications which are made across the different regions, are supported by sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence, which has been independently considered and assessed by the DCPL.

This as with the earlier regional statistics relating to when the DCPL was required to ask Child Safety for further evidence or information before deciding how to deal with *matters*, and also in terms of the *matters* that the DCPL referred back to Child Safety, is a strong indicator that Queensland's innovative child protection litigation model is significantly improving the quality of child protection applications that are being made by ensuring that they are seeking the most appropriate type of order, and are supported by good quality evidence, which is promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision making.

Total *matters* dealt with differently through either referring them back or an order

The following table sets out the total number of referred *matters* dealt with differently by the DCPL either through the referral of the *matter* back to Child Safety, or by applying for a child protection order of a different type, or a child protection order/s that was otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 76 – Total <i>matters</i> the DCPL dealt with differently to Child Safety's initial assessment						
	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with	Number of <i>matters</i> dealt with differently	% of total <i>matters</i> dealt with
Total <i>matters</i>	477	14.3%	466	13.9%	523	14.9%
With agreement	395	11.9%	409	12.2%	433	12.4%
Without agreement	82	2.5%	57	1.7%	90	2.6%

This table shows that as a percentage of the total *matters* dealt with differently by the DCPL, it has been relatively consistent across the last three years. Whilst acknowledging in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, the 2.6% was just above the 2.5% of the total number of *matters* dealt with differently without agreement in 2020-21, and still well below the 3.3% of total *matters* dealt with differently without agreement in 2018-19.

Written reasons where *matters* referred back or dealt with differently without agreement

If an agreement is not reached between the DCPL and Child Safety after consultation has occurred under the DCPL Act, the DCPL must provide Child Safety with written reasons for the DCPL's decision to deal with the *matter* differently to Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection.

Internal review of the DCPL's decision to refer *matters* back or to deal with differently -

Child Safety may request an internal review under the DCPL's Guidelines of *matters* that the DCPL has dealt with by either referring them back to Child Safety, or by applying for an order of a different type, or an order that was otherwise different from the order that Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for a child's protection without Child Safety's agreement.

An internal review is conducted by a different lawyer of the same or higher level employed in the ODCPL. The review is conducted on the same information that was considered in reaching the initial decision. If Child Safety have new information that they would like the DCPL to consider, Child Safety will refer a new *matter* to the DCPL. In 2022-23, as with the last three years, Child Safety did not request the DCPL to undertake an internal review of any of the 90 decisions made without agreement in respect of the DCPL's decision when dealing with referred *matters*.

Child Safety's initial assessment and the applications made by DCPL by type of order

The below table sets out Child Safety's assessment and how the DCPL dealt with referred *matters* by type of child protection orders sought by reference to the orders set out in section 61 of the CP Act, noting that where more than one type of order is sought within a child protection application, the order that appears last by reference to section 61 is reflected in the table.

Table 77 – Child Safety's initial assessment and the applications made by the DCPL by type of order

Type of order	2020-21				2021-22				2022-23			
	Number of Child Safety's assessment and % of total		Number of applications made and % of total		Number of Child Safety's assessment and % of total		Number of applications made and % of total		Number of Child Safety's assessment and % of total		Number of applications made and % of total	
Revoke a child protection order	25	0.8%	25	0.8%	18	0.5%	18	0.5%	20	0.6%	20	0.6%
Directive order – other	6	0.2%	5	0.2%	17	0.5%	10	0.3%	4	0.1%	2	0.1%
Directive order – no contact with child	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order supervised contact	61	1.9%	53	1.6%	87	2.6%	71	2.2%	56	1.6%	48	1.4%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	373	11.3%	376	11.4%	380	11.5%	406	12.3%	336	9.7%	358	10.4%
Custody to a suitable person	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	8	0.2%	3	0.1%	9	0.3%	5	0.1%
Custody to the chief executive	1,618	49.2%	1,663	50.6%	1,578	47.8%	1,590	48.2%	1,517	43.9%	1,562	45.2%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	112	3.4%	88	2.7%	66	2.0%	56	1.7%	75	2.2%	46	1.3%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	52	1.6%	51	1.6%	64	1.9%	66	2.0%	71	2.1%	73	2.1%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	57	1.7%	54	1.6%	53	1.6%	52	1.6%	48	1.4%	46	1.3%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	933	28.4%	924	28.1%	956	29.0%	956	29.0%	1,210	35.0%	1,190	34.4%
Permanent care order	44	1.3%	45	1.4%	75	2.3%	74	2.2%	110	3.2%	106	3.1%
Transfer	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	3,287	100%	3,287	100%	3,302	100%	3,302	100%	3,456	100%	3,456	100%

Across the years, there has been some variance in the number and types of child protection order applications made. The most notable changes, outlined in more details below related to the following:

- there was a notable decrease in the number of the child protection order applications seeking orders that would see the concerned children remain with their families (in-home

orders), that is, orders ranging from directive orders through to orders requiring the chief executive to supervise children's protection

- there was also a decrease in the number of applications seeking orders granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children (short-term out of home orders), and
- there was a marked increase in the number of orders seeking either long-term guardianship to the chief executive, or permanent care, that is granting long-term guardianship of a child to a suitable person.

Decrease in child protection applications seeking in-home orders

In 2022-23, as compared to 2021-22, there was a 16.2% decrease in the number of child protection order applications made that sought in-home orders (408 applications or 11.8% of the total applications as against 487 applications or 14.7% of the total applications). This is a contrast with what had been a clear trend across earlier years where there had been a continual increase in these types of applications, increasing from 7.5% of the total applications made 2018-19 (208 applications), to 9.5% in 2019-20 (308 applications), then 13.2% in 2020-21 (434 applications).

The decrease in child protection order applications seeking in-home orders corresponds with the decrease in the referred *matters* that the DCPL received that concerned children who were not subject to either a care agreement between Child Safety and the child's parents, or an order at the time the DCPL received the *matters* (down 19.4% or 86 *matters* in 2022-23).

Decrease in child protection applications seeking short-term out of home orders

Also in 2022-23, as compared to 2021-22, there was a 2.2% reduction in the number of child protection order applications made that sought either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), with 1,613 applications or 46.7% of the total applications made as against 1,649 applications or 49.9% of the total applications made. Across the years there is now a clear downward trend visible for these types of applications, where in 2019-20, 55.6% of the total applications made (1,808 applications) sought short-term out of home orders, then in 2020-21 it reduced to 53.3% of total applications, before then decreasing to 49.9% in 2021-22 to the now current 46.7% of applications made.

Increase in child protection order applications seeking long-term guardianship orders

It is noted that in line with the permanency and stability amendments implemented under the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*, which commenced on 29 October 2018, and as a result of subsequent amendments through the *Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021* that commenced on 29 November 2021, there was a substantial increase in 2022-23 of the number of applications made seeking orders that grant long-term guardianship of children. Also as outlined above in earlier sections, the substantial increase in these types of applications is also related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in the increase in new *matters* received and dealt with across March to December 2020, and then the connected subsequent increase in *matters* received across July to September 2022 and onwards that concerned children on existing short-term out of home child protection orders that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of the children.

The effect of the amendments that commenced on 29 October 2018 is that if a previous child protection order has been made for a child that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of the child (a short-term out of home order), the court must be satisfied of additional requirements before making any successive child protection order granting either custody or short-term guardianship of the child that would see the child being in continuous care for more than two years (see next section). Then in terms of the amendments that commenced on 29 November 2021, it requires Child Safety to review the case plans of children on orders that grant long-term guardianship of them to the chief executive and consider whether permanency for these children can be best achieved by an alternative arrangement.

Aligned with these amendments, there was a 23.3% increase in 2022-23 of the number of applications made seeking the various types of orders that grant long-term guardianship of children, with these types of applications making up 40.9% of the total applications made (1,415 applications). This was well up on the 34.8% to the total applications made in 2021-22 (1,148 applications) and the 32.7% in 2020-21 (1,074 applications).

Within applications seeking orders granting long-term guardianship, there was a 24.5% increase in applications seeking long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive, rising from 956 applications in 2021-22 to 1,190 applications in 2022-23, which followed an earlier increase of 3.5% in in 2021-22 (956 applications as opposed to the 924 applications made in 2020-21). There was also a significant increase of 43.2% in the number of applications seeking permanent care orders, rising from 74 in 2021-22 to 106 in 2022-23.

Applications seeking a successive order granting custody or short-term guardianship

The below table shows on a quarterly basis the number of child protection applications made by the DCPL that were seeking a child protection order that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of a child, in respect of children who had already been the subject of a previous child protection order that granted either custody or short-term guardianship at the point that the application was made.

Table 78 – Applications seeking a successive order granting either custody or short-term guardianship

Jul to Sep 2020			Oct to Dec 2020			Jan to Mar 2021			Apr to Jun 2021		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total
172	19	11.0%	181	25	13.8%	163	25	15.3%	189	26	13.8%
Jul to Sep 2021			Oct to Dec 2021			Jan to Mar 2022			Apr to Jun 2022		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total
245	43	17.6%	207	30	14.5%	208	48	23.1%	191	45	23.6%
Jul to Sep 2022			Oct to Dec 2022			Jan to Mar 2023			Apr to Jun 2023		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders	% of total
358	59	16.5%	255	30	11.8%	241	45	18.7%	270	50	18.5%

As referred to in the above section, there were permanency and stability amendments that commenced on 29 October 2018 as a result of the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*. The effect of these amendments is that if a previous child protection order has been made for a child that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of the child (a short-term out of home order), any successive child protection order granting either custody or short-term guardianship of the child that would see the child being in continuous care for more than two years, cannot be made unless:

- it is in the best interests of the child, and
- the Court considers reunification of the child with their family is reasonably achievable within the longer time.

In July to September 2018, the last full quarter before the permanency and stability amendments commenced, applications seeking successive child protection orders granting either custody or

short-term guardianship of children occurred in 29.8% of these types of applications. On commencement of the amendments, this then decreased slightly in the October to December 2018 quarter to 27.0%, before further decreases were seen across January to March 2019 (21.8%) and April to June 2019 (17.4%).

Across 2019-20, the first full year of the reforms, successive child protection orders granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children were sought in only 10.3% of these types of applications. Then from the above table, it is noted that there were increases across 2020-21 to 13.5%, and again in 2021-22 to 19.5% of applications, before a decrease is observed in 2022-23 to 16.4% of these types of applications.

The marked decrease in applications seeking successive child protection orders granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children post the introduction of the reform evidences the progress that has been made to address the concern noted in the Commission of Inquiry's final report that there were a high number of children and young people subject to multiple short-term orders in the child protection system that could have indicated that many children were 'drifting' in care without achieving either reunification with their family or long-term out-of-home care.

However, noting the increase across each quarter in 2021-22 of the number of applications seeking a successive order granting either custody or short-term guardianship, both in terms of the actual numbers and as a percentage of the total of these types of applications, whilst not conclusive, it is posited that the earlier child protection orders that were ending during this period would have included the periods of lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that may have impacted on the reunification timetables of the children, leading to the noted increase. Further, it is also noted that the substantial increase in the number of *matters* concerning existing orders that granted either custody or guardianship in July to September 2022 (358 orders, up from 245 in July to September 2021), is also posited to be connected to the large numbers of new *matters* received across March 2020 to August 2020 that led to the marked increase in orders granting custody being sought and made.

Types of orders sought by the DCPL by reference to Child Safety's six regions

The types of child protection orders sought by the DCPL by reference to the orders set out in section 61 of the CP Act, noting that where the DCPL sought more than one type of order, the order that appears last by reference to section 61 are reflected within the following tables across 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 by reference to Child Safety's six regions. Also set out below are tables that show the number of applications made by the DCPL that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander from each region.

Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Table 79 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	4	0.6%	4	0.6%	3	0.4%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	14	2.2%	10	1.5%	5	0.7%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	69	11.0%	59	9.0%	65	9.3%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	315	50.2%	309	47.2%	313	44.8%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	15	2.4%	21	3.2%	13	1.9%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	8	1.3%	8	1.2%	14	2.0%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	7	1.1%	13	2.0%	14	2.0%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	177	28.2%	211	32.3%	239	43.2%
Permanent care order	18	2.9%	19	2.9%	32	4.6%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	627	100%	654	100%	698	100%

Table 80 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	178	28.4%	169	25.8%	215	30.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	14	2.2%	8	1.2%	17	2.4%
Torres Strait Islander	7	1.1%	5	0.8%	5	0.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	428	68.3%	470	71.9%	461	66.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	627	100%	654	100%	698	100%

Within Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region, there was an increase of 44 applications made (6.7%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on a two-year comparison, it was up 11.3% (up 71 applications).

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was little change in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders – 70 applications made, 10.0% of the total applications made as compared with the 69 applications made, or 10.5% of the total made in 2021-22 – whereas on a statewide basis there was a 16.2% decrease in these types of applications
- there was a slight reduction in the number of applications made that sought either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), with the 326 applications made seeking these types of orders as compared with 330 applications made in 2021-22. It is however noted that due to the overall increase in the number of applications made in 2022-23, the percentage of the overall total of these types of applications had a larger decrease, reducing 50.5% in 2021-22 to 46.7% of the total applications made in 2022-23. On a statewide basis, there was a 2.2% reduction in the number of applications seeking short-term out of home orders
- there was a significant increase in the number of applications seeking orders that grant long-term guardianship of children in 2021-22, with these types of applications increasing from 251, or 38.8% of the total number of applications made in 2021-22, to 299 or 42.8% of the total number of applications made in 2022-23, an increase of 19.1% (48 applications). This was just below the statewide increase of 23.3%, and
- there was an 50.0% increase in the number of applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member or another suitable person along with applications seeking to grant permanent care of children to suitable people. In 2022-23, these applications totalled 60, or 8.6% of the total applications made, as compared with the 40 applications made (6.1% of the total applications made) in 2022-22. This was above the overall statewide 17.2% increase in these types of applications.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made, in 2022-23 in this region, consistent with the statewide increase, there was an increase from 182 applications in 2021-22, 27.8% of the total applications, to 237 applications, or 34.0% of the total applications. Further, this was above the 2022-21 figures of 199 applications, 31.7% of the total applications.

Table 81 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	3	0.6%	3	0.7%	8	1.5%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	4	0.7%	0	0.0%	8	1.5%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	36	6.7%	34	7.5%	41	7.8%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	2	0.4%
Custody to the chief executive	269	50.4%	210	46.6%	230	43.7%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	25	4.7%	8	1.8%	13	2.5%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	2	0.4%	23	5.1%	8	1.5%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	8	1.5%	11	2.4%	4	0.8%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	184	34.5%	154	34.1%	200	38.0%
Permanent care order	2	0.4%	7	1.6%	12	2.3%
Transfer	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	534	100%	451	100%	526	100%

Table 82 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	175	32.8%	156	34.6%	190	36.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	25	4.7%	14	3.1%	14	2.7%
Torres Strait Islander	6	1.1%	10	2.2%	9	1.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	328	61.4%	271	60.1%	313	59.5%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	534	100%	451	100%	526	100%

Within Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland region, there was an increase of 75 applications made (16.2%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. However, the 526 applications made in 2022-23 was eight applications less than the 534 made in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 44.1% increase in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders – 49 applications made, or 9.3% of the total made in 2022-23, as compared with the 34 applications made or 7.5% of the total in 2021-22 – whereas on a statewide basis there was a 16.2% decrease in these types of applications
- there was an increase of 11.9% in the number of applications made that sought either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), with the 245 applications made for these type of orders (46.6% of the total applications made) being well up on the 219 applications made for these types of orders in 2021-22 (48.3% of the total applications). Whilst noting that on an overall percentage of the total applications made there was a reduction, the increase in actual numbers was in contrast to the overall 2.2% reduction on a statewide basis in the number of applications seeking short-term out of home orders
- in relation to the number of applications seeking orders that grant long-term guardianship of children in 2022-23, the 224 applications made equated to 42.6%, which although on actual numbers of applications was an increase on the 195 applications made in 2021-22, it was below the 43.2% of the total applications made, but above the overall statewide percentage of the total applications made of 40.9%, and
- there was a significant decrease in the number of applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member or another suitable person along with applications seeking to grant permanent care of children to suitable people. In 2022-23, these applications totalled 24, or 4.6% of the total applications made, as compared with the 41 applications made in 2021-22 or 9.1% of the total applications made, and it was well below the overall statewide increase of 17.2% for these types of applications.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made in this region in 2022-23, consistent with the statewide increase, there was an increase from 180 applications or 39.9% of the total in 2021-22 to 213 applications or 40.5% of the total in 2022-23.

Table 83 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's North Queensland region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	2	0.5%	2	0.5%	2	0.5%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	4	1.1%	10	2.7%	0	0.0%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	18	4.9%	33	8.9%	36	8.1%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	201	54.8%	220	59.3%	219	48.5%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	11	3.0%	3	0.8%	3	0.7%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	4	1.1%	4	1.1%	10	2.3%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	10	2.7%	8	2.2%	7	1.6%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	109	29.7%	83	22.4%	133	30.1%
Permanent care order	8	2.2%	8	2.2%	32	7.2%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	367	100%	371	100%	442	100%

Table 84 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	189	51.5%	167	45.0%	247	55.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	17	4.6%	31	8.4%	21	4.8%
Torres Strait Islander	5	1.4%	10	2.7%	7	1.6%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	156	42.5%	163	43.9%	167	37.8%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	367	100%	371	100%	442	100%

Within Child Safety's North Queensland region, there was an increase of 71 applications made (19.1%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on two-year comparison, the increase was 20.4%.

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a notable decrease of 16.3% in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders – 36 applications made or 8.1% of the total applications made as compared with the 43 applications made, or 11.6% of the total made in 2021-22. This decrease is consistent with the statewide statistics that also saw an overall decrease of 16.2% in these types of applications
- the actual number of applications made (222) that sought either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders) was consistent with the 223 applications made for these types of orders in 2021-22. However, as a percentage of the total applications made, there was a reduction from 60.1% of the total applications made in 2021-22 to 50.2% of the total applications made in 2022-23. This decrease, albeit as a percentage of the total number of applications made, was well above the statewide decrease of 2.2% in the number of applications seeking short-term out of home orders, and
- there was a significant increase in the number of applications made seeking orders that would grant long-term guardianship of children, with these types of applications increasing from 103, or 27.8% of the total number of applications made in 2021-22, to 182 applications or 41.2% of the total number of applications made in 2022-23. Within these types of applications, orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive increased to 133 applications, or 30.1% of the total applications, up from 83 applications, or 22.4% of the total in 2021-22, and applications seeking permanent care orders increased to 32, or 7.2% of the total applications, up from the 8 applications made, or 2.2% of the total in 2021-22. The increase in applications seeking long-term guardianship orders was fairly consistent with the overall statewide increase in these types of applications.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made, in 2022-23 in this region, aligned with the statewide increase, there was an increase from 208 applications in 2021-22, 56.1% of the total applications, to 275 applications, or 62.2% of the total applications.

Table 85 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's Far North Queensland region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	0	0.0%	6	1.3%	3	0.7%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	94	22.4%	114	25.2%	50	11.0%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%
Custody to the chief executive	225	53.7%	213	47.0%	190	41.9%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	1	0.2%	3	0.7%	5	1.1%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	18	4.3%	6	1.3%	21	4.6%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	7	1.7%	1	0.2%	6	1.3%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	72	17.2%	107	23.6%	176	38.8%
Permanent care order	0	0.0%	3	0.7%	0	0.0%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	419	100%	453	100%	454	100%

Table 86 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	165	39.4%	206	45.5%	219	48.2%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	81	19.3%	75	16.6%	93	20.5%
Torres Strait Islander	39	9.3%	37	8.2%	35	7.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	134	32.0%	135	29.8%	107	23.6%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.8%	0	0.0%
Total	419	100%	453	100%	454	100%

Within Child Safety's Far North Queensland region, there was a marginal increase of 1 application made (0.2%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on two-year comparison, the increase in this region has been 8.4%.

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a marked decrease of 55.0% in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders – 120 applications made, or 26.5% of the total made in 2021-22, as compared with the 54 applications made or 11.9% of the total in 2022-23 – whereas on a statewide basis, the decrease was 16.2% in these types of applications
- there was a 9.7% decrease in the number of applications made that sought either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), with the 195 applications made for these types of orders (43.0% of the total applications made) as compared with the 216 applications made in 2021-22 (47.7% of the total applications made). This decrease was well above the statewide decrease of 2.2% in the number of applications seeking short-term out of home orders
- there was a significant increase in the number of applications made seeking orders that would grant long-term guardianship of children in 2022-23, with these types of applications increasing from 117, or 25.8% of the total number of applications made in 2021-22, to 203 applications, or 44.7% of the total number of applications made in 2022-23, an increase of 73.5%. This increase is well above the 23.3% overall statewide increase in these types of applications. It is noted that the increase relates to a larger number of applications seeking long-term guardianship to the chief executive, which increased from 107 to 176 applications, and
- there was a significant increase in the number of applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member or another suitable person, but not in respect of applications seeking to grant permanent care of children to a suitable person. In 2022-23, these applications totalled 27, or 5.9% of the total applications made, as compared with the 7 applications made in 2021-22 (1.5% of the total applications made). This was well below the overall statewide 3.4% figure for these types of applications.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made, in 2022-23 in this region, consistent with the statewide increase, albeit within the context of the overwhelming number of applications made concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, there was an increase from 318 applications in 2021-22, or 70.2% of the total applications, to 347 applications, or 76.4% of the total applications. This is well above the 285 applications made 2020-21, or 68.0% of the total.

Table 87 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's South East region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	7	1.0%	7	0.9%	2	0.3%
Directive order – other	5	0.7%	2	0.3%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	21	2.9%	29	3.9%	14	2.0%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	110	15.2%	108	14.5%	90	13.2%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	1	0.1%
Custody to the chief executive	310	42.7%	309	41.6%	291	42.6%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	24	3.3%	14	1.9%	10	1.5%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	7	1.0%	16	2.2%	13	1.9%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	13	1.8%	16	2.2%	9	1.3%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	215	29.6%	210	28.3%	238	34.8%
Permanent care order	14	1.9%	30	4.0%	15	2.2%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	726	100%	743	100%	683	100%

Table 88 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	190	26.2%	242	32.0%	214	31.3%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6	0.8%	22	3.0%	9	1.3%
Torres Strait Islander	4	0.6%	3	0.4%	1	0.1%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	525	72.3%	474	63.5%	458	67.1%
Not stated	1	0.1%	2	0.3%	1	0.1%
Total	726	100%	743	100%	683	100%

Within Child Safety's South East region, there was a decrease of 60 applications made (8.1%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on a two-year comparison, there has been a 5.9% decrease. This is in stark contrast to the statewide increase of 4.7% in 2022-23, and the two-year increase of 5.1%.

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 25.2% decrease in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders, reducing from the 139 applications made, or 18.7% of the total made in 2021-22, to 104 applications made or 15.2% of the total in 2022-23, whereas on a statewide basis, the decrease was 16.2% in these types of applications. It is noted that although there was a decrease in these types of applications, the 15.2% of the total applications made was the highest across the six regions
- there was also a decrease in the actual number of applications made seeking orders that would grant custody order short-term guardianship of children, with these types of applications decreasing from 325 to 302 applications, however, as a percentage of the total applications made, it increased from 43.7% to 44.2% of the total number of applications made in 2022-23. As a percentage of the total applications made, it is still below the overall statewide 46.7% for these types of applications, and
- in terms of the number of applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship, there was a marginal increase of 1.1% across all types of these applications, increasing from 272 applications, or 36.6% to 275 applications, or 40.3% of the total applications made in 2022-23. This was well below the overall statewide increase of 23.3% in applications seeking long-term guardianship. However, when considering applications made for long-term guardianship granted to the chief executive, there was a 13.3% increase in 2022-23, increasing from 210 applications, or 28.3% to 238 applications, or 34.8% of the total applications filed. This increase reflects that there were overall decreases across applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member or another suitable person along with applications seeking to grant permanent care of children to suitable people.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made in this region in 2022-23, in contrast to the overall statewide increase, there was a decrease, with the number reducing from 267 applications in 2021-22, or 35.9% of the total applications, to 224 applications, or 32.8% of the total applications. It is however noted that the 2022-23 numbers were still well above the 200 applications, or 27.5% of the total applications made in 2020-21.

Table 89 – Types of orders sought on matters received from Child Safety's South West region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total	Number of CPOs	% of total
Revoke a child protection order	7	1.1%	2	0.3%	5	0.8%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	8	1.3%	1	0.2%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	10	1.6%	16	2.5%	18	2.8%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	49	8.0%	58	9.2%	76	11.6%
Custody to a suitable person	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	343	55.9%	329	52.2%	319	48.9%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	12	2.0%	7	1.1%	2	0.3%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	12	2.0%	9	1.4%	7	1.1%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	9	1.5%	3	0.5%	6	0.9%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	167	27.2%	191	30.3%	204	31.2%
Permanent care order	3	0.5%	7	1.1%	15	2.3%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	614	100%	630	100%	653	100%

Table 90 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications made from this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	215	35.0%	251	39.8%	267	40.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	8	1.3%	11	1.7%	10	1.5%
Torres Strait Islander	8	1.3%	4	0.6%	10	1.5%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	383	62.4%	364	57.8%	363	55.6%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.5%
Total	614	100%	630	100%	653	100%

Within Child Safety's South West region, there was an increase of 23 applications made (3.7%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. Across the two years, there has been a 6.4% increase.

In respect to the types of child protection orders sought, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- against the statewide decrease of 16.2%, there was a 15.9% increase in the number of applications made that sought in-home orders, increasing from 82 applications made, or 13.0% of the total made in 2021-22 to 95 applications, or 14.5% of the total applications made in 2022-23, and
- in terms of the number of applications seeking to grant long-term guardianship, there was an increase of 10.5% across all types of these applications, increasing from 210 applications, or 33.3% to 232 applications, or 35.5% of the total applications made in 2022-23. This was below the overall statewide increase of 23.3% in applications seeking long-term guardianship. When considering applications made for long-term guardianship granted to the chief executive, there was only a 6.8% increase in 2022-23, increasing from 191 applications, or 30.3% to 204 applications, or 31.2% of the total applications filed. Whereas there was an 114.3% increase in applications seeking permanent care of children to suitable people, increasing from 7 applications, or 1.1% to 15 applications, or 2.3% of the total applications made in 2022-23.

In terms of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on applications made in this region in 2022-23, there was an increase from 266 applications in 2021-22, or 42.2% of the total applications, to 287 applications, or 44.0% of the total applications. Further, the 2022-23 figures were well above the 231 applications made in 2020-21, or 37.6% of the total applications.

Location of applications made by the DCPL by reference to South-East Queensland

In 2022-23, 57.8% of the applications (1,996 out of 3456) made by DCPL were filed within Court locations within South-East Queensland. This was a slight decrease on 2021-22, where 58.6% of all applications (1,934 out of 3,302) were filed within South East Queensland, and down further from 2020-21, where it was 59.1% of all applications (1,945 out of 3,287).

Table 91 – Location of applications made by the DCPL by reference to South-East Queensland

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
No. of applications made within South East Queensland	% of total applications made	No. of applications made within South East Queensland	% of total applications made	No. of applications made within South East Queensland	% of total applications made
1,945	59.1%	1,934	58.6%	1,996	57.8%

DCPL as a respondent

Under the CP Act, a child's parent or the child may apply to the Court to either vary or revoke child protection orders and the DCPL is a respondent to the application. The following table sets out the number of applications that have been made that the DCPL has been a respondent to across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 92 – The DCPL as a respondent

Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	2	5	5	1	5	5	6	4	4	1	2	8	48
2021-22	6	1	0	0	5	5	0	1	2	3	7	6	36
2022-23	5	4	1	4	6	0	1	4	8	0	3	0	36

In 2022-23, the DCPL was a respondent to 36 applications made to either vary or revoke child protection orders for children, which was consistent with the number of applications the DCPL responded to in 2021-22. It is recognised that the last two years were a notable decrease from the 48 applications the DCPL need to respond to in 2020-21.

In terms of the total applications made in the Court in 2022-23, 3,492 (3,456 + 36), the 36 applications represent 1.0% of the total applications made in the year, which is a decrease from 2021-22, where the 36 applications represented 1.1%, and from 2020-21, where the 49 applications represented 1.5% of the total applications made.

The following table shows the number of applications that the DCPL responded to that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 93 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications DCPL responded to

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	15	31.3%	17	47.2%	13	36.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.8%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	33	68.8%	19	52.8%	22	61.1%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	48	100%	36	100%	36	100%

The above table shows that in respect to the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children respondent *matters* in 2022-23 as compared to 2021-22, there was a decrease to 14 *matters*, or 38.9% of the total *matters*, down from 17 *matters*, or 47.2% of the total *matters*. In terms of a two-year comparison, it was an increase on 15 *matters*, or 31.3% of the total respondent *matters* in 2020-21.

Child protection applications determined

Child protection applications for orders determined in 2022-23

Table 94 – Child protection applications for determined		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3,611 (36.8%) ↑	3,412 (-5.5%) ↓	3,111 (-8.8%) ↓

In 2022-23, the Court determined 3,111 applications for child protection orders, which in a year-on-year comparison, was an 8.8% decrease on the 3,412 applications determined in 2021-22.

The decrease in 2022-23 came after an earlier decrease of 5.5% in 2021-22. These decreases have followed earlier increases of 15.0% between 2018-19 and 2019-20, and 36.8% between 2019-20 and 2020-21. These earlier increases were because of the implementation of the changes to the child protection litigation model that commenced on 1 July 2019, the most significant being that the DCPL now manages all *proceedings* in direct consultation with Child Safety frontline staff.

The decrease in 2021-22, is reflective of a number of applications that would have been determined across April to June 2020, shifted into 2020-21 as a result of the effect of the Guidelines issued in March 2020 by the Magistrates Court (including Childrens Court) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The applications shifting into 2020-21 increased the overall numbers of applications that were determined in 2020-21 to a degree.

In respect to the decrease in applications that were determined in 2022-23, the statistics outlined below will show that it relates to the overall increase in the number of child protection applications made that seek long-term guardianship orders to the chief executive.

The statistics show that in respect of the applications that were finalised in 2022-23, orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive on average required 1.3 more court events between lodgement and determination above the overall average of all applications, and took on average 60.4 days more, as compared with the state-wide overall average for all applications.

The below tables set out the number of child protection applications determined by the Court monthly and on a quarterly basis across the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 95 – Monthly child protection applications determined by the Court													
Year	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
2020-21	337	318	341	290	323	288	195	287	323	269	298	342	3,611
2021-22	313	272	384	253	336	246	164	215	319	274	266	370	3,412
2022-23	301	282	287	234	278	283	119	244	326	233	253	271	3,111

Table 96 – Quarterly child protection order applications determined by the Court

Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*
996	21.0%	901	21.8%	805	26.6%	908	105.9%
Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*
969	-2.7%	835	-7.3%	698	-13.3%	910	0.2%
Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*	Number of applications determined	Var.*
870	-10.2%	795	-4.8%	689	-1.3%	757	-16.8%

*Variance is a comparison with corresponding quarter in the preceding year

As referred to above, as a result, a number of the applications that would have been determined across April to June 2020 shifting into 2020-21, there was an increased number of applications determined in 2020-21, particularly across the July to September and October to December 2020 quarters.

In respect to 2022-23, when compared with 2021-22, less applications were determined across the each of the quarters.

Applications determined that concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In respect of child protection applications determined, the following table shows the number of applications determined that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 97 – Applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	1,284	35.6%	1,196	35.1%	1,082	34.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	157	4.3%	139	4.1%	129	4.1%
Torres Strait Islander	59	1.6%	80	2.3%	66	2.1%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	2,110	58.4%	1,996	58.5%	1,831	58.9%
Not stated	1	0.03%	1	0.03%	3	0.1%
Total	3,611	100%	3,412	100%	3,111	100%

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications, the above table shows that although there was a further increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on new *matters* received in 2022-23, increasing to 46.4% of the total number of new *matters* received, there was an actual decrease in the number of children subject to a determined application. The number reduced from 1,415 applications, or 41.5% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 1,277 applications, or 41.0% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This means that there was an overall increase in the number of child protection applications before the Court concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Applications determined by type of orders made by the Court or withdrawn

The below table sets out how the applications were determined, including applications that were withdrawn, across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 by reference to the orders set out in section 61 of the CP Act, noting that where the Court made more than one type of order, the order that appears last by reference to section 61 is reflected in the table.

Table 98 – Types of final orders made by Childrens Court and applications withdrawn

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of applications determined	% of total applications determined	Number of applications determined	% of total applications determined	Number of applications determined	% of total applications determined
No orders made ²⁰	14	0.4%	14	0.4%	19	0.6%
Withdrawn	184	5.1%	213	6.2%	174	5.6%
Revoke a child protection order	34	0.9%	14	0.4%	40	1.3%
Directive order – other	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	12	0.4%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order supervised contact	39	1.1%	50	1.5%	35	1.1%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	318	8.8%	390	11.4%	330	10.6%
Custody to a suitable person	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	5	0.2%
Custody to the chief executive	1,697	47.0%	1,575	46.2%	1,254	40.3%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	52	1.4%	59	1.7%	50	1.6%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	99	2.7%	83	2.4%	110	3.5%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	69	1.9%	73	2.1%	71	2.3%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	1,051	29.1%	855	25.1%	866	27.8%
Permanent care order	45	1.2%	80	2.3%	145	4.7%
Transfer	4	0.1%	1	0.01%	0	0.0%
Total	3,611	100%	3,412	100%	3,111	100.0%

Across the years, as with the statistics set out above in respect to applications made, there has been some variance in the actual number and types of child protection orders made, and in terms of their percentage of the overall total number of applications determined.

²⁰ DCPL was a respondent to 10 applications that were dismissed in 2020-21, 14 applications that were dismissed in 2021-22, and a further 14 applications that were dismissed in 2022-23.

As with the applications made statistics, the most notable change is in respect of the number of child protection orders made that resulted in children remaining with their families (in-home orders), that is, orders ranging from directive orders through to orders requiring the chief executive to supervise children's protection. In 2022-23, as compared to 2021-22, there was a 14.9% decrease in the number of in-home child protection orders made (377 orders or 12.1% of the total orders made as compared with 443 orders or 13.0% of the total orders made). This decrease follows earlier increases of 30.3% in 2021-22, and another 30.3% increase in 2020-21.

Also in 2022-23, consistent with the decrease in the number of applications made seeking child protection orders granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children (down 2.2%), there was a marked reduction in the number of applications determined making these types of orders, down 20.0%. The numbers decreased from 1,636 orders, or 48.0% of the total number of applications determined in 2021-22, to 1,309 orders, or 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Corresponding with the increase in applications made seeking orders granting long-term guardianship of children (including permanent care orders), in 2022-23, there was an increase in these types of orders to a total of 1,192 orders, or 38.2% of the total applications determined, up from the 1,091 orders, or 31.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22. Further analysis of the long-term orders made, including the differences in terms of who was granted long-term guardianship across the last three years is set out below.

The other noticeable variances within the data relate to the slight reduction in the number of applications that were withdrawn, which is analysed in more detail below, and the increased number of revocations of child protection orders.

In respect of the revocations made in 2022-23, it is noted that 16 of the 40 revocations were made on applications that the DCPL was a respondent to, or 40.0% of the total revocations. This is a marked increase on 2021-22, where only two of the 14 revocations were from applications the DCPL was responding to (14.3% of the total revocations), and on 2020-21, where only four of the 34 revocations were from applications the DCPL was responding to (11.8% of the total revocations). It is noted that the 14 revocations made in 2022-23 that the DCPL was a respondent to, on average, 12 of the applications were before the Court from lodgement to finalisation for 54.4 days, with the other two applications taking 247 days. This indicates that the overwhelming number of these applications were not contested by the DCPL.

As outlined earlier within this part, Child Safety under the DCPL Act must refer to the DCPL as a *matter* when a child protection order is in force for a child, and Child Safety is satisfied that the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, with Child Safety assessing that a child protection order is no longer required for the child. The increasing number of applications brought by parents seeking a revocation of an order, which are then not contested, will need to be monitored.

Orders sought on applications that were determined by way of withdrawal

The following table set out the types of orders that the DCPL had sought in respect of the child protection applications that were then withdrawn across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 by reference to the orders set out in section 61 of the CP Act, noting that where the DCPL had sought more than one type of order, the order that appears last by reference to section 61 is reflected in the table.

Table 99 – Types of final orders sought on applications that were determined by way of withdrawal

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number of applications withdrawn	% of total applications withdrawn	Number of applications withdrawn	% of total applications withdrawn	Number of applications withdrawn	% of total applications withdrawn
Revoke a child protection order ²¹	17	9.2%	14	6.6%	10	5.7%
Directive order – other	3	1.6%	2	0.9%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order supervised contact	26	14.1%	24	11.3%	16	9.2%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	41	22.3%	58	27.2%	49	28.2%
Custody to a suitable person	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	75	40.8%	91	42.7%	72	41.4%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	2	1.1%	6	2.8%	2	1.1%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	0	0.0%	4	1.9%	1	0.6%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	15	8.2%	10	4.7%	24	13.8%
Permanent care order	4	2.2%	4	1.9%	0	0.0%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	184	100%	213	100%	174	100.0%

The above table reflects that *proceedings* evolve and the DCPL is informed through the expertise and experience of frontline Child Safety staff, recognising that Child Safety's assessments are ongoing. Against this backdrop, the DCPL continuously reviews any further evidence or information within the proceedings and Child Safety's ongoing assessments with respect to the child's protective needs and their parents' capacity to respond to those needs.

²¹ DCPL was a respondent to 15 applications for the revocation of orders that were withdrawn in 2020-21, 13 applications for the revocation of orders that were withdrawn in 2021-22, and 10 applications for the revocation of orders that were withdrawn in 2022-23.

This proactive case management of proceedings means the DCPL continually reviews whether a child the subject of proceedings is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm. Where the evidence no longer supports that a child is a child in need of protection, or that an order is no longer appropriate and desirable, the DCPL takes active steps in making an application to withdraw the proceedings. In 2018-19, 99 applications or 4.3% of the total applications determined were withdrawn with the Court's leave. This increased in 2019-20 to 121 applications or 4.6% to the total applications determined. In 2020-21, it increased again to 184 applications or 5.1% of the total applications determined, before a further significant increase in 2021-22 to 213 applications or 6.2% of the total applications determined – an increase of 15.7% year on year. Then in 2022-23, there was a reduction in the overall number of applications withdrawn, reducing to 174 applications, or 5.6% of the total applications determined, which it needs to be noted, other than against 2021-22, is still substantially higher than earlier years.

The statistics in relation to the number and type of orders that were being sought on applications that were withdrawn, demonstrates that in protecting children, the DCPL on behalf of the State is only taking action that is warranted in the circumstances. For example, in 2022-23, of the applications withdrawn with leave of the Court, 24 of them were seeking orders that would have granted long-term guardianship of the children to the chief executive.

In contrast with the statistics relating to the increase seen in the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across new *matters* received and applications made, the following table shows the number of applications withdrawn in respect of children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decreased slightly across the last three years. In 2020-21, 68 applications, or 37.0% of the total applications withdrawn concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Then in 2021-22, although there were again 68 applications relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that were withdrawn, it reduced to 31.9% of the total applications withdrawn, before reducing to 64 applications in 2022-23, although it is acknowledged that they equated to a higher percentage of the total applications withdrawn (36.8%) due to the overall decrease in the number of actual applications withdrawn.

Table 100 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on withdrawn applications

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	48	26.1%	65	30.5%	48	27.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	11	6.0%	1	0.5%	9	5.2%
Torres Strait Islander	9	4.9%	2	0.9%	7	4.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	116	63.0%	145	68.1%	110	63.2%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	184	100%	213	100%	174	100%

Age of children on orders made granting long-term guardianship

The changes in the number of orders made that granted long-term guardianship of children are set out in the following two tables, along with key information about the age of these children at the point in time the orders were made across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 101 – Age of children at time orders granting long-term guardianship made

Age	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under 1 year of age	35	2.8%	36	3.3%	37	3.1%
1 year of age	51	4.0%	44	4.0%	62	5.2%
2 years of age	65	5.1%	54	4.9%	60	5.0%
3 years of age	83	6.6%	77	7.1%	90	7.6%
4 years of age	88	7.0%	67	6.1%	76	6.4%
5 years of age	96	7.6%	56	5.1%	88	7.4%
6 years of age	87	6.9%	79	7.2%	82	6.9%
7 years of age	73	5.8%	54	4.9%	66	5.5%
8 years of age	67	5.3%	56	5.1%	66	5.5%
9 years of age	75	5.9%	58	5.3%	59	4.9%
10 years of age	66	5.2%	73	6.7%	49	4.1%
11 years of age	73	5.8%	58	5.3%	58	4.9%
12 years of age	78	6.2%	61	5.6%	54	4.5%
13 years of age	63	5.0%	57	5.2%	68	5.7%
14 years of age	85	6.7%	79	7.2%	81	6.8%
15 years of age	73	5.8%	75	6.9%	85	7.1%
16 years of age	73	5.8%	63	5.8%	62	5.2%
17 years of age	33	2.6%	44	4.0%	49	4.1%
Total	1,264	100%	1,091	100%	1,192	100%

Table 102 – Average age of children at time orders granting long-term guardianship made

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Average age:	8.99 years	9.27 years	9.00 years

The above tables show that the age of children the subject of child protection orders made that granted long-term guardianship at the point in time the orders were made along with a mean average age. The tables evidence that the average age of children when these orders were made decreased in 2022-23 to be on par with 2020-21. It is however noted that prior to the COVID-19

pandemic, the average age of children when these types of orders had been made had fallen across 2017-18 to 2018-19 (from 9.02 years to 8.86 years), and then across 2018-19 to 2019-20 (from 8.86 years to 8.74 years). The above table then clearly shows that the average age then increased across both 2020-21 and 2021-22, before the decrease again occurred in 2022-23.

The increase in the average age in 2020-21 and in 2021-22 was influenced by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which as referred to above, provided that applications were to be adjourned for a minimum period of three months unless urgent circumstances existed that warranted an earlier listing, or as otherwise directed by the court. In response, there was a significant decrease in the rate that applications were determined across April to June 2020, with the applications shifting into 2020-21, resulting in an overall increase in the age of these children across 2020-21 and 2021-22 at the time the orders were made.

On this point, noting that applications seeking long-term guardianship to the chief executive are more likely to be contested (they are on average before the Court for more days and require more court events as set out below), and combined with the fact that there was a significant increase in applications seeking these types of orders in 2022-23 (up 24.5% in 2022-23), it may be that the mean average age of children at the point orders granting long-term guardianship are made will again rise over the next couple of years.

In respect to the number of orders made granting long-term guardianship, corresponding with the decrease of in-home orders made (down 14.9%), there was a 32.0% increase in the number of orders made that granted long-term guardianship of children (including permanent care orders). In 2021-22, 1,091 orders, or 31.9% of the total orders made granted long-term guardianship as compared to 1,192 orders, or 38.3% of the total orders made in 2022-23.

Within these types of orders, there were significant rises in orders made that granted long-term guardianship to either a suitable family member (up 32.5%, or 27 orders) along with orders made that granted permanent care of children to suitable people (up 81.3%, or 65 orders). Whilst again noting that applications seeking orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive are more likely to be contested, and as a result are on average before the Court for more days and require more court events, there was only a 1.3% increase in these types of orders (up 10 orders).

The overall increases in the number of orders granting long-term guardianship aligns with the reforms referred to above that were implemented through the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*, which included significant changes with respect to permanency and stability. The reforms established a new permanency framework that promotes timely decision-making and provides a greater emphasis on all dimensions of permanency, including the relational, physical and legal aspects. These changes also introduced additional considerations, which apply in the majority of applications for a second or subsequent child protection order which grants short term custody or guardianship of a child.

Additionally, there is expected to be further increases in the number of orders granting long-term guardianship to suitable people, including permanent care orders as a result of the subsequent amendments through the *Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021* that commenced on 29 November 2021, which requires Child Safety to review the case plans of children on orders that grant long-term guardianship of them to the chief executive and consider whether permanency for these children can be best achieved by an alternative arrangement.

Securing timely legal permanency for children who do not have a parent willing and able in the foreseeable future, or whose emotional security and stability requires the making of a long-term order, promotes children's wellbeing and best interests.

The following table outlines the number of children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander who were the subject of orders made granting long-term guardianship.

Table 103 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on long-term guardianship orders

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	439	34.7%	366	33.5%	419	35.2%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	54	4.3%	30	2.7%	39	3.3%
Torres Strait Islander	10	0.8%	22	2.0%	20	1.7%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	761	60.2%	673	61.7%	714	59.9%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1,264	100%	1,091	100%	1,192	100%

Correlating with the statistics relating to the increase seen in the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across new *matters* received and applications made, the above table shows that the overall percentage of the total number of orders made granting long-term guardianship in respect of children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has increased in 2022-23. In 2021-22, 418 applications, or 38.3% of the total long-term orders made concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This increased to 478 applications, or 40.1% of the total applications made in 2022-23.

To provide further context to understanding the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the child protection system, the following tables outline the cultural status of children across all types of orders that grant long-term guardianship across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 104 – Cultural status on orders granting long-term guardianship to a suitable family member

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	35	35.4%	36	43.4%	61	55.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	3	3.0%	5	6.0%	1	0.9%
Torres Strait Islander	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.8%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	60	60.6%	42	50.6%	46	41.8%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	99	100%	83	100%	110	100%

Table 105 – Cultural status on orders granting long-term guardianship to another suitable person

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	11	15.9%	18	24.7%	21	29.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6	8.7%	0	0.0%	2	2.8%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.4%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	52	75.4%	55	75.3%	47	66.2%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	69	100%	73	100%	71	100%

Table 106 – Cultural status on orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	387	36.8%	290	33.9%	312	36.0%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	45	4.3%	20	2.3%	31	3.6%
Torres Strait Islander	9	0.9%	21	2.5%	17	2.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	610	58.0%	524	61.3%	506	58.4%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1,051	100%	855	100%	866	100%

Table 107 – Cultural status on orders granting permanent care to a suitable person

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	8	17.8%	24	30.0%	24	16.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	3	3.8%	5	3.4%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	1	1.3%	0	0.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	37	82.2%	52	65.0%	116	80.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	45	100%	80	100%	145	100%

The above tables show that whilst there have been noticeable variances across the three years in respect to the different types of orders granting long-term guardianship in respect to children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of orders granting long-term guardianship to suitable people, along with an increase in their percentage of the total orders made. This increase was from 39 orders, or 39.4% of the total of these types of orders in 2020-21, to 64 orders, or 58.2% of the total in 2022-23. It is noted that there has also been an increase across the three years in the actual number of orders made granting long-term guardianship to suitable people and permanent care to suitable people, increasing from 17

orders in 2021-22 to 24 orders in 2022-23, and from 8 orders in 2021-22 to 29 orders in 2022-23 respectively.

Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of all applications

The below table sets out the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 108 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	3,611	Total number of applications determined	3,412	Total number of applications determined	3,111
Average number of court events	7.9 events	Average number of court events	8.2 events	Average number of court events	8.2 events
Average number of days	294.4 days	Average number of days	292.1 days	Average number of days	290.2 days

The above table shows that across the three years there has been a slight reduction in the average length of days between the lodgement and determination of all applications before the Court by just over 4 days. However, the average number of court events per finalisation increased by 0.3 court events from 2020-21 to 2021-22, before that was maintained in 2022-23.

Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications granting long-term guardianship to suitable people

In contrast to the above table, the below table provides that in respect of applications resulting in orders granting long-term guardianship of children, including permanent care orders to suitable people, on average, were before the Court for substantially less days and required fewer court events to be determined. In 2020-21, on average these applications required 79.3 less days and 2 less court events. Then in 2021-22, on average it took 67.4 fewer days and 1.6 court events, before in 2022-23, requiring 61 less days and 2 fewer court events per determined application.

Table 109 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications granting long-term guardianship to suitable people, including permanent care orders

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	213	Total number of applications determined	236	Total number of applications determined	326
Average number of court events	5.9 events	Average number of court events	6.6 events	Average number of court events	6.2 events
Average number of days	215.1 days	Average number of days	224.7 days	Average number of days	229.2 days

Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive

The below table sets out the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of applications granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 110 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	1,051	Total number of applications determined	855	Total number of applications determined	866
Average number of court events	9.5 events	Average number of court events	10.0 events	Average number of court events	9.5 events
Average number of days	373.0 days	Average number of days	364.3 days	Average number of days	350.6 days

Then in a marked contrast to the two earlier tables, the above table shows that in respect of applications resulting in orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive, on average, required a significant number of more days before the Court and a higher number of court events to be determined. In 2020-21, on average these applications required 78.6 days and 1.6 more court events than the average of all applications, or 157.9 more days and 3.6 court events as opposed to orders granting long-term guardianship to suitable people. Then in 2021-22, on average it took 72.2 more days and 1.8 court events, or 139.6 days and 3.4 more court events than the orders granting long-term guardianship to suitable people. Finally, in 2022-23 the applications required 60.4 days and 1.3 more court events above the average of all applications, or 121.4 more days and 3.3 more court events than the orders granting long-term guardianship to suitable people.

The increased number of days and court events required for applications seeking orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive is because on average, these applications are more likely to be contested. Whereas the applications resulting in orders that grant long-term guardianship, including permanent care orders to suitable people, are on average, not contested to the same degree.

Reasons for the adjournment of applications before the Court

In terms of the reasons as to why applications before the Court are adjourned, the DCPL commenced recording within its Visualfiles case management system standard reasons for the adjournment of applications from 1 July 2019. In addition to allowing lawyers to record against standards reasons, it is noted that the system also allows for other reasons to be also recorded.

The below three tables set out the standard reasons for the adjournment of applications recorded across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. It is noted the adjournment of an application can have one or a number of reasons recorded against it, so the numbers or percentages do not add up to the total number of adjournments within each quarter. Further, applications can be adjourned more than once for the same reason, for example, DCPL statistics show that applications can be adjourned for a Family Group Meeting (FGM) on a number of occasions.

Table 111 - Reasons for the adjournment of applications across 2020-21

Reason for adjournment	Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total
Service of a document/s	1,121	17.1%	957	17.0%	792	14.7%	933	16.8%
Respondent parent absent	434	6.6%	345	6.1%	313	5.8%	271	4.9%
Participant absent	110	1.7%	75	1.3%	90	1.7%	94	1.7%
Obtain legal advice and or representation	1,000	15.3%	742	13.2%	706	13.1%	620	11.2%
DCPL to ask CE for info	134	2.0%	218	3.9%	239	4.4%	213	3.8%
DCPL to receive info from CE	479	7.3%	426	7.6%	451	8.4%	477	8.6%
Disclosure request	32	0.5	19	0.3%	12	0.2%	11	0.2%
FGM to develop initial case plan, or FGM to review and develop revised case plan	1,999	30.6%	1,896	33.7%	1,944	36.1%	1,987	35.8%
Court ordered conference	649	9.9%	504	8.9%	462	8.6%	490	8.8%
Separate Representative Appointed	535	8.2%	424	7.5%	282	5.2%	308	5.6%
Social Assessment Report	463	7.1%	523	9.3%	582	10.8%	477	8.6%
113 non-party application	39	0.6%	47	0.8%	53	1.0%	43	0.8%
DCPL to consider amending or withdrawal of application	238	3.6%	159	2.8%	214	4.0%	168	3.0%
Outcome of other relevant proceeding	17	0.3%	22	0.4%	13	0.2%	32	0.6%
Participant contesting	378	5.8%	350	6.2%	365	6.8%	324	5.8%
Total adjournments	6,540		5,632		5,385		5,547	

What these statistics show is that in 2020-21, the primary reason for the adjournment of all applications before the Court related to the convening of Family Group Meetings (FGM) to either develop an initial case plan or to review and develop a revised case plan. Across the quarters, it ranged from between 30.6% in July to September 2020 up to 36.1% in January to March 2022. The yearly average of adjournments for FGMs was 34.1% of all adjournments.

The next most frequent reason of adjournments was for the service of documents, with the yearly average being 16.4% of all adjournments. Then rounding out the top 5 reasons, these are followed by respondents and participants seeking either legal advice and or representation, amounting to 13.2% of all adjournments. Then it is noted that the yearly average for adjournments for court ordered conferences to be held was 9.1%, and adjournments related to the commissioning of social assessment reports was 9.0%.

Table 112 – Reasons for adjournment of applications across 2021-22

Reason for adjournment	Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total
Service of a document/s	904	15.7%	769	14.6%	985	18.2%	1,049	18.5%
Respondent parent absent	235	4.1%	195	3.7%	292	5.4%	230	4.1%
Participant absent	103	1.8%	94	1.8%	88	1.6%	111	2.0%
Obtain legal advice and or representation	774	13.4%	742	14.1%	805	14.9%	818	14.5%
DCPL to ask CE for info	119	2.1%	121	2.3%	144	2.7%	184	3.3%
DCPL to receive info from CE	321	5.6%	320	6.1%	402	7.4%	384	6.8%
Disclosure request	24	0.4%	8	0.2%	7	0.1%	4	0.1%
FGM to develop initial case plan, or FGM to review and develop revised case plan	1,937	33.6%	1,900	36.0%	1,808	33.5%	2,034	36.0%
Court ordered conference	500	8.7%	401	7.6%	383	7.1%	454	8.0%
Separate representative appointed	357	6.2%	339	6.4%	384	7.1%	317	5.6%
Social Assessment Report	499	8.7%	430	8.1%	404	7.5%	464	8.2%
113 non-party application	47	0.8%	23	0.4%	21	0.4%	10	0.2%
DCPL to consider amending or withdrawal of application	169	2.9%	145	2.7%	145	2.7%	136	2.4%
Outcome of other relevant proceeding	32	0.6%	44	0.8%	59	1.1%	48	0.8%
Participant contesting	312	5.4%	277	5.2%	251	4.6%	189	3.3%
Total adjournments	5,767		5,277		5,400		5,655	

The above statistics show is that in 2021-22, the primary reason for the adjournment of all applications before the Court was again the convening of FGMs to either develop an initial case plan or to review and develop a revised case plan. Across the quarters, it ranged from between 33.5% in January to March 2022 up to 36.0% in both the October to December 2021 and April to June 2022 quarters. The yearly average of adjournments for FGMs was 34.8% of all adjournments (up from 34.1% in 2020-21).

The next most frequent reason of adjournments was for the service of documents, with the yearly average being 16.8% of all adjournments (up from 16.4% in 2020-21). This is followed by respondents and participants seeking either legal advice and or representation, amounting to 14.2% of all adjournments (up from 13.2% in 2020-21). Then it is noted that the yearly average for adjournments related to the commissioning of social assessment reports was 8.1% (down from 9.0% in 2020-21), and adjournments for court ordered conferences to be held was 7.9% (down from 9.1% in 2020-21).

Table 113 – Reasons for adjournment of applications across 2022-23

Reason for adjournment	Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total	Number of applications	% of total
Service of a document/s	843	15.0%	907	16.3%	841	15.1%	987	16.8%
Respondent parent absent	311	5.5%	311	5.6%	215	3.9%	300	5.1%
Participant absent	75	1.3%	110	2.0%	93	1.7%	129	2.2%
Obtain legal advice and or representation	947	16.9%	917	16.5%	836	15.0%	1,022	17.4%
DCPL to ask CE for info	148	2.6%	109	2.0%	135	2.4%	121	2.1%
DCPL to receive info from CE	387	6.9%	443	8.0%	430	7.7%	499	8.5%
Disclosure request	2	0.04%	4	0.1%	9	0.2%	18	0.3%
FGM to develop initial case plan, or FGM to review and develop revised case plan	2,048	36.5%	2,186	39.3%	2,268	40.8%	2,486	42.3%
Court ordered conference	397	7.1%	448	8.1%	384	6.9%	361	6.1%
Separate representative appointed	305	5.4%	307	5.5%	341	6.1%	316	5.4%
Social Assessment Report	457	8.1%	432	7.8%	431	7.8%	399	6.8%
113 non-party application	28	0.5%	5	0.1%	21	0.4%	28	0.5%
DCPL to consider amending or withdrawal of application	133	2.4%	167	3.0%	229	4.1%	209	3.6%
Outcome of other relevant proceeding	44	0.8%	45	0.8%	30	0.5%	12	0.2%
Participant contesting	146	2.6%	200	3.6%	201	3.6%	259	4.4%
Total adjournments	5,614		5,563		5,559		5,884	

The above statistics show that again in 2022-23, as with the previous two years, the primary reason for the adjournment of all applications before the Court was again the convening of FGMs to either develop an initial case plan or review and develop a revised case plan. Across the quarters, it ranged from between 36.5% in July to September 2022 and then increase through to 42.3% in the April to June 2023 quarter. The yearly average of adjournments for FGMs was 39.7% of all adjournments (up from 34.1% in 2020-21 and 34.8% in 2021-22).

The next most frequent reason of adjournments was for respondents and participants seeking either legal advice and or representation, amounting to 16.5% of all adjournments (up from 13.2% in 2020-21 and 14.2% in 2021-22). This was then followed by adjournments for the service of documents, with the yearly average being 15.8% of all adjournments (down from 16.4% in 2020-21 and 16.8% in 2021-22). Then it is noted that the yearly average for adjournments related to the commissioning of social assessment reports was 7.6% (down from 9.0% in 2020-21 and 8.1% in 2021-22), and adjournments for court ordered conferences to be held was 7.1% (down from 9.1% in 2020-21 and 7.9% in 2021-22).

Applications determined by type of orders made by the Court or withdrawn by reference to Child Safety's six regions

The following tables by Child Safety's six regions set out applications determined by types of child protection orders made by the Court or withdrawn by the DCPL by reference to the orders set out in section 61 of the CP Act, noting that where the Court made more than one type of order, the order that appears last by reference to section 61 is reflected within the tables. The cultural status of the children subject to the orders along with the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in each region across 2020-21, 2020-21 and 2022-23 are also provided.

Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

Table 114 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region						
Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	8	1.0%	9	1.4%	3	0.5%
Withdrawn	41	5.0%	35	5.5%	42	6.5%
Revoke a child protection order	2	0.2%	2	0.3%	12	1.8%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	5	0.6%	9	1.4%	4	0.6%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	74	9.0%	69	10.8%	36	5.5%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	394	48.2%	269	42.2%	265	40.8%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	15	1.8%	4	0.6%	13	2.0%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	13	1.6%	14	2.2%	24	3.7%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	14	1.7%	15	2.4%	28	4.3%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	241	29.5%	193	30.3%	186	28.7%
Permanent care order	11	1.3%	19	3.0%	36	5.5%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	818	100%	638	100%	649	100%

Table 115 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	221	27.0%	176	27.6%	171	26.3%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	20	2.4%	13	2.0%	16	2.5%
Torres Strait Islander	9	1.1%	2	0.3%	2	0.3%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	568	69.4%	447	70.1%	458	70.6%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.3%
Total	818	100%	638	100%	649	100%

Table 116 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	818	Total number of applications determined	638	Total number of applications determined	649
Average number of court events	8.5 events	Average number of court events	8.4 events	Average number of court events	8.1 events
Average number of days	301.3 days	Average number of days	303.3 days	Average number of days	295.8 days

Within Child Safety's Brisbane and Moreton Bay region, there was an increase of 11 child protection applications determined (up 1.7%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which is in contrast with the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. However, the 649 applications determined in 2022-23 was 169 applications below the 818 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the overall statewide statistics:

- there was a 20.0% increase in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, increasing from 35, or 5.5% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 42 or 6.5% of the total applications in 2022-23. Whereas on a statewide basis, there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, down to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was a 48.7% reduction in the number of in-home orders made, reducing from 78 orders, or 12.2% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 40 orders, or 6.2% of all applications determined in 2022-23. This is well above the statewide decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home child protection orders made
- there was an increase in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), increasing from 273 orders in 2021-22, to 278 orders in 2022-23. However, due to the larger number of applications determined in 2022-23 in this region, in both years, these types of orders equated to 42.8% of the total number of applications determined. This contrasts with the statewide statistics that saw a reduction of 327 short-term out of home orders, or a reduction from 47.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and

- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children increased by 13.7% in 2022-23, rising from 241 orders, or 37.8% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 274 orders, or 42.2% of the total applications determined. This increase was below the overall statewide increase of 32.0%. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there were significant increases in orders granting guardianship to suitable family members, up by 10 orders, or 71.4% (from 14 to 24 orders), in orders granting guardianship to other suitable people, up 13 orders, or 86.6% (from 15 to 28 orders) and also in orders granting permanent care of children to suitable people, up 17 orders, or 89.5% (from 19 to 36 orders). Whereas orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive reduced by 7 orders, or 3.6%, where on a statewide basis there was an overall increase of 1.3% in these types of orders.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications determined in this region, the above table shows that consistent with the overall statewide decrease, the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reduced from 191, or 29.9% of the total applications determined, to 189, or 29.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the Brisbane and Moreton Bay region, there was on average, a reduction of 0.3 court events and 7.5 days per determination in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. On a two-year comparison, there was a decrease of 0.4 court events and 5.5 days. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 5.6 more days, but 0.1 less court event per determination in 2022-23.

Table 117 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%
Withdrawn	31	5.2%	29	5.6%	27	5.3%
Revoke a child protection order	5	0.8%	3	0.6%	6	1.2%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	4	0.7%	2	0.4%	2	0.4%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	44	7.3%	33	6.3%	46	9.1%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.6%
Custody to the chief executive	264	44.0%	231	44.4%	215	42.5%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	15	2.5%	17	3.3%	11	2.2%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	14	2.3%	18	3.5%	11	2.2%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	12	2.0%	13	2.5%	6	1.2%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	207	34.5%	168	32.3%	162	32.0%
Permanent care order	3	0.5%	4	0.8%	16	3.2%
Transfer	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Total	600	100%	520	100%	506	100%

Table 118 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	235	39.2%	176	33.8%	160	31.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	21	3.5%	12	2.3%	14	2.8%
Torres Strait Islander	4	0.7%	7	1.3%	14	2.8%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	340	56.7%	325	62.5%	318	62.8%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	600	100%	520	100%	506	100%

Table 119 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	600	Total number of applications determined	520	Total number of applications determined	506
Average number of court events	7.6 events	Average number of court events	7.8 events	Average number of court events	7.6 events
Average number of days	287.5 days	Average number of days	276.7 days	Average number of days	262.7 days

Within Child Safety's Sunshine Coast and Central region, there was a decrease of 14 child protection applications determined (down 2.7%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which was not as large as the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. Further, the 506 applications determined in 2022-23 was 94 applications below the 600 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 6.9% decrease in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, decreasing from 29, or 5.6% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 27 or 5.3% of the total applications in 2022-23. Whereas on a statewide basis, there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, down to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was a 37.1% increase in the number of in-home orders made, rising from 35 orders, or 6.7% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 48 orders, or 9.5% of all applications determined in 2022-23. This is in stark contrast to the statewide decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home child protection orders made
- there was a 7.6% decrease in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), decreasing from 248 orders, or 47.7% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 229 orders, or 45.3% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction was well below the 20.0% decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, which saw a reduction in short-term out of home orders made by 327, or a reduction from 47.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22 to 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and
- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children decreased by 3.9% in 2022-23, reducing from 203 orders, or 39.0% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 195 orders, or 38.5% of the total applications determined. This reduction contrasted with the overall statewide increase of 32.0%. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there were decreases in orders granting guardianship to suitable family members, down by 7 orders, or 38.8%, and in orders granting guardianship to other suitable people, down 13 orders, or 53.8%. However, in terms of orders granting permanent care to suitable people, these were up 12 orders, or 300.0%, from 4 orders to 16 orders. Whereas orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive reduced by 6 orders, or 3.6%, where on a statewide basis there was a 1.3% increase.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications in this region, the above table shows that consistent with the overall statewide decrease, the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reduced from 195 applications, or 37.5% of the total applications determined, to 188 applications, or 37.2% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the Sunshine Coast and Central region, there was on average, a reduction of 0.2 court events and 14.0 days per determination in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on a two-year comparison, although the number of court events per determination was consistent at 7.6, there was a decrease 24.8 days per determination. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 27.5 less days, and 0.6 less court events per determination in 2022-23.

Table 120 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's North Queensland region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.9%
Withdrawn	11	2.9%	29	7.4%	24	7.1%
Revoke a child protection order	2	0.5%	1	0.3%	3	0.9%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	4	1.0%	7	1.8%	2	0.6%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	25	6.5%	31	7.9%	25	7.4%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	191	49.6%	188	48.1%	144	42.7%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	5	1.3%	1	0.3%	3	0.9%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	9	2.3%	8	2.0%	7	2.1%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	13	3.4%	23	5.9%	8	2.4%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	116	30.1%	87	22.0%	83	24.6%
Permanent care order	5	1.3%	17	4.3%	34	10.1%
Transfer	4	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	385	100%	392	100%	337	100%

Table 121 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	184	47.8%	177	45.2%	168	49.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	28	7.3%	27	6.9%	13	3.9%
Torres Strait Islander	10	2.6%	7	1.8%	11	3.3%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	163	42.3%	181	46.2%	145	43.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	385	100%	392	100%	337	100%

Table 122 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	385	Total number of applications determined	392	Total number of applications determined	337
Average number of court events	9.1 events	Average number of court events	9.9 events	Average number of court events	9.7 events
Average number of days	311.5 days	Average number of days	311.1 days	Average number of days	311.2 days

Within Child Safety's North Queensland region, there was a decrease of 55 child protection applications determined (down 14.0%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which was much greater than the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. Further, the 337 applications determined in 2022-23 was 48 applications below the 385 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 17.2% decrease in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, decreasing from 29, or 7.4% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 24 or 7.1% of the total applications in 2022-23. This was effectively consistent with the statewide statistics, where there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, however, withdrawals on a statewide basis reduced to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was a 26.3% decrease in the number of in-home orders made, reducing from 38 orders, or 9.7% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 28 orders, or 8.3% of all applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction was much larger than the statewide decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home child protection orders made
- there was a 22.2% decrease in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), decreasing from 189 orders, or 48.2% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 147 orders, or 43.6% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction was fairly consistent with the 20.0% decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, which saw a reduction in short-term out of home orders made by 327, or from 47.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22 to 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and
- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children decreased by 2.2% in 2022-23, reducing from 135 orders in 2021-22 to 132 orders in 2022-23. However, due to the overall reduction in the number of applications determined within the region, as a percentage of the total applications, there was an increase from 34.4% of the total applications determined to 39.2% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. The reduction in the actual number of orders made granting long-term guardianship contrasted with the overall statewide increase of 101 orders granting long-term guardianship. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there were decreases in orders granting guardianship to suitable family members, down by one order, and a much larger decrease in orders granting guardianship to other suitable people, down 15 orders, or 65.2%. However, in terms of orders granting permanent care to suitable people, these were up 17 orders, or 100.0%, from 17 orders to 34 orders. Whereas orders granting long-

term guardianship to the chief executive reduced by four orders, or 4.6%, where on a statewide basis there was a 1.3% increase.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications in this region, the above table shows that consistent with the overall statewide decrease, the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reduced from 211 applications in 2021-22 to 192 applications in 2022-23. However, again due to the overall reduction in the amount of applications that were determined in the region, as a percentage of the total, the number of applications determined that concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased from 53.8% of the total applications determined to 57.0% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the North Queensland region, there was on average, a reduction of 0.2 court events in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. However, on a two-year comparison, on average, there was an increase by 0.6 court events per determination. As to the average length of days between lodgement and determination of all applications, there was minimal change across the years. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 21.0 more days, and required 1.5 more court events per determination in 2022-23.

Table 123 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's Far North Queensland region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Withdrawn	16	3.8%	24	5.3%	12	3.6%
Revoke a child protection order	4	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	4	1.2%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	40	9.5%	96	21.0%	71	21.3%
Custody to a suitable person	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Custody to the chief executive	223	52.7%	249	54.5%	126	37.8%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	5	1.2%	1	0.2%	4	1.2%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	22	5.2%	8	1.8%	20	6.0%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	6	1.4%	3	0.7%	4	1.2%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	104	24.6%	69	15.1%	86	25.8%
Permanent care order	0	0.0%	6	1.3%	5	1.5%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	423	100%	457	100%	333	100%

Table 124 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	204	48.2%	206	45.1%	132	39.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	65	15.4%	70	15.3%	65	19.5%
Torres Strait Islander	30	7.1%	47	10.3%	32	9.6%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	124	29.3%	134	29.3%	104	31.2%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	423	100%	457	100%	333	100%

Table 125 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	423	Total number of applications determined	457	Total number of applications determined	333
Average number of court events	6.9 events	Average number of court events	6.3 events	Average number of court events	6.9 events
Average number of days	296.0 days	Average number of days	267.3 days	Average number of days	279.6 days

Within Child Safety's Far North Queensland region, there was a substantial decrease of 124 child protection applications determined (down 27.1%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which was much greater than the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. Further, the 333 applications determined in 2022-23 was 90 applications below the 423 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 50.0% decrease in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, decreasing from 24, or 5.3% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 12 or 3.6% of the total applications in 2022-23. This was well above the statewide statistics, where there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, down to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was a 21.6% decrease in the number of in-home orders made, reducing from 97 orders in 2021-22, to 76 orders in 2022-23. However, reflective of the substantial decrease in the total number of applications determined, the overall percentage of the total applications determined concerning in-home orders increased from 21.2% to 22.8% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. The 21.6% reduction in the number of short-term orders made was much larger than the statewide decrease of 14.9% for these types of orders
- there was a substantial decrease of 48.0% in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), decreasing from 250 orders, or 54.7% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 130 orders, or 39.0% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction was far greater than the 20.0% decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics for these types of orders made in 2022-23, and
- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children significantly increased by 33.7% in 2022-23, rising from 86 orders, or 18.8% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 115 orders, or 34.5% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there was a significant increase in orders granting guardianship to suitable family members, rising from 8 orders, or 1.8% of the total applications determined, to 20 orders, or 6.0% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. Otherwise, it was fairly consistent across orders granting long-term guardianship to other suitable people and orders granting permanent care of children to suitable people, whereas orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive increased by 17 orders or 24.6%, from 69 orders to 86 orders, or from 15.1% to 25.8% of

all applications determined. This was well above the statewide statistics that saw a 1.3% increase in orders granting long-term guardianship to the chief executive.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications in this region, noting the substantial decrease in the overall number of applications determined in this region, the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reduced from 323 applications, or 70.7% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 229 applications, or 68.8% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the Far North Queensland region, there was on average, an increase of 0.6 court events in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. However, on a two-year comparison, on average, it was consistent at 6.9 court events per determination. As to the average length of days between lodgement and determination of all applications, there was an increase by 12.3 days per determination in 2022-23. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 10.6 less days, and required 1.3 more court events per determination in 2022-23.

Table 126 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's South East region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	3	0.4%	1	0.1%	4	0.6%
Withdrawn	30	4.1%	67	8.2%	36	5.4%
Revoke a child protection order	12	1.6%	6	0.7%	10	1.5%
Directive order – other	2	0.3%	3	0.4%	2	0.3%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	14	1.9%	13	1.6%	11	1.6%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	89	12.2%	111	13.6%	99	14.8%
Custody to a suitable person	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%
Custody to the chief executive	335	46.0%	336	41.2%	263	39.3%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	7	1.0%	33	4.0%	10	1.5%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	22	3.0%	15	1.8%	26	3.9%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	13	1.8%	11	1.3%	18	2.7%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	187	25.7%	194	23.8%	157	23.5%
Permanent care order	14	1.9%	24	2.9%	32	4.8%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	728	100%	816	100%	669	100%

Table 127 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	214	29.4%	236	28.9%	219	32.7%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6	0.8%	12	1.5%	14	2.1%
Torres Strait Islander	4	0.5%	4	0.5%	3	0.4%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	503	69.1%	563	69.0%	432	64.6%
Not stated	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Total	728	100%	816	100%	669	100%

Table 128 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	728	Total number of applications determined	816	Total number of applications determined	669
Average number of court events	7.6 events	Average number of court events	8.3 events	Average number of court events	7.8 events
Average number of days	275.6 days	Average number of days	291.4 days	Average number of days	272.0 days

Within Child Safety's South East region, there was a substantial decrease of 147 child protection applications determined (down 18.0%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which was much larger than the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. Further, the 669 applications determined in 2022-23 was 59 applications below the 728 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the statewide numbers:

- there was a 46.3% decrease in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, decreasing from 67, or 8.2% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 36 or 5.4% of the total applications in 2022-23. Whereas on a statewide basis, there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, down to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was an 11.0% decrease in the number of in-home orders made, reducing from 127 orders, or 15.6% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 112 orders, or 16.7% of all applications determined in 2022-23. This decrease was not quite as large as the statewide decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home child protection orders made
- there was a 26.1% decrease in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), decreasing from 371 orders, or 45.5% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 274 orders, or 41.0% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction was above the 20.0% decrease seen in the overall statewide statistics, which saw a reduction in short-term out of home orders made by 327, or a reduction from 47.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22 to 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and
- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children decreased by 4.5% in 2022-23, reducing from 244 orders to 233 orders. However, due to the substantial decrease in the overall number of applications determined, as a percentage of the total number of applications determined, orders granting long-term guardianship of children increased from 29.9% in 2021-22 to 34.8% of the total number of applications determined in 2022-23. This reduction contrasted with the overall statewide increase of 32.0%. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there were increases in orders granting guardianship to suitable family members, up by 11 orders, or 73.3% (from 15 to 26 orders), and in orders granting guardianship to other suitable people, up seven orders, or 63.6% (from 11 to 18 orders), and also in orders granting permanent care to suitable people, up eight orders, or 33.3% (from 24 to 32 orders). Whereas orders granting long-

term guardianship to the chief executive reduced by 37 orders, or 19.1%, where on a statewide basis there was a 1.3% increase.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications in this region, noting the substantial decrease in the overall number of applications determined in this region, the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reduced from 252 applications in 2021-22 to 236 applications in 2022-23. However, as a percentage of the total, the number of applications determined that concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased from 30.9% of the total applications determined to 35.3% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the South East region, there was on average, a reduction of 0.5 court events and 19.4 days per determination in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, and on a two-year comparison, although the number of court events per determination increased by 0.2 events, there was a decrease 3.6 days per determination. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 18.2 less days, and 0.4 less court events per determination in 2022-23.

Table 129 – Child protection applications determined in Child Safety's South West region

Type of order	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
No orders made	2	0.3%	3	0.5%	8	1.3%
Withdrawn	55	8.4%	29	4.9%	33	5.3%
Revoke a child protection order	9	1.4%	2	0.3%	9	1.5%
Directive order – other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	1.3%
Directive order – no contact with child	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Directive order – supervised contact	11	1.7%	18	3.1%	12	1.9%
Order for the chief executive to supervise a child's protection	46	7.0%	50	8.5%	53	8.6%
Custody to a suitable person	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Custody to the chief executive	290	44.1%	302	51.3%	241	39.1%
Short-term guardianship to the chief executive	5	0.8%	3	0.5%	9	1.5%
Long-term guardianship to a suitable family member	19	2.9%	20	3.4%	22	3.6%
Long-term guardianship to another suitable person	11	1.7%	8	1.4%	7	1.1%
Long-term guardianship to the chief executive	196	29.8%	144	24.4%	192	31.1%
Permanent care order	12	1.8%	10	1.7%	22	3.6%
Transfer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	657	100%	589	100%	617	100%

Table 130 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on applications determined in this region

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	227	34.6%	225	38.2%	232	37.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	17	2.6%	5	0.8%	7	1.1%
Torres Strait Islander	2	0.3%	13	2.2%	4	0.6%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	411	62.6%	346	58.7%	374	60.6%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	657	100%	589	100%	617	100%

Table 131 – Average number of court events and days between lodgement and determination of applications

2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Total number of applications determined	657	Total number of applications determined	589	Total number of applications determined	617
Average number of court events	8.1 events	Average number of court events	8.6 events	Average number of court events	9.2 events
Average number of days	291.3 days	Average number of days	301.3 days	Average number of days	320.8 days

Within Child Safety's South West region, there was an increase of 28 child protection applications determined (up 4.8%) in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22, which is in contrast with the overall statewide decrease of 8.9%. However, the 617 applications determined in 2022-23 was 40 applications below the 657 determined in 2020-21.

In respect to the types of child protection orders made, the following are some notable variances in 2022-23 as opposed to the overall statewide statistics:

- there was a 13.8% increase in the number of applications that were determined by being withdrawn, increasing from 29, or 4.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 33 or 5.3% of the total applications in 2022-23. Whereas on a statewide basis, there was an 18.3% decrease in the total number of applications withdrawn, down to 5.6% of all applications determined
- there was a 7.4% increase in the number of in-home orders made, rising from 68 orders, or 11.5% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 73 orders, or 11.8% of all applications determined in 2022-23. This is in contrast with the statewide decrease of 14.9% in the number of in-home child protection orders made
- there was a 17.7% decrease in the number of orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship orders (short-term out of home orders), decreasing from 305 orders, or 51.8% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 251 orders, or 40.7% of the total applications determined in 2022-23. This was fairly consistent with the statewide statistics that saw 327 less short-term out of home orders made, or a reduction from 47.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 42.1% of the total applications determined in 2022-23, and
- the number of orders granting long-term guardianship of children increased by 33.5% in 2022-23, rising from 182 orders, or 30.9% of the total applications determined in 2021-22, to 243 orders, or 39.4% of the total applications determined. This increase was just above the overall statewide increase of 32.0%. In terms of the types of long-term guardianship orders made, there was a significant increase in orders granting permanent care of children to suitable people, up 12 orders, or 120.0% (from 10 to 22 orders), and in orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive, increasing from 144 orders, or 24.4% of the total applications determined to 192 orders, or 31.1% of the total applications determined. On a statewide basis there was an overall increase of 1.3% in orders granting long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive.

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were subject to child protection applications determined in this region, the above table shows

that the number of applications determined concerning children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remained consistent at 243 applications in both 2021-22 and 2022-23. However, reflective of the overall increase in the number of applications determined, as a percentage of the total, the number of applications determined that concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander decreased from 41.3% of the total applications determined to 39.4% of the total applications determined in 2022-23.

Finally, in respect to the average number of court events and calendar days between lodgement and the determination of all applications in the South West region, there was on average, an increase of 0.6 court events and 19.5 days per determination in 2022-23 as compared with 2021-22. On a two-year comparison, there was an increase of 1.1 court events and 29.5 days. In comparison with the overall statewide statistics, applications in this region on average took 30.6 more days, and required 1 additional court event per determination in 2022-23.

Orders made consistent with the type of order sought at time application determined

In respect of the types of child protection orders made, the following table shows across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, the child protection orders made by the Court consistent with the type of child protection orders sought by the DCPL at the time applications were determined.

Table 132 – Orders made consistent with type of order sought by the DCPL at time applications determined

Jul to Sep 2020			Oct to Dec 2020			Jan to Mar 2021			Apr to Jun 2021		
Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total
996	991	99.5%	901	887	98.4%	805	804	99.9%	909	900	99.0%
Jul to Sep 2021			Oct to Dec 2021			Jan to Mar 2022			Apr to Jun 2022		
Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total
969	968	99.9%	835	824	98.7%	698	696	99.7%	910	909	99.9%
Jul to Sep 2022			Oct to Dec 2022			Jan to Mar 2023			Apr to Jun 2023		
Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total	Total orders made	Orders consistent with type DCPL sought	% of total
870	867	99.7%	795	790	99.4%	689	687	99.7%	757	750	99.1%

In respect of the types of orders made, the above table shows that across the last 3 years, the Court made orders consistent with the type of orders sought by DCPL at the time the applications were determined in almost 100% of applications, with the combined yearly percentages being 99.2% in 2020-21, 99.6% in 2021-22 and 99.5% in 2022-23.

This reflects the DCPL's proactive case management of proceedings, where if the DCPL determines that the type of child protection order initially sought is no longer considered appropriate and desirable based on the current evidence, the DCPL takes active steps to file amended applications, seeking less or more intrusive orders where that is supported by the current evidence and Child Safety's assessment.

This shows that DCPL has been effectively dealing with child protection applications to an exceptionally high standard.

Successive CPOs made granting either custody or short-term guardianship

The below table shows the number of successive child protection orders made that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of children. That is, child protection orders made by the Court that granted either custody or short-term guardianship of a child, concerning children who had already been the subject of previous child protection orders that granted either custody or short-term guardianship that had not ended at the point the new child protection application was filed.

Table 133 – Successive child protection orders made granting either custody or short-term guardianship											
Jul to Sep 2020			Oct to Dec 2020			Jan to Mar 2021			Apr to Jun 2021		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total
274	22	8.0%	187	27	14.4%	157	30	19.1%	221	31	14.0%
Jul to Sep 2021			Oct to Dec 2021			Jan to Mar 2022			Apr to Jun 2022		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total
244	58	23.8%	173	41	23.7%	186	33	17.7%	220	45	20.5%
Jul to Sep 2022			Oct to Dec 2022			Jan to Mar 2023			Apr to Jun 2023		
Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total	Total preceding short-term orders	Number of successive short-term orders made	% of total
250	59	23.6%	204	51	25.0%	191	32	16.8%	248	56	22.6%

It is noted that in line with the permanency and stability amendments implemented under the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*, which commenced operation on 29 October 2018, there has been a marked decrease in the number of children, and as a percentage, on successive orders being made that grant either custody or short-term guardianship.

In July to September 2018, the last full quarter before the permanency and stability amendments commenced, there were successive child protection orders made granting either custody or short-term guardianship of children in 38.7% of these types of orders.

On commencement of the amendments, this then decreased in the October to December 2018 quarter to 24.4%, before slight increases were seen across January to March 2019 (26.9%) and April to June 2019 (25.6%). There were then marked decreases across 2019-20 and into 2020-21 shown in the above table. It is noted that as with applications made, these decreases in orders made evidence the progress that has been made to address the concern noted in the Commission of Inquiry's final report that there were a high number of children and young people subject to multiple short-term orders in the child protection system that could have indicated that many

children were ‘drifting’ in care without achieving either reunification with their family or long-term out-of-home care.

However, as also outlined in the table, the numbers of successive orders made granting either custody or short-term guardianship did increase both in terms of numbers and as a percentage of the total of these types of applications across both 2021-22 and 2022-23. Whilst not conclusive, it is again posited that the earlier child protection orders would have included the periods of lockdowns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that may have impacted on the reunification timetables of the children, leading to the noted increase in the successive orders made.

DCPL’s clearance rate

The below table sets out DCPL’s clearance rate across 2020-21, 2022-22 and 2022-23, which is a comparison of the number of applications finalised with the number of applications made.

Table 134 – DCPL’s clearance rate							
Jul to Sep 2020		Oct to Dec 2020		Jan to Mar 2021		Apr to Jun 2021	
Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised
902	996	776	901	753	805	856	909
110.4%		116.1%		106.9%		106.2%	
Jul to Sep 2021		Oct to Dec 2021		Jan to Mar 2022		Apr to Jun 2022	
Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised
892	969	829	835	772	698	809	910
108.6%		100.7%		90.4%		112.5%	
Jul to Sep 2022		Oct to Dec 2022		Jan to Mar 2023		Apr to Jun 2023	
Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised	Total number of applications made	Total number of applications finalised
945	870	816	795	819	689	876	757
92.1%		97.4%		84.1%		86.4%	

In 2022-23, a comparison of the number of applications determined (3,111) with the number of applications made (3,456) provides that the DCPL’s clearance rate was 90.0%. This was a clear reduction from the 2021-22 clearance rate of 103.3% and the 2020-21 clearance rate of 109.9%. However, as outlined in many of the statistics above, the overall 2022-23 clearance rate is reflective of the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting increase in the number of applications made seeking long-term guardianship of children to the chief executive. It is also due to the increasing number of applications that are being adjourned for Child Safety to convene FGMs to develop initial case plans for subject children, or to review subject children’s case plans and develop revised case plans. Noting that the primary reason for the adjournment of all applications before the

Court was for Child Safety to convene FGMs, amounting to a yearly total of 39.7% of all adjournments, with DCPL statistics showing that applications can be adjourned for a FGM on a number of occasions.

Appeals

In 2022-23, when required, the DCPL decided to appeal decisions by the Court at first instance, with the appeals being heard and determined by either a Childrens Court judge, or if not available, a District Court judge.

In addition to appeals initiated by the DCPL, the DCPL was also the respondent to a greater number of appeals initiated by other participants in the *proceedings* at first instance.

On appeals, the DCPL achieved positive outcomes in terms of ensuring the concerned children's protection and care needs were advocated for and met.

The decision to bring an appeal and the actions taken to respond to appeals, has continued to contribute to the development of a publicly available body of jurisprudence in child protection law, which serves to establish legal precedents and consistency in the application of legal principles and decision-making in the child protection jurisdiction.

The below tables set out the number of child protection appeals filed and lodged on a yearly basis across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Appeals filed

Table 135 – Child protection appeals filed		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
41 (86.4%) ↑	23 (-43.9%) ↓	19 (-17.4%) ↓

This table shows that in 2022-23, there was a 17.4% decrease in appeals filed (down four), and on a two-year comparison, there has been a 53.7% decrease. In 2020-21, the DCPL was the appellant in six appeals that were lodged, and a respondent to the other 35 appeals. In 2021-22, the DCPL was the appellant in one appeal lodged and a respondent to the other 22 appeals, and in 2022-23, the DCPL lodged two appeals and was a respondent to the other 17 appeals.

Appeals filed that concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In respect of child protection appeals filed, the following table shows the number of appeals that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 136 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on appeals filed						
Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	10	24.4%	6	26.1%	1	5.3%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	0	0.0%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	31	75.6%	15	65.2%	18	94.7%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	41	100%	23	100%	19	100%

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system, the above table shows that the number of appeals filed in respect of orders that concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was not consistent with the proportion of overrepresentation seen across the other points presented throughout this report. Noting that overwhelmingly the DCPL was a respondent to appeals filed, the above statistics clearly indicate that the parents of children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are far less likely to appeal orders made.

Appeals determined

Table 137 – Child protection appeals determined		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
39 (290.0%) ↑	21 (-46.2%) ↓	24 (14.2%) ↑

This table shows that in 2022-23, there was a 14.2% increase in appeals determined (up three). On a two-year comparison, there has been a 38.5% decrease.

Table 138 – Outcome of appeals determined			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Confirmed the decision appealed against	32	19	17
Varied the decision appealed against	2	0	0
Set aside the decision and substituted another decision	2	0	0
Set aside the decision appealed against and remitted back	3	2	7
Total	39	21	24

In 2020-21, the DCPL was a respondent to 30 appeals and the appellant in two appeals where the decisions appealed against were confirmed. Further, the DCPL was the appellant in two appeals that varied the decision appealed against, and the appellant in two appeals, one an interim order and one of a final order that were set aside and had another decision substituted in each. Also, the DCPL was a respondent to three appeals of final orders that were set aside with the matters being remitted back to the Court that had made the decision.

In 2021-22, the DCPL was a respondent to 15 appeals and the appellant in four appeals where the decisions appealed against were confirmed, was the appellant in one appeal and the respondent to one appeal of interim orders that were set aside with the matters being remitted back to the Court that had made the decision.

In 2022-23, the DCPL was the appellant in two appeals and the respondent in five appeals of final orders that were set aside with the matters being remitted back to the Court that had made the decision. The DCPL was also a respondent to 17 appeals that confirmed the decisions appealed against.

Appeals determined that concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In respect of child protection applications determined, the following table shows the number of applications that concerned children who were identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Table 139 – Children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on appeals determined

Cultural identity	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Aboriginal	8	20.5%	6	28.6%	4	16.7%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Torres Strait Islander	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	31	79.5%	15	71.4%	20	83.3%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	39	100%	21	100%	24	100%

In respect of the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system, the above table shows that as with the number of appeals filed, that the appeals determined in respect of orders that concerned children identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was not consistent with the proportion of overrepresentation seen across the other points presented throughout this report.

Child death and serious physical injury reporting

The death of a child is a profound loss, impacting parents, family and close community as well as carers and professionals who have worked, either directly or indirectly, with the child and their family.

Serious physical injuries to children are also accompanied by grief, and families recovering from such tragedies are entitled to compassion and dignity.

Where the DCPL was performing a litigation function in respect of a child who dies or sustains a serious physical injury, the DCPL has an obligation under the CP Act to undertake a case review of the matter. This is also required if the DCPL has performed a litigation function within the year before the death or injury.

The purpose of the case review is to promote the safety and wellbeing of children who come into contact with the child protection system, by facilitating ongoing learning and improvement in the provision of services, to promote accountability and to support collaboration and joint learning by agencies involved with the child.

Reports from child death case reviews undertaken by the DCPL are submitted to Queensland's Child Death Review Board, and are also provided to the State Coroner for use by a coroner to help in an investigation pursuant to the *Coroners Act 2003*.

Child death and serious physical injury case reviews

The DCPL conducts case reviews in accordance with the DCPL's *Child Death and Serious Physical Injury Case Review Policy*, which implements the statutory provisions in respect of reviews under Chapter 7A of the CP Act.

Child death and serious physical injury case reviews are not criminal investigations into how a child died or was injured, or who was culpable for the death or injury. These are matters for the Coroner and Criminal Courts to determine as necessary. Rather, the purposes of requiring child death and serious physical injury case reviews are to facilitate the ongoing learning and improvement in the provision of services by the DCPL and to promote the accountability of the DCPL. Finally, in conducting these reviews of child deaths and serious physical injuries, the DCPL must comply with legislation which prohibits the disclosure or use of confidential information which may identify the DCPL's involvement with a child, or their family, or may lead to the identification of a notifier of harm. These protections ensure confidentiality, maintain individuals' right to privacy and safeguard the integrity of the child protection system.

The DCPL's case reviews must be completed as soon as practicable, and within six months of receiving notice from Child Safety of the death or injury. This promotes the effective dissemination of lessons learned from reviews of systems and practice, and ensures recommendations arising can be promptly implemented by the DCPL as part of the ODCPL's commitment to continuous improvement.

Whilst it is inevitable that reviews vary in respect of breadth and complexity depending upon the individual circumstances of a matter, statutory provisions provide that the terms of reference for DCPL's internal review may include:

- whether the ODCPL complied with legislative requirements, the *Director's Guidelines* and any policies relevant to the performance of a litigation function
- commenting on the adequacy of legislation, guidelines and policies for performing litigation functions
- commenting on whether sufficient evidence was made available to the ODCPL for the purposes of decision making, and
- making recommendations and suggesting strategies to implement these recommendations.

2022-23 Child Death and other case reviews

During the 2022-23 financial year, the DCPL was given notice of 16 matters that required a case review to be undertaken. Of these, five related to matters involving the death of a child (this was an increase of one from 2021-22) and the remaining eleven notices related to serious physical injuries (also an increase of one from 2021-22).

In the same period, the DCPL completed case reviews in respect of 21 matters (up from the 10 reviews undertaken in 2021-22), nine relating to the death of a child (up from two in 2021-22) and the remaining 12 matters (up from eight in 2021-22) concerning serious physical injuries. The reports from the nine case reviews relating to the death of a child were submitted to the Child Death Review Board for external consideration.

The DCPL is committed to facilitating ongoing learning and continuous improvement in the provision of litigation services. As a key agency with responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children who are subject to proceedings for child protection orders, the DCPL strives to adopt a best interests, child centred approach, making evidence based decisions. In exercising its statutory functions, the DCPL is committed to working alongside Child Safety and taking all necessary action to enable the best outcomes for children subject to proceedings.

As a statutory agency, the DCPL must ensure adherence to legislative requirements and expectations in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, ensuring compliance with model litigant principles in representing the State in preparing and applying for child protection orders. Child death and other case reviews promote accountability and monitor the effectiveness of service delivery.

In respect of DCPL's litigation functions, these reviews provide an evidence based independent and objective analysis of how the *matter* was dealt with and why decisions were made, enabling important lessons to be learnt and services improved, ultimately reducing the risk of future harm to children within the statutory system.

In respect to the 21 reviews completed by the DCPL in 2022-23, all were undertaken as brief reviews, as in each matter, there was no probable link between the DCPL's decision making or the practice of the ODCPL and any of the deaths or serious physical injuries.

On review of the 21 child death and serious physical injury reviews undertaken within 2022-23, all 21 evidenced that in respect of the matters, there had been good collaboration between Child Safety and the ODCPL. Further, all reviews showed that DCPL Lawyers had undertaken a timely initial review of the referred *matters*, which consistent with the statistics presented within the performance part of this report, included asking for further evidence or information in 61.9% of the *matters* and providing prompt feedback on the draft initial affidavits. In terms of the DCPL's decision-making on the referred *matters*, in all reviews, the DCPL decided to apply for child protection orders, and again fairly consistent with the statistics presented within the performance part of this report, sought different types of orders, or orders that were otherwise different to Child Safety's initial assessment in 23.8% of *matters*.

Financial summary

The DCPL is not a statutory body for the purposes of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982* or the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

Funding for the ODCPL is appropriated from the Queensland Government as part of the appropriation for DJAG, with the Director-General of the Department being the accountable officer pursuant to the *Financial Accountability Act*. Comprehensive financial details relating to the operations of the Department are reported in the annual report for DJAG.

A summary of the revenue and expenditure for the ODCPL for the financial year 2022-23 is contained in the table below.

Table 140 – DCPL’s financial summary	
\$’000	
Revenue	
Appropriation	13,305
User Charges and Fees	-
Other Revenue	-
Total Revenue	13,305
Expenditure	
Employee Expenses	11,400
Supplies and Services	1,868
Depreciation and amortisation	27
Other Expenses	10
Total Expenses	13,305
Net Surplus (Deficit)	-

Overseas Travel Expenditure

There was no overseas travel undertaken by the DCPL or staff employed in the ODCPL during the year.

Consultancies

The ODCPL did not engage any consultants during the year.

Queensland Language Services Policy

The ODCPL did not engage any interpreters during the year.

Glossary

Acronyms

• ACA	Assessment Care Agreement
• Child Safety	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
• <i>CP Act</i>	<i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>
• CPCA	Child Protection Care Agreement
• CPO	Child Protection Order
• CPD	Continuing Professional Development
• CAO	Court Assessment Order
• DCPL	Director of Child Protection Litigation
• DCPL Act	<i>Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016</i>
• DCSYW	Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
• DJAG	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
• Form A	Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form
• FTE	Full Time Equivalent
• HR Act	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
• LAQ	Legal Aid Queensland
• OCFOS	Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor
• ODCPL	Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation
• OPG	Office of the Public Guardian
• Commission of Inquiry	Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry in 2013
• PCO	Permanent Care Order
• QCAT	Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
• QFCC	Queensland Family and Child Commission
• QLS	Queensland Law Society
• Rules	<i>Childrens Court Rules 2016</i>
• TAO	Temporary Assessment Order
• TCO	Temporary Custody Order

Terms

- *child in need of protection* – see section 10 of the CP Act
- *child protection application* – see rule 4 (Schedule 1 Dictionary) of the Rules
- *child protection matter* – see section 15(1) of the DCPL Act
- *child protection proceedings* – means a *proceeding* under the CP Act for the making, extension, amendment or revocation of a child protection order – see section 3 (Schedule 1 Dictionary) of the DCPL Act
- Court – means the Childrens Court of Queensland
- emergency order – temporary assessment order, court assessment order and temporary custody order
- *harm* - has the meaning given to it in section 9 of the CP Act
- *suitable person* - has the meaning given to it in Schedule 3 of the CP Act

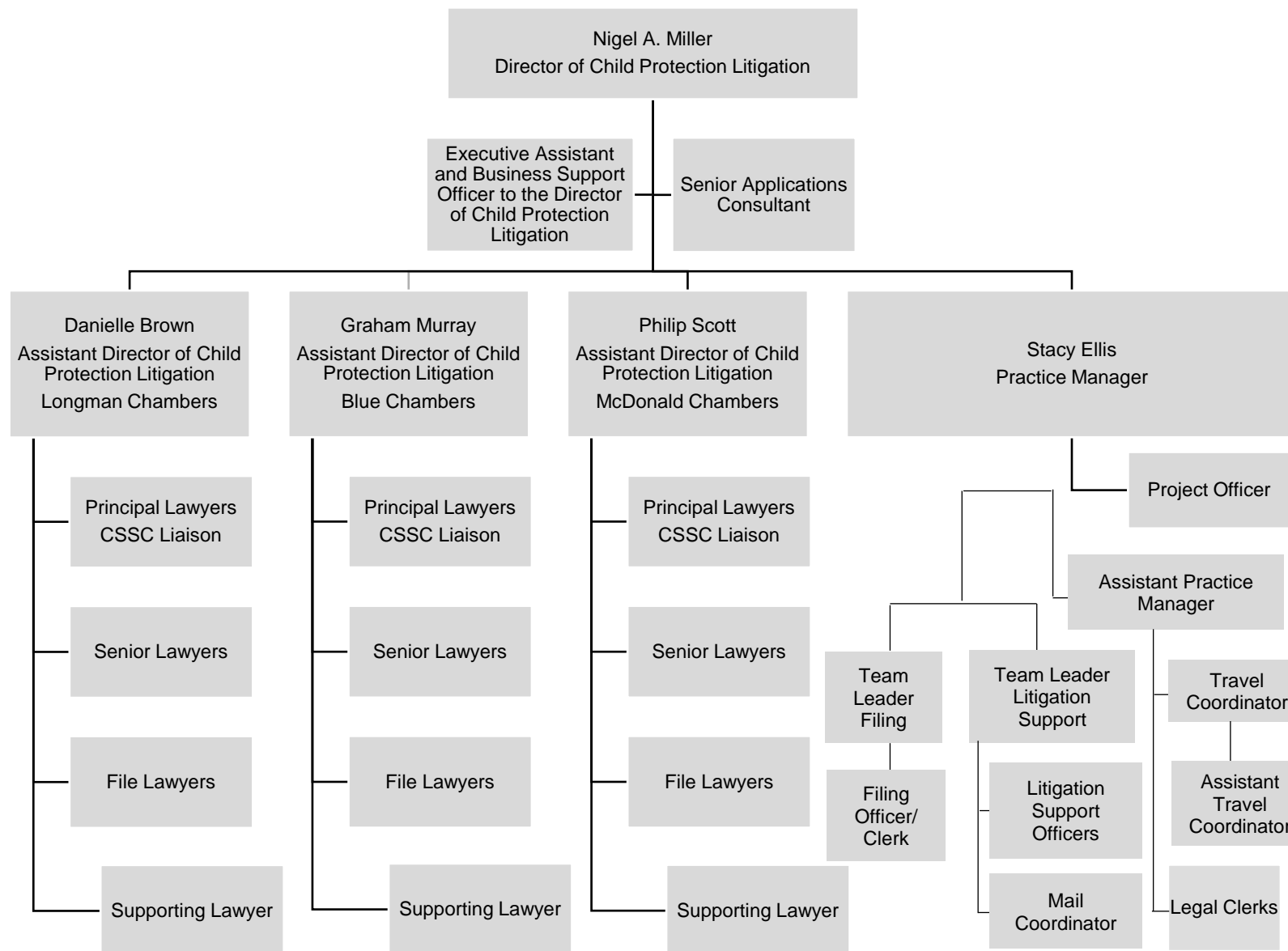
Annual Report 2022-2023

Director of Child Protection Litigation

www.dcpl.qld.gov.au

Appendix 1 - Organisational Chart

Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (ODCPL) Organisational Chart as at 30 June 2023



ODCPL's Executive Management Team (EMT)

The EMT sets strategic and operational priorities and initiatives in respect of service delivery and stakeholder engagement, and oversees ODCPL's people, learning and development, policies, procedures, and business processes.

Assistant Directors of Child Protection Litigation are responsible for the day-to-day management of each Chamber group and hold delegations to refer matters back to Child Safety, withdraw applications and commence appeals. Upon receipt of a referred matter, an Assistant Director undertakes an initial screening and allocates it to an Applicant Lawyer.

Applicant Lawyers

A Principal Lawyer is the single point of contact for Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) Managers, Senior Practitioners and Senior Team Leaders to discuss systemic issues and local practices.

On allocation of a matter, the Applicant Lawyer reviews the brief of evidence and in consultation with OCFOs and Child Safety, make the decision to apply for a child protection order, including type and duration of order.

The Applicant Lawyer drafts the child protection application and settles the initial affidavit. In consultation with the allocated Senior Team Leader, where necessary, the Applicant Lawyer will then appear in Court at contested or complex mentions, undertake the Court Ordered Conference in complex applications and appear at complex interim hearings and final hearings.

File Lawyers

A File Lawyer is aligned to a CSSC and manages child protection proceedings before the Court from first mention until an application is finalised. The File Lawyer appears on call-overs, liaises with Senior Team Leaders to ensure updates are provided and may appear at interim hearings and at Court Ordered Conference.

Litigation Support Officers, Legal Clerks and Supporting Lawyers

Supporting Lawyers, Legal Clerks and Litigation Support Officers assist in ensuring administrative and quasi-legal tasks are undertaken. Supporting Lawyers may appear on simple matters at busy call overs to support File Lawyers.

Appendix 2 - 2022-23 CPD Program topics

NO.	DATE	TITLE	PRESENTER/S
1.	8/07/2022	Strategic Indigenous Awareness Training	Grant Sarra, Gooreng
2.	13/07/2022	Practice Forum – Improving outcomes for parents with intellectual disability and their families	Community Living Association
3.	13/07/2022	In My Court: Criminal Jurisdiction DCM Gett & Magistrate Merrin	Sarah Ford - Gilshenan & Luton Lawyers
4.	13/07/2022	Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner Training Course (5 days)	Bond University Dispute Resolution Centre
5.	1/08/2022	Longman Practice Forum - Updating Affidavits Training Session	Danielle Brown, ODCPL
6.	9/08/2022	CLS & s 229BC Crim Code Mandatory Reporting	Bill Mitchell - Townsville Community Law
7.	17/08/2022	In My Court: The Civil Jurisdiction	Magistrate Andrew Sinclair & Magistrate Cameron McKenzie
8.	17/08/2022	Engendering Justice - Sentencing Women & Girls in Qld	Hon Margaret McMurdo AC c/- QSAC
9.	19/08/2022	Specialist interpreting in health and legal sectors	NAATI
10.	1/09/2022	Longman Practice Forum - Unpacking a complex case	Danielle Brown, ODCPL
11.	14/09/2022	Your Role as a Manager	Connect Manager
12.	20/09/2022	AIFS: The multiple meanings of permanency	Australian Institute of Family Studies
13.	27/09/2022	Coercive Control and its impact on children - the work of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board and Recent Studies	CPPAQ
14.	10/10/2022	Longman Chamber Forum: Interim hearings on contact	Danielle Brown, ODCPL
15.	11/10/2022	Child Centred Approaches to Responding to Family Violence	The Hatchery
16.	11/10/2022	The Queensland Ombudsman: An Intro to our Services & Investigations	Anthony Reilly, Annette Knights & Rhiannon Hunter
17.	12/10/2022	Imagining a Workplace without Burnout	Eventbrite
18.	14/10/2022	Diversity and inclusion for mentally healthy workplaces	Eventbrite
19.	31/10/2022	Introduction to Child Protection Conferencing	Gabriele Kuhnert, CPCU
20.	25/11/2022	Human rights protections for victim/survivors of DV	Legal Aid Queensland

21.	29/11/2022	First Nations CLE toolkit: engaging with ATSI to create meaningful access to justice	Natasha Tanirau-Stanley & Candice Hughes c/- YFS Legal
22.	2/12/2022	Response of Courts and Tribunals to the claims of Sovereign citizens	Judge Cash (QCAT)
23.	2/12/2022	The Qld Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation	Member Susan Gardiner (QCAT)
24.	9/12/2022	Understanding and Responding to Coercive Control	Legal Aid Queensland
25.	16/12/2022	Listening to Parents – Insights and Experience for Better Practice	Family Inclusion Network
26.	16/01/2023	Longman Practice Forum - Case Study: DCPL v W	Danielle Brown, ODCPL
27.	2/02/2023	File Management for File Lawyers	Mel Litchen and Charlotte Dougall, ODCPL
28.	16/02/2023	Issues impacting indigenous Queenslanders when coming into contact with the legal system	Judge Nathan Jarro (QCAT)
29.	16/02/2023	Presumptions, inferences, filling evidential gaps	Jeremy Gordon (QCAT)
30.	22/02/2023	Effective Supervision: Hints, tips and tricks for supervisors	Graham Murray, ODCPL
31.	23/02/2023	Stress and how to manage it and dealing with difficult people	Professor Mark O'Brien
32.	23/02/2023	Conducting an effective COCO	Rachael Field, Bond University ADR Specialist Professor and Peta Stilgoe, Member of Land Court
33.	23/02/2023	Reasons for decisions – adequacy and sufficiency	Chief Justice Helen Bowskill
34.	23/02/2023	How to approach making and delivering ex tempore decisions	Judge Alexander Horneman Wren KC, and Clare Endicott, Sessional Member of QCAT
35.	23/02/2023	Self Represented litigants	Justice Richard O'Brien, Family Court of Western Australia
36.	24/02/2023	Stays at First Instance and on Appeal	John McGill SC, Judicial Member of QCAT
37.	24/02/2023	Without Fear or Favour	Justice Sarah Derrington AM, Federal Court of Australia
38.	24/02/2023	The role of the Human Rights Act 2019 (QLD) in the work of QCAT	Professor Sarah Joseph, Professor of Human Rights Law, Griffith University, Queensland
39.	24/02/2023	Procedural Fairness in Tribunal	Justice Darryl Rangiah, Federal Court of Australia
40.	2/03/2023	Domestic and Family Violence in Child Protection Proceedings	Roisin O'Connor and Nigel Miller, ODCPL

41.	6/03/2023	Government Lawyers Legal Update 2021: Witness preparation.	Gadens- Kathy Merrick (Partner) and Pouyan Afshar (Barrister)
42.	8/03/2023	International Women's Day event: Empower her voice, secure her future	DJAG
43.	8/03/2023	The Fatigues	Lauren Phelps, Lawganised
44.	9/03/2023	Professional Development: The Role of Supervision	Graham Murray, ODCPL
45.	9/03/2023	Drafting Skills: affidavit evidence	Paul Venus, College of Law
46.	9/03/2023	Mediation intake (parts 1 and 2 - How to prepare an efficient and effective intake and how to conduct an intake	Linda Kochanski, College of Law
47.	9/03/2023	The view from the Bench: tips for aspiring advocates	Hon Justice Lucy McCallum hosted by the College of Law
48.	10/03/2023	Legal ethics for government lawyers	College of Law
49.	10/03/2023	Hot topics and cases in criminal law	College of law
50.	10/03/2023	Bringing Your Best and Getting the Best out of Families during separation and divorce	Smokeball
51.	13/03/2023	Professional Development: The Role of Supervision	Graham Murray, ODCPL
52.	15/03/2023	Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession	Lauren Phelps, Lawganised
53.	15/03/2023	Sentencing children under 14	John Robertson & co c/- Sentencing Council
54.	28/03/2023	Managing Conflicts of Interest	Petrina Macpherson & Famin Ahmed c/- Minter Ellison
55.	29/03/2023	Mental Illness – Why lawyers don't suffer from this	Lauren Phelps, Lawganised
56.	6/04/2023	Child Protection and Family Law interface	Leanne Walsh and Tina Foti, Court Services
57.	14/04/2023	Lifting the Veil - cultural issues and inherent bias in responding	CPPAQ
58.	18/04/2023	Impaired Capacity	Crown Law
59.	20/04/2023	Management Training	Graham Murray, ODCPL
60.	12/05/2023	Domestic & family violence in LGBTIQ+ communities	Legal Aid Queensland
61.	13/05/2023	Community Legal Centres Queensland: Master Class Taking Shelter from the Perfect Storm	Community Legal Centres Queensland

62.	29/05/2023	Working with children and young people in domestic violence proceedings	Legal Aid Queensland
63.	1/06/2023	QCAT and ILO Issues	Court Services
64.	21/06/2023	6 th National Child Protection Forum (Day 1)	Akolade
65.	22/06/2023	6 th National Child Protection Forum (Day 2)	Akolade

Appendix 3 - Child Safety's Service Centres in each region

Brisbane and Moreton Bay region

- Alderley Child Safety Service Centre
- Caboolture Child Safety Service Centre
- Cannon Hill Child Safety Service Centre
- Chermside Child Safety Service Centre
- Forest Lake Child Safety Service Centre
- Inala Child Safety Service Centre
- Morayfield Child Safety Service Centre
- Mount Gravatt Child Safety Service Centre
- Redcliffe Child Safety Service Centre, and
- Strathpine Child Safety Service Centre.

Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland region

- Bundaberg Child Safety Service Centre
- Caloundra Child Safety Service Centre
- Emerald Child Safety Service Centre
- Fitzroy Child Safety Service Centre
- Fraser Coast Child Safety Service Centre
- Gladstone Child Safety Service Centre
- Gympie Child Safety Service Centre
- Maroochydore Child Safety Service Centre, and
- Mount Archer Child Safety Service Centre.

North Queensland

- Bowen Child Safety Service Centre (Hub)
- Mackay Child Safety Service Centre
- Mount Isa-Gulf Child Safety Service Centre
- Townsville Investigation and Assessment Child Safety Service Centre
- Townsville North and Hinchinbrook Child Safety Service Centre
- Townsville South and Burdekin Child Safety Service Centre, and
- Townsville West and Charters Towers Child Safety Service Centre.

Far North Queensland region

- Atherton Child Safety Service Centre
- Cairns Child Safety Service Centre
- Cape York North and Torres Strait Islands Child Safety Service Centre
- Cooktown Child Safety Service Centre (Hub)
- Edmonton Child Safety Service Centre
- Far North Queensland Investigation and Assessment Child Safety Service Centre
- Innisfail Child Safety Service Centre

- North Cairns and Lower Cape Child Safety Service Centre
- Thursday Island Child Safety Service Centre (Hub), and
- Weipa Child Safety Service Centre (Hub).

South East region

- Bayside Child Safety Service Centre
- Beaudesert Child Safety Service Centre
- Beenleigh Child Safety Service Centre
- Browns Plains Child Safety Service Centre
- Gold Coast Assessment and In Home Service
- Labrador Child Safety Service Centre
- Logan Central Child Safety Service Centre
- Loganlea Child Safety Service Centre, and
- Mermaid Beach Child Safety Service Centre.

South West region

- Charleville Child Safety Service Centre (Hub)
- Ipswich Intake and Assessment Service Centre
- Ipswich North Child Safety Service Centre
- Ipswich South Child Safety Service Centre
- Roma Child Safety Service Centre
- South Burnett Child Safety Service Centre
- Southern Downs Child and Family Centre
- Springfield Child Safety Service Centre
- Toowoomba North Child Safety Service Centre
- Toowoomba South Child Safety Service Centre, and
- Western Downs Intake and Assessment (WDIA) Child Safety Service Centre.

Appendix 4 - Compliance Checklist

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s 	ARRs – section 7	Page 3
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of contents Glossary 	ARRs – section 9.1	Page 4 Page 163
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public availability 	ARRs – section 9.2	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter service statement 	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright notice 	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4	Page 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Licensing 	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5	Page 2
General information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Information 	ARRs – section 10	Page 19
Non-financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government's objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives 	ARRs – section 11.1	Page 12
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency objectives and performance indicators 	ARRs – section 11.2	Page 47
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency service areas and service standards 	ARRs – section 11.3	Page 29
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of financial performance 	ARRs – section 12.1	Page 162
Governance – management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational structure 	ARRs – section 13.1	Page 165
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive management 	ARRs – section 13.2	Page 39
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities) 	ARRs – section 13.3	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Sector Ethics 	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4	Page 31
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights 	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5	Page 31
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queensland public service values 	ARRs – section 13.6	Page 31
Governance – risk management and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management 	ARRs – section 14.1	Page 32
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit committee 	ARRs – section 14.2	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit 	ARRs – section 14.3	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External scrutiny 	ARRs – section 14.4	N/A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information systems and recordkeeping 	ARRs – section 14.5	Page 32
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Security attestation 	ARRs – section 14.6	Page 33

Summary of requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance – human resources	• Strategic workforce planning and performance	ARRs – section 15.1	Page 34
	• Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	Directive No.04/18 <i>Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Page 37
Open Data	• Statement advising publication of information	ARRs – section 16	N/A
	• Consultancies	ARRs – section 31.1	Page 162
	• Overseas travel	ARRs – section 31.2	Page 162
	• Queensland Language Services Policy	ARRs – section 31.3	N/A
Financial statements	• Certification of financial statements	FAA – section 62 FPMS – sections 38, 39 and 46 ARRs – section 17.1	N/A
	• Independent Auditor's Report	FAA – section 62 FPMS – section 46 ARRs – section 17.2	N/A

FAA *Financial Accountability Act 2009*

FPMS *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019*

ARRs *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*

Appendix 5 - DCPL's Guidelines issued as at 1 July 2019

Director of Child Protection Litigation

Director's Guidelines

Current as at 1 July 2019



Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation

Director's Guidelines – current as at 29 October 2018 – to replace previous Guidelines

Issued by the Director of Child Protection Litigation under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*.

These Guidelines are issued to:

- all staff of the Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (ODCPL);
- the chief executive of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety) and all staff working in the following areas undertaking work relevant to the functions of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL):
 - the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS);
 - Child Safety Service Centres; and
 - Child Safety's Legal Services;
- lawyers engaged by the DCPL to carry out the Director's functions under the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*.

These Guidelines are not issued as mandatory directions. The purpose of the Guidelines is to promote best practice for the collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety to achieve fair, timely and consistent outcomes for the protection of children in respect of matters including:

- referrals of *child protection matters* to the DCPL by Child Safety, including the form and content of a brief of evidence;
- procedures for dealing with *child protection matters*, including factors the DCPL must have regard to in deciding whether to apply for child protection orders;
- principles and procedures for the conduct of child protection proceedings, including procedures about the roles of the DCPL and Child Safety during the proceedings; and
- procedures about how Child Safety may seek an internal review of a decision of the DCPL for which written reasons are required to be given.

Where terms used in the Guidelines are defined in legislation such as *child in need of protection* that definition is adopted and the term is italicised. The relevant legislative reference is included in the definitions section at the end of the Guidelines (Appendix 1).

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Part 1 Role of the Director of Child Protection Litigation

1. The Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) is established by the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016* (the Act). The DCPL is an independent statutory officer located within the justice portfolio representing the State. The main functions of the DCPL are to:
 - a. prepare and apply for child protection orders (including applications to extend, vary or revoke child protection orders) and conduct child protection proceedings in the Childrens Court of Queensland;
 - b. prepare and apply for transfers of child protection orders or proceedings between Queensland and other participating States; and
 - c. prepare, institute and conduct appeals against decisions of the Childrens Court of Queensland on applications for child protection orders, and decisions to transfer a child protection order or child protection proceeding to a participating State.
2. The DCPL also has the following functions on request:
 - a. to provide legal advice to Child Safety in relation to the functions of Child Safety under the *Adoption Act 2009* and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (CP Act) and other matters relating to the safety, wellbeing or protection of a child;
 - b. to represent the State in legal proceedings under the *Adoption Act 2009* and the *Child Protection Act 1999*; and
 - c. to provide advice to the State about a matter to which that Convention of the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction applications under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth), section 111B, and to represent the State in proceedings relating to the matter.

Part 2 Role of the Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor

3. The Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) is a legal unit within Child Safety and is the principal point of contact for the DCPL. Key responsibilities of OCFOS include:
 - a. providing legal services and advice to Child Safety Service Centres (CSSC) about Child Safety's statutory functions relating to the protection of children;
 - b. applying for temporary assessment orders, court assessment orders and temporary custody orders (emergency orders);
 - c. working with CSSCs to prepare briefs of evidence for *child protection matters* that are being referred to the DCPL;
 - d. working in partnership with the DCPL to prepare matters for filing in the Childrens Court and providing ongoing consultation in the review and management of those matters; and
 - e. liaising with CSSCs and the DCPL as necessary to progress *child protection matters* in a timely manner consistent with the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.

