

2 November 2018

Our ref: BDS:CrLC

Mr Joel Cooper and Eugene Krykun
Performance Audit
Queensland Audit Office
PO Box 15396
City East Qld 4002

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Cooper and Mr Krykun

Queensland Audit Office: Forensic Services Audit Strategy

Thank you for meeting with representatives from the Queensland Law Society and the opportunity to discuss the Queensland Audit Office's Forensic Services Audit Strategy 2018.

In addition to the correspondence sent to you by Vanessa Krulin on 18 October 2018, please find below general information about the communication between the Queensland Law Society (**QLS**) and the Attorney-General about the delays in producing drug certificates, a copy of which is **enclosed**, and the QLS concerns about the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

We hope that this will be of assistance and would be pleased to provide you with any more information as required. We would be grateful if you could keep the contents of our correspondence confidential at this time.

Drug purity certificates

On February 2017, QLS wrote to the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police in regard to the extensive delays in obtaining drug purity certificates which are essential to committing a matter to trial. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the average wait time is six months, which can result in an accused being held on remand inappropriately or for a significant amount of time before the matter is committed to trial. QLS called for an expansion in the number of facilities that are suitable accredited and authorised to prepare drug purity certificates. Our letter dated 14 February 2018 is **attached**.

The Society is concerned that delays in obtaining forensic results can directly impact on a defendant's access to justice and the communities' understandable expectation that defendants and victims of crime are entitled to a timely resolution.

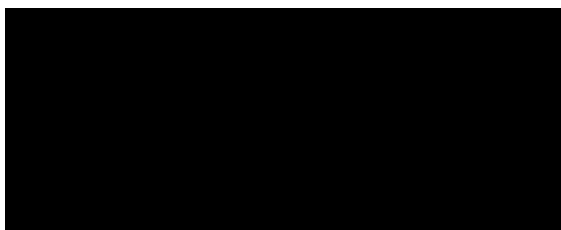
Delay in the provision of forensic results causes a considerable expense to government by the requirement of numerous additional mentions of a matter before a court. This can contribute to the ongoing expense of the court system, prisoner population and Queensland Legal Aid.

Mental Health Review Tribunal

In October QLS wrote to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services to reiterate our previously conveyed concerns that the Tribunal is severely under-resourced, lacking basic amenities and dot not operate according to well established processes or within parameters which are adhered to by other Queensland Courts and Tribunals. The correspondence provided a number of examples raised by our members and highlights the severe obstruction to justice and due process for vulnerable groups in our community.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter or to discuss further, please contact Legal Policy Manager, Binny De Saram on [REDACTED] or by email to [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully



Ken Taylor
President