

From: [Philippa Whitman](#)
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: FW: Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014
Date: Wednesday, 10 December 2014 11:25:41 AM

From: Philippa Whitman
Sent: Wednesday, 10 December 2014 11:04 AM
To: 'lasc@parliament.qld.gov.au'
Subject: Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.

It is submitted that Clause 80 of the Bill should not be passed.

Community Legal Centres, working collaboratively with other organisations, are often able to encourage, influence and inform public debate on issues affecting legal and democratic rights. They are able to promote accountable, transparent and responsible government and the development of law that reflects the public interest. Practically, the work that they do also assists in the law reform process through the development of models to respond to unmet legal need.

The twin concepts of freedom of expression and openness to ideas are the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. Fundamental to a democratic society, freedom of expression allows unpopular ideas to still have a voice. Ideas have different qualities – limiting discussion is a sub-optimal solution. It does not fix the underlying issues. Open discussion is what diffuses danger. Good ideas are strong – they have evidence on their side even if they might appear unpalatable to some. (National Convention on Civil Liberties, Civil Liberties and Law Reform, 9 July 1977)

The Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG, when discussing the role of the Australian Law Reform Commission, commented that the ALRC should reach out to the general public. He said, “(This) comes from my upbringing, my values, my views as a democrat, that law is too important to leave to the lawyers”. The work done by Community Legal Centres provides them with the opportunity to reach out to their communities – to contribute towards the representation of their public wishes, to play a part in communication of their public voice. The role that they perform in social or policy commentary should be valued and encouraged.

Community Legal Centres have a role to play in assisting Parliaments to promote and protect human rights. Providing Community Legal Centres with a voice on social or policy reform demonstrates that, although our political leaders in Queensland differ on many things, there is a common concern amongst a great number of them to ensure

that our laws and the machinery of government remain modernised and made more relevant to the notion of civil liberties that is current today. Positive, practical and specific steps have been taken in this State for the advancement of human rights. Community Legal Centres have a role to play in their future development.

Thank you

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TASC's mission is Social Justice for All.

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