

## The Queensland Divisions Network and Policy Development (E002)

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### What is policy?

The term “policy” has different meanings for different contexts and different audiences and is used in a variety of ways to cover many, quite different types of statements, intentions and action<sup>1</sup>. Policy may refer to:

- An authoritative statement by government about its intentions<sup>2</sup>
- A general statement of intentions or objectives or statement of future intentions
- A framework to guide action
- Internal policies and procedures that govern an organisations operations, e.g., Board and governance arrangements, staff handbooks, etc.
- An organisation’s position on, or contribution to, a public policy issue.

Within the context of this paper, policy refers to the Queensland Divisions networks contribution to public policy which articulates a course of action that affects the services and funding arrangements within the health care system for the Queensland Divisions Network.

What does policy development mean to the Queensland Divisions Network?

It seems self evident that the Queensland Divisions Network does not make or issue public policy in the same way that governments do. However, the Queensland Divisions Network does contribute to public policy debate and development. Where this results in a policy position, it will inform General Practice Queensland’s and, individual Division’s representation, advocacy and promotional activities on that issue, (e.g., Position Statement on Bulk Billing Clinics in, or near, public hospitals.).

It is recognised within General Practice Queensland and the Queensland Divisions Network that there is growing demand for general practice to give timely and expert advice into public policy development. Hence, it is critical for GPs and the Divisions network to increase their skills in policy development and analysis.

Each component of the Queensland Divisions Network has a critical role to play in the policy development process.

#### *Role of Queensland Divisions Network:*

General Practice Queensland facilitates and coordinates two essential parts of the Queensland Divisions Network including the Board Chairs and the EO’s Network. These networks provide critical mechanisms that support the policy development process for the Queensland Divisions Network. This includes identifying and prioritising policy issues, providing leadership and expertise and supporting engagement of Divisional Boards and membership around key policy development issues.

The General Practice Queensland Board plays a critical role in endorsing position statements that have been developed through the policy development process. Further, General Practice Queensland provides leadership and support to the abovementioned networks in the policy development process.

#### *Role of Queensland Divisions:*

Queensland Divisions play a key role in identifying issues and providing expertise and input into discussion papers and position statements. The strength of a policy development process for the Queensland Divisions Network is in the input and ownership of the issue by all Queensland Divisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Palmer & Short (1994) Health Care & Public Policy – an Australian analysis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Page 23

<sup>2</sup> P. Bridgman and G. Davis (2000) *Australian Policy Handbook*. Page 3

What is the Queensland Divisions Network Policy Development Process?

Following on from discussions held at the Queensland Divisions Forum in October 2004 and the November 2004 Board Chairs Retreat, the following policy development process for the Queensland Divisions Network has been defined based on the Australian policy cycle by Bridgman and Davis. The agreed policy development process for the Queensland Divisions Network is outlined below.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF THE ISSUE**

Issues can be identified in a number of ways including through Queensland Division Forums, General Practice Queensland Board, the Board Chairs or EO Networks, or by Individual Divisions. It can be an issue that requires proactive policy development or it can be reactive to Government policy processes.

The issue is discussed and prioritised by the General Practice Queensland Board.

Agreement on who will lead policy development process. (Eg Process could be lead by other stakeholders, GP Alliance, General Practice Queensland, Divisions or groups of Divisions)



### **ANALYSIS OF ISSUE**

Analysis of issue undertaken to define and scope the issue, and ensure a common understanding across the Divisions Network.

Appropriate mechanisms could include:  
Focus groups, Divisional Surveys, literature reviews, discussion by the Board Chairs network, EOs Network, General Practice Queensland Board.

Discussion paper developed for consultation that defines the issue and raises points for discussion



### **CONSULTATION**

A consultation process with clear and appropriate timeframes is agreed upon

This includes consultation processes for Divisional Boards,  
other stakeholders and GP groups as appropriate



### **COORDINATION**

The process of coordinating comments, incorporating feedback and refining discussion paper is clearly defined



### **CONFIRMATION OF ISSUE AND AGREEMENT OF NEXT STEPS**

Based on the discussion paper developed and the associated consultation process the General Practice Queensland Board decides on an appropriate course of action i.e. should a Queensland Divisions Network position statement be developed

If a position statement is to be developed, timeframes and an agreed level of consensus are clearly defined in consultation with the Queensland Divisions Network eg Board Chairs Network



### DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT

The discussion paper is revised and draft position statement to accompany the discussion paper is developed.



### CONSULTATION

The position statement is circulated for feedback and endorsement by Divisions – including Divisional Boards. Final comments/amendments are incorporated.

The Network agrees to support the position statement and a level of consensus is achieved



### ADOPTION

The General Practice Queensland Board adopts the discussion paper and position statement which has been endorsed by the Network



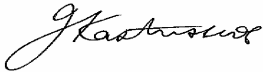
### IMPLEMENTATION

The position statement is disseminated and any required course of action to support implementation is undertaken



### EVALUATION

A review date is established. Policy is evaluated in terms of its consequences and effectiveness

<b>Version number</b>	1	<b>Changes Last Made:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2005
<b>Approved by:</b>			
<b>Changes to this version:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> Nov – Policy updated from QDGP to GPQ		
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