

COMMUNIQUE – Queensland First Children and Families Board Meeting 15 March 2022

On 15 March 2022, the Queensland First Children and Families Board (the Board), convened to discuss and guide a number of key priorities supporting the implementation of the *Our Way strategy: a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037*.

The Board met for a truncated virtual meeting due to the ongoing impact of the corona virus in the community.

The Director-General, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (department), Ms Deidre Mulkerin provided an update on key points relating to the Board's priorities and a snapshot of key child protection data as it relates to progress towards addressing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Members were provided an update on the department's key priorities including the removal of structured decision-making tools from practice to mitigate for unintended risks and impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families – Queensland is the first state to withdraw such tools. New decision-making tools will be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, including the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) to ensure the system better meets the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Board members acknowledged the challenges and opportunities for Queensland to demonstrate the way forward for other states and territories to achieve more culturally safe and responsive ways to determine risk for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Members noted progress by the department and QATSICPP to develop the blueprint for delegated authority to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, with a goal to implement across Queensland in ten years, with initial planning instigated for scale up within the next two years.

Members acknowledged the Delegated Authority Action Research Project five key areas of focus - enablers/ barriers to success, systemic changes, supports for healthy relationships (e.g., the personal attributes and commitment to the shared approach) and the importance of leadership to success.

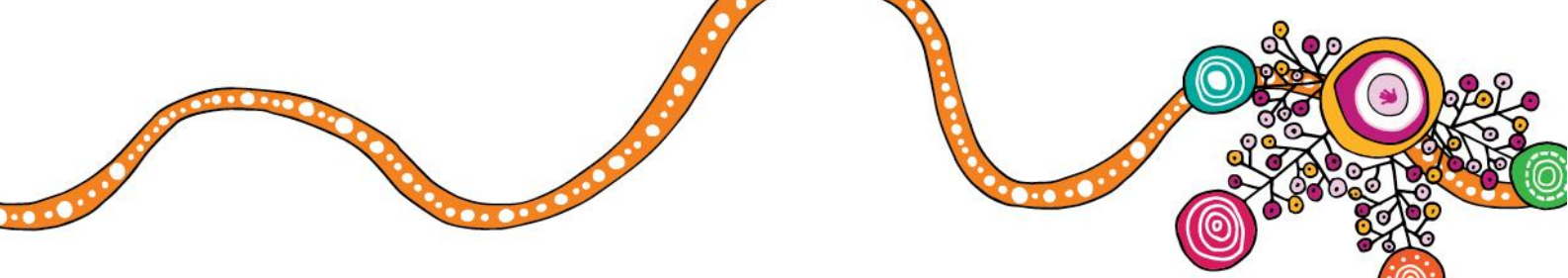
The Director-General reinforced the department's commitment to Placement Reform, to reduce placement pressures and provide better outcomes for children, through:

- Transition of child and family funding to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector
- Halving the number of children and young people in residential care
- Doubling the number of children and young people cared for by kin.

The Board discussed the development of the next *Our Way* action plan, *Breaking Cycles (2023-2025)*. A Road Map was tabled outlining how the *Breaking Cycles* actions will be co-designed in partnership with the Queensland Government, Family Matters Queensland, QATSICPP and partner agencies.

The Board emphasised the importance of interagency collective action to ensure a coordinated response from government, as well as, ensuring that through state-wide stakeholder consultations, the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities are included in the co-design process and incorporated in *Breaking Cycles*. The *Breaking Cycles* action plan is due for release in 2023.

Board members to agree performance measures to monitor the progress of implementation of the *Our Way* strategy to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Queensland child protection system. The agreed data will be presented to the Board by the department on a regular basis including trends and supporting narrative.



Deputy Director-General, Youth Justice, Mr Phillip Brooks attended the Board meeting to discuss the Youth Justice Reform agenda, noting that disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection and youth justice system are not mutually exclusive, risk factors are similar and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families encounter both systems.

The Board are particularly interested in opportunities to work across both systems to reduce the number of young people in contact with Youth Justice and Child Safety. Members agreed that a full day at the next Board meeting will be dedicated to further exploring these opportunities.

Tim Wilson, Director, Family Support and Commissioning Oversight, DCYJMA provided an update to the Board on the outcomes of the Family Well Being Service (FWS) evaluation and identified next steps to consider opportunities for improvement.

Key findings included:

- Each year over 2,200 families attend a FWS to manage complex family issues in Qld.
- The services are run by mob across 33 sites and the majority of clients are female.
- Overall across all sites, 55% of families have all or partial needs met after working with FWS.

Members noted that 93 percent of families that have all their needs met through the FWS program have no further contact with the child protection system within six months. Next steps include the department facilitating a discussion with key departmental and sector stakeholders, QATSCIPP and the Queensland Child and Families Commission (QFCC) about the findings and how these align with DCYJMA's strategic priorities and action plans.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 7 and 8 June 2022

More information in relation to the Board including previous communiques is accessible from: <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/campaign/supporting-families/background/queensland-first-children-families-board>.

For more information, please contact the Board Secretariat via email qcfbsec@csyw.qld.gov.au