

**Queensland Multicultural Policy ‘Our story, our future’
Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24**

**Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
Annual Reporting for 2023-24**

At 30 June 2024, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) is a Queensland Government department under the *Public Sector Act 2022*. QFES was initially established as a department on 1 November 2013 by *Public Service Departmental Arrangements Notice (No. 8) 2013*.

On 26 October 2022, the Queensland Government announced its response to the Independent Review of QFES (the Independent Review). The Independent Review examined the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the department, including structure and funding in relation to its core services and associated volunteer entities and made a range of recommendations for strategic and legislative reform. The Queensland Government accepted in-principle all recommendations of the Independent Review with the exception of recommendation 12 to implement a State Emergency Service levy which was not accepted.

The implementation of the Emergency Services Reforms includes the establishment of a dedicated fire department—the Queensland Fire Department—which will commence on 1 July 2024. The Queensland Fire Department will consist of Queensland Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service Queensland, the Office of the Chief Fire Officer, and operational and corporate support. Machinery-of-government changes resulted in the State Emergency Service transitioning to the Queensland Police Service on 3 June 2024. The Queensland Police Service is also responsible for marine rescue services and disaster management functions. Further disaster management functions were transferred to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

● **KEY ACTION 2: Recruitment and workplace culture**

Barriers to participation facing culturally and linguistically diverse communities will be removed so they can join the Public Sector and Queensland Government boards, through **culturally inclusive recruitment practices and workplace cultures**. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

- *Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections.*
- *Individuals are supported to participate in the economy.*
- *Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.*
- *Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity.*
- *Connected and resilient communities.*
- *A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity.*

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 2	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from CALD backgrounds.
2.1	Capitalise on the skills and knowledge of existing bicultural and bilingual employees in the Queensland Government.	Celebrate and socialise the skills and knowledge of our CALD staff and volunteers in QFES.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Equity and Diversity Plan (the plan) was finalised in March 2024. The plan outlines QFES’ commitment to promoting and fostering equity, diversity and inclusion, and aims to create a safe, capable and inclusive workforce that is representative of the communities we serve and where individuals from all backgrounds can thrive and contribute to our collective success. The plan is designed to support the new Queensland Fire Department (QFD) and is available on the department’s website at www.fire.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate-knowledge-centre/reports-plans-and-reviews <p>The forthcoming QFD 2025 Equity and Diversity Plan will outline key measures to support candidates in a recruitment process who identify as Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, people with CALD backgrounds, and women applying for leadership positions.</p>



Case studies or good news stories to highlight achievements relevant to Key Action 2 - Recruitment and workplace culture

Girls Firefighter Experience Camp

QFES delivered the first two-day Girls Firefighter Experience Camp, on 29 and 30 June 2024, supported by the Department of Education. This pilot program provided 30 girls from years 9 and 10, from a mix of metropolitan and regional areas, the opportunity to join the Fire and Rescue Service to experience a diverse range of activities that relate to being a firefighter. With a range of supervised activities including demonstrations of road crash rescue, urban search and rescue, and live fire demonstrations, led by firefighters, participants experienced what it would be like to have a career in firefighting. The program included a Careers Expo for parents, guardians, teachers and school careers guidance officers. The camp was held at the School of Fire and Emergency Services Training in Brisbane and included overnight accommodation on-site.

The camp was successfully delivered and well received by participants and their parents/guardians, and will be evaluated to determine the future of the program. In the post-survey results, 90% of respondents said the camp met or exceeded their expectations. On a scale of 1-10, the overall rating of the camp had an average of 9.1 with almost half of the participants giving a perfect 10 out of 10.

The camp was initiated as part of the department's commitment to the ongoing development of a diverse workforce, representative of the community it serves, with gender, equity and inclusion a priority focus.

