About us
Departmental overview

The department contributes to the Queensland Government’s Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities in delivering our strategic vision of thriving Queensland communities, where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can participate, are included and resilient, and enjoy high levels of social and economic wellbeing.

To do this, we help to:

- create jobs in a strong economy by engaging and partnering with peak organisations and associations and supporting rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Queensland
- give all our children a great start by supporting vulnerable Queensland families and delivering place-based and local solutions in our communities
- keep Queenslanders healthy by delivering targeted programs aimed at improving the wellbeing of individuals requiring community, disability or seniors services
- keep communities safe by contributing to programs and initiatives to support seniors, people with disability experiencing domestic and family violence and Queenslanders affected by a disaster
- be a responsive government by ensuring streamlined access to the services we deliver or fund with online services developed using a ‘tell us once’ approach.

The department will continue to be responsive to the changing demographics of Queensland and take leadership and action to ensure people of all ages and abilities are able to access opportunities and participate in an inclusive Queensland community.
Strategic overview

Our vision
Thriving Queensland communities, where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can participate, are included and resilient, and enjoy high levels of social and economic wellbeing.

Our objectives
The Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors will:
» Improve the wellbeing of individuals requiring community, disability and seniors services
» Strengthen communities and help them thrive
» Invest in quality responsive services and supports
» Demonstrate leading and responsive approaches in our management and governance

Our purpose
To improve the social and economic wellbeing of people and places by delivering quality targeted support.

Our values
These values guide the services we deliver for Queensland. They underpin our efforts and decision-making and drive our vision for thriving Queensland communities. We are a passionate and productive workplace that puts the people of Queensland first, values each community and advances the community services industry.

Our strategic priorities
1. Put people first by providing access to a range of universal and targeted services, building relationships and inclusion and supporting individuals and families across Queensland.
2. Value Queensland communities by building investment in local community services and place-based responses to increase the resilience and responsiveness of communities.
3. Advance the community services industry to ensure that Queensland has a progressive, high-performing community services industry delivering quality services that help people and communities to thrive.
4. Demonstrate leading approaches to public sector management and governance to ensure that improving the capacity and capability of our clients, communities, stakeholders and staff is at the forefront of our work.
Regions

We deliver services across seven regions.
Organisational structure
As the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Disability Services and Seniors, Coralee is passionate about Queensland communities—particularly those in regional, rural and remote areas of the state.

Her vision is for Queensland’s communities to be thriving, vibrant places where Queenslanders, regardless of their age, ability or personal circumstances, are able to participate and be included in their communities, be resilient and enjoy social and economic wellbeing.

The Minister’s vision for Queensland was inspired from her pre-parliamentary career, when she was the director of a community-based early learning centre in Townsville.

This role drove her commitment for family and community which she brings to her Ministerial portfolio.

Since her election in 2015, Minister O’Rourke has been travelling around the state from Cairns to Coolangatta listening to the needs of Queensland communities and how the Queensland Government can support the delivery of high-quality community services in these areas.

It’s from this work that the Queensland: an age-friendly community strategic direction statement and action plan and All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all were born.

Minister O’Rourke is also passionate about ensuring Queenslanders with disability can live in accessible communities, where they are included and can live their lives with dignity and as they choose.

She has played a key role in ensuring Queensland communities transition smoothly to the NDIS and worked hard to negotiate a beneficial full scheme agreement for Queenslanders with the federal government.

Minister O’Rourke is also dedicated to helping Queensland communities recover and build their resilience in the wake of disasters, working on the ground with Community Recovery workers during a number of natural disasters, including the 2019 floods in Townsville and northwest Queensland, the bushfires in southern Queensland in 2019 and the central Queensland bushfires in 2018.

In the wake of the full scheme NDIS transition, the Minister has also established Disability Connect Queensland and made it clear that, although the NDIS is now up and running in Queensland, it doesn’t negate the government’s responsibility to support and advocate for Queenslanders with disability.
Executive management

Clare O’Connor  Director-General
Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Public Sector Leadership (Policy)

Clare was appointed Director-General, Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors in May 2018 after acting in the position from December 2017.

Clare is an experienced Director-General, with many years in the senior executive service, having led the Policy and Performance Division of five Queensland Government agencies during periods of major reforms.

Clare has extensive experience in designing and delivering community and disability services, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

Clare is committed to serving all Queensland communities, particularly those that are vulnerable or need additional support.

Narinder Singh  Chief Finance Officer – Corporate Services
Bachelor of Science (Hons), CPA, ACMA, CGMA

Narinder was appointed Chief Finance Officer in August 2018, and has more than 10 years experience in the Queensland Government, including five years experience in senior management roles.

Prior to this, Narinder had over 10 years experience working in the private sector, primarily in the financial services industry in a variety of senior finance roles for a number of blue chip organisations. These roles provided Narinder with the opportunity to manage national and international teams.

Over his career, Narinder has held positions that have provided experience in financial management and governance, business planning, commercial pricing, organisational redesign and change, shareholder relations and financial risk management.
Katie Holm  Assistant Director-General – Community Services
Bachelor of Law

Katie joined the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors in July 2018 as the Assistant Director-General, Community Services Statewide.

Katie has 30 years experience working in the government and private sectors including roles with Disability Services Queensland, Queensland Public Service Commission and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

Katie brings her strategic and legal policy services delivery and commercial skills to her current role to support the department’s Thriving Communities agenda.

