

## Chief Executive Officer, HSQ Brief for Approval

Requested by: Paul Csoban, Executive Director, Forensic and Scientific Services

Department RecFind No:	HS006084
Division/Business Group:	CSS
File Ref No:	

**SUBJECT: Engagement of an external investigator to address concerns in the Forensic DNA Analysis work unit, Forensic and Scientific Services**

### Recommendation/s

It is recommended that the Chief Executive Officer, Health Support Queensland:

1. **Approve** the engagement of Livingstones Australia to investigate concerns in Forensic DNA Analysis, Forensic and Scientific Services.

**APPROVED / NOT APPROVED**

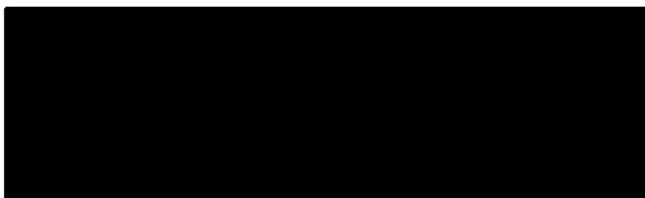
2. **Sign** the attached Instrument of Appointment to engage Livingstones Australia.

(Attachment 1)

**APPROVED / NOT APPROVED**

3. **Sign** the attached Terms of Reference for Livingstones Australia (Attachment 2).

**APPROVED / NOT APPROVED**



GARY UHLMANN

Date: 21 / 10 / 16

Chief Executive Officer  
Health Support Queensland

### Chief Executive Officer's comment


### Background

1. Forensic DNA Analysis are delegated the authority to test forensic items by the Commissioner of Police through the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (section 488B). The work unit analyses approximately 21,000 crime scene items and 15,000 person samples each year. Results are provided electronically to the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Statement of Witness documents and expert evidence are provided to the Queensland Courts. Forensic DNA Analysis provide vital DNA analysis results for both court purposes and intelligence purposes, which enable the QPS to link together previously unrelated alleged offences.
2. The Forensic DNA Analysis management team has had little employee turnover in the past five years.
3. Forensic and Scientific Services underwent a Ministerial Taskforce Review in 2005 following three front page media articles highlighting the large number of untested items held by Forensic DNA Analysis. The QPS and FSS worked collaboratively to reduce the number of untested items down to zero and begin working in real-time at the beginning of 2008. The Review also provided resources for the purchase of automated platforms to assist with laboratory throughput, a laboratory refurbishment and additional staff members (both permanent and temporary) to process the items.

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### Issue/s

4. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, an inappropriate interaction occurred between two senior scientists, Mrs Amanda Reeves and Mr Allan McNevin in a Forensic DNA Analysis management team meeting. As a result of this interaction and the slow disintegration of the team mentality within the management team, there has been an increasingly difficult working relationship between the two members listed above and within the management team.
5. A number of local strategies have been implemented to resolve this most recent incident including:
  - a) Mr McNevin sent two email apologies (one informal and one formal) to Mrs Reeves. These apologies were accepted by Mrs Reeves; however her email response to Mr McNevin's first apology included inappropriate comments.
  - b) Follow-up on Mrs Reeves' inappropriate email comments was conducted, however Mrs Reeves does not believe she needs to apologise for her comments and still has not apologised.
  - c) Mrs Reeves declined the offer of formal mediation. Mr McNevin accepted the offer of formal mediation. Mrs Reeves advised that mediation involved compromise and her strongly held belief is that she should not have to compromise in this situation.
  - d) Mrs Reeves declined the offer of a facilitated meeting. Mr McNevin accepted the offer of a facilitated meeting.
6. None of the local interventions have resolved the situation to an extent that either party is satisfied. This has led to an increase in tension and a decrease in open communication within the management team. This has created an environment where members are hesitant to provide scientific feedback on projects due to the uncomfortable atmosphere that has been created due to the protracted nature of the poor interaction.
7. Mrs Reeves is unwilling to amend her strongly held beliefs regarding Mr McNevin as Mrs Reeves has put forward a number of allegations regarding Mr McNevin. These were put forward in an email to Mr McNevin's line manager on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2016. The allegations are described as occurring for many years and affecting multiple team members. One allegation relates to Mrs Reeves feeling unsafe in the workplace due to the poor interaction on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June.
8. None of the allegations supplied in Mrs Reeves' email have been investigated at a local level. The most viable option to resolve the situation (which appears to have been occurring for many years, involves many staff members, some of whom are senior and with strong personalities), an external investigation into these allegations is considered the most viable option to move forward.
9. Appropriate communication and interaction is critical to the overall function and effectiveness of the work unit. Mr McNevin and Mrs Reeves are senior members of the organisation and if the allegations are an accurate portrayal of the situation, then their pattern of behaviour are not in line with the Queensland Public Service Code of Conduct.
10. An external investigation would allow a clear understanding of the issues that need to be addressed so that long term, sustainable strategies can be implemented. This would provide the best opportunity to correct the behaviours within the management team and also demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the Code of Conduct and safety and wellbeing of all staff members.
11. The delegate for approval of the instrument of appointment sits with the Chief Executive Officer, HSQ.

### Vision

12. The recommend course of action to approve the engagement of Livingstones Australia to investigate concerns in Forensic DNA service aligns in particular with the first two of the four directions set out in the 10 year vision [My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026](#): Promoting wellbeing, Delivering healthcare.

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This is because the recommended course of action will promote staff wellbeing and ultimately deliver better health outcomes for all Queenslanders by addressing concerns raised about the quality of the management team service provided by Forensic DNA Analysis who provide a service to the community.

### Results of Consultation

13. The following people have been consulted on this matter and the proposed course of action:
- Paul Csoban, Executive Director, Forensic and Scientific Services.
  - Deborah Whelan, Managing Scientist – Coronial Services Stream.
  - Jade Franklin, Manager Human Resources and Business Relationships, HSQ

### Resource Implications (including Financial)

14. A quote for the work from Livingstones has been obtained. Based on an hourly rate of \$320.00 per hour for a total of 16 hours, the anticipated cost of the investigation will be up to \$5,120.00. The investigation will be funded within the Forensic and Scientific Services operational budget.

### Attachments

**Attachment 1-** Instrument of Appointment to engage Livingstones Australia

**Attachment 2-** Terms of Reference

**Attachment 3 –** Quote from Livingstones

Author	Cleared by: (SD/Dir)	Content verified by: (Business Group Head)
Cathie Allen	Paul Csoban	Sharon Kelly
Managing Scientist	Executive Director	General Manager
Police Services Stream, Forensic and Scientific Services	Forensic and Scientific Services	Community & Scientific Support
11 October 2016	11 October 2016	19 October 2016

