Agency Planning Requirements

(2027 planning period)

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Agency Planning Requirements

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Overview – Agency Planning

1. Application of the Agency Planning Requirements

The *Agency Planning Requirements* provide agencies with the mandatory requirements for strategic planning and operational planning.

These requirements apply to Queensland Government agencies including:

- core government **departments** and **statutory bodies** (including **universities**)
- **public service offices** specified in Schedule 1 of the *Public Sector Act 2022*.

In most cases, the term 'agency' is used in this document to refer to departments, statutory bodies and public service offices.

When necessary, throughout this document, requirements are marked as to which apply specifically to departments only, or statutory bodies only.

2. Legal requirement for agency planning

Part 2, Division 2 of the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* (FPMS) relates to planning processes. Accountable officers and statutory bodies are accountable for ensuring the agency's planning processes comply with the provisions of the legislation.

Section 8 of the FPMS states that accountable officers and statutory bodies must comply with the *Agency Planning Requirements* when developing strategic and operational plans.

3. Purpose of agency planning

Section 6 of the FPMS requires that each accountable officer and statutory body must ensure a governance framework, appropriate for the agency, is established.

Effective planning, measuring and monitoring performance, and public reporting are key elements of any governance framework and addresses:

- **openness and transparency**: having clear roles and responsibilities, and clear procedures for making decisions and exercising power
- **integrity**: acting impartially, ethically and in the interests of the agency
- **accountability**: being answerable for decisions and having appropriate mechanisms

in place to ensure the agency adheres to all applicable standards

- **due care**: degree of care expected to be exercised to avoid harm in the circumstances, or alternatively, the absence of negligence
- **public defensibility**: activities and decisions are open to reasonable scrutiny and can withstand a 'public defensibility' test in the context of fairness, equity and 'value for money'.

Planning is an integral component of the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework (PMF) and is recognised as the starting point in any strategic management cycle. A 'big picture' view of performance management in the Queensland Government provides further context.

Suggested reference

- ***Queensland Public Sector Strategic Management Planner***
  Department of the Premier and Cabinet

4. Connections with whole-of-Government planning (objectives for the community)

The intent is that agency plans must collectively deliver on the Government's objectives for the community (see section 10 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*).

From time to time, the Government will release whole-of-Government plans or strategies to address a particular issue. At least annually, agencies should conduct an extensive review of whole-of-Government plans and strategies to ensure alignment with these documents.

Suggested references

- ***Queensland Government objectives for the community***
  Queensland Government

- ***Queensland Government Performance Management Framework***
  Department of the Premier and Cabinet

- ***Specific Purpose Planning Requirements – Mandatory and discretionary planning***
  Department of the Premier and Cabinet

5. Relationship with Ministerial Charter Letters

Each Minister and Assistant Minister has a Charter Letter that sets out their responsibilities in relation to whole-of-Government priorities and Government commitments.

The Premier meets regularly with each Minister, Assistant Minister and relevant Director-General to monitor progress on the delivery of priorities and commitments and to discuss new and emerging issues and risks facing the portfolio.

Agencies should ensure the priorities from the relevant Ministerial Charter Letter are reflected in its plans where appropriate. Agencies should regularly assess progress of priorities in the Charter Letter to ensure new and emerging issues and risks are incorporated in agency planning processes.

Suggested reference

- ***Ministerial Charter Letters***
  Queensland Government

6. Relationship between agency plans

The planning framework within agencies should ensure all operational plans and specific purpose plans support the agency's strategic plan.

Agencies should be able to demonstrate how all plans prepared by the agency relate to each other. This includes the relationship between the agency's strategic, operational and specific purpose plans. As well as the alignment of performance information.

7. Relationship with CEO and Executive Performance Frameworks

For departments:

Executive performance frameworks for Chief executives and senior executives are managed by the Public Sector Commission.

The Chief executive performance framework sets out the requirements for chief executive (CE) performance planning, monitoring, and assessment in the Queensland public sector, over a two-year cycle. For senior executives, this occurs over a one-year cycle, aligned to the Chief executive performance framework.

