

QFCC Response to the ACIL Allen Report

15th November 2022

BACKGROUND

Section 41 of the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* requires the Queensland Government to arrange an independent review of the performance by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) of its functions and table the report in the Legislative Assembly.

ACIL Allen was commissioned by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) to undertake this independent review (the review) required by legislation. The subsequent report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 13 January 2022. A copy of the tabled report can be located [here](#).

The QFCC acknowledges and thanks ACIL Allen and DJAG for this report.

FINDINGS OF REVIEW

The review found the QFCC:

- has developed and matured as an organisation since its establishment in 2014¹;
- has performed its legislative functions well, in accordance with the intent of the legislation and the recommendations of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (QCPCOI);² and
- is at a crossroads given the QCPCOI recommendations have been acquitted.³

The review identified eight areas for improvement by the QFCC to optimise its service delivery.

¹ Page 5 of the review

² Executive Summary of the review – page v

³ Ibid

Those eight areas and the QFCC’s response and position on each is outlined below:

Recommendation	Queensland Family and Child Commission Response
<p>1 Further explore opportunities to work strategically with the sector</p>	<p>In response to the report the QFCC has adopted a new approach to sector and partner engagement.</p> <p>A major focus of the QFCC in 2022 has been to embed a ‘one commission’ governance model across the commission that emphasises transparency and shared accountability. This has included updated policies and practices, such as new project management requirements that encourage collaboration and information sharing both across the commission, and with our external partners.</p> <p>Strategic effort has been made to increase purposeful engagement with external partners within the sector. The QFCC has implemented a new operating model arising out of a functional alignment. An outcome of this model is dedicated resources (such as a new First Nations and Child Rights team) and processes that identify opportunities to improve existing relationships with external partners and improve delivery outcomes. As part of this process, the QFCC has enhanced its ability to work and partner with statutory agencies such as the Public Guardian, peak bodies and other external stakeholders on key strategic issues.</p> <p>In June 2022, the QFCC launched its new Strategic Plan for 2022-26. The plan includes greater focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and child rights, and increased engagement and influence with partners, families, children and government.</p> <p>The plan outlines five objectives designed to move the QFCC towards a modern, responsive, and collaborative family and child commission. The objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure systems are accountable for the impact they have on children and families. 2. Raise awareness and advocate for children and their families. 3. Empower children and their families to influence decisions that affect their lives. 4. Support, connect and collaborate with organisations that advance the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children. 5. Build our capacity, capability and culture to achieve our vision. <p>The strategies that support Objective 4 to <i>“Support, connect and collaborate with organisations that advance the rights, safety and wellbeing of children”</i> highlight the QFCC’s unique position to bring together diverse voices to contribute to key issues impacting children and their families.</p>

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	<p>The QFCC chairs the Community Partnerships Group, an advocacy alliance of non-government peak bodies and statutory bodies. This forum enables the QFCC to engage and partner with key stakeholders and system influencers to identify and discuss persistent and emerging strategic issues that impact on the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people. By working collectively, the member agencies of the group strengthen their powers of advocacy, using their different roles and areas of influence.</p> <p>The QFCC is proud to partner with a broad range of peak bodies, industry partners, communities, advisory groups, academics, and government and non-government organisations. In 2022, the QFCC consulted with a broad range of stakeholders when developing its annual report on the performance of the Queensland child protection system, supported sector agencies through strategic sponsorships and participated in cross sector partnerships such as the <i>Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership</i> and the <i>Prevention Alliance</i>.</p> <p>The QFCC plays an important role in bringing stakeholders together across agencies and systems to drive sector improvement. A future focus of the QFCC is to improve the codesign of the commission’s work, including the development of recommendations for government implementation.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Ensure effective communication between the OPG and the QFCC.</p>	<p>The QFCC has taken an active role in ensuring effective communication between the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) and the QFCC.</p> <p>The QFCC Executive Leadership Board invited the OPG to present at their August 2022 meeting and reached agreement to formalise regular meetings and sharing of information between the two entities. The QFCC will progress the joint development of a Memorandum of Understanding in relation to information sharing.</p> <p>The QFCC’s new operating model has enhanced the QFCC’s ability to work and partner with statutory agencies such as the OPG, peak bodies and other external stakeholders on key strategic issues. The new operating model will ensure lines of communication, engagement and collaboration are enhanced with the OPG and other external agencies.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Revisit the workforce redevelopment and planning function.</p>	<p>The QFCC supports workforce development by conducting annual surveys of the workforce, making contributions to conferences and establishing partnerships with research organisations.</p>

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	<p>The QFCC undertakes an annual survey of the child protection and family support frontline workforce. In 2022, this was extended to include the youth justice frontline workforce. The survey contributes to better understand how the workforce perceive their work and how well the sector is functioning more broadly. The survey includes gathering perceptions of the culture of their organisation, the extent to which they feel supported as part of the workforce, and the extent to which staff are able to access professional development and learning opportunities to ensure they work effectively.</p> <p>The QFCC further contributes to workforce knowledge and capability through symposium and conference presentations, such as the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) Conference and webinar panel discussions, particularly about embedding children and young people’s views and experience into your work.</p> <p>The Child Death Review Board, hosted by the QFCC, plays a critical role in reviewing systems and has a key focus on workforce capability and capacity. The Board prioritises working with partner agencies and stakeholders to develop and refine processes for sharing information and identifying systemic issues.</p> <p>The Department of Justice and Attorney-General has commenced work on the statutory review of the <i>Family and Child Commission Act 2014</i>. This review will include consideration of the QFCC’s legislative functions, including the workforce development and planning function identified by ACIL Allen.</p>
<p>4 Investigate the efficacy of materials developed for parents and children.</p>	<p>The QFCC has undertaken a review of the materials its developed and maintained for parents and children. Following a survey of stakeholders and analysis of usage, the QFCC made the decision to close the <i>oneplace community services</i> directory and <i>Talking Families</i> initiatives. It was determined that other organisations are better placed to lead initiatives that optimise similar outcomes for children and their families.</p> <p>The QFCC is committed to building and maintaining strong connections with children, young people, families and other stakeholders. Providing the right information, to the right people, using the right channel is an important part of this.</p> <p>In 2021–22, the QFCC adopted a new digital media strategy and opened a LinkedIn account that, with our Facebook and Instagram profiles has extended our reach to more Queenslanders.</p>

