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Abstract

Michael Kendrick, Director of the Institute for Leadership and Community Development, Massachusetts, U.S.A., led an external evaluation of Queensland Advocacy Inc., a systems advocacy organisation. This report describes how the review was conducted and outlines its findings and recommendations. It provides excellent information on systems advocacy. **Keywords: Advocacy**

AN
EVALUATION
OF
QUEENSLAND ADVOCACY INC
REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL TEAM

February 1992

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The external team wishes to acknowledge the openness, frankness, and willingness of the QAI committee of management, the staff, and the many others who gave freely of their time, their experiences and their ideas during the course of the evaluation. In particular, the work of the evaluation sub-committee ensured that the team was able to carry out its work efficiently.

BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

Qld Advocacy Inc (QAI) is a systems advocacy organisation principally involved in legislative and policy reform, advocacy development, and advocacy support to individuals and groups. It had operated for only four years at the time of the evaluation.

During 1991, QAI decided to embark on an evaluation of itself. As there are no developed evaluation tools available for an advocacy organisation of this nature, and considering the very limited evaluation of advocacy organisations that has taken place in Australia, QAI developed a 'many-sided' evaluation process. This included (1) several internal reviews /workshops in which the committee of management and staff reviewed and examined its own work; (2) interviews undertaken by an independent researcher with 40 people who have been assisted by, or who are familiar with the work of QAI; and (3) a review undertaken by an external team. Further information about the approach adopted by QAI is contained in a separate paper prepared by QAI.

The external team was invited by QAI to consider all aspects of QAI's work, with particular reference to questions which they developed during, or as a result of the internal review and the interviews.

The external team undertook its tasks during February 1992.

This report outlines the findings and recommendations of the external team.

COMPOSITION OF THE EXTERNAL TEAM

QAI invited Michael Kendrick, Director of the Institute for Leadership & Community Development, Massachusetts, USA to lead the external team.

Other team members included:

Ian Bidmeade, Lawyer, Adelaide, South Australia.

Tony Breadsell, Co-ordinator, Independent Advocacy in the Tropics, Townsville, Qld.

Errol Cocks, Director, Centre for the Development of Human Resources, Edith Cowen University, Perth W. A.

Cathy Costanzo, Lawyer, Centre for Public Representation, Massachusetts, USA.

Anne Cross, Director, Community Resource Unit, Queensland.

Phillip French, State Co-ordinator, Citizen Advocacy NSW.

Joan Hailstone, Committee Member, Qld Parents of People with a Disability, Brisbane, Qld.

Peter Millier, Senior Trainer, Training & Evaluation for Change, Adelaide, S.A.

Mike Rungie, Director of Services, Aged Cottage Homes, Adelaide, S.A.

3. METHODOLOGY

3. 1 The steps undertaken by the external team included

- a) Development of the key dimensions to be examined by the team
- b) Data collection,
- c) Examination of data collected and conciliation of findings
- d) Development of recommendations
- e) Verbal feedback to the committee and staff of QAI.
- f) Writing of this report.

3. 2 The key dimensions developed by the team formed a basis of the data collection and analysis of that data the dimensions were

A. Clarity & Adequacy of...

- (1) Mission of QAI
- (2) Clarity about who is to be served/assisted
- (3) Clarity about activities/responsibilities to be included/excluded
- (4) Clarity about balance & priorities of activities/responsibility
- (5) Clarity about guiding values, beliefs
- (6) Consistency of #1 → #5

B. Quality of...

- (1) Assistance to individuals
- (2) Systems work
- (3) Advocacy Outreach & Assistance
- (4) Participation by disabled persons & allies
- (5) Planning
- (6) Safeguards
- (7) Innovativeness & Leadership
- (8) Image & presentation
- (9) Methodological Appropriateness

C. Organisational/Administration

- (1) Effectiveness of a) Governance

- b) Management Structure
 - c) Staff Role Clarity & Performance
- (2) Financial soundness
- D. Independence/conflicts of interest
- E. Additional Concerns

3. 3 In total, sixty interviews were conducted; these were with individuals assisted by QAI, the funding body, the State Government, staff, ex-staff, members of the committee of management, key people who were familiar with the policy and law reform work, and others in groups and organisations who had worked with QAI. Several interviews were done by telephone as several people lived outside of Brisbane.

