

Performance Improvement and Accountability Framework

Improvement through evidence-informed
action



Last revised July 2015



Director-General's message

Every day, the Department of Education and Training touches the lives of more than one million Queenslanders.

We are focused on making a real difference by providing high-quality learning and skilling to prepare Queenslanders with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate effectively in the economy and society.

Creating value in our business means generating better, more equitable and cost-effective learning outcomes that deliver long-term benefits for Queensland.

Our new business model empowers staff and communities to work together to respond to the unique needs of our learners and stakeholders. This includes supporting innovation through the use of key measures and evidence to lift performance across our services.

The Performance Improvement and Accountability Framework helps us all understand how our work individually and collectively contributes to better results.

Our empowered business model frees us from red tape and out-of-date practices to focus on our customers. Our emphasis on collaborative empowerment requires clear, measurable accountabilities to enable each of us to align our efforts and take action to improve outcomes for learners.

Successfully applying this framework improves our ability to improve results and increase benefits for all Queenslanders, and ensures that we are accountable and responsive to our customers and the Queensland public.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Watterston', written in a cursive style.

Dr Jim Watterston
Director-General
Department of Education and Training



Purpose

DET's business model (Figure 1) empowers staff to work with stakeholders to develop innovative responses to our learners' needs. Our key focus is on improving outcomes for our customers.

Increased empowerment and autonomy bring with it a need for a clear accountability system to ensure our investments and actions in the early years, schooling and training are targeted at improving outcomes for all learners and delivering benefits for Queensland.

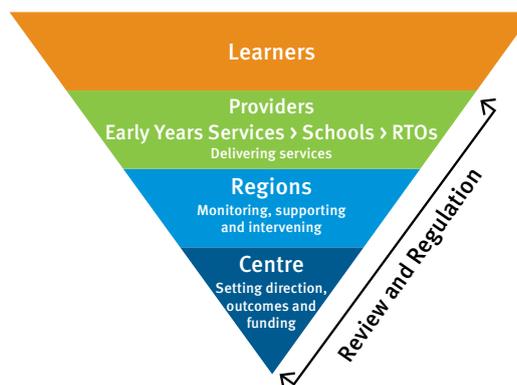


Figure 1: Empowered Business Model

We are all accountable for improving performance. The DET Performance Improvement and Accountability Framework helps us to better understand how we collectively contribute to student and customer outcomes. A consistent and shared understanding of performance expectations and accountabilities helps to drive continuous improvement.

The framework provides a clear line of sight from strategic objectives, investment and actions to agreed measures and targets in order to provide transparency, monitor progress, determine effective and cost effective interventions and improve results.

This framework embeds a cycle of continuous improvement to drive better results. It includes:

- a **Value Chain** that shows how government objectives and community expectations translate into investments in early years, education and training services that deliver long-term benefits for Queensland
- a high level **Benefits Map** which shows how DET objectives, inputs, services, outputs and outcomes align to deliver benefits for individuals and for Queensland
- a **Key Performance Indicator Cascade** which provides an overview of DET's headline measures for schools and service providers, regions and the department
- an **Accountabilities Overview** which shows the accountability instruments used at all levels of the department for planning and reviewing performance.

i For more information on DET Strategic Plan see: <http://deta.qld.gov.au/publications/strategic>

Central to the framework is the DET Value Chain (Figure 2). The Value Chain shows how performance drivers, improvement, measurement and accountabilities align to drive better outcomes for learners and deliver long-term benefits for Queensland.

The Value Chain also assists in understanding the measurable improvement resulting from investing in outcomes that contribute to a strong economy and cohesive society that benefits all Queenslanders.

In addition, the Value Chain demonstrates how our performance improvement cycle and accountability cascade work together to assist us to deliver better outcomes.

