



Inspírit -
to encourage, embolden
and inspire...

Mamre as a public change agent.

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Mamre acknowledges Jean-Jacques Sempé for the cartoon on the front page.

Mamre as a public change agent

Executive Summary

This paper was written to explore the implications of recommendation 9 in Dr Michael Kendrick's review of Mamre in 2006, that is: **"Mamre should continue and expand in its public change agency role such that it takes on equal significance with its service delivery role"** and the goal in the Strategic Plan 2007-09, **"Mamre, in partnership with families and individuals with a disability, takes a leadership and change-agency role in the broader community with regard to disability issues"**.

From its inception, Mamre has been out of step with established service provision. Its commitment to inclusion, the value each person brings to community, listening deeply to the experience of people with a disability and their families, and the importance of relationships offered a new way of thinking.

Mamre has an impressive history of effecting change, family by family, and the public change this has made on the broader community has been significant, however, the extent of this influence will never be known. Most of past Mamre's initiatives have been in response to parents' expressed needs, together with an openness to adapt and change. In the last decade Mamre has taken a more planned and strategic approach.

Mamre now has a sizeable constituency and reputation in Queensland that would give it strong moral and political "bone fides" both with people with a disability, their families and professionals. Many systemic issues impinge on the wellbeing of people with a disability and their families. Mamre is in a position to influence the service sector and the broader community about these issues with more strategic planned change agency.

This raises a number of challenges for Mamre, the most important being that its integrity is embedded in its core work of family support and that any public change agency should not impinge on this work. Mamre's current change activities could be more potent with a common focus and plan. Another issue is that over-emphasis on public change may threaten Mamre's Public Benevolent Institution status.

It is recommended that Mamre continue and expand its public change agency. This activity should remain subsidiary to the family support work and not impact on it. The Director should direct all public change activities with the advice and support from the Leadership Team and use the capacities of the Parent Program and latent Sibling Program as its base.

It is proposed that, in order to maintain the focus and intent of this public change agency work, it is badged **"Inspirit – to encourage, embolden and inspire"**.

Context

In 2006 at the request of the Management Committee of Mamre Association Inc (Mamre), Dr Michael Kendrick reviewed the organisation with a number of particular questions in mind, including:

“Where should Mamre Association / Community focus its service energy and resources in the next five years?”

“Mamre has always taken a change agent role effecting change in a much broader arena than Mamre itself. We have not acknowledged the extra effort and energy this takes as it is over and above the usual workloads that most service providers take on in Queensland. What is the place of Mamre in the wider arena?”¹

Within Michael's response was the following recommendation:

“Mamre should continue and expand in its public change agency role such that it takes on equal significance with its service delivery role.”²

Michael gave these reasons:

- It is an established service and change organisation with a long and credible track record.
- It has a sizeable constituency and reputation in Queensland that would give it strong moral and political “bone fides” both with families and professionals.
- Its vision and values remain as relevant and needed as when Mamre began (particularly due to the lack of public debate on values and vision).
- If Mamre is not to expand it will need other alternatives for people with a disability and their families to expand opportunities that do not require Mamre to overextend itself.
- With its demonstrated ability and skill to cultivate allies, it can see its change agent role as one it can share with others who are like-minded.

As a consequence of this and other complementary indicators, Mamre adopted the following Goal in its Strategic Plan 2007-9:

GOAL 4

Mamre, in partnership with families and individuals with a disability, takes a leadership and change-agency role in the broader community with regard to disability issues.

This paper is written to advise the Management Committee on policy changes and the Director on operational changes that may be required to meet this goal.

Definitions

For clarification, key words have been defined.

Change agent

The term change agent is not included in the more traditional dictionaries, however, Wikipedia identifies the word **change agent**, or **agent of change**,

as someone who intentionally or indirectly causes or accelerates social, cultural, or behavioural change.

Public

Public is defined as of or pertaining to the people as a whole; belonging to, affecting, or concerning the community or nation.³

Family Support (DSQ)

Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) clarifies family support through its aims which are to:

- strengthen the capacity of families to care for their family member with a disability
- assist families to build formal and informal supports
- assist families to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence
- support the inclusion of family members with a disability in community life
- reduce family crises.

