

Terms of Reference

Background

On 13 April 2024 the Queensland Government announced the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) as the state's new peak body for the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) sector. A peak body is a non-government umbrella organisation that represents their members' views.

Over 2 – 3 years from 13 April 2024, QCOSS will work with domestic and family violence services to establish an independent peak body for Queensland DFV Services ('the DFV Peak'). The DFV Peak will be a member-based organisation, representing domestic and family violence services in Queensland.

QCOSS is currently Queensland's DFV Peak. This includes:

- engaging with domestic and family violence services and establishing transparent mechanisms to collect the perspectives and insights of the domestic and family violence sector
- establishing and using mechanisms to share the insights of domestic and family violence services
- ensuring the perspectives of victim-survivors with diverse characteristics can be heard, collected and responded to
- establishing an independent domestic and family violence peak body that has a governance structure and membership with diverse characteristics.

('QCOSS DFV Peak Activities').

Queensland DFV Peak Advisory Group

The Queensland DFV Peak Advisory Group ('the Advisory Group') will oversee the QCOSS DFV Peak activities. The Advisory Group will be comprised of individuals endorsed by a domestic and family violence service or network in Queensland. Its function will be to provide advice and make recommendations to QCOSS in relation to QCOSS DFV Peak activities.

Domestic and family violence services include services and networks engaged in work associated with domestic and family violence, including prevention, response, recovery and perpetrator services.

Working in collaboration with QCOSS, the Advisory Group will develop a Charter that includes guiding principles, dispute resolution processes and a mechanism for reporting to the QCOSS Board.

Membership

Composition and Eligibility Criteria

The Advisory Group will comprise of up to fifteen (15) members.

A member must have significant experience working or volunteering with domestic and family violence services and/or networks in Queensland. A member must demonstrate the contribution they can make to the Advisory Group including their knowledge of the sector and/or the policy landscape and systems relevant to domestic and family violence, and have several of the characteristics outlined below:

- A member must have a connection to a domestic and family violence service or network in Queensland, including by employment, a board position or in a volunteer capacity.
- While members are appointed in their individual capacity, nominations and ongoing appointment must be endorsed by an organisation or network the member is connected to.
- Five (5) members of the Advisory Group must be people who identify as First Nations Peoples.
- The majority of the Advisory Group must be persons who identify as women.
- Among the Advisory Group there must be members with experience and/or endorsement from prevention, response and recovery (women's health) and perpetrator services and/or networks.
- The Advisory Group must include representatives of people from urban, regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland.
- Services who work with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people, people with a disability, and young people should also be represented.

To avoid doubt, any member of the Advisory Group should have several of the characteristics outlined above.

The QCOSS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or their representative will participate in the Advisory Group by facilitating meetings. The QCOSS CEO will not be a member of the Advisory Group.

To avoid doubt, the Advisory Group will not have a chair, all members will be equal, and no member is authorised to speak on behalf of the Advisory Group.

Appointment

Appointment to the Advisory Group will be for a term of three (3) years or until the board of the DFV Peak is established, whichever is sooner.

Nothing in these terms of reference will prevent a member of the Advisory Group from seeking to be appointed to the board of the DFV Peak.

Appointment to the Advisory Group will be coordinated by QCOSS.

Remuneration

An honorarium of \$500 per meeting will be made to members. The honorarium includes meeting preparation and attendance time. Payment will be paid within 14 days of each meeting.

The reasonable cost of travel and accommodation to attend in person meetings and/or other agreed activities will be reimbursed by QCOSS.

Conduct

When participating in the Advisory Group members are expected to:

- declare any conflict of interest or conflict of duty
- attend meetings having read the agenda and meeting papers and ready to engage with the material
- work with other members to provide advice and make recommendations
- be mindful of their wellbeing and the wellbeing of other members, participating in discussions about sensitive topics with care and respect
- where necessary, maintain the confidentiality of papers and meeting discussions and;
- act in accordance with the provisions of these terms of reference.

Meetings

Meetings will be convened monthly during ordinary office hours, by electronic means for a duration of 3 hours or as otherwise determined.

Agendas and meeting papers will be coordinated by QCOSS and provided 7 days prior to meetings. Minutes of meetings will be distributed within 7 days of meetings.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to meetings to enable member participation where required.

Where a member is unable to attend a meeting, that member is required to submit an apology to the Secretariat prior to commencement of the meeting.

Proxies will not be permitted.

Resignation and termination

Members may resign from the Advisory Group any time by notifying the Secretariat in writing.

If a member is no longer endorsed by a domestic and family violence service or network the member may no longer be able to participate in the Advisory Group and membership may be terminated by QCOSS if resignation or an alternative suitable endorsement is not provided.

A member's appointment may be terminated by QCOSS if they fail to attend 3 consecutive meetings or in the event of a serious or ongoing failure to comply with these terms of reference.

The role of QCOSS

QCOSS will coordinate and convene the Advisory Group, including by facilitating meetings and providing secretariat support. QCOSS will also undertake a range of administration functions including maintenance of corporate information and communication relevant to the Advisory Group.

QCOSS will maintain a register of conflicts of interest to be reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Advisory Group.

QCOSS will facilitate a review of these terms of reference in March each year. Amendments to terms of reference can be made outside the annual review process, as required.

QCOSS will provide a contact point for Advisory Group members via a secretariat and will engage individually with members when requested and/or as required, including for the purpose of receiving feedback or complaints about the Advisory Group.

On an annual basis, advice/feedback will be sought through the Secretariat on how to continuously improve the Advisory Group.