

Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 022

Submission By: Office of the Victims' Commissioner

Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Office of the Victims' Commissioner

Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026

Submission to the Justice, Integrity and
Community Safety Committee

6 October 2026

Commissioner's introduction

The Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026 (the Bill) proposes significant reforms to Queensland's parole framework, with a strong focus on community safety, victim participation and transparency in parole decision-making.

Through complaints, consultations and engagement with victims and service providers, my office has heard about the lasting impacts of serious offending, concerns about offender release, difficulties accessing information, and barriers to participating in parole processes.

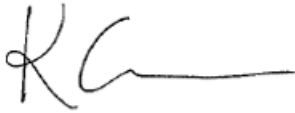
Many of these concerns were reflected in the 2025 independent review of the Parole Board Queensland undertaken by Mr Peter Hastie KC. A key focus of the review was the consideration of the rights, participation and treatment of victims within the parole process. Among the objectives of the review was to consider the impacts on victims of crime, including to:

- evaluate the adequacy of the Victims Register
- assess barriers preventing victims from participating fully in the parole process
- analyse the Parole Board's engagement with victims of crime
- identify improvements to enhance victims' rights and support throughout the parole process.¹

The Review identified opportunities to strengthen victims' rights, improve communication and information-sharing, and enhance the role of victims within the parole process. I am pleased to note that many of the Review's findings and recommendations reflect matters raised by my office in its submission to the Review. I also welcome the Government's support, or support in principle, for the majority of those recommendations, many of which have been incorporated into this Bill.

Overall, I support the reforms contained in the Bill aimed at strengthening community safety and improving victims' experiences of the parole system. This submission highlights reforms that will positively impact victims, identifies opportunities to further strengthen the proposed framework, and draws on feedback my office has received from victims and victim support organisations.

I welcome the Bill as a significant step towards a more victim-focused parole system and improved restricted prisoner and No Body, No Parole frameworks that will positively impact victims. The Bill represents a positive advancement in protecting victims' rights and strengthening public confidence in Queensland's criminal justice system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KC' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Kate Connors

Victims' Commissioner

Role of the Victims' Commissioner

The role of the Victims' Commissioner is established under the *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024* (Qld) (VCSVRB Act). My role is to protect and promote the rights and needs of victims of crime. My statutory functions include:

- providing information to victims of crime to help them navigate the criminal justice system
- dealing with complaints under the Charter of Victims' Rights
- conducting systemic reviews
- listening to victims to hear about their own, lived experiences
- advocating for victims' rights by making recommendations and providing advice to government and non-government entities about improvements to policy, practices, procedures and systems to uphold the rights of victims and better meet their needs.
- monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

Under section 6 of the VCSVRB Act, a victim includes a person who suffers harm because a criminal offence (including domestic violence) is committed against the person. This includes:

- people who have a criminal offence committed against them directly
- family members or dependants of a person who has a criminal offence committed against them
- people who are harmed because they helped another person who had a criminal offence committed against them
- witnesses of crimes.²

The VCSVRB Act defines harm as including physical, psychological or emotional harm, damage to or loss of property, and financial or economic loss.³ This definition recognises the range of impacts that a crime can have on an individual.

Review of the Charter of Victims' Rights

In February 2025, the Office of the Victims' Commissioner (OVC) commenced a systemic review of the Charter of Victims' Rights, pursuant to my functions under section 9(a) of the VCSVRB Act. The Review aims to ensure the Charter of Victims' Rights effectively promotes and protects the rights of diverse victims of crime, in line with recommendations by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce⁴ and the Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime.⁵

The Review is being informed by engagement with victims of crime, their advocates, family members and professionals who work with victims of crime. Since the commencement of the Charter Review, the OVC has undertaken extensive consultation on victims' rights, over two stages, resulting in:

- 129 submissions from stakeholders
- 213 responses to two surveys
- discussions with 87 people with lived experience and people who may face particular barriers when interacting with the justice system
- feedback from over 1,000 Queenslanders in commissioned market research
- discussions with 149 government and non-government representatives at six Listening Forums around the state
- interviews with 42 Subject Matter Experts from government stakeholders
- 104 responses to OVC information requests from government and non-government entities on their implementation of the Charter.