The Family Support Program is based on family-centred practice and uses an holistic approach to supporting families:

- respecting individual family lifestyles, values and stated priorities in caring for their family member with a disability
- identifying and recognising family strengths and expertise
- considering and addressing the needs of other family members when necessary
- assisting families to identify and build a range of informal supports around the whole family
- being responsive to family crises or immediate needs
- assisting families to plan and develop individualised, flexible and responsive supports that can change over time as the family's needs change
- tailoring supports to meet family needs rather than supports being driven by existing service types.⁴

Family Support (Mamre)

Mamre supports families and works with them to build a rich and full life for the person with a disability within their local community.

Mamre's family support strategies comply with DSQ's aims and strategies, however, Mamre's Principles of Service⁵ direct staff to take this work further by encouraging families to envision a good life for their family member, to plan for the future and to keep imagining better. The Principles of Service of particular relevance are:

Vision

Mamre believes that families have within them a positive vision for their person with a disability to live a full and ordinary life. Each family's vision is unique created from its cultural background, language, stories, values, expectations and priorities.

Planning

To reach that vision, families must plan for now, tomorrow and the future, and can be supported to do this by their friends, natural networks and Mamre.

Imagining better The future will be shaped by what we imagine today to be a better life for people with a disability and their families.

Mamre's history as a change agent

In 1982 Mamre through its newly written Charter⁶ challenged many, even those who were advocating change.

In 1980 the National Women's Advisory Council's report to the Federal Government outlined a future envisioned by mothers of disabled children which focused on easing the financial, emotional and physical burden of disability, greater access to professionals and an expansion of community based group home-like environments rather than institutions. The recommendations were innovative for their time. Families sought to "be treated as equal partners with professionals in making decisions about their child's future"⁷.

In contrast, Mamre's Charter spoke of inclusion, the value each person brings to community, listening deeply to the experience of families, and the importance of relationships. The Charter says, "It is the families themselves who point us in the direction we should go" and "in simple terms, the ideals are that all people may feel valued and included, through:

- an acceptance of each person,
- a recognition of, and valuing of, the gift that each person is,
- the Community's warm welcome and hospitality to people,
- the Community member's desire to take the time to "be with" each person, not just "do for", in order that the giver might also receive,
- an attempt to meet the diverse needs of those who approach Mamre"⁸.

While only a few families would have been able to articulate the difference between these policy positions, many felt the difference and the initial Mamre services were overwhelmed by demand.

The welcoming and familiar environments of the Mamre houses were safe places for families to share their concerns and to think of a better life not only for their children but also for themselves. The Mamre Parent Program allowed mothers (and later, fathers) to have time to rest, recharge and develop a greater awareness of themselves. Soon after, brothers and sisters had similar opportunities through the Sibling Program.

The Mamre community of people who supported the houses and shared their lives with the young people who came to stay lived a counter-cultural lifestyle, where they could "walk the talk", imagine new ways and test what was possible. Over time, the realities of sustainable funding, award wages and government regulations impacted on the original vision. Nevertheless, Mamre maintained its commitment to the Charter and to the original group of families it supported.

Mamre continued to challenge established practice, family by family. Families, in turn, challenged Mamre to provide support in new ways, including

home-based support and cash transfers. As the young people with a disability grew into adults, they came to Mamre for assistance in their own right. Recently one parent complimented Mamre by saying “The service is shaped by the people it serves”.

Mamre’s culture of listening, reflecting and questioning, and remaining open to change inevitably led to new initiatives. Building Informal Networks, the mentoring of new organisations and Mamre’s work with facilitated communication are examples.

In the last decade, Mamre has taken a more strategic planned approach to change, first realigning its funding and structure to allow it to work more affectively “family by family”. Mamre then consolidated its efforts to understand more deeply how best to do this. With this knowledge, Mamre then chose to share what it had learnt, challenge current funding policies and test some emerging ideas. An outcome is Pave the Way, a daring, hopeful yet practical strategy assisting families to shape their family member’s future by “turning vision into action through planning”.

Twenty-five years on, Mamre is in a strong position, reaping the benefits of its fidelity to families and staff, many of whom are now in leadership roles. Mamre’s world view has continued to be out of step with funding bodies and policy makers and has found itself in an excellent position to have political influence due to its sizeable constituency and support from both families and professionals. Many people with a disability, now confident adults, speak for themselves.

Mamre’s core work has always been family support. Nevertheless there may be good reason to consider planned public change agency with the same intention and vigour it works to effect change on a family-by-family basis.

