

Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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Committee Secretary
Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
By Email: JICSC@parliament.qld.gov.au

**QIFVLS Submission – *Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack’s Law Permanent)*
and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

Dear Committee Secretary,

The Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to considerations the government is giving to eradicating knife crime via amendments to ‘Jack’s Law’ in Part 3A of the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (PPRA).

Our submission is made from the standpoint of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) and Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS), dedicated to ensuring that families and households are safe from domestic and family violence and sexual violence.

Like all in the Queensland community, we seek enhanced community safety, including an end to knife crime. On this point, we note that a key focus of our service delivery at QIFVLS lies in our dedication to achieving the priority reforms and socio-economic targets outlined in the [National Agreement on Closing The Gap](#) (the National Agreement), particularly Target 13 (ensuring families and households are safe and that domestic and family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50% by 2031 as we progress towards 0).

Unfortunately, we do not feel that sufficient time has been set aside for all stakeholders to consider the impacts of the proposed amendments in the Bill. In particular, we believe that stakeholder submissions would be better informed by a report or evaluation of the current operation of Part 3A of the PPRA. This would serve as a valuable bookend to Griffith University’s 2022 report into the *Queensland Police Service’s Wandering Trial* (Griffith report).

Considering the findings and recommendations made by Her Honour Judge Richards after the Queensland Police Service’s (QPS) Independent Commission of Inquiry in November 2022, our overarching position is that the proposed amendments to Part 3A of the PPRA need to be grounded in a focus on:

- regular and ongoing training for QPS police officers and non-police staff in cultural safety, with training delivered by a specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander provider.
- an enhanced co-responder model (not just for domestic and family violence matters) which would include a specialist support worker, ideally from an Aboriginal and Torres



Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation, actively working in partnership with QPS police officers. This would ensure QPS resources are not unnecessarily stretched, leaving police officers to undertake functions that would be better undertaken by specialist support workers.

At QIFVLS, we are also concerned about the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls being incarcerated in Queensland. This climbing incarceration rate has been examined by both the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council (QSAC) as well as the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce in its second report, *Hear Her Voice – Report Two*. These reports identify the intersection between women and girls who appear before the courts as accused persons and their experiences as victim-survivors of domestic, family and/or sexual violence.

Considering the above, we note the Griffith report's suggestion that:

“the QPS should address the unreliability of data recorded in QPRIME specifically relating to First Nations people. Given the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the criminal justice system, and state and federal government commitments to Closing the Gap, it is crucial that QPS can accurately record and retrieve this important information.”¹

About QIFVLS

The Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services Aboriginal Corporation (QIFVLS) is a Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that fills a recognised gap in access to culturally appropriate legal and wraparound support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and sexual assault.

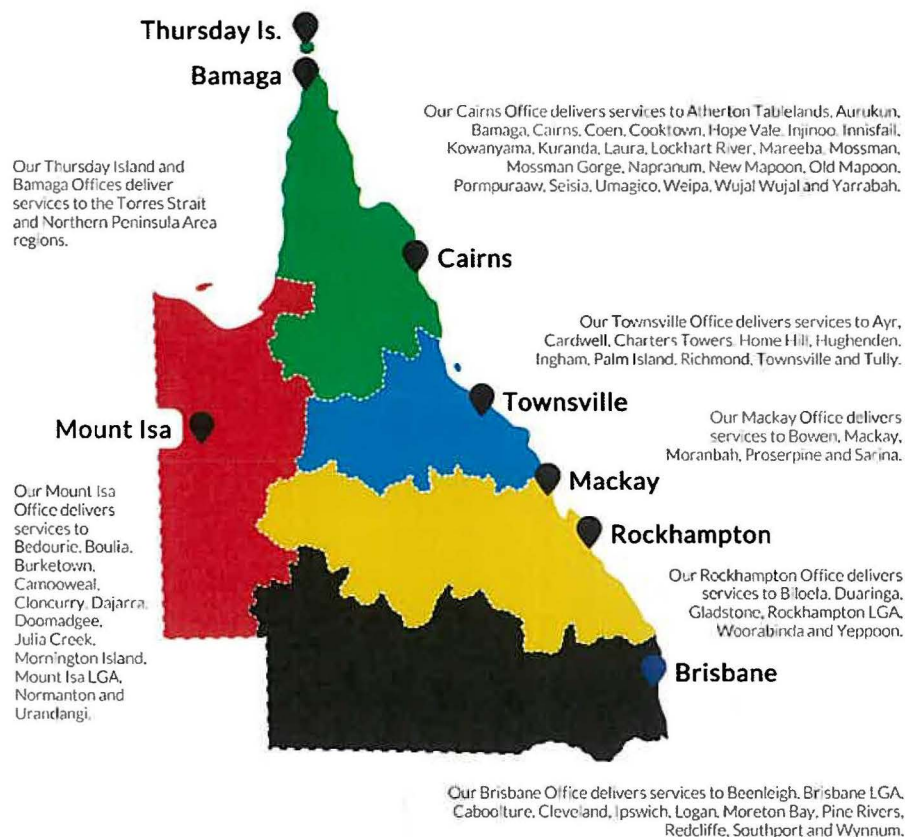
QIFVLS is primarily an outreach service. As can be seen from the map below, we operate out of eight offices across Queensland, delivering services to over 90 communities, from the urban south-eastern corner of the state, out west to communities surrounding Mount Isa, reaching the Northern Territory border, and north to the outer islands of the Torres Strait, neighbouring Papua New Guinea. Our services extend from domestic and family violence to family law; child protection; sexual assault and Victims Assist Queensland (VAQ) applications.

