

Queensland Community Service Peaks Election Statement

Working together for the social and economic wellbeing of all Queenslanders



Introduction

The Queensland community is diverse and regionalised. And while many people enjoy economic and social prosperity, there are a significant number of people in Queensland who do not.

This is highlighted by these facts:

- 12 per cent of the Queensland population (430,000) is experiencing poverty
- Underemployment has risen from 6.1 per cent in 2007 to 9.3 percent in 2017. A concern often masked by easing unemployment ratesⁱ
- Queensland has Australia's highest proportion, nearly 50 per cent, of low income households living in housing stressⁱⁱ
- 46 per cent of parents recently surveyed had experienced financial stress in the past yearⁱⁱⁱ
- 17.7 per cent of the Queensland population or just less than one in every five Queenslanders live with disability^{iv}. Many will struggle to find employment, access services and fully participate in the community.
- An estimated 236,200 Queenslanders of all ages have a profound or severe disability, 144,400 under the age of 65 and the NDIS will support approximately 91,000 people within this age range^v.
- 45 per cent of Australians will suffer a mental illness at one point in their lives
- 17 non-Indigenous youth in detention per 100,000 population compared to 429 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth per 100,000.
- Around 8,000 Queensland children on child protection orders are living in a form of out- of-home care at any time with nearly 50 per cent of these children being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

This snapshot of social statistics in Queensland highlight areas where Queenslanders are experiencing vulnerability and need support. They highlight the disproportionate disadvantage experienced by some groups in our community. Most importantly they highlight a need to change how we support our communities.

It is clear from these statistics that the service system is failing Queenslanders and that we need a new approach. This is particularly relevant when we consider that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in the majority of social services.

Because this is a critical issue, peak community service organisations have come together to ask the incoming Queensland Government to work with us, for every Queenslander.

We believe the only way to achieve the change that is necessary is to work together. We believe that to make the change necessary it is essential that the incoming Queensland Government is:

a government that leads with vision

...a shared, long-term vision not just for our state but for our people

a government that listens

... to a wide range of views from experts to people who experience disadvantage that is representative of our community

a government that acts together

...understanding that supporting our community cannot happen in silos but it can when viewed holistically and with sound relationships

It is only by using these three approaches that an incoming government will be able to effectively address the systemic issues that are letting Queenslanders fall through the gaps.

This document outlines how we can, together, in our own roles, lead with vision, listen and act together. It is our commitment to work alongside our communities to improve the social and economic wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

We seek commitment from the incoming Queensland Government work with us and do the same.

Leading with vision

In a world that is rapidly changing effective and positive government is one that will help our communities understand, manage and thrive through the transition. It is a government that has a clearly articulated and shared vision with its community.

For Queensland - a vision that places Queensland firmly in the global environment; that describes what we are transitioning to; that provides our communities with hope, agreed pathways and understanding for the future.

A vision that goes beyond political boundaries, forming the basis of a community that offers social and economic prosperity and wellbeing for all.

This vision that has come from the community, looking years into the future, is achieved by listening and acting and working with all. This vision has the possibility to strengthen every community in Queensland.

This vision must provide a road map with actions and investment and a way to measure to track our success! It must provide hope, direction and give us all something to strive toward.

Listening

To effectively develop a vision and achieve it requires listening from a broad range of views and trusted sources.

Peak organisations have a unique perspective and ability to gain broader perspectives on where Queenslanders want to be and what their vision may be. We are able to see the service system and actions of government from a holistic point of view and how it impacts collectively on individuals, families and groups. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peaks need to be engaged early to make sure the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are well represented and heard.

Peak organisations hold close relationships with organisations delivering community services, Queenslanders with lived experience of poverty and disadvantage, all levels of government and the private sector.

These relationships place us in a unique position to undertake engagement, consultation and research about how best to address social issues and community wellbeing looking at the needs of people and the community, best practice, and innovative models of service provision.

These relationships allow peak bodies to make an important contribution to the development of inclusive and innovative public policy through reference groups, submissions and engagement.

Peaks have the skills, capacity and flexibility to conduct research which provides the knowledge base upon which to develop effective local solutions.

Peak bodies present a cost-effective mechanism to access robust and innovative advice from a single point of contact, representing the allied interests of membership groups and the broader community.

We have strength in being able to bring people together around a topic, in a neutral and objective environment, whether it is the community sector, people with lived experience, different levels of government and different government departments or the community.

Acts together

As peak bodies from across the community services sector we meet on a regular basis to discuss the unique pressures that exist in Queensland.

It is clear from discussions that addressing these issues successfully will mean the relationship between government and community services organisations will need to change and mature from what has existed in the past.

We are seeking to forge a productive, robust and equal partnership to make sure we have the best possible outcomes for Queenslanders who are experiencing vulnerability.

Governments are no longer able to provide all the answers, deliver all the solutions, solve all the problems. We need to work together; we need to collaborate; at the strategic level, and within communities to develop local solutions to local issues.

We call for the incoming government to work across sectors, across jurisdictions, across artificial boundaries to build a collective in which the strengths of all are harnessed to develop the solutions to issues, to take advantage of the opportunities.

We understand that principles and frameworks need to underpin this approach and offer our support to put these in place. Peaks are in an ideal position to facilitate the foundations of this approach because of our strong relationships with all key stakeholders.

Call to action

By having a vision, and listening and acting together, the government has the best opportunity of designing systemic change that will meet the needs of Queenslanders.

We need change that enables stakeholders to meet, communicate, streamline processes and to provide ongoing coordination. Change to improve outcomes for people. How this is achieved, and the factors that are important, will vary according to the service settings, agency capabilities and specific needs of people and their communities.

What is clear from the statistics we read, from the people we talk to, from the experiences we have, is that the current service system is failing some Queenslanders. An integrated approach that places the person and their needs at the centre is required and must be a priority of the incoming government in Queensland.

Our commitment

QCOSS, COTA, NDS, Volunteering Queensland, ECCQ, Community Legal Centres Queensland, QShelter, QDN, PeakCare, QATSICPP, CSIA, Health and Community Services Workforce Council and Queensland Alliance for Mental Health commit to advance a vision to leave nobody behind, working towards a community that embraces our diversity and unique culture. We will work together with the Queensland Government and Queensland community to make it happen.

Our commitment is to continue listening to our stakeholders and acting with our stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for Queenslanders.

We are ready to work alongside a new government, the community sector, and Queenslanders to facilitate a redesigned service system to better meet the needs of all Queenslanders.

Government action

We want the incoming government in Queensland to commit to advancing a shared vision and working together to achieve it.

We seek a commitment from the incoming Queensland Government to engage early and strategically with peak bodies so we can ensure the best possible outcome for all Queenslanders. Particularly when the discussions pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are on the table, then representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies is critical.

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- ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, 2017
- ⁱⁱ ABS, 2017, Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2015–16.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Queensland Family and Child Commission, 2016, Talking Families Research Report
- ^{iv} Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), [2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(SDAC\)](#) (ABS 4430.0 2012) and referenced at <https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/disability-statistics/>
- ^v Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), [2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(SDAC\)](#) (ABS 4430.0 2012) and referenced at <https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/disability-statistics/>