


Queensland Health

HealthSupport  
Queensland


# Feedback from the Reporting Teams

Interviews conducted by Workplace Edge between 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017



Queensland Government

The cover features a teal background with a large graphic on the left consisting of overlapping circles in various shades of teal, blue, and yellow. The text is positioned on the right side of the cover.



## General comments

- The information supplied within this presentation is a summary of opinions of the majority of staff interviewed
- Names of interviewees have not been linked with their comments and no identifying material has been made available to FSS staff or HSQ staff

- Please bear in mind – the presentation is reflecting your views that you put forward and a lot of information was provided, but main points provided today reflect the significant number of interviewees that brought this information forward



## Status of the Reporting Teams

### Staff Perceptions:

- Seen by other teams as:
  - as difficult to work with
  - tending to engage in conflict more than cooperation
  
- Clarified that reporting staff raise concerns due to ensure appropriate interpretation and that other teams may not appreciate the level of clarity required for Court
  
- Majority of staff reported morale is low

**Staff Perceptions:**


- Management culture is one of blame
  - Too many managers
  - Favouritism
- Decisions made on the basis of personal relationships, rather than business requirements
- Management culture discourages dissent and dissent risks reprisal
- Management culture is disharmonious and the effect of this is deflating and fatiguing

**Staff Perceptions:**

- No-one in the Reporting Teams considered that the organisation has been well served by HR, referring to:
  - unresolved grievances;
  - HR being bound to the management view and not exhibiting any independent thinking; and
  - HR being passive, not active, and largely ineffective.
  
- Some staff indicated that they have sought HR advice from external sources, including Legal advice, due to a lack of confidence in the service provided by the Department.

**Staff Perceptions:**

- Presence of pernicious gossip permeates the organisation – management incapable of addressing this
- Gossip is toxic and this type of conduct is personally damaging for some individuals, but it also contributes to low morale.
- Some managers were not willing to act against poor workplace behaviours because of the potential to offend cliques and affect relationships. It was generally considered that values and goals are not aligned across the organisation.




## Team Organisation

### Staff Perceptions:

- Reporting Teams 1 and 2 are really one team where the two halves of the team alternate between Case Management and Statement preparation on a fortnightly basis. This was seen to be unnecessarily rigid and inefficient.
- The supervisors seem to be engaged in a lot of activity, but that activity does not contribute to the output of the Teams.
- Under the current structure, the three teams that undertake Case Management activities have four managers, and that this is excessive and unnecessary and leads to micro-management.





## Team Organisation

- Staff Perceptions:
- The current piecemeal allocation of work by supervisors is unnecessary and inefficient, leading to considerable inequities in the allocation of work.
- Inequitable workload distribution is a symptom of a lack of an internal framework:
  - » lack of defined accountabilities
  - » KPIs with monitoring
- Unequal output of work from staff is neither fair, nor reasonable or efficient, and contributes to the low morale

### Staff Perceptions:

- cliques within the teams, which affects a wide range of issues, such as the distribution of work and access to other opportunities.
- Some staff reported that they have been bullied and harassed in the workplace and that managers have not taken appropriate action, either by way of investigation or other appropriate intervention.
- Some staff reported that they often felt unwell because of the distress they felt from the effects of the social and interpersonal dysfunction in the teams and some have sought external professional advice and support.



## Team Functioning

### Staff Perceptions:

- The Reporting Teams do not interact socially with the other Teams, and that there were losses from this for the whole organisation, including damage to morale.
- Internal communications, both vertically and horizontal are poor.
- The current bottleneck and growing case management list affects the reputation of the Reporting Teams and there is no clear plan to deal with it.
- The change from Profiler Plus for Volume Crime samples is a significant change and there is no clear plan to address this.




## Work Arrangements

### Staff Perceptions:

- Part-time staff are unable to accumulate TOIL, however this is different to what occurs in Forensic Chemistry
- View the rigidity applied to 'spread of hours' affects flexibility in the workplace

### Staff Perceptions:

- Most team members believed that the use of Moot Courts was a very effective training tool to help staff to appear in Court and many believed that this experience should be extended to the other teams so that they could have a better understanding of what form of thinking was required in order to present results in a Court setting.
- Some Reporters take an inappropriate level of interest in case outcomes and risk losing the objectivity required of an expert witness.
- A significant number of team members reinforced the need for this form of moot court training to assist staff to remain objective in the provision of evidence and offset contextual bias



## Integration of the Teams

### Staff Perceptions:

- The Intelligence Team does not currently have an effective compliment of staff and should be absorbed into the Reporting Teams, enabling a redistribution of tasks as this would improve efficiencies and improve work quality and variety.
- A strongly expressed view was that a single integrated Reporting Team, which included the Intelligence Team, would only require one Team Leader (HP6) and one supervisor (HP5)
  - More responsibility for work output by all staff members
  - More autonomy
  - Improved quality of work life

**Staff Perceptions:**

- Most staff felt positive benefits will flow from the introduction of FR, in the future.
- organisation should not lose the opportunity to refine its systems and process to make best use of FR, and to ensure that further development of FR meets everyone's needs.
  - for example, currently statement preparation in FR takes much longer than under the previous system.

