

Reviewed – February 2026

The Queensland Parents Advisory Committee (QPAC) Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Queensland Parents Advisory Committee (henceforth called ‘the QPAC’) is to provide parent leadership that creates and maintains

- (a) a voice for **parents** as stakeholders in the child protection system including targeted and specialist services for families; and
 - (b) a platform for parents’ participation in developing government policies and practices in those systems to improve outcomes for children and families.
2. The QPAC will be effective from 6 December 2019 and continue until its termination has been agreed by a majority of core members (parents and backbone) and approved through negotiation between FIN and the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.
 3. The QPAC meeting is made up of approximately **15-17 people** (who are either ‘core’ or ‘co-opted’ members).

Core Members:

- **Parents** (approx. 9-12 members)
Parents who wish to contribute to improving Queensland’s child protection and family support systems:
 - the term ‘parents’ has many meanings and definitions.¹ For the purpose of Committee membership, the term ‘parent’ refers to ‘biological’ or ‘birth’ parents.²
 - parents must form at least **50% of total membership**
 - parent members will have had child protection experience (or targeted and specialist family support experience) **within the five (5) years prior to first joining**.

¹ The Committee firmly acknowledges that *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have distinct cultures and practices that must be respected, understood, and considered* and that child protection **legislation and practices denote a broader definition of ‘parent’**: *the term ‘parent’ can mean cultural parent, including extended family or kin recognised in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and community structures and child rearing practices* ([Charter of Rights for Parents involved with the child protection system in Queensland](#)).

² The terms **‘biological parent’ or ‘birth parent’** are themselves contentious and not comfortable language for many. There is no consensus nor preferred term. In FIN’s day-to-day language “parents are parents”; however, the current consensus is that the QPAC is a unique platform for the unique experience of biological or birth parents.

- a diversity of perspectives is important; the Committee's parent-membership will have **experienced different parts of the system/s** - from 'early support', through the range of orders, and reunification
 - parents are not all expected to be literate; a **diversity** of backgrounds, abilities, preferences, learning styles, and communication styles are valued and the QPAC will provide necessary support to enable participation of all members
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation is a priority
 - representation from across Queensland is ideal. No more than three (3) members should be from the Brisbane City Council local government area and representation from outside of Southeast Queensland will be sought within FIN's capacity to support parents³
 - a mix of mothers and fathers is ideal
 - In general, couples would not be eligible to sit on the Committee together; however, core members may consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis
- **'Backbone' parent allies** (approx. 2-3 members)
 - FIN, seq Coordinator
 - CEO (Micah Projects)

Co-opted Members:

Allies (approx. 4-5 people)

- **Minister** responsible for Child Safety (with consideration that the Committee may invite another closely relevant Minister if the Child Safety Minister is an apology and amenable to this)
- **Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety** (henceforth called 'the Department') officers with sufficient decision-making authority to be able to work with parents on identified issues will be co-opted to the committee.
 - Deputy Director-General, Strategy, Policy and Legislation (TBC)
 - One (1) Regional Executive Director (Julieann Cork)
 - Assistant Chief Operating Officer, Statewide Operations (Amanda Currie)
 - Director, Statewide Operations (Sandra Tucker)
 - The Department also provides 'co-secretariat' support
- **Other Allies** - in future, other allies with broader experience and positions may be co-opted, e.g. legal, housing, or income support or rights.

³ Southeast Queensland definition – 11 LGAs: **Brisbane City Council**, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Gold Coast City Council, Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Logan City Council, Noosa Shire Council, Redland City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

Co-Secretariat:

- The Department’s Senior Advisor, Program and Service Improvement and Operational Performance (Mary Kay) or similar.
- Family Inclusion Network (FIN,seq), Coordinator (Jenny Whitworth) or similar.