Recruitment attraction campaign

The QFES recruitment attraction campaign ALL IN. ALL FRONTS. is designed to attract new members to the workforce and promote QFES as an employer of choice. The department's website contains detailed information on a variety of career and volunteer roles, a tool to help members of the public find a role that suits their skills and experience, and a range of videos featuring QFES members.

The department offers a diverse range of careers and roles across numerous disciplines including firefighting personnel, emergency management experts, scientists, building fire safety engineers and communication officers, through to personnel in finance, information and technology, staff welfare and building design. Attraction techniques and activities for employment are focused on increasing diversity and attracting and engaging the best candidates possible.

Through ALL IN. ALL FRONTS. the department showcases the many roles and careers available for both paid and volunteer positions. QFES' goal is to highlight the many roles within the department as rewarding and attractive careers to entice a larger number of candidates.

The department aims to build a diverse workforce that is reflective of the community it serves, and increase capacity and capability for current and future workforce needs through contemporary and innovative recruitment practices and enterprise workforce planning.

● **KEY ACTION 4: Cultural diversity data**

The Queensland Government will collect, analyse, and use **cultural diversity data** to improve service delivery and better meet customer needs. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

- *Improved knowledge about customers' diversity.*
- *Culturally capable services and programs.*
- *A productive, culturally capable, and diverse workforce.*

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 4	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
4.1	Introduce a new Australian South Sea Islander indicator across government datasets and client information forms.	Introduce Australian South Sea Islander indicator for clients involved in key community engagement and safety programs delivered by QFES.	Delivered (2022-23)	This action was completed at 30 June 2023 as reported in the QFES 2022-23 Multicultural Action Plan annual reporting with the inclusion of a South Sea Islander indicator when enquires are made regarding the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight Fire Fascination (FFF) program. The FFF program supports parents and guardians with their efforts to educate children and young people (three to 17 years), who have been involved in at least one concerning fire incident, about fire safety. • Safe home program. The Safe home program is designed to assist all householders in recognising fire and safety hazards in and around the home.
4.2	Identify potential opportunities to incorporate diversity data into organisational reporting to inform strategic planning.	Explore feasibility of incorporating diversity data into organisational reporting to Executives and Board of Management to inform strategic priorities and decision-making.	Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department's Human Resource Dashboard was reviewed and opportunities to incorporate diversity data into organisational reporting to inform strategic planning were identified. <p>The enhancement to the design of the dashboard to integrate the department's diversity data (including targets, trends and performance) has been approved and the updated dashboard is due to be released to the organisation by June 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QFES undertook an equity and diversity audit to fulfil the Commissioner's obligations to progress equity, diversity, respect and inclusion in accordance with the <i>Public Sector Act 2022</i>. The audit utilised analysis of the September 2023 MOHRI data and QFES' Working for Queensland results that identified several areas for improvement. <p>The data and information contained in the audit will be used to inform further analysis, inquiry and empirical research to inform the annual review of the department's strategic workforce plan and the forthcoming QFD 2025 Equity and Diversity Plan.</p>

● **KEY ACTION 5: Interpreters and communication strategies**

Queensland Government agencies will ensure people who have difficulty communicating in English can access information and services at the right time and in the right manner, through **improved access to interpreters and implementing multilingual and multi-modal communication strategies**. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

- *Improved knowledge about customers' diversity.*
- *Culturally capable services and programs.*
- *A productive, culturally capable, and diverse workforce.*
- *Queensland gets the most benefit from our diversity and global connections.*
- *Individuals are supported to participate in the economy.*

