



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

26 November 2018

For immediate release

Human Rights Bill supported as offering welcome protection for vulnerable Queenslanders

Leading disability advocacy organisation Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) strongly supports the introduction of a Human Rights Act in Queensland. In QAI's submission, provided to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee (Committee) today, we confirm our support for the passage of the Human Rights Bill and call upon the Committee to recommend accordingly.

QAI Director Michelle O'Flynn noted the important protections that this Bill includes for people with disability in Queensland. 'We are particularly excited by the inclusion of the economic, social and cultural rights to education and health in the Bill', Ms O'Flynn said today. 'These are fundamental human rights that are not equitably enjoyed by people with disability and mental illness in Queensland.'

While strongly supporting the inclusion of the right to education, Ms O'Flynn notes that QAI's submission is proposing that this right is differently framed. 'There is now a wealth of research supporting the benefits of an inclusive approach to education for all students and it is the approach that has been committed to at an international level and by both state and federal government. It is important that the drafting of this clause reflects this commitment and requires commitment to it.'

QAI is hopeful that the Committee will recommend strengthening the Bill by including an independent cause of action and a broad range of remedies for breaches of the Act to ensure that the human rights are enforceable and meaningful. QAI also makes submissions calling for recognition of the right to reasonable adjustments to ensure people with disability can enjoy equitable access justice. 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, including children and prisoners.

'On balance, while we note that this Bill is not perfect and that human rights legislation will never be a panacea, we are thrilled by the proposed introduction of this legislation and strongly support its passage at the earliest opportunity,' Ms O'Flynn said. 'We are also very hopeful that this Bill will garner bi-partisan support. Human rights belong to us all – they are above politics.'

Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) is an independent, community-based systems and individual advocacy organisation and a community legal service for people with disability. Our mission is to promote, protect and defend, through systems and individual advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

For more information, please visit the campaign website: humanrights4qld.com.au.

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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