



# Queensland Advocacy Incorporated

Our mission is to promote, protect and defend, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

*Systems and Legal Advocacy for vulnerable people with Disability*

31 October 2018

For immediate release

## **Queensland Advocacy welcomes landmark Human Rights legislation tabled in Queensland Parliament today**

It is with much excitement that Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) thanks and congratulates the Queensland Government for introducing a Human Rights Bill for Queensland.

The announcement by the Queensland Attorney-General, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath, that the Human Rights Bill was being tabled in Parliament was enthusiastically welcomed by a broad cross-section of the community at the Community Legal Centres Queensland Leadership Forum in Brisbane on Monday.

QAI strongly supports this highly important legislative reform. "This is the reform that all of us who work with, support and advocate for the most vulnerable people in our community have been waiting and hoping for," QAI's Director Michelle O'Flynn said today. "We applaud the Queensland Government for developing a strong and workable Act that will help to create a culture of human rights protection in this state."

Once enacted, the Human Rights Act will offer basic protection of fundamental civil and political rights for all Queenslanders. In an innovative step for Australia, the Bill also protects the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the economic, social and cultural rights to education and healthcare.

QAI senior lawyer and systems advocate Emma Phillips, who has been working on the community-driven campaign for a Human Rights Act for the past three years and is Chair of the Human Rights Act Sub-Committee of Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, welcomed the historic reforms. "The introduction of this Bill represents a pivotal milestone in Queensland history," Dr Phillips said.

"This Bill contains a strong framework that protects the fundamental human rights of Queenslanders. We are particularly pleased to see the inclusion of a complaints mechanism, which enables people to make a complaint to the Queensland Human Rights Commission and have the opportunity for this complaint to be heard and conciliated in an accessible forum," Dr Phillips said. "This is innovative and important law reform – Queensland is leading the way in offering the strongest model of human rights protection in Australia."

QAI is hopeful that the Government will consider the inclusion of a broad range of remedies for breaches of the Act to ensure that the human rights are enforceable and meaningful. QAI also emphasises the importance of not limiting the Act in any way in its application, to ensure it offers full protection to all Queenslanders, particularly the most vulnerable.

"While the passage of this Human Rights Bill may not make a difference to the lives of all Queenslanders, it will make a fundamental difference to the lives of the most marginalised and disempowered, including people with disability and mental illness who seek advice and assistance from our organisation," Dr Phillips said. "It will introduce another dimension into decision-making about matters affecting the rights and lives of Queenslanders, requiring those making decisions by or on behalf of public entities to have regard to the impact of those decisions on the human rights of the person concerned. This will be an important safeguard for all Queenslanders, but will be particularly significant for those on the margins."

"This is a really significant moment in Queensland history," Ms O'Flynn said. "We wish to congratulate all of those who have worked so hard to make this happen."

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QAI endorses the objectives, and promotes the principles, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC

For more information, please visit the campaign website: [humanrights4qld.com.au](http://humanrights4qld.com.au).

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