Part 3 Principles of the Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016

4. The principles for administering the Act are contained in sections 5 and 6. A decision by the DCPL to apply for a child protection order or to refer a matter back to Child Safety may have profound implications for a child and their family. The principles apply to all actions taken and decisions made by the DCPL in the exercise of its statutory functions.

Part 4 Model litigant principles

5. As well as applying the principles of the Act, the DCPL, as a representative of the State, has a duty to exercise its statutory functions in accordance with model litigant principles.
6. Model litigant principles reflect the court's and the community's expectation that the State will conduct litigation in a way that is firm and fair. Model litigant principles state that fairness will be achieved when litigation is conducted promptly, efficiently, consistently and proportionately and in a manner that does not take advantage of another party's limited financial or other means. The model litigant principles are published on the Department of Justice and Attorney General's website and are available here: www.justice.qld.gov.au/justice-services/legal-services-coordination-unit/legal-service-directions-and-guidelines/model-litigant-principles
7. Child protection proceedings are unique and should not be conducted in a manner that is overly adversarial. Similarly, court outcomes should not be thought of in terms of 'winning' or 'losing' the case. Instead, the DCPL's overarching obligation is to assist the court to make a fully informed decision in accordance with the provisions of the CP Act and the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.
8. Whilst not an exhaustive list, in complying with its obligation to act as a model litigant the DCPL should:
 - a. ensure applications give fair and proper notice of the DCPL's case to parents, children (where appropriate) and other participants in proceedings;
 - b. ensure sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence is filed in support of applications, including evidence that does not support the applications;
 - c. ensure all relevant information is disclosed to other parties;
 - d. progress application as quickly as possible avoiding any unnecessary delay;
 - e. explore opportunities for early resolution of applications;
 - f. conduct child protection proceedings in a way that assists the court to make a fully informed decision about the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life;
 - g. conduct child protection proceedings in a way that is fair to other parties paying particular care not to take advantage of parties who are unrepresented; and
 - h. institute appeals that are consistent with the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life, and have a reasonable prospect of success.
9. Child Safety should assist the DCPL to comply with its model litigant obligations by:
 - a. providing the DCPL with all relevant information commencing with the referral of a *child protection matter* until the matter is finalised either by the Childrens Court of Queensland or by a referral back to Child Safety;
 - b. preparing affidavits that are balanced and fair including information that does not support the application, as well as information that supports the application;
 - c. taking reasonable steps to obtain further evidence or information requested by the DCPL;
 - d. ensuring the DCPL has up to date information about the child prior to court events; and
 - e. ensuring an officer with relevant case knowledge and authority attends all court events or is otherwise available by telephone.

Part 5 Collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety

10. The DCPL and Child Safety can promote good outcomes for children by working together collaboratively. Strong collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety is fundamental to the exercise of the DCPL's statutory functions in a way that promotes the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.²²
11. A strong and effective partnership between the DCPL and Child Safety is promoted by a mutual understanding and respect for each other's role in protecting Queensland's children who have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed from abuse and neglect. Child Safety has expertise and powers for the investigation and assessment of reported child abuse and neglect and statutory responsibility for providing and coordinating support services for the protection of children. The DCPL has expertise in preparing and applying for child protection orders, and conducting child protection proceedings. There is a clear separation between the Child Safety's investigation, assessment and casework responsibilities, and the DCPL's litigation responsibilities. Both agencies have a critical role to play in protecting and promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children in Queensland.
12. In addition to the importance of collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety generally, the relationship between the DCPL and OCFOS is particularly important. OCFOS has expertise in the assessment of the sufficiency of evidence to support an application for a child protection order and in the preparation of the brief of evidence accompanying a referral to the DCPL. The DCPL should work in partnership with OCFOS to finalise court material in preparation for filing in court and in the ongoing review and conduct of proceedings.
13. Strong collaboration between the DCPL and Child Safety will also be facilitated by the free flow of relevant information between both agencies so that decision making is underpinned by a comprehensive understanding of all of the circumstances of the case.

Part 6 Timeliness

14. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in a manner that is quick and efficient. Timeliness and avoiding unnecessary delay in decision making and the progress of child protection proceedings promotes the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children who are referred to the DCPL.

Chapter 2 – Referring a *child protection matter* to the DCPL

Part 1 Terminology

15. In this Chapter references to an application for a child protection order should be taken as also referring to an application to extend a child protection order and, where applicable, to an application to vary or revoke a child protection order. Chapter 8 of these Guidelines provides further guidance about an application to vary or revoke a child protection order.

²² This is reflected in the general principles of the Act at section 6(1)(a).

Part 2 Who can refer a child protection matter?

16. Only Child Safety, through OCFOS, or as otherwise directed by the Official Solicitor of OCFOS, can refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL. If an agency or a person other than Child Safety attempts to refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL, they should be advised to contact Child Safety who is responsible for conducting investigations and assessments, and providing and coordinating support services to children and families where a child is assessed to be a *child in need of protection*.

Part 3 When Child Safety must refer a child protection matter

17. Child Safety must refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL when satisfied:
- a. a child is a *child in need of protection*; and
 - b. a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - c. for a child that is subject to a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act)—that the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
 - d. for a child that is subject to a permanent care order—that the child's permanent guardian is not complying with their obligations under the order in a significant way and that the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for promoting the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.²³

Part 4 How a child protection matter can be referred

18. The preferred way for OCFOS to refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL is electronically.
19. Where the referral cannot be made electronically for any reason, a referred *child protection matter* can be hand delivered, faxed or posted to the DCPL.

Part 5 Telling the child's family about the referral

20. Where Child Safety refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL, they should tell the child's parents about the referral, explain why they have made the referral and what this means. Child Safety should also tell the child about the referral where Child Safety consider that is appropriate having regard to the child's age or ability to understand.

Part 6 Acknowledgment of receipt

21. The DCPL will provide a written acknowledgement of receipt of every referral, irrespective of how it was received. The written acknowledgement of receipt should be provided electronically within 24 hours of receiving the referral. If Child Safety do not receive this, they should contact the DCPL to confirm the referral has been received.

Part 7 A Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary

22. When Child Safety refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL, a completed 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form' should clearly and succinctly address the matters set out in section 16(1)(a), (b) or (c) of the Act as appropriate stating the material

²³ Section 15 of the Act.

facts underpinning the assessment and that are evidenced in the supporting documents. The 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form' should not re-produce passages contained in draft supporting affidavits, but may refer to relevant paragraphs of the supporting affidavits or to other relevant documents provided with the referral. Where the child is subject to an emergency order or a child protection order, a copy of the sealed order should be attached to the 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form'.

23. The 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form' should also:
- a. provide contact details for the relevant OCFOS and CSSC staff including afterhours contact details;
 - b. state whether Child Safety has applied for an emergency order for the child and the outcome of the application, including:
 - i. the type of emergency order;
 - ii. the date the emergency order ends; and
 - iii. if an emergency order was not made—what were the reasons;
 - c. state whether there is an existing child protection order for the child;
 - d. list all previous child protection orders that have been made for the child;
 - e. state whether there is a care agreement for the child;
 - ea. state whether there is no emergency order, existing order or care agreement for the child;
 - f. state whether there are other related proceedings²⁴ or orders, such as:
 - i. a proceeding in which a court is exercising jurisdiction conferred on the court under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth) for the child, or a family law order for the child;²⁵
 - ii. a proceeding under the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* if each party to the proceeding would be a party to any child protection proceeding, or a domestic violence order already in force if each party to the proceeding would be a party to any child protection proceeding;²⁶ and
 - iii. a proceeding before the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for an application for a review of a reviewable decision under the CP Act, including the decision that is the subject of the review application, and or any QCAT decision on an application for a review of a reviewable decision;²⁷
 - iv. related criminal law proceedings;²⁸
 - g. list any interim child protection order or orders under section 67 of the CP Act that Child Safety has assessed are necessary for the child's protection pending determination of any application made to court. The 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form' should state the key reasons why the interim order is necessary and

²⁴ Rule 70 of the *Childrens Court Rules 2016* (the Rules).

²⁵ Section 52(b) of the CP Act.

²⁶ Section 43 of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*.

²⁷ Section 247 and Schedule 2 of the CP Act.

²⁸ Section 103 of the CP Act.

the draft supporting affidavits should contain sufficient evidence to support the making of an interim child protection order or orders.

24. A 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form' is attached to these Guidelines.

Part 8 Brief of evidence

25. When Child Safety refers a *child protection matter* to the DCPL, the referral should also include a brief of evidence that includes:
- a. the reasons why the child is a *child in need of protection*; and
 - b. the reasons why a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; and
 - c. the type and length of child protection order or orders Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - d. for a child subject to a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act)—the reasons why the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or
 - e. for a child subject to a permanent care order—the reasons why the child's permanent guardian is not complying with their obligations under the order in a significant way and why the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for promoting the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.²⁹
- 25A. For a brief of evidence as outlined in guideline 25(a) to (c) in respect an assessment that a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act) in force should be extended, varied, or revoked and another order made in its place, where this would result in the child being in continuous care under a custody or short-term guardianship order for more than 2 years, the reasons should include how this is in the best interests of the child, and how reunification of the child to their family is reasonably achievable during the longer period of time.
26. Child Safety's brief of evidence should also provide:
- a. draft affidavits with attached exhibits evidencing the matters set out in section 16(1)(a), (b) or (c) of the Act as appropriate;
 - b. any other supporting documents that are available to Child Safety; and
 - c. all other documents relevant to the referral that are available to Child Safety at the time of the referral.
27. Affidavits are a critical component of the referral to the DCPL. Further guidance about preparing draft affidavits, including originating affidavits, is set out in Chapter 5 of these Guidelines.

Part 9 Confidential and sensitive information

28. When Child Safety refers a *child protection matter* to the DCPL that involves sensitive information that should not be disclosed to a parent, Child Safety is to make this clear on the 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form'. This includes circumstances where:

²⁹ Section 16(1)(a), (b) and (c) of the Act.

- a. Child Safety has made an administrative decision to withhold details of a carer's address from a parent; and
 - b. a parent's address is not known to the other parent and disclosure of the parent's address may endanger the parent's physical or psychological health.
29. Confidential information should be redacted from documents provided to the DCPL by Child Safety that are intended to be filed in a proceeding, such as exhibits to draft affidavits. This includes notifier details, carer's addresses (where Child Safety has made a decision to withhold this information) and third party details or information that could reasonably lead to the identification of these things.

Part 10 Referrals for a child subject to a child protection order

30. Where Child Safety decide to refer a child to the DCPL that is subject to a final child protection order, the referral should be made as soon as practicable and where possible not less than 20 business days before the child protection order ends.

Part 11 Referrals for a child subject to an emergency order

31. Where Child Safety decide to refer a child to the DCPL that is subject to an emergency order the referral should be made as soon as practicable and where possible no later than 24 hours prior to the emergency order ending.
32. If the brief of evidence is not complete by 24 hours before the order ends, the referral should still be made to the DCPL and the brief provided in its current form. The 24 hour period prior to the order ending allows the DCPL time to consider the referral, prepare the application and settle any affidavits. The DCPL and Child Safety also need time to liaise about the need for an extension of an emergency order to be sought by Child Safety. During this 24 hour period Child Safety can continue with the preparation of documents with further information being provided to the DCPL as it becomes available.
33. Where the emergency order is longer, for example a 28 day court assessment order, Child Safety should take reasonable steps to make the referral to the DCPL earlier than 24 hours before the order ends.
34. The DCPL and Child Safety should liaise closely to determine whether an extension of a temporary assessment order (not being followed by a court assessment order) or a temporary custody order should be sought by Child Safety so that the DCPL will be able to decide the most appropriate action to meet the child's ongoing protection and care needs and start taking that action. Where the DCPL has advised that the DCPL intends to apply for a child protection order and further time is needed, Child Safety should seek an extension from the court.³⁰
35. Reasons why a temporary custody order or an extension may be necessary include:
- a. so Child Safety can provide further information requested by the DCPL;
 - b. to finalise the application for a child protection order;
 - c. to finalise, compile and swear or affirm the supporting affidavit; or

³⁰ In granting an extension of a temporary assessment order or a temporary custody order, as well as being satisfied the DCPL intends to apply for a child protection order, under section 34(2) and 51AH(2) of the CP Act, the court needs to be satisfied the original grounds for making the order still exist.

- d. to obtain a further affidavit.
36. If the extension is not granted by the court, the DCPL should proceed to deal with the *child protection matter* before the emergency order ends.
37. Child Safety should ensure that relevant staff are available for urgent consultation when a child subject to an emergency order is referred to the DCPL.
38. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in a way that ensures that a child subject to an emergency order has their ongoing protection and care needs met.
39. A *child protection matter* referred to the DCPL that concerns a child that is subject to an emergency order must be dealt with by the DCPL deciding to either make an application for a child protection order, or refer the matter back to Child Safety before the emergency order ends.
40. The DCPL and Child Safety should liaise closely to ensure that any consultation takes place prior to the emergency order ending, and with sufficient time for the DCPL to deal with the *child protection matter*.
41. Close collaboration is particularly important for temporary assessment orders (that are not followed by a court assessment order) and temporary custody orders, both of which last for three business days with the possibility of extension for one business day. These orders may be extended for one business day only if the court is satisfied the DCPL has received a referred *child protection matter* and intends to apply for a child protection order.³¹ It is, therefore, important that Child Safety refers the *child protection matter* to the DCPL at the earliest possible opportunity.

Part 12 Referrals for a child subject to a care agreement

- 41A. Where Child Safety decide to refer a child to the DCPL that is subject to a care agreement, the *child protection matter* should be referred as soon as practicable to provide the DCPL with sufficient time to have any application filed and mentioned in court prior to the agreement ending. This timetabling will depend on the court location that any application may be filed.
- 41B. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in a way that ensures that a child subject to an agreement has their ongoing protection and care needs met, which may include Child Safety making an application for a temporary custody order.

Part 13 Referrals for a child subject to no order or care agreement

- 41C. Where Child Safety decide to refer a child to the DCPL that is subject to no order or care agreement, the *child protection matter* should be referred as soon as practicable with Child Safety providing the DCPL with a specific date by when any application the DCPL makes should be filed and mentioned in court. This timetabling will depend on the court location that any application may be filed.

³¹ Sections 34 and 51AH of the CP Act.

- 41D. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in a way that ensures that the child has their ongoing protection and care needs met, which may include Child Safety making an application for a temporary custody order.

Chapter 3 –Dealing with a *child protection matter*

Part 1 Initial review following referral of a child protection matter

42. The DCPL should conduct an initial review of the referral and supporting material as soon as practicable after receipt (unless the child is subject to an emergency order, which is dealt with in Chapter 2, Part 11 above). The DCPL's paramount consideration when conducting the review is the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.
43. The purpose of the initial review is to:
- a. assess the referral and the sufficiency of evidence to support the type of child protection order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection;
 - b. identify whether further information or evidence is required under section 17(2) of the Act prior to making a decision; and
 - c. identify whether consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety prior to the DCPL making a decision is necessary.
44. Where the DCPL agrees with the type of order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection and do not intend to request further evidence or information prior to making a decision, the DCPL should proceed to deal with the referred *child protection matter*.
45. Where the DCPL identifies an issue about the sufficiency of evidence to support the type of order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection or any other matter, the DCPL should contact Child Safety to initiate consultation.

Part 2 Consultation with Child Safety

46. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety as necessary to clarify any issues arising from the DCPL's initial review of the *child protection matter* before reaching a final decision about how to deal with the matter. Consultation should occur in a timely manner.
47. The DCPL must consult with Child Safety about relevant matters, including perceived gaps or weaknesses in the evidence, before deciding to:
- a. apply for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from, the order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection. This includes applying for a child protection order of a different duration to that which Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - b. refer the *child protection matter* back to Child Safety.³²

³² Section 18(1) of the Act.

48. If after consultation, Child Safety change the type of child protection order and/or duration of child protection order considered appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, Child Safety should provide written confirmation of this to the DCPL.

Part 3 Requests for further evidence or information to assist in decision making

49. The DCPL can request further evidence or information from Child Safety before making a decision about a referral.³³ For example, information about the impact of a parent's drug use on their capacity to meet the protection and care needs of the child.
50. Requests for further evidence or information prior to the DCPL making a decision should be made following the initial review of the referral or as soon as possible after that to ensure there is sufficient time for the request to be considered and actioned by Child Safety.
51. When the DCPL seek further evidence or information from Child Safety about a *child protection matter* before making a decision, the *child protection matter* should not be taken to have been referred back to Child Safety. A *child protection matter* is only referred back to Child Safety when the DCPL makes a final decision to refer the *child protection matter* back to Child Safety under section 17(1) of the Act instead of filing an application for a child protection order.
52. Section 23(2) of the Act requires Child Safety to take reasonable steps to provide the information requested by the DCPL. This applies to information requested under sections 17(2) and 23(1) of the Act. Child Safety should also take reasonable steps to provide further information requested by the DCPL as soon as possible.

Part 4 Making a decision about a child protection matter

53. The DCPL can deal with a *child protection matter* by:
- a. applying for a child protection order; or
 - b. referring the matter back to Child Safety.³⁴
54. Once a matter has been referred to the DCPL, Child Safety cannot withdraw the referral. The referral can only be dealt with by the DCPL.
55. If a child's circumstances change after a matter has been referred, and Child Safety is satisfied the child is no longer a *child in need of protection* and/or a child protection order is

³³ Sections 17(2) and 23(1) of the Act.

³⁴ Section 17(1) of the Act.

no longer appropriate and desirable, this information should be provided to the DCPL and this will be taken into account by the DCPL when making a decision about the matter.

Part 5 Factors the DCPL should have regard to

56. In deciding how to deal with a referred *child protection matter*, the DCPL should have regard to all of the information provided by Child Safety in the brief of evidence.
57. The DCPL should apply for a child protection order if the DCPL is satisfied there is sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence to establish on a prima facie basis that:
- a. the child is a *child in need of protection*; and
 - b. a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection.
58. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life, must be the DCPL's paramount consideration in deciding how to deal with a *child protection matter*. Other factors the DCPL should have regard to include:
- a. the sufficiency of evidence to establish that the child:
 - i. has suffered significant *harm*, is suffering significant *harm*, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant *harm*; and
 - ii. does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from *harm*;
 - b. the child's views and wishes;
 - c. whether the child's protection and care needs could be met by an order on less intrusive terms than the order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection. Relevant factors may include:
 - i. cultural considerations about how the proposed order may impact on the child's identity and future links to their family and community;
 - ii. the nature and impact of any support previously provided to the child and the child's parents by Child Safety or other agencies;
 - iii. progress made by the parents toward building their capacity to meet the child's protection and care needs;
 - iv. information available about a member of the child's family or community who may be a suitable person to be granted custody or guardianship of the child, and Child Safety's assessment about the suitability of that person including consultation with the person;
 - d. whether there is a case plan for the child that is appropriate for meeting the child's assessed protection and care needs;
 - e. the principles contained in sections 5B to 5E of the CP Act to the extent they are relevant, including the principles contained in section 5BA for achieving relational, physical and legal permanency for a child.
- 58A. If the child has been in the continuous care of the chief executive under a custody or guardianship order for approaching 2 years or more at the time of referral, the DCPL must not apply for a further short-term custodial or guardianship order unless satisfied this is in the best interests of the child and that reunification of the child to their family is reasonably achievable during the period of the further order.³⁵

³⁵ Section 62(5)(a) and (b) of the CP Act.

59. The DCPL should also identify and consider what other evidence or information not included in the brief of evidence may be available to support an application for a child protection order, and proceed with the application immediately with the further supporting evidence to be filed at a later time. This will be particularly relevant where the child is subject to an emergency order at the time of the referral of the *child protection matter* to the DCPL and a decision must be made urgently. For example, when the concerns relate to physical injuries to a child there may be detailed medical evidence that has not been obtained at the time the *child protection matter* is referred to the DCPL. This medical evidence may be necessary to support an allegation that the child has suffered physical *harm*, or to explain the likely cause of the injury. However, the DCPL should consider whether it is appropriate to apply for a child protection order, relying on preliminary medical information obtained by Child Safety from a doctor or the police, on the basis that when a detailed medical report has been prepared it will be obtained and filed in support of the application.

Part 6 Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children

60. The additional principles in section 5C of the CP Act apply to all decision making by the DCPL for Aboriginal children or Torres Strait Islander children. These principles recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have a right to be brought up within their own family and community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families have the best knowledge about the strengths and needs that exist in their families and communities. This underscores the importance of protecting and promoting an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child's connection to their family, culture and community. The section 5C principles state:
- a. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination;
 - b. the long-term effect of a decision on the child's identity and connection with the child's family and community must be taken into account; and
 - c. the following child placement principles apply in relation to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children:
 - i. the **prevention principle** – that a child has the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community;
 - ii. the **partnership principle** – that Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons have the right to participate in significant decisions under this Act about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children;
 - iii. the **placement principle** – that, if a child is to be placed in care, the child has a right to be placed with a member of the child's family group;
 - iv. the **participation principle** – that a child and the child's parents and family members have a right to participate, and be enabled to participate, in an administrative or judicial process for making a significant decision about the child; and
 - v. the **connection principle** – that a child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions and language, particularly when the child is in the care of a person who is not an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.
61. When the DCPL is making a significant decision about an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, the DCPL must have regard to the child placement principles and in consultation with the child and the child's family, arrange for an independent entity (independent person) for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision making process. However, the DCPL is not required to consult with and arrange for an independent person where the DCPL is satisfied:

- a. Child Safety has already complied with this requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child in relation to the significant decision, or
 - b. there is the following exceptional circumstances:
 - i. it is not practicable because an independent person is not available or urgent action is required to protect the child, or
 - ii. it is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the safety or psychological or emotional wellbeing of the child or any other person, or
 - iii. is otherwise not in the child's best interests, or
 - c. the child or the child's family does not consent to the ongoing involvement in the decision-making process of an independent person for the child.³⁶
62. Child Safety should include information in the brief of evidence provided with the referred *child protection matter* to assist the DCPL to have regard to the child placement principles and to be satisfied that Child Safety has in consultation with the child and the child's family, arranged for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family. If the DCPL require further information about the child's Aboriginal tradition or Island custom, the DCPL may request this from Child Safety and may also ask Child Safety to consult further with the child and the child's family on a specified matter. Where an independent person has been arranged for the child and the child's family, the independent person should facilitate this further consultation between Child Safety and the family. For example, the DCPL may consider that additional information about the child's connection to their family, culture, traditions, language and community is required.
63. Where Child Safety has been unable to arrange for an independent person because it has not been practicable as an independent person is not available or urgent action is required to protect the child, Child Safety should advise the DCPL. In these circumstances, Child Safety or the DCPL should in consultation with the child and the child's family, arrange for an independent person as soon as practicable after the referral of the *child protection matter* has been made to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision-making process.³⁷ If the DCPL undertakes this consultation with the family facilitated by their independent person in the absence of Child Safety, DCPL should provide Child Safety with a summary of what was discussed during the consultation.
64. If the DCPL propose to make a decision on a referred *child protection matter* that is different from the type of child protection order Child Safety considers appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, including referring the matter back to Child Safety, where time permits, there should be further consultation between Child Safety and the family, facilitated by the family's independent person about the decision the DCPL proposes to make. Child Safety should provide the DCPL with the outcome of the consultation for consideration by the DCPL in decision making about the referred *child protection matter*.
65. When the Childrens Court exercises a power under the CP Act in relation to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, section 6AB provides that the court must have regard to:
- a. Aboriginal tradition and Island custom relating to the child; and
 - b. the child placement principles in relation to the child.
- To inform itself, the court may have regard to the views of an independent person for the child, the child, or a member of the child's family.

³⁶ Section 6AA of the CP Act.

³⁷ Section 6(3) of the CP Act.

66. An independent person, or the child, or a member of the child's family can provide their views about Aboriginal tradition and Island custom to the court orally or in writing.³⁸

Part 7 Referring a matter back

67. When the DCPL refers a *child protection matter* back to Child Safety, the DCPL's involvement is at an end. The DCPL cannot give directions to Child Safety about how to deal with the child's case when referring a *child protection matter* back to Child Safety.
68. When referring a *child protection matter* back to Child Safety, the DCPL should provide written feedback to Child Safety about the reasons why the DCPL decided not to apply for a child protection order, including any issues with the sufficiency, relevance and appropriateness of evidence and how this may be addressed. In circumstances where Child Safety do not agree that the matter should be referred back, this information should be included in the written reasons provided to Child Safety under section 18 of the Act (see Chapter 3, Part 10 of the Guidelines). Where Child Safety agree that the matter should be referred back, the DCPL should include this information in the decision notification referred to in guideline 75. Child Safety may request that the DCPL conduct an internal review of the decision to refer a matter back using Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form attached to these Guidelines.
69. A *child protection matter* that is referred back to Child Safety, can be referred by Child Safety to the DCPL again at any time if:
- a. further information is obtained by Child Safety that is material to determining whether the child is a *child in need of protection* and/or whether a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - b. for a child that is subject to a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act)—further information is obtained by Child Safety that is material to determining whether the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - c. there is a material change in the child's circumstances; or
 - d. other relevant information or circumstances indicate the DCPL should consider the matter again.

Part 8 Notification of decision

70. When the DCPL makes a decision about a *child protection matter*, prompt written notice of the decision should be provided electronically to Child Safety as soon as practicable, and at the latest by the next business day. If the DCPL has been required to consult with Child Safety about applying for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable, or referring the matter back, Child Safety should provide written confirmation to the DCPL of whether the decision has been with the agreement of Child Safety.

Part 9 Telling the child's family about the DCPL's decision

71. Child Safety should tell the child's parents about the DCPL's decision and explain what the decision means. Child Safety should also tell the child about the DCPL's decision where

³⁸ Rule 49A(2) of the Rules.

Child Safety consider that is appropriate having regard to the child's age or ability to understand.

72. Where the DCPL's decision relates to an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, Child Safety should advise the child's parents and the child if appropriate having regard to the child's age or ability to understand of the DCPL's decision, in a way that allows their full participation, and in a place that is appropriate to Aboriginal tradition or Island custom.

Part 10 Written reasons for decision

73. In addition to notifying Child Safety about the outcome of a referral, under section 18(2) of the Act, the DCPL must also provide written reasons to Child Safety when the DCPL decide without the agreement of Child Safety to:
- apply for a child protection order of a different type, or that is otherwise different, from the order that Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; or
 - refer a matter back to Child Safety.
74. For example, written reasons are required if without Child Safety's agreement the:
- DCPL decide not to apply for a child protection order and refer the matter back to Child Safety;
 - DCPL decide to apply for a child protection order granting long-term guardianship of the child to the chief executive, but Child Safety considered that an application for a short-term guardianship order was appropriate and desirable; or
 - DCPL decide to apply for a child protection order of the same type but for a different duration to what Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable.
75. The DCPL lawyer that made the decision must complete the 'Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form' attached to these Guidelines, which should include in clear and unambiguous language the reasons why and the evidence relied upon by the DCPL when deciding to:
- apply for a child protection order of a different type, or that is otherwise different, to that considered appropriate and desirable by Child Safety; or
 - refer the *child protection matter* back to Child Safety.
76. The DCPL is to provide the 'Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form' to Child Safety within five business days of the date of decision unless the decision relates to a child that is subject to:
- a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act) that is ending within one week of the date of decision; or
 - an emergency order.
77. Where the child is subject to a final child protection order that is ending within 10 business days of the date of decision, or an emergency order, the written reasons must be provided at the same time as the notification of the decision.
78. If after consultation Child Safety agree with the DCPL's decision about the *child protection matter*, written reasons are not required. If there is no agreement to the DCPL applying for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable, Child Safety may request that the DCPL

conduct an internal review of the decision to refer a matter back using Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form attached to these Guidelines.

Chapter 4 – Ongoing collaboration following a decision to apply for a child protection order

Part 1 Preparing the case for filing

79. Where the DCPL decide to apply for a child protection order, the DCPL and Child Safety should work together closely and efficiently to ensure the application and supporting affidavit are finalised and filed as quickly as possible, prior to the expiry of any current order for the child.
80. In particular, the DCPL and Child Safety should liaise closely to progress the following tasks:
- a. any requests for further information, including requests for further affidavits, under section 23(1) of the Act;
 - b. the settling of an affidavit in support by the DCPL;
 - c. any consultation necessary to progress the case;
 - d. swearing or affirming an affidavit in support; and
 - e. providing a copy of the sworn or affirmed affidavit to the DCPL electronically.
81. Affidavits prepared by Child Safety should comply with Part 8, Division 2 of the *Childrens Court Rules 2016* (the Rules). In particular
- a. all pages of the affidavit, including exhibits, should be paginated;
 - b. as far as practicable, where there is more than one documentary exhibit, the exhibits should:
 - i. be bound in one or more paginated books;
 - ii. have a certificate in the approved form on or attached to the front of the book; and
 - iii. have an index to the book immediately after the certificate.
82. Child Safety should ensure that a copy of sworn or affirmed affidavits are provided to the DCPL electronically as soon as practicable, so as to provide sufficient time for filing in court prior to the expiry of any current emergency or final child protection order. Child Safety should keep the original on file and if required, provide it to the DCPL to provide it to the court, unless there is an agreement between the DCPL and Child Safety at a particular location.

Part 2 Requests for further information

83. After receipt of a referred *child protection matter*, the DCPL can request Child Safety provide further information from any time until the application for a child protection order has been decided or otherwise determined by the court.³⁹ This includes requests for further affidavits after an application has been filed in preparation for a court event, including a final hearing. It also includes information that may not be in Child Safety's possession at the time of the request. Section 23(2) of the Act requires Child Safety to take reasonable steps to provide the information requested by the DCPL. Child Safety should also take reasonable steps to provide further information requested by the DCPL as quickly as possible.

³⁹ Section 23(1) of the Act.

Part 3 Requests for independent expert assessments

84. When the DCPL decide that an independent expert assessment is necessary to support an application for a child protection order, they should notify Child Safety promptly.
85. Section 23(2) of the Act requires Child Safety to provide information to the DCPL, including an independent expert assessment, where it is reasonable to expect Child Safety to take that step in all of the circumstances of the case.
86. Where Child Safety agree the independent expert assessment is necessary, Child Safety and the DCPL should work together to identify the expert and develop the terms of reference, although Child Safety are ultimately responsible for deciding the content of the terms of reference.
87. Where Child Safety do not agree that an independent expert assessment (or other information requested by the DCPL) is necessary, there should be consultation between DCPL and Child Safety to explore whether there may be other ways to obtain relevant information, such as through a request by Child Safety under section 159N of the CP Act or by way of subpoena.
88. If after consultation Child Safety decide not to engage an independent expert assessment or provide the information requested, this may have implications for the DCPL's assessment of the sufficiency of evidence to support an application for a child protection order.
89. To avoid any doubt, where an independent expert assessment of a person is requested and organised by Child Safety, but the assessment cannot be completed because the person does not consent to participate, Child Safety will have taken reasonable steps to provide the information requested by the DCPL. This assumes the person has refused consent after being fully informed about the nature and purpose of the assessment in a way that is appropriate to support their informed consent.

Chapter 5 – Affidavit evidence

Part 1 Affidavits generally

90. Affidavits should be prepared in a manner that is balanced and fair. As well as including evidence that supports the application, affidavits should also include evidence that does not support the application. It should be apparent that this positive or contrary information has been taken into account in the assessment of the child.
91. Affidavits should contain only relevant information and should be well-structured. They should not be repetitive, and should not contain legal argument.
92. As far as possible, affidavits should not contain hearsay evidence. If an affidavit is to contain a statement based on information and belief, it must include the sources of the information and the grounds for the belief.

Part 2 Originating affidavits

93. The originating affidavit should:
- a. include sufficient evidence to establish that the child is a *child in need of protection*. For example, in risk of *harm* cases there should be sufficient evidence to establish each concern giving rise to an unacceptable risk of significant *harm* to a child. Where it is alleged that a parent's drug use is causing an unacceptable risk of harm to a child, the affidavit should contain sufficient evidence to prove that allegation to the requisite standard (the balance of probabilities). Evidence may include results of drug screen testing, criminal histories, information from police such as police occurrence summaries, observations of Child Safety staff or of other agencies, information from health care providers or drug treatment services or statements made by the parent;
 - b. include sufficient evidence to establish that there is no parent able and willing to protect the child from *harm*. This includes evidence of how the concerns impact on the parent's ability to meet the child's protection and care needs. There should be an assessment in respect of each parent, or where the identity or whereabouts of a parent is not known, the affidavit should evidence the reasonable steps taken by Child Safety to ascertain the identity and whereabouts of a parent; and
 - c. focus on current concerns. Evidence of a previous or resolved child protection concern should only be included if it is relevant to the current assessment in some way. The affidavit should make it clear that the concern is resolved, or there is no evidence that the concern is current, however, the relevance must be explained.
94. The originating affidavit should also contain information including but not limited to:
- a. the needs of the child and how these are being met;
 - b. the views and wishes of the child, and how they have been taken into account in the circumstances and having regard to the child's age or ability to understand;
 - c. the nature and impact of any support previously provided to the child and the child's parents by Child Safety or other agencies where relevant;
 - d. the parents' compliance with case plan actions and progress made including attendance at contact visits where relevant;
 - e. the living and contact arrangements for the child, including contact with siblings and extended family, and how they meet the child's needs (this is an express requirement for long-term guardianship or a permanent care order for the child under section 59(1)(b)(iii) of the CP Act);
 - f. why the order sought is necessary, including an assessment of why the child's care and protection could not be achieved by less intrusive means;
 - g. for a long-term guardianship order in favour of the chief executive, why guardianship could not properly be granted to another suitable person under a long-term guardianship or a permanent care for the child in preference to the chief executive; and
 - h. for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, information about:
 - i. the consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to self-determination and the long-term effect of an assessment on the child's identity and that their connection with their family and community has been taken into account;
 - ii. how the assessment upholds the child placement principles,
 - iii. how any decision to apply for a permanent care order has been made if appropriate in consultation with the child, and
 - iv. Child Safety's engagement and consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child in relation to making significant decisions for the child.

Part 3 Complying with rule 13

- 94A Rule 13 reflects the general principle that the DCPL should consider whether there is sufficient, relevant and appropriate evidence available to decide whether to make an application for a child protection order, which is linked to one of the policy objectives of establishing the DCPL, to ensure that child protection applications filed in court are supported by good quality evidence, promoting efficiency and evidence-based decision making.
- 94B Rule 13(2) provides a prescriptive list of the types of documents (see Guideline 95) that the DCPL must consider filing as an exhibit to an affidavit in a proceeding, which is then limited under rule 13(3), to only the documents in the possession or control of Child Safety that are also relevant to the proceeding.
95. If the documents listed in rule 13(2) of the Rules are in the possession of Child Safety and are relevant to the referral, these documents should be exhibited to a draft affidavit accompanying the referral. The documents required by rule 13 are:
- a. the assessment of the alleged *harm*, or alleged risk of *harm*, to the child carried out by Child Safety that formed the basis of the referral of the *child protection matter* to the DCPL, including the outcome of that assessment;
 - b. the most recent strengths and needs assessment for the child and the child's parents;
 - c. documents relating to the most recently completed family group meeting for the child including a case plan if a plan was developed at the meeting;
 - d. previous applications or orders made for the child under the CP Act, including temporary assessment orders or court assessment orders;
 - e. referrals to an external agency that provides support to the child or a member of the child's family, such as Queensland Health or a domestic and family violence service;
 - f. any independent assessment or report about the child or the child's parent, such as a psychological or psychiatric assessment or a social assessment report;
 - g. the child's birth certificate;
 - h. any child protection history report of a person relevant to the proceeding; and
 - i. any criminal history, domestic violence history or traffic history of a person relevant to the proceeding.
96. If it is not practicable for Child Safety to provide a draft affidavit exhibiting the documents listed in rule 13 with the referral, this must be provided to the DCPL as soon as practicable afterward, as unless otherwise provided for, they must be filed within 10 business days after the first appearance for an application. In addition, the 'Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form' should include a brief explanation for this and indicate when the draft affidavit is likely to be provided to the DCPL. This information will be used to determine whether an extension of time must be sought from the court and the length of time required.

Part 4 Affidavits prepared after the application is filed

97. Affidavits prepared after the application is filed have the principal purpose of updating the court about matters relevant to the application. Unless otherwise agreed, all affidavits, including updating and hearing affidavits should be reviewed and settled by the DCPL before being sworn or affirmed. These affidavits should not exhibit documents that have been exhibited to earlier affidavits filed in the proceeding. These should be comprised of direct rather than hearsay evidence wherever possible. If an affidavit is to contain a statement based on information and belief, it must include the sources of the information and the

grounds for the belief. Where the DCPL request Child Safety prepare a further affidavit ahead of a court event, in the absence of a filing direction, unless otherwise agreed, a draft affidavit should be provided to the DCPL 7 business days before the court event. This will allow the DCPL 2 business days to settle the affidavit, then Child Safety 2 business days to finalise and return it to DCPL for filing, and then service of the affidavit no later than three business days before the court event to which the affidavit relates.

- 97A. In circumstances where the court is hearing 2 or more applications for orders together⁴⁰ and a subject child dies during the proceedings, Child Safety are to prepare a separate affidavit evidencing the death. This will enable the DCPL to seek permission to withdraw the application in a way that is considerate and compassionate.⁴¹

Part 5 Preparing and exhibiting a child protection history report

98. A child protection history report can provide important information to the court in a case where a child or the child's parent is previously known to Child Safety (or to a child protection agency in another State). It is understood that Child Safety assessments will consider all of the child's circumstances, including things that happened in the past where relevant.
99. However, a child protection history report that is to be filed in support of an application should be prepared with care. The essence of the task is to balance the requirement to properly inform the court of the broader context in which the current application should be decided; against the requirement to present relevant and, reliable evidence to the court, and to be fair to other parties.
100. A decision about what information to include should be made on a case by case basis. It is not as simple as including substantiated concerns and leaving out unsubstantiated concerns. Unsubstantiated concerns may be relevant in a particular case. For example, where:
- a. the concern was not substantiated at the time of the original investigation and assessment, however, the information is relevant to the current assessment because the concern is the same; and
 - b. there was a positive assessment of a parent's willingness and ability to protect the child (particularly if the concern is of a similar nature to the current concerns).
101. Child Safety should exercise caution when including information where no steps were taken to investigate the veracity or reliability of the information.
102. If, in preparing a child protection history report, information is not included, for reasons including those set out above, the child protection history report should make this clear, for example, by being titled 'relevant child protection history report'.

Part 6 Information received under Chapter 5A - Part 4 Information Sharing - of the CP Act

103. Where written information received by Child Safety under sections 159MB, 159MC, 159ME or 159N of the CP Act has been taken into account in the assessment, or is relevant to the referral to the DCPL, that document should be attached to a Child Safety affidavit as an

⁴⁰ Section 115 of the CP Act.

⁴¹ Section 57A of the CP Act.

exhibit in preference to describing the contents of the document in the affidavit. Consent of the entity or service provider to use the document in court proceedings should be obtained and information relating to how it was sought or obtained should be set out in the affidavit. If consent is not obtained, the information may still be attached to a Child Safety affidavit, because a child's safety wellbeing and best interests are paramount, and the child's protection and care needs take precedence over the protection of an individual's privacy.

104. Where information is received by Child Safety orally under sections 159MB, 159MC, 159ME or 159N of the CP Act, Child Safety should ask the entity or service provider to provide the information in writing and seek their consent to use the document for the purposes of court proceedings. Where this is not practicable or where the entity or service provider is unwilling to provide the information in writing, or to consent to the use of their written information, Child Safety should make a case note of the conversation and attach the case note as an exhibit to the affidavit. After the application has been filed, the DCPL can consider issuing a subpoena to the entity or service provider for the production of documents relevant to the proceeding.

Part 7 Section 105(1) of the CP Act - rule against hearsay

105. Pursuant to section 105(1) of the CP Act, the Childrens Court is not bound by the rules of evidence, but may inform itself in any way it thinks appropriate. This does not mean that the rules of evidence do not apply. The Childrens Court must conduct proceedings in a manner that ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness. The rules of evidence should, therefore, be adhered to wherever possible, including the rule against hearsay.
106. This means that, wherever possible, evidence should be tendered by the person with direct knowledge of the matter. For example, evidence about the child's contact with a parent should be provided by the person who supervised the contact, such as the child safety support officer providing an affidavit exhibiting their case note of the contact. This is preferable to the information being provided in a hearsay form in the allocated child safety officer's affidavit prepared from Child Safety case notes. If a standalone affidavit is unable to be obtained, a report, letter or case note prepared by the person with direct knowledge of the matter should be exhibited to a Child Safety affidavit. Only in circumstances when an affidavit, report, letter or case note cannot be obtained should the hearsay evidence of the person be included in the affidavit of a Child Safety officer. Where there is a relevant contemporaneous case note, for example of a telephone conversation between a child safety officer and a doctor, it should be attached as an exhibit to the affidavit.
107. Sometimes a person with direct knowledge of the matter may be reluctant to provide an affidavit because they have a relationship with the child or the child's parent, which they do not want to compromise, such as a family support worker.
108. Where the relationship may be damaged if the person provides evidence to the court, the DCPL and Child Safety should consider whether the evidence is necessary, even if it is relevant. If, for example, the case is strong without this evidence, the DCPL may decide not to seek the affidavit or not to seek the affidavit until later in the proceedings when it becomes clear it is necessary. In deciding how to deal with this type of information, the DCPL and Child Safety should have regard to the relationship between the child or parent and the person and, as much as possible, proceed in a way that preserves that relationship.

109. Where the DCPL decide the evidence of a person working with or who has a therapeutic relationship with the child or the child's parent is necessary, Child Safety should ensure the person understands why they are being asked to provide an affidavit so they can make an informed decision about whether to provide an affidavit. It may assist to explain to a person who has reservations about providing an affidavit that:
- a. their evidence is relevant and necessary for the court to make a fully informed decision in the best interests of the child; and
 - b. they are being asked to detail relevant factual matters, or opinions where appropriate, for the court's consideration. They are not being asked to take a position against a parent. Their observations or opinions that do not support the application are as relevant as ones that do.
110. The preference for direct evidence does not apply to the evidence of children. There are statutory provisions that provide when a child may give evidence in a child protection proceeding. Only subject children aged 12 years and over can give evidence or be cross-examined; and that this can only happen with the leave of the court, if the child is represented by a lawyer, and if the child agrees.⁴² Also, a person can only ask a child, other than a child who is a respondent, to swear or affirm an affidavit with the leave of the court.⁴³ It follows that it will almost always be preferable for the DCPL to provide a child's evidence to the court in a hearsay form in the affidavit of a Child Safety officer or other appropriate witness.
111. Care should be taken when including things children say about their parents in the 'child's wishes and views' section of an affidavit. The child's relationship with their parents will continue after the litigation has ended, and, as much as possible, should not be adversely affected by the litigation process. Relevant paragraphs should be drafted with care with a view to balancing the requirement to ensure this information is before the court with the importance of preserving enduring family relationships for the child. Often this will come down to not 'what' is said but 'how' it is said.
112. To avoid any doubt, evidence of the child's wishes and views is different from evidence of things the child said that comprise part of the evidence of *harm* or unacceptable risk of *harm*. For example, the child's views about where they are staying or their contact with their parents can be distinguished from disclosures the child has made about *harm* caused to them by a parent. Although this evidence of *harm* will normally be provided in a hearsay form, it is clearly relevant and necessary evidence for the court.

Chapter 6 - The court process

Part 1 Court case management framework

113. The court case management framework is comprised of three parts:
- a. The Rules;
 - b. The Bench Book; and
 - c. Practice Directions made by the Chief Magistrate.

⁴² Section 112 of the CP Act.

⁴³ Rule 81 of the Rules.

114. Part 7 of the Rules is dedicated to court case management. It provides a framework for how the court must manage a proceeding to ensure the proceeding is resolved in accordance with the objects of the Rules.
115. The overarching objective of the court case management framework is to promote the fair and expeditious resolution of child protection proceedings and to reduce unnecessary delay.
116. The specific aims of the court case management framework are to ensure:
- a. parties to child protection proceedings understand their rights, responsibilities and the court process
 - b. there are more consistent and transparent court processes;
 - c. the court focuses on the best interests of the child; and
 - d. the court actively manages proceedings with assistance from parties.
117. The DCPL and Child Safety should work in partnership to promote the aims of the court case management framework. For example, the DCPL and Child Safety should work together to:
- a. comply with timeframes fixed by the court for the completion of steps in a proceeding; and
 - b. assist the child, if they are participating in the proceeding, and the child's parents to understand their rights, responsibilities and the court process, particularly where they are unrepresented.

Part 2 Filing documents in court

118. The DCPL is responsible for filing all of the applicant's material in court, including the application and supporting affidavits (originating documents). A document must be received by the relevant court registry by 4:30pm on a day the registry is open for business for the document to be taken to be filed in the registry that day.⁴⁴ Child Safety should ensure that electronic copies of executed affidavits are provided to the DCPL as soon as practicable having regard to filing deadlines.
119. After originating documents are received back from the registry, the DCPL should provide Child Safety with a copy of the sealed:
- a. application; and
 - b. front sheet of the affidavit showing the court's seal and the filing date.
120. These documents should be provided to Child Safety electronically. As the proceeding progresses, the DCPL should also provide Child Safety with a copy of any other filed document electronically as soon as practicable after sealed copies are received from the registry.
121. Where documents are filed electronically, Child Safety will be responsible for making copies of the sealed documents for service on the respondents. Where the DCPL file documents by delivering them to the registry personally or by post, and the registry issues sealed copies, these will be provided to Child Safety for service on the respondents.

⁴⁴ Rule 17 of the Rules.

Part 3 Service of documents filed by the DCPL

Division 1 Service of documents generally

122. Generally, Child Safety will serve originating documents and other documents filed by the DCPL on the parties to a proceeding, however, other arrangements can be decided on a case by case basis. The exception to this is subpoenas to produce a document or thing, which will be served on the subpoena recipient by the DCPL.
123. Child Safety, wherever practicable, should personally serve a copy of the application on the child's parents.⁴⁵ Personal service, particularly of originating material, is important because of the intrusive nature of the order sought, the likely vulnerability of the child's parents, and the fact they are often not represented by a lawyer at that stage of the proceeding. Child Safety should also tell the child about the application in a manner and to the extent that is appropriate having regard to the child's age and ability to understand.⁴⁶
124. Although the child is a party to the proceeding, the Rules provide that, subject to the Act, they may only be served with documents filed in the proceedings if:
- a. they are participating in the proceeding; or
 - b. the court has ordered it.⁴⁷
125. A person who personally serves a document on the child's parents should:
- a. explain what the documents are and what the proceedings are about;
 - b. tell the child's parents when the first/next court date is;
 - c. encourage the child's parents to obtain legal advice and give them information about how to contact their local Legal Aid Queensland office or other local community legal service, or if the parent is Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, assisting them to seek assistance from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS);
 - d. tell the child's parents they may bring a support person to court, although whether the person is allowed to be present in the court is at the discretion of the court; and
 - e. tell the child's parents they can ask the court for permission to attend a court event by telephone or audio visual link if, for example, it will be difficult for them to attend in person. Child Safety should also provide the parents with information about how they can make the request where the parents indicate they may make a request.⁴⁸
126. Where Child Safety staff are serving documents filed by the DCPL, they should complete service of the documents as soon as practicable, and no later than three business days before the court event to which the documents relate.⁴⁹ If Child Safety are unable to comply with this timescale, they should advise the DCPL. If a party is represented by a lawyer in the proceeding, the DCPL will serve their lawyer, this includes separate representatives.
127. After Child Safety staff have effected service of documents filed by the DCPL, the Child Safety staff member who served the documents should provide an affidavit of service. The affidavit should be executed as quickly as possible after service has been effected, and be provided to the DCPL electronically with the original to follow by post or hand delivery.

⁴⁵ Section 56 of the CP Act.

⁴⁶ Sections 56 and 195 of the CP Act.

⁴⁷ Rule 25(2) of the Rules.

⁴⁸ Rule 48 of the Rules.

⁴⁹ Rule 26(2) of the Rules.

Division 2 Service on guardians and the public guardian

128. Where the DCPL is required to serve a document on a person in a proceeding, and the DCPL know the person has a guardian, the document must be served on the guardian.⁵⁰ To assist the DCPL to comply with this obligation, Child Safety should advise the DCPL that a parent has a guardian when this is known to them. Where Child Safety reasonably believe a parent has impaired capacity but they are unsure whether the parent has a guardian, they should take steps to ascertain whether the parent has a guardian, for example, by contacting the QCAT registry to find out if QCAT has appointed a guardian for the parent.
129. If the DCPL reasonably believe a parent has impaired capacity but they are unsure whether the parent has a guardian, they should take steps to ascertain whether the parent has a guardian by seeking information from Child Safety or making enquiries themselves.
130. Where the public guardian has given written notice of an intention to appear in a child protection proceeding under section 108B(2) of the CP Act, they should be treated as a party, which includes serving them with copies of all documents filed by the DCPL in the proceedings.⁵¹

Part 4 Duty of disclosure

Division 1 Duty of Disclosure

131. The DCPL has a duty to make full and early disclosure to the parties of all documents in the possession or control of the DCPL that are relevant to a child protection proceeding. This includes applications to make, vary, extend and revoke a child protection order. It also includes applications where the DCPL is a respondent, such as an application to revoke a child protection order made by a parent.⁵² The DCPL should be proactive and forthcoming in discharging its duty of disclosure, which continues until the proceeding is decided.⁵³ However, the DCPL may refuse to disclose a relevant document in certain circumstances. This is discussed in part 4, division 6 below.
132. The duty of disclosure is intended to ensure the DCPL conducts proceedings on behalf of the State fairly and transparently, in a manner that does not disadvantage other parties, particularly in circumstances where they are not represented by a lawyer. Disclosure also ensures parties to a proceeding are equipped with relevant information so they can respond to the DCPL's case effectively.
133. In practice, the DCPL's duty of disclosure is a shared responsibility between the DCPL and Child Safety. Child Safety has a duty to disclose to the DCPL all information that is relevant to a proceeding that is in Child Safety's possession or control. This is also an ongoing duty that continues until the proceeding is finally decided or otherwise ends.⁵⁴ The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in a timely way to ensure the duty is complied with and that any directions of the court about disclosure can be fulfilled.

⁵⁰ Rule 33 of the Rules.

⁵¹ Rule 39 of the Rules.

⁵² Section 189C(1) and the definition of *child protection order* in Schedule 3 of the CP Act.

⁵³ Section 189C of the CP Act.

⁵⁴ Section 24 of the Act.

134. This means that all relevant documents that come into the possession or control of Child Safety after the DCPL has provided initial disclosure, should be provided to the DCPL for the purposes of disclosure. This is important to ensure the DCPL complies with its duty of disclosure and the model litigant principles generally. Further, the DCPL cannot tender a Child Safety document in a proceeding that has not been disclosed without the leave of the court.⁵⁵

Division 2 Duty to disclose relevant documents in DCPL's possession or control

135. 'Relevance' combined with 'possession or control' set the parameters of the DCPL's overarching duty of disclosure. Every document in Child Safety's possession or control about a child will not necessarily be relevant to a proceeding. To be relevant, the document must be relevant to the matters in issue in the proceeding. A document will be relevant if it tends to prove or disprove an allegation in issue. This includes a document that is likely to be relevant to a party's response to the applicant's case.
136. If a document is not relevant to an allegation in issue, it does not have to be disclosed. When documents contain information that is both relevant and not relevant to a proceeding, the whole document should be disclosed.
137. Possession or control refers to documents that are physically held by the DCPL and Child Safety, and documents that either agency is able to exercise power or command over such as emails, electronic documents and other documents that lack a physical form. It does not include documents that Child Safety has a power to obtain, such as information that can be requested under section 159N of the CP Act. A document in Child Safety's possession or control is deemed to be in the possession or control of the DCPL.⁵⁶

Division 3 Disclosure Form

138. Under rule 52 of the Rules, the DCPL must file and serve the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' attached to these Guidelines on each party to a child protection proceeding. The DCPL may file and serve a 'Form D – Disclosure Form' at any time on its own initiative or as directed by the court. Subject to a direction of the court to the contrary, the DCPL must file and serve the Disclosure Form on the parties within 20 days of the first mention date for the proceeding.⁵⁷ As set out in Guideline 127 above, Child Safety will generally undertake service of the Disclosure Form on the parties, however, other arrangements may be agreed on a case by case basis.
139. The 'Form D – Disclosure Form' includes two lists of documents. The first list is found in Box A, and is comprised of the types of documents that are normally held by Child Safety. The second list is found in Box B, and is a list of specific documents that the DCPL has identified are relevant and should be disclosed. The second list may include a document that:
- a. does not fall within the types of documents contained in the first list; or
 - b. falls within the types of documents contained in the first list, however, because of its particular relevance, the DCPL decide to list it as a specific document that can be requested.

⁵⁵ Section 189D of the CP Act.

⁵⁶ Section 189C(7) of the CP Act.

⁵⁷ Rule 52 of the Rules.

140. If the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' does not list any documents in Box B, Box B should be deleted.
141. To assist the DCPL to comply with the requirement to file the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' within 20 days of the first mention, Child Safety should provide electronically all relevant documents at the time of the referral and then continue to provide all relevant documents on an ongoing basis, such as:
- a. the documents that Child Safety consider should be exhibited in compliance with Rule 13 ;
 - b. other relevant documents in their possession or control that could be disclosed. Child Safety's approach to determining relevance should be inclusive. This means that if Child Safety staff are unsure whether a document is relevant they should provide it to the DCPL;
 - c. correspondence and emails;
 - d. relevant documents that Child Safety assess the DCPL should refuse to disclose under section 191(2) of the CP Act. Child Safety should provide documents that contain confidential information that require redaction before being disclosed. This includes notifier details, carer's addresses (where Child Safety has made a decision to withhold this information) and third party details or information that could reasonably lead to the identification of these things; and
 - e. advise the DCPL of any document Child Safety assess should be listed as a specific document on the 'Form D – Disclosure Form', because it falls outside the types of documents in the first list or because of the document's particular relevance.
142. Child Safety should provide written confirmation to the DCPL as soon as practicable after the above tasks have been completed. If the DCPL believe there may be other relevant documents that have not been provided, the DCPL should consult with OCFOS about this.
143. If the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' lists any documents in Box B, the DCPL should provide OCFOS with a copy of the draft Disclosure Form before it is filed, so OCFOS can provide any feedback to the DCPL before it is filed and served.
144. Where a party is unrepresented, the 'Form D - Disclosure Form' should be served on them personally wherever practicable. This is so the disclosure process, including how they can make a request for disclosure, can be explained. In addition, the party should be shown the information section at the end of the Disclosure Form, and be encouraged to obtain independent legal advice. Child Safety will normally serve the Disclosure Form on unrepresented parties. The DCPL may, however, attend to service of the Disclosure Form where this can be done at a court event.
145. Where a respondent's address is not known to the other respondent/s, it must be redacted from the copy of the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' served on the other respondent/s.
146. A copy of the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form' attached to these Guidelines, should be provided with the Disclosure Form when it is served on a party to the proceeding.
147. The filing and service of the 'Form D – Disclosure Form' in a proceeding is unlikely to be sufficient to discharge the DCPL's duty of disclosure. The proactive and ongoing nature of the DCPL's duty of disclosure under the Act is reflected in the Rules, which say that the

DCPL may disclose a document at any time.⁵⁸ The DCPL does not have to wait for the return of the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form' before providing disclosure, particularly in a case where there is not a large number of relevant disclosable documents. In these cases the DCPL may provide early disclosure by giving a copy of the relevant disclosable documents to the parties at the earliest opportunity.

Division 4 Requests for disclosure

148. Requests for disclosure of a document or documents by a party should be in writing and may be made using the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form'. The request should include an adequate description of the document sought.⁵⁹
149. Where an unrepresented party does not return the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form' or otherwise make a written request for disclosure, the DCPL and Child Safety should work together to ensure this is followed up with the party in a timely way. This may involve Child Safety contacting the party to ensure they understand they may request the DCPL disclose a particular Child Safety document/s that are relevant to the proceeding. Where a party needs assistance to understand the type of documents that are referred to in the first list on the Disclosure Form, they should be given this assistance.
150. The DCPL may also contact a party by telephone and/or in writing to them to make sure they understand the disclosure process, and what they may request the DCPL disclose using the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form'. In complying with its disclosure obligation, the DCPL should take reasonable steps to ensure a party has the benefit of disclosure of relevant Child Safety documents in the proceeding. Service of the Disclosure Form, particularly on unrepresented parties, on its own, will not normally be enough to satisfy the duty.
151. Where a party is represented, the DCPL should follow-up the return of the 'Form E – Request for Disclosure Form' with their lawyer.

Division 5 Providing disclosure

152. The DCPL should be forthcoming in providing disclosure under the CP Act. This may involve proactively disclosing relevant documents in a proceeding at an early stage prior to the return of the 'Form E - Request for Disclosure Form'. In other cases, this may involve providing disclosure following receipt of the Request for Disclosure Form. Complying with the duty of disclosure will require strong collaboration and partnership working between the DCPL and Child Safety. In particular, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety about the documents that have been provided and about whether there are other relevant documents in Child Safety's possession or control that have not yet been provided. Where particular documents or classes of documents are requested by a party, Child Safety should ensure that all requested documents are provided to the DCPL as soon as reasonably practicable. This will assist the DCPL to respond to the request as soon as reasonably practicable as required under the Rules.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Rule 55(1) of the Rules.

⁵⁹ Rule 53(1) and (2) of the Rules.

⁶⁰ Rule 52(3) of the Rules.

153. Responsibility for redaction of confidential information from Child Safety documents and records that are being provided in compliance with the DCPL's duty of disclosure, should be shared equally between the DCPL and Child Safety. This includes redaction of notifier details, carer's addresses (where Child Safety has made a decision to withhold this information) and third party details or information that could reasonably lead to the identification of these things. Where the DCPL undertakes the redaction of confidential information from documents that are otherwise disclosable, DCPL may request Child Safety to review particular redacted documents and provide the DCPL with written confirmation that all confidential information has been redacted.
154. The DCPL is responsible for deciding what documents are being disclosed and what documents are not being disclosed, because they are not relevant or because they fall within a ground for non-disclosure under section 191(2) of the CP Act.
155. Disclosure can be provided either by inspection or service. Inspection may be useful particularly in matters with a large volume of disclosure documents. The DCPL and OCFOS should consult about how disclosure will be provided in each case.
156. Where disclosure is being provided by inspection, this will take place at a location mutually agreed between the DCPL and OCFOS. The DCPL is responsible for providing written notice to the parties of the place and time the documents can be inspected. Where disclosure by inspection occurs at a CSSC, Child Safety should make copies of the documents requested by the inspecting party. The copies should then be provided electronically entitled 'bundle of disclosure documents requested by [name of party] on [date]'. The DCPL is responsible for providing the requested documents to the inspecting party.⁶¹
157. Where disclosure is being provided by service, the DCPL should provide a bundle of disclosure documents to the party either in hard copy form or electronic form depending on the party's circumstances, including whether they are represented by a lawyer. The DCPL should also provide a copy the bundle of disclosure documents electronically to Child Safety entitled 'bundle of disclosure documents provided to [name of party] on [date]'.
158. Before disclosure is provided, the DCPL must tell parties who inspect and/or receive copies of documents under the disclosure provisions of the CP Act, that it is an offence to, directly or indirectly, disclose or make use of the documents other than for a purpose connected to the proceeding.⁶²
159. When the DCPL provides disclosure of documents to a party, the DCPL must be satisfied that the document should not be refused under the non-disclosure grounds under section 191(2) of the CP Act to all parties, as the party may make the document available to any other party to the proceeding. Further, where a party requests disclosure of a document or documents provided to another party, the DCPL must provide immediate disclosure of the document or documents to the other party, subject to the non-disclosure grounds under section 191(2) of the CP Act.⁶³ If a particular ground for non-disclosure applies to one party but not another party in the proceeding, the DCPL should as per Guidelines 162 and 163 refuse to disclose, and then seek to manage the disclosure through the court on conditions the court considers appropriate. For example, disclosure of document (or part of a document) to one party may be likely to endanger the safety or psychological health of a person,

⁶¹ Rule 56(2) of the Rules.

⁶² Section 189E of the CP Act.

⁶³ Rule 57 of the Rules.

however, disclosure of that information to another party may not give rise to these risks. In this instance, the disclosure should occur by court order with appropriate conditions to manage this risk.

160. The DCPL should be diligent in ensuring that disclosure is up to date by the court ordered conference. If this is not practicable, the DCPL should bring this to the court's attention so the conference can be rescheduled. Disclosure also needs to be up to date before a hearing of an application. The DCPL should seek directions from the court to ensure disclosure is completed before a court ordered conference or a hearing of the application as appropriate.⁶⁴
161. The DCPL does not have to file a document it discloses to a party to the proceeding, unless the Rules require the document to be filed or the court directs that the document be filed.⁶⁵ Where the DCPL intends to rely on the document, it should comprise part of the evidence filed by the DCPL in support of the application.

Division 6 Non-disclosure under section 191 of the CP Act

162. When the DCPL is disclosing documents to a party, the DCPL must notify the party of any document the DCPL is refusing to disclose under section 191(2) of the CP Act.
163. Where the DCPL refuses to disclose a relevant document on a ground set out in section 191(2) of the CP Act, the DCPL must give the party written notice of the non-disclosure decision stating:
- a. the ground for non-disclosure;
 - b. the DCPL is not required to disclose the document, unless the court orders disclosure, and disclosure will then be on the terms ordered by the court; and
 - c. they can apply to court for an order requiring the DCPL to disclose the document under section 191 of the CP Act.⁶⁶
164. The DCPL should refuse to disclose a relevant document or part of a relevant document that falls within one of the grounds for non-disclosure mentioned in section 191(2) of the CP Act. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety about decisions to refuse disclosure of a relevant document as required.

Division 7 Disclosure compliance notice

165. The DCPL must provide written notice to the court that the duty of disclosure has been complied with ('Form F - Disclosure Compliance Notice Form' is attached to these Guidelines).⁶⁷ The DCPL should file and serve the notice on the parties prior to seeking a final determination of an application.⁶⁸ Until a 'Form F - Disclosure Compliance Notice Form' has been filed, the court cannot decide the proceeding.⁶⁹
166. Examples of when the DCPL may seek to file a 'Form F - Disclosure Compliance Notice Form' include:
- a. before the hearing of the proceeding; and

⁶⁴ Rules 52(4), 55 and 58(2) of the Rules.

⁶⁵ Rule 59 of the Rules.

⁶⁶ Section 191(4) and (5) of the CP Act.

⁶⁷ Rule 61 of the Rules.

⁶⁸ Rule 26 of the Rules.

⁶⁹ Rule 61 of the Rules.

- b. prior to asking the court to make a child protection order in accordance with a resolution reached at a court ordered conference.

167. The DCPL may file more than one 'Form F - Disclosure Compliance Notice Form' before a proceeding is finally decided.

Part 5 Subpoenas for production of documents or things

Division 1 Requesting subpoenas to produce

168. A subpoena to produce a document or thing (subpoena to produce) can be requested by a party to the proceeding. A 'subpoena to produce' may also be issued by the court on its own initiative.⁷⁰
169. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety in deciding whether it is necessary to request one or more subpoenas to produce in a particular matter. Child Safety may request the DCPL consider issuing a subpoena to produce a document or thing if it is relevant to Child Safety's assessment. However, the DCPL may refuse to issue the subpoena. The DCPL is responsible for requesting subpoenas to produce in child protection proceedings. This includes drafting the request and filing the request in court. The request must be in the approved form and comply with the Rules.⁷¹
170. Subpoenas to produce should not be issued as a matter of course in every case. Instead, they should be requested when necessary, and their scope should be appropriately targeted when a particular document or class of documents is sought.

Division 2 Service of subpoenas to produce

171. The DCPL is responsible for service of subpoenas to produce on the subpoena recipient and the parties.

Division 3 Conduct money

172. Conduct money is a sum of money paid to a subpoena recipient to meet their reasonable expenses of complying with the subpoena, including accessing and copying information. Conduct money is not payable to subpoena recipients who are employees or agencies of the State where they are not a party to or a participant in the proceeding.⁷² This means that conduct money will not be payable to a department that is responsible for public health, education, housing services or the police.
173. Where conduct money is payable, the DCPL is responsible for payment. Although the DCPL is generally responsible for service of subpoenas to produce, where Child Safety agree to effect service, the DCPL will provide conduct money, in the form of a cheque, at the same time as the 'subpoena to produce' is provided to Child Safety for service. In these circumstances, Child Safety should ensure that, as well as serving the 'subpoena to produce' on the subpoena recipient, they also provide the cheque in payment of conduct money to the subpoena recipient.

⁷⁰ Rule 94(1)(b) of the Rules.

⁷¹ Rule 93 of the Rules.

⁷² Rule 100(2) of the Rules.

174. Where Child Safety effect service of a 'subpoena to produce', the Child Safety staff member who served the subpoena should provide an affidavit of service. The affidavit should be executed as quickly as possible after service has been effected and be provided to the DCPL electronically, with the original to follow by post or hand delivery.

Division 4 Inspection and copying of material returned under subpoena

175. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety before making an application to inspect and copy material returned under a 'subpoena to produce'. The purpose of the consultation is to discuss whether there are any conditions the DCPL should request the court to impose in granting parties access to the material returned under the 'subpoena to produce'. For example, if the subpoena addresses a personal medical history of one of the parents, where the parties are legally represented, the DCPL may ask that only legal representatives be allowed to inspect and copy material returned under a 'subpoena to produce'.
176. The DCPL is responsible for inspecting material returned under a 'subpoena to produce', and if the court has given permission to copy the documents, for identifying and copying relevant documents. The DCPL should provide Child Safety with a copy of all documents copied.
177. The DCPL is responsible for compiling the bundle of subpoenaed material on which the DCPL intends to rely at a hearing, and for the indexing and paginating the bundle. Where a bundle of subpoenaed material is prepared by the DCPL, the DCPL will provide a copy of the bundle to Child Safety.

Part 6 Witnesses

Division 1 Coordination of witnesses

178. The DCPL and OCFOS should work together to identify witnesses who will give evidence at a hearing. The DCPL with the assistance of OCFOS will liaise with Child Safety witnesses in the lead up to the hearing about availability and other practical matters relating to giving evidence.
179. The DCPL is responsible for coordination of witnesses during a hearing, although the DCPL may be assisted by an OCFOS officer where they are in attendance at the hearing.

Division 2 Giving evidence in person or by audio visual link or audio link

180. Witnesses giving evidence as part of the DCPL's case should attend court in person, particularly Child Safety staff.
181. The DCPL may request permission from the court for a witness, particularly an expert witness, to give evidence by audio visual link or audio link.⁷³ In exceptional circumstances, the DCPL may request permission from the court for a Child Safety witness to give evidence remotely. For example, when the witness is unable to attend court due to illness or is no longer working for Child Safety, and lives a long distance from the court. Requests can be made in writing prior to the court event or orally at a preceding court event. The court can

⁷³ Rule 48 of the Rules.

also make a direction allowing a witness to give evidence remotely at a future court event on its own initiative.

182. The decision about whether to request permission for a witness to give evidence remotely rests with the DCPL. In deciding whether to make a request, the DCPL may consult with Child Safety to discuss the request and to obtain further information relevant to the request, such as the location of the witness and, in the case of an expert witness, the impact of appearing in person on their work commitments. Child Safety may approach the DCPL when they believe a request should be made for permission for a particular witness to give evidence by audio visual link or audio link. Child Safety should make contact with the DCPL about this as soon as possible, and before the review mention is held in the lead up to the hearing.
183. Where the DCPL make a written request for permission for a witness to give evidence by audio visual link or audio link, the request should comply with rule 48(2) of the Rules. In particular, rule 48(2) requires the person making the request to inform the court about:
- a. how and when notice of the request was given to the other participants to the proceeding;
 - b. whether any of the other participants object to the request; and
 - c. whether they are aware of any issues in the proceeding that are likely to be contested during the appearance.
184. When requested by the DCPL, Child Safety should assist the DCPL by obtaining the information required by rule 48(2) from parties and participants in the proceeding. The DCPL should request Child Safety's assistance to obtain this information as soon as practicable prior to the appearance. Child Safety should take reasonable steps to obtain this information and provide it to the DCPL with sufficient time for the DCPL to make the request prior to the court appearance.

Division 3 Subpoenas to attend to give evidence

185. A subpoena for a person to attend court to give evidence (subpoena to attend), can be requested by a party to the proceeding or can be issued by the court on its own initiative.⁷⁴
186. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety as necessary in deciding whether to request one or more subpoenas to attend to give evidence in a particular matter. The DCPL is then responsible for requesting 'subpoenas to attend'. This includes drafting the request and filing the request in court. The request must be in the approved form and comply with the Rules.⁷⁵

Division 4 Service of subpoenas to attend to give evidence

187. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together to ensure that 'subpoenas to attend' are served on a witness with as much notice as possible of the date the witness is required to attend court. Unless agreed, after the 'subpoena to attend' has been issued by the court and returned to the DCPL, the DCPL should, as soon as practicable, provide a copy of the 'subpoena to attend' to Child Safety for service.

Division 5 Notice to Child Safety witnesses

⁷⁴ Rule 94(1)(b) of the Rules.

⁷⁵ Rule 93 of the Rules.

188. The DCPL should provide written notice to Child Safety stating which Child Safety staff are required, including when and where the staff are required to give evidence in a proceeding. The DCPL should give Child Safety as much notice as possible of the date a Child Safety staff member is required to attend court to give evidence.

Division 6 Expert witnesses

189. Where the DCPL calls an expert witness to give evidence in a proceeding, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist, the DCPL should take all reasonable steps to minimise the disruption and inconvenience to the witness. In particular, where the witness is giving evidence in person, the DCPL should ensure the witness is present at court no longer than necessary to give the required evidence. The DCPL should also, in appropriate cases, request permission from the court for the witness to give evidence by audio visual link or audio link.
190. The court can make directions about how expert evidence is to be taken in a child protection proceeding.⁷⁶ Directions can be made by the court about various matters including the type and number of experts that will give evidence. Where the DCPL intends to ask the court to make directions under this provision, it should consult with Child Safety about the directions the DCPL intends to seek.

Division 7 Conduct money, witness allowances and witness losses and expenses

191. Conduct money is payable to a witness who is subpoenaed to give evidence to meet their reasonable expenses of travel to and from court.⁷⁷ Conduct money is not payable to subpoena recipients who are employees or agencies of the State where they are not a party to or a participant in the proceeding.⁷⁸ This means that conduct money will not be payable to employees of government departments or agencies who attend court to give evidence such as employees of a department that is responsible for public health, education, housing services or the police.
192. Where conduct money is payable, for example, when the subpoena recipient is a general practitioner, the DCPL is responsible for payment. The DCPL will provide conduct money, in the form of a cheque, at the same time as the 'subpoena to attend' is provided to Child Safety for service. In these circumstances, Child Safety should ensure that, as well as serving the 'subpoena to attend' on the subpoena recipient, that they also provide the cheque in payment of conduct money to the subpoena recipient.
193. In addition to the payment of conduct money to a non-State witness who is not a participant in the proceeding, the court can order the party who subpoenaed the witness to pay a travel and accommodation allowance, and losses and expenses, including legal costs, incurred by the witness incurred in complying with the subpoena.⁷⁹ However, the court can only make such an order if the subpoena recipient gives notice to the party who issued the subpoena that substantial losses and expenses will be incurred in complying with the subpoena, and gives an estimate of those losses or expenses.⁸⁰ Where a subpoena recipient contacts Child

⁷⁶ Rule 66(2) of the Rules.

⁷⁷ Rule 100(3) of the Rules.

⁷⁸ Rule 100(2) of the Rules.

⁷⁹ Rule 100(3) of the Rules.

⁸⁰ Rule 100(3) and 100(4) of the Rules.

Safety and raises a concern about the cost of complying with a 'subpoena to attend', Child Safety should:

- a. draw the subpoena recipient's attention to the notice on the subpoena advising them of their right to seek an order from the court for additional allowances and for substantial losses and expenses incurred in complying with the subpoena under rule 100(3) of the Rules;
- b. ask the subpoena recipient to provide written notice itemising the estimated losses and expenses they anticipate will be incurred in complying with the subpoena; and
- c. provide this information to the DCPL, together with a copy of any written communication from the subpoena recipient. This is so the DCPL can consider whether to take action to reduce the anticipated losses and expenses of the witness by, for example, seeking permission from the court for the witness to give evidence remotely.

194. The DCPL is responsible for payment of allowances, or losses and expenses ordered by the court to a witness where the 'subpoena to attend' was issued by the DCPL.

Division 8 Child witnesses

195. Subject children, or other children, rarely give evidence in child protection proceedings. This is because it is usually not necessary, and not in a child's best interests for them to give evidence. For these reasons, the CP Act and the Rules place restrictions around when a child can give evidence and be cross-examined in child protection proceedings.

196. Only subject children aged 12 years and over can give evidence or be cross-examined, and this can only happen:

- a. with the leave of the court;
- b. if the child is represented by a lawyer; and
- c. if the child agrees.⁸¹

197. Further, a person can only ask a child, other than a child who is a respondent, to swear or affirm an affidavit with the leave of the court.⁸²

198. Despite the tight statutory controls about a child giving evidence in a proceeding, occasionally, a child may give evidence in a case. For example, an older child who is participating in a proceeding, and who has a direct representative, may decide they want to provide an affidavit in response to the application.

199. In the unlikely circumstances that a subject child files an affidavit in response to an application but is unrepresented, the DCPL should be proactive in ensuring the child has a lawyer appointed to represent them in the proceeding.

200. Legal Aid Queensland provides advice and representation services to children in child protection proceedings. The DCPL can help a child to obtain legal representation through Legal Aid Queensland by:

- a. asking Child Safety to assist the child to apply to Legal Aid Queensland for the appointment of a direct representative; and/or
- b. requesting the court to appoint a separate representative to represent the child in the proceeding.

⁸¹ Section 112 of the CP Act.

⁸² Rule 81 of the Rules.

201. The DCPL may also pursue the appointment of an advocate from the Office of Public Guardian to support the child in the proceeding.
202. The DCPL should consider carefully whether it is necessary to cross-examine a child who has filed an affidavit in response to an application when a matter is proceeding to a contested hearing. The child should only be cross-examined if it is necessary. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety before reaching a decision about whether to seek the court's leave to cross-examine a child under section 112(3) of the CP Act. If the court's leave is granted, the DCPL must provide written notice to the child's legal representative that the child is required for cross-examination as soon as possible prior to the hearing.⁸³
203. Where a child has filed an affidavit in response to an application made by the DCPL, the DCPL should ensure that a party or participant seeking to cross-examine the child has obtained the requisite leave of the court under section 112(3) of the CP Act for that cross-examination. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety prior to making submissions to the court about whether leave for cross-examination of a child by another party or participant should be granted.
204. Where the court grants leave for cross-examination of the child, the DCPL should ensure the court makes directions about how the child will be cross-examined under rule 102 of the Rules. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety about what directions would be appropriate having regard to all of the circumstances of the case. The DCPL should assist the court to make directions that assist the child to give their best evidence, and to minimise any distress to the child. This could include those things specified by rule 102(2) of the Rules, namely:
- a. excluding a person or persons from the court while the child gives evidence;
 - b. allowing the child to have a support person nearby throughout their evidence; and
 - c. having the child give their evidence by audio visual link or audio link.
205. Where the child's parent is also a child and has filed an affidavit in the proceeding, the DCPL should consider, in consultation with Child Safety, whether to ask the court to make directions under rule 102(2) about how the child's parent will give evidence.

Part 7 Section 106 of the CP Act

206. The court has a duty under section 106 of the CP Act to, as far as practicable, ensure the parties to the proceeding, including the child (if they are participating) and the child's parents, and other parties understand the nature, purpose and legal implications of the proceeding and any order or ruling made by the court. This includes not hearing a proceeding unless a person who requires help to understand or take part in the proceeding, has the help they need to understand or take part.
207. The DCPL, as a model litigant, has a responsibility to be proactive in considering whether a party or participant is likely to require help to understand or take part in the proceeding, and take appropriate steps.

⁸³ Rule 91(3) of the Rules.

208. Child Safety should assist the DCPL to comply with its model litigant obligations by advising the DCPL if a party or a person participating in the proceeding requires help to understand or take part. This includes circumstances where a parent or participant:
- a. has difficulty communicating in English; or
 - b. has, or may have, a disability including an intellectual or cognitive impairment.
209. Where a party or a participant in a proceeding has a disability that prevents them from understanding the proceeding, the DCPL should assist the court to comply with its obligations under section 106 of the CP Act. The steps the DCPL should take will depend on the particular case, but may include:
- a. asking Child Safety to assist the person to apply to Legal Aid Queensland or a Legal Aid preferred service provider for assistance, or a local community legal centre, or if the person is Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, assisting them to seek assistance from ATSILS;
 - b. asking the court to issue a direction under rule 68(3) of the Rules directing the registry to send to Legal Aid Queensland the magistrate's written request that Legal Aid Queensland consider giving the person legal assistance for the proceeding; and
 - c. asking the court to make a direction under rule 67(2)(c)(ii) of the Rules, to ensure the person understands and can participate in the proceeding.