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 5	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
5.1	Explore opportunities to partner with research institutes and key stakeholders to understand barriers and opportunities to improve communications for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate opportunities to partner with the Queensland University of Technology in relation to the multicultural transmedia storytelling framework grant proposal. 2. Strengthen relationship with Multicultural Australia to improve effectiveness of the disaster preparedness of, and communications with, CALD communities. 	Delivered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A second Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant application was made in March 2024. The research team was advised in June 2024 that the application was unsuccessful and that the project would not be funded. The research team has determined that a third submission to the ARC will not be pursued and will instead explore smaller scale research opportunities related to the multicultural transmedia storytelling topic. 2. QFES hosted two AWS pilot workshops within the QFES Central Region in March 2024. The workshops were co-designed with the Central Queensland Multicultural Association Inc and Queenslanders with Disability Network to ensure the format met participants' needs. The workshops were aimed at identifying how the department can work with the community to ensure information and warnings reach everyone. The workshops involved 28 participants including people with disabilities and the Central Queensland Multicultural Association's Disaster Community Connectors. Participants delved into how communities currently find information about warnings and workshopped ideas to better assist their communities to understand warnings and make it easier to access information. The next phase of the project is to bring together the ideas formed at the workshops and produce the identified resources. <p>As demonstrated in the above initiative and in the Australian Warning System - awareness programs case study, engagement with CALD groups, and collaboration with QFES regional staff and local governments to engage CALD communities across Queensland, through facilitated workshops and activities enables the department to ensure important warnings information reaches these communities and that resources meet community needs improving outcomes for emergency response situations and in building community resilience.</p> <p>Outcomes from these engagements also include the development of translated warnings awareness materials, including brochures, digital flyers and magnets, in 31 languages; the production of culturally appropriate AWS warnings awareness videos in African languages with distribution on digital platforms through the Queensland African Communities Council; and the establishment of foundations for warnings redistributor networks with CALD communities providing warnings knowledge to community leaders and empowering them to deliver tailored content to their communities which proved to be a highly effective and successful approach for information dissemination.</p>
5.2	Strengthen coordination of QFES community engagement and communications programs targeting CALD communities.	Prioritisation of activities to improve communication with vulnerable communities through departmental forums.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QFES delivered six AWS mini workshops in June 2024 with TAFE, Loganlea Adult English Language Program (Adult Migrant English Program) students. A total of 220 students participated in the workshops which aimed to build awareness of the AWS and local hazards risks within CALD communities in Logan. • Fire and Rescue Service officers delivered annual fire safety presentations to newly arrived international students on the Gold Coast. Safety presentations delivered in January and February 2024 included 60 school-aged students and 45 adult students respectively. Topics are tailored to age groups and include home fire prevention tips, information about smoke alarms and escape plans, calling Triple Zero (000) in emergencies and the role of firefighters in the community. • QFES is a member of the Logan Multicultural Communities Collaborative. The groups meet monthly and aims to work collaboratively to deliver events and projects to support local CALD communities, including an annual safety and wellbeing expo held at TAFE, Loganlea attracting 600-800 people from CALD backgrounds. • QFES attended and participated in local Multicultural Month, Refugee Week and Harmony Week events across the state. • The QFES South Eastern Region developed a Regional Multicultural Engagement Plan. The plan's objectives relate to community capacity building, community access to information and community participation. The outcomes of the plan include the establishment of relationships with multicultural organisations, places of worship, collaborative networks and community leaders. A range of engagement activities have also been delivered including information sessions, workshops, event attendance and dissemination of collateral through community sources.