The team also examined administrative records, submissions, newsletters and other records of QAI.

4. FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

The external team was generally impressed with QAI and believed it to be an organisation with considerable strengths. In fact, some dimensions of QAI stand as an exemplary model. The fact that it has accomplished as much as it has in only a few years is a tribute to those involved.

4. 1 SUMMARY OF SOME KEY STRENGTHS OF QAI

Perhaps most important and notable has been the 'message' QAI carries and exudes about people with disabilities. It is a vision that is uplifting, positive, respectful, conscientious and genuine. In particular QAI has forthrightly claimed that people with disabilities are valued citizens of Queensland society and need to be recognised as such. Much of the activity of QAI has contained within it an assertion of this view. Further, QAI has notably allied itself with other groups promoting valued social roles for persons with disabilities, thereby becoming one of several Queensland 'anchors' for a more broadly based effort within the state to advance values change in favour of persons with disabilities.

QAI has taken this vision into its internal demeanour in that it has very pointedly placed itself as being 'on the side of' people with disabilities. It has resolved to make such persons the object of QAI's loyalty and intentions. Even its promotional materials echo this theme of choosing sides in favour of the interests of people with disabilities. For an advocacy group, it is always crucial to be clear as to whose interests it exists for and who is to have the primary claim on its loyalties. QAI has done this without ambiguity as was evidenced in the exclusive view put to the team that QAI clearly was on the side of people with disabilities.

QAI was intensely preoccupied in its own internal evaluation with the question of whether it had been true to those for whom it advocated. While this question of fidelity is pertinent to any advocacy organisation, QAI does not have a particular problem in this regard. On the contrary, its introspection on this subject is adaptive and continues to provide a workable safeguard to keep it focused on who it should be loyal to, and the degree to which this has been achieved. While there may be instances where greater fidelity may have been possible, it was the team's conclusion that fidelity to people is not at all a systemic character flaw of QAI.

The submission of QAI's operational processes to the imperative of significant, if not dominant, influence from people with disabilities is not only evident, but it is extraordinary. This is more than merely a matter of having a management committee dominated by people with disabilities. It also includes extensive positive expectation for this as a desirable end in itself, an array of practical supports to ensure that people with disabilities are present in QAI and external events, and an array of networks with disabled people that are commendable and vital.

QAI does not just adhere to extensive involvement of people with disabilities, it actually insists upon it. While the character of this involvement can feasibly be improved, such refinements would be unthinkable were it not for the 'base' commitment to such an aim that preceded it.

'Submission' as evidenced by QAI means a genuine intent to be directed by people with disabilities even if it were to mean the sacrifice of other valid interests. Interestingly, this has symbolic teaching value to others as to what moral fidelity might mean.

QAI coupled its loyalty to disabled people with a stringent, if not acute, preoccupation with the preservation of its independence. Independence is crucial to the ability of an advocacy organisation to speak on behalf of the people it serves and their issues. Were its independence to be compromised, it is unlikely that it could maintain a vigorous advocacy stance in the face of conflicting interests. QAI is by and large free of conflicts of interest with major service providers, and its staff and committee seem to evidence a high degree of freedom from conflicts of interest that might impair their ability to act without compromise on key issues. The only area where conflicts of interest may be difficult and potentially divisive is the receipt of commonwealth government funds.

The high level of integrity, and the concern with it, by QAI, has undoubtedly infused many of its interactions with others with a sense of the importance QAI places on its principles. The team noted, in all with whom it talked, a general sense that QAI was respected for the standard of its work, and trusted. This is consistent with its own aggressive efforts to act in such a way as to permit trustworthiness to be a crucial facet of its character. Its performance, conscientiousness and resolve have combined to bring it the respect of many. The team's sense was that it had earned this respect by the quality of its work. While occasionally the team heard of shortcomings, these were usually offered in the context of general respect for the quality of QAI's work.