These frameworks focus on performance expectations – both outcomes and behaviours that

constitute performance – with reference to the *Public Sector Act 2022*. They place performance and development at the centre of the process. This supports key aspects of organisational performance and provides a consistent approach to performance which is designed to be cascaded throughout the organisation to support aligned operational, team-based and individual performance and development planning.

8. Relationship with individual performance plans

The agency's strategic plan should be operationalised through the agency's operational planning process (refer to section 20). This forms the foundation for the development of individual performance plans within the business areas of an agency.

By adopting this approach, individuals within an agency should be able to link their performance to the objectives and strategies in the agency's strategic plan.

9. Responsibility for agency planning

Planning is the responsibility of everybody within an agency. To plan effectively, responsibility should not rest solely with planning officers. The role of planning officers is to facilitate the development of the strategic plan and operational plans.

Strategic Planning

10. Purpose of strategic planning

Strategic planning is an ongoing organisational process that helps agencies identify their objectives, the strategies they can implement to achieve them and the performance indicators to measure how well their outcomes achieved their objectives.

The purpose of strategic planning is to:

- describe the vision (strategic direction) of the agency
- identify the agency's purpose
- demonstrate how the agency objectives will contribute to the achievement of the whole-of-Government direction (objectives for the community, priorities and strategies)
- describe strategies to make the agency's vision a reality

- determine how the objectives will be measured (performance indicators)
- identify key strategic risks and opportunities for the agency.

There are no standard templates for the layout of strategic plans. However, strategic plans should be concise and ideally kept to a maximum of two pages.

Strategic planning involves leadership and decision-making about resources, priorities and timeframes.

The strategic plan should clearly articulate an agency's direction to staff, customers and other stakeholders and set the parameters for operational plans.

Suggested reference

- ***PMF - Better Practice Guide***

  Department of the Premier and Cabinet

11. Legal requirement for strategic planning

Section 8 of the FPMS requires each accountable officer and statutory body to develop a strategic plan for the agency to cover a period of four years.

There is no legal requirement for Ministers to approve strategic plans. However, ministerial consultation is recommended (refer to section 14).

12. Minimum information requirements of a strategic plan

12.1. Agency vision

A vision statement describes what the agency aspires to be by reflecting on how it wishes to be perceived by customers, stakeholders and the community. This high-level statement should reflect the future state or impact that the agency wishes to deliver to its customers, stakeholders and the community.

12.2. Agency purpose

The agency's purpose specifies the overall aim of the agency – a simple statement of the agency's reason for being.

12.3. Relationship with/contribution to the Government's objectives for the community

All agencies are responsible for contributing towards the achievement of the Government's objectives for the community.

By clearly aligning agency objectives, performance indicators and strategies to the Government's objectives, agencies are better able to demonstrate their contribution.

It is not a requirement for all of the Government's objectives for the community to be referenced in a strategic plan; only those the agency directly contributes to.

The relationship depicted in the strategic plan should be consistent with subsequent representations in an agency's *Service Delivery Statement* (contextual information) and annual report.

Independent offices (refer to Attachment A – Independent offices) must consider the context of and be consistent with the Government's objectives for the community in the development of their strategic plan.

12.4. Agency objectives

Agency objectives are the effects or impacts an agency seeks to have on its customers, stakeholders, or the community, and should collectively contribute to the whole-of-Government direction (objectives for the community, priorities and strategies).

Agency objectives should be focused statements of what the agency intends to achieve and be clear and measurable.

Departments must consider national commitments, including intergovernmental and other cross jurisdictional commitments, and align their objectives to the national objectives where appropriate. Strategic plans should not include a specific section on these initiatives and do not need to include reference to these arrangements or agreements.

12.5. Performance indicators

Performance indicators measure the extent to which the outcomes achieved by an agency are meeting its objectives. Agencies are encouraged to develop and set performance targets for performance indicators where possible.

Departments responsible for the delivery of performance indicators in national agreements or arrangements must be able to clearly align these indicators and/or targets with their performance indicators in their strategic plan.

Performance indicators included in an agency's strategic plan must be consistent with those reported against in an agency's subsequent annual report.

