

Ms Christine Smyth  
President  
Queensland Law Society  
By email: [president@qls.com.au](mailto:president@qls.com.au)

Dear Ms Smyth

I refer to the Queensland Law Society's 2017 Call to Parties Statement. The Palaszczuk Government notes the priorities identified by your members in the Statement and commends the Queensland Law Society's advocacy in protecting the rights of individuals, promoting good governance and increasing the community's understanding of the law.

## 1. Queensland Law Reform Process

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to evidence-based policy making. It adheres to principles of accountability and good governance in the development of legislation and is committed to developing policy and legislation based on research and evidence.

For example, the Queensland Government's investment in the specialist Domestic and Family Violence Court approach is based on the findings of the Griffith University's independent evaluation of the Southport specialist DFV court trial. The Queensland Government's investment in this trial, followed by a commitment to permanently establish a specialist domestic and family violence court in Southport, demonstrates the government's commitment to evidence based policy. The model for the proposed new Drug Court was based on recommendations from the *Drug and Specialist Courts Review* and is further evidence of good policy based on sound independent advice.

The reinstatement of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council (QSAC) which was abolished under the Newman-Nicholls Government has recently been referred terms of reference in relation to criminal offences involving the death of a child and options available for community-based sentencing orders, imprisonment and parole options. QSAC's research and recommendations help ensure policy and legislation is based on evidence and that we have a fair and effective justice system.

The Queensland Cabinet Handbook provides that '*Consultation is a fundamental and mandatory part of the development of all Cabinet submissions.... The importance of effective consultation during the development of a Cabinet submission cannot be over-emphasised. Ineffective consultation frequently leads to delays in Cabinet's consideration of proposals.*' Notwithstanding, it is sometimes the responsibility of a Parliament to respond legislatively to urgent emergent issues, and prior consultation may not always be possible. The committee system within the Queensland Parliament should provide a further opportunity for consultation when such a situation arises.

The Palaszczuk Government made amendments to the Constitution of Queensland to require that the Legislative Assembly ensures that each Bill, unless declared urgent, be referred to a committee for examination for at least 6 weeks.

The Bill containing this amendment was referred to the Committee of the Legislative assembly for its consideration, and all submissions were taken into account in the Committee's final report. None of the submissions, including the submission from the Queensland Law Society, recommended a period longer than the six weeks proposed in the Bill. It is worth noting that only one substantive Bill has been declared urgent since 2015.



By way of contrast, during the Newman-Nicholls Government, legislation was frequently progressed through the Parliament with little or no meaningful consultation with legal stakeholders. During 2012-14, 18 Bills were not referred to a Parliamentary Committee for consideration.

Following a commitment made by the then-Labor Opposition to the QLS before the 2015 election, the Cabinet Handbook was reviewed with a view to including a requirement for an Institutional Impact Statement (IIS), which would outline the impact on all state government institutions likely to be impacted by the legislation. Cabinet and Cabinet Budget Review Committee submissions are all now required to contain an IIS.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to consultation, and values the contribution made by the Queensland Law Society in its consultation prior to the introduction of Bills and its submissions to the various Parliamentary Committees considering the Bills.

I note with interest the suggestion that Bills be provided in tracking where they propose amendments to existing legislation. The Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel is an independent statutory body, however if re-elected, the Palaszczuk government will refer your suggestion to the Parliamentary Counsel for advice on the potential impact on their organisation of such a requirement.

## **2. Judicial Commission**

As was stated in the commitment to the QLS prior to the 2015 election, Labor recognises that, whilst courts should exercise their powers independently of the other arms of government, it is the role, in fact it is the duty, of executive government to appoint the judiciary. This arises from the duty of the executive to promote the rule of law through the appointment of a highly skilled and independent judiciary.

Confidence in the expertise, independence and impartiality of the judiciary is essential to the proper functioning of government in Queensland. The Queensland Government considered the public would only share the confidence in the selection and appointment of members of the judiciary if the process were seen to be transparent and genuinely consultative. Accordingly, in its first term, the Palaszczuk Government committed to reviewing the process for the appointment of Judicial Officers in Queensland.

