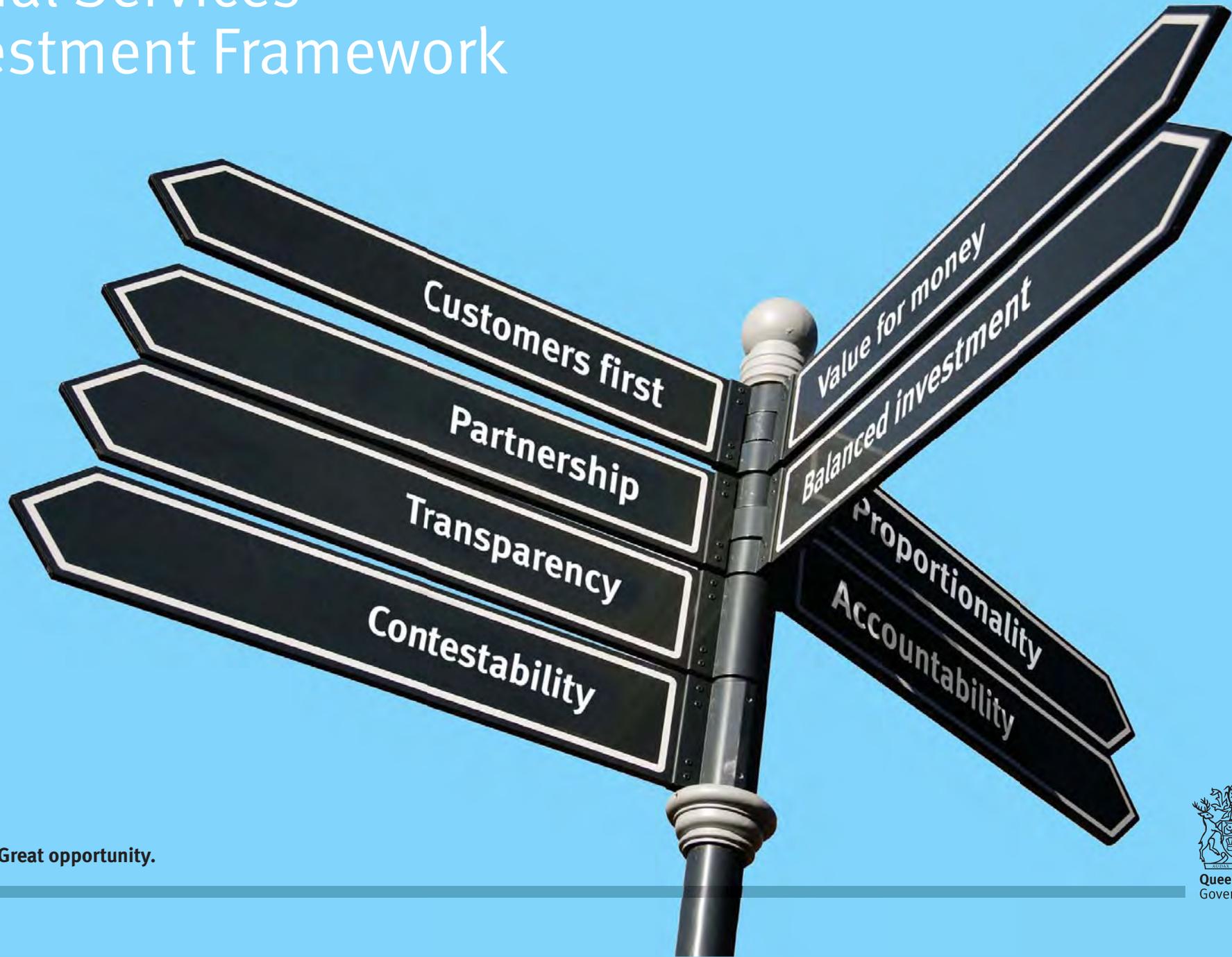


Social Services Investment Framework



Great state. Great opportunity.



Foreword

The Queensland Government invests in social services to support all Queenslanders, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community.

Social services touch the lives of many Queenslanders. As indicated in the independent Queensland Commission of Audit report, the grant management practices across the sector have lacked structure and accountability, preventing effective evaluation of programs. This Government recognises that things must change.

In its commitment to deliver a whole-of-Government approach to social services investment, the Government is transforming the way it manages its investment in social services to ensure improved frontline service delivery and sustainable outcomes for Queenslanders.

The Social Services Investment Framework responds to feedback from the social service sector for greater transparency around investment and a reduction in red tape. Alongside other reforms of this Government, the Framework will ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved with the funding available.