Helen Ferguson  Assistant Director-General – Strategic Policy and Legislation
Bachelor of Social Work, GAICD, Registered Nursing qualifications

Helen’s public service career spans over 20 years across the full spectrum of human services — community services, housing, homelessness, disability services, domestic and family violence, health and child safety — and she has held senior executive positions for over 10 years.

Prior to her public service career, Helen had extensive experience in non-government organisation service delivery, particularly supporting at-risk young people and in participatory research, organisational and governance development.
Matthew Lupi Senior Executive Director –
Disability Accommodation, Respite and Forensic Services
Bachelor of Science (Psych), Grad Dip Soc Sci, Grad Cert Mgmt, GAICD

Matthew has worked in social and human services in Queensland for over 25 years, spending the last 18 years with the Queensland Public Service. Matthew has held senior executive roles since 2004, and has led significant reform in child safety and community services since that time. Matthew is currently the Senior Executive Director, Disability Accommodation, Respite and Forensic Services and is leading the service delivery of the statewide Accommodation Support and Respite Services as an NDIS service provider.

Matthew has held numerous senior executive roles in government across policy, program and service delivery. Matthew has led service delivery in a number of locations, including Sunshine Coast, North Queensland and South West Queensland.

Neil Smith Chief Human Resource Officer –
Corporate Services
Masters Health Science, Graduate Diploma (OHS)

Neil was appointed the Chief Human Resource Officer of Human Resources and Ethical Standards, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in August 2009. He first joined the former Department of Communities in 2004 and went on to hold senior officer and executive roles.

Neil has extensive experience as a human resources professional, having worked in central and line agencies in the Queensland Public Service, as well as in private sector heavy engineering and construction. Neil has a passion for leading major organisational reform and change.

Michelle Hendy Assistant Director-General –
National Disability Insurance Scheme
Program Management Office
Bachelor of Arts (History)

With over 20 years experience, Michelle’s ability to develop and translate long-term policy and strategy into operational delivery plans, programs and projects has been central to her career in both public and private sectors.

Michelle has led multidisciplinary and specialist teams to deliver organisational transformational change programs introducing new frameworks, operating models and processes. She has developed, implemented and evaluated public policy, strategy and plans, and managed complex projects.

Michelle has managed and held key advisory roles throughout all phases and project life cycles within the transition of disability services to the NDIS.
Kathy Dunning Deputy Director-General – Corporate Services  
Bachelor of Business (Accounting)

Kathy commenced in the role of Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services in the former Department of Communities in November 2009.

Previously, Kathy was Acting Deputy Director-General of Community and Youth Justice Services from March to November 2009, and General Manager, Service Delivery, Department of Communities from March 2007 to March 2009.

Prior to this, Kathy was in senior management roles over a 12-year period in Disability Services Queensland. She held the position of Executive Director, Programs and Community Specialist Services for six years, and various Regional Director positions.

Tony Hayes Deputy Director-General – Disability Services  
Bachelor of Business (Accountancy), Grad Dip Exec Mgmt,  
M Admin, CGEIT, AFCHSE, CHE, FACS, FCPA, FIIA

Tony has extensive experience across the Queensland public sector in many line departments and central agencies. He has specialist experience and skills in strategic management and planning, organisational review and business process improvement, information and business strategy development, change management and project management.

Tony has worked in various roles with Queensland Health, the former Service Delivery and Performance Commission and the Public Service Commission. Tony was also a former International President of the ISACA, a non-profit, independent association that advocates for professionals involved in information security, assurance, risk management and governance.
**Government bodies**

The following government bodies, boards and panels were active during 2018–19 with reporting arrangements to the department:

- Queensland National Disability Insurance Scheme Transition Advisory Group
- Queensland Carers Advisory Council
- Queensland Disability Advisory Council and regional disability advisory councils:
  - Far North Queensland Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - North Queensland Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - Central Queensland Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - North Coast Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - Brisbane Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - South West Regional Disability Advisory Council
  - South East Regional Disability Advisory Council.

Additional information about government bodies can be found in Appendix 4 from page 132 and at: https://governmentbodies.premiers.qld.gov.au/departmentsearch.aspx by searching Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.
Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities

The department’s strategic objectives will contribute to the Queensland Government’s objectives for Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities.

Create jobs in a strong economy
» Managing the government’s ongoing investment in the NDIS to ensure it delivers on projected employment and economic benefits for Queenslanders.
» Engaging and partnering with peak organisations and associations.

Keep communities safe
» Supporting responses for people with disability who are experiencing domestic and family violence.
» Partnering with authorities to provide safe service environments for NDIS participants.
» Supporting the emotional, social and physical wellbeing of Queenslanders affected by disaster.
» Driving better financial, housing and general support for seniors.

Give all our children a great start
» Delivering place-based and local solutions to improve wellbeing and support services delivered in communities.
» Supporting the needs of Queensland’s carers by delivering targeted programs.

Keep Queenslanders healthy
» Supporting people with disability to have choice and control in the services they receive.
» Increasing the social and economic participation of Queenslanders with disability, so that they and their families can increase wellbeing and be full and equal members of society.
» Supporting families through food security programs.
» Improving the supports available for Queensland’s seniors.

Be a responsive government
» As a ‘Shareholder’ in the $20+ billion NDIS, holding itself, the Commonwealth Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency accountable.
» Developing contemporary legislative frameworks that promote and protect the human rights of Queenslanders with a disability.
» Driving performance and service improvements which support the delivery of inclusive and accessible services for Queenslanders.