

Terms of Reference: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector

Background

The Queensland public and successive Queensland state governments have been well served by its public sector ethics and integrity framework, which emphasises the commitment of both the Queensland Government and public servants to achieving high standards of professional and ethical conduct.

The 21st century has witnessed the rapidly evolving nature of public administration as it responds to new policy and service delivery challenges, the need to embrace digitalisation, and the changing nature of public sector work and workplaces.

A contemporary public sector needs a continued focus on culture and accountability. Most Australian jurisdictions periodically review their ethics and integrity arrangements, just as the Federal Government did in 2019 as part of an independent review into the Australian Public Service.

The Queensland integrity framework was considered in the context of the 2019 independent review of Queensland's state employment laws (the Bridgman Review).

The second phase of the Queensland Government's response to the Bridgman Review is focused on the modernisation of the *Public Service Act 2008*, including extending the protections and obligations under that Act to other public sector employees. This phase will address recommendations that relate to public sector ethics.

The Queensland Government is commencing a review to refresh its focus on culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector.

Scope

The aim of the review is to ensure the Queensland Government has a culture and accountability framework that:

- is contemporary, fit for purpose and future focused
- is effective in supporting an ethical public sector culture
- is underpinned by robust systems including complaints mechanisms and training
- maintains the public's trust in the decisions of the Queensland Government.

To achieve this aim, when making recommendations the review should have regard to the:

- culture of the public sector in ensuring ethical decision making and impartial advice to the Executive
- nature of the interactions and interdependencies between integrity bodies, the Queensland public sector and the Executive
- legislation underpinning the existing ethics and integrity framework
- adequacy of systems to prevent ethical, accountability and integrity issues arising
- adequacy of ethics training and communication and relevant policies
- timeliness of processes to resolve ethical and integrity complaints.

For clarity:

- the review will focus on system level reform and will not seek to resolve individual complaints
- for the purposes of this review, the 'Queensland public sector' encompasses public service agencies and public sector entities as defined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* except for local government (and their entities), the parliamentary service and universities.

Process

The review will be conducted by an independent reviewer.

The reviewer may request additional expertise be provided to assist the review.

The review will have regard to relevant research, including commissioning its own research.

The review will involve consultation with key Queensland integrity bodies and others as determined by the reviewer.

Timing

An interim report will be provided to the Premier and Minister for the Olympics within two months of commencing the review.

A final report will be provided within four months of commencing the review.

The reports will be made public immediately upon receipt.