QAI seemed to be a very hardworking and productive organisation that operated just on the inner edge of what it could optimally manage. Those serving in voluntary capacities often worked a considerable number of hours thereby matching the staff's effort. Its accomplishments in terms of workload are notable, considering its relatively modest staff and financial resources.

These resources appeared to the team to be well administered and financially sound. The staff were efficient in handling a wide range of logistical and financial obligations. The president of QAI showed a remarkably high level of conscientiousness and oversight in regards to the financial management of the organisation. The team did not notice any

expenditures or projects that were questionable. While the organisation was not frugal to the point of austere, Spartan habits, it showed a considerable regard for managing its public funds with an eye on good value.

Advocacy organisations can often be highly involved in advocacy issues which may be valid but lack any sense of what efforts are important versus trivial. QAI seems to have selected advocacy issues that have high relevance and promise in regards to the needs and concerns of people with disabilities. Often the issues it chooses to address are discomfiting to various other interests and authorities. QAI has managed to assert its claims in the face of considerable risk of conflict and divisiveness because it believed the issues to be highly relevant. Whilst this argues for QAI's good judgement on the worthiness of issues, it also exemplifies the commitment of QAI to taking difficult stands if this is what is needed.

It would be negligent of the team to not mention the considerable effort QAI has put into its combined internal/external evaluation. QAI has evidenced a remarkable degree of thoroughness in terms of the variety of measures it has taken in order to take stock of itself. Also, the general level of openness of QAI to external scrutiny sets a very high level precedent for other Australian advocacy organisations to emulate in the future.

The team found that QAI quite typically embodies a warmth, hospitality, graciousness and ease with people, even though it is often involved in situations and circumstances which could easily lead to aggressiveness, hostility and rancour. Its philosophy of action and advocacy seems to be one in which even those it opposes are still to be accorded respect and courtesy. Given the conflictual nature of advocacy, this is a very adaptive trait in principled people. It also encourages use of QAI resources by external people and members, and external involvement and comment.

QAI enjoys a public profile that vastly exceeds its size. In part, this is due to the absence of other advocacy bodies occupying key state-wide positions of prominence. However, it also derives from a considerable degree of respect a wide variety of people in Queensland have for both the quality of what QAI represents (i.e., its values, ideals and message, etc...) as well as the quality of work that it does. One notable example is the general praise heard for the law reform submissions and campaigns of QAI. This generalised

attribution of credibility, authenticity and integrity is a rare asset that promises to do much to advance the issues that QAI is pursuing.

4. 2 **THE DIFFICULTIES AND ISSUES FACED BY QAI**

4. 2. 1 **The Problems of Focus and Priorities**

QAI did not come into existence within a crowded advocacy scene in Queensland. Rather it has been a pioneer and a forerunner of future efforts at advocacy. The crux of its difficulties during the present period arise out of the reality that there are far too many valid advocacy tasks that need to be done and too few bodies to undertake them. Were there to be a wide range of different advocacy groups on the scene in Queensland, it could well be true that QAI would find it easier to decide upon a clear focus for its efforts. However, while many of these kinds of options could eventually come into being. QAI will find itself for many years yet with the unavoidable necessity of having to narrow its focus if it is to get anything coherent done. The alternative would be to attempt a scattershot approach.

QAI is not able to undertake all of the advocacy functions that Queensland may require. Even if it were to do so, it would still not be advisable for it to attempt such a task. Each type of advocacy has its own specialisation and appropriateness and no single advocacy agency or form can optimally be all things to all people. For instance, it is correct and proper that people with disabilities be able to speak for themselves where this is possible. Families also need a public voice. However, the solution is not to have families be the voice of disabled persons or vice-versa. Similarly, people with varying disabilities may choose at times to organise and speak to issues close to them. For instance, people with visual impairments may have concerns not shared by persons who use wheelchairs. Also the kind of advocacy needed by a single individual may not be the same kind as is needed to influence a legislature.

