

Inquiry - Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submission on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

This brief submission on the legislation is made on behalf of Labor Enabled Queensland (LEQ) and equity group of the Australian Labor Party, Queensland Branch. The group is composed of Labor Party members with various disabilities and mental health conditions.

We appreciate this opportunity provided by the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee to make a submission on the legislation.

We support this legislation wholeheartedly because it affords all Queenslanders, and especially people with disability, with greater protection from various forms of abuse and mis-treatment by health practitioners.

The Experience of People with a Disability

People with a disability in Queensland are more likely to experience various forms of violence, including physical, sexual and emotional violence and abuse. It is estimated that adults with a disability are two to three times more likely to be subjected to violence and abuse than other members of the community.

The Melbourne School of Population and Global Health utilised data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey to analyse the level of violence and abuse experienced by people with a disability.

People with disability in Australia are more likely to experience all types of violence and abuse. Women with a disability are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted than women who do not have a disability.

The rate of all forms of violence and abuse is highest for people with cognitive and psychological disability. Regrettably, violence and abuse by health practitioners is a reality. Queenslanders, especially those who are the most vulnerable, need greater protection from unscrupulous health practitioners.

Fact sheets on violence and people with a disability produced by the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health may be found at:

<https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/research-groups/centre-for-health-policy/disability-and-health-unit/violence-against-people-with-disabilities#:~:text=It%20is%20known%20from%20previous,compared%20to%20the%20general%20population.>

Recommendations

We make two recommendations for the consideration of the Committee on greater transparency and community education about the reforms included in the legislation.

Transparency

We support measures to increase the transparency of the process of regulating health practitioners. The community will be all the more safe from violence and abuse, especially those with a disability, with greater transparency about the record of offences committed by those seeking to be registered as health practitioners.

We recommend that efforts should be made to increase accessibility to this information for people with a disability. One possibility is to produce such information in Easy Read format as the Disability Royal Commission did with its final report in 2023.

Community Education

We further recommend that the Government be encouraged to provide community education about the reforms so that all Queenslanders, including people with a disability, are better informed about how their safety while in the care of health practitioners is protected. Again, this education should be provided in a variety of formats to ensure that people with various forms of disability have adequate access to this education material.

Conclusion

We support the legislation and hope that our recommendations are a useful contribution. We are happy to provide further information if the Committee requires it.

Contact Details

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