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 5	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
5.3	Ensure frontline staff have the skills and knowledge to support CALD customers, including knowledge of how to access interpreters and communicating this with funded non-government service providers.	Develop opportunities to increase awareness of the importance of providing accessible services to people from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and promote departmental policies relating to use of language services, including procedure PR1003 – Use of Language Services.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cross-cultural skills course for firefighters is a mandatory unit within the firefighter recruitment course and is also available to all QFES staff and volunteers on the department's learning management system. During 2023-24, there were 517 completions registered . Fire Communications Officer recruits undertake training on how to access and use the Automated Translation and Interpretive Service (ATIS) to support their emergency call-taking role. Optional units—such as the Cultural Protocols Guide for Operators and Cultural Protocols for Crew Leaders—are available to QFES staff and volunteers on the student and learning management system. During 2023-24, there were 30 completions registered. The departmental procedure regarding the Use of Language Services is available to all staff and volunteers on the staff intranet. QFES reporting on the <i>Queensland Language Services Policy</i> performance measures is available at: www.data.qld.gov.au
5.4	Develop targeted communication and engagement plans that consider multiple formats and modes of delivery, including use of Plain English and audio-visual resources, and targeted and trusted communication channels utilised by diverse communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted communication and engagement plans are included in media and communications campaigns. Enhance QFES capability in development of skills and incorporation of 'Easy English' into community engagement materials 	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community safety advertising campaigns continued to be developed and promoted statewide to build resilience in the community and enable members of the public to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to fire and emergency events including translation into multiple languages for CALD audiences. Campaign radio and social media advertisements were translated into a range of languages. Information included public safety and preparation messages for bushfire safety, home fire safety, the Australian Fire Danger Rating System, AWS and fire risks and charging dangers posed by Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Batteries. Advertising was linked to further information in a range of languages on the department's website. Translated resources can be accessed via the following link and include Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Samoan, Spanish and Vietnamese: www.fire.qld.gov.au/prepare/fire/resources

Case studies or good news stories to highlight achievements relevant to Key Action 5 - Interpreters and communication strategies

Australian Warning System—awareness programs

Warnings awareness is a key part of the AWS Grassroots Community Engagement strategy which has been specifically informed by the United Nation's World Meteorological Organization concept *Warnings for All*.

To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, pilot programs were delivered by QFES' Public Information and Warnings Unit in collaboration with local QFES staff and organisations that represent vulnerable communities, including youth, seniors, culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations people and people with a disability. Communities from across the state were involved including remote and regional communities such as Mount Isa, Livingstone and Toowoomba.

QFES' approach was centred around the questions: *How would your community best learn about warnings?* and *How can we best work together to ensure public information and warnings gets to your community members during emergencies?*

Throughout the pilot programs, QFES engaged with communities to learn about barriers to accessing AWS warnings and to continue to actively support projects that promote warnings awareness.

This is an innovative approach which empowers community groups to discuss the best way to educate their own community. It also aims to establish warnings redistributors within these networks. These pilot programs provided a wealth of insight and feedback around community awareness, understanding and access to warnings, which will be invaluable for future public information planning.

For example, through the pilot program with Queensland African Communities Council, nine culturally appropriate videos for distribution on digital platforms have been developed and were launched as part of Africa Day celebrations in June 2024.

QFES is a founding member of the **Ipswich CALD Disaster Management Collaboration Network** established in January 2023. The network includes representatives from Multicultural Australia, Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, City of Ipswich, Red Cross Australia, Queensland Police Service and the Polynesian African Cross-Cultural Advisory Group. The purpose of the network is for disaster management agencies and CALD communities in Ipswich to work together in a collaborative and coordinated way to support and deliver emergency and disaster resilience initiatives. Outcomes in 2023-24 included a bushfire safety information session delivered by the Rural Fire Service focusing on how network members can share information and help their communities to prepare for bushfire season. In November 2023, the network delivered a disaster preparedness workshop with the Ipswich Multicultural Leaders Network jointly facilitated by QFES and Multicultural Australia representatives. Through these connections, QFES was invited to speak on the 4EB ethnic community radio station during the *Samoan Tuesday segment* in December 2023.

● **KEY ACTION 6: Address racism, discrimination, and promote inclusion.**

Queensland Government agencies will ensure equitable and respectful opportunities and experiences for staff and customers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, through targeted initiatives to **address unconscious bias and racism and promote inclusion**. As per the Queensland Multicultural Policy, activities in this section should link to one or more of the following high-level outcomes:

- *Improved knowledge about customers' diversity.*
- *Culturally capable services and programs.*
- *A productive, culturally capable, and diverse workforce.*
- *Recognition and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and culture.*
- *Queenslanders celebrate our multicultural identity.*
- *Connected and resilient communities.*
- *A respectful and inclusive narrative about diversity.*

