

The Queensland Compact

Towards a fairer Queensland



November 2008



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Statement of Commitment

The Queensland Compact is designed to guide the relationship between the Non-profit Community Services Sector (the sector) and the Queensland Government, articulating a vision and goals which underpin this relationship. It commits both parties to actions that will contribute to better outcomes for Queenslanders by fostering strong working relationships, driving engagement in planning and policy processes, and strengthening sector capacity and service quality.

The Queensland Government's *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* framework outlines five ambitions for Queensland: strong, green, smart, healthy and fair. Bold, long-term targets have been established to tackle major challenges facing Queensland and to drive action which delivers improvements in each of these areas.

The Compact recognises the contribution of the Non-profit Community Services Sector to a "Fair Queensland", in delivering services to vulnerable people, and promoting opportunities for Queenslanders to contribute to their communities through volunteering.

The Compact also recognises the sector's sizeable contribution to the Queensland economy, through the many jobs it creates and the value of work performed by volunteers. A strong and viable community services sector is vital to achieving "a diverse economy powered by bright ideas" – part of the Queensland Government's vision for a "strong Queensland".

The Queensland Compact has been developed through consultation across government and the sector, led by the Community Services Futures Forum and the Department of Communities.

It applies to all Queensland Government agencies and to all sector organisations which are committed to the Queensland Community Services Sector Charter.

It is essential that government and the sector work well together, given their inter-dependent and complementary roles and responsibilities. A strong working relationship will allow the sector and government to develop new responses to the challenges they confront working in a complex, fast-changing environment.

The Queensland Compact is founded on principles of universal human rights and values declared in international covenants, the laws of Queensland and the Commonwealth, common law, and the hopes and values of a just society.

While it focuses on relationships in Queensland, it will link with work at the national level to strengthen relationships between government and the sector.

The Queensland Compact requires real commitment from government and the sector to make a difference. It outlines mechanisms to manage and monitor the achievement of its goals. Both sectors recognise that the Compact is not a legal document and does not imply additional funding. However, the Compact will inform future planning for future investment priorities, and represents a clear undertaking by both groups to strengthen the way government and the sector work together to identify and respond to community needs.

We endorse the vision, goals, principles and commitments of the Queensland Compact.

**The Hon.
Anna Bligh MP**
Premier of Queensland
27 November 2008

The Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Minister for Communities, Disability Services,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships,
Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth
27 November 2008

Jill Lang
Chair, Community Services
Futures Forum
27 November 2008

Purpose

The Queensland Compact sets out expectations and commitments for the Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector to work together in a respectful, productive, forward-looking relationship that benefits the community.

Vision

The Queensland Government and Non-profit Community Services Sector working together for a better quality of life and a fair community for all Queenslanders now and in the future.

Goals

The Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector will work together to:

1. Build strong working relationships
2. Improve engagement in planning and policy
3. Improve the sector's capacity and sustainability
4. Continue to improve service quality and innovation.

Principles

The Queensland Compact is underpinned by principles shared by the Non-profit Community Services Sector and the Queensland Government:

Principles for Goal 1 — Build strong working relationships

Cooperation: we agree to work respectfully towards our common aims and to respect the distinct contributions of the government and the sector.

Independence and autonomy: we recognise each sector's legal and statutory obligations, and value the community services sector's role in stimulating public debate and challenging government policy.

Meaningful communication: we value ongoing timely and open communication supported by a range of mechanisms that facilitate productive dialogue.

Transparency and accountability: we value clear, open communication about policies and resource allocation, recognising that finite resources are available for competing demands.

Appreciation of sector diversity: we acknowledge that the sector's diversity is a strength, positioning it to respond to diverse community needs through a range of viewpoints, contributions, service approaches and different types and sizes of services.

Principles for Goal 2 — Improve engagement in planning and policy

Community participation and engagement: we recognise the voices of communities, service providers and service users, and value their contribution to policy, program and service development, and planning and review.

Needs-based planning and evidence-based decision making: we recognise the need to use and share relevant information to create a strong evidence base for planning and delivery of effective community services that identify, prioritise and address unmet needs, and target disadvantaged individuals, families and communities.

Recognition of community diversity: we value our diverse communities and recognise local and regional differences and cultural diversity.

Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity: we recognise that our population is increasingly multicultural, requiring equitable access, appropriate policies and responsive services.

Recognition of the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: we respect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to self determination and self management, and recognise the need for appropriate responses including community-controlled organisations. We value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognise the historical disadvantage and contemporary disadvantages experienced by these people and their communities.

Capacity building and community development: we commit to approaches that build on the strengths of people and communities and bring together local resources to meet community aspirations and needs.

Principles for Goal 3 — Improve the sector's capacity and sustainability

Future-focused investment: we support strengthening the sector's capacity to develop, innovate and respond to emerging needs,

A sustainable human services workforce: we commit to strengthening the skills and professionalism of workers and volunteers, recognising that effective service delivery is founded on a strong, skilled and competent workforce.

Recognition and support of volunteers: we uphold the critical role of volunteers in building a stronger, healthier community and a sustainable future and support the Queensland Government's ambition to support safe and caring communities including the target to "increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers".

Principles for Goal 4 — Continue to improve service quality and innovation

Quality service provision: we commit to the sustainable delivery of safe, responsive, innovative, client-focussed community services, and to ongoing service improvement.

Effective service delivery: we recognise that the service system should focus on the efficient and effective use of available resources to achieve agreed outcomes.

Matching expectations and resources: we recognise the need to work collaboratively to align agreed service delivery expectations with funding.