All of the preceding points to the necessity for QAI to decide upon a focus for itself from amongst the wide range of advocacy possibilities that it now confronts. This has two immediately relevant dimensions. The first is to decide upon what QAI will undertake

itself as its own special responsibility. The second is to clarify what its role will be towards other existing advocacy efforts or ones that are emerging or need to be helped to emerge. The results of these decisions will be QAI's focus.

It cannot be sufficiently stressed that QAI will need to abandon or avoid some valid advocacy efforts if it is to obtain focus and clarity as to its mission. While it is important to remedy the many absences of adequate advocacy, it is not true that QAI has an overriding responsibility to assure advocacy in the amount and types that may be needed. It is understandable that QAI is intensely concerned about advocacy, but it cannot be assumed that QAI can and should do something about each and every advocacy matter that arises. On the contrary, QAI needs to recognise that it must make the painful decision to restrict itself to a mission that is focused and shows promise of being consistent with its character, resources and mandate.

All advocacy organisations have intrinsic limits and will be constrained by the particular form and scale of these limits. These limits might include funds, competence, clarity, familiarity with the issues, credibility, standing, position, tenure, strategy, etc. . Even if QAI were to be resolute in its focus, it would, out of necessity, have to balance its work commitments against its limits. For instance, if QAI had staff in every major city in Queensland, the level of operational responsibilities it could follow through on would be vastly different than is now the case, given its tiny staff. Consequently, QAI needs to approach its decisions about focus and limitations knowing that the inevitable outcome will be a decision not to do a variety of things that urgently need to be done. Since QAI cannot and should not do everything it must do what it does well.

As well as the limited number of advocacy efforts in Queensland, part of the origin of the current problem of agency focus derives directly from its mission statement. This statement is much too global for the purposes of QAI resolving its problem of focus and priorities. In particular, QAI has embraced the vision of 'empowerment' as its aim. The team's view was that the empowerment of persons with disabilities must be seen as a societal aspiration and process of which a given agency can only do a small but valid part of what needs to be done. QAI is correct to aspire to these and other societal changes, but needs to recognise that it is simply one of the many possible ways in which such a goal is to be advanced. Hence, its responsibility might be more appropriately cast as to

whether it will advance the cause of empowerment in its advocacy work. Thus, QAI is relieved of the awesome responsibility of being the soul agent of empowerment as opposed to being one agent working towards it.

The goal of empowerment is not, per se, an advocacy question, but rather a question of the relations of disabled people within society. Consequently, others in society must do their share, e.g. families, governments, agencies, employers, schools, neighbourhoods, etc... Advocates exist to mobilise change in all of these domains. Some forms of the advocacy, therefore, will be optimally tailored to influence particular aspects of society, e.g. political advocacy influencing governments, citizen advocacy influencing personal relationships. While a teacher can hold a vision of empowerment, the teacher's job is still teaching. Similarly, a family can have a vision of empowerment, but its proper role is to express this through the domain of family life. It is, therefore, possible for QAI to hold a vision of empowerment, but it must decide what its job is in order to be able to express its vision of empowerment.

QAI is still a relatively new organisation and has considerable years ahead of it. It has not felt an acute sense of necessity to formally grapple with the problem of setting priorities because its internal decisions, commitment and resources have not been brought to a complete enough sense of crisis on this matter. The team's impression was that QAI was well aware that it needed to make mission and priority setting decisions but has managed, to date, to avoid doing so with few ill effects. Consequently, it lacks experience with difficult priority setting decision processes and has not developed the appropriate mechanisms and traditions associated with this organisational necessity. Fortunately, these difficult decisions are well within the capacity of QAI to address as it is, overall, an organisation that does not shrink from painful and difficult tasks. Even so, QAI needs to recognise its inexperience in sharpening its focus and setting and staying with priorities if it is to eventually mature into a rigorous example of how this should be done.

