



11 April 2017

Acting Committee Secretary
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000

Email: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Court and Civil Legislation Amendment Bill 2017

We refer to the letter dated 29 March 2017 seeking Submissions on the above legislative review by 12 April 2017.

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 crime. It is through our experience that we offer the following comments on **amendments of relevance** to the support services PACT provide to young victims or witnesses of crime.

In principle, PACT is supportive of amendments to legislation within the justice portfolio to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts and agencies and to clarify, strengthen and update particular legislation. In particular, PACT support amendments which:

- Streamline various court and tribunal processes and clarify court powers and jurisdictions.
- Make Queensland's classification legislation consistent with national scheme legislation.
- Facilitate the making of domestic violence notations on a person's criminal history or a formal record of conviction.
- Clarify the functions and powers of the Public Guardian in relation to a relevant child under the *Child Protection Act 1999*.
- Expand secrecy provisions and facilitate disclosure of personal information in certain cases.
- Clarify when the stepchild relationship ends and revoke certain dispositions in a will upon the end of a de facto relationship.

Part 7 Amendment and *Classification of Computer Games and Images Act 1995*

We are extremely supportive of any amendments to the *Computer Games and Images Act 1995* in order to better classify games and images. This will increase the protection of vulnerable children through identification and disclosure of age-inappropriate games and images.

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

Part 8 Amendment of *Classification of Films Act 1991*

Again, PACT is supportive of any amendments to the *Classification of Films Act 1991* to display the classification of films based on the age of the viewer.

Part 9 Amendment and *Classification of Publications Act 1991*

We support the proposed amendments to the *Classification of Publications Act 1991* to ensure all classification of publications will be decided in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Act. Further, we support amendments that strengthen the areas covered and provide better community education and clarity of the Act's provisions, specifically to enhance the protection of children.

The amendments in relation to the terms 'child abuse photograph' or 'child abuse publication' are also supported by PACT.

Part 11 Amendment of *Criminal Code*

PACT is extremely supportive of any amendments regarding the range of offences relating to child exploitation materials.

Part 13 Amendment of *Information Privacy Act 2009*

We support the proposed amendments to the *Information Privacy Act 2009* to provide that certain requirements about the collection and disclosure of personal information do not apply in the context of delivering an emergency service.

PACT is often inhibited in its ability to support young people as a result of the interpretation by certain agencies of their ability to share information under the provisions of the Privacy Legislation. PACT is currently required to obtain written consent from the families it supports before agencies will share information with it. PACT would like to see amendments to the Privacy Legislation 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 to share information to enable optimum support to vulnerable children and young person victims of crime.

Part 21 Amendment of *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992*

PACT is supportive of the amendments which allow domestic violence notations to be administratively made on a person's criminal history or formal record of conviction, provided the person is convicted of an offence for which the charge has been noted as a domestic violence offence. This is likely to lead to the better protection of vulnerable children involved in domestic violence situation.

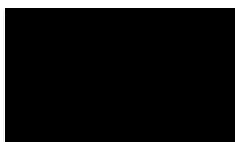
Part 25 Amendment of *Public Guardian Act 2014*

We support the importance of clarifying the definition of 'relevant child' for the purposes of the powers and functions of community visitors.


PACT is very grateful to be consulted about this important issue. Should your staff require clarification or further information on any of the issues raised, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this valuable review. We trust our input has been of value.

Yours sincerely



Alexandra Marks
Chairperson



Jo Bryant
Chief Executive Officer