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07 May 2021

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Secretary

A Submission Pertaining to the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021

I served as Vice Chair of the Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary (QACCAC) from 2013-2014 and as Chair from 2014-2019. During that time QACCAC provided advice on all aspects of Queensland's ANZAC Centenary commemorations and oversaw a number of Legacy Projects – one of which was the refurbishment and enhancement of Anzac Square (the State War Memorial) in Brisbane.

The following comments are made in the hope that they may assist the Committee's consideration of the Bill.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Estimated Cost for Government implementation

The numbers in this section must be treated with considerable caution. Anzac Square has no Concept of Operations and no Strategic Plan – much less an Operational/Business Plan – from which an operating budget can be established. The basis from which the numbers were derived is unknown and they must, therefore, be considered 'a best guess'.

Apparently, the cost of the Office for Veterans will be found from the \$2.4m per annum which will leave very little over for the funding of the necessary Anzac Square staff and the ongoing curation, maintenance and oversight of the Square.

The second paragraph under this heading acknowledges that the costs of the maintenance of the Anzac Square parklands will be met by the State Government. Anzac Square is a considerable ornament to the city of Brisbane (and Queensland more broadly) and it is not unreasonable that Brisbane City Council (BCC) contributes to its operating cost. This could be as a contribution in-kind with the BCC undertaking to provide the on-going maintenance of the parklands – a similar arrangement exists in both Sydney and Melbourne. The existing wording in the Explanatory Notes, gives the BCC a legislated capacity to charge the State Government for such maintenance. According to the BCC's (albeit uncertain) internal

costings made available to the Anzac Square Steering Committee, the value of this in-kind support is some \$750,00 per annum.

Propose the amendment of the second paragraph of this section of the Explanatory Notes to read '... These costs will be met by the State Government, in partnership with the Brisbane City Council, through ...'. This would at least provide an avenue to negotiate an in-kind contribution from BCC.

With the establishment of QVC, the costs of maintaining the Anzac Square parklands (in the absence of BCC in-kind support) will be found from the annual \$2.4m further reducing monies available for the curation, maintenance and oversight of the Square.

Clause 9 of the proposed Bill gives a broad outline of the functions of Anzac Square. It would appear highly likely that the monies remaining from the annual \$2.4m, once the costs of the Office for Veterans and the maintenance of the parklands are taken out, will only allow very limited curatorial, improvement and maintenance spending – to say nothing of spending on the broader functions of the Square as outlined in Clause 9.

THE PROPOSED BILL

Comments on some of the Clauses in the proposed Bill follow:

Clause	Comment
12 (f)	Does the Council have the power to accept donations on behalf of Anzac Square as distinct from donations to the Fund? If not, propose that the Bill be amended so that the Council can accept such donations.
13	In the worst case, this composition could result in only two veterans in the council of 8. Notwithstanding the establishment of the Veterans' Reference Group, this does not seem to be an appropriate number for a council which is responsible for the provision of advice on veterans' matters – to say nothing of its Anzac Square and Fund responsibilities. It is for consideration that the Chair should be a suitably qualified and experienced veteran in addition to the other two veterans
13 (1) (b)	BCC representation should be the CEO <u>NOT</u> a delegate. If a delegate is allowed, it could easily be an officer who may not have the authority to commit BCC to decisions or speak authoritatively on its behalf.
13 (2) (a)	Which veterans' organisations are likely to be invited to nominate? There is a plethora of veterans' organisations many of which have very narrow agendas and may well use a position on the Council to endeavour to advance those agendas rather than the prime purposes of the council. Specifying two well founded, long-standing, reputable and well governed organisations would provide some safeguards. The Presidents of RSL Queensland and Legacy would be very appropriate and would follow the precedent set by the Anzac Day Act 1995 and maintain the long-standing linkages established under that Act.

13 (3)	<p>Include additional areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • museum curation including audio/visual display and associated technology • Veterans' Affairs and/or Defence Force experience
34 (1)	<p>There is no obligation for the Minister to establish a Veterans' Reference Group. Therefore, it is possible that, depending on the Minister of the day, a Reference Group may not be established. This would deprive the Council of an important source of advice and information.</p> <p>Propose the clause be changed to read 'The Minister will establish...'</p>
37 (1)	<p>This makes the careful choosing of the appointed members under 13 (2)(a) quite critical</p>
39 (a)	<p>What staff will the Council have to implement its policies etc? Are these to be the admin staff in the Office for Veterans or will there be 'operational' staff with responsibilities for the day to day running of Anzac Square?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be a 'General Manager/CEO of Anzac Square? A necessary position given the size of the task.
48	<p>Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan is no trivial undertaking. Specialist resources will need to be made available to the Council to achieve this. Such resources will have to be in addition to the admin staff.</p>
53	<p>This may well cause the Brisbane City Council to cease providing in-kind support by maintaining the Anzac Square parklands. This would add significantly to the cost of operating/maintaining Anzac Square. See comments above in paragraph headed <i>Estimated Costs for Government Implementation</i></p>
55	<p>Notwithstanding the removal of the existing Trust/Fund trustees, do the objectives of the Fund remain the same as the objectives of the Anzac Day Trust?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Cl 73 – it appears that the council has the function to administer the Act – therefore, presumably the objects of the Fund are the same as those for the Trust.
81 - 34	<p>Does the abolition of the former Trust change the objectives of the new Fund? If so, where are they stated?</p>

Having lived with the Anzac Square restoration and enhancement project from inception to completion in the course of the ANZAC Centenary, I am more than happy to be of any assistance I can in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Craig
Captain RAN Rtd
Former Chair
Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary