

11.0 Implementation

This chapter provides some high level guidance to aid the implementation of the structural, service delivery and economic development reforms outlined in earlier chapters.

Key points

- The recommended reforms will fundamentally shift the way communities and government engage and do business—getting implementation right will be critical if they are to be successful.
- To implement the reforms, government will need to work with communities to develop an agreed implementation plan. This plan should provide a long-term platform for change that allows for reforms to occur over a timeframe that is most likely to achieve a real and long-lasting change to the way services are delivered in remote and discrete communities.
- Beyond the reform architecture outlined in chapters 6-10, key actions for implementation over the first 12 months of the reforms should include:
 - Issuing a clear statement of intent to ensure that there is acceptance within government and communities.
 - Assigning ministerial and agency leadership to ensure that government can make things happen, including across ministerial portfolios.
 - Establishing a joint community and government oversight committee to steer reforms.
 - Developing an implementation plan.
 - Establishing the reforms in legislation, policies, budget, delegations, systems and processes.
 - Setting up the functions and operations of an Independent body to conduct oversight of the reforms.
 - Creating the architecture for establishing community authorising bodies.
- The Queensland Government should partner with the Australian Government to maximise the effectiveness of the reforms.
- Departments and their representatives who are engaging with communities will need to have a full understanding of the priorities and realities in communities, be committed to the new approach for engagement, and have sufficient delegated authority to get things done.
- Given the readiness of some communities, but not others, the reforms will need to be staged. Reform implementation should aim for short term wins to foster trust in the reform process.

11.1 Introduction

This inquiry comes after a long line of reviews and reports looking at the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Successive governments have invested a lot of time and effort in policies, pilots and initiatives—however, they often fail due to poor implementation (DOFD 2010).

There can be no doubt that enormous sums of money, and a huge amount of bureaucratic effort, have been devoted to addressing Indigenous disadvantage over the past 20 years ... There have quite literally been thousands of recommendations already made to governments regarding how to deal with the problems faced by Indigenous people. Many of the reviews and reports are critical of the failure to implement those that have gone before. (Crime and Misconduct Commission 2009, p. xviii)

The Commission's recommended reforms involve changes in how government and communities engage and make decisions. They require commitment and changes to resourcing, authority, policy, legislation, institutions and processes.

... communities have seen reform come and go, to achieve the buy in, a public and permanent commitment must be made and is required. (QCOSS sub. DR11, p. 2)

Communities' readiness for the reforms vary—some are at the forefront of driving change, others need more time and support. Whole-of-government commitment, material support, as well as an embrace of learning and adaptation by communities and government, are essential to achieve lasting positive outcomes.

We believe that these recommendations will lead to improved life outcomes for remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities if they are implemented within an appropriate timeframe, which will need to extend beyond the usual political cycle, and supported by a commitment to sustain adequate investment. (Uniting Care Queensland sub. DR4, p. 1)

This chapter briefly sets out some initial steps and practical guidance that will help to implement enduring reform, and builds on recommendations from earlier chapters. An indicative reform timeline is also provided—however, the final form of any implementation plan will need to be developed by government in consultation with Indigenous leadership.

11.2 Establishing acceptance, authority and ability

The Commission has proposed a package of reforms that will fundamentally shift the way communities and government engage and do business. Effective implementation relies on communities and government being 'ready for change'. This goes beyond a simple desire for change, but also whether the conditions, motivations and resources are in place.

The community development literature ascribes successful change to three key factors: the acceptance of the need for change, the authority to make change, and the ability to undertake change (Figure 59).

Figure 59 The three A's

Acceptance	Authority	Ability
The extent to which those who will be affected by reform or policy change accept the need for change and the implications of change.	The support needed to effect reform or policy change or build state capability (political, legal, organisational, and personal).	Focuses on the practical side of reform or policy change, and the need for time, money, skills and the like to even start any kind of intervention.

Source: Adapted from Andrews et al. 2017, p. 161.