Recommendations to this end will follow later in the report.

4. 2. 2 **Confusion Between Assistance for Personal Development and Advocacy Development**

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QAI's embrace of, and acutely sensitive commitment to, the aim of empowerment has led it to undertake to position disabled people to be the actual directors of QAI. This comes from a sincere and uncomplicated desire that the organisation be the expression of the will of people with disabilities. This aim derives, in part, from the overarching aspiration for societal empowerment for people with disabilities. It was the team's impression that, at times, the broader goal of advocacy had become subordinated to the more immediate goal of the assistance and empowerment of the 'inner' or core group of disabled people associated with QAI. This 'internal empowerment' process was, in fact, a process of supporting these individuals towards their own development. The team's view was that this goal was at times a distraction from organisational development.

This sort of trade-off between the needs of people involved in organisations and the needs of the organisation are common and unavoidable. The optimal way to handle them is, of course, to recognise them as being present and to adopt a strategy which balances them. The team's view was that this process of supporting individuals was only partly in the interests of the organisation's formal mission of advocacy. The boundary between support intended to enable disabled persons to set and govern an advocacy agenda had become a kind of support group or service for its core members. Such support or service was only partially related to QAI's 'outward' advocacy agenda. Therefore, such support did impair QAI's broader advocacy agenda given its disproportionate attention to the needs and issues of its core members. Put another way, this 'inner' or 'core' group benefited much more from QAI than most others. Not surprisingly, the efforts of QAI to support such persons has resulted in quite notable growth, maturation and sophistication for such persons.

4. 2. 3 **The Extent To Which The Committee of Management Actually Provides Strong Management Direction To QAI**

As indicated earlier, QAI has actively, sought direction from its members as to its mission and agenda. One key vehicle towards this end has been the management committee. This committee is almost entirely composed of persons with disabilities and symbolically embodies the spirit of disabled persons dominating the direction of the organisation. It is

not true; however, that in practice the committee is actually providing the leadership and direction that it could conceivably be able to provide. As a result, the majority of direction is arising from the staff. While QAI has excellent staff, this strength needs to be balanced by strength in the committee. The remedy is not to restrain staff initiative and leadership or to bemoan their disproportionate influence. The proper resolution of this matter is to focus more attention on committee improvement.

The origin of the problem partly has to do with the complicated task of managing an organisation such as QAI. It is a considerable challenge intrinsically and it cannot be assumed that committees will do it well simply because committees exist. Fortunately it is quite common for committees to improve their performance through performance enhancing training, consultation, discipline and experience. In the case of people with disabilities, the problem may even be larger because of the historical isolation of such individuals from roles where they might develop competence and experience of this kind. Further, their impairments may well introduce additional practical limitations that will need to be addressed.

When committees are entirely composed of persons with disabilities, there may well be the exclusion of persons with talents, standing or experience that may be helpful to the organisation. Thus, the decision to go with a committee that almost excludes non-disabled persons may be costly to QAI unless these losses can be made up some other way. Further, QAI has not always recruited committee members from its membership of disabled persons on the basis of the match of their competencies to the tasks of a management committee. QAI faces a number of dilemmas in structuring its committee that will require it to consider other factors in committee selection, development and performance beyond the factor that the committee be dominated in numbers by persons with disabilities. This feature may well be substantially maintained but increased attention to committee competence is needed.

4. 2. 4 The Absence of a Fixed Point (Person) Responsible for Ensuring the Completion and Quality of QAI's Program

QAI has opted for a collective style of operation and has eschewed the creation of hierarchies that might produce a sense of inequality amongst people in the organisation.

Such aspirations are quite common in reform-minded organisations and can well work to a degree if the voluntary, consensual spirit of co-operation is present. Nonetheless, the nature of the work of the organisation is such that the work itself must be specified, its implementation assigned, and its progress tracked and guided. This division of labour, in turn, creates roles that carry with them designated responsibilities.

