

Your Ref:

Our Ref: Direct Advocacy

12 April 2012

The Hon. David Gibson MP  
Minister for Police and Community Safety  
GPO Box 1425  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Minister

## QLS ISSUES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Further to my letter of 4 April 2012, I thought it may assist if I provided you with a snapshot of policy issues that should be considered by you in due course.

### 1. Access to legal representation in prisons

The Society has long advocated for a consistent and equitable approach to access to legal representation in Queensland's correctional facilities. In particular, the Society is concerned with the disparity in identification requirements when accessing different centres and difficulties for practitioners in accessing their clients in a timely fashion. We have been working with the Department closely on reviewing various standard operating procedures. We **enclose** our previous submissions on these issues:

- Letter to the Hon Neil Roberts MP dated 19 May 2011- Access to Legal Representation
- Letter to Ms Karla Hartnett dated 9 August 2011- Access to Legal Representation
- Letter to Ms Karla Hartnett dated 13 January 2012 – Consultation- SOP- Visitors to a Facility
- Letter to Ms Karla Hartnett dated 14 February 2012- Consultation- SOP- Legal Resource Access

### 2. Joint initiative with Queensland Police Service (QPS) - Regional lawyer lists

The Society has been working with QPS to develop regional lawyer lists which can be handed to persons in custody. The Parliamentary Legal Affairs, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee recommended that the use of a regional lawyer list be mandated in the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*. We urge the government to adopt this recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee. We **enclose**:

- The letter to Ms Amanda Powell dated 26 September 2011- *Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011*
- A copy of the Police District Referral Nomination Form for Legal Practitioners in relation to criminal law matters

### 3. Parole boards and legal representation

The Society is concerned that legal practitioners, who have obtained written authority to act on behalf of a prisoner, are unable to receive a response from the Parole Board until the same response has been provided to the prisoner. This creates undue delay in the process. We urge that the Parole Board practice mandate that legal representatives be advised of the outcome of a parole decision, which affects their clients, at the time of the decision being made. We **enclose** our submission on this issue.

- Letter to Hon. Neil Roberts MP dated 14 March 2012- Parole Board communication with legal practitioners

### 4. Funding for prisoner programs

The Society considers that more funding, support and access to prisoner programs-such as parole programs and criminogenic programs- is essential to reducing recidivism. The Society also considers that appropriate post-release support for prisoners helps to ensure that they do not re-enter the criminal justice system.

### 5. Overrepresentation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Queensland criminal justice system

The Society is concerned with the high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. We encourage reforms which place the diversion and rehabilitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders at the centre of the justice scheme. We **enclose** our submission regarding the Justice Strategy.

We support the use of the Murri Court as an effective and culturally appropriate regime. We call for the operations of the Court to be extended and recognised through legislation.

- Letter to Mr Phillip Reed dated 7 June 2011 - Draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Strategy
- Letter to Hon. Paul Lucas MP dated 28 February 2011- Evaluation of the Murri Court: Final Report

I would be pleased to meet with you as soon as possible to further advance these issues. Please contact or have one of your staff contact our Senior Policy Solicitor, Ms Binari De Saram on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time.

[REDACTED]  
Dr John de Groot  
President