

Message from Michael Hogan

Former Director-General

The Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge lens was developed by the former Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for use by all Queensland Government agencies to support the development of more culturally responsive services and systems.

The lens should be applied at all levels, from the smallest projects through to strategic redesign and reform initiatives. By doing this, government's capacity to provide the right services that are innovative, holistic and culturally capable will be enhanced.

Government's traditional approaches to policy generation, program design and service delivery have not made a significant enough impact on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. so it is essential to rethink how we work for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The evidence tells us that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having self-determination, ownership of and meaningful influence over all decisions, policies, programs, projects, procurement and practices that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities is the most effective way to achieve improved social and economic outcomes.

By applying the lens to every aspect of our work across government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations will be empowered and supported to guide and where possible, lead the development of more effective public services.

Working in this way will require us to respectfully listen to and be responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authority, to trust in culturally informed wisdoms and most importantly, rebalance the power between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to create a future where shared responsibility is possible.

We must be open to, and accepting of, a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples decide, design and deliver the services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Using the lens can facilitate the changes necessary if such a transformational shift is to be achieved.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities have deep cultural wisdoms and knowledge that will, if valued, help inform better government services for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

I look forward to continuing to lead this initiative and seeing examples of how the lens is being applied across the Queensland Government.

When to use the lens

Are you doing a redesign, review, or reform of a policy, program, project, procurement or practice? Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge will need to be embedded in your work, and the lens should be applied.

It is equally as important to use the lens for existing pieces of work. There are always opportunities to rethink current policies, programs, projects, procurement and practices and respond in different ways. The lens can also be applied retrospectively as part of a reflective or review process.

The lens is designed to enable you to commence using it flexibly at any stage in your work, however it is the department's intent that all staff will automatically apply the lens as a forethought from the earliest stages of commencing a piece of work and throughout.

The lens questions are structured in a way that aligns with most standard work cycles: Exploration and evidence gathering, Planning and design, Implementation and delivery, and Evaluation and review.

How to use the lens

First, look at the instructions provided on the diagram. The diagram will lead you through a cycle of personal and team reflection and connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners before applying the 'lens questions' to your work. There are 12 lens questions designed to drive and guide the process for ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples knowledge is embedded in all aspects of your work. The final step is to include the 'answers' to the lens questions in all key decision making processes (including, but not limited to, Memorandums for Approval, board submissions, Work Package and Project documentation).

There is no template or specific form you need to complete as you use the lens, however decision makers must be able to clearly see that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders have had meaningful influence in the options and decisions being presented. This process, where responses are 'built-in not bolted on' aims to create sustainable long lasting cultural change that embeds using the lens into the DNA of the Queensland Government.

The lens is designed to be applied flexibly and, depending on the nature of the work, not all lens questions will be relevant for every piece of work.

Informed by: Australian Policy Handbook (2012) Queensland Government Gender Analysis Toolkit (2009) Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework (2011) World Health Organisation Health in All Policies (2013)

About the lens elements

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and **Respectful communication** These elements are central to, and underpin all aspects of, the lens. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, world views and ways of knowing and being cannot be defined or categorised. The only way we can truly understand and infuse the unique strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge is through genuine and respectful negotiation, consultation and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

The orange lines indicate that continuous quality improvement must occur both as part of the work cycle, and also in our own personal and team process of applying the lens.



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The Accountability 'stop sign'

In the centre of the lens is a question that is a catalyst for decision makers at all levels of the organisation to be accountable for ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices have had ownership of or meaningful influence in the decision being presented. It is at this point that decision makers are expected to challenge instances where they can't see evidence or examples of where and how the lens has been applied.

The lens questions

These are a series of questions that highlight key opportunities to seek out and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge in your work. These questions are aligned to most standard work cycles.

Instructions

A suggested approach to use the lens most effectively.

Continuous quality improvement

The cultural capability journey

An ability to accept the complexity, be open-minded and self-reflective, understand the historical context of the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and maintain a desire to learn and understand are essential qualities for every person working in every area of the department.





1. REFLECT

Before using the lens, reflect on your individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability journey and your willingness to learn and be open to new ideas, beliefs, practices and priorities.

How are we checking for unintended consequences for Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander** stakeholders?

Planning and design

4. PROGRESS

Ensure that evidence and examples of how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices have had meaningful influence in your work are presented in all planning and decision making processes, such as Memorandums for Approval, Work Package and Project documentation.

How do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples define success in relation to this topic?

What opportunities are

we exploring for Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander

stakeholders to lead and

own this work with support

from the department?

Exploration and evidence gathering

What do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics, researchers, evaluators and commentary say about the topic?

What does the qualitative and quantitative data tell us about this topic for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders?

Respectful communication

How are we being transparent, authentic and regular in our communications with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders?

> How does the planned approach allow for local responsiveness and opportunity to build on community strengths?

Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander stakeholders**

Who are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders we are partnering, negotiating and consulting with at all stages and how are we doing this in a way that is respectful and effective?

Accountability

Have Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander** stakeholders had ownership of or meaningful influence in this work?

Implementation and delivery

> How does the planned solution coordinate with other services to build holistic and accessible responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

> > How is this being implemented by or in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders?

How are we measuring outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations within the evaluation?

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2. CONNECT

As early as possible in commencing this work, identify and confirm key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners who will be involved from the earliest stages. This should be as a forethought to commencing the work, not an afterthought.

3. APPLY

Use the questions in the lens to drive and guide the process for ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge is embedded in all aspects of your work. A User Guide is available.

Evaluation and review