QAI has been small and collegiate enough to muddle through the question of who does what. Nonetheless, there does exist a problem in that the overall responsibility for keeping QAI focused and on track is held collectively and, hence, is held in equal shares by anybody in particular. Ultimately, the committee is the responsible 17 party under law but, again, this does not bring the problem of responsibility to the personal level. The team was concerned that QAI fix this responsibility for tracking the overall execution of QAI's mission. While it is conceivable that this could be undertaken by someone in a voluntary role, it is normally carried by staff.

4. 2. 5 **Ambiguity in the Role of QAI's Membership and its Subsequent Under-utilisation**

QAI has developed a membership of considerable numbers. It was evident that QAI welcomes the involvement of people with disabilities, their friends, family and allies. QAI utilises members in ideas days, for committee selection purposes, and so forth, although these are relatively modest uses. For those members who have made use of QAI, or who have participated in QAI activities or campaigns, the team found that they valued the role of QAI and their association with it. However many members outside of the 'core' group, are unlikely to be affected by their membership, because membership as a role and cost is relatively negligible. It is not clear what QAI wants from a membership nor is this membership particularly capitalised upon by QAI, except as a target for mailings. It is not clear that QAI's membership strategy does very much with this potential asset.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

5. 1 **Concerning the Focus of QAI's Work and the Development of Priorities**

5. 1. 1 QAI needs to recognise that its limited resources do necessitate that QAI explicitly establish and follow priorities to guide its activities.
5. 1. 2 QAI needs to explicitly adopt the strategy of focusing on some elements of advocacy and consciously foregoing others in order that it create for itself a coherent, specialised and realistic advocacy mission.
5. 1. 3 QAI needs to consciously limit its advocacy activities to only those areas consistent with its mission.
5. 1. 4 Given the history, strengths, and achievements of QAI, the team recommends that QAI should declare and disseminate the message that its focus is on systems, advocacy and law reform. By 'systems' advocacy it is meant efforts oriented to changing the character of the systems that disabled persons rely on, e.g. educational, health, employment, transport, housing, etc... It also means advocacy development activities oriented to system's change as well as advocacy coalitions and education on key advocacy issues.
5. 1. 5 QAI needs to continue to affirm the primacy of the voice of people with disabilities in the advocacy agenda of QAI.
5. 1. 6 QAI's committee of management should be fixed as the body within QAI which ultimately sets and enforces its principles.
5. 1. 7 QAI needs to explicitly recognise that there are other legitimate 'stakeholders' in the advocacy agenda of QAI beyond that of people with disabilities that need to be consulted with in the formulation of priorities.
5. 1. 8 QAI should undertake, every two years, a broad public consultation process on what should be the advocacy priorities and agenda for the QAL
5. 1. 9 QAI should have a fixed date each year to review whether the year's priorities have been met, and to decide upon its priorities for the upcoming year's program.

5. 1. 10 QAI should pursue a proactive strategy to advance its advocacy agenda rather than to rely on reactive posture.

5. 1. 11 QAI should undertake a process of outlining its long-term aims and strategies as a background for the shorter-term process of fixing and adhering to priorities.

5. 1. 12 QAI should inform its potential clientele, as definitely as possible, what it can be expected to do and what it can be expected to undertake. This process of crafting a set of clear expectations relates to what is said to individuals, what message is contained in QAI materials, and what expectations are widely held by those who might turn to QAI for assistance.

5. 2 Concerning an Advocacy Development and Support Strategy

5. 2.1 QAI should explicitly indicate (as in #5. 1. 12) that there are areas and concerns where no advocacy is available, but needed, and that it is expected that others will need to step forward to develop such needed advocacy. Further, QAI may choose to deliberately highlight areas of unmet need in order to promote awareness of the need and to educate others as to their possible contribution to addressing such need. In such instances, QAI should explicitly indicate that its role is facilitative only.