The Charter Review is now well advanced, and I will provide a report to the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services by December 2026. More information about the Review can be found on the OVC's [website](#).

This submission is informed, in part, by the views and experiences shared with the OVC thus far, as well as the victims who have provided feedback or made complaints to the OVC.

Victims' Commissioner's submission on the Bill

The stated objectives of the Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026 are to deliver significant reforms to the Queensland parole framework, enhance the rights and participation of victims, and ensure the parole system operates effectively and transparently in a way that reflects community expectations.⁶ The proposed reforms 'reinforce that parole is a privilege, not a right, and that community safety must be the paramount consideration in decisions about a prisoner's release on parole.'⁷

To achieve these objectives, the Bill proposes amendments to the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CSA), the *Youth Justice Act 1992* (YJA) and the VCSVRB Act to:

- expand the restricted prisoner framework to all prisoners serving a sentence of life imprisonment and require an initial restricted prisoner declaration for a minimum period of five years, ensuring a higher threshold for parole for prisoners convicted of the most serious offences and reducing the uncertainty and re-traumatisation repeated parole applications can cause victims and their families
- strengthen the No Body, No Parole (NBNP) framework to better incentivise prisoner cooperation and provide reassurance to victims' families
- strengthen exceptional circumstances parole to line up with the framework for restricted prisoners to be better aligned with community expectations
- promote victim and community safety in parole decision making and improve the accountability, transparency and governance of the Parole Board Queensland (the Board), including through enabling the president to publish decisions and reasons for the decision.
- prioritise victims' rights by better informing them and supporting them through the parole process and improving the registration processes for victims for the Victims' Register
- Rename the 'Eligible persons register' in both the CSA and the YJA with 'Victims register,' and 'eligible person' with 'registered victim' in the CSA, the YJA and the VCSVRB Act in line with commonly used language.

The parole system offers a supervised pathway for offenders leaving correctional facilities. In September 2025, Mr Hastie KC delivered an independent review of the Parole Board Queensland (the Review), which identified ways to improve the operation and conduct of the Board. Amongst other issues, the Review focused on the rights, participation and treatment of victims within the parole process.⁸ The Review made several recommendations regarding victims. I am pleased that the Government supported or supported in principle most of these recommendations and has adopted several in this Bill.⁹

Expanding the restricted prisoner framework

The restricted prisoner framework currently enables the president of the Parole Board to declare that a restricted prisoner must not be considered for parole for a period of up to 10 years if it is in the public interest to do so. A restricted prisoner is currently defined as a prisoner who has been sentenced to life imprisonment for committing multiple murders or for murdering a child.¹⁰

The Bill (Clause 9) expands the cohort of prisoners to whom the restricted prisoner framework applies, to include all prisoners serving a sentence of life imprisonment. The Bill also introduces an initial mandatory restricted prisoner declaration for a minimum period of five years for all restricted prisoners and enables deputy presidents to make restricted prisoner declarations (Clause 12).

I am supportive of these amendments. The traumatic effects of serious offending on victims are ongoing. I have heard from victims that uncertainty about when an offender may be considered for parole can cause significant anxiety, while the prospect of release may result in overwhelming fear for victims and their families. Repeated parole considerations can also require victims to revisit the circumstances of the offence and articulate the ongoing impacts of the trauma, which is itself traumatic and emotionally exhausting. Extending the period between parole considerations may reduce this uncertainty and lessen the burden on victims and their families.

I note that the new scope of restricted prisoners will apply to prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment, even if the sentence was imposed before the commencement of the provision (Clause 66, new section 492). This will provide comfort to victims of prisoners currently serving a life sentence.