As you are aware, a discussion paper was released on 15 October 2015 to generate debate and enable consultation about the appointment process. Consultation on the issue included consideration of models for judicial appointments both here and overseas, options for suitable reform in Queensland, and the selection criteria and processes that might be used. Submissions were received from the public and various legal stakeholders.

You would also be aware the Attorney-General released a protocol for the permanent appointment of judicial offices to the Magistrates, District and Supreme Courts following consultation with the heads of jurisdiction, Queensland Law Society and Bar Association of Queensland. Subsequently, the Judicial Appointments Advisory Panel was established.

The Protocol has only been in operation for a little over a year. The Palaszczuk Government values the contribution of the professional bodies in developing processes which enhance the legal system in Queensland. Should there be a need identified for improvements to the Protocol, a re-elected Palaszczuk Government will work with the professional bodies and other stakeholders to ensure the protocol represents the best process for judicial appointments.

The heads of jurisdiction are responsible for managing complaints against judicial officers and providing education and training to judicial officers. The annual conference held by each of the Courts is an opportunity to provide continuing judicial and legal education on emerging issues.

In addition, as part of the roll out of specialist Domestic and Family Courts the Queensland Government committed \$670,000 over four years for professional training for Magistrates in domestic and family violence issues.



Judges of the District and Supreme Courts receive a generous jurisprudential allowance that provides for continuing education in areas where they feel they would benefit most. This recognises the independence of the Judges, and the level of confidence the executive arm of government has in their judgment to self-manage their continuing education. The component for a jurisprudential allowance for Magistrates forms part of their salary.

### **3. Access to Justice in Queensland**

The then-Labor Opposition made an election commitment to the QLS prior to the 2015 election to review the available funding sources for Legal Aid with a view to increasing, over time, the funding provided for state funded legal assistance legal services to a level that is at least equal to the national average per capita.

To honour our election commitment, funding of \$32.4 million over four years was provided in the 2016/17 budget to boost Legal Aid Queensland funding to a level that is equal to the national average per capita over time and funding of \$13 million a year, ongoing, to sustain expected increases in demand (LAQ). This ensured Queenslanders would continue to have the same level of access to state-funded free or low cost legal assistance services as was available in the rest of Australia.

The Queensland Government also recognised that, with the changing nature of the legal profession, including the increasing use of e-conveyancing, the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund (LIPITAF) was not providing the necessary certainty of funding, provided LAQ with additional funds of \$3.238 million in 2016-17. LAQ is also set to receive increasing funding over 2017-20 with a commitment of \$12.951 million per annum on an ongoing basis from 2020-21 to ensure that the election commitment was maintained.

This increase in funding has allowed LAQ to respond to a greater proportion of general unmet legal need across the state, increasing the number of vulnerable and indigent people receiving legal assistance. In addition to this funding, LAQ are to receive \$6.302 million over 2016-17 to provide duty lawyer services in the permanent specialist domestic and family violence court in Southport.

In the 2016-17 budget the Queensland Government allocated further funding for LAQ to assist with the transition of 17 year olds in the Youth Justice system through the provision of an out of hours advice service. LAQ was also allocated \$2.688 million over four years to assist with the smooth establishment and operation of the proposed new Drug Court.

The Queensland Government committed to investing \$33.3 million to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) over the period 2017-20. Funding allocation to CLCs is subject to a triennial review of the service system which allows for investment to be directed towards priority areas in a phased and sustainable way.

Allocating funding in this way best promotes an integrated, efficient and effective service system that allows for direct investment in priority areas in a phased and sustainable way. Over 2017-20, investment has been directed towards domestic and family violence, employment law services and community legal education.

This commitment by the Palaszczuk Government represented well over 60 per cent of the total Queensland and Commonwealth funding pool for CLCs. The Queensland Government successfully lobbied the Federal Government to reverse the \$2 million per annum of funding cuts which were due to take effect from July 2017.

The Queensland Government then stepped in to provide interim funding of \$565,000 to CLCs affected by the lack of certainty created by the Federal Government when it finally bowed to pressure to reverse the cuts, but failed to release details in a timely manner. Without this support, vital services to the most vulnerable in our community would have been lost.

Importantly, the Palaszczuk Government also removed gag-clauses that had been placed on CLCs and other community organisations by the Newman-Nicholls Government. We recognise the need to CLCs, and the profession more broadly, to contribute their expertise towards public policy and legislative reforms and to lobby on behalf of the vulnerable Queenslanders they represent.