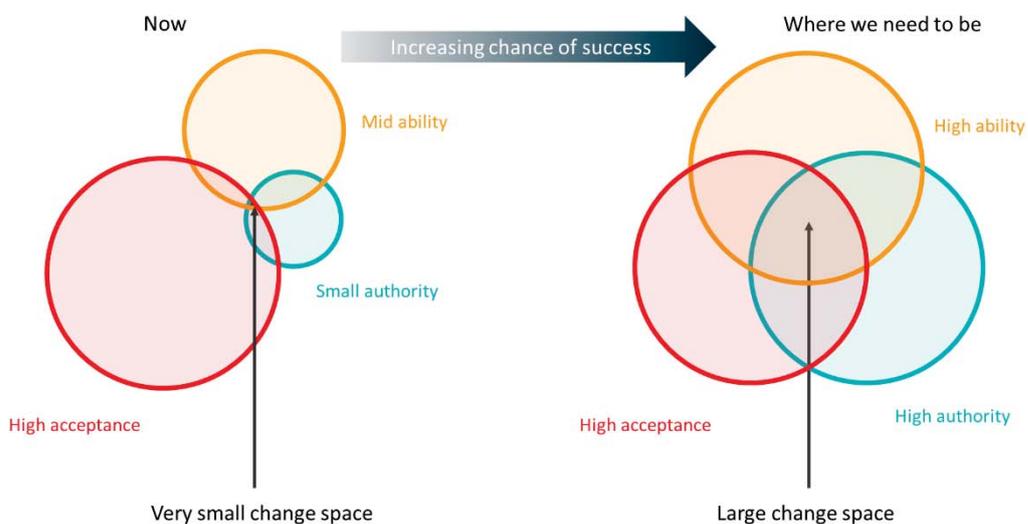
Each of the 'three A's' need to be in place to maximise the chances of successful change occurring. This means that an assessment of readiness is important, as well as building the capacity for change.

A high level analysis of the Queensland Government and communities' readiness for change suggests that:

- there is broad acceptance of the need for change across government and communities
- many stakeholders have policy change fatigue and communities' trust in government has eroded over time
- communities currently have little real authority to influence service delivery
- there is no single, agreed source of authority in many communities
- on-the-ground government officers lack sufficient authority to get things done
- there is no single authority to enable cross-agency or cross-government collaboration
- the governance and skills of communities is growing rapidly, but a lack of financial resources, real-time information and delegated authority constraints their ability to influence or control service delivery
- there is an enormous amount of policy experience, financial resources and goodwill being expended— however, these efforts need to be better directed.

This analysis suggests that there is currently insufficient space for change. To create this space there will need to be sufficient authority (within community and government bureaucracy) to enable reforms (Figure 60).

Figure 60 Increasing space for change - the need to grow authority and ability



Key first steps for building the authorising environment are to:

- assign responsibility for leading the change (at the ministerial, agency and community level)
- establish and communicate a clear commitment (such as through a Premier's directive)
- institutionalise new approaches (through policy, regulatory and delegation changes)
- plan for, and identify short term gains that can be built on as experience and trust develop.

Developing abilities will also be important—this requires reprioritisation of resourcing, and will be supported by the structural reforms outlined in Chapter 7.

11.3 Assign ministerial and agency leadership

The reforms recommended by this inquiry are transformational and broad—they call for a whole-of-government shift in the way decisions are made and how services are funded, commissioned and delivered.

To make these changes happen, strong leadership is needed—this will entail a clear and deep commitment from government, a shared vision and clear strategies for achieving change. It will also require assembling a group with sufficient commitment and power to lead the change effort (Kotter, 1996).

Establish a lead minister

Senior ministerial leadership will be needed with a whole-of-government perspective to lend sufficient authority to deliver the reforms across ministerial portfolios. The Queensland Government should assign a senior minister to lead the reforms and be responsible for their implementation. Reforms relating to specific agencies (Recommendations 15–22), would be led by the minister responsible for that portfolio, reporting to the lead minister.

The lead minister should report to Cabinet on progress of the reforms.

Assign central agency leadership

Central agency leadership would provide the authority needed to drive implementation across the bureaucracy. Obstacles to change need to be removed, structures shifted to match the vision, and risk-taking and non-traditional ideas and actions need to be encouraged. These are large changes in the way government departments operate, and they will require the authority and whole-of-government leadership that only a central agency is most likely to deliver.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet would be well placed to drive the reforms and manage the broader policy implications.

The central agency will have two core functions—to establish and administer a joint government and community committee to steer the reforms, and to ensure that the reformed arrangements are established and embedded in legislation, policies, budget, delegations, forums and processes across government.

A delivery unit should also be established in the central agency—this should consist of a small group of dedicated individuals whose sole focus is to achieve the implementation of reforms, and who should regularly report on progress (Barber et al. 2011).

Government will also need to establish internal capabilities and delegations to support reforms—these are discussed in Chapter 7.

11.4 Establish joint community-government oversight

The Queensland Government and community representatives will need to agree on how the reforms are implemented. This will build acceptance and buy in, and give authority for actions taken to progress implementation.