The Framework's aim is to provide Government agencies and

social service organisations with an overarching guide for why and how Government invests in social services, while maintaining a focus on outcomes for customers. Its purpose is to promote mutual understanding across Government, the social service sector, the private sector and the public on the approach Government will take to investing in social services.

The Framework sets the foundation to guide both Government and the social service sector through a suite of reforms which aim to make the administration of funding more efficient, transparent and accountable, and to deliver sustainable services for identified needs.

The reforms will take time to implement, but I know that with the support of all parties – Government and the sector alike – the Social Services Investment Framework will drive a generational shift in how we support the vulnerable members of our community.

Hon Tim Nicholls MP
Treasurer and Minister for Trade
Chair, Social Services Cabinet Committee

Introduction

Social services address physical or social disadvantage and promote the health, wellbeing and quality of life of individuals, families and communities. They support people for the duration of their need while seeking to build independence, self-reliance and resilience; empowering individuals to participate in, and contribute to, the community.

Social services build the skills of Queenslanders, as well as support vulnerable Queenslanders to get back on their feet, whether through education and health services or through crisis support such as homelessness and child protection services.

Social service needs are diverse and often complex – they range from the individual to the wider community level, from metropolitan to rural and remote regions, and across different socio-economic groups, cultures and generations.

The Queensland Government invests in social services to support all members of our community, particularly the most vulnerable. Social services are provided to break down the barriers to social and economic participation and to ensure a base level of support is available to all Queenslanders. This means strengthening social connectedness, building capacity and capability, and improving productivity.

Government’s investment in social services is predominantly through funding social service organisations to deliver a diverse range of services. Social service organisations are uniquely positioned by their strong connections to and knowledge of the communities they work with. They also bring significant financial and in-kind resources to local services and communities through harnessing support from the corporate sector, local industries and communities, and individuals.

In addition to providing support to Queenslanders, Government’s investment in social services has a significant impact on the economic landscape. In 2012-13, 12 per cent of the Queensland workforce was working in the health care and social services industry, making it the largest employer in Queenslandⁱ. Over the next five years, it is projected that demand for social services will result in the national social service sector, of which Queensland is a significant contributor, accounting for more than one fifth of total employment growth (an increase of 177,800 or 13 per cent)ⁱⁱ.

In the coming decade there is expected to be increasing pressure on the social service sector including: greater demand for services due to population growth and an ageing population; increasing expectations from customers for greater choice and high quality flexible services; demands for significant expansion of the social services workforce; and expectations regarding the way technology is used to empower customers, provide greater reach and better respond to needs.



SOURCE: Department of Communities

These challenges require Government and the sector to develop policies and deliver services that meet changing needs and expectations. It has resulted in significant reform such as implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommendations, *Housing 2020 Strategy* and *Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland*.

Government and the sector must continue to evolve and adapt to ensure decisions on when, how and where to invest in social services are made wisely to ensure scarce resources are allocated to the right services, at the right time and in the right way. To ensure this happens, the Social Services Investment Framework was designed to assist in guiding rigorous, consistent and transparent investment decisions that deliver positive outcomes for all Queenslanders.



SOURCE: Department of Communities

Framework Overview

The Social Services Investment Framework sets out the principles for why and how Government will invest in social services. It provides the foundation of a program of reform (the Social Services Reform Program) which will transform the way Government manages its investment in social services into the future.

The Framework's development has been driven by:

- calls from the social service sector for Government to be more transparent about its approach to investment and to reduce red tape
- a range of recommendations in the Queensland Commission of Audit report, including changes to the way Government manages grants and Government's increasing role as an 'enabler'
- Government's commitment to provide value for money social services to the Queensland community
- Government's commitment to develop a strong and sustainable social service sector.

The Framework has been developed to ensure Government invests in services that build social and economic participation, are responsive to the needs of Queenslanders, involve the efficient and effective allocation of public resources and align available funding with Government priorities.

Effective social services investment is about investing, innovating and planning for the future. It recognises that issues are often complex and entrenched and outcomes may take many years to achieve. Through a greater focus on prevention and early intervention, individuals, families and communities are assisted earlier to reduce long-term harms and disruption to their lives, as well

as avoid higher intensity and costly interventions. Crisis support is provided to those most in need to assist them to rebuild and take greater control of their lives and re-engage with their community. Effective social services expenditure is a customer-centred, future-oriented investment in our community.

The Social Services Investment Framework reflects this shift to an investment view of social services expenditure.

The Framework encourages investment in evidence based programs that deliver better outcomes for individuals, families and communities. It promotes flexibility in Government's investment to deliver the most appropriate response given local and individual circumstances, respecting cultural diversity and adapting to regional, rural and remote settings. It endorses cross sector collaboration to deliver services that align service delivery with community need and government priorities.