The Palaszczuk Government has not changed its position in relation to legal representation in QCAT. As stated previously, we will not commit to allowing legal representation as-of-right. QCAT was established as a low-cost jurisdiction to allow persons to resolve legal disputes in a timely and cost efficient manner. Labor believes the existing provisions for legal representation in QCAT are adequate to allow legal representation in appropriate matters.

#### **4. Court Resourcing**

The Palaszczuk Government recognises that courts sit at the centre of the justice system and subsequently the way courts operate impact all stakeholders in that system. The Society's members would have noted with pleasure the recent announcement of the appointment of eight new magistrates, including six extra positions funded in the 2017-18 Budget. Three of these Magistrates were permanently appointed to the Domestic and Family Violence Courts in Southport, and in Townsville, with circuits to Palm Island and Mt Isa.

On the advice of the Chief Magistrate, Magistrates with expertise in Children's Court matters, particularly child safety matters, were appointed throughout the year.

Recognising the impact on the courts of increasing workloads, in its first budget the Palaszczuk Government invested \$20 million over two years into the justice system which included funding for Queensland Courts. This funding boost assisted court registries across the State in managing increasing and complex workloads to provide timely and effective client services to the community. Specifically, the additional funding contributed to meeting shortfalls including property costs and the provision of additional staff.

In its first term, in accordance with the commitment given to the QLS prior to the 2015 election, the Palaszczuk Government undertook an audit of courts and tribunals to identify ageing facilities including audio visual systems that did not meet the current needs.

As a result, \$31.6 million of extra funding was allocated over five years to renew and expand the audio visual capability of our courts. Part of this investment included enhancement of the audio visual capability in 47 court rooms; adding mobile video conferencing systems to 12 court house and flexible electronic display capability in courthouses throughout the state. A re-elected Palaszczuk Government would continue to invest in technology in courthouses throughout Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government made other significant investment in courts and prisons in Queensland to increase the use of videoconferencing which reduces the costs, risks and disruption of transporting defendants from prisons to courts. Prisoners are also now able to meet with their legal team via video-link instead of lawyers having to travel to prisons.

Courts and the police have collaborated to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of legal protections for people at risk of harm from domestic and family violence. They have replaced manual document transfers between courts and police with new automated, electronic transmission of domestic violence documents (eDV).

Prior to eDV, the median time it took for private applications for domestic violence protection orders to be available on police systems to be served was over a day. With eDV, the median time is now one minute.

These new electronic arrangements are saving the police and courts thousands of hours annually through reducing multiple re-entry of data into systems.

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government would continue to build on this significant investment in Courts.



## 5. Criminal Law in Queensland

The Palaszczuk Government implemented significant reforms in criminal law during its first term of government and has reinstated the specialist courts abolished by the former LNP Government.

In accordance with its election commitments, the Palaszczuk Government committed \$8.7 million over four years to reinstate court diversionary processes, including the Drug Court, Murri Court and the Special Circumstances Court Diversion Program abolished by the former LNP Government. A further \$23.6 million was allocated to reinstate court referrals for youth justice conferencing.

The Murri Court model was developed after significant consultation with key stakeholders and has now been established in 14 locations across Queensland including: Cairns, Cherbourg, Caboolture, Townsville, Mt Isa, Mackay, Maroochydore, Rockhampton, Brisbane, Wynnum, Cleveland, Richlands, Toowoomba; and St George.

After the successful trial of a specialist domestic and family violence court in Southport, the Queensland Government permanently established the Southport Specialist DFV court, and is rolling out the specialist DFV court approach in four other locations, Beenleigh, Townsville, Mount Isa and Palm Island over four years. This represents an investment by the Queensland Government of \$69.5 million, including \$20 million for capital works at the Beenleigh and Townsville courthouses, and funding for specialist Magistrates, court staff, corrections officers, prosecutors, duty lawyers, support services for victims of DFV, and programs for perpetrators.

The funding package also included additional funding for interpreter services State-wide, recognising the need for interpreters in DFV proceedings.