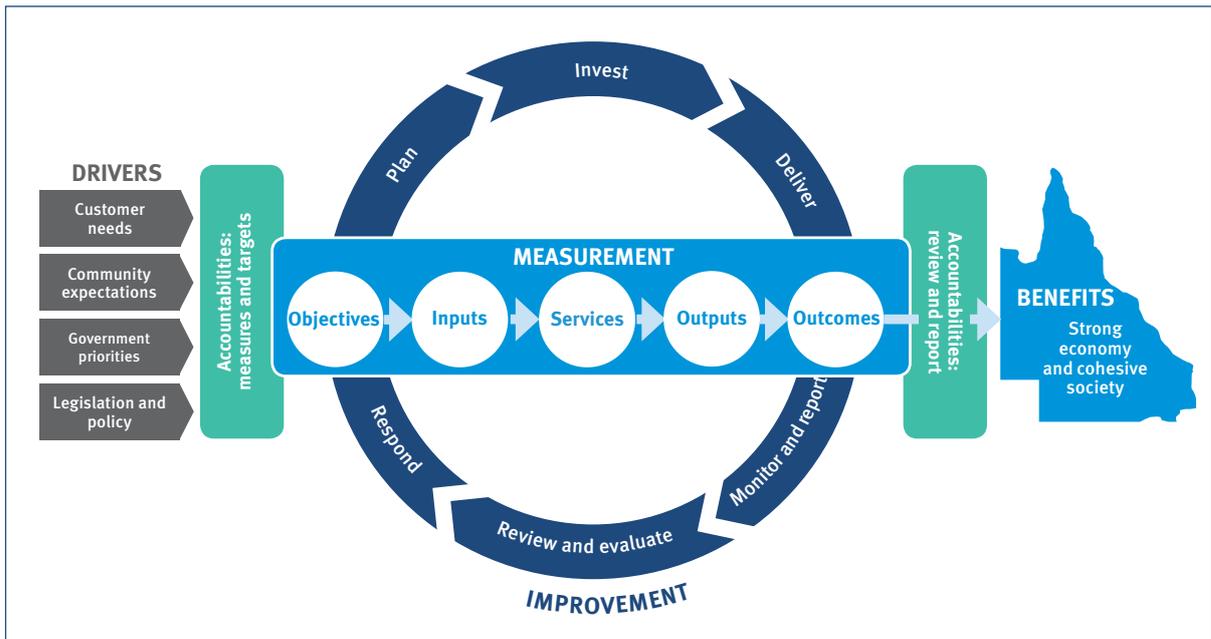


Figure 2: DET Value Chain

Performance drivers influence the strategic direction of the department. They underpin the objectives, inputs and services that result in outputs, outcomes and benefits. The key performance drivers that shape service design and delivery are: customer needs, community expectations, government priorities and legislation and policy.

Improvement through evidence-informed action

Any performance improvement framework is only as good as its application. It is only through action that improvement occurs.

Improving outcomes requires informed decisions about what actions we should take. Performance is strengthened through regular feedback, analysis of our performance data, learning from others and sharing of good practice. This underpins our concept of collaborative empowerment – working together to understand and respond to the unique needs of our customers.

Improving performance is everyone’s responsibility. Opportunities to make improvements, big and small, are around us every day. It is the quality of our actions which will make the difference.

i Further examples of the way performance data informs responsive actions across early childhood, schooling and training is at: <http://deta.qld.gov.au/corporate/performanceframework/pdf/performanceinsights.pdf>

Benefits Map

DET's approach to performance and accountability is built upon a consistent Benefits Map that links objectives, inputs, services (delivered by DET or commissioned to third parties to deliver), outputs, outcomes and benefits for Queensland.

The Benefits Map (Figure 3) provides a performance logic that shows how our objectives link to investments in services that deliver measurable outputs, outcomes and long-term benefits for individuals and the state.