What needs to be changed?

With every decade there are new challenges for people with a disability and their families in achieving a rich and ordinary life. The issues identified below are of particular concern to Mamre and the families it serves.

Broader acceptance of what is possible

The community living movement continues to be under threat and many consider that ground is being lost. With services focusing much of their energy on compliance regimes, the untidy nature of people’s lives and the sheer joy of people’s stories become an impediment rather than a positive outcome.

Yet these stories fire the imagination of families, neighbours and friends. They demonstrate what is possible and open the doorway for others to try, succeed and try again. The community living movement will be saved, not by clever service workers, but by ordinary people who expect people with a disability to have their own homes, jobs, friends and a rich and full life like everyone else.

Work needs to be done to embed the idea that people with a disability deserve to have rich and full lives in their own communities; that communities are poorer for every person they exclude. Each person brings his or her own gifts, needs and realities and we are not done until everyone is welcomed.

Reality to match the rhetoric

Twenty years of influence by people with a disability, families and community service workers have led to the government disability policies to be respectfully written, reflecting a vision of inclusion and rights. However, most government officers whose job is to interpret this vision into realistic and useful programs have inadequate understanding or skill to do so. The high turnover of staff and the emphasis on systemic solutions have alienated many community service providers, service users and families. The government's acceptance of the limited and abusive reality of many people with a disability ridicules this rhetoric.

The government departments are also functioning through crisis management, currently focusing on ageing parents and the legacy of little action for too long. Families are doubly disappointed, first hearing the rhetoric of rights and inclusion then given little hope of any practical assistance. It is little wonder that families submit, at best, to low expectations and minimal standards and at worst, to despair.

Families need evidence that people with a disability can have rich and full lives, that governments want this to happen, and services can work skilfully, creatively and respectfully with families to make it happen.

From Clienthood to Partnership

For decades families have called for more funding and the subsequent increase in services has been welcomed. However, it brings with it a greater risk of people with a disability and their families being seduced into 'clienthood'. The role of client often subsumes the natural networks and roles people have, such as family member, tenant, and neighbour.

Services have been moving into areas traditionally managed by people themselves and their families and friends, including their life plans and dreams, deciding where, how and with whom they should live, and allocating when and what level of service is required. With this reliance on paid service, many families have lost their natural authority and with it a sense of responsibility for the family member's future. Communities, in turn, quickly absolve their responsibilities too. The simple support solutions found within loving families and concerned communities have been overrun and sidelined by formal service. And when services fail, families understandably have difficulty taking back their responsibility for their family members.

Currently the discussion is about how to relieve the burden on carers. Families, not the people with a disability, are becoming the focus in the political domain. Families are provided with services as an end in itself rather than as a means to a better life for people with a disability.

The funding programs often cause families to compete against each other for resources, to question who is more deserving or to write pessimistic applications. Families are required to paint a dreadful picture of their lives, just to receive consideration for their needs.

Families need to reclaim their natural authority and responsibilities. It is only then that services will limit their influence and develop respectful relationships in order to work with families in partnership.

Development of the next generation of leaders

Most family support programs in Queensland use agency staff to provide small amounts of support as required. Yet families need people who are consistent and reliable and who know them well. The disability sector is noted for its high turnover, particularly for direct support workers. The median of 28% is significantly higher than the national All Industries median for 1999, of 9.1%, and the median for the Human Services sector, of 14.7%⁹. This disproportionate and continual loss of people is costly for the sector and inevitably leads to a depletion of people ready to take leadership roles.

An unintended consequence of children with a disability entering regular school settings and receiving services at home is the lack of connection of families from each other. Without intentional action, the disability sector is at risk of a future generation with only a handful of leaders, isolated families and a transient ill-informed workforce.

Intentional strategies are needed to ensure that people with a disability, families and staff are connected, encouraged and skilled to take leadership roles in the next generation.

How does Mamre currently effect change?

Change at the family level

Mamre's core business is to support families and has also acted over the years to encourage them to envision, plan and imagine better. Many consider this micro change of working "family-by family" as the most powerful.

The key workers are directed to "be intentional about everything"¹⁰, to take the hard road, develop relationships with families so they challenge in return and keep Mamre honest. How this is done is equally important. A skilful key worker is discerning, able to listen, takes time to reflect on the best response and is able to learn themselves from families' experiences.

