



MEDIA RELEASE

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Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in state care must be reduced through Changing Tracks

The number and over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in foster, kinship and other state care must be reduced with the release of Changing Tracks 2020-2022 says Family Matters Queensland. A reduction in the high number of children in care must be the first priority in the Changing Tracks action plan released today.

“We are concerned that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland represent 42.7% of all children in care,” says Family Matters Qld Co-Chair Cr Gerald Featherstone. “We have seen results from our services facilitating family-led decision making to safely care for and protect our children. We welcome actions that enhance our participation in key decisions and increases community-controlled funding to continue to over-turn this tide of over-representation.

“Changing Tracks 2020-2022 sees the next stage of genuine commitment to partnership, knowing we all have a part to play and are stronger together. Along with a shared commitment to a continued joined up approach, Changing Tracks presents bold steps towards generational change. “

“The changes we are seeing since the first Changing Tracks in slowing the growth in the number of children entering care is testament to the belief the government has in partnering with community, our sector, and community-controlled services. If we stay the course, we will be better together. This will achieve better outcomes for families and children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies are well placed to continue to support families, children and the community.

“Only 42 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care are living with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kin. We are hopeful that implementation of a Kinship Program will see more of our children remaining with family and our families being supported to take up this role,” says Gerald

Family Matters Queensland says Changing Tracks 2020-2022 is part of the Our Way Strategy and sits within a complex national system that is burdened by inconsistency in practice and legislation.

“This action plan continues to support the call for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s strategy to be overseen by an independent national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner,” says Rachel Atkinson, Family Matters Qld Co-Chair.

“Changing Tracks shows that change can only happen when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are involved in decision making. It is only through being involved in the total control of these decisions will we see self-determination. Family Matters is doing this with Changing Tracks as it pushes to reduce the number of children in state care.

“Giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders the chance to work with government to reduce the number of children in foster, kinship and out of home care is the key. Family Matters Qld looks forward to our continued partnership to meet the needs of our children. We’re looking forward to seeing an increase in active efforts to keep our children connected to family, community and culture.

“A big win for our Torres Strait Islander communities will be realised by creating legislation recognising Torres Strait Islander families’ traditional child rearing practice. These family ties are central to a child’s identity, are the right of every child and are overdue to be recognised,” says Rachel.

Family Matters Queensland is calling for a centre of excellence to be developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on evidence-based programs that work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

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[Changing Tracks: an action plan for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children & families 2020–2022](#)
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