5.2.2 QAI could temporarily act as an auspice for an emerging advocacy effort if this is thought to be important and consistent with both QAI's mission, capabilities and resources. QAI in such 'hosting' needs to be clear and careful in distinguishing its role and responsibility vis-à-vis and emerging advocacy initiative.

5.2.3 QAI should not undertake the development or hosting of further advocacy efforts if it is possible and realistic for such advocacy efforts to emerge of their own accord. QAI needs to concern itself with the dangers of gradually accumulating responsibility for weaker advocacy efforts that cannot internally sustain themselves. Further, the association with QAI or other types of advocacy efforts may confuse the specific role and responsibility of QAI.

5.2.4 QAI should create a special group that would act as the committee's principal operational and policy group for guiding and supporting the staff and the committee on advocacy matters and priorities.

5. 3 **Concerning Law Reform and Individual Legal Advocacy**

5.3.1 QAI should not continue to offer legal assistance to individuals

5.3.2 QAI should continue to respond to general inquiries concerning legal advocacy for persons with disabilities involving referral as well as supervised referrals.

5.3.3 QAI should see the legal advocacy needs of individuals with disabilities, and their families, as being addressed by a combination of private practitioners, legal aid services, and any emergent localised legal assistance services specifically established to serve persons with disabilities.

5.3.4 QAI should educate generic legal services and the legal system to influence them to be more relevant and responsive to the legal advocacy needs of people with disabilities.

5.3.5 QAI should act as a resource to generic legal services but monitor these services to ensure that they actually provide such direct legal assistance as may be required.

5.3.6 QAI should focus its legal work on law reform activities consistent with its work to date.

5.3.7 QAI should create a priorities and strategies group to guide the law reform and legal advocacy strategies adopted by QAI. This group could advise on education for lawyers and the legal system, develop ways of achieving reliable legal advocacy, and input into the law reform work.

5.4 **Concerning Individual Non-Legal Advocacy**

- 5.4.1 QAI should formally recognise that the scale of individuals with disabilities in Queensland that might be benefited by some form of individual advocacy is so large as to render QAI virtually unable to address even a small part of this need.
- 5.4.2 QAI should acknowledge that there exists a need to create individual non-legal advocacy at a local level to address these needs.
- 5.4.3 QAI needs to consciously declare that it does not see its role as being the body that should address individual non-legal advocacy needs in Queensland.
- 5.4.4 Since individual non-legal advocacy may require a variety of solutions that do not, at present, appear clear, the QAI should establish a task force to investigate the wide range of unpaid and paid options that might be useful in the Queensland context.
- 5.4.5 QAI should cease on individual non-legal advocacy responsibilities except in-so-far as these are manageable and advantageous to QAI keeping its ‘feet on the ground’.

5.5 Concerning Committee of Management Composition, Development and Support

- 5.5.1 The committee of management should continue to be dominated by the voice of people with disabilities.
- 5.5.2 The committee of management should be expanded to include various people who are not disabled to the extent that this strengthens the committee’s performance, advances the aims of QAI, and is consonant with the intent to preserve the overall influence and direction of people with disabilities.
- 5.5.3 The committee should continue to demand initiative and leadership from QAI staff in the interests both of strengthening the committee in its role and advancing the mission of QAI.

5.5.4 The Committee should undertake to strengthen itself in its ability to provide direction and clear management to QAI through the following measures:

- a) improved committee selection emphasising the specific contributions and talents of each potential committee member;
- b) Clarification of specific responsibilities and role for each committee member;
- c) provision of improved committee training and other consultation to the committee members that might enhance their performance;
- d) exploration of whatever supports may be adaptive in helping committee members with disabilities excel in their role.

5.5.5 The committee should be enabled to be more effective and competent, but this should not mean that the committee become more professional or bureaucratic. This projected increase in committee strength is intended to enrich not supplant the dominance of the influence of persons with disabilities.