Key workers report that the family support plan and review process offers many opportunities to influence families. They also talk of "seizing the moment" understanding that people with a disability and their families often see a way forward through informal conversations and sharing with other people in similar circumstances. It is the intentional cup of coffee or the guided conversations between people over a shared meal where the best work is done.

The Parent Program and Sibling Program were also identified as important change strategies where families met other families, offered information and were given opportunities to develop skills and awareness.

Mamre works hard to engage and maintain support staff who will complement the family, rather than resort to agency staff. These relationships can become long-lasting, complex and rich and build the Mamre community. The informal networks are immense and extend to families' circles of support, other like-minded services and the broader community.

Mamre will never know what public change has occurred as a consequence of their work with people with a disability and families. Rarely is Mamre acknowledged nor does it want to be. The change strategies within families should not be visible; however, one can see the guiding hand.

Change as part of Mamre's culture

Mamre has worked hard to develop and maintain a culture of listening to people with a disability and their families, reflection and questioning. It is matched with a readiness to adapt and change. Mamre's essential openness to service as a journey, not a solution has allowed it to innovate and learn more easily.

Change within the wider sector

Mamre intentionally responds to opportunities to share their experience for the express purpose to effect change. Some recent examples are when Mamre staff have:

- participated in sector training and information sessions;
- mentored other family support services in times of need;
- supported new services in their establishment phase; and
- presented at conferences and workshops.

Staff identified the most potent strategies have been when they have shared the opportunity with people with a disability and their families, demonstrating what is possible and getting people to tell their own story.

This work has been responsive rather than planned, however, a number of planned initiatives have had the express goal of effecting change in the broader community. In 2005, Mamre invited people with a disability and families across Queensland to the Inspirit Conference to explore and deepen a positive and inclusive vision for themselves, understand the social and service contexts and the threats, and develop practical strategies to put their vision into action. Pave the Way has also planned for capacity to engage in the broader debate on succession planning across Australia.

In the past, Mamre has contributed to alliances and coalitions which focus on a particular issue. Mamre brings significant clout and is welcomed. However, the past connections between other change agents, including Queensland Parents of People with a Disability and the Community Resource Unit, have diminished making these alliances less likely to happen.

Change through leadership development

In the twenty-five years, Mamre has identified people with a disability, families and staff who are ready to take leadership and has offered them opportunities to tell their story and to speak out. Mamre has found capacity to support people to conferences and events which are typically beyond their reach. The Parent Program often invites visiting dignitaries to connect with key families who would benefit from their ideas. On occasions Mamre has provided additional support to families who are taking extraordinary action to improve the lives of their family member.

Mamre trusts these staff and families will speak out. Over the 25 years, this work has borne fruit. Many families and staff have taken courageous steps in their own lives and for people with a disability generally. While much of this leadership development has been responsive and serendipitous the more potent outcomes have come from a planned strategic approach.

Change through staff selection

Prospective Mamre staff attend an information session which outlines the values underpinning Mamre's work. This helps identify those who are willing to work in a way that is considered by many to be 'counter-cultural'.

Mamre also calls on staff to consider their role in the Mamre community as an integral part of their work. Mamre expects a vigorous commitment to 'imagining better' which is likely to flow into their private lives. Staff are asked to "walk the talk" regardless of their role.

Selecting staff because of their values, vigour and hope for people with a disability and their families has led to many staff remaining longer and returning. Mamre experiences a lower than average turnover of staff and this has assisted it to retain its corporate history and wisdom¹¹.

There are many people who could manage a service the size of Mamre; however the current Director is also personally committed to the values. She is able to deconstruct what is happening, identify the risks and know which ones to take. These particular attributes are central to Mamre's capacity to keep the creative tension and to stimulate change. If Mamre is to continue with its change agenda the choice of her successor will need to be carefully considered in this light.

Mamre's workforce strategies complement its commitment to change. It has built on its knowledge of what works. Its values are clear and it has high expectations for staff as agents of change.

Influencing Government

Mamre has a courteous relationship with its funding bodies, yet a healthy disregard for their influence. Mamre has the bone fides to challenge policies and requirements which are unreasonable and has done so. Mamre also has many allies within government who support its activities and Mamre responds generously to requests for advice and training.

There is no doubt that Mamre has influenced the government's understanding of family support, and this public change agency was planned and supported by other like-minded organisations.