Part 8 Interpreters

210. Where a witness appearing as part of the DCPL's case needs an interpreter, the DCPL is responsible for arranging this. The DCPL should ensure that every witness called by the DCPL who needs an interpreter has one. Where Child Safety is aware that a witness may need an interpreter they should advise the DCPL. The DCPL is responsible and for payment of any applicable fees.
211. Where a party or a participant in a proceeding requires an interpreter to understand the proceeding and they are unrepresented, the DCPL should ask the court to appoint an interpreter to attend all court events to facilitate their taking part. This includes:
- a. the child, where they are participating;
 - b. the child's parents; and
 - c. a person participating under section 113 of the CP Act with all of the rights and duties of a party.
212. Where the court orders the appointment of an interpreter, the costs of the interpreter should be met by the court.

Part 9 Preparation for hearing

213. The DCPL should act with diligence to ensure in a matter where the parties cannot reach an agreement to be considered by the court, that it progresses to a hearing as quickly as possible. Where a matter is set down for a hearing, the DCPL should ensure the DCPL is ready to proceed on the allocated hearing date.
214. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together in the lead up to a hearing to ensure that procedural directions of the court are complied with, and that the DCPL is ready to proceed. In particular, ongoing consultation and collaboration can assist to:

- a. ensure the DCPL is kept updated about Child Safety's casework with the child and family as required;
 - b. ensure there is ongoing assessment of the evidence in a matter and how that aligns with the application before the court;
 - c. provide an update about Child Safety's consultation and engagement with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child in relation to making significant decisions where the application is for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child;
 - d. provide ongoing disclosure of relevant documents to other parties;
 - e. obtain further information or evidence required for the hearing;
 - f. settle draft affidavits;
 - g. serve filed material on the child's parents and other parties;
 - h. serve subpoenas to produce and subpoenas to attend to give evidence on subpoena recipients;
 - i. share and discuss material returned under subpoena;
 - j. discuss material filed by other parties;
 - k. notify Child Safety about when Child Safety staff will be required to attend court to give evidence; and
 - l. serve notice on a party that a person who made an affidavit that they filed in court is required to attend the hearing.
215. Responsibility for preparing a matter for hearing lies with the DCPL, including preparation of:
- a. a list of filed material to be relied on at the hearing;
 - b. a witness list;
 - c. all witnesses for hearing including Child Safety witnesses;
 - d. the bundle of subpoenaed material to be relied on at the hearing including indexing and paginating;
 - e. a chronology;
 - f. an outline of argument; and
 - g. draft orders of the court.
216. Where a respondent parent is in custody, the DCPL is responsible for liaising with the court to ensure that timely notice of the hearing is provided to the correctional centre so the parent is brought to court for the hearing.
217. Child Safety should assist the DCPL to prepare for the hearing by:
- a. preparing affidavits and other required material in a timely manner;
 - b. serving documents on the child's parents and other parties, and providing affidavits of service;
 - c. providing the DCPL with current telephone contacts for all witnesses, including Child Safety witnesses; and
 - d. advising which Child Safety staff will be attending with authority to provide the Child Safety position about any issues that arise at court.
218. The DCPL may indicate that a Child Safety witness can be on 'standby' on the day they are due to give evidence. In these circumstances, the Child Safety witness should ensure they remain within or near the relevant CSSC, and are available on the telephone number provided at all times.

Part 10 Appearances by the DCPL

Division 1 Appearing in person

219. The DCPL's preferred mode of appearing in court is in person. In deciding whether to appear at a court event in person, the DCPL should consider:
- a. the nature of the court event;
 - b. the complexity and sensitivity of the case;
 - c. whether there are any issues that are likely to be contested at the court event;
 - d. whether the other parties, or their lawyers where they are represented, object to the DCPL appearing remotely;
 - e. whether there are particular characteristics of the proceeding, or a party to the proceeding that would make a remote appearance problematic; and
 - f. the distance the DCPL would have to travel to attend the court event.
220. Where an appearance in person is not practicable, the DCPL may seek the court's permission to appear by audio visual link or audio link. For example, where an appearance in person would require a DCPL lawyer to travel a long distance for a single court event. This is consistent with model litigant principles, which require the State to take appropriate steps to manage litigation efficiently. The DCPL may also seek to appear remotely in other circumstances, such as where the legal representative for another party intends to seek an adjournment for the purposes of providing legal advice, and the DCPL does not intend to oppose the adjournment.

Division 2 Appearing by audio visual link or audio link

221. A participant in a child protection proceeding, including the DCPL, can request the court's permission to appear at a future court event by audio visual link or audio link. The request can be made in writing prior to the court event or orally at a preceding court event. The court can also make a direction allowing a participant to appear remotely at a future court event on its own initiative.⁸⁴
222. Where the DCPL decides to make a written request to appear by audio visual link or audio link, the DCPL may ask OCFOs to assist by obtaining information required by the Rules, such as whether the parents object to the request.⁸⁵ The DCPL should request Child Safety's assistance as soon as practicable prior to the appearance. Child Safety should take reasonable steps to obtain this information and provide this information to the DCPL with sufficient time for the DCPL to make the request prior to the court appearance.
223. Where permission is granted and the DCPL intend to appear at a court event by audio visual link or audio link, they should advise OCFOs.

Division 3 Engaging lawyers to appear on behalf of the DCPL

224. Section 11 of the Act provides that the DCPL may engage appropriately qualified lawyers to assist the DCPL to carry out its statutory functions (section 11 lawyer). The principal purpose of this section is to give the DCPL the power to engage a local solicitor or Counsel to appear

⁸⁴ Rule 48(1) of the Rules.

⁸⁵ Rule 48(2) of the Rules.

on behalf of the DCPL at a court event. A section 11 lawyer will act as an agent for the DCPL appearing on the DCPL's instructions.

225. The DCPL should advise Child Safety that they have engaged a section 11 lawyer in the proceeding, and provide Child Safety with the name and contact details for the section 11 lawyer.

Part 11 Mentions

Division 1 Roles of the DCPL and Child Safety

226. As the applicant, the DCPL will attend all mentions of an application. The role of the DCPL at a mention is to lead submissions about the progress of the case and about any issues arising at the mention. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety and other stakeholders as required, particularly if there are resource or casework implications for Child Safety. However, the DCPL is responsible for all decision making about an application at a mention.
227. Child Safety have an important role to play at mentions as the DCPL's briefing partner. There are two aspects to this role—
- a. to ensure the DCPL, and ultimately the court, have up to date information about the child and family's circumstances, which are dynamic and can change rapidly; and
 - b. to participate in consultation with the DCPL and discussion with other parties and participants about issues arising at court, particularly where they relate to Child Safety's casework responsibilities for the child and family.

Division 2 Written updates and consultation with Child Safety before a mention

228. Child Safety, no later than 2 business days prior to each mention of an application, should provide electronically to the DCPL a written update in relation to the matter, and then within 24 hours before the mention, the DCPL and Child Safety should consult about the application and the child and family's current circumstances as required. Child Safety should ensure the DCPL is fully informed about any new developments in terms of case management or other relevant matters. If the DCPL has requested Child Safety prepare an affidavit ahead of a mention, as per Guideline 97, a draft affidavit should be provided to the DCPL 7 business days before the mention. This will allow the DCPL time to settle and arrange for the affidavit to be filed, then served as soon as practicable, and no later than three business days before the mention.
229. In preparation for a mention, the DCPL and Child Safety should discuss relevant topics, which might include, but are not limited to:
- a. where the child is subject to one or more interim orders under section 67 of the CP Act, whether there is any change in the Child Safety assessment about the appropriateness of those orders for meeting the child's care and protection needs;
 - b. whether the DCPL should ask the court to make one or more of the orders listed in section 68 of the CP Act, such as ordering that the child be separately represented in the proceeding;
 - c. orders that are likely to have resource or financial implications for Child Safety, such as an order that increases the child's contact with their family or that stipulates that contact occur on a weekend;
 - d. timescales for holding a family group meeting to develop a case plan and file the case plan in court;

- e. whether the court should make a protection order or vary a domestic violence order under the DFVP Act under rule 70 of the Rules; and
 - f. whether the court should make an order under section 114 of the CP Act transferring a proceeding to another court, or an order under section 115 of the CP Act to hear 2 or more applications together.
230. Because of the inherently unpredictable nature of child protection proceedings, particularly where parents are unrepresented, there will be times where issues arise at a mention that were not anticipated. Child Safety should ensure an officer with authority to provide Child Safety's assessment about matters arising at court attends all court events, including each mention of the application, or is otherwise available by telephone.
231. Where an issue arises at court that the DCPL and Child Safety have not previously consulted about, the DCPL and Child Safety should consult as necessary at court. This may require the DCPL to request that the court stand the matter down for consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety on a relevant issue, which should include where required, consultation about Child Safety's capacity in respect of any resource implications, including financial in respect of the issue. Where the issue relates to a case work matter, such as the child's contact with their family, the DCPL must consult with Child Safety prior to providing a position to the court. The DCPL should adopt Child Safety's assessment about a casework issue unless the evidence does not support the assessment. Where the DCPL takes a position that conflicts with that of Child Safety's assessment, the DCPL should ensure the court is aware of Child Safety's assessment so it can consider this in reaching a decision.

Division 3 Discussions with other parties or participants

232. As the applicant, the DCPL will lead any discussions or negotiations with other parties, participants or their legal representatives at court. Where the DCPL engages in case discussions and a Child Safety staff member is not present, the DCPL should convey the content of the discussions to Child Safety.

Division 4 Appearances by parents who are in custody

233. Where a respondent parent is in custody, the DCPL is responsible for liaising with the court to ensure that timely notice of the mention is provided to the correctional centre so arrangements are made for the parent to appear remotely.

Part 12 Interim orders and other orders on adjournment

Division 1 Section 99 of the CP Act

234. The CP Act provides that the court may adjourn a proceeding for a child protection order for a period decided by the court.⁸⁶ In deciding the period of adjournment, the court must take into account the principle that it is in the child's best interests for the application for the order to be decided as soon as possible, and that delay in making a decision for a child should be avoided.⁸⁷ On an adjournment, the court pursuant to section 67 of the CP Act, can make an

⁸⁶ Section 66(1) of the CP Act

⁸⁷ Section 66(3) of the CP Act

interim order granting temporary custody of the child to Child Safety⁸⁸ or a suitable person who is a member of the child's family.⁸⁹

235. On an adjournment of a proceeding, the other relevant provision is s99 of the CP Act, which provides if:
- a. a child is in Child Safety's custody or guardianship, or the custody of a family member under an order; and
 - b. before the order ends, an application is made for the extension of the order or for another order;
 - c. the order granting custody or guardianship continues while there is a pending decision before the court on the new application, unless the court orders an earlier end to the custody or guardianship.
236. The DCPL in consultation with OCFOS, should actively consider if and when an application should be made requesting the court order an end to the continuation of an earlier order under section 99, and seeking an interim order under s67 of the Act, the factors may include:
- a. whether the child is in the custody of Child Safety pursuant to a temporary assessment order, court assessment order or temporary custody order;
 - b. whether the child is in Child Safety's custody or the custody of a member of the child's family pursuant to a child protection order;
 - c. whether the child is in Child Safety's guardianship pursuant to a child protection order;
 - d. that where a child is in the custody or guardianship of Child Safety under a child protection order, which includes an interim order pursuant to section 67 CP Act, the child and their parents acquire a right of review with respect to placement⁹⁰, save in situations where Child Safety reasonably suspects compliance would constitute a risk to the safety of the child or anyone with whom the child was living⁹¹. In such situations, there is an obligation on Child Safety to provide information to the child and their parents as to this right of review⁹². Where a temporary assessment order, court assessment order or a temporary custody order continues by virtue of section 99 of the CP Act and no interim child protection order is made pursuant to s67 of the CP Act, then there is no right of review, by a child or parent, in respect of placement⁹³ and the requirement of Child Safety is simply to notify the parents as the child's placement⁹⁴;
 - e. the effect of the court ordering an earlier end to custody or guardianship under s99 of the CP Act, may change the applicable test in respect of interim custody, from a consideration of the court being satisfied:
 - i. that it is necessary to provide interim protection for the child while the investigation is carried out⁹⁵; and
 - ii. to there being an unacceptable risk to the child in the adjourned period without the making of the interim order.

⁸⁸ Section 67(1)(a)(i) & (ii) of the CP Act

⁸⁹ Section 67(1)(a)(ii) of the CP Act

⁹⁰ Section 247 and schedule 3 of the CP Act

⁹¹ Section 86(3) & (4) of the CP Act

⁹² Section 86(2) of the CP Act

⁹³ Section 86(1) of the CP Act

⁹⁴ Section 85 of the CP Act

⁹⁵ For example section (45(1)(c)(i) of the CP Act

Division 2 Interim orders under section 67 of the CP Act

237. When the court adjourns a proceeding, it can make any one or more of a number of interim orders under section 67 of the CP Act.
238. Although section 67(5) of the CP Act provides that an interim order only lasts for the period of the adjournment, an interim order made at the first mention of an application may be continued until the application is finalised, which can be a period of many months. It is critical the DCPL gives careful consideration to an application for an interim order. In particular, the DCPL should:
- a. apply the principles of the Act in decision making about whether to apply for an interim order, including the paramount principle and the principles that emphasise that State intervention in the lives of children and families should be the minimum necessary to meet the child's protection and care needs;
 - b. consider carefully the sufficiency of evidence to support an application for an interim order; and
 - c. wherever necessary, consult closely with Child Safety about any proposed interim order, and any issues arising in respect of the interim order such as the sufficiency of evidence to support the court making the order.
239. Child Safety should ensure the DCPL is aware of any circumstances where the making of an emergency order was contested or appealed by the child's parents.

Division 3 Other orders under section 68 of the CP Act

240. Under section 68 of the CP Act, the court can also make any one or more of a range of other orders on adjournment, including an order:
- a. requiring a social assessment report to be prepared and filed;
 - b. authorising a medical examination or treatment of the child and a report about the examination or treatment to be filed;
 - c. regulating the child's contact with their family during the adjournment;
 - d. requiring Child Safety to convene a family group meeting to develop or revise a case plan for the child, or for another stated purpose relating to the child's wellbeing and protection and care needs;
 - e. that a court ordered conference be held between the parties; and
 - f. that the child be separately legally represented in the proceeding.
241. The court is required to consider making each of the above orders when it adjourns a proceeding.⁹⁶ The DCPL should consult with Child Safety as appropriate in respect of the above orders prior to a mention.
242. Where the court is contemplating ordering the preparation of a written social assessment report about the child and the child's family under section 68(1)(a) of the CP Act on the adjournment of a proceeding, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety about this.⁹⁷ As far as possible, the DCPL should seek Child Safety's view about whether the report is necessary, and about the particular issues the report should address before indicating a position to the court. The DCPL should provide Child Safety's views about the proposed report to the court. The DCPL should not ask the court to order the preparation of a social

⁹⁶ Rules 68, 69 and 71 of the Rules.

⁹⁷ Rule 66(1) of the Rules.

assessment report without first consulting with Child Safety about the necessity of the proposed report, and about Child Safety's capacity to pay the costs of preparing the report.

243. Where the court orders the preparation of a written social assessment report under section 68(1)(a) of the CP Act, the DCPL should liaise with OCFOS to progress its preparation. Child Safety is responsible for payment of the costs of preparing the report. The DCPL should also, as far as possible, ensure the court clearly prescribes the particular issues the report should address.⁹⁸
244. Where the court proposes to make an order under section 68(1)(c) of the CP Act requiring Child Safety to supervise family contact with the child, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety to ascertain whether Child Safety agrees to supervise the contact. Where Child Safety does not agree to supervise family contact, Child Safety should provide reasons why not. The DCPL will then be able to provide this information to the court and other parties. Where Child Safety refuses to supervise the family contact, the DCPL should ensure the court is aware of this and the restriction on the court making an order requiring Child Safety to supervise family contact without the agreement of Child Safety under section 68(5) of the CP Act.
245. A further area of consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety is about other orders the court can make under section 68 of the CP Act about the appointment of a separate representative for the child. As indicated above, the Rules require the court to consider the appointment of a separate representative in every case.⁹⁹ The DCPL and Child Safety should consult about this before the first mention of every application and at subsequent mentions as appropriate.

Part 13 Orders under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012

246. The court must consider whether to make a protection order or vary a domestic violence order under the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (DFVP Act) in every case.¹⁰⁰ The court can also make a direction about a proceeding under the DFVP Act, such as directing the registrar to request that information from that proceeding be provided to the Children's Court.¹⁰¹ The DCPL and Child Safety should consult about this prior to each court event for every case where domestic and family violence is an issue. In particular, the DCPL should seek Child Safety's view about whether the court should make a protection order or vary a domestic violence order and the reasons for that view.

Part 14 Court ordered conferences

Division 1 Holding a court ordered conference

247. Where an application for a child protection order is contested, there must be a conference between the parties or reasonable attempts to hold a conference must have been made.¹⁰² The overarching purpose of a conference is to explore the possibility of the parties reaching an agreement about how the application should be resolved. A conference can also narrow the legal issues that are in dispute between the parties for determination at a hearing. The court may direct parties to try to decide or resolve a particular matter in dispute at a

⁹⁸ Section 66(2) of the CP Act.

⁹⁹ Rule 68(1)(b) of the Rules.

¹⁰⁰ Rule 70 of the Rules.

¹⁰¹ Rule 70 of the Rules.

¹⁰² Section 59(1)(c) of the CP Act.

conference. In these circumstances, the court must issue a direction stating the particular matter the parties must try to decide or resolve at the conference.¹⁰³

248. In reaching an agreement to resolve the application at a conference, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life, will be the DCPL's paramount consideration. The DCPL will also consider whether there is sufficient evidence to support the agreement reached by the parties.
249. The court is responsible for notifying parties and participants of the conference (except the child, unless they have filed a notice of address for service).¹⁰⁴ In cases where it may not be immediately clear that a participant should be notified of the conference, such as a person taking part in the proceeding under section 113 of the CP Act, the DCPL should pass this information on to the court.
- 249A. Requests by the DCPL for information from Child Safety, to inform the court of the contact details of all participants entitled to attend the conference, should be made in a timely manner, and where possible ahead of the mention at which it is envisaged a conference will be ordered. Child Safety must provide the relevant contact information requested to the DCPL as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event, within two business days of receiving the request.
- 249B. Child Safety must work collaboratively with the DCPL to ensure the DCPL is able to provide all information relevant to the court ordered conference to the Child Protection Conferencing Unit in a timely manner, and, at least three weeks prior to the conference, unless the court has ordered a conference occur in a reduced timeframe. In particular, Child Safety must provide the DCPL with information and details of any matters which may assist the convenor in mediating the matters in dispute which are not evidenced in any affidavit material filed with the court. Further, Child Safety must provide details, if applicable, of any recent developments that may be relevant to the conference. Child Safety shall provide the information requested as soon as practicable, or within a timeframe as agreed with the DCPL, and at least three weeks' prior to the scheduled conference, unless the court has ordered a conference be held within a reduced timeframe. Where the court has ordered a conference occur within three weeks from the mention, Child Safety must work collaboratively with the DCPL to ensure the DCPL is able to provide all relevant information to the Child Protection Conferencing Unit as soon as reasonably practicable following the mention at which the court ordered the conference to be held.
250. Although the child is a party to the application, they are not required to attend the conference. However, where appropriate, having regard to the child's age and ability to understand the matter, the child must be told about the conference and be given an opportunity to participate.
251. Child Safety are required to tell the child about the conference where appropriate as soon as practicable after receiving notice of a conference from the court.¹⁰⁵ Child Safety should tell the child the date, time and location of the conference, as well as who will be attending and the purpose of the conference. Child Safety should also tell the child they can attend the conference if they want to, but they do not have to. Child Safety should also discuss with the child that, subject to the discretion of the convenor, there is flexibility about how they participate in a conference, for example, they can:
- a. bring a support person;
 - b. attend part, but not all, of the conference;

¹⁰³ Rule 106 of the Rules.

¹⁰⁴ Rule 108 of the Rules.

¹⁰⁵ Rule 44 of the Rules.

- c. talk to the convenor without other participants being present; and or
 - d. provide their views about the application, or a matter relevant to the application, in writing.
252. Where the child indicates an intention to attend the conference, Child Safety should tell the DCPL and pass on any views expressed by the child about how they would like to participate in the conference. In appropriate cases, the DCPL should communicate this information to the convenor for the conference to assist them in their planning and preparation. For example, the child may want to attend the conference, but may not want to speak to the convenor when a particular person is in the room.
253. Where the child attends the conference and they are being given an opportunity to express their views, as far as possible, the DCPL should ensure this is done in accordance with the requirements of section 5E of the CP Act.
254. As a conference is a court event, Child Safety, no later than 2 business days prior to the conference, should provide electronically to the DCPL a written update in relation to the matter, and then within 24 hours before the conference, the DCPL and Child Safety should consult prior to the conference. The purpose of the consultation is for Child Safety to ensure the DCPL is fully informed about any new developments in terms of case management or other relevant matters about the child's case, and to exchange views about the application and any issues in dispute.
255. Issues to do with the application and about the evidence filed in support of the application discussed at the conference are the responsibility of the DCPL. Issues to do with case management, such as contact and placement, are the responsibility of Child Safety. The relevant agency will normally lead discussion about these matters as they arise at a conference.
256. The DCPL and Child Safety should consult about their respective positions about these matters and discuss what may be negotiable prior to the conference. Where the DCPL is considering a resolution of the application on different terms than those proposed in the application, it should consult with Child Safety about this. The DCPL cannot reach an agreement to resolve an application that includes case management actions that will be carried out by Child Safety, without the agreement of Child Safety. For example, where a parent proposes a resolution to an application that includes the parent having additional contact with the child, the DCPL cannot agree a settlement on these terms unless Child Safety agree to facilitate the additional contact between the child and the parent.
257. If the conference is for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, DCPL and Child Safety should consult ahead of the conference and ensure that in consultation with the child and the child's family, any required arrangements for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the conference have been undertaken. An independent person may attend the conference to facilitate the family's participation in the conference.
258. Occasionally, there may be a benefit in holding a further conference in a proceeding. For example, where significant information is received that is relevant to the application after the earlier conference was held. Where the DCPL believes a further conference may be of benefit, it should consult with Child Safety before asking the court to order that a further conference is held.

Division 2 Dispensing with the requirement to hold a conference in a contested matter

259. In exceptional circumstances, for example, where there is a risk to the safety of a party, section 59(1)(c)(ii) of the CP Act provides that the court can make a child protection order in a contested matter even though a conference has not been held. Before the DCPL submits to the court that it would be inappropriate to hold a conference, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety. If the application to dispense with the requirement for a conference is made by another party or by the court of its own motion, where practicable, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety before making submissions to the court about whether a conference should be held.

Part 15 Family group meetings held whilst the application is before the court

260. The function of the family group meeting is to deal with matters relating to a child's protection and care needs or wellbeing.¹⁰⁶ Where the purpose of the meeting is case planning, this includes considering the child's protection and care needs and agreeing on a plan to meet those needs and promote the child's wellbeing.

261. The DCPL will not ordinarily attend a family group meeting held whilst an application is before the court. However, depending on the circumstances of a particular case, the DCPL may attend a family group meeting on the request of Child Safety.¹⁰⁷

262. Generally, the purpose of the DCPL attending the family group meeting, will be to provide information about evidentiary matters that relate to the child's protection and care needs, or about matters to do with the application before the court. Circumstances when the DCPL may attend include:

- a. for complex matters; or
- b. for the provision of legal advice in case planning for a matter that relates to the child's protection and care needs. For example, in a case where the *harm* to the child was caused by alleged physical abuse of the child by a parent that is the subject of separate criminal proceedings.

263. Following a case planning family group meeting, Child Safety should provide a copy of the documents prepared as part of the case planning process to the DCPL, namely the:

- a. most recent strengths and needs assessment for the child and the child's parents;
- b. case plan; and
- c. review report (if it is a revised case plan).

264. Prior to a case plan being endorsed by Child Safety, the DCPL may be asked to provide advice about whether the case plan:

- a. is appropriate for the child's assessed protection and care needs; and
- b. in the case of a long-term guardianship order, includes satisfactory living and contact arrangements for the child.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Section 51J(1) of the CP Act.

¹⁰⁷ Section 51(L)(1)(j) of the CP Act.

¹⁰⁸ Section 59(1)(b) of the CP Act.

Part 16 Interim and final hearings

265. The DCPL is responsible for running all aspects of the DCPL's case at interim and final hearings. The DCPL should, however, continue to work in partnership with Child Safety in carry out this responsibility.
266. Child Safety staff have three roles at interim and final hearings:
- a. to attend court as a witness to give evidence;
 - b. to support Child Safety staff who are giving evidence (this applies to OCFOS officers); and
 - c. to attend court as the DCPL's briefing partner.

Division 1 Child Safety staff as witnesses

267. Child Safety staff, in particular child safety officers, are key witnesses at interim hearings (where oral evidence is taken) and at final hearings. The Child Safety assessment for a child is at the centre of the DCPL's decision making and should be at the centre of the court's decision making on an application. A number of child safety officers may give evidence at a hearing including:
- a. the child safety officer that completed the initial investigation and assessment for a child and family that led to the referral of the *child protection matter* to the DCPL;
 - b. the child safety officer that is currently allocated to the child's case; and or
 - c. child safety officers that have previously been allocated to the child's case during a period of time relevant to the application before the court.
268. A child safety officer who is scheduled to give evidence at a hearing, should not be present in court during the hearing until after their evidence is completed. For this reason, the DCPL may decide to call the allocated child safety officer as their first witness so they can be present in court for the remainder of the hearing.

Division 2 Child Safety staff attending court

269. Child Safety staff have an important role to play at interim and final hearings. There are two aspects to this role—
- a. to ensure the DCPL, and ultimately the court, have up to date information about the child and family's circumstances, which are dynamic and can change rapidly; and
 - b. to consult with the DCPL and participate in discussion with other parties about Child Safety's casework responsibilities for the child and family.
270. Child Safety should ensure that an officer with authority to provide the Child Safety assessment about matters arising at court attends all interim and final hearings, or is otherwise available by telephone (also see Guideline 230).
271. Where an OCFOS officer attends an interim hearing (where oral evidence is taken) or a final hearing, they may assist the DCPL with the coordination of witnesses during the hearing.

Division 3 Applications for adjournment of a hearing

272. The DCPL's overarching responsibility as a model litigant conducting court proceedings on behalf of the State, is to ensure that each application is ready to proceed on the allocated hearing date. Requests for an adjournment of a hearing by the DCPL should be rare, and wherever possible, should not be made on the day of the hearing.
273. Where an application for an adjournment of the hearing is made by another party or participant in a proceeding, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety in formulating a position about whether to oppose the adjournment. Consultation with Child Safety allows Child Safety to raise relevant issues including the impact of an adjournment on the child. The DCPL should consider carefully what position to take in response to an application for an adjournment of a hearing, balancing competing factors including:
- a. the requirement to resolve child protection proceedings as quickly and efficiently as possible;¹⁰⁹
 - b. the requirement to provide procedural fairness to a party to the proceeding; and
 - c. whether a previous adjournment or adjournments have been granted by the court.

Part 17 Transition orders

274. When the court is deciding an application for a child protection order for a child that is already in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive, or a *suitable person* under a final child protection order, in certain circumstances, the court can make a transition order. A transition order can last for up to 28 days and is made so the child can be gradually transitioned into the care of the parents.¹¹⁰ Where the possibility of the court making a transition order arises either prior to or at a court event, the DCPL and Child Safety should consult about the proposed order. The DCPL should ensure the court is aware of Child Safety's assessment about the transition order.

Part 18 Court outcome communications

275. Following every court event, including a court ordered conference, the DCPL must provide Child Safety with written notice of the court outcome electronically, using the DCPL court outcome notification form. Along with the court outcome notification form, the DCPL should also provide Child Safety with a copy of any sealed orders or directions made by the court if they have not received them directly from the court. Separate to Child Safety's obligation under section 63 of the CP Act, the DCPL will provide the parties with a copy of any sealed order or directions made by the court.
276. Where possible, the court outcome notification should be provided electronically on the same day as the court event. If this is not possible, it should be provided by 5:00pm on the next business day. Where the court outcome notification cannot be provided during business hours on the same day as the court event, the DCPL must telephone Child Safety and advise them of the court outcome. Before 5:00pm the telephone call should be made to the relevant OCFOS officer. If the relevant OCFOS officer is not available, the DCPL should contact the PO5 OCFOS Legal Officer for the cluster. If it is after 5:00pm, the telephone call should be made to the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or 3235 9999.

Part 19 Amendment of application to seek a different order after filing

¹⁰⁹ Section 5B(n) of the CP Act.

¹¹⁰ Sections 65A and 65B of the CP Act.

277. Ongoing review of an application and the evidence filed in support, may result in the DCPL deciding that a different child protection order to that sought in the application is considered appropriate and desirable for the child's protection. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life, must be the DCPL's paramount consideration in decision making about the amendment of the application. The DCPL should also have regard to the sufficiency of evidence to support the order.
278. The Child Safety assessment is also subject to ongoing review. Where Child Safety assess that a different child protection order to that sought in the application is considered appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, they should notify the DCPL. If the different order that is assessed would result in the child being in continuous care under a custody or short-term guardianship order for more than 2 years, the assessment will need to include how this is in the best interests of the child, and how reunification of the child to their family is reasonably achievable during the longer period of time.
279. The DCPL may decide to amend an application in a number of circumstances, including:
- a. following consideration of new information provided by Child Safety or evidence filed by the separate representative or another party; and
 - b. as a result of negotiations at a court ordered conference or other court event.
280. Where the DCPL decide that a different child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, the DCPL should amend the filed application to reflect the change of position. The amendment may seek to change aspects of the original application including:
- a. the type or duration of child protection order sought;
 - b. adding a further child protection order to the application; and or
 - c. who custody or guardianship of the child is granted to.
281. Before reaching a decision to amend an application, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety. Where the application is for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, DCPL and Child Safety should ensure engagement and consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child in relation to making significant decisions for the child.
282. Where Child Safety are not in agreement with the amendment and further time is necessary for consultation or further assessment, the DCPL should consider whether the application should be adjourned, rather than amended and decided, contrary to Child Safety's assessment. Where the DCPL decide to amend the application without the agreement of Child Safety, the DCPL should advise the court of Child Safety's assessment.

Part 20 Withdrawal of child protection order application

Division 1 written applications for withdrawal

283. Ongoing review of a matter may result in the DCPL deciding that a child protection order is no longer necessary for the child's protection. Where the DCPL is so satisfied, the DCPL should apply to withdraw the application.
284. The Child Safety assessment is also subject to ongoing review whilst they are working with a child and their family. Where Child Safety assess that a child protection order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, they should notify the DCPL.

285. An application for a child protection order may only be withdrawn by the DCPL with the leave of the court.¹¹¹ The DCPL must consult with Child Safety before deciding to apply for the court's leave to withdraw an application for a child protection order. The DCPL may request further information from Child Safety under section 23(1) of the Act relevant to the decision to withdraw an application.
286. When the DCPL decide to withdraw an application for a child protection order, written notice of the decision should be provided electronically to Child Safety.
287. Where the DCPL decide to withdraw an application without the agreement of Child Safety, the DCPL must also provide Child Safety with written reasons for the decision and Child Safety may request an internal review of the decision using 'Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form'. If Child Safety request an internal review of the decision, the DCPL should delay filing the withdrawal application until after the internal review is completed. The DCPL and Child Safety need to act quickly in requesting and completing any review, so that the process is completed prior to the next court event wherever possible.
288. If the DCPL decide, following consultation with Child Safety, that the application should be withdrawn, they should prepare a written application in a proceeding in the approved form.¹¹²
289. The application should state the reasons why a child protection order is no longer necessary for the child. There should be sufficient evidence to support the application and to allow the court to be satisfied a child protection order is no longer necessary for the child. This will usually require an affidavit to be filed in support of the application evidencing the reasons why the child protection order is no longer necessary. Where the DCPL decide to withdraw the application without the agreement of Child Safety, the DCPL should advise the court of Child Safety's assessment.

Division 2 Oral applications for withdrawal

290. An application for leave to withdraw an application can be made orally as well as in writing.¹¹³ Although the preference is for the application to be made in writing, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to make the application orally. For example, where all parties are in agreement, and it is in the best interests of the child to resolve the proceedings without delay.
291. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety before making an oral application for leave to withdraw an application. Where Child Safety do not agree with the withdrawal, the DCPL should adjourn the application for further discussion with Child Safety.

Chapter 7 - Children and other parties and participants

Part 1 Participants in a child protection proceeding

292. As well as the parties to the proceeding, the following are participants in a child protection proceeding:

¹¹¹ Section 57A of the CP Act.

¹¹² Rule 73 of the Rules.

¹¹³ Rule 74 of the Rules.

- a. the separate representative for the child;
- b. a person who is not a party to the proceeding, but who the court allows to take part under section 113 of the CP Act;
- c. where a guardian for a party has filed a notice of address for service, the guardian;¹¹⁴ and
- d. if the public guardian has given written notice of an intention to appear in the proceeding under section 108B(2) of the CP Act, the public guardian.

Part 2 Participation of children in proceedings

293. The subject child is a party to a child protection proceeding. Although the child is not required to participate in the proceeding, the child has a right to attend and participate in the hearing, and to be represented by a direct representative and/or a separate representative under section 108 of the CP Act. In addition to or instead of being represented by a lawyer, the child may be supported by an advocate from the Office of Public Guardian.
294. Whether a child participates in a proceeding, and how the child participates will depend on the circumstances of each case. In particular, it will depend on the child's age and ability to understand the matter, and the child's views about taking part in the proceeding. The child's participation may be limited to the court receiving the child's views in writing, or it may extend to the child being represented by a direct representative and participating in the proceeding as a party.
295. In cases where the child's age and ability to understand mean they are likely to be able to participate in a proceeding (whether to a limited extent or otherwise), the DCPL, as a model litigant, has an obligation to ensure the child, at an early stage, is given information about participating in the proceeding.
296. Child Safety have an important role to play in assisting the DCPL to comply with this obligation by:
- a. telling the child about the proceeding and what it is about, in a manner appropriate to the child's age and ability to understand;¹¹⁵
 - b. making sure the child is aware they do not have to participate in the proceeding, but they can if they want to;
 - c. making sure the child understands there is flexibility about the way they can participate in the proceeding;
 - d. explaining to the child they are entitled to have help to participate in the proceeding, which could include being represented by a lawyer, having an advocate appointed to support them or bringing a support person of their choice to court;
 - e. assisting the child to access help for the proceeding by, for example:
 - i. helping them to make an application for legal aid;
 - ii. making a referral to the Office of the Public Guardian; or
 - iii. helping the child to identify and make contact with a support person of their choice.
297. Child Safety should ensure the DCPL is fully informed about the child's views about participating in the proceeding, and about any steps Child Safety has taken to assist the child to obtain representation or support.

¹¹⁴ In these circumstances, under rule 33, documents that are required to be served on the party must be served on the guardian.

¹¹⁵ As required under sections 56(1)(b) and 195 of the CP Act.

298. The DCPL should assist the court to manage the child's participation in the proceeding in a manner that gives paramount consideration to the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child. The ways in which the DCPL can assist the court include:
- a. ensuring the court has relevant information;
 - b. asking the court to make a direction under rule 42(1) about how the child will participate when appropriate, for example, a direction allowing the child to have a support person nearby during the proceeding. When the child is an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child, support may be provided to the child by an independent person or another appropriate person in accordance with Aboriginal tradition or Island custom; and
 - c. making submissions to the court about the way the court should hear from the child, which may include the examples provided in rule 43(2) of the Rules.

Part 3 Section 113 participants

299. Under section 113 of the CP Act, the court can allow a person who is not a party to the proceeding to take part, such as a member of the child's family or the child's carer. The extent and duration of the person's participation is determined by the court and can include doing some or all of the things a party can do.
300. The DCPL and Child Safety should consider whether there is a person with a relationship with the child who may wish to participate in the proceeding as a non-party. Where a person who may wish to participate is identified, the DCPL and Child Safety should discuss this.
301. Where the DCPL or Child Safety have contact with a person who may want to participate in a proceeding, such as a member of the child's family or the child's carer, they should tell the person that they can make an application to the court for an order allowing them to take part.
302. The DCPL and Child Safety should also:
- a. encourage the person to seek legal advice about making an application to take part in the proceeding; and
 - b. tell the person about rules 73 and 74 of the Rules, which deal with making an application in a proceeding.
303. Child Safety is responsible for serving the application on the parties. However, if a party is represented by a lawyer in the proceeding, the DCPL will serve their lawyer, this includes separate representatives.¹¹⁶
304. Before making a submission to the court about an application under section 113, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety about the:
- a. person's relationship with the child;
 - b. extent to which the person is able to inform the court about a relevant matter;
 - c. extent to which the person should be allowed to participate; and
 - d. parent's, and, where appropriate, the child's views about the person's participation.
305. Section 113 provides broad flexibility for the court to decide how a non-party will take part in the proceeding. In formulating a position about a non-party's participation in the hearing, the DCPL should consider the person's participation carefully, having regard to all the circumstances of the case. The DCPL's paramount consideration must be the safety,

¹¹⁶ Rule 73 of the Rules.

wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life. The DCPL should also have regard to the extent the person can assist the court in its consideration of the application.

306. Where appropriate, the DCPL should ask the court to expressly prescribe the scope of the person's participation under section 113, which may include prescribing certain things in the order. For example, where the child has expressed concern about the person receiving particular information in the filed material, the DCPL may submit that that information is redacted from the material provided to the person.

