



6 January 2021

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4001

By email only: CSSC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Members

Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a further submission in relation to the *Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020* ('the Bill').

About QCROSS

QCROSS (Queensland Council of Social Service) is the peak body for the social service sector in Queensland. Our vision is to achieve equality, opportunity and wellbeing for every person, in every community.

QCROSS' position

We refer the Committee to our submission to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee inquiry dated 3 August 2020.

In summary, QCROSS does not support the passage of the Bill because the Bill will result in unjustifiable limitations of the human rights of Queenslanders, in particular the rights of children and families.

QCROSS supports the legitimate purpose of stability for children who are in contact with the child protection system. However, this purpose can be achieved through less restrictive and reasonably available ways including providing better support to families (including extended families) and using alternative models of permanency planning that do not sever the child's right to have a connection with their birth family.

Amendments to the Bill

If the Committee recommend the Bill be passed, our view is that further safeguards should be included.

The Bill should include an amendment to the *Child Protection Act 1999* that would require the court to be satisfied that appropriate efforts have been undertaken to support the child to stay with their family (including extended family) prior to making any child protection order, including permanency orders.

QCROSS is a signatory to the joint submission made to the Committee by the Queensland Family and Child Commission and others. This submission seeks amendments to the Bill as follows:

1. Including a requirement that 'Active Efforts' to implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle be demonstrated as a precursor to all decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
2. Independent oversight of permanency decisions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our submission to the Committee.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aimee McVeigh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aimee McVeigh
Chief Executive Officer