As a complementary reform, I urge the Committee to consider expanding the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* (the DPSO Act) to high-risk violent offenders. Currently the DPSO Act applies only to serious sexual offenders and enables the Attorney-General to apply to the Supreme Court for a continuing detention or

supervision order against the prisoner if they are a serious danger to the community, even where the prisoner has not committed any further offences. Queensland is the only Australian state other than the Northern Territory that still limits its high-risk offender legislation to dangerous sexual offenders. All other states now extend their schemes to high-risk violent offenders. Extending this dangerous prisoner scheme to high-risk violent offenders would provide a mechanism for continuing post-sentence detention of high-risk offenders and ensuring dangers prisoners to be continued to be supervised upon their eventual release.

No Body, No Parole reforms

The Bill proposes amendments to address legislative loopholes in the 'No Body, No Parole' (NBNP) framework which is intended to encourage homicide offenders to cooperate with authorities to locate, or identify the last known location of, a victim's body or remains. It does so by preventing the offender's release on parole unless the Parole Board is satisfied the prisoner has satisfactorily cooperated.

I support these reforms, which strengthen the NBNP framework and recognise, as noted in the Explanatory Notes, 'the profound and ongoing anguish experienced by families who are unable to lay their loved ones to rest'.

Through our engagement with victims who are bereaved family members, I have heard about the immense and ongoing pain caused when authorities are unable to locate the body or remains of a victim. Victims have shared with my office their feelings of abandonment when a decision is made to discontinue a search. This distress can be exacerbated when an offender who does not cooperate is then released on parole. We have also heard that the emotional toll in these circumstances can extend beyond the immediate family and be felt across the whole community, particularly when there is a prolonged lack of resolution.

These reforms appropriately address loopholes in the NBNP framework, ensuring that offenders are incentivised, wherever possible, to provide information that may bring some closure to grieving loved ones and the broader community.

Providing greater predictability around timing of parole

The Bill amends section 180 of the CSA to clarify that a prisoner may apply for parole 180 days before their parole eligibility date unless an exception applies. This rectifies unnecessary complexity in the current drafting in relation to parole eligibility identified

by the Review and in doing so, provides greater certainty for victims about when they may be required to engage with the parole process.

I am also pleased to note that the Bill makes amendments to expressly require the Parole Board, when determining when any prisoner may next apply for parole, to consider the likely effect of a further parole application on a registered victim (Clause 41). This is an important amendment that recognises the impact of parole applications on victims and will help to ensure that the interests and wellbeing of victims form part of the Board's consideration.

Expanding victim participation in parole decisions

This Bill recognises and strengthens the role of victims in parole decision-making and seeks to address a range of concerns and obstacles that may impede victims having a voice in the parole process. As the Explanatory Notes state:

Victims bring an important perspective to parole decision-making, including about the continuing impact of the offending and the effect a prisoner's release may have on their safety and wellbeing. However, participating in the parole process and making a submission about the prospect of a prisoner's release on parole can be complex, confronting, and potentially re-traumatising.

I welcome the amendments in the Bill which provide that the paramount consideration in deciding a parole application is the safety of the community. In assessing potential risk to the community, I am pleased to note that the Bill introduces a strengthened requirement for the Board to have regard to the likely impact of parole release on a registered victim *and the victim's family*, and any submissions made by a registered victim (new section 193(6)(e)).

I also welcome amendments in the Bill that require that the Board to expressly consider whether any conditions are necessary to ensure that—

- the safety of the community and any registered victim for the prisoner are not endangered by the prisoner while released on parole; and
- no psychological harm is caused to any registered victim for the prisoner by the prisoner being released on parole (new section 200(3A)).