On 13 June 2017, the *Queensland Drug and Specialist Courts Review: Final Report* was released. The report outlined an evidence based approach to establishing a Drug Court which ensured the Queensland Government would invest in the most appropriate and effective response to address drug and alcohol related offending and deliver better long-term outcomes for offenders and the community.

As part of the Palaszczuk Government's \$32.6 million funding package to be delivered over four years (2017-2021), the Government committed to the establishment of a Drug and Alcohol Court, based in Brisbane, and to provide court referral and support services. The new Drug and Alcohol Court would provide an intensive and targeted response to adult offenders with severe drug and alcohol use directly associated with their offending.

It will require participants to be judicially-supervised and undertake targeted, structured and evidence-based treatment and interventions that seek to address their drug and alcohol dependencies and criminal thinking to reduce future offending.

The re-establishment of the new Drug and Alcohol Court is well underway with the recent assent of the *Penalties and Sentences (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017* in the final week of the 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament. A second term Labor Government will commit to commencing the Drug Court in Brisbane.

As part of the program being undertaken to transition 17 year olds to the youth justice system, a series of supervised bail accommodation services will be established at various locations across the state to provide courts with another bail option.

About 80 per cent of young people in youth detention in Queensland are on remand, awaiting the outcome of their court matters. Often, this is because there is no suitable accommodation or support services for their release on supervision.

Where ordering young people to reside with parents or other carers while awaiting court proceedings is not a safe option, the court will have the power to order a young person be bailed to a Supervised Bail Accommodation centre. Youth justice workers will be based at the Supervised Bail Accommodation and there will also be health, education and other services available.

In addition to the Supervised Bail Accommodation Services, other initiatives include:

- Increased police diversion practices
- Introduction of a statewide after-hours legal service for young people and
- Increased court efficiencies, including two extra magistrates.

The Government has committed a total of \$4 million under the Community Justice Group (CJG) grant program to fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop strategies within their communities for dealing with justice-related issues and to decrease Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contact with the criminal justice system.

CJGs aim to achieve this through the delivery of, or referral to, culturally-appropriate support services to improve the outlook and quality of life of offenders and increase cultural understanding in the courts and in the wider criminal justice system.

Further, in 2016-17, the Queensland Government allocated funding of \$11 million over four years to build the capacity of CJGs in 18 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to respond to domestic and family violence.

This investment aims to enhance the grant program and will support CJGs to develop local authority groups, including panels and use existing cultural structures, to respond to domestic and family violence, crime and violence.

## **6. Children's Law in Queensland**

The Queensland Government has implemented strategies and initiatives for youth justice that are evidence-based and provide a positive balance between holding young people accountable for their behaviour while addressing the underlying causes of their offending. This approach is achieving results.

In 2016, the Queensland Government repealed the former LNP Government's punitive amendments to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* and replaced them with evidence based legislation aimed at addressing the underlying causes of youth offending. Under these amendments, Restorative Justice Conferencing was reintroduced and expanded to give both police and courts the ability to refer young people to a conference and hold them accountable, bring them face to face with their victims and take steps to make amends.

Youth Justice's Transition to Success (T2S) program, a vocational training and therapeutic service program, has been rolled out to 12 locations across Queensland. T2S works with young people to re-engage them with education and training and provides them with skills and qualifications they need to enter the workforce. T2S has been highly successful at reducing the rate of re-offending, providing graduates with certificate qualifications in fields such as construction, horticulture, business and hospitality, and transitioning its graduates into school, further training and employment. T2S has also seen a non-reoffending rate of 69 per cent of graduates, compared with a 65 per cent reoffending rate for graduates of the failed boot camp program.

Another initiative, the Intensive Case Management program, for high risk recidivist young people piloted in Caboolture has been replicated in Townsville, as part of the comprehensive Townsville Community Youth Response. This has underpinned a significant reduction in the number of young people offending in Townsville over the last two years. Further, the number of property offences in the Townsville area has decreased by 17 per cent in the past year including a decrease in thefts and related offences in Townsville.

These programs are being supported by ongoing improvements across the whole youth justice system including:

- investment of \$26.2 million to implement all 83 recommendations of the Independent Review into Youth Detention in Queensland
- establishment of a Childrens Court Committee to reduce remand and make systemic improvements to court processes
- investment of a further \$7.3 million to continue the Townsville Community Youth Response
- development of new initiatives to support the transition of 17 year olds into the youth justice system.

