



Media release

8 April 2025
For immediate release

Ombudsman's report released on preventing harm to children with disability in Queensland

The Queensland Ombudsman's report, *Preventing harm to children with disability in Queensland – Report 1: Department of Education*, was tabled today (Tuesday 8 April) by the Honourable Pat Weir MP, Speaker of the Queensland Parliament.

The Disability Royal Commission

On 5 September 2023, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) published a report about Public Hearing 33. This hearing examined the violence, abuse, neglect and deprivation of human rights experienced by two young men with disability, Kaleb and Jonathon (pseudonyms).

In its report, the Disability Royal Commission made a number of recommendations, including that the State of Queensland conduct an independent review into the powers and responsibilities of all the departments and agencies that engaged with Kaleb, Jonathon and their late father.

The Ombudsman's investigation

In late 2023, the Queensland Ombudsman, Mr Anthony Reilly, commenced an investigation on his own initiative.

The focus of the Ombudsman's investigation is on the current practices and procedures of the Queensland public sector agencies that engaged with Kaleb, Jonathon and their father.

Report 1: Department of Education

This is the Ombudsman's first report from the investigation, and it looks at the Department of Education (Education). The Ombudsman will report separately on the findings about other public sector agencies.

The Ombudsman found that Education has in place a range of practices and procedures relating to student protection reporting, recordkeeping and maintaining professional judgement. It also provides mandatory student protection training.

“We identified some areas of Education’s current practices, procedures and training where improvements could be made to ensure neglect is identified, suspicions of harm are appropriately recorded and cumulative harm is captured,” Mr Reilly said.

The Ombudsman made nine recommendations for improvements to Education’s practices and procedures.

“Education does not conduct regular audits of student protection reports that have been submitted. Education identified student protection reporting and recordkeeping as some of the most significant administrative issues in Kaleb and Jonathon’s case. We consider that regular audits are important to ensure students are protected.

“We consider it is important for agencies to have in place adequate practices and procedures, training courses and monitoring mechanisms that aim to prevent as much harm to children as possible.”

About the Ombudsman

The Queensland Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Parliament.

The Ombudsman ensures public agencies make fair and balanced decisions for Queenslanders by investigating complaints and conducting own-initiative investigations that tackle broader, systemic concerns.

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about state government departments, local councils and public authorities. Sometimes agencies use non-government entities to deliver services to the community. We can also investigate those entities.

The Ombudsman can make recommendations to rectify unfair or unjust decisions and improve administrative practice.

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