4. The **roles and responsibilities** of QPAC members are described below.

Role	Responsibilities
Independent Chair	The QPAC will be chaired by an independent person agreed by parent core members, FIN,seq, and the Department. Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate meetings and decision-making processes • Act as spokesperson if required or delegate as they determine
Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meetings at identified time periods
Co-Secretariat (FIN & Dept)	The QPAC and Chair will be supported by a Co-Secretariat provided by FIN,seq and the Department. Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange agenda • Record minutes and monitor actions • Monitor and communicate factors and risks that may influence the Committee • Write and receive correspondence • ‘Co-Secretariat’ to meet regularly to ensure above
Parents (‘core members’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute skills and knowledge from their lived experiences (focusing primarily on system issues and improvements rather than on individual case issues) • Provide in-person or written testimony that highlight the issues parents face • Potentially participate in additional opportunities (outside of scheduled QPAC meetings), such as meeting with Government, responding to government discussion papers and consultations, or speaking at professional forums • Withdraw from or pause formal membership if their child/ren come under new investigation or intervention. During this period, parents may choose to stay connected to the QPAC through informal working group meetings and parent preparation sessions.
Family Inclusion Network (FIN,seq), Micah Projects (‘core members’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central role as the ‘backbone’ for the Committee and as an ally for parents • Holds up to two (2) votes in decision-making • Provide information in response to enquiries (from parents or other stakeholders), and administer membership EOIs • Facilitate parents’ participation – including childcare, travel, accommodation, etc



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and conduct 'parent preparation' sessions (group development, member skill development, and identifying priorities for influence)
The Department (Child Safety) and other Allies ('co-opted members')	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide expertise developed from their professional experience• Seek formal feedback from the QPAC members. (Responses to open Government consultations should be scheduled for QPAC meeting-times wherever possible)• Contribute updates and facilitate actions from their area of work• Advocate for the inclusion of parent voices in the development of legislation, policy, and practice• Use of personal information: the Department must not access parent members' departmental records without the parent's written consent
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents who were previously a parent member of the QPAC, may be referred to as 'Alumni'.• The Alumni can provide historical knowledge, advice and mentoring to prospective and new Committee members, and to the QPAC as required
All Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assume good faith: any parent may express their views. All parties join this work to contribute to system improvement. Views are not presented in an effort to 'establish the truth', rather to demonstrate the range of truths, perceptions, and experiences. Parents' views will not be checked against official government nor court records.• The QPAC will work together as a team• Open, honest, and respectful discussions• Respect all personal and confidential information shared in the group• Disclose conflicts of interest (real or perceived) and excuse themselves when appropriate• Attend all scheduled meetings (face-to-face, telephone, or online) or apologise if unable• Make timely decisions and responses to agreed priorities and actions• Maintain objectivity and focus on the Committee's purpose• Be a role model for the Committee's purpose, both within <i>and outside</i> meetings, and not bring the Committee into disrepute.• Share communications and information across the membership• Monitor and communicate factors that may influence the Committee• Notify members of potential risks and issues which may impact the Committee• Participate in continual improvement reviews of the Committee's purpose, roles, and responsibilities – to be held at least every two years.



5. **Application to join:** Parents' applications to join the QPAC must be received formally (in writing or orally) to FIN,seq. Applicants must consent to a confidential Queensland ministerial security check to confirm their eligibility prior to formal nomination. New members will be selected by the existing core members based on the applicant's ability to commit to the QPAC's Terms of Reference, and ensuring the membership maintains the diversity required – particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership, geographic variation, and diversity of members' experiences.
6. **Consent to use parents' names and image/photo:** Consent from parents will be sought to use parents' name in Committee business and documentation, and on occasion publish parents' names and photos when communicating Committee activities. Anonymity would rarely occur in a high-level formal advocacy body such as the QPAC; however, exceptions can be made.
7. **Period of Membership ('tenure'):** Parent members will be appointed for the term of two (2) years, with the ability to re-nominate at the end of one term. The maximum parent membership period on the Committee is two terms. Note the following principles:
 - **Continuity:** Continuity of membership is important due to the high level of trust required between members, and the need for the group to move beyond the 'forming' stage of group development, towards the 'performing' stage. To retain continuity, the re-nomination of at least two (2) members must be encouraged at the end of each term.
 - **Membership changes:** Notwithstanding the above, additional and/or replacement members may be considered by core members at any time. Members may also withdraw from the QPAC at any time, and similarly nominate to re-join at any time. All membership decisions are determined by the core members of the QPAC.
8. **Re-nomination** – core members wishing to serve a second term must re-nominate at the end of the term. Formal re-nominations must be made to FIN,seq. Re-nominations will be considered at the next meeting by the core members.
9. **Meeting Frequency:** QPAC meetings will be held four (4) times per year (generally March, June, August, November), for at least two hours, at a suitable venue. Attendance is expected at Global Day of Parents in June (possibly in lieu of the formal June QPAC meeting).

