

Overview of the Child and Family Hubs Project 2023-24

The primary aim of the Child and Family Hubs project was to develop an evidence-based framework to support organisations and practitioners delivering child, youth and family health, development and wellbeing services and initiatives in integrated hub settings within Queensland, and possibly beyond. The Framework was intended to:

1. Enhance partnerships and connections among key child and family development-focused agencies across Queensland and potentially Australia; and
2. Foster a common language and understanding regarding child and family hubs.

The project was resourced June 2023 – February 2024 inclusive through funding provided by The Bryan Foundation to Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP), and timed to align with planning for the FamilyLinQ school-based hubs to be opened at two Logan primary schools from 2024. The project was also undertaken in the context of a fertile policy environment at the state and national levels.



Funding from The Bryan Foundation was used to deliver the project with significant in-kind support provided by multiple stakeholders. Strategic guidance was provided by a time-limited Project Sponsor Group of 18 senior representatives with experience in hub/integrated service delivery, including members of the National Child and Family Hubs Network (NCFHN). Positive support by these and other stakeholders was a prominent and valuable feature of the project, with strong interest noted throughout. In total more than 160 people from a wide range of backgrounds were engaged to provide input into the Framework. The project also saw the development of a strengthened relationship with the NCFHN as a key stakeholder, with mutual potential benefits identified throughout the life of the project and beyond.

The project was undertaken in several phases, summarised below with related deliverable/s:

1. Map hubs across Queensland – a total of 308 hubs/place-based approaches were identified (as of August 2023), and summarised in an [online map](#) categorised by primary and secondary funding source.
2. Scope best practice frameworks, research and resources related to hubs – 130 resources were received, collated and analysed to form the basis of the draft Framework.
3. Develop a best-practice Child and Family Hubs Framework – a draft based on the above scoping was tested and iteratively refined through six regional workshops, 13 site visits, 10 interviews



with individuals and seven targeted online consultations. It resulted in two interconnected documents:

- *Document 1:* Hub purposes, underpinnings and practice principles
- *Document 2:* 10 elements, each with an overview, First Nations considerations, applications, questions to consider and relevant resources.

The Framework generated considerable interest as the basis from which to develop related implementation and quality improvement tools. It was referenced in the NCFHN Strategic Plan 2024-2029 as the basis for development of a national version for trialling and testing, as well as generation of a related evaluation framework.



4. Develop a communications strategy to enable knowledge of, and engagement with, the Framework – the strategy highlighted opportunities for collective effort towards this aim, including an ongoing partnership with the NCFHN.
5. Develop and trial a professional development strategy related to the Framework – resources relating to five modules designed to be accessible online were generated, with the first three tailored to and trialled with the Family LinQ team with positive feedback.

Learnings were shaped by many sources and across all phases of the project, and comprised the following:

1. Well-supported hubs can make a positive difference to the lives of their local people and communities, with good practice evident across Queensland;
2. Barriers to integrated service delivery are common and significant;
3. There is a clear need and appetite for bringing together Queensland's hub stakeholders to share their rich wisdom and build capability; and
4. Supporting access to the Framework and related resources will likely add value to work of current and future hubs in Queensland, and possibly beyond.

Arising from these learnings, project recommendations are listed below from the most immediate to medium-term with the intent to apply a system lens to future implementation:

1. Maintain ongoing connection with FamilyLinQ to support application of the Framework to their setting;



2. Explore with the NCFHN options for using the Framework as the basis for related implementation, evaluation and quality improvement tools;
3. Seek First Nations input into the current Framework, and integrate this into future iterations alongside ongoing feedback to ensure it is culturally-informed and remains contemporary and useful;
4. Explore options to resource and establish a forum for shared learning regarding hub-related practice in Queensland;
5. Explore interest and capacity with partners to enact the communication strategy in full to develop a dedicated, interactive landing page for the Framework and related resources to enable stakeholders to connect and amplify the impact of their work;
6. Explore interest and capacity with partners to develop, host, circulate, monitor and evaluate professional development resources to build capability amongst hub stakeholders; and
7. Explore interest and capacity with partners to trial new place-based funding approaches to ensure sufficient, predictable, sustainable cross-sectoral resourcing that is informed by and responsive to community need to optimise wellbeing.

Capturing and distilling the wealth of knowledge, practice and emerging evidence provided a valuable foundation from which to develop, test and refine the Framework and identify next steps. As such this complex, multi-faceted project appears to represent a sound investment by The Bryan Foundation, including through the positive impact it had on development of FamilyLinQ's practice framework. Future collective effort (including in close partnership with the NCFHN, and with further resourcing) would help fully realise the project's communication and professional development strategies. This will bring to life the Framework's intent to enhance partnerships and connections among key child and family agencies, and foster a common language and understanding regarding child and family hubs. Doing so will help more children, families and communities thrive now and into the future across Queensland, and possibly beyond.

Resources relating to the project – and child and family hubs more generally – are available on a designated Learning Hub of the TQKP website, available through <https://tqkp.org.au/child-family-hubs>. This page was launched in December 2024, and will be updated periodically as new resources become available.