Agencies should develop a 'data dictionary' for the performance indicators in the strategic plan to document the attributes of each performance indicator, what each performance indicator means, and what the limitations are. Publication of data dictionaries is not required.

12.6. Strategies

Strategies state the ways in which the agency intends to achieve its objectives and contribute

to the Government's objectives for the community.

Strategies included in a strategic plan would generally be longer term strategies that are pursued over several years.

12.7. Strategic risks and opportunities

The strategic plan must identify key strategic risks and/or critical issues for the agency to achieve its vision and purpose. Strategic risks may be related to external factors and/or strategic risks internal to government.

Further, the likely cause and effect of each strategic risk must be clearly identified and articulated in agencies' risk management documents. The internal controls countering the impact of identified strategic risks need to be managed with the agency's business processes and also reflected in agencies' risk management documents.

It is suggested that plans focus on the agency's top five strategic risks.

The strategic plan must also clearly identify key opportunities for the agency. Again, it is suggested that the agency's top five key opportunities be identified. These may or may not be linked to identified strategic risks. However, where there is a link to identified risks, this should be made explicit.

12.8. Human Rights Act 2019

Agencies need to consider their commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights when developing their strategic plan. In addition, the following statement could be adapted for inclusion in the plan, either in the introductory text of the agency, or as a lead-in statement to the objectives of the agency:

"We respect, protect and promote human rights in everything we do."

Suggested reference

- ***Reporting on human rights guide***
  Department of Justice

12.9. Timeframe

Strategic plans must cover a period of four years and the timeframe to be covered by the plan must be clearly stated.

Refer to section 13 and 14 for further information on timeframes for reviewing, consultation and approval of strategic plans.

13. Review of strategic plan

Agencies must review their strategic plan each year.

Agencies should conduct a comprehensive review at least every four years (i.e., in the third year of the plan).

The annual review of the strategic plan allows agencies to identify the extent of changes to the internal and external environment. If the agency considers these to be significant, the strategic plan should be updated.

If a strategic plan has been reviewed but is not being updated, the following text should be included in the plan as an amendment to the plan title and on the webpage:

This strategic plan was reviewed [insert month and year] and remains current for the reporting period 20xx-20xx.

14. Consultation and approval of strategic plan

For departments:

14.1. Central agency consultation

Departments must undertake consultation with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and Queensland Treasury (QT) on their draft strategic plan before it is published.

Departments must submit a **consultation draft strategic plan**, approved by their Director-General, to the Performance Unit in DPC (via email to performance.unit@premiers.qld.gov.au) **by 31 March** each year. This process is mandatory, regardless of whether there are no changes proposed, or the changes to the strategic plan are considered significant or minor.

DPC will provide collated central agency feedback to departments within 10 business days of receiving the draft strategic plan.

Following consultation, departments should incorporate feedback into their strategic plan where relevant and appropriate.

14.2. Ministerial consultation

Departments should consult with their Minister(s) and submit a **final draft strategic plan** approved by their Director-General for consultation before publication.

14.3. Approval

The Director-General of the department must approve the strategic plan before publication.

***For statutory bodies*:**

14.4. Central agency consultation

For **statutory bodies** that are published in the *Service Delivery Statement* (SDS), it is mandatory to consult with central agencies on draft strategic plans.

A **consultation draft strategic plan**, approved by the CEO (or Board), must be submitted to the Performance Unit in DPC (via email to performance.unit@premiers.qld.gov.au) **by 31 March** each year. This process is mandatory, regardless of whether or not there are changes proposed, or if the changes to the strategic plan are considered to be significant or minor.

DPC will continue to provide collated central agency feedback to statutory bodies within 10 business days.

For all other statutory bodies (not published in the SDS), it is not mandatory to undertake central agency consultation, however it is encouraged.

14.5. Ministerial consultation

It is not a mandatory requirement for statutory bodies to submit their strategic plan to their Minister(s) for consultation, however it is encouraged.

14.6. Submission to the Board for approval

A final strategic plan must be submitted to the Board of the statutory body for approval with a covering submission outlining any major policy changes and consequential resource implications.