It promotes a streamlined model for Government investment incorporating a range of investment types from small grants, service procurement and alternative investment (including in-kind support and social financing), through to individualised funding. It supports a consistent approach in the management of funding including procurement, administration and reporting (both outcomes and financial) and encourages a greater focus on driving performance improvement in service delivery.

The Framework also seeks to enhance Government investment by encouraging community and private sector investment in social outcomes alongside Government investment.



SOURCE: Department of Communities

Ultimately, greater collaboration across sectors to address community need, an increased focus on outputs and outcomes, greater flexibility in investment and a consistent approach to funding arrangements will reduce the administrative burden on the social service sector.

To achieve this vision operationally and to translate it into practical impacts on frontline service delivery will take time. To support this, the Queensland Government has implemented a Social Services Reform Program to develop whole-of-Government tools and mechanisms to implement the Framework, such as the development of a standard suite of social service contracts.

Further information on the program can be found at www.treasury.qld.gov.au/social-services-reform

Individual agencies are also adopting reform programs to embed the principles in their everyday work. For example, Queensland Health's *Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland* endorses 'health boards and local people (be) involved in making local decisions in the best interests of the community'ⁱⁱⁱ.

The Queensland Procurement Policy is the Government’s overarching policy for the procurement of goods and services. Its purpose is to deliver excellence in procurement outcomes for Queenslanders, including social services^{iv}.

The Policy, related guidelines, templates and other resources can be found at www.hpw.qld.gov.au

The Contestability Framework creates opportunities for innovation, partnerships and diversity of choice. It supports quality improvements in the supply of social services in a sustainable way, through an ongoing process to challenge the status quo and ensure that service delivery outcomes remain contestable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Contestability Lifecycle



Government’s Reform Agenda

As outlined in *A Plan – Better Services for Queenslanders*, Government seeks to ‘provide more services to Queenslanders and improve the quality of those services’^v. This Framework, together with *A Plan – Better Services for Queenslanders*, *Queensland’s Renewal Program*, the *Queensland Procurement Policy* and the *Queensland Government Contestability Framework*, will set the context for how the Queensland Government invests in social services. Concepts within the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*^{vi} will also be applied by agencies when making investment decisions.

The Framework and the Social Services Reform Program are an integral part of the Government’s overall renewal program as outlined in Figure 2 (over page).

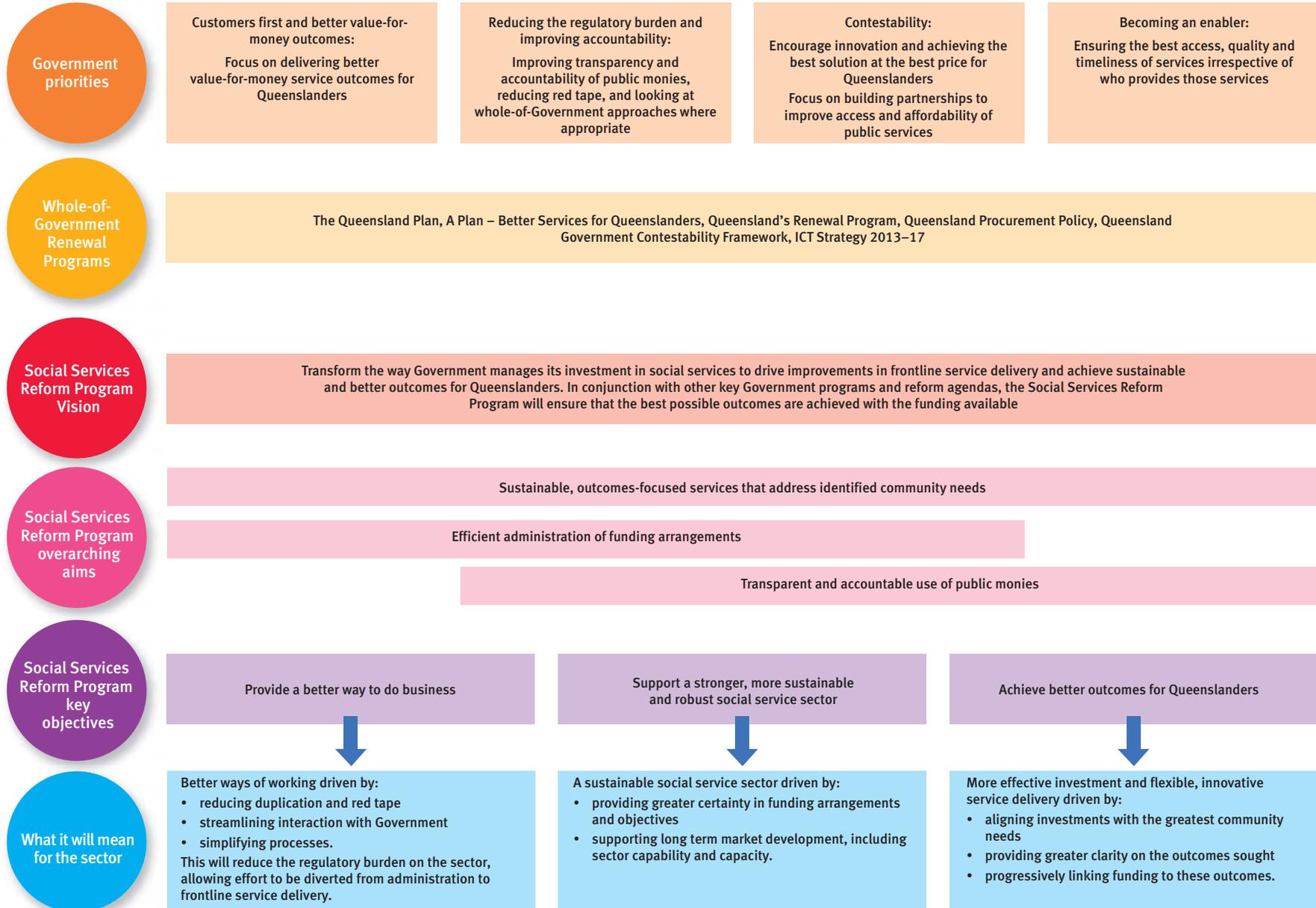


SOURCE: Thinkstock



SOURCE: Thinkstock

Figure 2 – Whole-of-Government priorities and the Social Services Investment Framework



Principles for how we invest

Set out on the following pages are the Queensland Government's whole-of-Government principles for why and how it invests in social services.

The principles will inform Government investment and the development of Government policies, practices and tools. This includes agency-specific investment policies, such as the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' *Investing in Queenslanders Social and human services investment blueprint 2014-19*^{vii}, and whole-of-Government programs such as the Social Services Reform Program.

The principles apply to Government and to the social service sector. They are interdependent, with the foundation principle 'Customers first' being central to all the other principles. It is the driving force behind all investment in social services, and in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies, programs and services.

Through application of the Framework principles, the Government will provide a better way to do business with the sector, support a stronger more sustainable and robust social service sector and achieve better outcomes for Queenslanders.



PHOTOGRAPHER: Michael Marston



Customers first^{viii}

- underpins all investment in social services and aligns with the Queensland Public Service Values
- know our customers in order to design outcomes-focused services around the needs of individuals, families and communities
- deliver what matters by identifying what works, for whom and in what circumstances
- take a holistic approach to service delivery, delivering services in a way that is seamless, simple and empowering for customers, and most appropriate to individual and local circumstances
- provide customers, where appropriate, with choice and control to shape support and service responses
- provide culturally appropriate services and adapt services to suit regional, rural and remote settings
- address need while seeking to build resilience and self-reliance, and balance the provision of support with personal responsibility and mutual obligation.



Partnership

- collaborate between and across Government agencies, the social service sector, the private sector and the community
- co-identify needs and co-design integrated, outcomes-focused solutions with communities, the social service sector, private sector, and Government
- draw on local expertise and experience to develop local responses and build local capacity
- focus on maximising the value of contributed funding, pooled resources and expertise
- work across organisations and sectors to drive the development and implementation of innovative solutions
- be clear about when a partnership approach is appropriate
- operate in a values based relationship built on ethical practice.



Transparency

- be transparent about the full scope of decision making, including need identification, the basis for funding decisions, contracting requirements, and program outputs and outcomes
- clarify when Government is fully funding the cost of services or when it is making a contribution towards the cost of services
- recognise the contribution of all parties to the delivery of solutions, such as contributions from other levels of government, the private sector and the social service sector
- be transparent around how funding is used, including Government and the sector publishing details of Chief Executive Officer remuneration, and other key financial details
- where possible, share information to improve planning and service delivery outcomes.



Contestability

- test the market to ensure it is providing the public with the best possible solution for the best possible outcomes at the best possible price
- balance the need to plan services on a long-term basis, with sufficient incentives to bring about continuous improvements in performance
- adopt processes that encourage innovative service delivery, flexible outcomes-focused responses, and collaboration
- streamline processes to reduce the burden on Government and the social service sector
- encourage participation from a diversity of social service organisations
- work together to build the capacity and capability of the Government and social service sectors and to develop the market
- understand the market, its capability and capacity, and adapt funding approaches accordingly, recognising that in some circumstances market based approaches may not be feasible.