To support the Board's consideration of the likely impact of parole release on a registered victim and their family, I am pleased to note that the Bill includes a range of reforms to strengthen the ability of victims to participate in parole decisions by the Board. Clause 31 makes amendments to:

- extend the timeframe for a registered victim to make a submission on a parole application to 42 days (instead of 21 days), with the possibility of applying for an extension
- remove the restriction that the submission must be about matters that were not before the court at the time of sentencing (enabling Victim Impact Statements (VIS) before the sentencing court to be provided), and specifically state that the submission may address matters relevant to the decision to make a parole order, the conditions to be included in an order, and the likely effect of an order on the victim or their family
- protect the privacy and safety of registered victims (previously 'eligible persons') by prohibiting the Board from giving prisoners or representatives of prisoners a victim's submission or information in a submission and enabling sensitive information contained in parole reports to be withheld from prisoners
- enable a registered victim to apply to appear before the Board either by 'contemporaneous communication link' (video or phone), or in person if appearing by link would be difficult, and to be accompanied by a support person or advocate
- require that registered victims be provided with detailed information about the opportunity to make a submission and appear before the Board, as well as information about parole and the Board's role

These are significant reforms that collectively enhance victims' ability to participate in the parole process while recognising and responding to their individual circumstances, safety and wellbeing. The reforms align with key themes that my office hears from engaging with victims, including that:

- victims need clear and timely access to information about parole decisions
- victims want to have their voices heard in relation to parole applications
- victims value the opportunity to have a support person or advocate with them as they navigate the criminal justice system
- privacy and safety are critical needs for victims and their families.

I applaud the amendments in the Bill that strengthen the Board's consideration of the impact release on parole may have on a registered victim and their family and broaden what information can be included in a submission. My office has heard from victims that they feel that their submission to the Board is purely procedural, and rarely influential in

the Board's decision-making. It is important that victims understand that their submission has been given genuine consideration. I urge the Committee to consider recommending that, in implementing these amendments, a review of the Parole Board Queensland Decision Making Manual should be undertaken with a view to improving communication with victims about how their submissions have been considered in the decision-making process.

I welcome the provision of an improved range of information to victims about the Board, its role and the opportunity to make a submission. This will assist to address concerns raised with my office and noted by the Review that many victims do not understand parole or the role of the Board. As discussed below, this information needs to be provided in an accessible and trauma-informed manner.

I also welcome the Bill's amendments to enable the president to publish a decision of the parole board and the reasons for the decision and prescribes the considerations and process for publication of the decision (Clause 51). This will provide victims and the community with a better understanding of the parole process and how the parole makes its decisions. Enabling registered victims to make a submission about the publication of a Board decision is an appropriate safeguard to ensure risks to victim safety and wellbeing can be identified. As discussed below, victims may need support to understand this process and to make a submission.

Access to Victim Impact Statements and other material before the sentencing court

The Review concluded that it is appropriate for the Board to have access to information before the sentencing court:

The exclusion of material before the court at the time of sentencing is problematic. The parole board may not always have all of the information given to a sentencing court. It may not have even the sentencing remarks, and even if it does, these may not capture all of the matters placed before the sentencing court. It would also not have the victim impact statement.

I warmly support the proposed removal of the limitation preventing submissions from including information before the sentencing court. This amendment will mean that victims will be able to provide their VIS to the Board, consistent with the Review's recommendation.

However, I query whether this reform goes far enough. My office has heard from victims that they have assumed that information presented during sentencing, such as their VIS, would be available to the Board. This assumption may contribute to some victims choosing not to register on the Victims Register, or not to make a submission.

The Review recommended that an amendment be made to the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* (Qld) to require that, where a sentence involves a parole eligibility date, any VIS to be provided to the chief executive for use in the parole process, unless the court orders otherwise.¹¹ The government supported this recommendation in principle, noting it would consider the best way for this information to be provided to the Board. I note that similar recommendations for the provision of sentencing remarks and medical and other reports tendered at sentencing¹² were also supported in principle, but are not included in the Bill.

The Bill amends section 245 of the CSA to require that if asked by the Board, the chief executive must provide a *comprehensive* report on the prisoner's parole application (Clause 53). The amendment states that a report 'is comprehensive if the report contains enough details to help the parole board decide the application'. Based on the Review's description of the contents of reports previously made,¹³ it appears unlikely that information provided at the time of sentencing, such as a VIS, would be included in those reports.