Statutory bodies should also refer to any applicable administering legislation for any legislated approval processes that take precedence to these *Agency Planning Requirements*.

For independent offices (refer to Attachment A – Independent offices)**:**

14.7. Central agency consultation

Independent offices must consult with QT on their draft strategic plan before it is published.

A **consultation draft strategic plan**, approved by the CEO (or Board), must be submitted to QT **by 31 March** each year.

This process is mandatory, regardless of whether the changes to the strategic plan are considered significant or minor. If an independent office has reviewed its strategic plan and determined that no change is necessary, the independent office must advise QT **by 31 March** each year.

14.8. Submission to Parliamentary Committee

Independent offices must consult with their responsible Parliamentary Committee on their

draft strategic plan before it is published.

A **consultation draft strategic plan**, approved by the CEO (or Board), must be submitted to the relevant Parliamentary Committee **by 31 March** each year.

This process is mandatory, regardless of whether the changes to the strategic plan are considered significant or minor. If an independent office has reviewed its strategic plan and determined that no change is necessary, the independent office must advise the relevant Parliamentary Committee **by 31 March** each year.

14.9. Approval

The CEO of the independent office must approve the strategic plan before publication.

15. Publication of strategic plan

For departments:

The final strategic plan (approved by the Director-General) must be published on the department's website **by 1 July** each year (refer to section 16).

For statutory bodies / independent offices:

The final strategic plan (approved by the CEO/Board) must be published on the statutory body or independent office website **by 1 July** each year (refer to section 16).

Statutory bodies and independent offices should refer to any applicable administering legislation for any legislated timeframes that take precedence to these *Agency Planning Requirements*.

16. Publication standards

Strategic plans must be published online only. When publishing online, agencies must comply with the requirements for accessibility as prescribed in the *Digital service standard* (Criteria 9: Make digital services accessible).

The *Ministerial guideline for publications schemes and disclosure logs* (issued for the purposes of the *Right to Information Act 2009*) requires agencies to publish their strategic plan under the agency's Publication Scheme.

If a member of the public is unable to access the plan electronically, a hard copy of the document should be provided at no cost in accordance with *Information Standard 33 – Information Access and Use (IS33).*

Agencies must ensure the strategic plan relating to the annual report remains accessible from

the agency's website for as long as the annual report remains accessible. The *Annual Report Requirements for Queensland Government agencies* requires the annual report for the past three years remain accessible on the agency's website.

If a strategic plan has been reviewed, but is not being updated, the following text should be included in the plan as an amendment to the plan title and on the webpage:

> *This strategic plan was reviewed [insert month and year] and remains current for the reporting period 20xx-20xx.*

For departments, strategic plans are listed centrally. If the website address for the department's strategic plan has changed, the new link should be emailed to csonline@premiers.qld.gov.au.

17. Statutory obligation to distribute copies

Under the *Libraries Act 1988*, agencies are required to provide an electronic copy of their strategic plan for legal deposit to the following libraries as it is an official publication (not a public record).

- One electronic copy to **State Library of Queensland** (addresses both National and Queensland deposit).
    - Electronic (digital) publications should be deposited via National edeposit Service (NED). Refer to the NED website for the e-format options available. General enquiries contact: legaldeposit@slq.qld.gov.au.
- One electronic copy to the Queensland Parliamentary Library. The required e-format is PDF. Contact: QPL.Acquisitions@parliament.qld.gov.au.

18. Extensions and exemptions

Only in extreme circumstances will an extension or exemption to the requirement to prepare and publish a strategic plan be granted (e.g., agencies that have been affected by changes to administrative arrangements may need additional time to facilitate an effective planning process).

The Treasurer may exempt (wholly or partially) a department or statutory body from complying with a performance management standard. In considering a request for an extension or exemption from planning and performance management processes, the Treasurer must consult with the Premier and the Auditor-General (*Financial Accountability Act 2009*, section 59).

Prior to an agency writing to the Treasurer to request an extension or exemption from the

planning requirements under the FPMS, agencies must initially consult with the Performance Unit in DPC by email at performance.unit@premiers.qld.gov.au or by telephone 07 3003 9201.

