

## B. Audit objectives and methods

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### Performance engagement

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This audit has been performed in accordance with the Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements, issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. This standard establishes mandatory requirements and provides explanatory guidance for undertaking and reporting on performance engagements. The conclusions in our report provide reasonable assurance that the objectives of our audit have been achieved. Our objectives and criteria are set out below.

### Audit objective

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The audit assessed how effectively Queensland government agencies work together for the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children.

We addressed this by assessing whether:

- Queensland's family support and child protection system is managed to ensure efficient and effective coordination across agencies
- Queensland government agencies share responsibility for the continuous improvement of the family support and child protection system.

### Entities subject to this audit

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We included the following entities in our audit:

- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
- Department of Education
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Queensland Family and Child Commission
- Queensland Police Service.

In March 2020, we excluded Queensland Health from the scope of this audit due to its role in leading the Queensland Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Audit approach

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### Field interviews

We conducted interviews with key people, staff, and stakeholders from across the family support and child protection system. This included, but was not limited to:

- Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women executive management group, executive director and director of strategy and delivery performance, director and manager of family safety and wellbeing, regional directors and managers, child safety officers at regional intake services and service centres, and ongoing intervention officers
- Department of Education's director of investigations, performance and conduct; director of student protection; and student protection principal advisors
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Deputy Director-General, executive director, director, social policy officer, principal adviser, and program manager
- Queensland Family and Child Commission chief executive officer and principal commissioner, deputy commissioner, executive directors, directors, and other officers
- Queensland Police Service Child Protection and Investigation Unit investigators and representatives from the Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group
- Queensland Health's Communicable Disease Branch and Child Protection Unit staff
- various family support service providers and their staff.

### Document review

We obtained and reviewed relevant documents from the entities involved in the audit. We reviewed relevant legislation, organisational reviews and evaluations, strategic plans, performance reports and indicators, guidelines, case files, and correspondence. We sought advice from the entities regarding the status of recommendations from the Carmody Inquiry. We did not perform an independent assessment to validate the status of these recommendations.



## Data analysis

We accessed all child harm reports received by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women between 2013–14 and 2018–19 and recorded in its Integrated Client Management System (ICMS). In some cases, we isolated our analysis to different time periods due to limitations with the datasets. For example, we accessed all referrals made to family support services recorded in its Advice and Referral Case Management System (ARC) between 2015–16 and 2018–19. However, due to data quality issues within ARC, we limited our analysis to 2016–17 to 2018–19. Some of the analysis we performed included:

- assessing the time taken by family support services to attempt to contact families from the date they received the referral between 2016–17 and 2018–19
- assessing the portion of families that received support from family support services and those that did not receive support, and whether those families had a subsequent child harm report meeting the threshold of significant harm made to the Department of Child Safety between 2016–17 and 2018–19
- assessing the portion of families referred to family support services that consented to receive support and those that did not consent between 2016–17 and 2018–19
- assessing the portion of families that received support and reported that family support services had either fully met their needs or partially met their needs between 2016–17 and 2018–19
- assessing the time taken by regional intake services to screen a child harm report from the time the intake service received the report to the time it took intake staff to record a child harm report for investigation between 2013–14 and 2018–19
- assessing the time taken by child safety officers to sight a child from the date the intake service received the child harm report to the time they sighted the child between 2013–14 and 2018–19
- assessing the number of placements that children had between 2013–14 and 2018–19.

We assessed the mean and median time taken to deliver family support and child protection services. The mean is the average of the numbers. The median is the middle value in a list of values and accounts for outliers that may be influencing the time taken to deliver services.