I appreciate that, as the Review noted, parole is not part of the sentencing process. Rather than focusing on punishment, parole decisions are concerned with whether the prisoner can be safely released to enable their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.¹⁴ However the Board is required to use its discretion to consider what is and is not relevant to its decision. I suggest the Committee consider strengthening the Bill by enabling the Board to be automatically provided with the VIS as part of the comprehensive report provided by the chief executive. This may require including an amendment to section *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* similar to that recommended by the Review.

In the alternative, I suggest that the Bill be amended to ensure that the information provided to a victim about the Victims' Register (new section 319ZN) includes advice that VIS are not automatically provided to the Board.

The Justice Legislation (Strengthening Victims' Rights) Amendment Bill 2026, which is currently before Parliament, proposes the introduction of Community Impact Statements (CIS). CIS provide a mechanism where the Victims' Commissioner can provide a statement to the sentencing court about the harm offending has caused, or is likely to have caused, to the community generally, or a particular section of or group of people within, the community. CIS enable the court to consider harm to victims who would otherwise not be represented in the justice process including where individual victims cannot be identified, or where victims cannot, or choose not, to make VIS.

It is proposed that CIS be introduced only for child exploitation material offences (sections 228A to 228DC of the Criminal Code); serious vilification and prohibited

symbols offences (chapter 7A of the Criminal Code); and an offence of attempting, or conspiring to commit, these offences. However, the Bill allows further offences to be prescribed by regulation.

On the basis that the Justice Legislation (Strengthening Victims' Rights) Amendment Bill 2026 is passed, I suggest that the Committee consider whether the Board should be provided with any CIS provided to the sentencing court.

Accessible provision of submissions

In June 2024, the *Corrective Services (Promoting Safety) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* (Qld) amended the CSA to allow victims to make submissions in other formats approved by Board, such as voice recording, via telephone or via video link.¹⁵ These changes provide greater flexibility in how a victim can engage with the Board and are welcomed. However, it is unclear how this amendment has been operationalised. There is currently limited information on the Board or Victims Register websites outlining any other approved formats. Information provided to victims, and publicly available materials, should include information about the additional approved formats to provide victims with greater choice and control about their submissions.

It is my understanding that there are limited services who provide support to draft submissions to the Board. Many victims will not be able to take advantage of the positive legislative reforms in this Bill without support. I urge the Committee to enquire into the current support services available to victims preparing submissions, with a view to identifying opportunities to strengthen support at this critical stage of the criminal justice process.

I also note the Review's observation that victims want a better understanding of the whole criminal justice system, including the parole process.¹⁶ This reflects feedback my office has received that a lack of understanding and information is a barrier to their participation, and to claiming their entitlements. The Victims' Advocate Service may address this challenge to some degree, however, there remains a need for specialist support services to provide tailored responses. Implementation of these reforms should communicate how these reforms impact victim entitlement and participation opportunities to all stakeholders, including specialist services.

Improving access to the Victims' Registers

The Victims' Registers (adult and youth) are an important mechanism for providing eligible victims with certain information about an offender's sentence. For many victims, access to this information is critical to managing their safety and can have a significant impact their psychological wellbeing. However, victims who are not registered, including

those who do are unaware of the register or do not know how to apply, are unable to access this information.

Through my office's engagement with victims, we have heard:

- many victims are not aware of the existence of Victims' Registers or their potential eligibility for registration
- information may be provided only at the finalisation of a case, when victims may not understand the importance of registering at that time or may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of another application process
- victims are not informed that when an offender is registered on the Youth Victims' Register and then transitioned into an adult correctional facility, the victim's registration on the Adult Victims' Register is not automatic.

These concerns align with feedback received by the Review during consultation and underpin a number of reforms in the Bill. The Review noted that victims' lack of awareness may be contributing to low numbers of registration overall, while also observing that recent increases in registration (between July 2022 and June 2024) may reflect greater publicity about victims' rights and the introduction of greater flexibility in the application process.