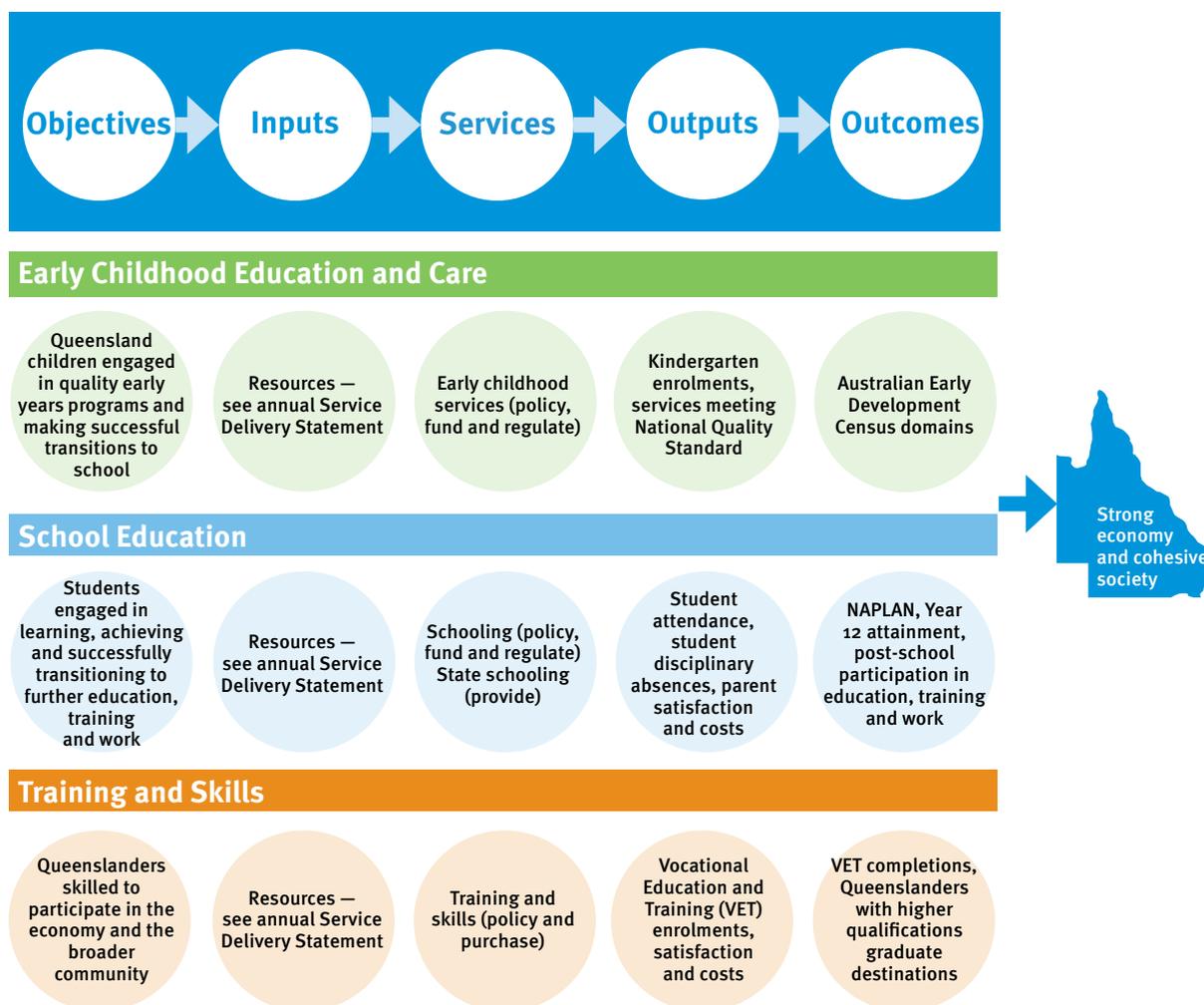


Figure 3: DET Benefits Map

Key Performance Indicator Cascade

DET's Key Performance Indicator Cascade sets out our performance indicators for schools and service providers, regions and the department. It provides a comprehensive view across the department's service areas of our headline indicators drawn from DET's Strategic Plan, Service Delivery Statement and the School Performance Assessment Framework headline indicators.

i For the full KPI cascade see: <http://deta.qld.gov.au/corporate/performanceframework/pdf/cascade.pdf>

Our focus is on improving outcomes for our customers. To do this effectively we must all understand and use performance information to plan and deliver the best possible outcomes. A cycle of ongoing improvement underpins this framework and links the performance measurement and accountability aspects together.

The stages of the improvement cycle are:

- **plan** — objectives and outcomes for our customers are set and measures of success are determined taking into account current and past performance and external drivers
- **invest** — investments are allocated based on evidence supporting the effectiveness, equity and efficiency of available strategies
- **deliver** — services, programs and projects are delivered according to performance agreements, plans, contracts and service agreements
- **monitor and report** — monitoring occurs continuously and reports occur at regular intervals
- **review and evaluate** — reviews and evaluations on effectiveness, equity and efficiency of services, programs and projects are informed by quantitative and qualitative, financial and non-financial information
- **respond** — plans and delivery strategies are modified based on information that comes from customer feedback monitoring, reviewing and evaluating in order to deliver better outcomes and benefits.

Performance improvement occurs at all levels and focuses on

continuous improvement over time.

School Improvement Unit

The School Improvement Unit has carriage of the school performance and assessment framework and plays a lead role in supporting state school improvement.

This includes conducting an annual desktop audit of school performance data, leading and guiding school reviews, and identifying and sharing successful practices and statewide trends.

These arrangements build on current school planning and reporting processes and mean that every state school will benefit from engaging in tailored school reviews to inform improvement action.



A clear line of sight enables accountabilities to cascade through individual roles in the department, including the Director-General, central office staff, regional directors and staff, principals, school staff and service providers.

