

PROGRESSIVE YOUTH CARE & CONSULTANCY

Echoes of Resilience

A Sector Healing and Cultural Readiness Forum

One Village. One Direction.

FORMAL EVENT PROPOSAL

Submitted to: Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
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(PYCC)
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Prepared in anticipation of the Queensland Commission of Inquiry Report, expected late May 2026

Executive Summary

Queensland's child protection sector is approaching a pivotal moment. The Commission of Inquiry currently underway will publish its report in late May 2026. That report will contain findings and recommendations that will shape the system for years to come. What it cannot contain and what no Commission report ever has is the cultural conditions necessary to implement those recommendations well.

Culture is not changed by a report. Culture is changed by people and only when those people have done the interior work of understanding each other, releasing the resentments and assumptions they have carried, and choosing to move forward together rather than defending the ground they have always stood on.

This is what Echoes of Resilience is for.

This forum is not a response to the Commission. It is preparation for it. It is an invitation to every person in Queensland's child protection Village the families, the young people, the Department staff, the carers, the children of carers, the sector workers to come together before the report lands, to clear the air of the toxic dynamics that have fractured relationships across the sector, and to decide, collectively, that they will receive whatever comes next as one sector rather than a collection of competing interests.

The forum uses structured storytelling, restorative practices, and the Village Model philosophy to achieve something that policy cannot: genuine human understanding across the divides that have formed between the people this system is built from. When those divides are named, witnessed, and consciously set aside, the sector becomes capable of implementing reform together not just complying with it separately.

Event Title	Echoes of Resilience: One Village. One Direction.
Strategic Purpose	Sector cultural healing and readiness for Commission of Inquiry report implementation
Core Philosophy	The Village Model we are all impacted by the same moment; we heal it together
Timing	Proposed delivery prior to the Commission report, anticipated late May 2026
Participants	Cross-sector: families of origin, young people, carers, Department staff, sector workers
Facilitator	Nicole Hague (PGDip) Director, Progressive Youth Care & Consultancy (PYCC)
Key Outcome	A sector that receives the Commission report with shared understanding, cleared air, and collective commitment — not entrenched division
Classification	Collaborative Trauma-informed Restorative Culturally healing

The Moment We Are In

A Commission Report Is Coming

Queensland's child protection sector has been here before. Reviews, inquiries, and commissions have come and gone. Reports have been published, tabled, and — in varying degrees — implemented. Some have changed things. Some have changed less. What is consistent across all of them is this: the quality of implementation is determined not by the quality of the recommendations but by the state of the relationships between the people who must carry them out.

A sector that receives a reform report from a place of distrust, division, and accumulated grievance will find ways — consciously and unconsciously — to resist it, reinterpret it, or reduce it to the minimum required for compliance. A sector that receives the same report from a place of shared understanding, cleared resentment, and collective purpose will find ways to exceed it.

The Commission of Inquiry report expected in late May 2026 represents a genuine opportunity. PYCC's position is that the most important work the sector can do right now is not to lobby for recommendations, it is to prepare the culture that will receive and implement whatever recommendations emerge.

Reform is not what the report says. Reform is what the sector does with what the report says. And what the sector does depends entirely on who the sector has decided to be to each other.

The Toxic Culture Problem — Named Honestly

There is a toxic culture that can exist within and between the groups that make up Queensland's child protection sector. This is not a comfortable thing to name in a formal proposal document. It is named here because naming it is the first act of dismantling it.

This toxicity does not belong to any single group. It is not the Department's fault, or the carers' fault, or the advocacy sector's fault. It is the accumulated residue of years of operating in a high-pressure, under-resourced system where people have been hurt, dismissed, blamed, and unsupported — and where those experiences have calcified into assumptions, resentments, and competing narratives about who is responsible and who is the problem.

It lives in the carer who no longer trusts the Department worker enough to call before the placement breaks. In the Department worker who has learned not to show emotional investment in front of sector partners because it will be used against them. In the family of origin who has been told so many times that they are the problem that they have stopped trying to be heard. In the sector worker who has stopped bringing families to the table because it is too hard to navigate the power dynamics in the room.

It is not malicious. It is relational scar tissue. And like all scar tissue, it limits movement without anyone intending for it to.

This forum is a structured, safe, and professionally facilitated opportunity to soften that scar tissue, to allow the sector to move more freely than it has been able to, in time to make the most of whatever reform comes next.