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 6	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
6.1	Provide anti-racism training for all staff, including what it is, and how to prevent and respond to it.	Build awareness within workforce of training courses available relating to anti-racism, diversity and inclusion. Functional areas within QFES People Directorate will review current programs relating to education, training and resources addressing racism, discrimination, diversity and inclusion to identify gaps in QFES offerings.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QFES Corporate Induction Forum includes a number of sessions focusing on building a supportive and inclusive workplace with a focus on cultural safety, challenging bias, equity and diversity, and recognising the value of diverse perspectives. • The Multicultural Queensland Charter is required reading for on-boarding new and cross-boarding existing employees within the department's Human Resource System. • The QFES Charter (launched in December 2022) describes how we live our values. The charter sets behavioural expectations for the QFES workforce. The QFES values guide the way we behave towards ourselves, our colleagues and others and hold significant meaning across the workforce, with 95 per cent of staff and 94 per cent of volunteers saying they understand the importance of behaviour in a manner that aligns to the QFES values (outcomes from 2023 Working for Queensland and Volunteering for Queensland surveys). • QFES continued the Allies of Inclusion program. Within the program there are a number of Workforce Resource Groups made up of staff and volunteers with a shared set of interests, experiences and perspectives that help promote the values of QFES and support inclusivity within the department and the community. A QFES Ally of Inclusion contributes to respectful and inclusive workplaces where our people feel safe to share their perspectives. They are willing to challenge attitudes, words and behaviours which do not support an inclusive culture or which might compromise the way our services work together. The network promotes the positive benefits on inclusive leadership at all levels of the department. Since its inception in September 2018, over 500 staff and volunteers have registered as an Allies of Inclusion network member. The network has grown by 11 per cent since 30 June 2023. • QFES continued to be a corporate member of Diversity Council Australia which provides for individual membership for access to research and events regarding cultural diversity, race and intersectionality. • QFES takes a continuous improvement approach to ensure that contemporary attitudes to racism, discrimination, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded within training and development resources including the department's Leadership Foundation Programs. • QFES continued to support and socialise campaigns and resources to build awareness of available training courses relating to anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Racism. It stops with me. – an Australian Human Rights Commission campaign. - Human Rights Awareness – including an e-learning product that explores human rights from the perspective of the responsibilities of staff and volunteers to respect, promote and protect the human rights of all Queenslanders. The e-learning product is available on the department's learning management system which is accessible to all QFES staff and volunteers. More than 1,000 staff and volunteers completed the awareness training in 2023-24. - continued delivery of an Introduction to the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> session in the QFES Corporate Induction.

