



Propositions for Investment, Commissioning and Contracting Reform

- The Queensland Government has made '**respect for your money**' and '**redesign a government that works for you**' key themes of its first term agenda. Improvements in the way governments invest and partner have tremendous opportunities to deliver better child, youth, family and community safety and wellbeing, and better value to taxpayers.
- Historically, Queensland has significantly under-invested in universal/primary prevention and early/secondary prevention (i.e. less per capita than best-in-class or national averages, than comparable Australian jurisdictions), as evidenced in:
 - the annual Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services and Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage/Closing the Gap reports
 - QFCC's Performance of the Queensland child protection system 2024-25 Annual Report.
- The lack of adequate investment 'upstream' in preventative and developmental social infrastructure and services, especially in primary prevention, has contributed to an incessant demand to keep spending more and more at the crisis, tertiary end across child protection, health, mental health and justice systems.
- Investing more and more funds at the crisis/tertiary end of the continuum, relative to universal/primary and secondary interventions, will:
 - not address or disrupt the conditions, factors and pathways that are creating and exacerbating adversity, trauma and harm
 - not slow down the rate of growth in the flow of families into crisis and children into care.
- Reform of existing program investment, commissioning and contracting processes, beyond those already advanced, can drive greater public value, higher impact, and reduce undue red tape and transactions costs.
- There is also scope to better align and leverage federal, state and local public, philanthropic and corporate investment.
- Significant changes are required to the 'plumbing' and flow and balance of investment in order to:
 - driving better value and impact from existing and new expenditure
 - flatten the curve on the growth of tertiary-level investments
 - rebalance the overall investment across the continuum
 - reduce red tape and transaction costs
 - boost productivity
 - make systems 'work' for children and families
 - build trust and confidence in citizens and communities.
- Queensland Kids Partnership (QKP) proposes that the Queensland Government commit to **advance Investment, Commissioning and Contracting Reforms** for child, youth and family development, wellbeing and safety services provided to government agencies and non-government organisations.

- QKP encourages consideration reforms of existing investment, commissioning and contracting processes in the human services / human development portfolios through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. Specifically, the investment review should:
 - identify unnecessary transaction costs for non-government organisations and councils in doing business with the Queensland Government
 - investigate alignment with evidence of '**what works**' and what is '**fit-for-purpose and context**' in Queensland
 - identify opportunities for **reallocation to prevention** and early intervention for efficiency and impact improvements.

- The proposed **Investment, Commissioning and Contracting Reforms** should include consideration of a suite of key elements:
 - trialling **pooled funding** and **value-based commissioning at regional and place levels** of related state (and possibly federal and philanthropic) investment
 - developing a **Queensland Prevention and Early Intervention Investment Framework** (as with Victoria's Early Intervention Investment Framework, and the recent recommendations of the Australian Productivity Commission in the recent Delivering Quality Care report)
 - establishing an **Avoided Costs** team in Treasury to analyse current and proposed spending
 - undertaking a Queensland Treasury-led review of the **economic impact of the life cost** of adverse childhood experiences (like the NSW Govt's 2018 report from Taylor Fry Forecasting Futures Outcomes)
 - commissioning an **investment review**, and report back to Government by early 2027, on existing and proposed State Government funded child and youth early intervention programs, and parenting, and family supports
 - developing **long-term outcomes-focused, multi-agency investment plans** to achieve a better balance of investment toward prevention and early intervention, and to reduce duplication and gaps, starting with a 'Thriving Families' Investment Plan
 - **rationalising 'like' programs** within and across Departments to reduce administration and transaction costs, and reinvesting savings in what works and an **Innovation and Evaluation Fund**
 - **designating a 'lead' contracting Department** for community organisations with contracts with multiple agencies
 - **extending contracts** – up to 7-10 years for certified, quality providers in recurrent programs
 - engaging local communities in investment decisions, including through **long-term regional investment plans**, to ensure programs are fit for both purpose and context.

- **Also see:**
 - QKP blog: 'Toward productivity with Purpose 2: Investing for Value and Impact' (<https://tqkp.org.au/toward-productivity-with-purpose-2/>)
 - QKP webpage: 'Investment Reform for Thriving Kids' (<https://tqkp.org.au/our-initiatives/investment-reform-for-thriving-kids/>)
 - Australian Productivity Commission report: Delivering quality care more efficiently (<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries-and-research/quality-care/>).

Queensland Kids Partnership brings together people and organisations to create change, so all young Queenslanders can thrive. Together, we can create a powerful movement to reshape the environment so that every baby, child and young person is thriving, every family is supported and connected, every community resourced and taking collective responsibility for raising thriving Queenslanders.

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