



Multi-agency collaborative panels (MACPs) – information for legal stakeholders

Background

The *Strengthening Communities Safety Act 2023* was passed by the Queensland Parliament on 16 March 2023 and commenced on 22 March 2023, making changes to the *Youth Justice Act 1992*, the *Bail Act 1980*, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* and the Criminal Code.

The amendments establish MACPs in the *Youth Justice Act 1992* (the Act).

About MACPs

MACPs have existed administratively since 2021, and have proved effective in bringing together relevant agencies and non-government service providers to ensure timely and coordinated assessments of the needs of the 'collaborative response cohort' (previously known as the serious repeat offender cohort) and respond to those needs.

Part 8A of the Act establishes in legislation the MACP system, its purpose, membership (including the participation of non-core members as appropriate), and the responsibilities of core members.

Establishment of system

Section 282I provides that the chief executive ('Youth Justice') must establish a MACP system. It is intended that the existing administrative MACPs will become the statutory MACPs.

Purpose

Section 282J provides for the purpose of the MACP system. This legislative purpose aligns with the pre-existing objectives of MACPs, namely, to coordinate the provision of services, including assessments and

referrals, to meet the needs of particular children charged with offences or at risk of being charged with offences.

The inclusion of young people 'at risk of being charged with offences' ensures MACPs can continue working with young people after any proceedings have concluded, if there is a risk they will reoffend.

Referral of young people to MACP system

Section 282L provides guidance in relation to the referral of young people to a MACP. Youth Justice must decide, in consultation with the core members, the categories of children (each an 'eligible category') who may be referred to the MACP system.

There is no intention to alter the existing MACPs' focus on the collaborative response cohort, or certain other young people on a case-by-case basis who may benefit from a collaborate response.

Any member of the MACP system may refer a child who is in an eligible category to the system (s.282L(3)). The members of the MACP system must collectively decide whether or not to accept the referral of the child to the system.

Members

Section 282K sets legislative expectations about core and non-core membership of MACP systems. Each MACP is to have **core membership** from the government agencies that are mainly responsible for any of the following matters:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services
- child protection services



- community services
- corrective services
- court services
- disability services
- education
- housing services
- public health services
- youth justice services
- police services

In addition, core members may from time to time invite relevant prescribed entities or service providers (**non-core members**) (s.282K(1)(c)).

Prescribed Entities and Service Providers

Prescribed entities and service providers are defined under section 282K(2).

Prescribed entities include other government agencies providing services to children; the Mater Hospital; Hospital and Health Boards; the National Disability Insurance Agency; non-state schools; the Public Guardian; and any another entity prescribed by regulation.

Service providers include Legal Aid Queensland, and any non-government entity that provides a service to children (such as counselling, disability, education/training, health, housing/homelessness or legal services).

Should service providers wish to participate in information sharing under the [cross-agency memorandum of understanding and arrangement](#), they will need to complete an [online form](#).

A regularly updated [service provider list](#) can be accessed on the department's website.

Responsibilities of core members

Section 282M provides the key responsibilities of core members:

- (a) to contribute to the operation of the MACP system through representatives who have appropriate knowledge and experience and decision-making authority;
- (b) to use their best endeavours to agree on recommendations to give to Youth Justice, and to each other, about assessing and responding to the needs and offending behaviour of children referred to and accepted by the members and, for that purpose, to—
 - (i) share information about the children, under the [cross-agency memorandum of understanding and arrangement](#); and
 - (ii) identify relevant resources of members or other entities; and
 - (iii) take the action required under the recommendations; and
 - (iv) monitor the implementation of the recommendations and review their effectiveness; and
 - (v) invite and facilitate contributions from prescribed entities or service providers with knowledge, experience or resources that would help achieve the purpose of the MACP system.

Further information

For further information about the *Strengthening Communities Safety Act 2023* please email Youth Justice Policy, Strategy and Legislation (YJPSL) at OSED_YJPSL@cyjma.qld.gov.au.

YJPSL cannot give legal advice but may be able to assist with other questions.