'Parent preparation' sessions will also be an expectation for core members. These sessions will generally be held on the day preceding the QPAC meeting. The sessions will focus on group development, member skill development, and identifying priorities for influence.
10. **Attendance:** If a member has been unable to attend two meetings in a row, FIN,seq and the member will discuss if there are any additional supports needed for the member to participate or if the member is unable to fully commit to the QPAC at this time.
11. **Quorum:** (the minimum number necessary to make decisions) will be "half plus one of the parent membership" and at least one backbone member.

E.g.

# Parents appointed	Half plus one	# Parents for quorum	Full quorum
9	4.5 + 1 = 5.5	6	6 parents + 1 backbone member
8	4 + 1 + 5	5	5 parents + 1 backbone member

12. **Decision-making:** While the QPAC does not have governance or statutory decision-making responsibilities, it will make decisions or recommendations in relation to its operations and/or its purpose. Decisions will follow a **consensus decision-making process**⁴. Co-opted members' advice will be respected and considered; however, if consensus is not able to be reached in a reasonable period, core members will decide by vote.

Decisions that **are time-critical** will be made by majority (providing there is quorum).

Decisions that are **not time-critical**, may be recorded as 'draft' and will become final if no further input is received ten (10) business days after distribution. If input is received within this timeframe, the decision is taken back to core members.

Decisions required between meetings (often called '**out of session**') must be communicated so that all members (core and co-opted) are aware and are able to have their say.

13. Payment and/or Reimbursement:

Parents ('core members')

- Parent members will be paid a 'sitting fee' for formal meetings, in line with other current lived experience or consumer representative initiatives and updated accordingly.⁵
- Reasonable travel costs to attend QPAC meetings
- Training and support to develop necessary skills including speaking with intelligence over emotion, self-care in disclosure, how systems look and work, and understanding community.

The Independent Chair and **departmental/government or other professionals ('co-opted members')** will not be remunerated as they will likely all be paid professionals with relevant knowledge of policy and practice, who commit their time as an 'in-kind' contribution. The reimbursement of reasonable travel costs may be considered.

The **Co-Secretariat will not** be remunerated when they hold relevant paid roles in organisations or departments.

⁴ **Consensus decision-making** is a democratic decision-making process that requires group members to engage in a dialogue and share information for the purpose of increasing others' understanding of the issues and to provide a rationale for choosing a particular position. By including the whole group in the discussion and decision-making process, everyone becomes invested. To reach a consensus, there must be a context or environment created that is conducive to respectful dialogue and the healthy exchange of ideas.

⁵ **Remuneration** is based on [Health Consumers Queensland, Position Statement – Health Consumers Payments, September 2025](#).

Alumni are volunteer roles and are not paid the ‘sitting fee’ of a parent member (core member). If travel is required, the reimbursement of reasonable travel costs may be considered.

14. **Amendment**, modification, or variation of these Terms of Reference may only occur in writing, in consultation and agreement with the core members.

Related documents:

Minutes (template)	
Action Register	
Membership register	
Expression of Interest form	

Controlled Document: ***Final***

Approved by QPAC Date: 17 February 2026

Next Review Date: February 2028 – then every two years (ideally after the commencement of each new membership term).

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