



26 February 2017

Premier Anastacia Palaszchuk MP
Premier and Minister for the Arts
PO Box 15185
City East
Queensland 4002

Dear Premier

Submission on "Proposed Amendments to the Queensland Parole Laws"

I write on behalf of the Board of Management and Members of Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group, Family Support After Murder Inc. (QHVSOG) to support several provisions of the proposed legislation in the Government's response to the recommendations of the Queensland Parole System Review conducted by Walter Safronoff QC.

The following recommendations are of particular interest to members of QHVSOG:

58. The government should review the policy restricting placement of sexual offenders and those prisoners convicted for murder or those with a serious violent offence declaration with a view to reintroducing appropriate candidates to low security facilities.

Government response: Not supported. The Queensland Government has reviewed the policy and does not support changes to the current policy. The policy was introduced following the escape of a convicted murderer. The possibility of an escape by prisoners convicted of sexual offences or subject to life imprisonment has such high potential to undermine public confidence in the low security program, that this particular recommendation cannot be supported.

QHVSOG response: Not supported. Homicide Victim families are entitled to be able to rely on the Corrective Services system to ensure that those prisoners convicted of homicide are maintained in high security facilities until the end of their sentence or release on parole.

It is simply unacceptable that a victim family member could meet in the street a prisoner convicted of the murder of their loved-one on some kind of "day-release program" as a part of rehabilitation program in a low security facility.

60. Queensland Corrective Services' GPS tracking capabilities should be developed so that it is possible for the parole board to require GPS tracking and monitoring in appropriate circumstances based on the assessed risk of each parolee.

Government response: Supported. The Queensland Government will expand GPS tracking capabilities to allow for monitoring parolees in appropriate circumstances.

QHVSOG response: Supported. In a just society, all reasonable measures must be taken to ensure the safety and sense of security of homicide victim families. The use of GPS tracking devices to help

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regulate the movement of parolees will help to provide warnings both to the homicide victim families and to alert Police in situations where the parolee is detected as in danger of breaching parole conditions.

Several QHVSG members are survivors of Domestic and Family Violence Homicides (DFV Killings) committed by perpetrators of violent crime whilst they were on parole.

77. Queensland Corrective Services should instruct probation and parole officers to consider, as part of the case management of parolees, whether it is appropriate to seek to have the Parole Board add a condition requiring GPS monitoring for an appropriate period of time.

Government response: Supported. The Queensland Government will amend operational practice regarding the use of parole order amendments.

QHVSG response: Supported. See comment for Recommendation 60.

81. Queensland Corrective Services and the Parole Board should implement strong systems and accountability measures to ensure that information is available to the Victims Register to provide to victims at the earliest opportunity.

Government response: Supported. The Queensland Government will review information sharing practices and make any necessary changes to ensure information is available to the Victims Register at the earliest opportunity.

QHVSG response: Supported. See comment for Recommendation 60.

87. The Queensland Government should introduce legislation, similar to that in South Australia, which requires the Parole Board to consider the cooperation of a prisoner convicted of murder or manslaughter and not release the prisoner on parole unless the Board is satisfied that the prisoner has satisfactorily cooperated in the investigation of the offence, including, when relevant, by assisting in locating the remains of the victim of the offence.

Government response: Supported. Legislative provisions will be introduced in 2017 to give effect to the “No Body, No Parole” policy which prevents a murderer from being granted parole where s/he has not revealed where the victim’s body is located. A number of models, including that which has been introduced in South Australia (better known as a “no cooperation, no parole” system), exist and could be adopted in Queensland. The Government will determine the best model to introduce to give effect to this recommendation.

QHVSG response: Supported with amendment.

QHVSG recommends that any proposed “No Body, No Parole” legislation focuses on the period immediately following the completion of the sentencing and appeals processes in Homicide cases. It is recommended that a period of two years be set following the last of any legal appeals during which the prisoner be directed to reveal where the body of the deceased can be found. After that period the offer of future parole be denied.

The reason for this recommended variation to the South Australian model is to ensure that homicide victim families have the best chance of retrieving the body of their loved-one. It has been the

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experience in other jurisdictions, where a “No Body, No Parole” policy is in force, that disclosures up to 20 years after the conviction are often frustrated by the changes in the land use, such as housing developments, roads, changes in agricultural use, etc. It has also been known to be misused by prisoners wishing to secure early release by claiming a location of the body in a location they know to be unrecoverable due to changes in land use. Their claim cannot be disproved.

If the aim of this provision is to help the family recover the remains of their loved-one and to achieve some measure of closure as a result, the availability of this provision for between fifteen (15) to twenty (20) years before the opportunity ends is unlikely to achieve the objective.

The members of the Board of Management and the members of QHVSG strongly support those aspects of the proposed legislation that strengthen the safety and sense of security of homicide victim families. We strongly support a “No Body, No Parole” policy amended to ensure that the those convicted of murder or manslaughter are encouraged to reveal the location of the body as early as possible after conviction and exhaustion of all appeals.

Yours faithfully



for President Tina Good

Copy to:

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