

Queensland Police Union of Employees

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Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014
Submission 003

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane 4001

By e-mail: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair

Re: QPU Submission on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014

I write on behalf of the Queensland Police Union ("QPU") in relation to your invitation of 12 May 2014 to make a submission to the Committee in relation to the *Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2014*.

The QPU supports the Government's Bill and sees it as legislation designed to expand the rights of victims of crime and their families as well as improving community safety.

The proposed changes to the *Criminal Code* in terms of allowing the retrospective application of Chapter 68 will allow offenders who have otherwise escaped justice to be prosecuted for the most heinous of crimes.

These renewed prosecutions will only occur where technological advances and/or fresh evidence is able to be called to account for their alleged crimes. It is an amendment which ensures the families of murder victims are provided some measure of closure.

Importantly the amendments also ensure victims of crime are not further victimised through offenders being acquitted as a consequence of perjury or false evidence. This amendment strikes an appropriate balance between the legal rights and shields provided to suspects in our system of criminal justice whilst ensuring community expectations and the rights of victims are maintained.

The proposed amendments to the *Code* and the *Justices Act* in terms of alleging previous convictions as a circumstance of aggravation bring a degree of common sense to the rules of criminal procedure. The ability to serve a notice to allege previous convictions on the day of court, or with the provision of a court brief and criminal history will reduce the workload on operational police officers.

By allowing proof of service through a signed endorsement, such as that used on a notice to appear, rather than a sworn statement before a justice, is a much more efficient use of police resources. These amendments go a considerable way to reducing red tape associated with the pre-court processes required of officers.

The QPU fully supports the amendments to the *Bail Act* in relation to the surrendering of passports, where ordered, prior to allowing a defendant to leave custody. Such amendments appropriately recognise the community's expectation alleged offenders comply with the conditions of their bail, and remain within the jurisdiction pending the outcome of the charges against them.

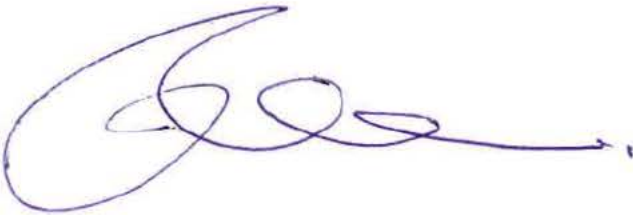
The expansion of the driver licence disqualification power of courts is also supported. Police often encounter situations involving the foolishness of a vehicle passenger by engaging in dangerous behaviours such as suddenly pulling on a driver's handbrake. These amendments will allow the Courts to remove such offenders' driving privileges as a consequence of their criminal actions, and can only enhance road safety.

While the QPU also supports the remaining amendments contained within the Bill, I would like to finally mention the proposed amendment to the Dangerous Prisoners legislation. The use of GPS ankle trackers for these convicted felons is the next best thing to keeping them incarcerated. By providing for mandatory jail terms for tampering with or removing the GPS tracker, the QPU believes the Government is further enhancing the safety of our community, and especially that of vulnerable people such as children.

The QPU commends the Bill to the Committee as being a significant step in enhancing the rights of crime victims and ensuring the safety of the Queensland Community.

I am available to address the Committee in respect to the Bill if my appearance would be of assistance in the Committee's deliberations. Otherwise I am available on 3259 1900 should the Committee have any questions in relation to the matters I have raised on behalf of the QPU.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ian Leavers', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

IAN LEAVERS
GENERAL PRESIDENT & CEO