

Statement of Government's reforms to design a sustainable Parole Board Queensland operating model



Parole in Queensland

The purpose of Queensland's parole system is to keep the community safe, by reducing an offender's risk of reoffending through community supervision by expert community corrections officers and supporting positive changes which continue after the conclusion of an offender's sentence.

In Queensland, the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CSA) establishes parole as the only form of early release from custody, with parole decisions made by either the sentencing court or a parole board. There are three types of parole in Queensland – court ordered parole (COP), board ordered parole (BOP) and exceptional circumstances parole (ECP).

Parole Board Queensland (PBQ) operates in a complex operational environment as one component of the broader criminal justice system. It is required to collaborate with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure the risks associated with parole are appropriately identified and managed.

PBQ makes independent decisions regarding the release of prisoners to BOP following advice and recommendations provided by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS). PBQ is also responsible for considering ECP applications, and COP and BOP applications if there has been a request for suspension or amendment of the court order that has been escalated to the Board by QCS, generally on the basis of a failure to comply with the order.

The work of PBQ has the capacity to significantly impact prisoner numbers. An efficient and effective parole system is a key lever to influence prisoner numbers within Queensland, promote offender rehabilitation, and contribute to community safety and supports the Government objective of *Backing our frontline services*.

Additionally, there are clear economic benefits to government if more prisoners, who are eligible and meet the requirements for parole, are released on parole in a timely manner. The direct cost of managing an offender in custody is much higher than in the community. The *2022 Report on Government Services* reported QCS' 2020-21 operating expenditure per prisoner per day was \$207.13 compared to the expenditure per offender per day (persons under supervision within the community) which was \$19.63.

Reforms to design a more sustainable PBQ operating model

In 2021, the Queensland Government engaged KPMG International Limited (KPMG) to provide current state insights and advice on future efficiencies and modernisation considerations for PBQ. The Review highlighted a need to undertake certain actions to ensure a sustainable operating model for PBQ moving forward.

The Queensland Government has already implemented some key improvements, including:

- Providing funding to establish additional temporary board operating teams to address demand for PBQ services; a permanent Chief Administrative Officer; and a temporary transition team to support a lean process review.



- Introducing legislative amendments to the CSA (via the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021) to provide the Board with greater flexibility to respond to increased workloads.

Improvements will continue across the following three focus areas.

Focus Area 1 – Strategy, function and structure

- Formally clarify PBQ's official status, and ensure appropriate governance, structural and functional arrangements for its operations.
- Convene a formalised body to enhance operational transparency and collaboration across the parole system.
- The Government will engage former District Court Judge, Mr Milton Griffin QC to undertake a review of Queensland's parole system.
- Establish a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) role with overall responsibility for all administrative functions required to operate PBQ, delivered by the Secretariat which will report to the CAO.
- Develop agreed Service Level Agreements (SLAs), including the development of key performance indicators, to clarify roles, services and working arrangements between the Board and the Secretariat, and between PBQ and its parent agency.

Focus Area 2 – Service delivery

- Develop a triaging model to support more efficient allocation of matters to the Board.
- Develop an action plan to assist in parole consideration and management of offenders with domestic and family violence concerns, in the context of commitments made to recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce.
- Commission a formal evaluation of the Court-Ordered Immediate Parole Eligibility (COIPE) Project.
- Review PBQ's ongoing resourcing needs and develop a future resourcing model, informed by a lean process review.
- Review parole board member remuneration classifications, including for Professional Board Member positions.
- Undertake a targeted recruitment strategy to diversify the backgrounds and skill sets of Professional Board Members.
- Review all PBQ policies, procedures and processes to ensure consistent and contemporary service delivery and determine opportunities for efficiency.
- Consider an electronic case management solution and develop an architecture and IT strategy for PBQ.

Focus Area 3 – Governance

- Ensure formal financial governance arrangements are established, including monthly financial reporting.
- Develop an implementation plan to enhance the culture of PBQ.
- Develop a data analysis and management framework that will inform future performance reporting on the Queensland parole system.



- Develop a formalised governance framework to support ongoing decision making, communication and collaboration, including clarifying roles and responsibilities.
- Develop an appropriate Performance Outcomes Framework and conduct reviews of PBQ against agreed key performance indicators, considering system level indicators that measure the performance of a range of stakeholders across the Queensland parole system.

The Queensland Government is committed to community safety and ensuring PBQ can continue to contribute to an efficient, effective, and safe justice system for Queenslanders.

PBQ, QCS and key stakeholders will continue to work collaboratively to implement reforms with a focus on action to facilitate connectivity and responsiveness between stakeholders across the parole system.