The Queensland Government should establish a joint community/government oversight committee to ensure agreement on the scope of reforms, keep all parties informed as implementation progresses, and serve as a forum for engaging broader stakeholder groups. The Queensland Government should provide ongoing resourcing including secretariat services and participation costs for members.

The government and community representatives—acting as equivalent and equal parties—will need to have sufficient commitment and authority to guide the reforms to their full implementation.

The right people will include those who have the knowledge of what needs to happen and those with the authority and capacity to get it done. (Thornton et al. 2017)

The role of the joint committee is to guide implementation of the reforms through discussion, negotiation and information sharing. Initial tasks would include:

- finalising an implementation plan and timelines within six months
- agreeing on an independent body to monitor and report on progress of the reforms
- developing and agreeing criteria for establishing community authorising bodies and for staging the transition of decision-making and accountability
- developing the format of agreements between government and communities.

The steering committee should have an ongoing role to share progress and learnings to date, and to identify issues and strategic opportunities.

Membership should include representatives of Queensland Government, with central agency leadership and key, trusted leaders from communities.

Other stakeholders should be involved in an information sharing and advisory capacity. For example, the Independent body, Australian Government, Local Government Association of Queensland, and other service providers, peak bodies, academic institutions or industry groups should be involved as appropriate.

11.5 Assign an independent body to monitor and report on progress

Independent oversight of the framework will be required to ensure that stakeholders have confidence in the reform process and that evaluation is impartial. In consultation with the joint committee, the Queensland Government should assign an independent body to evaluate and report on progress and outcomes of the reforms. The independent oversight functions may be allocated to an existing organisation but should be established in legislation, and include appropriate expertise and Indigenous representation (Chapter 10).

Early assignment of the independent body is important to establish acceptance of the reforms and authority for data collection processes. Public reporting will play a key role in establishing accountability between government and communities.

I refer to recommendation no. 3 which states that an implementation plan should be developed in consultation with communities within six months. To state the obvious, I would strongly recommend the prior establishment of the Community Representative Body and the Independent Oversight Body (including governance capability training), before any such action is taken. (Willis sub.. 2, p. 5)

Knowing that the reforms and agreements will be subject to independent oversight and public reporting from the outset will encourage communities and government to commit the necessary attention and resources to the reforms process.

Assignment of the independent oversight role should be an initial priority task of the steering committee. Once agreed, the Queensland Government should take immediate steps to establish the independent oversight functions in legislation; interim arrangements should be considered while establishment is underway.

11.6 Establishing the community authorising bodies—a staged approach

As discussed in Chapter 7, not all communities are ready to engage immediately with the structural reforms. This means that there is a need for a long-term approach with staged implementation—those communities that are ready to engage with the reforms, should be encouraged to do so. Those that are not yet ready need to be supported.

The staged approach should allow for early wins that can be built on as experience and trust develop—this will provide evidence of successful change, fostering acceptance, authority and ability.

An agreed, transparent pathway for progressing through reform stages would provide surety for communities and lend authority to decisions made in the agreement-making process. The agreed pathway would allow communities to identify where they sit on a spectrum of readiness to adopt greater decision-making and accountability, and what further capacity needs to be built.

The joint government and community steering committee should establish clear criteria that need to be met for an authorising body to be established. These criteria should consider good governance principles such as legitimacy and leadership, community participation and voice, strategic direction, accountability (internal and external), resource governance and organisational performance (more detailed guidance regarding these criteria is provided in Chapter 7).

Once criteria are established, and they are ready to enter the agreement-making process, communities should be invited to lodge an expression of interest for recognition.

11.7 Institutionalise new approaches

The Queensland Government must take direct steps to establish the reforms in legislation (where necessary), policies, budget, delegations, forums and processes. This will build the acceptance, authority and ability for sustained change. Clear guidance and authority should be provided, for example in the form of a Premier's instruction, that directs departments to make changes that enable the recommendations of this inquiry.

Policy review

To progress and embed policy reform that supports better service, community and economic outcomes, the central agency should review and update policy, funding and commissioning models. The review should assess to what extent current practices support longer-term developmental objectives and responsiveness to the needs of Indigenous people.

Establish systems and resources

To implement and embed the structural reforms, the central agency should oversee establishment of systems to collect and report community-level expenditure data, mandated across government. Existing grant funding to the communities should be identified and a grant pool established. Mechanisms to collect and report outcomes data in line with community priorities will need to be established.

