



**ELAB submission 006**  
**Received: 24 Sept 2012**

Our **Mission** is to stop child sexual assault in our society.

Our **Vision** is to make Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child.



24<sup>th</sup> September, 2012

Ms Rosemary Menkens MP  
The Chair  
Education and Innovation Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane, Qld 4000  
E-mail: eic@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Menkens,

As you know, Bravehearts Inc is a not for profit organisation specialising in child sexual assault. Bravehearts has been operating since 1997 providing child focused healing and preventative strategies including comprehensive therapeutic, support and education programs. In addition, we are heavily involved in legislative reform and research.

As an agency that is focussed on advocating for appropriate and effective responses to child sexual assault, we provide the following feedback in relation to the *Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012*.

On the whole Bravehearts supports the amendments proposed under the *Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012*. We do however provide the following comments in relation to specific proposed amendments.

We believe it is absolutely essential that the legislation be amended to ensure that teachers and staff of state and non-state schools are mandatorily required to report all disclosed and suspected concerns of child sexual assault, without this requirement being limited to just 'significant' harm to the child or to matters where the alleged perpetrator is an employee.

While a failure to report disclosed sexual harm should be considered a serious offence in itself and appropriately dealt with under section 204 of the *Criminal Code*, we recognise the legitimate concerns teachers and staff may have about reporting suspected child sexual assault. In line with this we support the amendment that protects staff against criminal sanctions where they do not report the likelihood of sexual harm. However, there must be an avenue for disciplinary action in appropriate cases.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this feedback.

Warm Regards

Hetty Johnston  
Founder & Executive Director

Carol Ronken  
Criminologist, BA (psych), MAppSoc (social research)  
Research and Policy Manager

[www.bravehearts.org.au](http://www.bravehearts.org.au)