

The Forensic Science Queensland Journey So Far*

*as at 25 October 2024

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

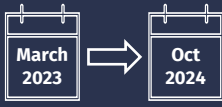
Created New FSQ Values Statement

Excellence Innovation Integrity
Respect Collaboration

International Recruitment of Experienced Forensic Biologists

11 offers, 9 accepts, 8 commenced. An additional 1 to commence by the end of October.

Ongoing, Extensive Recruitment Campaigns

 FSQ applications – 3306
FSQ interviews - 352
Forensic Biology applications – 1143
Forensic Biology interviews – 123

Director FSQ

Corporate Operations
Restructured FSQ to meet current and future staffing growth needs.

Forensic Operations

Corporate & Strategic Governance

Human Resources

Culture & Leadership

Forensic Biology

Forensic Chemistry

Historical Case Review

Quality Assurance

Research & Innovation

Director's Office

Developed Our People

- Developed and implemented a Leadership Program for Team Leaders and above.
- Delivered extensive scientific training in DNA interpretation for staff.
- Expanded the proficiency testing program to include all scientists.
- Developed a Gradual Exposure Program for new starters.
- Provided Mental Health First Aid training.
- Facilitated mindfulness training for all staff.
- Participated in Department of Public Prosecutions, Queensland Health, and FSQ collaborative sexual offence moot court exercise.
- Facilitated visits for staff to other labs to share learnings.
- Developed and implemented a FSQ Awards program to recognise staff achievements and years of service.

PROCESS FOUNDATION

Enhanced Scientific Practices

- In-depth reviews by external experts of biological screening, DNA analysis, illicit drug analysis and clandestine laboratory examination methods.
- Redesigned and delivered new sexual assault investigation kits (renamed as Forensic Medical Examination Kits - FMEKs).
- Implemented new kits for toxicology sample collection, contamination reduction, and clothing collection for sexual assault investigation (SAI).
- Developed Early Evidence Kits (EEKs) for SAI use in remote locations.
- Released new robust DNA interpretation guidelines.
- Transitioned to case management approach for major crime.
- Implemented a stakeholder-based casework prioritisation model.
- Implemented a legal-led historical case review process, 15 cases referred to FSQ for review (10 in progress). 927 current cases also identified for review.
- Redesigned the Statement of Witness and supporting annexures compliant with the Supreme Court Practice Direction 2024/14.
- Developed and implemented a Summary of Results report to provide FSQ's justice stakeholders with more user-friendly and timely results.
- Recommended for ISO/IEC 17025 NATA re-accreditation through a rigorous site visit in July 2024.

Increased FSQ Capacity

- Ongoing national and international recruitment campaigns to attract qualified and experienced forensic biologists.
- Developed a 'Recognition of Prior Learning' process to streamline training for experienced scientists.
- Redesigned rostering for scientists to increase efficiency and completion rates of work tasks.
- Redesigned workspaces and reviewed processes to increase efficiency.
- Reduced the sample backlog by >5500 from February to October 2024.

Implemented Outsourcing Program

- Introduced an outsourcing program to utilise scientists from external forensic providers to work remotely from overseas and interstate.
 - 3.1 x International (NZ, UK) scientists - Property Crime
 - 4.5 x International (UK) and Australian scientists - Major Crime
- 10,561 DNA profile interpretations and 7,441 DNA profile reviews conducted by outsourcing partners since June 2023.
- Onboarding additional 2 scientists from US and negotiating an agreement with another US forensic service provider for a further 5-10 scientists.
- Expanded NZ provider outsourcing agreement to include FMEK screening.

SCIENCE INNOVATION

Innovation Initiatives

- Developed a FSQ Research and Innovation Strategy to guide current and future projects.
- Developed a Project Management Framework including the FSQ Validation Manual and FSQ Implementation Framework.
- Established collaborative research partnerships with Griffith University and Charles Sturt University.
- Commenced research comparing evidence recovery techniques and evaluating differential cell separation methods.

Improved Testing Methods

- Verified new swabs for use in the redesigned FMEKs.
- Verified a new DNA collection, preservation, and shipment method.
- Verified changes to the semen identification test.
- Verified a new screening test for blood.
- Completed an assessment of the DNA extraction performance for blood, saliva and semen samples.
- Verified changes to the DNA extraction (releasing the DNA from the cellular material), quantitation (measuring the amount of DNA in the sample), amplification (copying specific sites on the DNA), electrophoresis (measuring the DNA) methods.
- Verified a new DNA analysis method to target and analyse male specific DNA.

INFRASTRUCTURE

COI recommendations progress (final and interim reports)

67

9

39

11

126

■ Closed ■ Completed pending approval ■ In progress ■ Yet to commence

Established FSQ Governance

- Developed a new FSQ Strategic Plan 2023-27 with a new Vision and Purpose to unite staff and stakeholders in FSQ's future journey
- Tabled 4 progress reports in Parliament on the implementation of COI recommendations.
- Implemented 3 business cases for significant change (BCFSC) to establish org structure and enhance staffing resources. 4th BCFSC is under consultation.
- Transitioned to DJAG on July 1 as per the Forensic Science Queensland Act 2024.
- Built a new FSQ website to provide information to stakeholders and the public and publish data (www.fsq.qld.gov.au).

Enhanced Scientific Equipment

- Developed a new case management system to track business as usual cases and historical case review for improved KPI reporting.
- Purchased new, fit for purpose microscopes and consumables for Evidence Recovery.
- Purchased 2 x new robotics platforms for DNA extraction.
- Upgraded end-of-life equipment for DNA analysis.
- Purchased an Automated Sperm Searcher for FMEK examinations.
- Purchased new equipment for Forensic Chemistry for illicit drug analysis.

Improved Facilities

- Built and delivered additional office accommodation to house increased staffing numbers and improve staff wellbeing.
- Refurbished existing office space to house the new Quality Assurance and IT teams.
- Planned refurbishment of Forensic Biology, Research and Innovation and Forensic Chemistry Laboratories.