Quality and Projects

## Staff Perceptions:

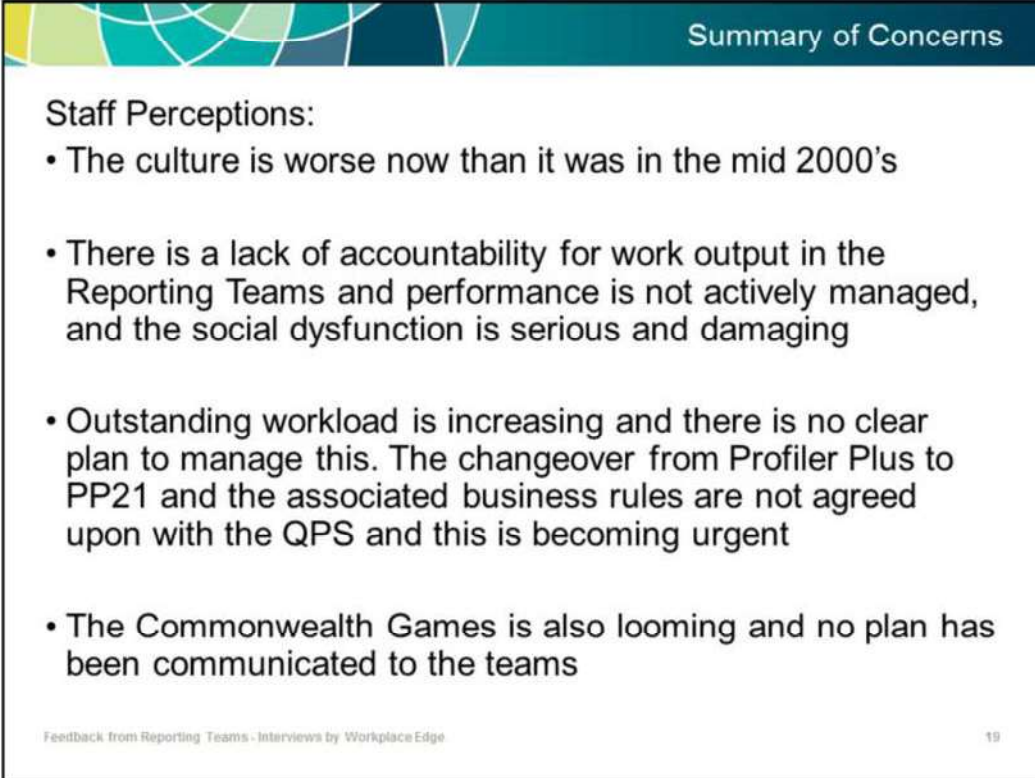
- Concern that significant Projects have not been delivered, which contributes to difficulties between Reporting and the other teams.
  - example given: the failure to finalise the capillary electrophoresis project, which is not yet finalised after seven years of consideration
  
- Projects are not managed effectively:
  - no single point of responsibility for delivery of Projects
  - can affect the level of confidence they have with regard to court



**Staff Perceptions:**

- there should be a central point of accountability for process improvement and project delivery
  - this should be the role of Quality and Projects to drive this, particularly to ensure scientific rigour
  
- opportunity to work on projects is not shared equitably
  - leads to loss of existing skills and ability to develop new skills
  
- consistent with concerns regarding favouritism
  - allocation of project opportunities should be on the basis of scientific merit, not to placate agitators or reward allies

# Summary of Concerns

A presentation slide titled "Summary of Concerns" with a decorative header. The slide lists four bullet points under the heading "Staff Perceptions:". The footer contains the text "Feedback from Reporting Teams - Interviews by WorkplaceEdge" and the number "19".