Performance is monitored through regular reviews where performance against stated objectives, measures and targets and improvement is identified, celebrated and shared. Performance plans and reviews include:

Individual

- The Director-General has a performance agreement with the Ministers and Premier, and is accountable for service delivery. These responsibilities cascade to Deputy Directors-General and other executive staff through individual performance agreements.
- All staff have individual performance development plans which outline expectations of individuals and how performance against these agreements is monitored and reviewed to build staff capability.

Organisational

- Service agreements provide the performance accountability mechanisms for third party service providers.
- Schools conduct regular planning, reporting and improvement based on the School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework (SPRRF). This includes developing a four-year school plan with annual reviews. In addition, the School Improvement Unit administers the School Performance and Accountability Framework with headline indicators to help drive improvement and accountability in Queensland state schools.
- Regional and divisional operational plans and reviews: Regional Directors and Deputy Directors-General are accountable for deliverables and outcomes set out in regional and divisional operational plans and performance reviews. Divisional operational plans set out deliverables for central office divisions.
- Department plans and reviews: The Strategic Plan and the Annual Report are key accountability artefacts at the system level.

Table 1 below sets out the planning and reporting artefacts at the individual and organisational levels that are used to inform performance improvement and accountability.

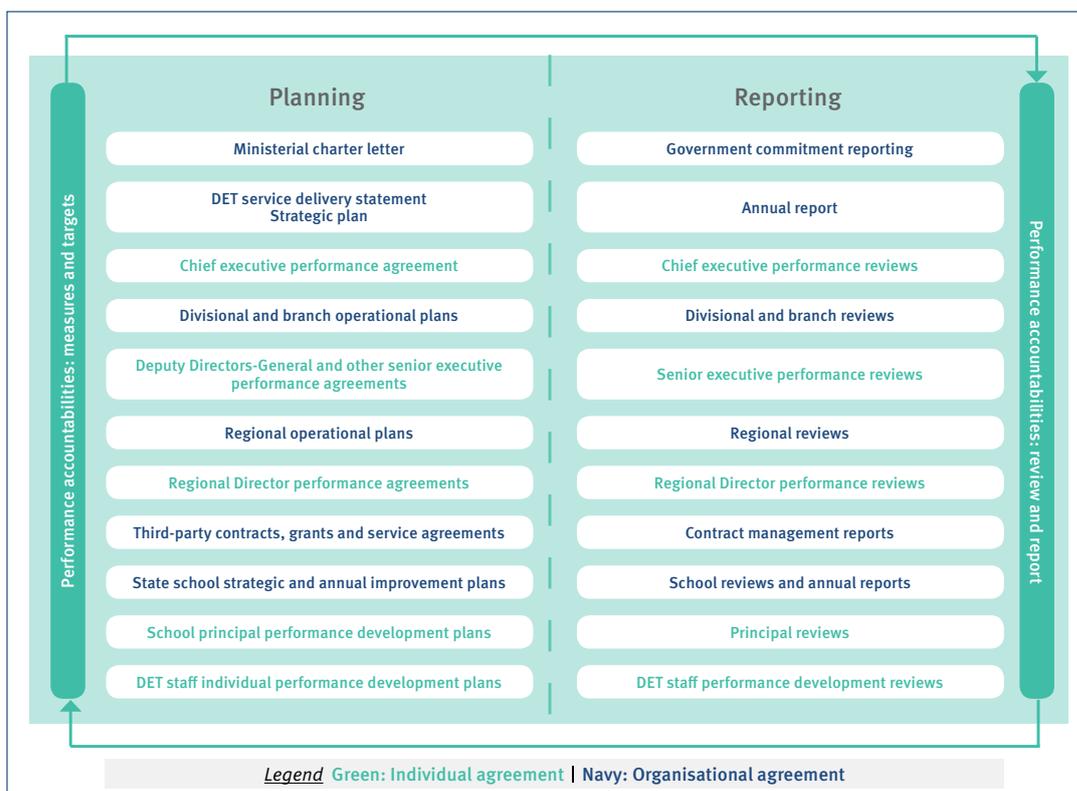


Table 1: Accountability planning and reporting elements

Performance improvement and accountability requires the management and evaluation of information on the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the department's services and investments. This improves accountability, shapes actions, informs policy development and implementation, and creates value for clients, stakeholders and the community².