19. Machinery of Government changes

This section sets out specific strategic planning requirements **for departments** affected by machinery of government (MoG) changes.

A MoG change is a formal transfer of functions from one agency (usually a department) to another, made by *Administrative Arrangements Orders* and *Departmental Arrangements Notices* published in the Government Gazette.

MoG changes have implications for strategic plans, particularly for new departments, and continuing departments with new and/or changed functions.

Complexities may arise which require specific advice from central agencies. For advice, contact the Performance Unit in DPC by email at performance.unit@premiers.qld.gov.au or by telephone 07 3003 9201.

Suggested references

- ***Administrative Arrangement Orders***
- ***Departmental Arrangements Notices***

19.1. Requirement for a strategic plan

Continuing departments with new or changed functions

Continuing departments with new or changed functions must produce an updated strategic plan that reflects the department's post-MoG responsibilities.

For the minimum information requirements for a strategic plan, refer to section 12.

New departments

New departments must produce a strategic plan that reflects the functions and responsibilities of the department.

For the minimum information requirements for a strategic plan, refer to section 12.

19.2. Consultation and approval

Consultation with DPC and QT on the draft strategic plan is mandatory.

A **consultation draft strategic plan**, approved by their Director-General, must be submitted to the Performance Unit in DPC (via email to performance.unit@premiers.qld.gov.au) prior to

publication of the updated/new strategic plan.

19.3. Publication

An updated/new strategic plan (approved by the Director-General) must be published on the department's website **as soon as possible,** ideally within 3 months (or as directed by DPC), after the MoG change.

For the minimum publication standards refer to section 16, and statutory obligations to distribute copies refer to section 17.

19.4. Annual reports

Departments must disclose information consistent with its current strategic plan (current means a four year period commencing or including the annual reporting period) in their annual report.

Suggested reference

- ***Annual Report Requirements***

  Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Operational Planning

20. Purpose of operational planning

Operational planning is a process which focuses on answering the question, 'How will we deliver our services?'

An operational plan is a subset of an agency's strategic plan. It must cover a period of one year and should describe short-term activities and/or milestones that contribute to the implementation of an agency's objectives.

Agencies may choose to have an operational plan at the agency level, or individual plans across business units, service areas or divisions. There are no standard templates for the layout of agency operational plans.

Operational plans should be developed in a way that best suits the business area responsible for delivering the plan.

Suggested reference

📖 ***PMF - Better Practice Guide***

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

21. Legal requirement for operational planning

Section 8 of the FPMS requires each accountable officer and statutory body to develop operational plans for relevant business areas, or an operational plan for the whole agency, to cover a period of not more than one year.

22. Minimum information requirements of an operational plan

22.1. Relationship with agency strategic plan

The agency's operational plan(s) must be developed to deliver on the agency's objectives in its strategic plan. Agencies should be able to demonstrate how all plans prepared by the agency relate to each other.

The operational plan(s) should outline how the agency will contribute to delivering its services over the year to support the delivery of the agency's objectives within the allocated budget. There is no prescribed format for representing this relationship.

22.2. Operational risks and opportunities

The agency's operational plan(s) must consider the potential impact key operational risks and opportunities may have on the agency's service delivery, including how these risks will be managed or mitigated and opportunities realised.

22.3. Service areas and services

Services are sets of activities that deliver outputs and result in outcomes for customers, stakeholders and the community. Ideally, services generate benefits for these groups, and as a result, are valued by them. Related services are grouped into a high-level service area for communicating the broad types of services delivered by an agency.

22.4. Performance information

Performance information within an operational plan should reflect and compliment/contribute to the agency's performance indicators in its strategic plan. This information should measure the success of the operational strategies, projects or activities outlined in the operational plan, and be regularly monitored throughout the year to determine how the agency is performing.

22.5. Operational strategies / projects or activities

Strategies are the way in which an agency intends to pursue its objectives, deliver its services and assist in achieving the whole-of-Government direction (objectives for the community, priorities and strategies).

Strategies included in an agency's operational plan(s) would generally be shorter term 'operational' strategies that are pursued over a one year or less timeframe and would cascade down from the strategies outlined in the agency's strategic plan.

