

Queensland Police Union of Employees

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Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

8 March 2019

Dear Committee Chair,

Re: Review of the *Police Service Administration (Discipline Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*

I write on behalf of the Queensland Police Union ("QPU") in respect to the Committee's call for public submissions into the above Bill.

The QPU is a significant stakeholder in the police discipline system and has long been calling for reform to move from an antiquated and punitive discipline system to one which embraced modern employment ideals.

To this end, the QPU was part of the steering committee which assisted Government in identifying improvements to the current system.

It costs significant public funds to recruit and train a police officer. The new Bill recognises that officers are human beings who can make mistakes. It is designed to implement a system of discipline which recognises this and encourages officers to come forward and engage with their supervisors to improve their performance. It is designed to actively increase the professionalism of officers by removing the fear of a punitive sanction for minor or inconsequential misconduct, and replacing it with professional development strategies.

During 2018, I had the privilege of attending various police establishments around Queensland to explain the concept of the proposed system, which has been embodied in this Bill. By and large police officers were very receptive to the proposed changes, and favourably commented on a new, modern and restorative approach being taken to discipline.

Under the old system, police officers were left with months, if not years of uncertainty while they faced disciplinary complaints. Large amounts of money and time were wasted investigating even the most trivial of matters to the Nth degree. Officers were taken off line and stood down from their duties during those processes. Ultimately in most instances the outcome would not be dismissal or even demotion of the officers concerned. The delay however not only deprived the public and the QPS of the services of the subject officer, but also had a negative impact on the officer, their family and colleagues.

I am pleased to say this antiquated approach will be no more under the new Bill. Instead officers will be dealt with in a timely manner, and encouraged to identify areas where they can improve through training, supervision, mentoring and other strategies. Where a sanction is necessary, new sanctions such as community service which allows an officer to pay back to the community for any misdeed is available. These new sanctions replace existing sanctions such as pay point reductions which had an on-going and often draconian effect on an officer's (and their family's) financial situation.

The new system is not a return to the pre-Fitzgerald era either. The Commissioner and the Crime and Corruption Commission will still have the power to prosecute in QCAT officers who engage in corrupt conduct.

The Commissioner will still be capable of dismissing officers who, despite being given opportunities to improve their professionalism, refuse to do so. Similarly the Commissioner will be able to remove officers who engage in serious misconduct, such as the commission of serious indictable offences.

I commend this new Bill to the Committee as a far sighted, modern approach to dealing with police discipline, which recognises the public's investment in the QPS and its officers. I believe it will lead to a quicker, fairer and more transparent discipline system

which encourages officers to act professionally, yet recognises on occasions shortfalls can occur, which can be quickly and successfully remedied.

I am available on 3259 1900 should the Committee require any further detail.

Yours faithfully,



IAN LEAVERS
GENERAL PRESIDENT & CEO
QUEENSLAND POLICE UNION