Part 4 Unrepresented parents and section 113 participants

307. Where a parent, or a person who has been allowed to take part in the proceedings under section 113 of the CP Act, is unrepresented, there is an enhanced duty of fairness on the DCPL. The DCPL should take particular care to apply model litigant principles by taking actions including:
- a. encouraging the parent or section 113 participant to seek legal advice including accessing the duty lawyer service where available, and by providing them with information about how they can apply for legal aid;
 - b. explaining the nature of the application and providing information about the court process;
 - c. providing the parent or section 113 participant with a further copy of material previously served on them, where they attend a court event without a relevant document and this is impairing their ability to participate effectively;
 - d. drawing the court's attention to:
 - i. section 106 of the CP Act where relevant, for example, where a parent has a disability, and assisting the court to comply with its obligations under section 106;
 - ii. section 109 of the CP Act and the requirement for the court to be satisfied the parent has had a reasonable opportunity to obtain legal representation before proceeding to hear an application; and
 - iii. rule 80(3) of the Rules that prohibits the court from drawing any inference from a failure by a parent (or other respondent) to file an affidavit in response the application.
308. The DCPL can assist unrepresented parents and section 113 participants in the ways set out above, but DCPL lawyers should not advise on legal issues, evidence or the conduct of their case.
309. Child Safety should also assist unrepresented parents and section 113 participants by:
- a. explaining the content of documents served on them;
 - b. ensuring they are aware of the next court date;
 - c. encouraging them to obtain legal advice and representation, and giving them information about how to access Legal Aid Queensland or a local community legal centre, or if they are Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, assisting them to seek assistance from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS);
 - d. telling them they may bring a support person to court (although whether the person is allowed to be present in the court is at the discretion of the court); and
 - e. telling them they can ask the court for permission to attend a court event by telephone (or by audio visual link), and giving them information about how they can make the request.

Part 5 Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children

310. Before exercising a power under the Act for an Aboriginal child or Torres Strait Islander child and in deciding whether to make a permanent care order, the court must consider:
- a. the child's Aboriginal tradition or Island custom; and
 - b. the child placement principles in relation to the child.¹¹⁷
311. The court must also consider how it is to be informed about these matters, and matters relevant to the additional provisions for placing Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children in care mentioned in section 83 of the CP Act, and whether to issue directions to ensure it is appropriately informed.¹¹⁸
- 311A. When the DCPL file a child protection application for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, the DCPL must under rule 14(2) of the Rules, file as soon as practicable after filing the application, a 'Form G – Name and Contact Details of Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Entities' Form attached to these Guidelines, that includes the details of any arranged independent person for the child, if any, to the extent the information is known to the DCPL when the Form is filed.
312. The DCPL should assist the court by making submissions where appropriate about any directions the court should make to ensure it is informed about the matters, this will include the DCPL seeking a direction when required that an independent person or a member of the child's family be given a copy of a document filed in the proceeding.¹¹⁹
313. If the court seeks the views of an independent person for the child, or a member of the child's family on Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander custom relating to the child, they can be provided either in writing or orally.¹²⁰
314. Before a court event, DPCL and Child Safety should ensure engagement and consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision-making process. Child Safety should as part of their written update to the DCPL under Guideline 228, provide the DCPL with any changes in respect of an independent person arranged for the child, if any. This should include providing any relevant names and contact details of any arranged independent person.
315. When an application is amended or withdrawn, the DCPL and/or Child Safety should ensure engagement and consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision-making process.

Part 6 Communications with legal representatives

316. Communications with legal representatives for parties or participants about an application will normally be between the DCPL and the legal representative. The exception to this is where the communication is about a matter that falls exclusively within Child Safety's casework responsibilities. For example, where a legal representative wants to discuss

¹¹⁷ Section 6AB and 59A of the CP Act.

¹¹⁸ Rules 49A and 72 of the Rules.

¹¹⁹ Rule 72(4) of the Rules

¹²⁰ Rule 49A(2) of the Rules.

arrangements for a family group meeting or the child's contact with a parent, the communication should be between the legal representative and the CSSC directly. The point of contact in CSSCs for legal representatives who want to discuss casework matters is the relevant OCFOS officer. Where a legal representative contacts the DCPL to discuss a casework matter, the DCPL lawyer should refer the legal representative to the relevant OCFOS officer. OCFOS officers should inform the DCPL about matters discussed with legal representatives when they are material to the application. For example, where Child Safety make changes to the child's contact arrangements with a parent following discussion with a legal representative, they should advise the DCPL.

317. Where a legal representative contacts Child Safety about a matter that relates to an application and is not exclusively about casework, Child Safety should ask the legal representative to contact the DCPL and provide contact details for the relevant DCPL lawyer. Similarly, where Child Safety receive written communication from a legal representative that relates to the application, Child Safety should forward the communication to the DCPL who will respond. Where the DCPL receive written communication about an application from a legal representative, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety before responding if the communication touches on any casework matters, and provide a copy of the communication electronically.
318. The DCPL should keep Child Safety regularly updated about communications with legal representatives for parties or participants, and should consult with Child Safety when appropriate, for example, if an offer to settle the application is made.

Chapter 8 – Applications to vary or revoke a child protection order

Part 1 Referrals by Child Safety

319. Child Safety must refer a *child protection matter* to the DCPL when satisfied:
- a. a child is in need of protection and a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act)¹²¹ in force should be extended, varied, or revoked and another order made in its place, or
 - b. that a child protection order (other than an interim order under section 67 of the CP Act) in force for a child is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection and should be revoked, or
 - c. a child's permanent guardian under a permanent care order is not complying in a significant way with the permanent guardian's obligations under the CP Act and the order should be varied or revoked.¹²²
320. As well as stating the reasons why the child protection order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, or why a child's permanent guardian under a permanent care order is not complying in a significant way with the permanent guardian's obligations under the CP Act, the referral to the DCPL should state:
- a. where the Child Safety assessment is that the child protection order be extended or varied:

¹²¹ Section 65(8) of the CP Act.

¹²² Section 15(1)(a), (b) and (c) of the Act.

- i. the reasons why the child continues to be a *child in need of protection*,¹²³
 - ii. the type and duration of child protection order that is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; and
 - iii. the reasons why the recommended child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection;
- b. where the Child Safety assessment is that the child protection order be revoked and another child protection order be made in its place:
 - i. the reasons why the child continues to be a *child in need of protection*;
 - ii. the type and duration of child protection order that should be made in place of the current order; and
 - iii. the reasons why the recommended replacement child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection;
- c. where the Child Safety assessment is that the child protection order be revoked:
 - i. the reasons why the child is no longer a *child in need of protection*;
 - ii. the reasons why the child protection order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child's protection; and
 - iii. where the current order is either a permanent care order or a long term guardianship order in favour of a member of the child's family or other *suitable person*, the reasons why the revocation of the order is consistent with the child's need for emotional security and stability.

321. The DCPL must provide written reasons to Child Safety about decisions relating to applications to vary or revoke a child protection order without the agreement of Child Safety, and the decisions are subject to internal review (see Chapter 11 of these Guidelines).

Part 2 Applications to vary or revoke a child protection order by a parent or child

322. As well as the DCPL, the child or the child's parent can apply to:
- a. vary a child protection order, other than a permanent care order;
 - b. revoke a child protection order other than a permanent care order, and make another child protection order in its place; or
 - c. revoke a child protection order other than a permanent care order.¹²⁴
323. Where such an application is made, the court is required to provide notice of the application to the DCPL and Child Safety.¹²⁵ Child Safety is responsible for personally serving the application on respondents other than the DCPL, and for telling the child about the application.¹²⁶
324. If it appears the applicant is not represented by a lawyer, Child Safety should provide the applicant with information about how they can apply for legal representation. If the applicant is a child, as well as providing information about applying for legal representation, Child Safety may also assist the child to obtain the support of an advocate from the Office of the Public Guardian.

¹²³ It is noted that where Child Safety assess that a child protection order granting long-term guardianship of a child to the chief executive should be varied to a suitable person mentioned in s61(f)(i) or (ii), or that a long-term guardianship order should be revoked and a permanent care order made in its place, section 15(1)(a)(i) of the DCPL Act requires that Child Safety must still be satisfied the child is a *child in need of protection* and provide reasons to the DCPL as to why the child continues to be a *child in need of protection*.

¹²⁴ Sections 65(1) and 65AA of the CP Act.

¹²⁵ Section 65(5)(b) of the CP Act.

¹²⁶ Section 65(5)(c) and sections 56 and 195 of the CP Act.

325. After the DCPL receive notice of the application, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety to:
- a. discuss Child Safety's current assessment about whether the child is a *child in need of protection* and whether the current child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection;
 - b. obtain Child Safety's feedback about the application and any affidavits filed in support; and
 - c. discuss the preparation of draft affidavits in reply, including agreeing a timetable for providing draft affidavits to the DCPL.
326. As well as providing draft affidavits in reply to the DCPL, Child Safety should also provide a statement:
- a. Setting out Child Safety's assessment and the position the DCPL should take in response to the application; and
 - b. summarising the reasons for that assessment.
327. Where the DCPL do not agree with the Child Safety assessment, there should be further consultation. Ultimately, the DCPL is responsible for determining how the DCPL will respond to the application.
328. The DCPL and Child Safety should work collaboratively to finalise any affidavits in reply. The DCPL may request further evidence or information from Child Safety in response to an application, and Child Safety should take reasonable steps to provide the information.
329. There should be ongoing consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety until the application is finalised. Child Safety should keep the DCPL updated about any relevant changes in the child's or the parent's circumstances. Child Safety should ensure an officer with relevant case knowledge and authority attends all court events or is otherwise available by telephone.
330. The DCPL does not have to provide written reasons to Child Safety about decisions the DCPL makes as a respondent to an application Child Safety does not agree with, and decisions are not subject to internal review.

Chapter 9 – Interstate transfers of child protection orders and proceedings

Part 1 Introduction

331. There are five types of interstate transfers of child protection orders and proceedings. They are:
- a. administrative transfer of a child protection order from Queensland to another State;
 - b. judicial transfer of a child protection order from Queensland to another State;
 - c. transfer of a child protection order from another State to Queensland;
 - d. transfer of a child protection proceeding from Queensland to another State; and
 - e. transfer of a child protection proceeding from another State to Queensland.
332. A table showing the responsibilities of the DCPL and Child Safety for each of these transfers is provided at Appendix 2 to these Guidelines.

333. The DCPL is involved in three types of transfers: judicial transfer of a child protection order to another State; the transfer of a child protection proceeding from Queensland to another State; and the transfer of a child protection proceeding from another State to Queensland.
334. Child Safety and its interstate counterparts are signatories to the Interstate Child Protection Protocol (Protocol). The Protocol and supporting operating guidelines contain agreed principles, procedures and timeframes for the conduct of interstate transfers and requests for assistance. The interstate liaison officers in Child Safety are the Child Safety contact for interstate officers. Interstate liaison officers also advise Child Safety staff about issues relevant to the interstate transfer of child protection orders and proceedings. Where information about the requirements of the Protocol and Child Safety's liaison with interstate officers is relevant to the DCPL's functions in this area, Child Safety should provide this information to the DCPL.

Part 2 Applications for judicial transfer of an order to another State

335. Child protection orders (other than an interim order under section 67 or an order granting long-term guardianship of a child to a person other than the chief executive) may be transferred to another State administratively or by the Childrens Court of Queensland.¹²⁷ The DCPL is responsible for making applications for judicial transfer of a child protection order.
336. Where Child Safety determine that an application should be made for judicial transfer of a child protection order to another State, they should make a referral to the DCPL.
337. The referral should state:
- a. the reasons why Child Safety are satisfied the order should be transferred;
 - b. the proposed interstate order including any relevant provisions of the proposed order;
 - c. how the proposed interstate order equates to the Queensland child protection order;
 - d. the reasons why the protection sought to be achieved by the proposed interstate order could not be achieved by an order on less intrusive terms; and
 - e. why it is in the child's best interests that the order be transferred.
338. The referral should be accompanied by a draft affidavit evidencing the matters mentioned above. The draft affidavit should also:
- a. address whether a family group meeting has been held or reasonable attempts have been made to hold a family group meeting;
 - b. exhibit the child's current case plan and review report;
 - c. include the child's views and wishes about the proposed transfer;
 - d. state where the child, the child's parents and other persons significant to the child are living;
 - e. where the child is Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, detail the consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision-making process, and also consideration that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination, the long-term effect of the proposed transfer on the child's identity and connection with the child's family and community, and the child placement principles; and
 - f. exhibit the written consent of the interstate officer to the transfer.

¹²⁷ Sections 206 and 212 of the CP Act.

339. The DCPL should not make an application for the transfer of an order to another State unless an interstate officer has provided their written consent for the transfer. In deciding whether to bring the transfer application, the DCPL's paramount consideration is the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.
340. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety in deciding whether to make the transfer application. If the DCPL propose not to make the transfer application, they must consult with Child Safety before reaching this decision. Where the DCPL decide not to make the application without the agreement of Child Safety, written reasons are required and the decision is subject to internal review using 'Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form'.

Part 3 Applications for transfer of a proceeding to another State

341. The DCPL may apply to transfer a current child protection proceeding to another State.
342. Where Child Safety determine that a current proceeding should be transferred to another State, they should notify the DCPL in writing. The written notice should state:
- a. the reasons why Child Safety are satisfied the proceeding should be transferred;
 - b. the reasons why it is in the child's best interests that the proceedings be transferred; and
 - c. whether Child Safety assess that the court should make an interim order granting custody of the child or responsibility for supervision of the child to an interstate officer or another person if a transfer order is made.¹²⁸
343. The written notice should be accompanied by a draft affidavit evidencing the matters mentioned above. The draft affidavit should exhibit the written consent of the interstate officer to the transfer and should also include information about:
- a. whether there are any child protection orders in force for the child in the other State;
 - b. whether there are any current, or have previously been any, child protection proceedings for the child in the other State;
 - c. where the child, the child's parents and other persons significant to the child are living;
 - d. include the child's views and wishes about the proposed transfer; and
 - e. where the child is Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander, should detail the consultation with the child and the child's family and compliance with the requirement to arrange for an independent person for the child to facilitate the participation of the child and the child's family in the decision-making process, and also consideration that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination, the long-term effect of the proposed transfer on the child's identity and connection with the child's family and community, and the child placement principles.
344. Where the DCPL determine that it may be in the child's best interests for a current child protection proceeding to be transferred to another State, they should consult with Child Safety about this. In particular, Child Safety liaise with the relevant interstate office about the proposed transfer, and should report back to the DCPL about this. The DCPL should not make an application for the transfer of a proceeding to another State unless an interstate officer has provided their written consent for the transfer.

¹²⁸ Section 230 of the CP Act.

345. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety in deciding whether to make the transfer application. If the DCPL propose not to make the transfer application, they must consult with Child Safety before reaching this decision. Where the DCPL decide not to make the application without the agreement of Child Safety, written reasons are required and the decision is subject to internal review by Child Safety using 'Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form'.

Part 4 Applications for transfer of a proceeding to Queensland

346. Where another State seeks to transfer a child protection proceeding to Queensland under a law of that State, they must first obtain the consent for the transfer from Child Safety. Child Safety must consent to the transfer, unless satisfied it is not in the child's best interests for the proceedings to be transferred.¹²⁹ Child Safety should consult with the DCPL before consenting to the transfer.
347. When Child Safety consents to a transfer of a proceeding to Queensland, Child Safety should provide the DCPL with a copy of:
- a. the written consent to the transfer;
 - b. the decision from the interstate court to transfer the proceeding;
 - c. any interim order issued by the interstate court; and
 - d. Child Safety's written notice filed in the court stating that the DCPL is a party to the proceeding in place of the interstate officer.
348. Upon registration of the interstate transfer decision in the court, the DCPL becomes a party to the proceeding in place of the interstate officer.
349. The DCPL and Child Safety (along with other parties including the child and the child's parents) may apply to the court to revoke the registration of the interstate transfer decision. The DCPL and Child Safety should not take this step without first consulting with each other.

Chapter 10 – Appeals

Part 1 Responsibility for appeals

350. The DCPL is responsible for bringing and responding to appeals against the following decisions of the court:
- a. determining an application for a child protection order;
 - b. on an application for a child protection order, including interim orders made on the adjournment of a proceeding; and
 - c. on an application to transfer a child protection order or child protection proceeding from Queensland to another State.
351. Child Safety is responsible for bringing and responding to appeals against a decision of the court on an application for an emergency order. Child Safety may instruct the DCPL to appear on its behalf in these appeals. Further guidance about the DCPL appearing on the instructions of Child Safety in appeals against emergency orders, and other child-related matters is contained in Chapter 12 of these Guidelines.

¹²⁹ Section 234 of the CP Act.

352. An appeal can be commenced by the DCPL in response to a request from Child Safety or on the DCPL's own initiative. Where Child Safety request that the DCPL bring an appeal, the DCPL will make an independent decision about whether to commence proceedings. Child Safety cannot direct the DCPL to bring an appeal, however, the DCPL should have regard to the reasons why Child Safety say the appeal should be brought.

Part 2 Timeliness

353. Timely decision making about whether to bring an appeal is critical. Both the DCPL and Child Safety should act quickly. Consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety about whether to bring a DCPL appeal should occur in a timely way.

Part 3 Urgent and non-urgent appeals

354. Urgent action in appeal decision making is particularly important for appeals against interim and final decisions on a child protection order application that are determined to place the child at immediate and unacceptable risk of suffering significant *harm* (urgent appeals). Urgent appeals should be brought with utmost speed (ideally on the day of the decision or the next business day) and should normally be accompanied by an application to stay the operation of the decision.
355. Examples of an urgent appeal include appeals against a decision:
- a. not to make an interim order granting temporary custody of a child to Child Safety in circumstances where the child has been in the temporary custody of Child Safety and this is determined to be necessary in order to meet the protection and care needs of the child; and
 - b. to make a protective supervision order for a child who is in the custody of Child Safety at the time of the decision, which is assessed to place the child at unacceptable risk of suffering significant *harm*.
356. Non-urgent appeals relate to decisions of the court that do not give rise to an immediate and unacceptable risk of significant *harm* to the child (non-urgent appeals). For example:
- a. a decision to make an order granting custody of the child to Child Safety on an application for a long-term guardianship order in favour of the chief executive;
 - b. a decision to make an order granting custody of the child to Child Safety for one year on an application for a two year custodial order in favour of Child Safety; and
 - c. a decision involving an erroneous statement or application of the law that does not result in an outcome that places the child at immediate and unacceptable risk of significant *harm*.

Part 4 Child Safety requests the DCPL bring an appeal

357. Where Child Safety assess that an appeal should be brought, Child Safety should make a written appeal request using 'Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form' sent electronically (unless the request relates to an urgent appeal, which can be requested by telephone). If the appeal request cannot be made electronically, it can be hand delivered, faxed or posted to the DCPL. The DCPL should provide a written acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal request electronically within 24 hours of receiving the request.

358. The appeal request should state the reasons why Child Safety believe an appeal should be brought including:
- a. the impact of the court's decision on the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child; and
 - b. the proposed grounds of appeal including a statement of how the court erred.
359. This information should be set out in summary form in the 'Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form' attached to these Guidelines.
360. Written requests for appeals other than urgent DCPL appeals, should be made as soon as practicable and within five working days of the date of the court's decision. This is to allow time for an internal review of the DCPL's decision before the appeal period ends, if the DCPL decide not to bring an appeal without the agreement of Child Safety.

Part 5 Consultation and collaboration with Child Safety

361. The DCPL should consult with Child Safety in deciding whether to commence an appeal. In particular, the DCPL must consult with Child Safety before deciding not to bring an appeal requested by Child Safety. The DCPL should also consult with Child Safety before deciding to commence an appeal on the DCPL's own initiative.
362. There should be ongoing consultation between the DCPL and Child Safety until the appeal is resolved. The DCPL and Child Safety should consult prior to appeal court events to ensure the DCPL has up to date information about the child's circumstances and to discuss relevant casework matters. Child Safety should ensure an officer with relevant case knowledge and authority attends all appeal court events or is otherwise available by telephone.
363. The DCPL and Child Safety should also work together on the preparation of any further evidence to be filed in the appeal. Where an appeal is accompanied by an application for a stay of the operation of a decision, the DCPL may file a further affidavit evidencing the steps Child Safety has taken to mitigate the risk of *harm* to the child arising from the decision appealed against, such as safety planning, home visits and police welfare checks. The DCPL and Child Safety should work together quickly and efficiently to ensure further evidence is filed in a timely way.

Part 6 Deciding whether to bring an appeal

364. In deciding whether to bring an appeal, the DCPL's paramount consideration must be the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child, both through childhood and for the rest of the child's life.
365. The DCPL should also consider whether:
- a. there are grounds for the appeal and a reasonable prospect of success; and
 - b. the appeal raises issues of general importance to the application of the Act, the CP Act or other relevant legislation.
366. Decisions about whether to bring an urgent appeal, whether on request by Child Safety or on the DCPL's own initiative, should be made urgently and by the end of the next business day following the court's decision.

Part 7 Notification of decision

367. If the decision relates to an urgent appeal, immediate notification of the DCPL's decision about whether to bring an appeal, should be provided to Child Safety by telephone and followed up with written notification of the decision.
368. Decisions about whether to bring a non-urgent appeal, should be made as soon as practicable. Where Child Safety makes a non-urgent appeal request, it should be decided and written notification of the decision provided within five business days of receipt of the appeal request.

Part 8 Written reasons for decision and internal review

369. Where the DCPL decide not to commence an appeal requested by Child Safety, the DCPL must provide written reasons for the decision (unless Child Safety, following consultation, agree that an appeal should not be brought).
370. The written reasons must be prepared by the DCPL lawyer that made the decision. The written reasons should:
- a. be in the 'Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form' attached to these Guidelines;
 - b. use clear and unambiguous language;
 - c. state the reasons why the DCPL decided not to bring an appeal;
 - d. explain the basis for the decision;
 - e. be provided to Child Safety:
 - i. for urgent DCPL appeal requests, by the end of the next business day following receipt of the request, and at the same time as notification of the decision is provided; and
 - ii. for non-urgent DCPL appeal requests, within five business days of receipt of the request and at the same time as notification of the decision is provided.
371. Child Safety may request an internal review of a decision not to bring an appeal requested by Child Safety using 'Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form'. Internal reviews should be made and dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in Chapter 11, Part 4 of these Guidelines.

Part 9 Responding to appeals

372. Where the DCPL is a respondent in an appeal brought by another party, the DCPL should consult with Child Safety in responding to the appeal. In particular, the DCPL should consult with OCFO in the preparation of the DCPL's outline of argument and any further affidavits to be filed in the appeal. The DCPL should also consult with Child Safety in preparation for appeal court events.
373. The DCPL do not have to provide written reasons to Child Safety about decisions the DCPL makes as a respondent in an appeal that Child Safety does not agree with, and decisions are not subject to internal review.

Chapter 11 – Miscellaneous

Part 1 Ongoing matter review

374. A decision by the DCPL to apply for a child protection order is subject to ongoing review until the application is finalised. This is particularly important because of the dynamic nature of the lives of children and families. Ongoing review will involve regular consultation with Child Safety and ongoing assessment of the evidence about whether:
- a. the child is a *child in need of protection*; and
 - b. the order sought is appropriate and desirable; or
 - c. where the child is subject to a child protection order, whether revocation of the order is still appropriate and desirable for the child's protection.
375. Ongoing case review may also involve the DCPL requesting further information or evidence from Child Safety under section 23 of the Act to ensure the sufficiency, relevance and appropriateness of the evidence before the court.
376. The Child Safety assessment is also subject to ongoing review whilst they are working with a child and their family. Where Child Safety assess that different intervention to that sought in the application is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection, they should notify the DCPL. For example, whilst an application is before the court, Child Safety may assess that a more or less intrusive order, or that no order should be made for the child. In these circumstances, the DCPL and Child Safety should consult, so the DCPL can decide whether the application before the court should be amended or withdrawn.
377. Child Safety may also assess that, due to a change of circumstances, the interim protective measures in place to protect a child are no longer appropriate to meet the child's protective needs. For example, Child Safety may assess that a child that is the subject of an application for a protective supervision order has suffered *harm* or is at unacceptable risk of suffering *harm* if the child is not taken into custody. In these circumstances, Child Safety and the DCPL should engage in urgent consultation so the DCPL can consider whether there is sufficient evidence to support an application for temporary custody, and can make arrangements to have the application brought on urgently for mention. In some cases it may be necessary for Child Safety to take a child into custody under section 18 of the CP Act. However, generally the DCPL and Child Safety should engage in urgent consultation with a view to ensuring the child's protective needs are met by seeking the appropriate interim orders on adjournment of the application for a child protection order.

Part 2 Transcripts of proceedings

378. The DCPL is responsible for deciding whether to obtain a transcript of proceedings for applications for child protection orders and appeals. Where the DCPL decide to obtain a transcript of proceedings, the DCPL is responsible for payment of any applicable fees.

Part 3 Section 99MA of the CP Act – notification of suspension to the DCPL

379. Section 99MA of the CP Act provides for the mandatory suspension of a QCAT *review proceeding* about a Child Safety contact decision, when the person who commenced the *review proceeding* is also a party to a child protection proceeding before the court. The

purpose of the provision is to allow decisions about a child's contact with a parent or family member to be made in one jurisdiction.

380. Where a *review proceeding* is suspended by QCAT, the *tribunal registrar* must notify the parties to the review and court of the suspension. Child Safety is then required to notify the parties to the child protection proceeding of the suspension. Child Safety should provide notice of the suspension to the DCPL and other parties as soon as practicable and prior to the next court event. The notification to the DCPL, along with a copy of the notifications sent by Child Safety to the parties should be provided to the DCPL electronically.

Part 4 Internal review of the DCPL's decision

Division 1 Reviews generally

381. Where the DCPL is required to provide written reasons for a decision to Child Safety under section 18 of the Act, Child Safety may request that the DCPL conduct an internal review of the decision. Written reasons are required when the DCPL:
- a. make a decision on a *child protection matter* that Child Safety disagree with (section 18(1)(a) or (b) of the Act);
 - b. decide to withdraw an application for a child protection order without the agreement of Child Safety (section 18(1)(c) and Chapter 8 of the Guidelines);
 - c. decide not to bring an appeal requested by Child Safety, where Child Safety still want the appeal to be brought following consultation (section 18(1)(c) and Chapter 10 of the Guidelines);
 - d. decide not to make an application to transfer a child protection order to another State without the agreement of Child Safety (section 18(1)(c) and Chapter 9 of the Guidelines); and
 - e. decide not to make an application to transfer a child protection proceeding to another State without the agreement of Child Safety (section 18(1)(c) and Chapter 9 of the Guidelines).
382. Internal reviews must be conducted on the same information the DCPL considered in reaching the decision. Where Child Safety have new information and they want the DCPL to reconsider the child's case, Child Safety should make a new referral of a *child protection matter* to the DCPL including the new information.
383. Internal reviews should be dealt with by the DCPL as quickly as possible and prior to the expiry of any current order or appeal period, unless the review request is received after the order or the appeal period has ended.
384. The request should:
- a. be made in writing using 'Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form' attached to these Guidelines and sent electronically;
 - b. be made as soon as practicable and within 5 business days of the date the DCPL notified Child Safety of the decision. If the review relates to a child that is subject to a current order, the request should be made as soon as practicable prior to the expiry of the order. If the review relates to a non-urgent DCPL appeal, the request should be made as soon as practicable and within 5 business days of the date the DCPL notified Child Safety of the decision not to appeal;
 - c. state briefly the reasons why Child Safety disagree with the DCPL's decision and indicate any matters Child Safety want the DCPL to take into account in the review; and

- d. not include new information.
385. The DCPL should provide a written acknowledgement of receipt of the review request electronically within 24 hours of receiving the request.
386. The review must be conducted by a different decision maker of the same or a higher level to the original decision maker.
387. The review should be completed within 5 business days of receipt of the request or earlier if the order or appeal period ends during this time. The review should either confirm the original decision or make a different decision to the original decision.
388. The decision on the review should:
- a. be recorded in the 'Form J – Director's Review Decision Notification Form' attached to these Guidelines;
 - b. state the reasons for the decision;
 - c. list any actions arising from the decision; and
 - d. be provided to Child Safety as soon as possible and within one business day of the completion of the review.
389. Where the decision on the review is to make a different decision to the original decision, the DCPL should communicate this to Child Safety immediately by telephone with the completed 'Form J – Director's Review Decision Notification Form' to be provided as soon as practicable after that. The DCPL should take any steps required to action the new decision on an urgent basis. For example, if the original decision was to refer the matter back to Child Safety and, on review, the DCPL decide to apply for a child protection order, the application (and supporting material) should be finalised and filed as a matter of urgency.

Division 2 Reviews where the child is subject to an emergency order

390. Where Child Safety make a review request for a child that is subject to an emergency order, the DCPL and Child Safety should work together efficiently to ensure that, wherever possible, the review can be completed and any resulting action taken before the emergency order ends.
391. In order to achieve this, a review request for a child subject to an emergency order:
- a. should be made urgently following receipt of the written reasons for decision;
 - b. can be made orally by telephoning the DCPL; and
 - c. should be decided urgently and, wherever possible, before the emergency order ends.
392. Similarly, the DCPL should communicate the outcome of a review request to Child Safety immediately by telephone with the completed written internal review outcome to be provided as soon as practicable after that.

Division 3 Reviews of the DCPL decision not to bring an appeal

393. Generally, requests for internal review of a decision not to bring a DCPL appeal requested by Child Safety should be made quickly and as soon as practicable after receipt of the DCPL's written reasons for decision.

394. Where the review relates to an urgent DCPL appeal, it should be dealt with urgently without delay and by the end of the next business day following receipt of the request. Internal reviews relating to non-urgent appeals should be dealt with expeditiously and before the appeal period ends.

Part 5 Information sharing between the DCPL and Child Safety

395. In performing its statutory functions, the DCPL may receive information about a child the subject of an application or their family that is relevant to Child Safety's ongoing intervention with the child. For example, a member of the child's family may provide information to the DCPL at a court event about a parent's drug use that suggests the child may be suffering *harm* or is at risk of suffering significant *harm*. As well as advising the family member to pass this information on to Child Safety directly in light of Child Safety's frontline child protection responsibilities, the DCPL should also provide this information to Child Safety. The information should be provided as soon as practicable after receipt of the information. In the first instance, the DCPL may provide the information orally or in writing electronically. Where the DCPL provide the information orally, this should be followed by subsequent written confirmation of the information provided.
396. Where the information received by the DCPL suggests a child may have been the victim of an offence, or that an offence has occurred that gives rise to a risk of significant *harm* to the child, the DCPL should provide the information to police. The information should be provided to police in writing as soon as practicable after receipt or on an urgent basis depending on the nature of the information received. Before the DCPL provide information to the police, the DCPL should provide the information to Child Safety and advise Child Safety the information is also being provided to police.

Part 6 Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003

397. The *Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003* (Qld) (CP(IM) Act) provides for Queensland's involvement in implementing the child protection aspects of the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children (Child Protection Convention). The Child Protection Convention is an international agreement about parental responsibility and measures to protect children, which aims to ensure there is international cooperation and jurisdictional clarity for the protection of children across international borders. The child protection aspects of the Child Protection Convention are the responsibility of the States and Territories.
398. The Director-General of Child Safety is designated as the central authority for implementing the child protection aspects of the Child Protection Convention.¹³⁰ Circumstances when Child Safety's obligations under the CP(IM) Act are engaged include where:
- a. urgent protective measures are required for a child who is present in Queensland although habitually resident in a Convention country other than Australia; or
 - b. a Convention Country requests that Queensland seek protective measures for a child whose habitual residence is the requesting Convention Country but the child is present in Queensland for the time being.

¹³⁰ Section 29(1) of the CP(IM) Act.

399. As the designated central authority for implementing the child protection aspects of the Child Protection Convention, Child Safety is responsible for all communication with Convention Countries about the Child Protection Convention. If an officer from a Convention Country contacts the DCPL about a child, the DCPL should:
- a. explain that the Director-General of Child Safety is designated as the central authority for implementing the child protection aspects of the Child Protection Convention; and
 - b. ask the Convention Country to contact the Legal Services Branch of Child Safety and provide the relevant contact details.
400. Child Safety's obligations under the CP(IM) Act include conducting investigations and assessments of children and families, providing support on a voluntary basis and pursuing compulsory intervention in the court through an application for an emergency order and/or by making a referral to the DCPL recommending that an application for a child protection order be made.
401. When Child Safety assess that a child to whom the CP(IM) Act applies is:
- a. a *child in need of protection*; and
 - b. that a child protection order is appropriate and desirable for the child's protection;
402. Child Safety should refer the child to the DCPL. The referral should comply with Chapter 2 of these Guidelines.
403. The DCPL should make a decision about how to deal with the referral in accordance with section 17 of the Act and Chapter 3 of these Guidelines. The DCPL is not obliged to file an application for a child protection order for a child that is referred to it, to which the CP(IM) Act applies. The DCPL should assess the referral including considering the sufficiency of evidence to make an application in the normal way.

Part 7 Media and publications

404. DCPL lawyers are not permitted to make public comment in their professional capacity about any aspect of their work without the permission of the Director. Section 19 of the Act imposes a duty of confidentiality on persons who gain information about a person's affairs through the administration of the Act. This information may only be recorded and disclosed to someone else in accordance with the provisions of section 19(3) of the Act. Sections 187 and 188 of the CP Act also impose a duty of confidentiality on persons who gain information about a person's affairs through the administration of the CP Act. This information may only be used or disclosed in accordance with the provisions of sections 187(4) and (5) and section 188(3) of the CP Act.

Part 8 Alleged Child Safety contravention of the CP Act or an order, or contempt of court

- 404A. If in a proceeding there is an allegation that a Child Safety officer has contravened the CP Act or an order made under the Act, or is charged with contempt of court, the DCPL should apply to adjourn the matter to afford the Child Safety officer with the opportunity to obtain legal advice and if necessary, to allow the attendance of either OCFOS or Child Safety's Court Services Unit, or an independent lawyer.

Part 9 Family Law Proceedings

404B. Section 69ZK of the *Family Law Act 1975 (Cwlth)* provides that a court exercising family law jurisdiction must not make an order in relation to a child who is under the care of a person under a child welfare law, unless the order is to come into effect when the child ceases to be under that care, or the order is made with the written consent of Child Safety.

404C. Where Child Safety is aware of a current family law proceeding at the time of referring a *child protection matter* to the DCPL, this information must be included within Part 10 of the Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form, and a copy of any family law order (including interim orders) for the child should be provided in the brief of evidence. Where a family law proceeding is commenced whilst a child protection proceeding is before the court, Child Safety is required to notify the DCPL as soon as practicable after receiving notice of the family law proceedings.

404D. Where Child Safety consents to the family law jurisdiction whilst the child protection proceedings are before the court, Child Safety should ensure the court hearing the family law proceeding is aware of the DCPL's position in the child protection proceeding.

Chapter 12 – Providing advice and representation to Child Safety

405. The Act allows the DCPL to provide legal advice and representation upon request to Child Safety.¹³¹

406. The DCPL may provide legal advice to Child Safety when requested about:

- a. the functions of the chief executive of Child Safety under the *Adoptions Act 2009* and the CP Act;
- b. other matters relating to the safety wellbeing and best interests of a child; and
- c. matters involving the State's obligations under the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Hague Child Abduction Convention) as applied under section 111B of the *Family Law Act 1975 (Cwlth)*.

407. The DCPL may also represent the State in legal proceedings when requested:

- a. under the *Adoptions Act 2009* and the CP Act;
- b. relating to the safety wellbeing and best interests of a child; and
- c. under the *Family Law (Child Abduction Convention) Regulations 1986* pertaining to the State's obligations under the Hague Child Abduction Convention.

408. In each of these circumstances, the DCPL acts on the instructions of Child Safety and on a fee for service basis. Child Safety should provide formal instructions to the DCPL by hand delivering, posting or faxing a letter of instructions together with any other relevant information to the DCPL.

¹³¹ Section 9(2) of the Act.

Director's Guidelines – current as at 29 October 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel A. Miller', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nigel A. Miller

Director of Child Protection Litigation

Appendix 1 - Definitions & Abbreviations

Definitions

- *child protection matter* - has the meaning given to it in Schedule 1 of the Act
- *child in need of protection* - has the meaning given to it in section 10 of the CP Act
- *harm* - has the meaning given to it in section 9 of the CP Act
- emergency order – temporary assessment order, court assessment order and temporary custody order
- final child protection orders – child protection orders specified in section 61 of the CP Act
- *review proceeding* - has the meaning given to it in section 99MA(9) of the CP Act
- *suitable person* - has the meaning given to it in Schedule 3 of the CP Act
- *tribunal registrar* - has the meaning given to it in section 99MA(9) of the CP Act
- chief executive (child safety) – the chief executive of Child Safety

Abbreviations

- Chief executive of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women – Child Safety
- *Child Protection Act 1999* – CP Act
- Child Safety Service Centre – CSSC
- Director of Child Protection Litigation – DCPL
- *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016* – the Act
- Office of the Director of Child Protection Litigation – ODCPL
- Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor – OCFOS

Appendix 2 - Interstate transfers of child protection orders and proceedings

The table shows responsibility for the transfer of orders and proceedings to and from Queensland between the DCPL and Child Safety.

Type of transfer	DCPL responsibility	Child Safety responsibility
Administrative transfer of an order to another State ¹³²	<ul style="list-style-type: none">no involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Child Safety responsibility
Judicial transfer of an order to another State ¹³³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">makes the applicationconducts the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">liaises with interstate officer to obtain consent to transfer and the provisions of proposed interstate ordermakes referral to the DCPLserves application on partiesarranges a family group meetingobtains the child's views and wishes where appropriatenotifies parties to application of the court outcome
Transfer of an order to Queensland ¹³⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none">no involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Child Safety responsibility
Transfer of proceedings to another State ¹³⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none">makes the applicationconducts the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">liaises with interstate government officer to obtain written consent for the transfer of the proceedingserves application on partiesnotifies parties to application of the court outcome
Transfer of proceedings to Queensland ¹³⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none">following registration of the interstate transfer decision in the Childrens Court the DCPL becomes a party to the proceedings in place of the interstate government officerconducts the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">chief executive decides whether to provide written consent for transfer of the proceedings to Queenslandchief executive files copy of the interstate transfer decision and any interim orders of interstate court in the Childrens Courtwhere an interstate government officer is a party to the proceeding, the chief executive files a notice stating that the DCPL is a party to the proceeding in place of the interstate government officer

¹³² Sections 206 to 211 of the CP Act.

¹³³ Sections 206 and 212 to 219 of the CP Act.

¹³⁴ Sections 220 to 224 of the CP Act.

¹³⁵ Sections 225 to 232 of the CP Act.

¹³⁶ Sections 233 to 238 of the CP Act.

