



Queensland Government Response to the

Queensland Productivity Commission Inquiry

into service delivery in remote and discrete
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
communities

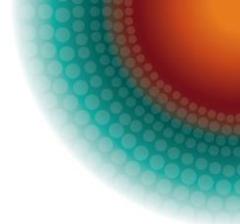


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Introduction

In September 2016, the Queensland Government announced the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) would inquire into service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Inquiry was announced to respond to the concerns of Mayors and leaders of remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that the level of investment in all services (federal, State and non-government) had not delivered better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and discrete communities. The QPC was asked to consider investment in remote and discrete Indigenous communities and what works well, and why, with a view to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Queensland Government, working through the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), recognises the need to increase the economic participation, improve the community participation and promote the cultural recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

This includes delivering on ongoing Government commitments to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to create more job opportunities, grow emerging businesses, increase home ownership, and support safe, caring and connected communities.

In Queensland's remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities there is more work to be done to address existing levels of disadvantage.

Queensland's remote and discrete Indigenous communities account for seven of the top ten most economically and socially disadvantaged locations in Australia (at Census 2011). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in these communities experience (relative to outcomes for non-Indigenous Queenslanders) much higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of school attendance, lower rates of home ownership and poorer health outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and very remote communities experience wellbeing outcomes in the areas of justice, child protection and domestic and family violence that are significantly below those of non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Addressing these levels of disadvantage will require a new approach – one that moves away from our current model of high investment and low outcomes to a new model that is driven by improving community wellbeing.

The QPC Final Report and Recommendations

The QPC provided its Final Inquiry Report (the QPC Final Report) to the Queensland Government on 22 December 2017. The QPC Final Report provides mixed results. It shows examples of good service delivery that can be built upon but most participants in the Inquiry process agreed that there are opportunities to improve how services are designed, funded and delivered that will work towards better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

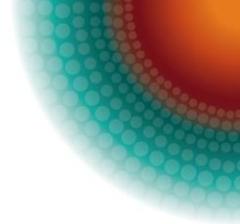
The Final Report provides a comprehensive approach in reviewing service delivery, and has identified the need for structural reform that builds stronger partnerships between communities and government, encourages community ownership and direction for investment and procurement decisions, and provides greater accountability for service providers and better outcomes in service delivery.

The QPC's substantial reform agenda for policy and service delivery includes:

- **Structural Reform** to transfer accountability and decision-making closer to communities and where services users are;
- **Service Delivery Reform** to put communities at the centre of service design; and
- **Economic Reform** to facilitate economic participation and community development.

The QPC Final Report notes that the reform proposal will need to be underpinned by capability and capacity building within Government, service providers and community and the timely and transparent transfer of data to measure performance and evaluate outcomes.

The Queensland Government is committed to working with communities to implement the proposed reform. We need to ensure that we get this reform right, and to do that we need to work with communities and stakeholders, so that together we can identify and implement workable solutions tailored to the needs of communities, government and service providers.



The commitment to working with community on a new reform agenda

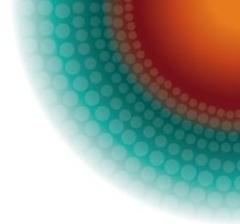
The Queensland Government commits to working with community, other government and key stakeholders on this reform. The reform model proposed in the QPC Final Report provides a blueprint that can guide future collaboration and co-design between Queensland Government, remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and other stakeholders, to improve outcomes.

Some of this work is already underway. The Queensland Government submission to the QPC Inquiry highlighted where we are working together with remote and discrete communities to make a difference in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. More effective, efficient and responsive service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. We are investing in innovative strategies by partnering with communities to improve engagement, improve the design, delivery and evaluation of services through community participation and integration, and improve local opportunities for economic participation to achieve wellbeing outcomes.

The Queensland Government submission also highlighted that work is already underway to increase community voice in service design and delivery and deliver economic participation opportunities. This work includes planning a new future for Queensland's welfare reform communities. In this process, the Queensland Government has supported:

- **a commitment to working collaboratively** with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners;
- **joint planning and decision-making** about priorities and the allocation of discretionary investment; and
- **increased accountability to funding outcomes** through transparent data and information sharing transparency and accountability.

However, it should be noted that the Queensland Government must consider the needs of all remote and discrete communities, and the need to respect the locally elected Indigenous Councils across the State.