Value for money^{iv}

- assess whether overall objectives and outcomes (short and long term) will be met
- assess cost-related factors including up-front price, whole-of-life costs and transaction costs
- account for local circumstances that may drive key costs
- assess broader factors such as fit for purpose, quality, sustainability, social benefits and other non-financial benefits
- adopt appropriate measures to assess overall value for money, balancing cost factors and non-financial benefits
- draw on the evidence base of what works, for whom and in what circumstances while still encouraging innovation
- ensure delivery of the best outcomes by assessing value against cost.



Balanced investment

- ensure appropriate investment across the continuum of universal, secondary and tertiary services
- place a greater focus on prevention and early intervention services
- balance short-term needs and priorities with long-term investment in outcomes
- re-balance investment based on changing needs, demands and priorities, which may involve a re-prioritisation of funding to new services or a reduction or modification of existing services
- manage risk appropriately, such as funding higher risk investments to test new approaches and innovations.



Proportionality

- ensure management and administrative arrangements meet the necessary accountability requirements while being proportionate to the investment and risk, including reporting and compliance arrangements
- align contract duration with the time needed to realise impacts and outcomes as specified in the contract
- ensure a fair allocation of resources at a local level, relative to the needs of others, and across Queensland, depending on the size, mix and needs of the population based on principles of equity.



Accountability^{ix}

- develop and monitor clear and measurable objectives, evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives, and share findings
- develop responsible exit strategies and funding contingencies
- assign responsibility for risk and for short, medium and long-term measures of success
- reward good performance and address poor performance
- ensure the highest standards of financial management are met, to ensure finite financial resources are directed to meeting Government priorities and community need on a sustainable basis
- ensure the sector understands and meets the terms and conditions of contracting arrangements, including complying with relevant advocacy clauses.

Approach for how we invest: the Framework in action

When applying the Framework principles to social services investment and the implementation of social services programs, there are a number of key issues and decision points that need to be taken into consideration (see Figure 3).

These issues are scalable, that is – depending on the size, complexity, risk and maturity of an investment – they should be adjusted accordingly. In addition, the approach used will be dependent on whether it is a new investment or if a current investment is being re-designed or re-prioritised.

Figure 3: Approach for how we invest



Call to action

The successful implementation of this Framework will take commitment from the Government and the social service sector alike. It involves a shift in the way the sectors work together and within themselves, and embraces new ways of doing things.

The Framework alone will not achieve the vision and aims set out in this document. It will only be through the practical application of the Framework's principles in the work of public servants and social service sector employees that they will be achieved. Both Government and social service organisations will need to work together to change and adapt.

Alongside this Framework, Government has published a highlights report identifying key activities it is undertaking or planning to undertake to implement this Framework. This includes cross agency initiatives as part of the Social Services Reform Program as well as initiatives being driven by individual agencies.

Ultimately, the implementation of the Framework will result in changes that will progressively make a tangible difference to the way we invest in and deliver services to Queenslanders.

If you have any thoughts or feedback on the Framework, please contact us on: **SSRProgram@treasury.qld.gov.au** or telephone **(07) 3035 1826**.



SOURCE: Queensland Government Department of Communities

Endnotes

- i Queensland Treasury and Trade, 2013, Employment by Industry December Quarter 2013, available at www.oesr.qld.gov.au/products/briefs/employment-by-industry/
- ii Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Industry Employment Projections 2013 Report, available at <http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/EmploymentProjections>
- iii Queensland Health, 2013 Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland, available at www.health.qld.gov.au/blueprint/
- iv Queensland Government, 2013, Queensland Procurement Policy, available at www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/QueenslandProcurementPolicy2013.pdf
- v Queensland Government, 2013, A Plan: Better Services for Queenslanders Queensland Government Response to the Independent Commission of Audit Final Report, available at www.treasury.qld.gov.au/office/knowledge/docs/better-services-for-queenslanders/
- vi Queensland Government, 2009, Financial Accountability Act 2009, available at www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2009/09AC009.pdf
- vii Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services, 2013, Investing in Queenslanders Social and human services blueprint 2014-19 (not yet released)
- viii Queensland Government, 2013, Queensland Public Service Values, available at: http://www.psc.qld.gov.au/about-us/about-the-public-service/assets/Qld_Gov_Values_poster.pdf
- ix Queensland Government, 2013, Queensland Commission of Audit: Final Report – February 2013, available at <http://commissionofaudit.qld.gov.au/reports/final-report.php>



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