QFES Action No	Agency activities supporting Key Action 6	QFES activities to support the Multicultural Action Plan 2022-24	Progress status for 2023-24	Outcomes achieved for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
6.2	Uplift the cultural capability of agency staff, to help them better understand their CALD colleagues and customers.	QFES leaders support policies and programs which aim to support understanding of CALD communities, including attendance at cultural events, and undertaking and promoting training opportunities such as cross-cultural intelligence, unconscious bias and diversity awareness training.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QFES Corporate Induction Forum includes a number of sessions focusing on building a supportive and inclusive workplace with a focus on cultural safety, challenging bias, equity and diversity, and recognising the value of diverse perspectives. The Multicultural Queensland Charter is required reading for on-boarding new and cross-boarding existing employees within the department's Human Resource System. QFES socialised Multicultural Queensland Month in August 2023 through the staff intranet with access to resources, events and opportunities. QFES continued the Allies of Inclusion program. Within the program there are a number of Workforce Resource Groups made up of staff and volunteers with a shared set of interests, experiences and perspectives that help promote the values of QFES and support inclusivity within the department and the community. A QFES Ally of Inclusion contributes to respectful and inclusive workplaces where our people feel safe to share their perspectives. They are willing to challenge attitudes, words and behaviours which do not support an inclusive culture or which might compromise the way our services work together. The network promotes the positive benefits on inclusive leadership at all levels of the department. Since its inception in September 2018, over 500 staff and volunteers have registered as an Allies of Inclusion network member. The network has grown by 11 per cent since 30 June 2023.
6.3	Senior Executives provide clear messages affirming the agency's commitment to zero tolerance to racism and discrimination and encouraging antiracism initiatives in their agency.	Senior Executives develop opportunities to increase awareness of the importance of providing accessible services to all cultural and linguistic backgrounds and promote zero-tolerance messaging through department-wide communications and leadership forums.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<p>QFES provided ongoing messaging through internal communications channels, including the Commissioner's Update (monthly newsletter to all staff and volunteers), Response Magazine articles and the staff intranet including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response Magazine article April 2024 edition highlighting the Australian Warning System pilot workshops co-designed with the Central Queensland Multicultural Association and Queenslanders with Disability Network. Commissioner newsletters highlighting Multicultural Month (August 2023), Inclusion at Work Week (November 2023), Queensland Public Sector Human Rights Update, and Human Rights Week (December 2023). Internal promotions of Multicultural Month (August 2023), Human Rights Week (December 2023), International Volunteers Day (December 2023) and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 2024).
6.4	Promote education, training and resources addressing systemic issues of racism, discrimination, diversity, and inclusion.	QFES leaders undertake and promote training opportunities such as existing cross-cultural intelligence, unconscious bias and diversity awareness training.	Delivered (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QFES continued the Allies of Inclusion program. Within the program there are a number of Workforce Resource Groups made up of staff and volunteers with a shared set of interests, experiences and perspectives that help promote the values of QFES and support inclusivity within the department and the community. A QFES Ally of Inclusion contributes to respectful and inclusive workplaces where our people feel safe to share their perspectives. They are willing to challenge attitudes, words and behaviours which do not support an inclusive culture or which might compromise the way our services work together. The network promotes the positive benefits on inclusive leadership at all levels of the department. Since its inception in September 2018, over 500 staff and volunteers have registered as an Allies of Inclusion network member. The network has grown by 11 per cent since 30 June 2023. QFES continued to support and socialise campaigns and resources to build awareness of available training courses relating to anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion. For further information refer to Action 6.1.

Case studies or good news stories to highlight achievements relevant to Key Action 6 - Addressing racism and promoting inclusion

Building on the Strengths of our Stories – a storytelling journey to build cultural agility, understanding and respect

QFES coordinated the delivery of *Building on the Strengths of our Stories*—a two-day experience where participants explore insights into Australia's First Nations peoples and cultures. The program was held in March 2024 with more than 20 QFES staff participants.

The program approach draws upon the ancient practice of storytelling, where participants are engaged in a journey of truth telling. This provides an opportunity to unpack the intentions of legislative frameworks enacted on First Nations people, allowing for a deeper appreciation and understanding around cause and effect and how this might shape current day circumstances and practices.

The approach challenges participants' thinking beyond the rhetoric and towards a true shared space of understanding and collaboration. Program participants are able to build on the strengths of their collective stories, challenge their current understanding, and celebrate our First Nations cultures.

Participant feedback included: "Building on the Strengths of Our Stories would have to be the most comprehensive and informative program that I have attended. The program not only highlights the history and impacts of Government policies on First Nations Queenslanders, but also provides practical ways that the attendees can contribute to improving outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The facilitators presenting the program are willing to share their personal family stories and how past policies have personally impact their family. I would encourage as many people as possible to have the opportunity to participate in this training."

"The stories that were shared over the two days were unlike anything I've experienced before. The experience was raw, and real. The learnings were powerful, jarring, and beautiful all at the same time. I think differently every single day because of the truths that were shared through the program, and I feel hugely privileged to be involved."

The department will deliver a further program to 24 staff in July 2024.