

# QEC and Tweddle voluntary merger exploration

## What employees said

The boards of Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) and Tweddle Child and Family Health Service (Tweddle) have been exploring a potential merger. They wanted to understand if a merger would improve care for babies, children and families. They also wanted to understand what it could mean for employees and the broader early parenting sector.

Employees were asked to share their views on the merger – what matters most to them, what they want to protect and the opportunities a merged organisation could offer.

This document summarises employee feedback. A summary of feedback from families, community members, partners and referrers is also available on the QEC and Tweddle websites.

## Who participated

From 24 February to 31 March 2026, 378 people were consulted about the merger. This included employees, families and carers, community members, partners, referrers and government representatives. They took part in surveys, focus groups, interviews, team discussions and roundtable sessions over the five-week consultation period.

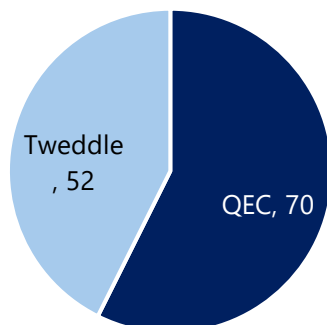
**122** Employees completed the staff survey

**91** Employees took part in 13 qualitative sessions

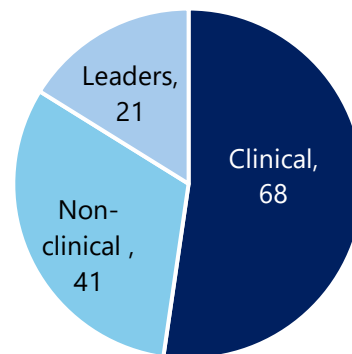
### Employee locations

Barwon, Dandenong, Footscray, Gippsland, Noble Park, Preston and Wodonga

Number of employees who completed the staff survey, by organisation



Number of employees who completed the staff survey, by role



## What we heard across all groups

Across all groups, there was broad and consistent support for the merger. Many participants expressed genuine optimism about what a merged organisation could achieve. But they were also clear on what must be protected through the process and what will need to be carefully managed if a merger proceeds. Themes were consistent across QEC and Tweddle participants.

What we heard	What it means for the merger
Broad support across all groups	Employees, families, partners, government and sector peers see the merger as an opportunity
Better access for families	A merged organisation can improve how families find, access and navigate support
Build on what works	Families, employees and partners want to protect quality of care, trusted relationships and local community connection
Sector leadership opportunity	A merged organisation is well placed to provide consistent clinical guidance and support to the growing EPC network
A stronger workforce	Greater scale creates broader career pathways, shared professional development and stronger communities of practice

## Support for the merger was strong and consistent among employees

Across both organisations, employees were broadly supportive of the merger. Seventy-six per cent of staff survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a merger could strengthen the work both organisations do to support babies, children and families. Four per cent disagreed.

Employees were positive about the opportunity. They also wanted to understand what the change would mean in practice, how culture would be managed and what it would mean for them personally.

"Success would depend on agreed shared mission, ethos and a commitment on both sides to progress and move forward and get through the bumps to achieve what we set out to."

**QEC employee**

## **Quality of care mattered most to employees across both organisations**

Quality of care was what mattered most to employees across both organisations, with 86% rating it as the most important thing to keep the same. Eighty-seven per cent of employees rated improving experiences and outcomes for babies, children and families as very important and 82% rated innovating to better support families experiencing vulnerability as very important.

Employees also said protecting organisational culture should be a top priority, particularly the values, ways of working and sense of purpose that both organisations have built over time. Employees described the culture of their organisation as one of the most significant things about working there.

## **Employees see real opportunity in a merged organisation**

Career development was rated very important by 59% of employees, learning and development by 63% and team connection and ways of working by 67%.

Employees said there were limited opportunities to move between programs, build new skills or step into leadership roles. A merged organisation with a broader range of programs, sites and specialisations could change this.

Staff in regional and outreach roles named communities of practice, shared training and more regular connection as things a larger organisation could offer to address the professional isolation they experienced.

Employees were also curious about drawing on the combined clinical expertise of both organisations, where two distinct but complementary approaches have developed. Senior leaders described this as one of the most compelling reasons to merge.

"A larger organisation with greater professional development opportunities, broader programs and stronger sector presence would be more attractive to the workforce than either standalone organisation is at its current scale."

**Tweddle employee**

## **Culture, leadership and identity must be managed carefully**

Forty-seven per cent of employees identified potential downsides to the merger. Uncertainty during transition, particularly around culture, ways of working and integration, was the most common concern.

Employees also raised concerns about whether the cultures of both organisations could strengthen through integration or whether one might dominate the other. Loss of culture and organisational identity came through in multiple survey responses and in every qualitative staff session.

Employees across both organisations named leadership as one of the reasons they stay and raised questions about how leadership would be managed through a merger.

## **Employees want a merged organisation to invest in workforce development**

Across the consultation, employees named specific things a merged organisation should prioritise. These came through in focus groups, team discussions and survey responses and reflect what employees see as the real opportunities for a merged organisation.

Employees want a merged organisation to:

- create stronger career pathways and progression opportunities across a larger organisation, with more roles, specialisations and leadership positions available
- give employees more flexibility to work closer to home
- build communities of practice so clinical and non-clinical staff can learn from each other across both organisations
- offer more learning and progression opportunities
- create a more sustainable workforce pipeline by making EPC roles more attractive and visible to the broader health and community sector
- support staff to develop deeper specialist expertise by combining the clinical knowledge and practice strengths of both organisations
- reduce professional isolation, particularly for staff in regional and outreach roles, through access to a larger peer network
- invest in better IT and support services.

## **Other themes employees raised**

Beyond the headline findings, employees raised a range of other themes across sessions and survey responses. These included:

- strengthening how families are referred between services and how discharge communication back to referrers
- aligning PASDS approaches to deliver consistent outcomes for families
- maintaining existing community programs and partnerships
- building stronger awareness and a clearer service identity to help reach families earlier, before they reach crisis point
- supporting Aboriginal families through culturally safe services and stronger partnerships
- keeping local relationships and community connections.

## **Employees want clear communication and engagement throughout the merger process**

Employees want to be kept informed at every stage, through their managers and teams. When asked what would help them feel informed and engaged through a potential merger:

- 110 out of 122 employees said they wanted clear communication about what is decided and what isn't
- 97 employees nominated regular updates from managers and team discussions
- 92 employees wanted clear timelines and next steps.

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

Employees across both organisations gave their time and shared their views openly and honestly throughout the consultation process. Families, community members, partners, referrers, government and peak bodies contributed generously, showing a genuine willingness to consider what would be better for babies, children and families.

All responses were anonymous and confidential.

The feedback shared through consultation helped both boards consider the benefits, opportunities and concerns associated with a merger. Consultation findings were considered alongside due diligence and independent financial and legal analysis.

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 findings will help inform how it is planned and delivered.