

## **Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024**

**Submission No:** 6  
**Submitted by:** Ending Violence Against Women and Children Queensland  
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15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee  
Queensland Parliament House  
Cnr George and Alice Streets  
Brisbane QLD 4001

10<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Secretariat,

**RE: VICTIM'S COMMISSIONER AND THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL 2024**

Thank you for your invitation to respond to the consultation on the victims commissioner and sexual violence review Board Bill 2024.

EVAWQ provides a representative and united voice for Queensland women and children affected by gender-based violence, and the individuals and service agencies that provide specialist support. Our organisation shares the depth and diversity of knowledge from specialist services within women's health, women's refuge and housing, women's legal, and domestic, family and sexual violence to a broad range of government and non-government stakeholders in relation to all aspects of gender-based violence. EVAWQ regularly engages with government, on behalf of a diversity of specialist sector organisations, to provide advice in relation to emerging trends, service demands and funding equity.

EVAWQ commends the work of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and recommendations from the Hear Her Voice reports and Government's response to these recommendations.

We wish to express our disappointment with the one-week timeframe for response, this has limited our capacity to fully engage in the consultation process. It is our strong preference that future consultation allow for at least a number of weeks to ensure adequate time can be allocated. We are very open to engaging with the department prior to the settling of draft bills or in any other way that would facilitate more thorough and productive engagement.

The views of the members of EVAWQ are diverse as they are informed by many different perspectives. We have included some high level observations common to all members below.

**Independence of the Victims Commissioner**

The Independence of the office is of critical importance in establishing and maintaining the trust of victim-survivors of domestic family and sexual violence in Queensland. To this end, EVAWQ is encouraged to see the inclusion of s11 (2):

*Without limiting subsection (1), the commissioner is not subject to direction by any person, including the Minister, about the way in which the commissioner's functions are to be performed.*



### **Ensure dedication to victims of domestic, family and sexual violence**

We refer to Hear Her Voice Report 2 Recommendation 18-

*The commissioner should have a specific and dedicated focus on victims of domestic, family and sexual violence and First Nations victim-survivors given the particular vulnerability. This focus may be through the establishment of a deputy commissioner role, or similar.”*

EVAWQ are concerned that the unique vulnerabilities of victims survivors of DFSV will not be adequately supported within a broad and overarching definition of Victim, and role of the Victims Commissioner.

This is particularly important when understanding the intersectional disadvantages of First Nations women and the high rates of women misidentified as Persons Using Violence.

EVAWQ are further concerned about the potential consequences of utilising the limited allocated resources for systems reform to respond to the Hear Her Voice recommendations intended primarily to improve the experiences for victim survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence to benefit a broader overarching group of victims. This concern is heightened by the current environment of resource scarcity in the face of ever-increasing demand.

### **Sexual Violence Review Board**

Recommendation 46 specifically states that:

*The board’s functions and powers will be provided for in legislation and should include the independent review of sexual violence cases that are not progressed, or cases requested to be considered by the victims’ commissioner.*

EVAWQ supports that the WSJT recommendation be implemented in full to ensure both individual and systemic accountability for victims of sexual violence.

**Sincerely,**

EVAWQ Management Committee members



## EVAWQ Management Committee

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Chief Executive Officer  
*Women's Health and Equality Qld*



### Beck O'Connor

**EVAWQ Secretary**  
Chief Executive Officer  
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### Lucy Gregory

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