The Bill includes amendments to require a prosecuting agency to provide QCS with the contact details of victims of violent, sexual and domestic violence offences, as soon as practicable after sentencing. QCS will then contact eligible victims to inform them of their entitlement to register and provide support to do so. These reforms will reduce the burden on victims having to independently seek out the registration process and addresses feedback we have heard from victims and those who support them.

I am supportive of this proactive information-sharing approach which recognises that some victims may not want to be registered and should not be required to take action to remove themselves from the Register. It is equally important that victims are provided with sufficient information and support to understand the Register and the information they may receive through it.

Consistency between Victims' Registers

Amendments to the YJA made by the *Making Queensland Safer Act 2024* (Qld) introduced an 'opt out' model for the Victims' Register for youth offenders. Under this model, the QPS and the ODPP proactively provide information about certain eligible victims to the Department of the Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS), enabling DYJVS to automatically register the victim without needing to apply. It is unclear how effective

these amendments have been in increasing registrations and streamlining processes for victims.

While I recognise there are advantages to both the 'opt out' and the proactive information sharing models, I suggest that consistency between the two Registers is desirable from the perspective of victims, victim support service providers and agencies involved in implementing these processes.

I urge the committee to seek advice regarding the efficacy of the 'opt-in' model and consider whether there is an opportunity to better align processes to support both Victims' Registers and reduce complexity for victims and other stakeholders.

Entitlement to expanded information

The Bill (Clause 64) expands the information available to registered victims under the CSA to include:

- information about any further cumulative terms of imprisonment imposed on the prisoner while in custody
- the results of any parole application
- if ordinary parole is refused, the exclusion period that applies before the prisoner can reapply without consent of the Board
- for a restricted prisoner, when a declaration is made and when it ends, and decisions not to impose such a declaration
- for a NBNP prisoner, when a no cooperation declaration is made and when a prisoner is found to have provided timely and satisfactory cooperation
- when the prisoner's status as a restricted prisoner or a no body-no parole prisoner ends
- when the prisoner is transferred interstate or overseas
- when the prisoner is transferred to the custody of an officer under the *Migration Act 1958* (Cwlth).

The chief executive is also able to provide a registered victim with any other information they consider appropriate (Clause 64). Among the listed examples are the details of rehabilitation activities engaged in by the prisoner. I note that this amendment responds to feedback received by the Review from victims and the Review's recommendation,¹⁷

and aligns with feedback my office has received about the type of information that victims would like to receive.

Collectively, these changes enhance transparency and support victim participation by providing more comprehensive information about a prisoner's custody arrangements, parole and release pathway. They also help victims better understand and prepare for decisions that may affect their safety and wellbeing.

The Bill also restructures the provision to require certain information, such as an escape or information that could endanger the victim's life or physical safety, to be provided immediately after the chief executive becomes aware of the information. Other information must be provided as soon as practicable after the chief executive becomes aware of the information.

Timing of information provision

Concerningly, the Review noted that there have been considerable delays in the past: *Unfortunately, there have been instances where eligible persons have found out about the grant of parole after the prisoner has been released, sometimes well after that occurrence and by means other than official channels.*

Victims have also shared with my office experiences where they have not had sufficient time to undertake safety planning activities after being notified about a prisoner's release on parole. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed.

I strongly welcome the introduction of the victim's right to be informed of the results of any parole application, where this was previously at the discretion of the chief executive. The operationalisation of this amendment is supported by a related amendment to section 194 of the CSA to require the Board to give a copy of the parole order to the chief executive (Clause 40). As noted above, chief executive is required to provide this information to the registered victim 'as soon as practicable'. However, no timeframes are prescribed for the provision of information to the chief executive.

I note that legislation in other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, requires a registered person to be notified at least 14 days before the release of the prisoner on parole or within 14 days after a decision not to release the prisoner on parole.¹⁸

The Bill retains current limitations requiring that the day the parole order starts (the 'start day') must be no more than 14 days after the parole order was made. The start day may therefore be less than 14 days. This means that there is a short period of time for the Board to notify the chief executive and the chief executive to notify the victim to provide victims with adequate notice and time to prepare.