Queensland Government Response to the QPC Inquiry

The Queensland Government welcomes the QPC Final Report and its Recommendations. We thank the QPC Commissioner Kim Wood and the Presiding Commissioner Professor Bronwyn Fredericks and the Inquiry team for their significant work to deliver this QPC Final Report.

Communities, local councils, service providers and government agencies have undertaken extensive work to inform the QPC's Inquiry. The Queensland Government thanks all who participated for their contribution.

The Queensland Government expresses a long-term commitment to work with the 19 remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that include Indigenous Local Government Areas (Councils), their Mayors and community leaders, and other stakeholders to implement the intent of the proposed reform agenda.

Addressing structural reform

The Queensland Government is committed to collaboration and co-design with community to implement structural reform to support the reform proposal. We will work with communities to:

- **establish new governance structures** that are representative of community voice, support local decision-making, streamline coordination, and support community-led service delivery that addresses the needs and priorities of community and result in improved outcomes; and
- **establish an independent body** to provide ongoing evaluation and oversight of government's performance in implementing the reforms by June 2019.

In recognising the significant role of Local Governments and the Federal Government in achieving the objectives of the reform proposal, and particularly the role of Indigenous Councils, the Queensland Government will work with communities, Councils and the Federal Government to develop improved ways of working together.

Subject to community agreement, it is anticipated that the first representative governance structures will begin to be established in the second half of 2019.

Addressing service delivery reform

The Queensland Government commits to service delivery reform that focuses on the needs of individuals. We will work with communities to:

- **provide service delivery models** that suit the circumstances, remove impediments to communities providing services, place people at the centre of service delivery, are responsive to the needs of local Indigenous people, support longer-term developmental objectives and fund for outcomes; and
- **identify and expand existing government practice** that aligns with the QPC's reform proposal to support Government's and service providers' capacity and capability building towards the whole-of-Government service delivery reform.

Addressing economic development

The Queensland Government commits to working with community to support their economic development to promote sustainability. We will work with community to develop and provide supports:

- to **Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs** to drive economic and community development through private sector activity;
- to **grow the Indigenous community owned service delivery sector** to provide economic and community development opportunities, provide for community designed and driven service delivery, and provide for quality and affordability of services; and
- for the **capacity and capability building of local government** to support employment and local business opportunities through the growth and coordination of infrastructure development and council services.

Each community will have a tailored employment and economic development strategy.

Building capability and capacity

The Queensland Government accepts the need for capacity and capability building for community and Government to support a long-term implementation of the reform. We will work with communities to:

- **develop and implement phased approaches** to reform implementation that are responsive to each community's capacity and capability;
- **support long-term capacity and capability building** of communities and local Indigenous community service organisations, including through providing opportunities to learn through experience and learn through failures; and
- **identify areas for Government's capability and capacity building** and develop a whole-of-Government transition plan to build capability and capacity across agencies.

Supporting monitoring and evaluation for better outcomes

The Queensland Government accepts the need for timely and transparent data sharing to support the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes as part of the long-term implementation of the reform. We will work with communities to:

- **draw on community knowledge and expertise** in evaluation, support local decision-making, enable adaptive practice, and empower local communities to drive improvements in service design and delivery by providing communities timely, relevant and useful information and by involving communities in monitoring, evaluation and the design of progress indicators; and
- **develop a best-practice evaluation framework** that ensures access to relevant information for all stakeholders and that reporting is streamlined and compliance requirements are necessary and proportionate to the level of funding and risk while maintaining sufficient accountability for the use of public monies.

Addressing engagement, oversight and implementation

In working with communities, the Queensland Government recognises the expertise of community members, the importance of addressing community priorities and of bringing government decision-makers to the table. The Queensland Government enters into this work committed to co-design of the reform agenda, and to deliver this work we will:

- **assign the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships as ministerial lead** to be responsible for implementing the reform;
- establish a joint community and government oversight committee to provide governance and to steer development and implementation of the reforms by July 2018;
- **establish an Implementation Team** within DATSIP to work in close consultation with communities and agencies to develop the details of the reform and identify and implement

workable solutions, guided by the joint oversight committee and supported by the Deputy Premier; and

- **leverage the existing Ministerial Champions Program** and the supporting Government Champions Program to enable Champions to support the implementation of the reforms and provide direct accountability to communities and provide frontline government coordination in working with communities.