Amend legislation and delegations

Relevant legislation will need to be reviewed and potentially amended to support the recommendations of this inquiry—including but not limited to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984*. As well, functions of the independent body and authorising bodies may need to be established in legislation.

Delegations should be revised promptly so that the right people have negotiation and decision-making authority. Processes that support continual adaptation should be authorised and embedded into institutional routines.

11.8 Working with the Australian Government

The Australian Government directly and indirectly impacts service provision and economic development outcomes in the remote and discrete communities through its investments, service delivery activities, policies, laws and regulations. Stakeholders recognised that it will take a joined-up effort to maximise the effectiveness of the reforms. For example:

To enable effective funding reforms to occur, need to know government investments at the community level to be able to understand if it's being used in the right areas and outcomes achieved (Yarrabah Leaders Forum sub. DR14, p. 4)

the relationship with the Federal Government will be important to the achievement of a range of outcomes in communities. (QCOSS sub. DR11, p. 2)

The Queensland Government therefore must not only commit to achieving these outcomes, but must also commit to recruiting the Commonwealth Government, Local Governments and other relevant parties to also fulfil their role in achieving these outcomes. This is a challenge of leadership that the Queensland Government must embrace. (Cape York Land Council sub. DR13, p. 5)

Many options for achieving economic reforms require coordination with, and changes to, Australian Government policy, as they involve integration of the income support system and state service delivery system. Operating through the reformed arrangements, place-based approaches can be used as a mechanism to help coordinate the policies of different tiers of government (Chapters 8, 9).

To maximise the effectiveness of the reforms, the Queensland Government should seek to partner with the Australian Government including to collaborate, coordinate and advise through participation in the oversight committee, and provide outcomes, expenditure and services data at the community level. It should advocate that the two governments work together to streamline reporting and compliance arrangements for areas of shared responsibility and that they should pursue a joined-up approach by aligning policy, services and investment activities, including by the reformed service delivery framework.

11.9 Timeline for implementation

Together the Queensland Government and communities (through the steering committee) will need to agree a timeline for implementation of the reforms. The timeline should incorporate all the activities required to implement the structural, service delivery and economic reforms, support their operations, and establish the reforms as the normal way of doing things. Key tasks include to:

- assign responsibility for leading the change (at the ministerial, agency and community level), and allocate resourcing to support establishment and planning
- establish the steering committee to finalise an implementation plan and guide delivery of the reforms
- assign an independent oversight body
- institutionalise the reforms in legislation, policies, budget, delegations, forums, systems and processes
- establish community authorising bodies, progress expressions of interest and enter agreements.

Some key actions for reform are provided in Table 28 as a starting point for discussion.

Table 28 Some key actions for reform implementation

Actions	Queensland Government	Oversight Committee	Community	Independent oversight body
Immediate actions				
Issue statement of intent to commit to reforms				
Assign ministerial and central agency leadership				
Allocate resourcing to support establishment and planning				
First 12 months				
Establish oversight committee				
Develop an implementation plan				
Assign the independent oversight body				
Revise government delegations				
Establish community baselines (expenditures and outcomes)				
Identify grants and program funding to communities; establish funding pool				
Establish criteria for establishing community authorising bodies				
Review legislation and amend where required				
Review grants compliance requirements				
Change service delivery contracts contract timeframes and skills transfer requirements				
Report on the Indigenous employment target				
Report on accreditation and barriers to employment				
Transition—after 12 months				
Establish first community authorising bodies				
Negotiate and enter first agreements				
Initial evaluation and public report on progress of implementation				
Ongoing				
Continue to establish community authorising bodies, progress EOIs and enter agreements as communities indicate their readiness				
Regular review of progress against agreement commitments				
Public reporting on the Indigenous employment target				
Expenditure reporting to communities every two years				

Recommendation 13

To implement the reforms, the Queensland Government should:

- assign responsibility to a lead minister and central agency for implementing the reforms
- establish a joint community and government oversight committee to steer reforms
- finalise an implementation plan within six months that allows for the establishment of the Independent oversight body and authorising bodies, and provides a long-term road map for reform
- establish the reforms in legislation, policies, budget, delegations, systems and processes.

Recommendation 14

To maximise the effectiveness of the reforms, the Queensland Government should seek to partner with the Australian Government, including to:

- provide outcomes, expenditure and services data at the community level
- streamline reporting and compliance arrangements for areas of shared responsibility
- pursue a joined-up approach by aligning policy, services and investment activities, including through the reformed service delivery framework.

As an initial step, the Queensland Government should invite the Australian Government to join the implementation oversight committee (recommendation 13).
