

Communique - Queensland First Childrens and Families Board meeting

26 & 27 September 2023

Queensland First Childrens and Families Board (QFCFB) Co-Chair, Aunty Rachel Atkinson, welcomed newly appointed Co-Chair, Kieran Chilcott, to the role and the value he will bring to the QFCFB. The QFCFB members congratulated Kieran on his appointment.

Deirdre Mulkerin, Director-General, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) thanked members for their ongoing trust and leadership, noting the collaborative relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and the Queensland government has been recognised nationally as one of the strongest partnerships of any jurisdiction in Australia. Dierdre spoke to the progress of initiatives related to the Board's key priorities including:

- transition of investment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations (ATSICCO) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Businesses,
- the QFCFB Our Way performance report,
- Redirecting decision making to ATSICCO including the statewide implementation of Delegated Authority and the early success of the intake reform trials, and
- the ongoing development and implementation of a new kinship care program.

Helen Missen, Acting Executive Director, SPAL spoke to the DCSSDS Child and Family Strategic Framework, including the *Our Way Implementation Plan* which sets out the actions planned and/ or underway across the department to eliminate the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the child protection system including the implementation of Our Way and other reform activities across the agency. The Child and Family Strategic Framework is consistent with the Family Matters Building Blocks and national priorities under *Closing the Gap* and *Safe and Supported*, and will replace *Supporting Families Changing Futures 2019-2023*, that ends in December 2023.

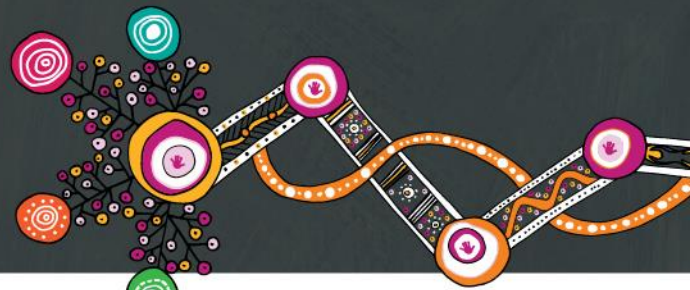
Tim Wilson, Director, Family Support and Commissioning Oversight and Kim Green, Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families, Investment and Commissioning (I&C) spoke to progress on the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and relative care model, *Family Caring for Family*. Co-designed in partnership with QATSCIPP, the *Family Caring for Family* program will maximize the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with family and kin, connected to community and culture.

Samantha Landgren, Senior Advisor (Cultural Consultant) and Tracey De Simone, Acting Chief Operating Officer, Statewide Operations, updated members on the progress of pilot of the culturally responsive intake model, Intake Reform. Members noted the positive early results from the two trials sites underway in the Sunshine Coast/Central Region. The QFCFB commended Sam, Tracey and Statewide Operations on the hard work to get the pilot off the ground and were keen to hear about future progress.

Michael Currie, Co-Chair, Family Matters Queensland noted the traffic light assessment currently being prepared by the Family Matters Leadership Group, in partnership with QATSCIPP, that accompanies the annual Family Matters Report 2023 compiled nationally by SNAICC.

The QFCFB welcomed Bob Gee, Director-General, Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, and noted the current Youth Justice initiatives underway across the state. Members noted the positives of the youth co-responder program and Family Led Decision Making that are resulting in more positive experiences for young offenders.





Members noted the Residential Care Service Review that was announced by the Honorable Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services in July 2023. Kate Connors, Deputy Director-General, Strategy, DCSSDS discussed how the department is leading the review with oversight by the Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. The outcomes of the review will be used to develop evidence-based policies and initiatives to enhance the quality of residential care; and ensure that children and young people in care have the same opportunities as their peers to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Helena Wright, Executive Director, Delegated Authority, DCSSDS and Kylie Phipps, Director, Practice and Workforce Strategy, QATSCIPP, spoke to the implementation of the statewide blueprint for Delegated Authority – *Reclaiming Our Storyline* to shift decision making and the delivery of child protection functions where the powers and functions of the Chief Executive (Child Safety) under the Child Protection Act 1999 for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child, can be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entity, where certain requirements are met. Members acknowledged the legislative and practice complexities and significance of this change, and the sustained commitment from DCSSDS and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entities to work together in new ways.

Members welcomed Minister Craig Crawford and extended their congratulations on his appointment to his new portfolio. Minister Crawford reinforced his confidence in the QFCFB and their cultural leadership and oversight over *Our Way* and supporting action plans.

Minister Crawford joined QFCFB members, Family Matters Queensland Co-Chairs, State and Territory Child and Family Secretaries, and partners from across Queensland Government and the ATSCCO sector, to launch the next *Our Way* action plan, *Breaking Cycles – An action plan: co-designing, developing and implementing services with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2023–2025*, and commended the co-design partnership between DCSSDS and QATSCIPP on behalf of Family Matters Queensland.

Breaking Cycles 2023-2025, the third *Our Way* action plan, will change the way that services are designed, developed and delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, in order that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Queensland grow up safe, loved and cared for in family, connected to kin, community and culture.

Breaking Cycles 2023-2025 builds on the successes, learnings and foundations set under the *Changing Tracks*, the first implementation phase of *Our Way*, and is built around **8** priority areas and **32** flagship actions. Priority areas include:

- Transformative systems change;
- Investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations;
- Strategy for the statewide implementation of Delegated Authority;
- Prevention and early intervention;
- Family participation and control of decision making;
- An increased and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce; and
- Cross-government commitment to address over-representation and improve wellbeing outcomes.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held **5 and 6 December 2023**. For more information in relation to QFCFB membership and previous communiques, visit [QFCFB webpage](#). Queries can be emailed to the QFCFB Secretariat to qfcfbsec@cyjma.qld.gov.au.