Significant progress has already been made towards implementing the Government's plan for a measured approach to the transition of 17 year olds from the adult justice system to the youth justice system. A Labor Government will continue to implement youth justice reforms to ensure that our youth justice policy is aligned with evidence about what works to reduce offending.



## 7. Family and domestic violence matters

The Queensland Government has made significant progress towards implementing the recommendations of the landmark report *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland*. The Government's pledge has been demonstrated through a significant funding commitment over five years for a range of initiatives aimed at tackling domestic and family violence including:

- establishing an independent and multi-disciplinary Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board to review domestic and family violence deaths
- implementation of an electronic domestic violence interface (eDV project) to replace manual processes between police and Courts to streamline application processes and support timely enforcement of protection orders
- roll-out of the domestic violence duty lawyer scheme – reaching a total of 22 sites by 2020
- strengthening the criminal law response to domestic and family violence (DFV), including allowing the DFV context of offending to be noted on charges and criminal histories, making DFV an aggravating factor on sentence, ensuring victims of DFV automatically have status as a 'special witness' when giving evidence about the commission of an offence by the perpetrator, and introducing a new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting
- domestic and family violence services to support victims, specialist teams to prioritise victims and their safety, additional perpetrator interventions to help protect victims and a communication and engagement program to change attitudes and behaviours towards domestic and family violence
- new shelters to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence
- trialling and now permanently funding the Southport specialist domestic and family violence court, as well as rolling out specialist DFV court approaches in Beenleigh, Townsville, Mount Isa and Palm Island.

In addition to these important initiatives, the Palaszczuk Government committed funding to permanently establish the Southport specialist domestic and family violence court. In its commitment to invest \$69.5 million over four years to roll out specialist DFV court approaches in five locations – Southport, Beenleigh, Townsville, Mount Isa and Palm Island, providing coverage of 28 per cent of DFV civil and criminal matters in magistrates courts state-wide. This funding included capital works to refurbish the Beenleigh and Townsville courthouses so they are better equipped to cater for the safety needs of victims of domestic and family violence and provide adequate court and meeting rooms to deal with these matters.

Three new magistrates who will support the work of the specialist DFV courts, were recently appointed with two located at the Southport DFV Court and one based in Townsville and circuiting to Mount Isa and Palm Island. As well, as part of the roll out of specialist Domestic and Family Courts the Queensland Government committed \$670,000 over four years for professional training for Magistrates in domestic and family violence issues.

The Queensland Government invested \$2.69 million, on top of the \$69.5 million investment, to renovate the Southport courthouse to improve the space for our court users who attend for domestic and family violence matters.

Since the commencement (in May 2016) of the new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting, as at 30 September 2017, 1,170 charges had been lodged in the Magistrates Court in relation to 1,071 defendants. Of those 1,170 charges, 411 charges have been presented on indictment (in relation to 334 of the 1,071 defendants) in the District Court. So far, 123 defendants have been convicted.

Model laws were also introduced in the 2016 Amendment Act – allowing Queensland to participate in the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, which provides for automatic recognition of orders made in other Australian jurisdictions. These laws will commence on 25 November 2017, White Ribbon Day.

The Queensland Government introduced laws which included:

- The introduction of a sexual assault privilege to protect counselling communications made by a victim of sexual assault (implementing recommendation 96 of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report)
- An expansion of the scope of the financial assistance scheme to ensure all victims of domestic and family violence have access to financial assistance (implementing recommendation 95 of the *Not Now, Not Ever* report)
- The establishment a charter of victim's rights, which includes the right of a victim (including of domestic violence) to be informed of accused bail applications and outcomes
- Expanding the victims of crime financial assistance scheme to allow victims of non-physical violence to seek financial assistance.

The Queensland Government is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to specifically respond to domestic and family violence issues within these communities.

The Domestic and Family Violence CJG Enhancement Program received \$11 million in additional funding during the 2016-17 financial year to support the Community Justice Groups' (CJGs) response to domestic and family violence in 18 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Co-designed DFV models have been implemented in four locations, Cherbourg, Mornington Island, Mossman and Wujal Wujal.