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	<p>In June 2022, we launched a new, user-friendly website, with refreshed QFCC branding. The website affords a fresh opportunity to connect with Queensland young people, families and partnering organisations. The website has several new features to connect target audiences with the information they need most. There is a dedicated ‘youth’ space, containing a guide to child protection, stories from young people and blogs written by QFCC youth advocates. The ‘families’ space is for parents and carers, containing videos and blogs and promoting the work of the Families are first initiative, celebrating First Nations families and communities. The new ‘assistance’ page has quick links to support services that are easily accessible, even on mobile devices.</p> <p>The redeveloped website also provides a platform to showcase the good work achieved by the commission, our partners and the community. It will continue to provide easy access to QFCC publications, news and policy submissions.</p>
<p>5 Streamlining activities where the QFCC does not appear to have strong impact.</p>	<p>Prioritisation is a key component of the QFCC’s new operating model, to ensure allocation of the QFCC’s limited resources maximises its impact. To this end, the QFCC is currently developing an Oversight Framework to provide a consistent basis to underpin discussions and decisions about issues in focus, approach and investment to strengthen confidence, shared understanding, transparency and impact.</p> <p>The framework will provide guidance on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. oversight, impact, boundaries and complexities (benefits/opportunities and limitations/risks) 2. how to identify when system vulnerability increases 3. the differing and scalable tools of the 'oversight toolkit' 4. decision factors to guide which tool to use and scale of investment (based on system vulnerabilities that most impact children and families). <p>As part of the development of the Oversight Framework, the QFCC is actively working with system partners to improve how it designs, implements, and monitors reviews and recommendations to ensure it has maximum impact.</p>

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<p>6</p> <p>Provide a clear portfolio of work that is the responsibility of the Commissioner.</p>	<p>In June 2022, the QFCC introduced a new operating and functional model that included a dedicated focus and workforce for the Commissioner. The new model underpins the QFCC’s renewed focus on strong partnerships, aligns to its strategic direction, provides clearer Commissioner portfolios, and streamlines leadership with appropriate layers and spans of control. Dedicated portfolios of work, with clear reporting lines, have reduced the risk of duplication and confusion across the commission.</p> <p>A new, dedicated First Nations and Child Rights team is headed by the Commissioner. The Commissioner sets the strategic direction of this team’s deliverables, is accountable for external leadership and voice on First Nations and child rights and authorises system reviews and monitoring as it relates to First Nations and child rights. The Commissioner’s portfolio strengthens the structure, voice and leadership dedicated to First Nations Australians in the QFCC both internally and publicly.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Consider ways to further demonstrate achievement of organisational objectives and outcomes.</p>	<p>As an entity with a primary role of influencing change, the commission’s performance can be hard to quantify, as the outcomes of its work are often delivered by others. A range of measures have been developed to assess the achievement of the QFCC’s strategic objectives, as outlined in its strategic plan. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners engaging in the design and delivery of the QFCC’s work • Partners inviting the QFCC to assist them achieve mutual goals • The QFCC is actively engaged in social policy design, and its advice is sought • Children and young people are given opportunities to influence key decision makers on the effectiveness of systems in protecting and promoting their rights, interests and needs. <p>The QFCC has introduced the following Service Delivery Statement on stakeholder satisfaction, to be reported on annually: <i>percentage of surveyed stakeholders that feel the QFCC contributes to improving the child protection and youth justice systems</i>. This measure will go some way in demonstrating the achievement of our organisational objectives and outcomes.</p> <p>Alternative ways of demonstrating achievement of organisational objectives and outcomes are through media monitoring. The QFCC’s media coverage is analysed each year to evaluate its public reputation and the likely impact of its messages among their target</p>

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	<p>audiences. Between May 2021 and April 2022, the QFCC featured in 879 media reports (including syndicated coverage), generated through proactive opportunities, reactive media enquiries, or passing mentions. Overall, 66% of coverage was positive or very positive in tone.</p> <p>Media monitoring organisation Isentia assigned the QFCC a Media Impact Score of 3.4. This score is derived from a comparative index of more than 400 Australian organisations’ media performance across 2020. The QFCC’s score is comparable with the media performances of organisations in the university and not-for-profit sectors and sits at the ‘very positive’ end of the spectrum.</p> <p>The QFCC maintains a culture of continuous improvement by monitoring the strengths of its current processes and seeking feedback from stakeholders. The QFCC demonstrated this by initiating a rapid review of the progress of implementation of recommendations from a selection of system reviews. Stakeholders were invited to participate in consultation, including a survey to provide feedback on the on recommendations made by the QFCC in a selection of its previous system reviews.</p>
<p>8 Engage and collaborate with the sector in meaningful ways.</p>	<p>As per 1 above. The QFCC’s new operating model includes a dedicated Government Relations and Performance team and a dedicated Media, Communication and Engagement team. The new First Nations and Child Rights team also has a strong focus on community engagement. This will enhance the QFCC’s ability to meaningfully collaborate with the sector, including identifying opportunities to make joint submissions and run joint advocacy campaigns on issues that affect children.</p>