I urge the Committee to consider whether the Bill should impose timeframes for the provision of information about parole outcomes to victims. Alternatively, I urge the committee to seek advice from QCS about what operational processes are, or will be, in place to ensure that victims will be able to be informed of parole outcomes in a timely fashion, enabling them to enact safety plans and prepare for a prisoner's release.

Widening eligibility

The Bill expands eligibility for both the youth and adult Victims' Registers to victims of violent or sexual offences where the offender has been sentenced to detention or prison for an offence against the *Bail Act 1980* (Qld) (Clauses 59 and 82). This is a welcome expansion that will enable victims of sexual and violent offences to receive information about the offender's sentence where the offender remains in custody or detention for bail breach offences after completing the sentence for the substantive offence.

The Bill also removes the provision requiring the chief executive to give a youth offender an opportunity to make a submission opposing a victim's registration (Clause 82). I support this amendment as I understand it is a barrier for some victims who would like to receive information about an offender's sentence and release but are concerned about their identity being revealed to the offender during the registration process. I note that the chief executive retains existing powers to refuse or remove a registration where this is necessary to protect the security of a detention centre, the safe custody or welfare of a youth, or the safety or welfare of another person.¹⁹

Importance of accessible, trauma-informed communication

This Bill represents a welcome improvement in the types of information to be provided to victims. As observed by the Review, there is little community understanding about the parole process, or the purpose of parole. In our interaction with victims, we frequently hear that they don't understand terminology used in the criminal justice system or understand key concepts (for example the difference between parole release dates and parole eligibility dates or the roles of different agencies or bodies like the Board).

The implementation of these reforms will require careful consideration of the important additional information enabled by this Bill is communicated to victims in plain English and in formats that are accessible to all members of our community.

I am pleased to note that the Bill include amendments that:

- require the chief executive to use the victim's preferred method of contact when providing information about the Victims' Register (clause 56)

- require the chief executive not to contact victims if aware that they do not want to be contacted by the chief executive or to receive information about the Victims' Register (clause 56)

These amendments are consistent with a trauma-informed approach to communicating with victims.

Definitions of 'victim' across legislation

Through my office's engagement with victims and stakeholders, we have heard that multiple definitions of 'victim' across different legislation create uncertainty about eligibility for rights, services and supports and increase complexity for victims and others navigating the criminal justice system. This can create false expectations for victims seeking to understand their eligibility and make it more difficult for agencies to consistently identify and respond to those seeking assistance.

As noted above, the OVC has undertaken extensive consultation on victims' rights over the past 18 months as part of the Charter Review. Stakeholders expressed concern that the existing definitions of 'victim' and 'affected victim' in the VCSVRB Act, together with differing definitions of 'eligible persons' in relation to victims' registers,²⁰ create uncertainty about entitlement to rights and services. Feedback to the Review highlighted the need for definitions that are clear, practical and capable of consistent application by entities required to uphold Charter rights.

Definitions of 'victim' currently appear in the VCSVRB Act, the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009* (Qld) (VOCAA) and the *Mental Health Act 2016* (Qld). In addition, the following Bills propose further definitions:

- the Justice Legislation (Strengthening Victims' Rights) Amendment Bill 2026, proposes the introduction of a new, expanded definition of 'victim' in the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 (Qld)* for the purposes of making VIS
- the Victims of Crime Assistance (Victims' Advocate Service) Amendment Bill 2026 introduces a new definition of 'victim' for the purposes of the Victims' Advocate Service.

The Bill (Clause 58) replaces all references to the 'Eligible persons register' in both the CSA and the YJA with 'Victims register,' and makes consequential amendments to the VCSVRB Act to update this terminology. The term 'eligible person' will also be replaced with 'registered victim' in the CSA, the YJA and the VCSVRB Act.