Issues

The mix of Mamre's history, the current environment and how Mamre does business raise a number of issues. These are outlined below with recommendations for action.

Responsive verses planned change

In the past, Mamre's work in public change agency has been more responsive than planned. There are very good reasons for this. Mamre's Charter guides people to listen deeply to families. "It is the families themselves who point us in the direction we should go."¹² Mamre also responds to external requests for assistance and will do so if it is in the interests of families generally.

Some of these responses have had consequences which were unexpected and have challenged Mamre's capacity to maintain the required level of response.

Nevertheless, Mamre now has more than enough experience to recognise gaps and a need for change. Planned strategic change typically works better than responsive efforts. Pave the Way was a carefully planned initiative and has already evidenced a significant change capacity.

It is recommended that Mamre take a planned approach to its public change activities (say, 40%) and, at the same time, make space for ideas, opportunities and unintended consequences which come from its responsive work (60%).

Many ideas from Mamre have been taken forward and developed by funding bodies, CRU, QPPD and other organisations focusing on systemic issues. However, in recent years, these "partnerships" have not worked well. Mamre has witnessed the depletion of planned change strategies to which it can contribute and has on occasions resorted to acting on its own.

A planned and dedicated approach will require Mamre to clarify its position and strategies. Work will need to be done to reach an agreed position and understanding on a topic and who will be the spokesperson.

When Mamre does take action it will need to ask such questions as:

- Is it worth our while to contribute?
- What can we learn from others?
- Can we realistically influence the debate?
- How will we measure our effectiveness?

It is recommended that all public change agency is guided, monitored and reviewed by the Director who is informed and supported by the Leadership Team and answerable to the Committee of Management.

Mamre is in no position to replace these change agency organisations. The issue is how to regenerate the momentum of the past. Mamre should not duplicate their efforts. Rather, it should support and, where necessary, work to re-energise these organisations and regain the successful partnerships of the past.

It is also recommended that Mamre continues to support and encourage any partnerships with other organisations in public change activities.

Capacity of Key Workers

A clear message to Mamre is that its integrity is embedded in its core work of family support and that any public change agency should not impinge on this work. If it did, the damage would be worse than doing nothing. Further, it can be inferred by the comments above that effecting change, family by family, is the most powerful and sustainable of public change strategies.

Mamre asks key workers to:

1. portray a compelling and hopeful future;
2. market what they believe and do;
3. build people's information;
4. model good practice;
5. do what it takes to make things happen;
6. evaluate, question, learn the lessons; and
7. work towards real and lasting change¹³.

Mamre also asks key workers to assist people with a disability and families to develop and maintain natural supports and networks in their local communities. Mamre has a daunting task to equip key workers with adequate time, skills and capacities to do all these things.

In turn, key workers identify, train and supervise direct support workers, who are also pivotal to the success of these change strategies. The key workers' current workload to employ support staff and process the paperwork currently impinges on these more important community based activities. Mamre is aware of this and has included a review of the key worker role in its operational plan.

It is recommended that Mamre review the key worker role with particular understanding of the time, skills and capacities required to work with people with a disability and their families to envision, plan and to imagine better.

In Mamre's enthusiasm to respond to broader change strategies, key workers are asked or volunteer to contribute beyond their core work. This offers good learning opportunities, yet there does not appear to be adequate consideration for the core work left undone or the unintended consequences of this additional work. Mostly the staff cope, however, this is not good practice. When it all becomes too hard, the core business of supporting people with a disability and their families prevails, and rightly so.

Letting people down, even if it is through extra curricular activities, does not bode well for Mamre's reputation. Taking on new commitments which are not sustainable can do damage to people and the organisation.

It is recommended that both planned and responsive public change initiatives are kept distinct and separate from the core work of key workers. If key workers become involved, Mamre has considered the consequences of this extra work with strategies to continue their core work.

Connections within the sector

Initially Mamre was a small counter-cultural community which forged its own separate path. Now Mamre is a large organisation with significant influence both with families and with the service sector. Some consider Mamre continues to go it alone, highly regarded, but not being challenged externally to do better. Mamre does not appear to have the strong connected relationships with other organisations who would challenge it to improve.

Allies would value Mamre's voice at the political level – it would add significant credence to some of the campaigns of late. Working with other like-minded organisations would increase its understanding of the theory and practice of change and share the responsibility for commenting on key issues which affect people with a disability and their families.