Performance measurement focuses on outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products or engagements delivered as part of our service whereas outcomes address the impact of the service on the status of individuals or a group, and the success of the service area in achieving its objectives. Outcome measures should be balanced across the following perspectives:

- **Service effectiveness** – measuring how well the performance of a service, program or project achieves stated objectives.
- **Equity of outcomes** – monitoring the impact of strategies through the performance of identified groups (particularly disadvantaged groups).
- **Cost effectiveness** – measuring how well inputs (investments) are converted to outcomes for customers or the community. Cost effectiveness is expressed as a ratio so that the cost and relative impact of different services, strategies, interventions, programs or projects can be compared.
- Technical efficiency – a measure for monitoring investments where a cost effectiveness measure is not available. Technical efficiency is the simple ratio of inputs to outputs.

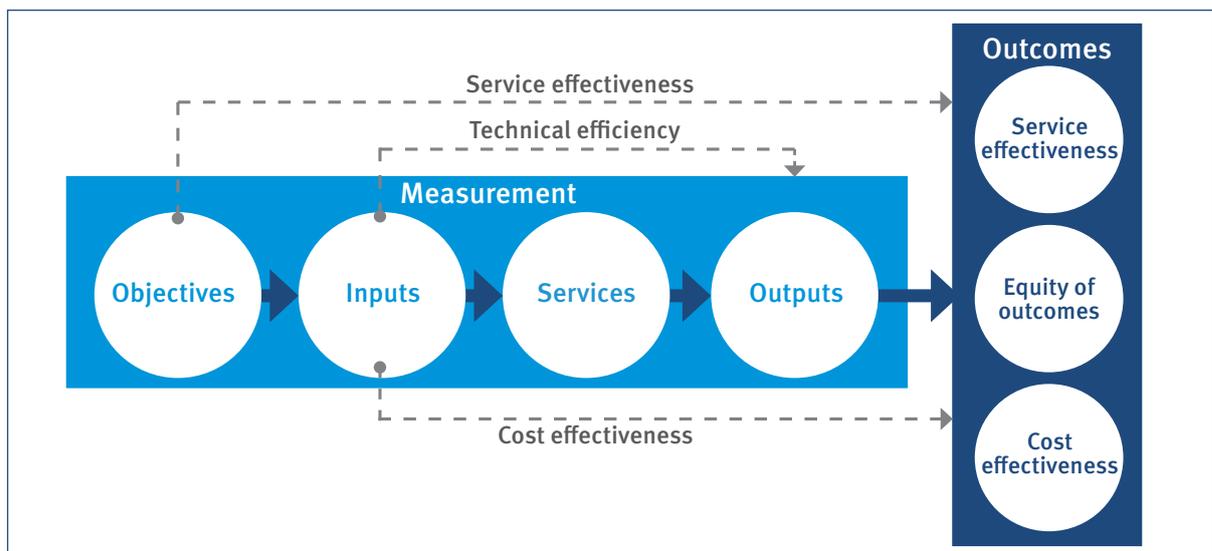


Figure 4: Types of performance measures

To help drive improvement, performance measurement should also include:

- **trends** over time which shows changes in performance
- **targets** that forecast the expected performance and can cascade through senior executive performance agreements, divisional, regional, school and individual staff plans
- **benchmarks** that allow performance to be compared in relative terms. An example of a benchmark would be Queensland's performance against the performance outcomes for all of Australia
- **thresholds** that state the performance point where escalation or intervention should be undertaken. For example, the School Improvement Unit is tasked with identifying performance thresholds and, in cooperation with regions, determine when and where support can be best provided to individual schools.

i A Performance Measurement Model that assists in developing a shared understanding of key concepts and terms in performance measurement is at:

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/corporate/performanceframework/pdf/measurementmodel.pdf>

² Adapted from Queensland Government Performance Management Framework – definition of performance management

This framework is based on the following policies and guidelines which provide further information on performance improvement and accountability:

- Queensland Government
 - Performance Management Framework
 - Financial Accountability Act 2009
 - Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009
- Australian Government – Productivity Commission
 - Report on Government Services: General Performance Framework

The framework supports the department's:

- *Strategic Plan*
- *Service Delivery Statement*
- *Operational Plans and performance reviews*

Related frameworks, policies and procedures include:

- *Queensland Government Agency Planning Requirements*
- *DET Governance Framework*
- *DET Evaluation Strategy*
- *DET School Performance Assessment Framework*
- *DET Developing Performance Framework*

 More information about the DET Performance Improvement and Accountability Framework can be found at:
<http://deta.qld.gov.au/corporate/performanceframework/index.html>