Appendix 3 – Guidelines Forms

Contents:

- Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form
- Form B – Deleted
- Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form
- Form D – Disclosure Form
- Form E – Request for Disclosure Form
- Form F – Disclosure Compliance Notice Form
- Form G – Name and Contact Details of Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Entities Form
- Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form
- Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form
- Form J – Director's Review Decision Notification Form

Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Form

This form is to be completed by an Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) officer¹³⁷ or a Child Safety Service Centre Officer when Child Safety is referring a child protection matter to the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL).¹³⁸

If the referred child protection matter involves a child/ren subject to an emergency order/s, the referral should be made as soon as practicable and where possible no later than 24 hours prior to the emergency order ending.¹³⁹

If the referred child protection matter involves a child/ren subject to a child protection order/s in force, the referral should be made as soon as practicable and where possible not less than 20 business days before the child protection order/s ends.¹⁴⁰

Part 1 Form Completion Information

Date referral completed:		Officer completing referral:	
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Part 2 Proposed Court Location

Proposed court location:		If proposed court location is not where the child/ren or parents live, provide reasons and include the views of the parents and child/ren if known:	
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Part 2A Child Safety Service Centre with ongoing case management responsibility

If the DCPL applies for a child protection order/s, which Child Safety Service Centre will have ongoing case management responsibility:	
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Part 3 Child Safety Information

OCFOS Officer:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Child Safety Service Centre:		Phone:	
Child Safety Officer:		Email:	
Team Leader:		Email:	
After Hours Contact:		Phone:	
		Email:	

Part 3A Child Safety CourtShare Information

CourtShare Record ID:		CourtShare Record name:	
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Part 4(a) Child's Information *(if there is more one child, complete a part per child in order of oldest child to youngest child)*

Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

¹³⁷ Guidelines 16, 22 – 24 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹³⁸ Section of the 15 *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*.

¹³⁹ Guideline 31 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁴⁰ Guideline 30 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Name and relationship of person caring for child: ¹⁴¹			
Address of child:			
Phone:		Email:	
Mother's given name:		Mother's family name:	
Date of birth:		Mother's ICMS number:	
Mother's address:			
Mother's phone:		Email:	
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Legal representative Name and firm:		Email:	
		Phone:	
Postal address:			
Father's given name:		Father's family name:	
Date of birth:		Father's ICMS number:	
Father's address:			
Father's phone:		Email:	
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Legal representative Name and firm:		Email:	
		Phone:	
Postal address:			

Part 4(b) Second Child's Information *(delete this part if there is only one child. Duplicate the part if there is more than two children. If a mother's or father's details are the same as a previous child, record 'Same as [name of child]')*

Child's given name/s:			Child's family name:	
Date of birth:			Child's ICMS no:	
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say			
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say			
Name and relationship of person caring for child: ¹⁴²				
Address of child:				
Phone:		Email:		
Mother's given name:			Mother's family name:	

¹⁴¹ Complete part 8 if there has been a decision not to tell the child/ren's parent/s in whose care the child/ren are placed and where the child/ren are living

¹⁴² Complete part 8 if there has been a decision not to tell the child/ren's parent/s in whose care the child/ren are placed and where the child/ren are living

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Date of birth:		Mother's ICMS number:	
Mother's address:			
Mother's phone:		Email:	
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Legal representative Name and firm:		Email:	
		Phone:	
Postal address:			
Father's given name:		Father's family name:	
Date of birth:		Father's ICMS number:	
Father's address:			
Father's phone:		Email:	
Cultural identity:	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say		
Legal representative Name and firm:		Email:	
		Phone:	
Postal address:			

Part 5 Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity (independent person/s) for the child/ren *(complete this part if a child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Duplicate the part if there is more than one arranged independent person)*

Name of independent person:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Address:			
For which child and or family member/s has the independent person been arranged:			
Date chief executive satisfied independent person is suitable:			
Details of significant decision/s:			

Part 6 Emergency Order Information¹⁴³ *(complete this part if there is an existing temporary assessment order/s (TAO), court assessment order/s (CAO) or temporary custody order/s (TCO) for the child/ren, or if an emergency order/s was sought and not made, the reasons for it – also attach a copy of the order to the completed Form)*

Is there an existing emergency order for the child/ren:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>(complete the appropriate order section below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>(complete last section of table)</i>		
Which type of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> TAO	Date order/s end/s:	Magistrate location:
Provisions of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised contact with child/ren <input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren in chief executive's custody		

¹⁴³ Guideline 23(b) of the Director's Guidelines.

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 Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical examination or treatment of child				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child unless a person or a person of stated category is present <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and details):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter and search a place to find the child				
Which type of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> CAO	Date order/s end/s:		Court location:	
Provisions of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised contact with child/ren				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical examination or treatment of child				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren in chief executive's temporary custody				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren's contact with their family during chief executive's custody <i>(if selected, provide details):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child unless a person or a person of stated category is present <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and details):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter and search a place to find the child				
Which type of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> TCO	Date order/s end/s:		Magistrate location:	
Provisions of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised contact with child/ren and take the Child/ren into, or keep in chief executive's custody				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical examination or treatment of child				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child <i>(if selected, provide details subject to order):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child unless a person or a person of stated category is present <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and details):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter and search a place to find the child				
If an emergency order/s was sought and not made, what were the reasons:					

Director's Guidelines
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Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

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Part 7 Existing Child Protection Order Information¹⁴⁴ *(complete this part if there is an existing child protection order/s for the child/ren. If more than one type of order is made for a child, or if 2 or more children are being referred under existing orders, indicate which type of order relates to each child – also attach a copy of the order/s to the completed Form)*

Is there an existing child protection order for the child/ren:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date order/s end:	
--	--	-------------------	--

Which type of order/s:	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>		

Has there been previous child protection order/s for the child/ren? ¹⁴⁵ <i>(if yes, please provide a list of all previous child protection orders including date/s made, and provide a copy of any order/s in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Part 8 Care Agreement Information¹⁴⁶ *(complete this part if there is an existing care agreement for the child/ren – also attach a copy of the agreement to the completed Form)*

Is there a care agreement for the child/ren:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Type of agreement:	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment care agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Child protection care agreement
Date agreement commenced:		Date agreement will end:	

¹⁴⁴ Guideline 23(c) of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁴⁵ Guideline 23(d) of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁴⁶ Guideline 23(e) of the Director's Guidelines.

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Has there been previous care agreements, and or has the agreement been extended for the child/ren: <i>(if yes, please provide a list of all previous care agreements, and or extensions of the agreement including date/s agreements entered and ended, and provide a copy of the agreement/s in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Part 8A No Emergency Order, Existing Child Protection Order or Care Agreement¹⁴⁷ *(complete this part if there is no emergency order/s, existing child protection order/s or a care agreement/s for the child/ren)*

Is there no emergency order/s, existing child protection order/s or a care agreement for the child/ren:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If the DCPL applies for a child protection order/s, what date for a first mention before the court has been assessed as being appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	
Provide reasons why the specific date has been assessed as being appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	

Part 9(a) Details of the referred child protection matter (child/ren in need of protection and a child protection order/s is appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection)¹⁴⁸

Is the chief executive satisfied that the child/ren are in need of protection and a child protection order/s are appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection – this includes an assessment that an existing child protection order should be extended, varied, or revoked and another order made in its place: <i>(if yes, complete this part. If no, complete part 9(b))</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the chief executive substantiated alleged harm and, or alleged risk of harm:	<input type="checkbox"/> Alleged harm <input type="checkbox"/> Alleged risk of harm
What is the type of alleged abuse and or neglect:	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual abuse or exploitation
Briefly describe what is the action/s or lack of action/s (behaviours by the parent/carer) that have been assessed to have caused the alleged abuse or neglect or alleged risk of abuse or neglect:	
What is/would be the harm – the resulting detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child (impact experienced by the child):	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional
Provide reasons why the child/ren are in need of protection:	

¹⁴⁷ Guideline 23(ea) of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁴⁸ Guidelines 17 & 22 of the Director's Guidelines.

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 Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

Provide reasons why a child protection order/s is appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection	
What type of order/s is considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: <i>(If Child Safety considers more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact: </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> </div> </div>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> </div> </div>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Custody order </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> </div> </div>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i> </div> </div>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> </div> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> </div> </div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE) </div> </div>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>	
What interim order/s have been assessed as being appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: ¹⁴⁹ <i>(If Child Safety considered more than one type of</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren in temporary custody of the chief executive
	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren in temporary custody of suitable person who is member of the child/ren's family <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to proposed order):</i>

¹⁴⁹ Guideline 23(g) of the Director's Guidelines.

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Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

order interim or is appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of interim order relates to each child)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent not to have contact (direct or indirect) with the child unless a person or a person of stated category is present (<i>if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to proposed order and details</i>):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised contact with child/ren
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enter and search a place to find the child
Provide details of why proposed interim orders have been assessed as being appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	

Part 9(b) Details of the referred child protection matter (child protection order/s in force and is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection)¹⁵⁰

Is there a child protection order/s, other than an interim order, in force for the child/ren, and the chief executive satisfied that the order/s are no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection and should be revoked: (<i>if yes, complete this part and ensure the details of the existing order/s have been entered into Part 7 above</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Provide reasons why the existing child protection order/s is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	

Part 9(c) Details of the referred child protection matter (permanent care order/s in force and is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection)¹⁵¹

Is there a child protection order/s (a permanent care order) in force for the child/ren, and the chief executive satisfied that the permanent guardian under the order is not complying, in a significant way, with the permanent guardian's obligations under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> , and the order is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: (<i>if yes, complete this part and ensure the details of the existing order/s have been entered into Part 7 above</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Provide reasons why the permanent guardian under the order is not complying, in a significant way, with the permanent	

¹⁵⁰ Guidelines 17 & 22 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁵¹ Guidelines 17 & 22 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

guardian's obligations, and why order/s is no longer appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	
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Part 10 Other relevant proceedings and orders¹⁵² <i>(complete this part if there is other relevant proceedings or orders for the child/ren)</i>	
Is there a proceeding in which a court is exercising jurisdiction conferred on the court under the <i>Family Law Act 1975</i> (Cwlth) for the child/ren, or an existing family law order for the child/ren: <i>(if yes, please provide details and include a copy of any order/s in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Details:	
Is there a proceeding in the Magistrates Court under the <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i> involving the child/ren's parents: <i>(if yes, please provide details, and include any relevant material in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Details:	
Is there is a domestic violence order already in force involving the child/ren's parents, and if so, is the chief executive of the view that the order should be varied in terms of the date it ends or the terms of the order: <i>(if yes, please provide details for the view, including who is the aggrieved/applicant and who is the respondent, and include a copy of any order/s in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Details:	
Is there a proceeding before the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for an application for a review of a reviewable decision, or any QCAT decision on an application for a review of a reviewable decision involving the child/ren: <i>(if yes, please provide details, including who is/was the applicant, the decision that is/was the subject of the review application, and include a copy of any related material in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Details:	
Is there a related criminal law proceeding/s in a court involving the child/ren: <i>(if yes, please provide details, and include a copy of any related material in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

Part 11 Confidential and sensitive information¹⁵³ <i>(complete this part if there is some confidential and sensitive information that should not be disclosed)</i>	
Is there any safety concerns for the child/ren, their parents or any other prospective participants:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

¹⁵² Guideline 23(f) of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁵³ Guidelines 28 & 29 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter Summary Form

If yes, who of the following do the concerns relate to: <i>(please provide details of the safety concerns and include a copy of any related documents in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/ren <input type="checkbox"/> Mother <input type="checkbox"/> Father <input type="checkbox"/> Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Child Safety Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Legal representative <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Details:	
Has there been a decision not to tell the child/ren's parent/s in whose care the child/ren are placed and where the child/ren are living: <i>(if yes, please provide details, and include a copy of any related documents in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Details:	
Is there any other confidential and or sensitive information that has not been or should not be disclosed under section 186 and or section 191 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> : <i>(if yes, please provide details, including if Child Safety received the information from a prescribed entity or service provider and if they have been consulted about the disclosure of the information, and address the relevant ground/s under ss186 and, or 191 of the Act, and include a copy of any related documents into the withheld folder in SharePoint)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Details:	

Part 11A Additional Issues *(complete if there is are additional issues that need to be mentioned)*

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Part 12 List of attached documents *(the types of documents to include are copies of the emergency application, emergency order, adjournment order, previous Child Protection Orders, care agreements, supporting affidavit (including date filed), and attachments would include, criminal histories, child protection history reports, case plan, most recent review report, any expert reports that are relevant. A copy of each document listed should be included in SharePoint)*

No.	Document type (including attachments)	Author	Date of document
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form

This form is to be completed by a Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) lawyer¹⁵⁴ when providing written reasons to Child Safety about how the DCPL has dealt with a referred child protection matter¹⁵⁵ or a request for the DCPL to institute an appeal against a decision on an application/s for a child protection order.

Part 1 Form completion information					
Lawyer completing form:		Date form completed:		Date of decision:	

Part 2 Form A – Referral of Child Protection Matter/s Summary Information Form, or Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form			
Officer completed referral/request form:		Date referral/request completed:	

Part 3 Director of Child Protection Litigation information				
DCPL file lawyer:		Phone:		Email:

Part 4 Child Safety information			
OCFOS Officer:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Child Safety Service Centre:		Phone:	
Child Safety Officer:		Email:	
Team Leader:		Email:	
After Hours Contact: (if required)		Phone:	
		Email:	

Part 5(a) Child's information <i>(if there is more one child, complete a part per child in order of oldest child to youngest child)</i>			
Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 5(b) Child's information <i>(delete this part if there is only one child. Duplicate the part if there are more than two children)</i>			
Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

¹⁵⁴ Guidelines 75 and 370 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁵⁵ Section 17 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016* (DCPL Act).

Director's Guidelines
 Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form C – Director's Written Reasons for Decision Form

Part 6 For a referred child protection matter/s¹⁵⁶, type of order/s Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection¹⁵⁷ (if this form relates to a request by Child Safety for the DCPL to institute an appeal against a decision on an application/s for a child protection order go to Part 10)

What type of order/s is considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: (if Child Safety considers more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)

<input type="checkbox"/> No order ¹⁵⁸	
<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other (if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren (if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order)
	<input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren (if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order)
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order (if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) (if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order)
	<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) (if selected, provide duration of order)
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) (if selected, provide duration of order)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) (if selected, name of suitable person and details)
	<input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) (if selected, name of suitable person and details)
	<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) (if selected, name of suitable person):	

Part 7 Did the DCPL consult with Child Safety about the referred child protection matter/s¹⁵⁹

Did the DCPL consult with Child Safety:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date of consultation:	
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¹⁵⁶ Section 15(1)(a) and (b) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁵⁷ Sections 16(1)(a)(iii) and 16(1)(b) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁵⁸ Section 16(1)(b) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁵⁹ Section 18(1) of the DCPL Act.

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Name/s of OCFOS and or Child Safety officers consulted:	
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Part 8 How has the DCPL dealt with the referred child protection matter/s	
Did the DCPL decide to apply for an order/s: ¹⁶⁰	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What type of order/s did the DCPL decide to apply for: <i>(if the DCPL considers more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of proposed order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No order ¹⁶¹
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:
	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order
	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order)</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>	
Did the DCPL decide to refer the matter/s back to Child Safety:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes ¹⁶² <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did the DCPL apply for an order/s of a different type, or order/s that were otherwise different from, the order/s Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes ¹⁶³ <input type="checkbox"/> No

¹⁶⁰ Section 17(1)(a) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁶¹ Section 16(1)(b) of the DCPL Act.

¹⁶² Written reasons will be provided for the decision within 5 business days, unless child is subject to an order ending within one month of the date of the decision or an emergency order – see section 18(2) of the DCPL Act and Guidelines 75 & 76 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁶³ Written reasons will be provided for the decision within 5 business days, unless child is subject to an order ending within one month of the date of the decision or an emergency order – see section 18(2) of the DCPL Act and Guidelines 75 & 75 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Part 9 DCPL reasons for decision on the referred child protection matter/s¹⁶⁴ *(include identification of any deficiencies in evidence if applicable, and give reasons why the matter/s was referred back to Child Safety or why the DCPL decided to apply for an order/s of a different type, or order/s that were otherwise different from, the order/s Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection?)*

Part 10 The decision that Child Safety has requested the DCPL to institute an appeal against *(complete this part if the decision relates to a request by Child Safety for the DCPL to institute an appeal against a decision on an application/s for a child protection order)*

Date order/s made:		Court location:		Name of magistrate	
If the decision Child Safety has requested the DCPL institute an appeal against a final decision on an application/s for a child protection order, what is the type of order/s the court has made: <i>(if the court has made more than one type of order for a child, or heard 2 or more applications for orders together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No order				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:		<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order, and duration of order):</i>		
			<input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order, and duration of order):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order		<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i>		
			<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, duration of order):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, duration of order):</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship		<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>			
		<input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>			
		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)			

¹⁶⁴ Section 18(2) of the DCPL Act.

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>
If Child Safety has requested the DCPL institute an appeal against an interim decision on an application/s for a child protection order, provide details of the decision:	
Does Child Safety's appeal request relate to all or part of the decision on an application/s for a child protection order:	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the decision <input type="checkbox"/> Part of the decision <i>If part, provide details:</i>

Part 11 For a request for the DCPL to institute an appeal, what has Child Safety assessed to be appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren

What type of final order/s has Child Safety assessed to be appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: <i>(if Child Safety considered more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if 2 or more applications for orders were heard together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No order	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i>
		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>	

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		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>	
If Child Safety has requested the DCPL institute an appeal against an interim decision on an application/s for a child protection order, provide details of what Child Safety has assessed to be appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren:		

Part 12 Did the DCPL consult with Child Safety about the appeal request¹⁶⁵

Did the DCPL consult with Child Safety:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date of consultation:	
Name/s of OCFOs and or Child Safety officers consulted:			

Part 13 How has the DCPL dealt with the appeal request

Did the DCPL decide to institute an appeal: ¹⁶⁶	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>(if yes, complete the below section)</i>		
If the DCPL have decided to institute an appeal, what type of final order/s will the DCPL seek: <i>(if the DCPL considers more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No order		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren – <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order and duration of order):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details, and duration of order):</i>	

¹⁶⁵ Guideline 361 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁶⁶ Section 9(1)(c)(i) of the DCPL Act.

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		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) (if selected, duration of order):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) (if selected, duration of order):	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) (if selected, name of suitable person and details):
		<input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) (if selected, name of suitable person and details):
		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) (if selected, name of suitable person):		
If the decision Child Safety has requested the DCPL institute an appeal against, is an interim decision on an application/s for a child protection order, what does the DCPL consider appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren:		

Part 14 DCPL Reasons for decision on appeal request ¹⁶⁷ (include identification of any deficiencies in evidence if applicable, and give reasons why the DCPL decided not to institute an appeal)

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¹⁶⁷ Section 18(2) of the DCPL Act.

Registry: [Click here to enter text.](#)
Number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Form D – Disclosure Form

Note to respondent parents: there is important information about this document in the attached disclosure process information sheet.

Child's details

These are the same details as appear on the application for a child protection order form.

Given name	
Family name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say
Cultural identity	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say

Applicant

The applicant is usually the person applying to the court for the making or extension of a child protection order (normally the Director of Child Protection Litigation). It can also be the person the person applying to the court to vary or revoke a child protection order.

Applicant's name	
Relationship to child	

First respondent

For applications to make or extend a child protection order, respondents usually include anyone who is a 'parent' as defined under section 52 of the Child Protection Act 1999. If a parent makes an application to vary or revoke a child protection order, the Director of Child Protection Litigation is a respondent along with each other parent.

Given name	
Family name	
Relationship to child	

Second respondent (if applicable)

Delete the below box if there is only one respondent. Add additional boxes if there are more than two respondents.

Given name	
Family name	
Relationship to child	

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Form D – Disclosure Form

Additional participants (if applicable)

Sometimes additional people are included in a child protection proceeding as though they are a party (e.g. a separate representative appointed for a child under section 110 of the Child Protection Act 1999). These participants' details should be included here. Add additional boxes if there is more than one additional participant in this proceeding. Delete this box if there are no additional participants in this proceeding.

Given name	
Family name	
Role in proceeding	

Notice to respondents and participants:

Under section 189C of the Child Protection Act 1999, the Director of Child Protection Litigation (the Director) has an ongoing duty to disclose to you all documents in the Director's possession or control that are relevant to the proceeding.

*The Director is giving you a list of the types of documents in **Box A** that are ordinarily in the possession or control of Child Safety to help you decide which documents you may want to access. Each of these documents may not be in the possession or control of Child Safety in every case. The Director has also given you a list of additional, specific documents in **Box B** that are in the Director's possession or control that the Director thinks you may want to access. (Delete this sentence if Box B of this template is not completed).*

If you request disclosure of a document, the Director must give you access to the document unless the Director is permitted to refuse access under section 191(2) of the Child Protection Act. If you request a document, the Director may refuse to disclose the document to you if the Director is of the view that disclosure should be refused because of section 191(2). The Director must tell you about this refusal and explain the reason why you are being refused access to the document. For more information about what you can do if the Director refuses to give you access to documents, see the attached disclosure process information sheet.

Box A: Types of documents that are normally in the possession or control of Child Safety

- information received by Child Safety where it is suspected a child has been, is being, or is likely to be harmed including:
 - notifications (subject to section 186 *Child Protection Act 1992*); and
 - child concern reports;
- assessments about whether the child is a *child in need of protection* including investigation and assessment outcomes and attached documents;
- records of interview;
- structured decision making assessments including:
 - safety assessments;
 - family risk evaluations and family risk re-evaluations; and
 - reunifications assessments;
- assessments of the child's strengths and needs;
- assessments of a parent's strengths and needs;
- case plans and review reports;
- referrals from Child Safety to another agency;
- information received by Child Safety about the child or their parents from another agency;
- referrals and minutes from Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Team meetings, Domestic Violence Collaborative Agency Meetings and carer agency meetings;
- about the child prepared by an external reporter or assessor;
- reports about a parent prepared by an external reporter or assessor;

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- case notes made by Child Safety, for example, about a child's contact with a parent or a Child Safety visit to a parent;
- child protection history report(s);
- criminal, domestic violence, or traffic history of any person relevant to the proceeding;
- cultural support plans; and
- correspondence between Child Safety and a parent.

Box B: Specific documents that are in the possession or control of the Director of Child Protection Litigation (delete if not applicable)

- Director of Child Protection Litigation to complete as required.

Addresses for service

This form is to be given to all other parties to the proceeding by the Director of Child Protection Litigation.

First respondent's details

Full name	
Address	
Phone	
Mobile (if applicable)	
Fax (if applicable)	
Email (if applicable)	

Second respondent's details (if applicable)

Full name	
Address	
Phone	
Mobile (if applicable)	
Fax (if applicable)	
Email (if applicable)	

Director of Child Protection Litigation's address for service

Full name	
Address	
Phone	
Mobile (if applicable)	
Fax (if applicable)	
Email (if applicable)	

Director of Child Protection Litigation (authorised officer details)

Signed	
Full name	
Date	

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Form D – Disclosure Form

Filed in the *insert court location* registry on *insert date of filing*:

Registrar
Signature and seal of registrar

Disclosure process - why have I been given this form?

You have been given this form because section 189C of the Child Protection Act 1999 provides that the Director of Child Protection Litigation (the Director) has an ongoing duty to disclose to each other party all documents in the Director's possession or control that are relevant to the proceeding. This form is how the Director tells you about the documents which it has an obligation to disclose to you.

Although the Director has an obligation to disclose relevant documents to you, you can also ask the Director for any particular relevant documents that you want disclosed to you.

Under rule 52 of the Childrens Court Rules, the Director must file and serve this disclosure form on you within 20 days of filing an application for a child protection order. The Director may also give this form to you again at any other time it thinks it is appropriate to or because the Childrens Court has ordered it to.

How do I access documents?

*If you tell the Director you want access to particular documents you should read the following information. There are two lists of documents. The first list (in **Box A**) explains the types of documents the Director normally has access to because they are documents that are normally held by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (Child Safety). This list is to help you decide if there are any particular documents you want to be disclosed. The second list (**Box B**) is a list of additional, specific documents the Director has decided are relevant and you might want to be disclosed to you. (Delete sentence if Box B does not list specific documents.)*

*If you want to access a particular document you can request it by filling out the **request for disclosure form** which has been given to you with this form. You should try and be **as specific as you can** when describing the documents that you want so that the Director can locate the document for you and organise the best way for you to have access to it. Information that can help the Director locate documents for you include:*

- Who the document is about*
- What the document is about*
- The date of the document or the time period to which the period relates*

How will the Director let me access documents?

*You can indicate to the Director how you would prefer to access the documents when you fill in the **request for disclosure form**. For example, you may ask that the Director post the documents to you or send them to you by email (if an electronic copy of the document is available).*

The Director will consider your request but it is ultimately up to the Director as to how you will be given access to the documents. For example, if you request a large number of documents be sent to you, the Director may ask that you come to an office to inspect the documents instead and take copies of the documents that you need.

Can the Director refuse to give me access to any documents that I ask for?

The Director may refuse to give you access to certain documents or information in the circumstances outlined in section 191(2) of the Child Protection Act. If you ask the Director for access to a document and the Director refuses to give you access to the document, the Director will explain to you why the Director is refusing to give you access.

If the Director tells you that the Director refuses to give you access to a document under section 191(2), the Director is not required to disclose the document unless the Childrens Court orders disclosure. If the Childrens Court orders disclosure, the disclosure is on the terms ordered by the Childrens Court.

What do I do if I don't agree with the Director's refusal to give me access to a document?

If you do not agree with the Director's refusal to give you access to a document you should seek independent legal advice from a lawyer. The lawyer may be able to help explain why you have been refused disclosure of a document.

You may apply to the Childrens Court under s 189(5)(c) to ask the Childrens Court to order the Director to disclose the document to you. A lawyer might be able to help you apply to the Childrens Court to seek an order for the Director to disclose the document to you.

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Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form E – Request for Disclosure Form

Registry: [Click here to enter text.](#)
Number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Form E – Request for Disclosure Form

Child's details

These are the same details as appear on the application for a child protection order form

Given name	
Family name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say
Cultural identity	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say

Details of party requesting disclosure

Put your details here.

Name of person requesting disclosure	
Relationship to child	
Role in proceeding <i>(delete the one that does not apply to you)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> I am the applicant <i>(you will normally be the applicant if you are applying to vary or revoke an existing child protection order)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I am the/a respondent <i>(you will normally be the respondent if the Director of Child Protection Litigation has commenced a proceeding for a child protection order and you are responding to their application)</i>

Details of the documents that I would like access to:

*In the **disclosure form** that Director of Child Protection Litigation (the Director) gave you (which is attached to this form), the Director explained that the Director has an obligation to disclose all documents relevant to the proceeding under section 189C of the Child Protection Act 1999. The Director also listed the documents and types of documents that are normally held by the Director and/or Child Safety (Box A). The Director may have also included additional specific documents that the Director thinks you might want to access (which may have been Box B).*

You can request access to any documents in the possession or control of the Director that are relevant to the proceeding.

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Form E – Request for Disclosure Form

The Director explained that the Director may refuse to disclose documents to you under section 191(2) of the Child Protection Act 1999. The Director will have given you a list of documents that the Director is refusing to disclose to you because of section 191(2) (which may have been Box B or C). The Director might refuse documents that you have requested because the Director, when reviewing them, has realised that there is a reason to refuse to disclose them to you because of section 191(2). If this happens, the Director will explain to you why the Director has refused to disclose the documents.

If you would like access to any documents then you should write those documents in the box below. Remember, as per the requirements in section 190 of the Child Protection Act 1999, try to give as much information as you can about each document, so that the Director can find it for you and can work out how best to give you access to it, such as

- who the document is about
- what the document is about
- the date of the document or what period of time the document relates to

I would like access to the following documents:

How would you like to access the documents?

The Director of Child Protection Litigation will try and give you the documents in the way that you specify below. However, sometimes the Director can't give you the documents in the way that you would like. If the Director can't give you the documents in the way that you have requested the Director will explain why.

If you are unhappy with the way that the Director has decided that you should have access to the documents, you should seek advice from a lawyer about what to do.

Please select the boxes

I would like to inspect the documents (only answer question 1)

If you want to receive copies of the documents, do not tick the box below. Go to the box.

☐ I would like to **inspect** the requested documents

Selecting this option means that you are asking the Director to arrange for you to attend at an office to look at the documents you have requested in this form. You can then ask to make copies of the ones that you think that you might need for when you go to court.

I would like to receive copies of the documents

If you want to inspect the documents, do not tick the box below. Go to the box above.

☐ I would like to **receive copies** of the requested documents.

Selecting this option means that you are asking the Director of Child Protection Litigation to send you the documents that you have requested in this form.

I would like to receive copies of the requested documents:

- ☐ by post
- ☐ by email

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Form E – Request for Disclosure Form

☐ by fax

What do I do now?

You have to give this document to the Director. You don't have to give this document to anyone else.

You can give this document to the Director in person (you can do this by giving it to one of the Director's staff, for example, at court). You can also send it to the Director by post, email or fax (just select the one you prefer) using the details below:

☐ Post: *insert postal address*

☐ Email: *insert email address*

☐ Fax: *insert fax no*

Director of Child Protection Litigation (lawyer details)

Full name

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received by the Director on:

Registry: [Click here to enter text.](#)
Number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Form F – Disclosure Compliance Notice Form

Child's details

Given name	
Family name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated
Cultural identity	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say

The Director of Child Protection Litigation provides notice under rule 61 of the Childrens Court Rules 2016 that the Director:

- 1) understands the duty of disclosure under section 189C of the *Child Protection Act 1999* and the consequences for failing to disclose a document under section 189D of the *Child Protection Act 1999*;
- 2) has considered the matters mentioned in rule 60 of the Childrens Court Rules 2016; and
- 3) has complied and will continue to comply with the duty of disclosure to the best of the Director's knowledge and ability.

Signed by [print full name]	Signature	Date

Registry: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Number: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Form G – Name and Contact Details of Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Entities Form

(this form is only to be completed and filed by the Director of Child Protection Litigation)

Child's details

Add additional boxes if there are more than one child.

Given name	
Family name	
Date of birth	
Gender	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Not stated/prefer not to say
Cultural identity	<i>Click on the appropriate box</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Applicant

Applicant's name	
Relationship to child	

First respondent

Given name	
Family name	
Relationship to child	

Second respondent (if applicable)

Delete the below box if there is only one respondent. Add additional boxes if there are more than two respondents.

Given name	
Family name	
Relationship to child	

Additional participants (if applicable)

Add additional boxes if there is more than one additional participant in this proceeding. Delete this box if there are no additional participants in this proceeding.

Given name	
Family name	
Role in proceeding	(e.g.: separate representative, guardian for Ms Jones.)

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Form G – Name and Contact Details of Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Entities Form

Independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity's name and contact details

Name of entity	
Contact person (if applicable)	
Address	Address known to the Director
Phone	
Mobile (if applicable)	
Fax (if applicable)	
Email (if applicable)	

Director of Child Protection Litigation (lawyer details)

Signed	
Full name	
Date	

Filed in the *insert court location* registry on *insert date of filing*:

Registrar
Signature and seal of registrar

Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form

This form is to be completed by an Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) officer or Child Safety Officer when the chief executive (Child Safety) has assessed that a court decision on an application/s for a child protection order is not appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren,¹⁶⁸ and requests the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) institute an appeal against the decision.¹⁶⁹

If the request is for an urgent appeal to be instituted, the form should be made as soon as practicable and where possible on the day of the decision.¹⁷⁰

Part 1 Form completion information

Date form completed:		Officer completing request:	
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Part 2 Child Safety information

OCFOS Officer:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Child Safety Service Centre:		Phone:	
Child Safety Officer:		Email:	
Team Leader:		Email:	
After Hours Contact:		Phone:	
		Email:	

Part 3 Details of the decision Child Safety requests an appeal against

Is Child Safety requesting an urgent appeal against a decision: <i>(an urgent appeal against a decision is when Child Safety assess it places the child(ren) at immediate and unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Date of decision:	Location of Court:	Magistrate:

Part 4 Director of Child Protection Litigation information

DCPL file lawyer:	
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Part 5(a) Child's information *(if the appeal request related to more one child, complete a part per child in order of oldest child to youngest child)*

Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 5(b) Child's information *(delete this part if there is only one child. Duplicate the part if there are more than two children)*

¹⁶⁸ Guideline 359 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁶⁹ Section 9(1)(c)(i) of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*.

¹⁷⁰ Guideline 354 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form

Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 6 Details of the decision that Child Safety is requesting the DCPL to institute an appeal against and the reasons for an appeal¹⁷¹

If the decision Child Safety is requesting DCPL institute an appeal against, is a final decision on an application/s for a child protection order, what is the type of order/s the court has made: <i>(if the court has made more than one type of order for a child, or heard 2 or more applications for orders together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> No order</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i></div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact: </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i></div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Custody order </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i></div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE) </td> </tr> </table> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i></div>	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>						
<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>						
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)						
If Child Safety is requesting DCPL institute an appeal against an interim decision on an application/s for a child							

¹⁷¹ Guideline 358 of the Director's Guidelines.

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 Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form

protection order, provide details of the decision:	
Does the appeal request relate to all or part of the decision on an application/s for a child protection order:	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the decision <input type="checkbox"/> Part of the decision <i>If part, provide details:</i>
Outline the impact of the court's decision on the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child:	
What are the proposed grounds of appeal including a statement of how the court erred:	

Part 7 For a request for the DCPL to institute an appeal, what has Child Safety assessed to be appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren			
What type of final order/s has Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable for the child/ren's protection: <i>(if Child Safety considers more than one type of order appropriate and desirable for a child, or if it is proposed that 2 or more applications for orders will be heard together, indicate which type of order relates to each child)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No order		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – other <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to order and what directed to do or refrain from doing, and duration of order):</i>		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"><input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> </td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> Directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Directive order – contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> Directing no contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Directing supervised contact with child/ren <i>(if selected, provide name of parent/s subject to the order, and duration of order):</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision order <i>(if selected, provide details of the matters Child Safety is to supervise, and duration of order):</i>		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"><input type="checkbox"/> Custody order</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) – <i>if selected, provide duration of order.</i> </td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) – <i>if selected, provide duration of order.</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Custody order	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (STC-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person, and duration of order):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (STC-CE) – <i>if selected, provide duration of order.</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term guardianship – to chief executive (STG-CE) <i>(if selected, provide duration of order):</i>		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"><input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> </td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> to suitable person who is member of child's family (LTG-SPF) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i> <input type="checkbox"/> to another suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-SPO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person and details):</i>		

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 Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form

		<input type="checkbox"/> to chief executive (LTG-CE)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent care order - long-term guardianship to a suitable person nominated by chief executive (LTG-PCO) <i>(if selected, name of suitable person):</i>	
If Child Safety is requesting DCPL institute an appeal against an interim decision on an application/s for a child protection order, provide details of what Child Safety has assessed to be appropriate and desirable for the protection of the child/ren:		

Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form

This form is to be completed by an Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor (OCFOS) officer or Child Safety Officer when the chief executive (Child Safety) requests the Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) conduct an internal review of a decision.¹⁷²

If the request is for an urgent internal review, the form should be made as soon as practicable after the receipt of the DCPL's written reasons for decision.¹⁷³ Otherwise, an internal review request that relates to a decision about an appeal should be made within 5 business days, with other requests to be made within 10 business days, or before the expiry of any current order or appeal period.¹⁷⁴

Part 1 Form completion information

Date form completed:		Officer completing request:	
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Part 2 Child Safety information

OCFOS Officer:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Child Safety Service Centre:		Phone:	
Child Safety Officer:		Email:	
Team Leader:		Email:	
After Hours Contact: (if required)		Phone:	
		Email:	

Part 3 Director of Child Protection Litigation information

DCPL file lawyer:	
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Part 4 Is the DCPL decision that Child Safety is requesting be reviewed urgent? *(has the decision resulted in an assessment by Child Safety that the child/ren are at immediate and unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm (e.g. child subject to an emergency order that is about to end))*

Is Child Safety requesting an urgent review of a decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date of decision	
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Part 5(a) Child's information *(if the request relates to more than one child, complete a part per child in order of oldest child to youngest child)*

Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 5(b) Child's information *(delete this part if there is only one child. Duplicate the part if there are more than two children)*

Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

¹⁷² Guideline 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷³ Guideline 388 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷⁴ Guideline 384 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Issued under section 39 of the *Director of Child Protection Litigation Act 2016*
Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form

Part 6 Details of the DCPL decision that Child Safety is requesting be reviewed	
Decision referring a <i>child protection matter</i> back to Child Safety ¹⁷⁵	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Applying for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable ¹⁷⁶	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision to withdraw an application ¹⁷⁷	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to transfer a child protection order to another State ¹⁷⁸	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to transfer a child protection proceeding to another State ¹⁷⁹	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to bring an appeal ¹⁸⁰	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Part 7 Child Safety's reasons why the internal review is sought including any matters Child Safety want the DCPL to take into account in the review <i>(if there is new information, the child protection matter should be the subject of a new referral to the DCPL including the new information)</i>

¹⁷⁵ Guidelines 68 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷⁶ Guidelines 78, 321 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷⁷ Guidelines 287 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷⁸ Guidelines 340 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁷⁹ Guidelines 345 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁰ Guidelines 371 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

Form J – Director's Review Decision Notification Form

This form is to be completed by a Director of Child Protection Litigation (DCPL) lawyer¹⁸¹ when providing written notice to Child Safety about the outcome of a requested internal review.

Part 1 Form completion information					
Lawyer completing form:		Date form completed:		Date of decision:	

Part 2 Form I – Child Safety Internal Review Request Form			
Officer completed request form:		Date request completed:	

Part 3 Director of Child Protection Litigation information					
DCPL file lawyer:		Phone:		Email:	

Part 4 Child Safety information			
OCFOS Officer:		Phone:	
		Email:	
Child Safety Service Centre:		Phone:	
Child Safety Officer:		Email:	
Team Leader:		Email:	
After Hours Contact: (if required)		Phone:	
		Email:	

Part 5(a) Child's information <i>(if there is more one child, complete a part per child in order of oldest child to youngest child).</i>			
Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 5(b) Child's information <i>(delete this part if there is only one child. Duplicate the part if there are more than two children)</i>			
Child's given name/s:		Child's family name:	
Date of birth:		Child's ICMS no:	

Part 6 Details of the DCPL decision that Child Safety requested be reviewed	
Decision referring a <i>child protection matter</i> back to Child Safety ¹⁸²	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

¹⁸¹ Guideline 388 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸² Guidelines 68 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

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Form H – Child Safety Appeal Request Form

Applying for a child protection order of a different type, or an order that is otherwise different from the order Child Safety considered appropriate and desirable ¹⁸³	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision to withdraw an application ¹⁸⁴	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to transfer a child protection order to another State ¹⁸⁵	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to transfer a child protection proceeding to another State ¹⁸⁶	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Decision not to bring an appeal ¹⁸⁷	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Part 7 How has the DCPL dealt with the internal review request	
Did the DCPL on review make a different decision: ¹⁸⁸	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – <i>If yes, complete the below section</i>
Provide the reasons for the decision and list any actions arising from the decision: <i>(e.g. filing an application for a child protection order)</i>	

¹⁸³ Guidelines 78, 321 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁴ Guidelines 287 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁵ Guidelines 340 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁶ Guidelines 345 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁷ Guidelines 371 & 381 of the Director's Guidelines.

¹⁸⁸ Guidelines 388 & 389 of the Director's Guidelines.