There are many issues which may challenge Mamre. An example is “what support works for families in chronic poverty?” These families may not be supported by Mamre, because of their complex needs or their dismissal of Mamre's values. Mamre could contribute to the debate even though it is not directly involved. Many of these issues have complex answers, and Mamre's contribution would deepen its practice and increase the quality of what it does.

Some staff should be involved in sector-wide issues. Mamre needs to be in regular contact with, and perhaps challenging, other organisations, such as Carers Queensland, and family support organisations. Mamre needs to pay attention to sector relationships and be aware of the integrity issues which come with taking the public stage. Without attention, there will be a cost to Mamre, mostly likely a personal cost to the leaders.

It is recommended that Mamre dedicate time and energy to connect with the broader service sector and to stimulate and contribute to debates on key issues affecting people with a disability and their families.

Using existing capacity more affectively

Mamre's Parent Program and Sibling Program have traditionally focused on providing guided time for family members to reflect and renew. This has gradually changed to provide more information and opportunities for families to imagine better and to take courage to make changes.

The Strategic Plan realigns both programs to focus more directly on change strategies. Some families who have come to rely on the Parent Program for a stress-free holiday may not support this. However, there are now other

holiday opportunities outside of Mamre which families can access, that were not available before. Both programs have significant capacity to “encourage, embolden and inspire” families, much in the way the Inspirit conference did in 2005.

Within the existing Parent and Sibling Programs, Mamre provides greater emphasis on activities which support the goals of the Strategic Plan and “encourage, embolden and inspire” families to make change.

Managing Mamre’s Public Benevolent Institution status

Mamre has been cautioned that taking a public change agency role may impinge on its Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status. This is of concern as many staff benefit from the salary sacrifice opportunities which are offered.

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) advises that the dominant purpose of a PBI is the direct relief of “poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness”. Mamre’s core business of family support validates Mamre’s PBI status. Other purposes and activities (such as leadership development or training) must be incidental to that purpose. The ATO directs that “they must be minor in extent and importance”.¹⁴

Deciding whether Mamre is predominantly for the provision of benevolent relief is a matter of fact and degree. The ATO weighs all relevant factors and both Mamre’s current constitution and activities will be relevant. If there are changes in Mamre’s constitution or operations, its status may change. Mamre’s character upon foundation will not be determinative. However, the foundation, history and proposed future directions may all be relevant.

While Mamre’s way of working has traditionally been developmental, collaborative and hopeful, Mamre’s public change could become adversarial and confrontational. A safeguard against this would be to develop a badge for the change process which encapsulates Mamre’s way of working.

It is recommended Mamre’s change agency activities remain secondary and minor to its core business of family support. Any change of emphasis is made after consulting with the ATO on how it impinges on Mamre’s PBI status.

It is also recommended that Mamre’s public change activities reflect Mamre’s current Objectives, Charter, Values and Principles of Service. A badge for this public change agency could be “Inspirit-to encourage, embolden and inspire”.

A way forward

In the light of the recommendations above (and also listed on p20) and additional comments by interviewees, a way forward is offered.

Public change agency remains subsidiary to Mamre's core business.

Mamre expands its change agency role to the extent that it continues to be subsidiary to its core business of family support and does not affect its PBI status.

Change agency activities reflect Mamre's Values.

Mamre's change agency reflects its current Objectives, Charter, Values and Principles of Service. Mamre badges its public change agency as "Inspirit – to encourage, embolden and inspire".

A planned approach to change agency

Mamre commits to a planned approach to change agency (say 40%) with generous capacity to respond to opportunities, ideas and unintended consequences which come from families and allies (60%).

Public change strategies stay with the Director

The Director of Mamre manages Inspirit activities and is the public spokesperson for Mamre. She is advised and supported by the Leadership Team and reports to the Committee of Management.

Inspirit has four main directions:

1. Active engagement with the sector to stimulate and contribute to debates important to people with a disability and families.
2. Provision of education and information to develop the capacities of families and service workers.
3. Identification and development of staff and family leaders.
4. Capacity to trial new ideas and service types on a hosted or auspiced basis.

