



Enabling Workforces and Organisations **for Thriving Kids**



ANALYSIS AND MAPPING - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current capability building offerings, policies and frameworks

AUGUST 2025



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Acknowledgements

Recognition of First Nations peoples

We respectfully acknowledge the First Nations Traditional Owners and Elders of the lands and seas on which we meet, live, learn and work. We acknowledge those of the past, who have passed on their wisdom and whose strength has nurtured this land. We acknowledge those of the present for their leadership and ongoing efforts to protect and promote First Nations people and cultures. We recognise that it is our collective effort and responsibility as individuals, communities, organisations and governments to ensure equality, recognition and advancement of First Nations Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday life. We walk together in our shared journey of reconciliation.

Recognition of lived experience

We acknowledge the individual and collective contributions of Queenslanders with lived experiences of mental ill-health and problematic alcohol and other drug use, and people, groups and communities impacted by suicidal distress or suicide. We acknowledge families, carers and support people who play a fundamental role in supporting people with lived experience. Each person's journey is unique and collectively provides a valuable contribution to reform. We acknowledge and value your expertise.

Recognition of collective collaboration

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our collaborators including Emerging Minds, Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation, the Queensland Brain Institute at The University of Queensland and Dovetail - as part of Insight to the initiative for this initial phase. We would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support from the Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) and extend our thanks to all stakeholders across a range of roles and organisations. We give our thanks and appreciation for the time, knowledge and resources shared to bring together these important insights.



Leveraging resources of TQKP's philanthropic and other partners.

Background

Workforces and organisations across government sectors are dealing with three inter-related and challenging trends:

- the prevalence, complexity and impacts of child maltreatment, mental ill-health, problematic and challenging behaviours, and disorders and conditions,
- the demands to better address neurodiversity, and to better support family functioning, especially those experiencing early or chronic stress and distress, and
- high levels of worker anxiety, stress, exposure to psychosocial hazards, staff turnover and absences, and challenges recruiting skilled and experienced staff.

Recent key Queensland Government strategies, including Shifting Minds and related sub-plans of Achieving Balance, Every Life, the Queensland Trauma Strategy and Putting Queensland Kids First, have highlighted the importance of prevention and building workforce capacity.

Further information about Enabling Workforces can be found [here](#).

Purpose

The 'Enabling Workforces and Organisations for Thriving Kids' initiative ('Enabling Workforces') is developed in alignment with the Queensland Mental Health Commission's 'Shifting Minds 2023-2028' strategy, which seeks to enhance mental health and wellbeing across Queensland.

The purpose of the Enabling Workforces initiative is to broaden and sustain learning within and across organisations that broadens, deepens and shares contemporary knowledge, skills and language about:

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma, complexity and diversity, and
- Brain health and development, mental wellbeing, healing and resilience for children, young people and their families.

Enabling Workforces seeks to embed, expand, and maintain brain health and development and neuro-informed practices into service delivery within various organisations throughout Queensland. It draws on both national and international efforts to disseminate current knowledge, skills, and terminology related to ACEs, trauma, complexity, diversity, as well as brain health and development through consultations, workshops, and interviews. The approach is intended to demonstrate the project's potential value and relevance in encouraging others to engage in the process.

Mapping and analysis

The initial phase of the project concentrated on mapping existing policies and frameworks, professional standards and existing capability resources and offerings to inform the development and delivery of a workforce 'trial, test and learn' package to improve and apply understandings about brain health and development into relevant government services in Queensland. The focus in this phase has been on government-sector workforces and agencies to uphold the principles outlined in Shifting Minds 2023-2028. It was noted that non-government, community managed and private organisations could also benefit from the activities being developed through the initiative.

To support the design of future workforce activities and ensure they provide meaningful value, this phase focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the current systems, contexts and workforces it aims to support.



Findings

Policy and framework mapping

An analysis and mapping of 86 national and Queensland policies and frameworks identified significant alignment with the initiative's objectives. Notable policies include Shifting Minds, the Queensland Trauma Strategy, Every Life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Plan, and the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These policies emphasise early intervention, trauma-informed care, resilience-building, and the integration of mental health support into child-focused services.

Gaps were identified in policy implementation, particularly in translating policy intentions into workforce development programs. These findings highlighted a need to embed neuro-informed and trauma-responsive practices across multiple sectors, including child safety, education, health, and youth justice.

Professional standards mapping

An analysis and mapping of professional competency frameworks across selected sectors highlighted:

- limited explicit references to brain health, trauma, and adversity in workforce standards, despite their critical role in child development
- a lack of cross-sector consistency in embedding trauma-responsive and culturally safe practices, and
- a strong emphasis on individual professional responsibility for maintaining well-being, rather than systemic support for workforce mental health and resilience.

Workforce capability building resources and offerings mapping

There is a wide range of high quality, evidence-based resources at a national and Queensland level. Many of these are low-cost or free programs; however, currently, there is little awareness and accessibility of these. While sector-specific training exists, there is little coordination between training programs across different agencies.

Queensland service delivery landscape

A desktop review of service delivery across Child Safety, Health, Disability, and Education found:

- a strong presence of child protection across the State including remote locations
- youth mental health services offered in urban and regional centres, but limited access in rural and remote areas
- a need for integrated service delivery to better support children and families experiencing adversity, and
- workforce shortages and high turnover impacting the quality and continuity of care, particularly in frontline roles.

Stakeholder engagement

A series of workshops and interviews were conducted with government leaders, frontline practitioners, and people with lived experience. Key insights include:

- strong support for a common language and framework to support trauma-informed, neuro informed workforce development
- high levels of staff burnout and stress, exacerbated by workforce shortages and complex casework
- the need for practical, accessible, and sector-wide training resources that can be embedded into existing professional standards.



Key recommendations

- 1. Develop a common language:**
Establish a shared understanding and language of neuro-informed capabilities across and within sectors, agencies and departments.
- 2. Align training programs with professional standards:**
Integrate trauma-informed, resilience-building, and neurodevelopmental knowledge into existing workforce professional standards.
- 3. Promote continuous professional development and support implementation:**
Support ongoing, evidence-based professional development programs that are practical, accessible, and tailored to workforce needs.
- 4. Encourage neuro and trauma-informed leadership:**
Ensure system leaders are well informed about trauma and neuroscience so that they can better support their staff and self and have enhanced capacity to lead effectively and with compassion.
- 5. Foster interagency collaboration:**
Create structured opportunities for cross-sector learning and collaboration to break down service silos.
- 6. Address intergenerational trauma:**
Implement culturally sensitive programs and support systems that promote healing and resilience.
- 7. Secure sustainable funding:**
This will ensure the long-term viability of projects and initiatives, enabling them to achieve lasting impact.

Next steps

The Enabling Workforces Toolkit has been developed. This is an online learning resource that:

- provides structured, evidence-based training in brain development, trauma, resilience, and child well-being
- offers a tiered approach to learning, ensuring accessibility for all workforce levels
- aligns with existing policy frameworks and professional standards to support widespread adoption.

The second phase focused on piloting and evaluating the toolkit across multiple sectors, ensuring it meets workforce needs and informs future capability-building efforts.

This initiative represents a critical step in strengthening Queensland's workforce to better support children, young people, and families in overcoming adversity and achieving positive life outcomes.

For details of the next phase of the initiative and implementation learnings, please refer to 'Enabling Workforces Final Report' and 'Enabling Workforces Implementation Guide'

For more information
or to talk about how to get more involved,
please contact TQKP@aracy.org.au