Summary of Concerns

Staff Perceptions:

- The culture is worse now than it was in the mid 2000's
- There is a lack of accountability for work output in the Reporting Teams and performance is not actively managed, and the social dysfunction is serious and damaging
- Outstanding workload is increasing and there is no clear plan to manage this. The changeover from Profiler Plus to PP21 and the associated business rules are not agreed upon with the QPS and this is becoming urgent
- The Commonwealth Games is also looming and no plan has been communicated to the teams

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Rolled up summary of the more pressing concerns that we need to work on



## Summary of concerns

**Staff Perceptions:**

- Communications are poor between the vertical levels of management and it is not an inclusive workplace
- There is a failure to manage social processes in the broader organisation e.g. disengagement / marginalisation of the Reporting Team and failure to manage pernicious rumours
- There is separation between the 'science' teams and the reporting teams as a result of the development of antagonistic attitudes, which is further entrenched by a lack of socialising and reduction in other meaningful interactions
- Managers are not managing staff
- Planning for moving forward is not clear

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## Summary by ED

- I'd like to thank you for taking the time to share your views, its important to understand this and we appreciate your frankness and the time you've taken with this process
- Gossip & innuendo - a lot of gossip happening, its damaging and destructive and creates negative culture that distracts us from our work. I can't stop this on my own and I call on all of you to be committed to improving the cultural environment.
- I am disappointed at the level of dissatisfaction and unhappiness still reported from this team – but we as a management team want to work with you to develop solutions to improve this situation
- Aware of TOIL and part-time staff unable to accrue and we are working with HR on a way forward.
- We will consult regarding our future actions, however it will take time and we won't be able to change everything overnight. We ask for your patience.
- Senior Management cannot fix everything of their own accord, this will require commitment from everyone
- While I have given you feedback on the themes as presented to us by Workplace Edge and clearly there is a difference between perception and fact in some instances. We will address this by our communications
- We heal as a team and address our problems or we risk losing some or all of the work
- We need your help and commitment to work through these issues together



## Way Forward

- Status of the Reporting Teams
  - » Investigate ways to improve the interactions between the teams to improve information sharing and ensure shared decision making where it's appropriate
  
- Morale
  - » There is an urgent need to address morale and this will not be achieved without purposeful effort over a period of time.
  - » Culture Development process to be undertaken

## Way Forward

- Management

- » There is a clear message that staff expect improved communications and more timely action on problems that affect their well-being. We will be looking at the best ways to achieve this.
- » There is an expectation that internal processes will be open and merit based and transparent in accordance with Departmental policies and internal processes and communications need to enable and demonstrate this.
- » A goal must be to ensure a culture of inclusion and shared sense of achievement and this will be a key goal of the cultural development process

- **HR Support**

- » There is no disagreement that we have not been well resourced or well serviced from an HR management perspective. We are currently examining options for improving HR / IR support for the whole of FSS.



## Way Forward

**• Culture**

- » Gossip is damaging and destructive and improper conduct will be addressed decisively. There are employment policies and processes to deal with inappropriate behaviour and one of the reasons for improving our access to HR resources is to address issues before they become problematic.
  
- » The Department has no tolerance for workplace bullying and harassment. There will be education programs to ensure staff are informed of standards of conduct the Department expects and resources will be available to support staff
  
- » Managers will be expected to manage and they will be supported to ensure that best practice outcomes are achieved for all our staff.

- **Team Organisation & Team Functioning**

- » Much information has been provided about the organisation and functioning of the Reporting Teams and the Intelligence Team and a process will be put in place to assess the issues raised, do some data mining and devise a change management plan
- » This process will include consideration of the thoughts put forward about Team Integration.
- » There will be further consultation with all staff of Forensic DNA Analysis as we go forward on this issue.



## Way Forward

- **Work Arrangements**

- » Forensic Chemistry work under different arrangements and part-time staff accumulate ATO
- » We will work with HR regarding a way forward

- **Training**

- » Suggestions about training needs for staff who provide court evidence will be considered and the benefits from widening participation in the use of Moot Courts and other training methods will be considered

- **Forensic Register**

- » presents us with both challenges and opportunities and further information will be provided about FR and additional input can be put forward to your line manager for enhancement

**• Quality & Projects**

- » Clearly there is a high level of awareness about quality issues and projects, including project design and project completion and access to opportunities for involvement in projects
  
- » There is much to consider in what has been put forward and there will be further consultation with staff on these issues before final decisions are made



## Way Forward

- The current bottleneck and growing case management list
  - » We will seek your input and ideas on how to tackle this
- Changeover from Profiler Plus to PP21 and associated business rules
  - » Kylie and Sharon have been tasked with devising the workflow process for Volume Crime samples
  - » Additional consultation will be undertaken with the QPS as appropriate
- Commonwealth Games
  - » It is anticipated that an increase in items will be received during this period and workforce management plans have been implemented
  - » If a DVI were to occur, we will align with the DVI plan to process the samples and the plan allocates the priority. This is done in consultation with the QPS and Coroner.



# Questions

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