Resources are kept distinct and separate from core business

Any resources for Inspirit are kept distinct and separate from Mamre's core business of family support. If Key Workers are seconded from their role to write papers, present at conferences or provide broad sector training, there is reparation for the work unattended. This is an important safeguard for the integrity of the core work of Mamre.

Review of the role of the key worker

Mamre reviews the current potency of the key workers in their work to assist families to envision, plan and imagine better. It is understood the activities of key workers and the support staff they supervise are pivotal to Mamre's integrity and their work, family by family, is the most potent of Mamre's public change strategies.

Realignment of the Parent and Sibling Program

Mamre aligns the Parent Program (and latent Sibling Program) to have greater emphasis on change and development, in the Strategic Plan. The Director directly oversees these programs because of their tie with the directions of Inspirit and for greater coherence with other change initiatives.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1. Mamre's public change agency is guided, monitored and reviewed by the Director who is informed and supported by the Leadership Team and answerable to the Committee of Management.*
- 2. It is recommended that Mamre take a planned approach to its public change activities (say, 40%) and, at the same time, make space for ideas, opportunities and unintended consequences which come from its responsive work (60%).*
- 3. Mamre continues to support and encourage any partnerships with other organisations in public change activities.*
- 4. Mamre review the key worker role with particular understanding of the time, skills and capacities required to work with families to envision, plan and to imagine better.*
- 5. both planned and responsive public change initiatives are kept distinct and separate from the core work of key workers. If key workers become involved, Mamre has considered the consequences of this extra work with strategies to continue their core work.*
- 6. It is recommended that Mamre dedicate time and energy to connect with the broader service sector and to stimulate and contribute to debates on key issues affecting people with a disability and their families.*
- 7. Within the existing Parent and Sibling Programs, Mamre provides greater emphasis on activities which support the goals of the Strategic Plan and "encourage, embolden and inspire" families to make change.*
- 8. Mamre's change agency activities remain secondary and minor to its core business of family support. Any change of emphasis is made after consulting with the ATO on how it impinges on Mamre's PBI status.*
- 9. It is also recommended that Mamre's public change activities reflect Mamre's current Objectives, Charter, Values and Principles of Service. A badge for this public change agency could be "Inspirit-to encourage, embolden and inspire".*

Individuals consulted

Kevin	Cocks	Director Queensland Advocacy Inc
Anne	Cross	Director Uniting Care Queensland
Pauline	Davis	Acting Executive Director Disability Services Queensland
Jan	Dyke	consultant
Zoë	Jackes	Key Worker Mamre
Rachel	Johnson	Team Leader (North) Mamre
Julie	Johnson	Team Leader (South) Mamre
Despina	Macris	Chairperson Mamre Management Committee
Sharyn	Pacey	Consultant, Information Program, Community Resource Unit
Catherine	Raju	Resource Officer Pave the Way
Margaret	Rodgers	Co-ordinator Building Informal Networks - Mamre
Lynda	Shevellar	Acting Director Community Resource Unit
Kathryn	Treston	Director - Mamre
Peter	Vacca	Key Worker Mamre
Greg	Wagner	Network Coordinator Queenslanders with Disability Network Inc
Jeremy	Ward	Manager Pave the Way

References

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 - ² Kendrick M *Brief Summary Report To The Management Committee of Mamre Regarding A Specialized Review of Mamre's Roles and Future*, April 2006 (p10)
 - ³ The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary 1993
 - ⁴ Disability Services Queensland website 2007
 - ⁵ Mamre Association Inc *Policy and Procedures 2007* (p20)
 - ⁶ *ibid* (p18)
 - ⁷ National Women's Advisory Council *My Child Was Born Disabled* 1980 (p5)
 - ⁸ Mamre Association Inc *Policy and Procedures 2007* (p18)
 - ⁹ Disability Services Queensland, *Planning for Capability – Five-Year Workforce Planning Strategy for the Queensland Disability Sector 2001-2006* Jan 2001 p12
 - ¹⁰ Interview with Kathryn Treston, Director Mamre
 - ¹¹ Figures from HR officer indicate an average of 21% turnover per annum (including support workers) compared to the average of 30% as outlined in DSQ's study into Planning for Capability
 - ¹² Mamre Association Inc, *Policy and Procedures 2007* (p18)
 - ¹³ Interview with Kathryn Treston, Director Mamre
 - ¹⁴ Australian Tax Office, *Is your organisation a public benevolent institution?* ATO website 2007.