¹ <https://blogs.griffith.edu.au/gci-insights/2022/11/14/review-of-the-queensland-police-service-wandering-trial/> page v



QIFVLS

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service



QIFVLS provides legal assistance and representation in the following areas —

- Domestic and family violence.
- Child protection law.
- Family law.
- Victim Assist Queensland (VAQ) compensation applications.
- Minor assistance in blue card matters.

Through the observations and experiences of our frontline staff, we witness family violence as a cornerstone or intersection that links an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's connection to the child protection system, the youth justice system, adult criminal justice system, housing and/or homelessness, health and the family law system.

In contrast to siloed government responses, QIFVLS consistently advocates for uniform, holistic, culturally safe and consistent strategies that will improve responses in the family violence, policing and criminal justice, child protection system, housing and corrective services. This approach aligns with achieving reductions in the Justice targets (particularly Targets 10&11 read in conjunction with Targets 12 and 13) of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap as well as meeting the overarching objectives of the 4 priority reform areas.

Making the existing Jack's Law framework permanent

If the existing Jack's Law framework is to be made permanent, we strongly support a review of Part 3A of the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (PPRA) as part of the overall review



of the PPRA as set out in section 807 of the Act. We suggest the review could draw on the involvement and expertise of the QPS Research and Evaluation Branch.

Applying Jack's Law to a greater range of other public places

We are interested in further information about the data and evidentiary basis supporting the expansion of wandering to *other public places*. This is due to our reading of Key Finding 2 of the Griffith Report which noted that:

Key Finding 2. This variability in outcome between the two sites suggests that any continuation of wandering should be targeted at only those areas where data shows a proportionately higher prevalence of knife offences occurring over a sustained period.²

The Griffith Report went on to note that in future, *"wandering should only be used in places where the evidence suggests weapons are more likely to be carried."*

In addition to Key Finding 2 of the Griffith Report, we would also be interested in any updated data on the effects of wandering in reducing the overall incidence of knife-crime. Specifically, we are interested in data regarding:

- the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls who are wandered compared to males; and
- the number of incidences of wandering of these individuals that resulted in a knife or other weapon being found.

Streamlining the framework to provide further efficiencies

Given the workloads of police officers, we understand and appreciate the need to utilise streamlined procedures. Considering our overarching emphasis on cultural responsiveness of police QPS employees, we are keen to find common ground with the QPS in avoiding inappropriate use of stereotypes and cultural assumptions/biases by what the Griffith Report noted to be a small number of officers. Given the vulnerability of our clients and the intersecting and multiple complex needs affecting them, we also want to ensure any streamlined procedures with wandering do not lead to a bypassing of reasonable suspicion safeguards and net-widening among minor offenders, as identified in Key Finding 9 of the Griffith Report.

From the point of view of the clients whom we assist in the family violence and sexual violence space, we caution against any net-widening which may produce unintended consequences of further institutionalising victim-survivors of family and/or sexual violence and entrenching mistrust in police and government agencies among our clients and their communities.

Conclusion

We are thankful for the Committee's consideration of our submission and trust that our viewpoint as both an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation and Family Violence Prevention Legal Service is appreciated.

² <https://blogs.griffith.edu.au/gci-insights/2022/11/14/review-of-the-queensland-police-service-wandering-trial/>



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If you would like to discuss our feedback further, please don't hesitate to contact me at

[REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service

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Thelma Schwartz

Principal Legal Officer