



4 July 2017

Committee Secretary  
Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE Q 4000  
Email: [etisbc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:etisbc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Respectful Relationships Information Paper**

We refer to the email dated 16 June 2017 seeking Submissions on the above-mentioned Information Paper by 14 August 2017. We commend the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee and the Queensland Government for their efforts in better educating vulnerable Queenslanders.

Protect All Children Today Inc. (PACT) is a non-profit community organisation established in 1986 as a service provider of court support as well as advocating for vulnerable children, young people and their families. PACT's Child Witness Support Program provides support for children and young people who are required to give evidence in criminal court matters, either as victims of, or witnesses to, a crime. PACT recruits Child Witness Support Volunteers to provide child victims and witnesses with support and information about the Criminal Justice System. Approximately, 70% of the children supported by PACT are victims of sexual assault. Therefore, it is through our experience that we offer the following comments.

Firstly, we express support of the Terms of Reference and believe they comprehensively address the issues requiring consideration.

We further believe the Scope of the Inquiry is adequate and should identify important factors for legislative reform and curriculum development.

As an organisation supporting child victims of sexual assault, we do express concern over the sexualised use of technology and the criminal trials involving children and young people that have resulted from "sexting", "revenge porn" and "viewing of sexual content online". Sadly, in our opinion, this has "normalised" various forms of sexual behaviour, leading to unnecessary crime to vulnerable Queenslanders.

We believe that sex education and respectful relationships education should be **compulsory in all Queensland schools**, providing it is age-appropriate, relevant, meaningful, accurate and engaging. In our experience, accurate information empowers children to make the best decisions, so the more they learn and understand about sexuality and the associated risks, the better.

---

***Vice Regal Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland***

We do not support the notion that sex education encourages young people to engage in sexual risk behaviours. PACT strongly believes that sex education is more likely to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

PACT recognises the commitment and dedication of not-for-profit agencies such as the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, True Relationships and Reproductive Health, Bravehearts, ACT for Kids and so on, in educating children and providing therapeutic support. These services are invaluable across the State. However, the Queensland Government has a responsibility to ensure that all school children receive adequate sex education and respectful relationships instruction.

In relation to the issues for consideration, we provide the following response based on our experience working with child and young person victims of crime:

***How prevalent are sexting, non-consensual sharing of sexual images and other sexualised use of technology in Queensland State schools?***

PACT does not have the expertise to provide factual information on this issue. However, we would suggest that this behaviour is prevalent across schools especially for students between the age of 12-16 years. Taskforce ARGOS would be best placed to provide statistical information of this nature.

***Compared to Queensland state schools, are there advantages or disadvantages in the ways that other states and territories deliver sexual education, respectful relationships education and education about at-risk behaviour and the use of digital technologies?***

PACT does not have the expertise to provide comment on this issue.

***Does the Queensland Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum:***

- ***Meet students' needs?***
- ***Help students to make safe and healthy choices?***
- ***Help students understand respectful relationships?***

Whilst we don't have statistical information to substantiate our views, we would suggest that the current curriculum does not adequately meet students' needs given that it is not **compulsory**. We believe that the curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is relevant, interesting, engaging and educational.

***In what ways could the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education in Queensland state schools be improved?***

We support the suggested identified examples and believe they should all assist in improving the current situation.

We further believe the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education should be **compulsory** and embedded into the Queensland curriculum. Further, the current curriculum should be reviewed and amended to ensure it is age-appropriate, interesting, engaging and informative. Factual and relevant information will assist young people to make informed sexual choices.

Due to the expertise and experience of the range of external agencies mentioned above, they should be consulted to provide input into the review and amendment of the current Queensland curriculum. Taskforce ARGOS of the Queensland Police Service should also be engaged to provide statistical information in relation to all sexual related cyber-crimes to inform the development of the curriculum.

Teachers need to receive training to provide them with a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum and their commitment to embed it into their lesson planning. Without their ownership, acceptance and acknowledgement of the benefit of this important learning topic, this education will fail. Early engagement of teachers in the review and amendment of the curriculum should assist in this regard.

The fostering of school participation will also need to be addressed to ensure a systematic positive culture across the teaching body.

PACT is very grateful to be consulted about this important issue. Should your staff require clarification or further information on any of the issues raised, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Jo Bryant, PACT's Chief Executive Officer on telephone [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this Information Paper, we trust our input has been of value.

Yours sincerely



Alexandra Marks  
Chairperson



Jo Bryant  
Chief Executive Officer