

Dear Foster and Relative Carers

Seeking your assistance: 2009 *Views of children and young people in foster care* survey

As Queensland's Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, I am charged with the responsibility of protecting and promoting the rights, interests and wellbeing of children in the care of the Department of Child Safety. This is a responsibility that I share with the thousands of dedicated foster and relative Carers throughout the state.

In working towards our shared goals, I cannot overstate the importance of listening to children and young people. If we want to make a difference for the better we need to understand what it's really like to live in foster care.

We need to know what children like about living in care, if they feel happy and safe and what makes them anxious and frustrated. We need to know about the health and wellbeing of these children and young people and about their experiences and challenges at school.

It is only by answering these questions that we can know how well the child protection system supports these most vulnerable children. That's why, since 2006, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has directly sought the views of children and young people living in alternative care through the *Views* surveys.

Not only do these surveys tell us at the Commission which areas our monitoring and advocacy should focus on but they provide direct, independent feedback to the Department of Child Safety. They tell us and others in government what can be improved and, importantly, how we might make those improvements.

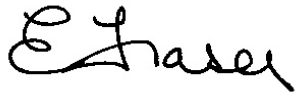
The results of the 2007 *Views* survey gave us some important insights. We were pleased to find that, once again, children and young people were overwhelmingly positive about their Carers with the vast majority indicating that their Carer treats them well, listens to them and cares about their best interests. We also found that there may be room to improve young people's sense of stability given that almost one in five felt worried that they might have to change placements in the next few months.

As in previous years, the full results of the 2009 *Views* survey will be made available to all Carers. Children and young people will also receive a copy of *Your Views...Foster Care*, a special report designed specifically for children and young people. Results from previous surveys can be viewed at the Commission's website www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au.

In the past we have been able to rely on foster and relative Carers to support the children and young people they care for to express their views. I am once again asking for your help. Community Visitors (CVs) will be gathering the views of children and young people between April and June this year and I am asking for your support in this important task.

In the coming months, your CV will provide you with details of the survey. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your CV or contact the Acting Manager of Research, Dr Lee Tennent on (07) 3247 5528 or email lee.tennent@ccypcg.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Fraser'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'E' being large and prominent.

Elizabeth Fraser
**Commissioner for Children and Young People
and Child Guardian**