Welcome to the first Qld Child Safety Practice Framework newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed on progress of the department’s new child safety practice framework, which was a recommendation of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry.

There has been a flurry of activity since late August 2014 when the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) announced it would partner with Children’s Research Center (CRC) and SP Consultancy (SPC) to develop a new practice framework tailored for the Queensland context.

The first week of September saw briefings with departmental and sector staff, including family support agencies and Recognised Entities, and two focus groups (Brisbane and South East regions). In these focus groups participants were asked about their best hopes and fears for the new framework and their vision for practice.

October and November saw the total number of focus groups grow to 24. These included a video-link to the hubs of Thursday Island, Weipa and Cooktown; and focus groups with parent and family representatives from the Townsville and Brisbane Family Inclusion Networks, CREATE young consultants, and Foster Care Queensland. A meeting with Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak members brought the focus group process to a close.

These sessions have allowed more than 520 participants to meet with a member of CRC/SPC and provide their perspectives. The pie chart details the breakdown of the groups that were consulted:

**Feedback from statewide focus groups to date**

**Best hopes** for the new practice framework:
- reduction in children coming into care because families are better supported
- greater consistency across the state
- community support at early intervention
- families are empowered and have the confidence to problem solve
- practice is more inclusive of families
- more partnership with services that can improve the quality of families’, lives not just children’s safety
- focus on early intervention and education
- better education around cultural awareness and protocols
- less red-tape, resulting in more time to work with children and families.
Worst fears for the new practice framework:
- change of government priorities
- changes are not embraced across the sector
- poor implementation
- fear of adapting to change
- collaboration and consultation will be inadequate and too narrow to capture how communities feel
- won’t respect cultural diversity
- resources will not be available for implementation.

What would good practice look like for Queensland in 2019?
- Proactive and responsive child protection systems, a decrease in the number of children in out-of-home care.
- Shared responsibility and accountability.
- Family is at the centre.
- Decreasing barriers while increasing collaboration.
- Families feel safe, supported and engaged, are comfortable asking for help.
- Genuine understanding that child protection is everyone’s business.
- Positive, respectful working relationships and changes in understanding of the department’s role with families.
- Alignment of legislation, framework and thresholds across all services.
- Culture (working in a supportive, positive environment).
- Workloads are reasonable and sustainable; NGOs have enough staff to service all families in need.
- Less kids in care.
- Earlier intervention.

What can you do now?
If you were one of the 520-plus focus group participants, hopefully you have already gone back to your service centre or agency and discussed your experience. Let people know what was talked about, what was done, and what you thought about the session.

Maybe you could try running a session like the one you participated in with a few colleagues. Here are some ideas to get you started:
- Describe what our practice will be like in three years if we get this new framework right.
- Describe what our relationships will be like across our services.
- What is already working and what are we doing well?
- What might block us or get in the way of developing a framework that supports the kind of practice we want?
- On a scale of zero to 10, where 10 represents where we want our practice to be in three years' time, where do you think we are right now?
- What is one thing that you, your team, your office or your region could do to move our practice a point along the scale?

Want more?
Contact the Practice Leadership Unit at:
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Other sites of interest
www.spcconsultancy.com.au