22.6. Alignment with specific purpose plans

Alignment with specific purpose plans of the agency (e.g., the ICT resource strategic plan) should be detailed in the operational plan(s) where relevant (refer to section 29).

22.7. Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA)

Departments must outline their commitment to the QDMA in their operational plan(s), including response and/or recovery preparations during and following a disaster.

22.8. Human Rights Act 2019

Agencies need to reflect in their operational plan(s) how the agency or areas are committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights through their everyday interactions with the community. Agencies need to also consider how their operational plan(s) will support their reporting obligations under Section 97 of the *Human Rights Act 2019.*

In addition, the following statement could be adapted for inclusion in the plan(s):

"We will develop and continue to review our policies, programs, procedures, practices and service delivery to ensure our decisions and actions are compatible with human rights. We will ensure that human rights are central to everything we do."

Suggested reference

📖 ***Reporting on human rights guide***

Department of Justice

22.9. Timeframe

Agency operational plan(s) must cover a period of one year and clearly state the timeframe of the plan.

23. Review of operational plans

Operational plans should be evaluated and/or reviewed at least every six months.

24. Approval of operational plans

Operational plans must be approved by the relevant delegated officer within an agency.

Once approved, operational plans should be implemented from **1 July** each year.

25. Publication standards

Operational plans should be communicated and made available to staff within the agency.

To determine if an operational plan should be published, an agency should refer to their publication scheme and the *Right to Information Act 2009* (in particular Schedule 3 which sets out the exemptions under the Act) and/or consult with the agency's Right to Information area.

As a matter of process, operational plans should be made available to stakeholders who are particularly interested in an agency's service delivery (such as non-government organisations, construction industry, outsourced providers etc).

26. Extensions and exemptions

There is no legislative or administrative extension or exemption process for agency operational plans.

Specific Purpose Planning

27. Purpose of specific purpose planning

From time to time, Government will release whole-of-Government plans or strategies to address a particular issue. Specific purpose planning focuses on addressing these areas of high strategic importance.

Specific purpose planning often crosses organisational and structural boundaries and can be implemented at the whole-of-Government level or across multiple agencies with specific strategic interest (an example is emergency management planning which is led by one agency and involves a number of others).

Specific purpose planning can also occur at the agency level in areas such as finance, information technology, human resources and physical assets. Examples of specific purpose planning include procurement planning, strategic workforce planning and waste reduction and recycling planning.

This section of the *Agency Planning Requirements* relates to specific purpose planning at the agency level only.

A specific purpose plan focuses on an area of strategic importance to an agency and should be aligned with the agency's strategic and operational plan(s).

Specific purpose planning can occur on an annual or ongoing basis depending on specific policy and/or legislative requirements.

Agencies should consult with the policy owner responsible for the specific purpose planning requirement and refer to any guidance material developed by the policy owners (refer to section 29).

28. Legal requirement for specific purpose planning

Section 61(e) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* requires that accountable officers and statutory bodies undertake planning appropriate to the size of the department or statutory body.

Those specific purpose plans that are mandatory will be governed by legislation specific to those plans or the agency that has ownership of the policy from a whole-of-Government perspective.

Discretionary specific purpose planning is generally considered to be better practice for agencies to develop and adopt these plans to improve their performance and ensure greater

alignment to the whole-of-Government direction (objectives for the community, priorities and strategies).

29. Requirements for specific purpose plans

The individual requirements for specific purpose plans are not within the scope of the *Agency Planning Requirements*.

The policy owners for the various types of mandatory and discretionary specific purpose planning requirements generally publish comprehensive guidance material to support development of specific purpose plans.

Suggested reference

📖 ***PMF Specific Purpose Planning Requirements***
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Attachment A – Independent offices

The following entities are classified as Independent offices for the purposes of the *Agency Planning Requirements*:

- Crime and Corruption Commission
- Office of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner
- Office of the Governor
- Office of the Health Ombudsman
- Office of the Information Commissioner
- Queensland Audit Office
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Queensland Ombudsman.