A program of capability building has been developed. This includes peace keeping training, DFV workshops and attendance at DFV conferences. In the 2017-18 budget commitment was made to a further eight communities to commence these co-designed capability building activities. The communities were Thursday Island, Hope Vale, Coen, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama.

The Queensland Government will continue to implement the recommendations from the *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland*.

#### **8. Rights of small business and property owners**

The Queensland Government notes the reform measures proposed for streamlining process for delivering equitable outcomes for small business and property owners. In 2008, the then Labor Government introduced a Bill to amend the *Property Law Act 1974* to extend the duty of a mortgagor exercising power of sale to take reasonable care to ensure that the property is sold at market value, and to create an offence where a mortgagor fails to follow the prescribed steps in relation to a sale.

The Palaszczuk Government will investigate whether there is the need for similar protections for property owners affected by a Council exercising power for recovery of unpaid rates.

Details of the election policy relating to all taxes, fees and charges will be released with the Government's fiscal and economic plan during the campaign.

#### **9. Access to fair compensation schemes**

Queensland currently has the best and fairest workers' compensation scheme in the country for injured workers and employers. The financial position of the scheme is sound, employers' premiums remain the lowest in Australia, and our *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* places great emphasis on a safe return to work, requiring workers and employers to take every reasonable step to participate in rehabilitation and return to work programs.

The Palaszczuk Government believes that common law rights of all injured workers in Queensland should be protected and preserved within our state's workers' compensation scheme, which is why we overturned the degree of impairment threshold imposed by the Newman-Nicholls Government that applied to access common law damages. We restored common law access arrangements that existed prior to the threshold, backdated to take effect from 31 January 2015, the date of the last Queensland election.

A re-elected Labor Government will maintain the present scheme design of what is Australia's best performing workers' compensation scheme with the lowest premiums for employers, and full access to common law rights and entitlements.



The Queensland Government is also committed to a zero tolerance approach to child sexual abuse ensuring support for all victims and fully supports the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Queensland Government has acted to implement a number of the recommendations of the Royal Commission's Redress and Civil Litigation Report including the introduction of legislation that removed the limitation period for victims of child sexual abuse in institutions.

Whole of government guidelines for responding to claims for compensation concerning allegations of child sexual abuse were also released on 16 August 2016, in response to recommendations 96 to 99 of the Royal Commission's Report.

The guidelines are based upon similar New South Wales and Victorian guidelines, and set out how the State of Queensland and all Government agencies should respond to civil litigation against the State brought by claimants who have been sexually abused as children.

An issues paper was released for public consultation on 16 August 2016 to seek feedback on the scope for the removal of the statutory limitation period and other civil litigation recommendations of the Royal Commission relating to the duty of institutions and the proper defendant.

Subsequently, the Palaszczuk Government consulted with specific stakeholder groups to understand how changes recommended by the Royal Commission might work in practice. That further consultation has now concluded. The Palaszczuk Government has been carefully working through all feedback.

#### **10. Consumer Protection for Queenslanders**

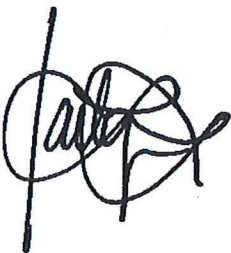
The Palaszczuk Government notes your concerns regarding claim farming and would commit to working with stakeholders to investigate the issues further, including whether additional resourcing is required for regulators to investigate and prosecute persons engaged in inappropriate conduct.

There is currently a merit-based open selection process in place for the position of Legal Services Commissioner. Applications for the position of Legal Services Commissioner opened on 2 October 2017 and closed on 16 October 2017.

Once the position has been filled, a re-elected Palaszczuk Government will consult with whoever is appointed as the Legal Services Commissioner on whether consumers of legal services would benefit from an investigation of the impacts on the justice system of lay representatives appearing in legal matters, including risks to consumers and delays to judicial processes.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Queensland Law Society's Call to Parties for the 2017 Queensland Election. I also wanted to take this opportunity to re-commit the Palaszczuk Government to a continued dialogue regarding policy into the future. I look forward to continuing to work with you and the members of the Queensland Law Society.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jackie Trad', written over a circular stamp or seal.

**JACKIE TRAD MP  
DEPUTY PREMIER  
Minister for Transport and  
Minister for Infrastructure and Planning**