I am supportive of these changes. They will improve clarity and consistency, as it reflects the terminology commonly used by the community and in public-facing materials.²¹ However, I would like to highlight that these changes will result in the VCSVRB Act having three distinct concepts of victim: 'victim' in section 6, 'affected victim' in section 38 and 'registered victim' in Schedules 1 and 2. As a result, individuals may be recognised as victims in some contexts but not others, creating inconsistent expectations, uncertainty about eligibility for rights, services and supports, and added administrative burden for agencies responsible for implementing victim-related legislation.

The Bill (Clause 41 and 51) also defines 'victim, of a prisoner' in the CSA in relation to making decisions about exclusion periods and notification and consultation about the publication of Parole Board decisions.

In these context 'victim, of a prisoner' means:

- (a) a person against whom an offence was committed if the prisoner is serving a term of imprisonment for the offence; or
- (b) a registered victim for the prisoner.²²

The Bill (Clause 56) also defines 'victim, of an offence' for the purpose of a prosecuting authority providing information about the victim to the chief executive, QCS to support increased awareness of the Victims' Register.

While I appreciate there is sometimes a need to define terms for the particular context in which they are being applied, I encourage the Committee in its consideration of this and other Bills currently before Parliament, to recognise the importance of achieving greater consistency in the terminology and definitions used across victim-related legislation.

I note that our Review of the Charter of Victims' Rights is due to be provided to the Minister in December 2026. I will take amendments proposed by this Bill into account in developing recommendations.

Endnotes

¹ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) 132–33 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

² *Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024* (Qld) ('VCSVRB Act') s 6.

³ VCSVRB Act s 6.

⁴ Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice: Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system* (Report 2 Volume 1, 2022) 14 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/5b70727a-cc0e-4e08-8eda-e1434e6e0814/wsjt-hear-her-voice-report-2-volume-1.pdf>>.

⁵ Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, *Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime* (Report No. 48 to 57th Parliament, May 2023) vi <<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/5723t648/5723t648-b045.pdf>>.

⁶ Explanatory notes, Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026 (Qld) 1.

⁷ Explanatory notes, Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026 (Qld) 1.

⁸ State of Queensland, *Review of the Parole Board Queensland – Terms of Reference* <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/7eb9c82c-f815-48a8-8a4e-cd257ed93f37/review-of-parole-board-queensland-terms-of-reference.pdf>>.

⁹ State of Queensland, *Putting community safety and victims first in Queensland's parole system, The Queensland Government's response to the Review of Parole Board Queensland final report* 21–26 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/76e94bd3-886e-4bd2-941f-093487504851/government-response-to-pbq-report.pdf>>

¹⁰ *Corrective Services Act 2006* (Qld) s 175D.

¹¹ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) Recommendation 38 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

¹² Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) Recommendations 39 and 40 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

¹³ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) 36–37 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

¹⁴ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) Recommendation 105 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

¹⁵ Explanatory Note, *Corrective Services (Promoting Safety) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*, 10.

¹⁶ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) Recommendation 10, 105 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>.

¹⁷ Peter Hastie KC, *Review of Parole Board Queensland* (Final Report, 22 September 2025) Recommendation 35 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/e8b477ed-d6f2-4e5a-ad5b-c44eb7409e36/review-of-parole-board-queensland-final-report.pdf>>.

¹⁸ *Corrections Act 1986* (Vic), s 30A.

¹⁹ *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld) s 282A(6).

²⁰ *Corrective Services Act 2006* (Qld) s 320 and *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld) s 282A

²¹ State of Queensland, *Putting community safety and victims first in Queensland's parole system, The Queensland Government's response to the Review of Parole Board Queensland final report* 26 <<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/ckan-publications-attachments-prod/resources/76e94bd3-886e-4bd2-941f-093487504851/government-response-to-pbq-report.pdf>>.

²² Protecting Queenslanders from Dangerous Prisoners and Strengthening Victims' Rights Amendment Bill 2026 (Qld) cl 51(7).