5.6 Concerning Safeguards and Renewal for QAI

5.6.1 QAI in its continuing emphasis on the importance of sound values and ideology should undertake periodic occasions to examine, critique, affirm and modify its values, theories and ideologies. More specifically such sessions or similar measures are intended to:

- a) challenge assumptions, myths and thinking within QAI that may conceivably need revision, dissent or clarification;
- b) to reach out to the key stakeholders, thinkers, allies and friendly critics of QAI in order to take advantage of their insights for the increased relevance of QAI to the needs of people;
- c) to modify the missions, goals and objects should this be needed.

5.6.2 QAI needs to identify and develop the spirit of QAI that has honoured people with disabilities, e.g.;

- acts of respect and worth
- words, concepts and phrases, key symbols
- the quality of welcome offered to people with disabilities
- the presence of disabled people in all things associated with QAI
- disabled people as the priority at the end of the day
- disabled persons as leaders, etc.

and to decide upon ways in which it can be advanced and refined

5.6.3 QAI should create a workable internal review process by the committee of management to trace its progress on commitments it had made as well as to direct the committee towards decisions that need follow through.

5.6.4 QAI should consciously affirm the assumption that it is fallible and that its resultant weaknesses, errors and shortcomings will need to be addressed as a matter of routine.

5.6.5 QAI should commission a global external evaluation at least every three years and targeted external/internal reviews on a more frequent basis. Such regular reviews could be as informal as the solicitation of comments by critical friends on key issues.

5.6.6 QAI should specify someone to assure the quality of its work and the consistency of such work with its values and aspirations.

5.6.7 QAI should engage in selective, highly focused training experiences for staff, boards, friends and allies on subjects of key strategic significance for people with disabilities and the work of QAI.

5.6.8 QAI should explore ways to diversify its current funding base so as to not be entirely dependent on one or a few sources.

5.6.9 QAI should pursue, alone and in concert with others, ways in which commonwealth funding could be directed to QAI with the least possible level of reduction of the independence of QAI.

- 5.6.10 QAI should develop a strategy of QAI, either alone, or with its allies to play a stronger advocacy and influence role vis-à-vis the Queensland government, in the light of the devolution of services to the state government, and its resultant impact on disabled persons.
- 5.6.11 QAI should conscientiously investigate the meaning of standing alone from funders, allies, critics, and vested interests should this be required of QAI given its values, beliefs and principles. This should be considered with the further intent of avoiding some common dysfunctional aspects of taking a stand such as righteousness, lack of humility, arrogance, ‘bunker mentality’, elitism, unnecessary aggressiveness, hostility, etc.
- 5.6.12 QAI should continue to develop and maintain perceptive selective and adaptive contacts with the national and international advocacy movement as may be feasible and useful.
- 5.6.13 QAI should deliberately and with regularity submit to learning from disabled people so that QAI can continue to be relevant and respectful of those it has been created to serve.
- 5.6.14 QAI should never overstate what it does nor to undertake commitments it cannot ultimately honour.
- 5.6.15 QAI should continue to selectively find, involve, and develop leadership amongst its members, committee members and staff.

5.7 Transitional Considerations for QAI in Addressing the Recommendations

- 5.7.1 QAI should permit itself and its allies ample time to understand, examine and reflect on the advice it has been given.
- 5.7.2 Where QAI does not grasp the rationales for the recommendations, it should seek greater clarity.
- 5.7.3 QAI should identify, as early as feasible, areas of broad agreement with the advice given.

- 5.7.4 QAI should undertake consultation with its membership and allies regarding the advice it has been given.
- 5.7.5 QAI may find it adaptive and proper to proceed with any number of interim measures as the natural course in implementing the advice it has been given.
- 5.7.6 QAI should consider it proper and adaptive to continue contact with all or part of the evaluation team in the furtherance of its efforts to deal with the recommendations.
- 5.7.7 QAI should hold and appreciation for its many highly commendable strengths as it makes changes so that these are not lost, devalued or otherwise weakened.
- 5.7.8 The evaluation team considers a period of 12-15 months as being ample for the initiation of the majority of its recommendations, i.e. by the end of the 92-93 fiscal year.