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HEALTH AND DISABILITIES
COMMITTEE

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Queensland Council of Social
Service Inc

One Funding System for Better Services Bill 2011

Submitted by: The Queensland Council of Social Service Inc

Date: 21 October 2011

For over half a century the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) has strived to promote social justice in our society. With more than 650 members statewide, QCOSS provides a voice for and with Queenslanders affected by poverty and inequality; leads on issues of significance to the social, health and community sectors state-wide; and contributes to a national voice on these issues through membership of the nation-wide network of state and territory councils and the Australian Council of Social Service.

The move to whole of government funding legislation is one of the most significant decisions affecting the funding relationship between the government and the health and community services sector. This work continues on from the single service agreement discussion and initial consultation in November 2010. We support the intent of the Bill and commend the consultation process that accompanied its development.

1. We strongly support cl 7 Guiding principles, commending in particular the inclusion of the principles of the Queensland Community Services Compact. Similarly we strongly support the link in cl 19(2)(a) between the wording of funding agreements and the guiding principles.
2. Clause 14 sets out the meaning of *serious concern*. In particular, cl 14(a) provides one example of "improper use of funding": *funding is used for a purpose other than providing a funded product or service*. There are processes in place to manage variations to agreements, and we support the legislation clearly articulating when statutory remedial powers can be exercised. However, QCOSS highlights that this example could lead to inadvertent capture of services responding to rapidly changing situations or emergent need, such as in disaster response. It could also potentially capture activities of service providers to build organisational capacity or improve the quality of the service, which may not be explicitly articulated or recognised in funding agreements. We recommend a change to the wording of this example.

This submission is informed by consultation across the sector and with a number of peaks and statewide organisations. For further information about the issues raised in this response please contact: Tanya Hall, A/Senior Manager, Sector Development on (07) 3004 6900 or tanyah@qcross.org.au.