



SUBMISSION

**Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board)
Amendment Bill 2021**

Submission Title:	Public Trustee (Advisory and Monitoring Board) Amendment Bill 2021
Date:	18 November 2021
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CARERS QUEENSLAND

The activity and impact of providing care is best understood in terms of its context; as a relationship between two or more individuals, rooted in family, friendship, or community. Caring is a role rarely chosen by most, nor does it discriminate. Children and young people, people of working age and older people, people with disability, people who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse, indigenous Australians, people with diverse bodies, genders, relationships, and sexualities and those living in rural and remote Queensland provide care to family members or friends daily. For some caring is a short-term commitment whilst for others, it is a role that literally lasts a lifetime.

Family and friend carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic medical condition, terminal illness or are frail aged. Carers come from all walks of life.

Carers Queensland is the peak body representing the diverse concerns, needs and interests of caring families in Queensland. Carers Queensland believes that all carers regardless of their age, disability, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, geographical location, or their cultural and linguistic differences should have the same rights, choices and opportunities and be able to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing and participate in family and community life, employment, and education like other citizens. Carers Queensland's mission is to improve the quality of life of all carers throughout Queensland.

We aspire to provide an independent platform from which to advance the issues and concerns of the 533,200 carers in Queensland and believe our knowledge and expertise in carer issues means we can provide the Government with relevant and trusted information that will ensure that the needs of carers will be recognised, respected, and acted on.

Our submission is informed by national and international peer reviewed data, our own experience as a service provider and the personal and often difficult admissions of carers, those people who provide unpaid care and support.

INTRODUCTION

Carers Queensland commends the Public Trustee of Queensland for offering the health and social care sectors, caring families, and the community to comment on the proposed Public Trustee (Amendment Bill). We welcome the opportunity to make the following comments for consideration.

Discussion

The Public Trustee of Queensland provides financial management services to approximately 9,300 vulnerable individuals. We are aware that carers of this population often find the process of financial management difficult to navigate, and often seek assistance in understanding the complexity of appointed financial administration. Carers seek to have a collaborative client focussed relationship, in which they can work with the Public Trustee to achieve mutually agreeable decisions on behalf of the vulnerable person. This type of collaboration increases transparency and public trust in the local process of the Public Trustee. The establishment and implementation of an independent Advisory and Monitoring Board, overseeing the function of the service would be practically beneficial in providing transparency and clarity.

With the recent report highlighting several shortcomings of the Public Trustee, it is reasonable to expect the public, including carers and individuals managed by the Public Trustee, to be concerned about their practices. It has been shown that public trust increases in government organisations through the sharing of information, transparency and accountability. One of the Advisory and Monitoring Board's proposed functions is to monitor complaints regarding the function of the Public Trustee. Having this robust complaint oversight feature does allow for individuals involved with the Trustee to have their voice heard, and for the Office to be held accountable.

Carers have been found to have among the lowest wellbeing in the population, often experiencing burnout, fatigue and negative physical and psychological effects due to their role. In addition, Australia is experiencing an aging population in which 15.7% of the 5,234,271 Queenslanders are aged 65 years or older, this figure is expected to more than double by 2050. This coincides with the expected lowering in the number of working aged peoples and consequently less carers. This will result in an increased demand for services like the Public Trustee of Queensland. The advisory capacity of the proposed Board would be beneficial in preparing and shaping the service in preparation for the increased level of demand and increased public scrutiny.

Recommendation:

Carers Queensland suggests the establishment and implementation of an independent Advisory and Monitoring Board for the Public Trustee of Queensland, would be beneficial in providing support to the population the Trustee serves as well as increasing transparency, accountability and public trust.