



4 April 2016

Ms Leanne Lingard MP
Chair
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic
and Family Violence Prevention Committee
Parliament House
Alice and George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000
Email: hcdsdfvpc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Lingard MP

Re: *Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting – Mason’s Law) Amendment Bill 2016*

We refer to your letter dated 22 March 2016 seeking submissions on the above-mentioned reform by 26 April 2016. Firstly, we would like to commend the Palaszczuk Government on its commitment to best practice child protection reforms.

Protect All Children Today Inc. (PACT) is a non-profit community organisation, established in 1986 as a service provider of court support. PACT also advocates on behalf of 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 the courts, either as victims of, or witnesses to, a crime.

Given our role is primarily to support children and young people in the Queensland Criminal Justice System, we offer comments from that perspective.

We express our support for extending mandatory reporting for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector, to provide greater protection for vulnerable younger children at risk, due to their regular contact with, and observation of, individual children and families. We also believe that by embedding this into legislation it formally acknowledges the importance of the protective role they play and cements the current voluntary reporting practices of the ECEC sector.

In addition, we strongly support the amendments of the Act to include three additional categories of mandated reporters and to reflect which approved individual providers the mandatory reporting obligation apply to, given it enhances the protection of younger children at risk.

In closing, PACT commend the Queensland Law Reform Commission’s commitment to ensure the Bill is fundamentally consistent with the legislative principles of mandatory reporting whereby ‘the safety, wellbeing and best interests of a child are paramount’.

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

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Should your staff require clarification or further information on any of the issues raised, please do not hesitate to contact Jo Bryant, PACT's Chief Executive Officer [REDACTED].

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on these valuable reforms and trust that our input has been of value.

Yours sincerely



Alexandra Marks
Chairperson



Jo Bryant
Chief Executive Officer