



## Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Futures Forum is an independent coalition of state-wide human services, peak organisations, service providers and networks across the whole of Queensland.

The Futures Forum brings together the collective wisdom of the Queensland not for profit Health & Community Services Sector (the Sector) to:

- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information;
- Engage in strategic analysis and future thinking about where we want the sector to be, and how we can position ourselves for ongoing improvement; and
- Identify activities that can serve as vehicles for proactive change.

Promoting the contribution the community sector makes towards a fair and just society for all Queenslanders is a part of our core business.

### 2. Membership

#### 2.1 Eligibility

- 2.1.1 The Futures Forum values its diverse membership and seeks to be as representative of the Sector as possible by including a diverse range of sub-sectors and target groups. Membership of the Forum is open to the Queensland not-for-profit health & community services organisations and networks that are primarily involved in human service delivery or supporting human services. Organisations and networks include:

- (a) State-wide peak agencies
- (b) State-wide service providers

that are stand alone agencies, not a branch of another organisation, and

- (c) State-wide independent networks; and
- (d) Regional bodies or networks

that are well established with demonstrated ability to collaborate with other organisations and network in their regions, have diverse and inclusive membership base, and are preferably stand alone incorporated organisations with decision making capacity.

- 2.1.2. It is expected that members of the Futures Forum share the vision and values as articulated in the Queensland Community Services Sector Charter.

#### 2.2 Representation

- 2.2.1 The Futures Forum believes that its diversity of membership enriches discussion and is vital for sharing information and developing vehicles for proactive change. While the Futures Forum's membership reflects the diversity of the sector, it does not seek to be a representative body for the whole of the community services sector.

2.2.2. The Futures Forum does not represent itself as a single consultation point for government or other sectors. The Futures Forum may at times provide a mechanism for supporting consultation with appropriate and relevant stakeholders.

2.2.3 The Futures Forum elects Sector representatives to the Compact Governance Committee (CGC) in consideration of the following:

- CGC Representatives self nominate, and are elected in consideration of their contribution to the diversity of the CGC and their commitment to working in partnership with government.
- CGC Representatives are significant people within the sector who will act in the sectors best interest based on their extensive knowledge and experience working within the sector. They will have a developed understanding of the sector's diversity via participation in the Futures Forum.
- CGC Representatives do not represent the sector as a whole, and will give their government counterparts clear and consistent messages of the diversity of the sector. They will draw from the collective wisdom of the Futures Forum to direct government representatives to appropriate consultation points.
- CGC Representatives will abide by the CGC Terms of Reference.

## **2.3 Membership Involvement**

2.3.1 The level of involvement is flexible depending on members' capacity to participate and on their regional location. Members are encouraged to attend (in person or via teleconference) at least 2 to 3 meetings in a year to keep abreast of work of the Forum.

2.3.2 Members' involvement in the Forum includes participating in meetings, reading minutes of meetings and contributing to decisions around joint action (see Section 4).

2.3.3 The same rule of decision making (outlined in 4.2) applies to members who are absent from a number of consecutive meetings.

2.3.4 Other interested organisations from the non government sector may be invited to participate in the Forum meetings and activities from time to time.

2.3.5 Organisations that are interested in the work of the Forum but are not eligible for membership on the Forum can be included on the Forum distribution list.

2.3.6 Optional financial and/or in-kind contribution can be made by organisational members to meet Forum operating and administrative costs.

## **2.4 Application for Membership**

2.4.1 Membership of the Forum is voluntary and is open to any organisation or regional network that meets the guidelines as stated in 2.1.

2.4.2 Organisations and networks that wish to be considered for membership must put forward their interest in writing (email or letter) to the Futures Forum Chairs, outlining how it meets the eligibility and representation guidelines as stated in 2.1. The Chairs will then examine the application, and make a recommendation to the broader Forum at the next meeting.

