

## QEC and Tweddle voluntary merger exploration

### What families and community members said

The boards of Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) and Tweddle Child and Family Health Service (Tweddle) have been exploring a potential merger. Both organisations wanted to know if merging could strengthen care for babies, children and families in the early years.

As part of the merger exploration, families and community members were asked to share their views. This document summarises what they said. Summaries of what staff, partners and referrers said are also available on the QEC and Tweddle websites.

#### Who participated

From 24 February to 31 March 2026, QEC and Tweddle consulted with 378 people about a potential merger. This included employees, families, community members, partners, referrers and government representatives. Feedback was gathered through surveys, focus groups, interviews, team discussions and roundtable sessions.

**22**

Families and community members completed a survey

**16**

Families and community members were interviewed

#### Most families and community members supported the merger

Families and community members were supportive of the merger. Many were optimistic about what a merged organisation could achieve for families across Victoria. Among people who completed the community survey, 71% said they had no concerns about a merger proceeding. They were also clear about what should be protected and what could be improved.

**71%**

Said they had no concerns about a merger

## Families want a merged organisation to do more

Families and community members wanted a merged organisation to reach more families, make services easier to find and access and help families get support earlier. Among people who completed the community survey, 51% said reaching more families across Victoria would make the biggest difference.

Providing better, more equitable access for families across communities was also important, with 88% rating it as very important.

Families and community members saw an opportunity for a merged organisation to have a stronger presence and help families earlier. Many said families often do not find out about QEC and Tweddle's services until they are already struggling.

**51%** Said reaching more families was the most important thing a merged organisation could do

**88%** Said better, more equitable access for families was very important

## Quality of care must be protected

Families were clear about what must not change. Quality of care was the highest priority, with 88% identifying it as the most important thing to keep the same.

Families described the care they received at QEC and Tweddle as supportive, non-judgemental and focused on the whole family. Many said these services were different from other services they had used.

**88%** Identified quality of care as the most important thing to keep the same

"The approach to family-centred care that goes beyond sleep techniques to support the whole parent. The non-judgemental, safe environment where parents can be vulnerable without fear."

**QEC family**

Families also placed a high value on improving outcomes for babies, children and families, with 87% of community survey respondents rating improving the experience and outcomes for babies, children and families as very important for a merged organisation.

**87%** Rated improving the experience and outcomes for babies, children and families as very important

Families and community members said they want consistency across locations. They want the same quality of care and the same approach regardless of which location they attend. This was raised as both an expectation and a concern about what a larger organisation would need to actively manage.

Families and community members also said their voice should continue to be part of how a merged organisation is designed and run. Consumer voice must be embedded at all levels of the organisation.

### **Relationships and local connection matter**

Families said trusted staff and strong local relationships should be protected.

Many spoke about the important connections both organisations have built with local communities, services and support networks. Families said these relationships take years to build and should not be lost.

### **Families want services that are easier to find**

Many families said they only learned about QEC or Tweddle through word of mouth or after reaching crisis point. They want a merged organisation to be easier to find and easier to access. Thirty-five per cent of community survey respondents said improving intake and assessment processes should be a priority for a merged organisation.

**35%** Said improving intake and assessment processes should be a priority for the merged organisation

"A bigger service needs to really promote what is available to families.  
People haven't heard about it."

**Tweddle family**

## **Families in regional Victoria want better access closer to home**

Families in regional areas described longer wait times and fewer options close to home. Many had friends or family in other parts of Victoria who could not access services because of where they lived. They saw a merged organisation with a broader network of locations as an opportunity to reach more families across the state.

“There should be more equitable access. Where you live currently limits what you can access and when. A bigger organisation with more locations could address this.”

**QEC family**

### **How this feedback will be used**

Families and community members gave their time to share what they value about QEC and Tweddle and what they want for other families. All responses were anonymous and confidential.

Family and community feedback helped both boards consider the benefits, opportunities and concerns associated with a merger. It was considered alongside financial, legal and operational advice and due diligence.

The consultation findings have also been provided to the Minister for Health, who has final approval on whether a merger proceeds.

If a merger is approved, the consultation findings will help inform how it is planned and delivered.