Why This Cannot Wait Until After the Report

There will be a temptation to wait. To see what the Commission recommends and then decide how to respond. PYCC's position is that this approach will cost the sector the opportunity this moment represents.

If the sector receives the Commission report divided each group primed to defend its interests, shaped by unresolved grievance, ready to interpret recommendations through the lens of their accumulated pain, the report will become another battleground. Each group will fight for the recommendations that serve their narrative and resist the ones that challenge it. Implementation will be fractured. The children at the centre of all of this will experience whatever change results at the end of that process, diminished by it.

If the sector receives the report having done this work having sat together, named the toxicity, heard each other's stories, cleared the air, and made mutual commitments then every recommendation that emerges becomes a shared project. Disagreements will still exist. Differences in emphasis and priority will still exist. But they will be navigated from a position of genuine relationship rather than entrenched opposition.

The window for this work is now. Before the report. Before the positions harden around its findings. Before the sector chooses, by default, to be divided.

The Village Model: One Shared Wound

The Village Model begins with a question the system rarely asks: who else is in this room? Not just the child and the Department. Not just the carer and the worker. But every human being whose life is shaped by the moment a child comes into care.

PYCC's foundational insight — built from 28 years of frontline and leadership experience — is that every person in the child protection system is responding to the same original wound. A child has had to be separated from their family. That is a failure — not of any individual, but of the conditions in which families live and the systems designed to support them. Every person in the room, regardless of their role, is living in the aftermath of that failure. Their responses differ. Their pain differs. Their power differs. But they share the same origin.

When the sector understands this — when a department worker can hear a carer's story of 3am isolation and recognise it as part of the same wound they carry from the removal they conducted last Tuesday — the adversarial architecture of the sector begins to dissolve. Not because the structural differences disappear, but because the human commonality becomes visible enough to stand on.

That is what this forum is designed to create: enough shared visibility of the common wound that the sector can stand on it together, rather than fighting over who it belongs to.

*We do not need to agree on every policy position to recognise each other's humanity.
We only need to have sat in the same room and told the truth at the same time.*

The Full Circle — Every Voice the System Touches

One of the most important design decisions in this forum is who is in the room. Previous sector dialogues have tended to involve the 'official' parties — carers and Department, or service providers and government. Echoes of Resilience is designed around the full circle of people whose lives are altered when a child comes into care. This is not about adding more voices for the sake of inclusivity. It is because the toxic culture that exists in the sector is partly a product of each group having only ever seen the impact through their own eyes. Healing requires that they see it through each other's eyes too.

The Family of Origin

The family that was separated. Parents, siblings, grandparents. People who carry the wound of removal — the grief, the shame, the disorientation — and who are most frequently absent from sector conversations about reform. Their presence here is not about assigning blame. It is because no one in this room can fully understand what they are working on without hearing from the people at the centre of it.

The Children and Young People

The people the entire system exists to protect, who almost never have a seat at the table where decisions about their lives are made. Represented here through their own voice or through trusted advocates. Their stories are not illustrations of the problem. They are its most important data.

The Department of Child Safety Staff

The workers who carry the legal and moral weight of the system's most difficult decisions. Who witness removal and carry it home. Who are often positioned as the system rather than people within it — shaped by it, constrained by it, and frequently wounded by it. Their presence here as full human beings rather than institutional representatives is itself an act of cultural repair.

The Foster and Kinship Carers

The families who opened their doors and found themselves navigating complex trauma, systemic indifference, and a telephone that often didn't get answered. Whose expertise is routinely undervalued. Whose burnout is a systemic crisis that the system prefers not to examine too closely.

The Children of Foster Families

The invisible group. Children who made no decision, who signed nothing, who one day found their home altered by the arrival of someone in acute crisis — and who have never had a formal space in which to name what that cost them. Their presence here is, for many of them, the first time the sector has acknowledged that they are part of the Village at all.

Extended Networks and Sector Workers

Grandparents. Family friends. School counsellors. Youth workers. Advocates. The wider network of people who hold pieces of these stories in silence, who encounter the impact of these decisions without a framework for understanding them, and who are never asked what they know.

Forum Design — Seven Phases

The forum is structured across seven phases. The first two phases are entirely focused on creating the conditions for what follows — naming the toxicity, establishing the emotional contract, and grounding every participant in their shared humanity before any stories are told. The middle phases hold the storytelling, witnessing, and cross-group echoing. The final phases move from what has been heard to what each person is willing to change — and to the collective readiness that is the forum's ultimate purpose.

Phase	Title	Description	Duration
1	Opening the Circle	Acknowledgement of Country. The facilitator names every voice in the Village not to create categories but to dissolve them. We begin by naming what we share: every person in this room has been shaped by a decision to bring a child into care.	20 mins
2	Naming the Toxicity — Honestly and Without Blame	A brief, facilitated acknowledgement that a toxic culture can exist between sector colleagues — between carers and Department staff, between services and families. This is not an accusation. It is an act of honesty that makes genuine healing possible. You cannot heal what you will not name.	20 mins
3	The Village Speaks — Stories of Shared Impact	Live storytelling across all voice groups using the three-part structured narrative. The goal is not to establish who suffered most. It is to demonstrate that every person in this room has been marked by the same moment — a child coming into care — and that those marks, while different in shape, are equal in weight.	60 mins
4	Cross-Group Witnessing — The Echo	The Role Reversal Echo across groups. A carer echoes a Department worker's story. A worker echoes a parent's. The carer's child echoes the carer. This is where the walls come down — when you have to say out loud: I heard what that cost you. And the other person says: yes. That is right.	40 mins
5	Clearing the Air — What We Have Carried About Each Other	A facilitated exercise where participants are invited to name — safely, anonymously if needed — one assumption, resentment, or judgement they have carried about another part of the sector. These are written, not spoken. They are placed on a Clearing Table. They are acknowledged and then symbolically set aside. This is the moment the room breathes differently.	25 mins
6	Building the One Sector — What We Commit To	Echo Cards completed as mutual commitments — not just Department staff committing, but every voice group committing to one change in how they relate to another part of the Village. The Wall of Change holds these commitments from everyone.	20 mins
7	Closing — One Village, One Direction	The facilitator closes the circle. The Commission report is named: it is coming. What we decide today about how we will receive it — together or divided	15 mins

Phase	Title	Description	Duration
		— matters more than any single recommendation it contains.	

The Clearing Table — A Purpose-Built Healing Element

Phase 5 introduces an element that is unique to this forum's cultural healing purpose: the Clearing Table. This is a structured, facilitated exercise in which participants are invited to name — anonymously, in writing — one assumption, one resentment, or one judgement they have carried about another part of the sector. Not about a specific person. About a group. About 'the Department.' About 'carers.' About 'family advocacy organisations.' About 'residential care workers.'

These written notes are placed on a central table. The facilitator reads a selection aloud — without attribution. The room hears them. They are acknowledged as real, as understandable, and as the product of genuine hurt rather than malice. Then, symbolically and collectively, they are set aside.

This is not a pretence that the hurt did not happen. It is a decision — made consciously, together, in front of witnesses — that the hurt will not be the operating framework going forward. That decision, made in community, carries a different weight than a policy statement or a training module ever could.

Cross-Group Echo — The Architecture of Mutual Recognition

The Role Reversal Echo technique is extended across all voice groups in this forum. The cross-group pairing is not random — it is designed to create maximum disruption of the assumed us-and-them architecture. A Department worker echoes a parent's story. A carer echoes a worker's story of conducting a removal. A family of origin representative echoes a carer's story of 3am isolation. The carer's teenager echoes a Department worker's story of moral injury.

When a carer has to say out loud: 'I heard that you felt like a monster. I heard that you went home and couldn't eat. I heard that no one asked how you were,' — to a Department worker — something shifts in the room that no policy reform can create. And when the worker says: 'yes, you heard me' — the carer understands something they did not understand before. That is not a small thing. That is the foundation of a working relationship between people who have historically operated as adversaries.

Psychological Safety and Cultural Protection

The cultural healing purpose of this forum requires that psychological safety is not just a safeguard but the primary design principle. Every element of the forum has been built around the question: what does this person need to feel safe enough to tell the truth? Because only the truth heals. Managed, careful, politically aware presentations of experience do not heal anything. They maintain the performance that sustains the toxic culture.

The Emotional Contract

Before any story is shared, the facilitator establishes a clear, explicit contract with the room. Participants agree to three things: they will not interrupt, they will not correct or rebut, and they will not offer solutions during the witnessing phases. They also agree to one more thing — and this is the element specific to the cultural healing purpose of this forum:

"You may hear something today that challenges the story you have been telling yourself about another part of this sector. You are not required to abandon your experience. You are required to stay in your seat and let the challenge happen. That is the work."

This contract does more than protect storytellers. It protects the process of cultural change, which is inherently uncomfortable and which human beings are wired to avoid. Naming the discomfort as the work — before it arrives — is what keeps the room together when it does.

