

Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024

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11 March 2024

Committee Secretary
Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via email: CSLAC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024.

As you would be aware, as Public Advocate I undertake systemic advocacy to promote and protect the rights and interests of Queensland adults with impaired decision-making ability.¹

As noted in the Explanatory Notes, the establishment of the role of the Victims' Commissioner and the Sexual Violence Review Board were recommended by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (Taskforce) in its second report, *Hear her voice – Report Two – Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system* (the Second Report).

I fully support the establishment of both the role of Commissioner and the Board, and look forward to seeing the benefits that both will bring to victims of crime in Queensland. I note that both have systemic review functions, as I have as the Public Advocate; I can certainly appreciate the positive changes that such roles can make.

I am pleased to see that the Bill requires that the Commissioner, when performing their functions, must have regard to victims who have characteristics that make them particularly vulnerable to harm, which includes victims with disability.²

As noted in the Second Report, women with disability are overrepresented as victims of crime.³ The final report by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability also notes the same issue.⁴

I further suggest that to better take into account the experience of people with disability as victims of crime, there should also be added into the Bill a requirement that the Board include a member of the community with lived experience of disability who could ensure that specific issues for victims of crime with disability are raised and discussed.⁵

Having increased representation of people with disability would be a positive step in addressing the difficulties faced by victims with disability in the criminal justice system.

¹ *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* (Qld) s 209.

² *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Case Review Board Bill 2024* (Qld) cl 11.

³ Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice – Report Two – Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system* p 43

⁴ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, *Final Report – vol 8*, p 35.

⁵ *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Case Review Board Bill 2024* (Qld) cl 73.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024.

Should you wish to discuss any of the matters I have raised in this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact my office via email [REDACTED] or phone [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

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John Chesterman (Dr)
Public Advocate