### **3. Meetings**

- 3.1 The Forum will meet not less than bi monthly (every two months).
- 3.2 The Futures Forum will have two co-chairs. One co-chair will be the Director of QCOSS, the other will be a member of the Forum who is elected for a 12 month period. The role of the chair is to facilitate discussions within the meeting. The chair of the meeting may bring another representative from their organisation to participate in the meeting if desired, with prior notice to the Forum.
- 3.3 As well as being one of the two Co-Chairs, the Director of QCOSS will act as a meeting convenor, and will manage the secretariat functions, which will be based at QCOSS. QCOSS will also manage any funds received from member contributions, and significant non-operational expenditures will be raised in meetings for approval.
- 3.4 The meetings will be run to a set agenda and members can submit agenda items up to 2 weeks before the date of the next meeting. Agenda items must be submitted along with background information outlining the links to the purpose of the group, and the outcome desired from the group (ie. Decision made whether the group will take action).
- 3.5 The Forum meetings will be conducted according to normal meeting procedures. Agreed meeting protocols will also be upheld, such as observing teleconference protocols, acknowledging traditional custodians etc.
- 3.6 One meeting over a 12-month period is to be allocated for strategic planning purposes: to review and renew the Forum action plan and to nominate a new Co-Chair for the Forum for the next 12-month term.
- 3.7 The Co-Chairs will schedule a Futures Forum meeting prior to a Compact Governance Committee meeting and place any Compact related issues requiring discussion, input or decision by Futures Forum members on the agenda.
- 3.8 CGC Representatives will inform the Futures Forum of any relevant decisions of the Compact Governance Committee. At most times this will occur at the meeting of the Futures Forum subsequent to the Compact Governance Committee meeting. If the matter is deemed to be of more urgent interest to Forum members; requires work to be undertaken; or further input, CGC Representatives will distribute information to Futures Forum members out of session through the Forum Chair.

### **4. Decision making and joint action**

- 4.1 The Forum will at all times attempt to act through consensus decision making.
- 4.2 In the instance that members of the Forum wish to pursue joint action around an issue but there is not agreement from all members of the Forum, this may still proceed under the Forum's name if there is support from two-thirds of the Forum members present at the meeting. In this instance there will be an acknowledgement that 'the following members of the Forum...' support either the submission or the course of action.
- 4.3 Members are able to initiate work based on discussions at meetings as smaller groups, independent of the Futures Forum.
- 4.4 From time to time, an issue may arise that requires a vote from the broader membership who are not present at the meeting. In these instances, two-thirds of those present at the meeting must agree to open the issue up to the broader membership. Votes will be

collected via email, and actions will require a two-thirds majority to progress. In these cases, a non-response will be considered as approval.

- 4.5 Submissions and other reports prepared on behalf of the Forum will first be tabled at Forum meetings in draft form for comment and then circulated via email for final endorsement. When submissions are circulated for 'signoff' Forum members take responsibility for advising if they do not wish to support the submission, that is, non-response is taken to indicate agreement with the course of action.
- 4.6 As a general rule, where possible, at least one week's turn-around should be given to Forum members when asking for consideration, comment and/or sign-off on submission, documents or course of action
- 4.7 The Forum may establish working groups of interested parties to take action around specific issues on behalf of the Forum.
- 4.8 In determining a course of action, the Futures Forum will take into account any resource constraints that may apply, and prioritise actions accordingly.
- 4.9 Current work in the Forum will build on previously agreed positions and strategic directions by the Forum. As such there is no scope to go over old ground. Incoming members and members who are absent from several consecutive meetings are to take responsibility for gaining awareness of work undertaken by the Forum to date and be in agreement with the strategic directions that have been established (as outlined in the Forum Action Plan)

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 The two co-chairs will act as public spokespersons for the Futures Forum.
- 5.2 Members of the Forum take responsibility to engage with the work of the Forum and bring to the Forum issues of concern for the sector.
- 5.3 Members of the Forum take responsibility to disseminate information from the Forum through their constituents and/or networks.
- 5.4 Members of the Forum take responsibility to engage or consult with their constituents and/or networks on an agreed course of action.

## **6. Other matters**

- 6.1 The Forum will evaluate its efforts in addressing issues of concern for the sector on a regular basis.
- 6.2 These terms of reference will be reviewed after 12 months in effect.