Commitments

To achieve Goal 1 — Build strong working relationships

The Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector together agree to:

- Promote understanding of the Queensland Compact, actively pursue its implementation and monitor its effectiveness
- Prioritise and promote effective working relationships between the people, organisations and structures of the sector and government
- Develop appropriate mechanisms and skills in government and the sector, to support and resource productive relationships and effective communication
- Improve communication between government agencies and community service organisations.

The Queensland Government agrees to:

- Recognise that community service organisations have their own organisational missions, values, and structures and accountabilities in addition to their funding relationship with government
- Improve communication and cooperation within and across government, particularly across agencies and programs directed to specific groups in the community.

The Non-profit Community Services Sector agrees to:

- Recognise that government is accountable to the electorate, and will make decisions based on a range of stakeholder views and factors
- Communicate and cooperate effectively across the community services sector.

To achieve Goal 2 — Improve engagement in planning and policy

The Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector together agree to:

- Improve sharing of data and information to support good planning and practice
- Identify and address the priority needs of communities through a range of approaches and organisational forms
- Improve alignment and consistency between policy development, planning, program design and service delivery across both government and the sector
- Be prepared to adapt service responses to meet changing community needs.

The Queensland Government agrees to:

- Adopt genuine consultative approaches that seek input into policy development and planning early enough to make a difference
- Improve the evidence base used for planning, policy development and funding decisions
- Improve alignment of data collection requirements within and across departments.

The Non-profit Community Services Sector agrees to:

- Participate proactively in planning and policy development processes, clearly stating whose perspectives are being put forward and acknowledging differing views where they exist
- Foster involvement by communities, constituents and service users in planning and policy processes, and to represent their needs and views effectively when they can not participate directly
- Improve the use of data, research and evaluation in planning and delivering services.

**To achieve Goal 3 —
Improve the sector's capacity
and sustainability**

The Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector together agree to:

- Strengthen systems and infrastructure needed for effective service delivery and development into the future
- Work together on strategies to develop a sustainable human service workforce, focusing on attracting, retaining and training a high quality workforce
- Encourage development and application of culturally appropriate approaches to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Encourage development and application of culturally appropriate approaches to work with people from different cultural backgrounds
- Work together to develop and negotiate service responses which achieve desired outcomes
- Develop strategies that encourage and support volunteering.

The Queensland Government agrees to:

- Actively reduce administrative duplication, compliance costs and unnecessarily prescriptive funding agreements and to recognise that organisations may have multiple funding streams.

The Non-profit Community Services Sector agrees to:

- Actively pursue improvements in the efficiency and sustainability of organisational and management approaches.

**To achieve Goal 4 —
Continue to improve service
quality and innovation**

The Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector together agree to:

- Continue to improve service system design and the quality of service delivery
- Work together to investigate and implement improved funding arrangements that balance expectations and funding levels.

Implementing and monitoring the Queensland Compact

The Compact aims to create practical improvements in the relationship between the Queensland Government and the Non-profit Community Services Sector and provide real benefits for Queensland communities. Both the government and the sector need to demonstrate how the Compact has made a difference. This will require strong commitment from both.

Under a joint governance process, a Committee will oversee implementation of the Queensland Compact. The Compact Governance Committee will comprise representatives from government agencies and a range of organisations in the Non-profit Community Services Sector. It will be chaired by an independent chair.

The Compact Governance Committee will develop an Action Plan that gives effect to the commitments within the compact and creates practical change. This plan will outline specific actions for the first two years of the Compact, along with measurable targets. It will identify responsible agencies and organisations to lead each strategy, as well as realistic timeframes for implementation.

The Compact Governance Committee will oversee progress on the Action Plan by the relevant organisations and agencies. The Committee will resolve barriers to implementation and identify opportunities including linkages with other cross-sectoral projects. Any disputes relating to the implementation of the Compact will be referred to this Committee for resolution.

The Compact Governance Committee will report publicly three times each year on the advancement of Compact goals, Compact-related activities and progress against the Action Plan. The Committee will also issue an Annual Report of progress against the 2-year Action Plan.

Both sectors will be accountable for their performance against the Compact commitments and action plan. The Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth will make an annual statement in Parliament regarding implementation of the Compact.

The Compact Governance Committee will commission an independent review process at the end of two years to assess the effectiveness of the Compact and its implementation and identify areas for improvement and future directions. The findings of the review will be made publicly available.

The members of the Community Services Futures Forum involved in the development of the Queensland Compact are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Queensland) Limited
- Aged Care Queensland Incorporated
- Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League (Queensland) Incorporated
- Bravehearts Incorporated
- Carers Queensland
- Centacare Brisbane
- Centacare Toowoomba
- Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
- Combined Churches Community Service Forum
- Community Centres and Family Support Network Association Queensland Incorporated
- Council on the Ageing Queensland Incorporated
- Endeavour Foundation
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Limited
- Health and Community Services Workforce Council Incorporated
- Mackay Regional Council for Social Development Limited
- Mission Australia
- National Disability Services Queensland
- Ozcare
- Peakcare Queensland Incorporated
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition
- Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Incorporated
- Queensland Baptist Care
- Queensland Community Housing Coalition Limited
- Queensland Council of Social Service Incorporated
- Queensland Disability Housing Coalition
- Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network
- Queensland Shelter Incorporated
- Queensland Youth Housing Coalition Incorporated
- Australian Red Cross (Queensland)
- Relationships Australia (Queensland)
- Spiritus
- St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland
- The Queensland Alliance of Mental Illness and Psychiatric Disability Groups Incorporated
- The Salvation Army Queensland
- Tenants' Union of Queensland
- UnitingCare Queensland
- Volunteering Queensland Incorporated
- Welfare Rights Centre Incorporated
- Women's Health Services Network Queensland
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Incorporated

For more information about *The Queensland Compact: Towards a fairer Queensland*

Visit: www.communities.qld.gov.au

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