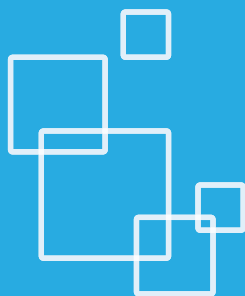




Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry



Discussion paper

February 2013



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Discussion Paper questions

Chapter 3: Reducing demand on the tertiary system

1. What is the best way to get agencies working together to plan for secondary child protection services?
2. What is the best way to get agencies working together to deliver secondary services in the most cost effective way?
3. Which intake and referral model is best suited to Queensland?
4. What mechanisms or tools should be used to assist professionals in deciding when to report concerns about children? Should there be uniform criteria and key concepts?

Chapter 4: Investigating and assessing child protection reports

5. What role should SCAN play in a reformed child protection system?
6. How could we improve the system's response to frequently encountered families?
7. Is there any scope for uncooperative or repeat users of tertiary services to be compelled to attend a support program as a precondition to keeping their child at home?
8. What changes, if any, should be made to the Structured Decision Making tools to ensure they work effectively?
9. Should the department have access to an alternative response to notifications other than an investigation and assessment (for example, a differential response model)? If so, what should the alternatives be?

Chapter 5: Working with children in care


10. At what point should the focus shift from parental rehabilitation and family preservation as the preferred goal to the placement of a child in a stable alternative arrangement?

11. Should the Child Protection Act be amended to include new provisions prescribing the services to be provided to a family by the chief executive before moving to longer-term alternative placements?
12. What are the barriers to the granting of long-term guardianship to people other than the chief executive?
13. Should adoption, or some other more permanent placement option, be more readily available to enhance placement stability for children in long-term care?
14. What are the potential benefits or disadvantages of the proposed multi-disciplinary casework team approach?
15. Would a separation of investigative teams from casework teams facilitate improvement in case work? If so, how can this separation be implemented in a cost-effective way?
16. How could case workers be supported to implement the child placement principle in a more systematic way?
17. What alternative out-of-home care models could be considered for older children with complex and high needs?

Chapter 6: Young people leaving care

18. To what extent should young people continue to be provided with support on leaving the care system?
19. In an environment of competing fiscal demands on all government agencies, how can support to young people leaving care be improved?
20. Does Queensland have the capacity for the non-government sector to provide transition from care planning?

Chapter 7: Addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children


21. What would be the most efficient and cost-effective way to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family wellbeing services across Queensland?
 22. Could Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family wellbeing services be built into existing service infrastructure, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services?
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23. How would an expanded peak body be structured and what functions should it have?
24. What statutory child protection functions should be included in a trial of a delegation of functions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies?
25. What processes should be used for accrediting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies to take on statutory child protection functions and how would the quality of those services be monitored?

Chapter 8: Workforce development

26. Should child safety officers be required to hold tertiary qualifications in social work, psychology or human services?
27. Should there be an alternative Vocational Education and Training pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to progress towards a child safety officer role to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety officers in the workforce? Or should this pathway be available to all workers?
28. Are there specific areas of practice where training could be improved?
29. Would the introduction of regional backfilling teams be effective in reducing workload demands on child safety officers? If not, what other alternatives should be considered?
30. How can Child Safety improve the support for staff working directly with clients and communities with complex needs?
31. In line with other jurisdictions in Australia and *Closing the gap* initiatives, should there be an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets within Queensland's child protection sector?


Chapter 9: Oversight and complaints mechanisms

32. Are the department's oversight mechanisms – performance reporting, monitoring and complaints handling – sufficient and robust to provide accountability and public confidence? If not, why not?
 33. Do the quality standards and legislated licensing requirements, with independent external assessment, provide the right level of external
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checks on the standard of care provided by non-government organisations?

34. Are the external oversight mechanisms – community visitors, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, the child death review process and the Ombudsman – operating effectively? If not, what changes would be appropriate?
35. Does the collection of oversight mechanisms of the child protection system provide accountability and transparency to generate public confidence?
36. Do the current oversight mechanisms provide the right balance of scrutiny without unduly affecting the expertise and resources of those government and non-government service providers which offer child protection services?

Chapter 10: Courts and tribunals

37. Should a judge-led case management process be established for child protection proceedings? If so, what should be the key features of such a regime?
 38. Should the number of dedicated specialist Childrens Court magistrates be increased? If so, where should they be located?
 39. What sort of expert advice should the Childrens Court have access to, and in what kinds of decisions should the court be seeking advice?
 40. Should certain applications for child protection orders (such as those seeking guardianship or, at the very least, long-term guardianship until a child is 18) be elevated for consideration by a Childrens Court judge or a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland?
 41. What, if any, changes should be made to the family group meeting process to ensure that it is an effective mechanism for encouraging children, young people and families to participate in decision-making?
 42. What, if any, changes should be made to court-ordered conferences to ensure that this is an effective mechanism for discussing possible settlement in child protection litigation?
 43. What, if any, changes should be made to the compulsory conference process to ensure that it is an effective dispute resolution process in the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings?
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44. Should the Childrens Court be empowered to deal with review applications about placement and contact instead of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and without reference to the tribunal where there are ongoing proceedings in the Childrens Court to which the review decision relates?
45. What other changes do you think are needed to improve the effectiveness of the court and tribunal processes in child protection matters?

Chapter 11: Funding for the child protection system

46. Where in the child protection system can savings or efficiencies be identified?

Chapter 12: Conclusion

47. What other changes might improve the effectiveness of Queensland's child protection system?

Call for submissions

Submissions made in response to these questions should be provided to the Commission by no later than 5.00 pm, **15 March 2013**.

Submissions can be made on the Commission's website at: www.childprotectioninquiry.qld.gov.au/submissions or emailed to submissions@childprotectioninquiry.qld.gov.au.

For those who do not have internet access, submissions can be mailed to:
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