

11 November 2024

Our ref: [MC-LP]

The Hon Amanda Camm MP
Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services,
Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of
Domestic and Family Violence
1 William Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Minister

Welcome to portfolio and legal profession issues

The Queensland Law Society (QLS) congratulates you on your appointment as Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.

We take this opportunity to offer the assistance of the legal profession and in particular, QLS legal policy committees, where your responsibilities involve legislative and policy reform. The QLS legal policy committees examine policy and legislative proposals and also consider practical issues affecting the profession such as court practice and procedure.

Members of our Children's Law Committee, Elder Law Committee, Domestic and Family Violence Law Committee, and Health and Disability Law Committee have substantial expertise in their respective areas, which might be helpful to progressing the policy objectives of the government.

In anticipation of your portfolio's program of reform, we provide a snapshot of current priority areas for your consideration.

Domestic and family violence

QLS looks forward to continued progress on initiatives that prevent domestic and family violence, hold perpetrators to account and support victim-survivors, including ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. QLS appreciates being consulted on these initiatives and stands ready to offer feedback based on the expertise of our committed volunteers, including those on the QLS Domestic and Family Violence Committee.

Elder abuse

QLS welcomes the government's commitment to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into elder abuse. QLS looks forward to publication of the terms of reference for the inquiry and would be pleased to provide our members' feedback to the inquiry.

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As the cohort of older Queenslanders experiencing abuse is growing, it is essential that a whole-of-government strategy is developed to respond to elder abuse incorporating prevention, education, training, collaborative frameworks, interventions, responses and redress across a range of portfolios and stakeholders. As part of this strategy, it is essential to adequately fund services to reduce the impact of elder abuse, such as the Seniors Legal and Support Service, which provides essential legal information and advice, advocacy and social support for older Queenslanders experiencing elder abuse.

Disability services

QLS recommends appointing a state monitor to oversee Queensland's response and implementation of the Disability Royal Commission recommendations.

QLS also recommends the coordination of state and national regulation of restrictive practices and resourcing training across all sectors with a view to minimising their use across all health, aged care and disability care settings.

Child protection

Safeguarding the best interests of children requires a comprehensive framework to address the systemic failures and inequities within the child protection system. QLS recommends implementing a transparent and accessible complaints mechanism in the child protection system, allowing children's and young people's individual and systemic concerns to be heard and addressed. This should include the allocation of legal assistance sector funding to ensure these mechanisms are accessible in practice.

Additionally, QLS recommends ensuring sufficient and ongoing resources of First Nations organisations and bodies to provide culturally appropriate programs and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. These organisations are uniquely positioned to provide culturally appropriate programs and support that address the underlying factors contributing to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss these complex issues further. Please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Advocacy and Legal Policy, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to arrange a convenient time.