Safeguards for Specific Voice Groups

Families of Origin

- Supported by an independent advocate (not Department-affiliated) throughout the event.
- No Department worker who has had direct involvement with any participant's family is present.
- Stories reviewed for content that may affect active legal proceedings — independent legal advice sought where needed.
- Participants may withdraw from any element at any time without explanation or consequence.

Children and Young People

- Participation voluntary, supported by a trusted advocate or support person of their choosing.
- Young people choose their own storytelling format — live, written, audio, or symbolic object.
- A dedicated support person for young participants is present throughout the forum.

Department Staff

- Briefed in advance that this is not a disciplinary or performance context.

- Participation is voluntary.
- Staff are explicitly told that the cultural healing purpose of the forum includes healing the wounds the system has created in them — not just the wounds it has created for others.
- Confidential debrief available with wellbeing support person after the forum.

Children of Foster Families

- Participation is voluntary. Parental consent and young person's own expressed willingness are both required.
- Living Library gallery format available as an alternative to live storytelling.
- A dedicated support person present for this group throughout.

Overarching Safety Conditions

- Neutral, non-government venue — not a department office.
- Warm, circular seating — no tables, no laptops, no institutional furniture arrangement.
- Qualified wellbeing support person present throughout.
- Quiet withdrawal space available always.
- PYCC co-facilitator monitoring the room while the primary facilitator holds the centre.
- No case-specific details that could identify an active child, placement, or legal proceeding.

Outcomes — What This Forum Creates

The outcomes of this forum are not primarily measured in policy recommendations or reform documents. They are measured in the quality of relationship and the state of culture within the sector when the Commission report arrives. These are the outcomes PYCC is committed to achieving.

Cultural Outcomes

- Participants leave with a direct, human understanding of the experience of at least one other part of the Village they did not have when they arrived.
- The assumptions and resentments that have calcified across sector groups are named, witnessed, and consciously set aside — not denied, but no longer operating as the default framework.
- The sector has a shared language for describing itself as a Village — a language that will be available when the Commission report lands and the temptation to fragment resurfaces.

Relational Outcomes

- Specific working relationships between individuals across sector groups — carer and worker, family advocate and Department manager — that begin from a place of mutual recognition rather than assumed opposition.
- Echo Card commitments from every participant group: specific, named, and followed up.
- A documented moment of cross-sector mutual commitment that can be referred back to when the pressure of implementation makes the old divisions attractive again.

Strategic Outcomes

- A sector positioned to receive the Commission report as a shared project rather than a contested terrain.
- A published white paper that contextualises the Commission report within the full circle of human impact — giving the sector a shared frame for interpreting whatever recommendations emerge.
- A replicable forum model that can be used in regional contexts across Queensland to extend the cultural healing work beyond a single event.
- PYCC positioned as the sector's reform partner — not its critic.

Resource Requirements

Venue	Neutral, non-government space. Circular seating, warm lighting, Clearing Table space, breakout for wellbeing support.
Participants	Cross-sector: family of origin (with advocates), young people (with support persons), Department staff, foster/kinship carers, carers' children/family, sector workers.

Timing	Proposed delivery TBA 2026 Pending Commission's report. PYCC recommends 2026 as optimal.
Facilitation	PYCC Facilitator (primary) PYCC co-facilitator Independent wellbeing support person Voice group preparation workers
Materials	Echo Cards Clearing Table materials Wall of Change Living Library gallery Consent forms
Duration	3.5–4 hours facilitated, plus 45 mins setup and post-forum wellbeing support
Follow-Up	PYCC produces thematic summary and white paper within 30 days. 60-day Echo Card follow-up.

An Invitation

The Commission of Inquiry will produce its report. The recommendations will come. Some will be welcomed. Some will be contested. Some will be implemented fully, some partially, and some not at all — and the outcome for children will be shaped, more than by anything in the report itself, by the state of the relationships between the people responsible for implementing it.

PYCC is asking the Department, and the broader sector, to invest in those relationships now before the report, before the positions harden, before the old divisions reassert themselves in response to new pressure.

We are not asking anyone to agree on everything. We are asking everyone to come to the same room, hear the same stories, and make the same decision: that the children at the centre of this system deserve a sector that has done its own healing work.

That is what this forum offers. Not a policy platform. Not an advocacy position. A room where the Village can finally see itself whole and choose to move forward as one.

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Queensland, 2026