



6 September 2016

Research Director
Health, Communities and Disability Services and
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000
Email: hcdsdfvpc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

We refer to the email dated 18 August 2016 seeking Submissions on the above legislation by 7 September 2016.

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.

PACT is supportive of any legislative reforms that better protect vulnerable children and young people who have been victims or witnesses of domestic or family violence. It is through our experience that we offer the following comments:

We are supportive of the policy objectives and achievements of the Bill outlined in the Explanatory Notes.

Division 2: Requiring Police to consider the provisions of immediate protection and expanding the operation of police protection notices (PPNs)

Whilst we support the recommendation that PPNs be extended to protect a victim's children, we express concern about Police being overly burdened and having to consider what action to be taken to enable this to occur. It would appear that this may be a resourcing issue for the Queensland Police Service.

Section 134- Clause 40: Expanded powers to direct a person to move to and remain at a place

We believe that it is important for a respondent to be requested to remain at an appropriate place so the Officer can better ensure the safety of the aggrieved.

Section 37(1)(b): Grounds for a DVO and Tailoring conditions

We support the recommendation that courts can issue DVOs on the basis that victims have been threatened or have a fear that the respondent will commit domestic violence, by extending the definition of domestic violence. We further agree with tailoring DVOs to better protect victims.

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



Section 97: Duration of Protection Orders (POs)

We support the recommendation that courts can determine the appropriate length of POs to ensure the safety, protection and wellbeing of victims.

Consideration of Family Law Orders

We agree that the inconsistency between DVOs and Family Law Orders causes victims much confusion and frustration. Therefore, we support the Bill strengthening the current obligations by requirements courts to always consider any family law order and exercise their powers to resolve any inconsistencies between the order and proposed DVO.

Respondents' non-compliance with voluntary intervention orders (VIO)

We support the changes to clarify that once a respondent has agreed to an intervention order being made, they should comply with it in the same way as they should comply with other court orders.

Clause 44: Information Sharing and Police Referrals to specialist services

PACT is often inhibited in our ability to support young people as a result of the interpretation of the Privacy Legislation in regard to the sharing of information. We are currently required to obtain written consent from the families we support and would like to see amendments to ensure child victims of sexual assault are adequately supported through the daunting criminal justice process. Therefore we fully support the development of information sharing guidelines between Police and DFV services providers without consent. Further, we would like to see this practice extended to enable Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to share information with PACT to enable us to provide optimum support to vulnerable children and young person victims of crime.

Clauses 51 to 61: Legal Framework for the NDVOS in Queensland

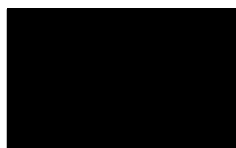
PACT supports the Bill be amended to streamline processes and improve safeguards for victims. However, we express concern over the workload associated with exchanging information about DVOs among Queensland and interstate courts and police. It would appear that adequate resourcing would need to be a consideration when implementing these proposals.

Clauses 45 and 46: Increasing penalties for breaching police protection notices and release conditions

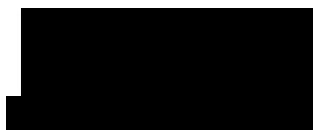
PACT does not have the expertise to comment but would suggest that increasing penalties may discourage negative behaviours by perpetrators.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this piece of legislation and trust that our input has been of value.

Yours sincerely



Alexandra Marks
Chairperson



Jo Bryant
Chief Executive Officer