

## Parliament of Queensland

## Human Rights Bill 2018

*November 2018*

*Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.* Proverbs 31:9

**1. Introduction**

Catholic Women's League State of Queensland Inc. is the state peak body representing the CWLA in Queensland. We are a Non-Government Organisation and are a member organization of the Catholic Women's League Australia Inc. (CWLA), the national peak body representing the League's six member organisations located throughout Australia. One of CWLA's four principle aims is to influence legislative and administrative bodies at all levels of government in order to preserve the dignity of the human person. Given our focus we feel compelled to contribute a submission to this particular inquiry.

**2. Catholic Social Teaching**

The

CWL State of Queensland looks to the Catholic Church's social teaching, which we believe to be a rich source of wisdom and guidance about building a just society and living an ethical life amidst the challenges of modern society. Our social teachings are articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents.

One important social teaching theme relates to the principle of solidarity. This can be described as follows:

Everyone belongs to the one human family, regardless of their national, religious, ethnic, economic, political and ideological differences. Everyone has an obligation to promote the rights and development of all people across communities, nations, and the world, irrespective of national boundaries<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <<https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/solidarity>> last viewed at 17 November 2018.

We believe that this social teaching directly relates to the implementation of a human rights law in the state of Queensland, which will be of benefit to all Queenslanders.

### **3. Support for the Human Rights Bill QLD**

As as has been noted in the explanatory notes, human rights legislation has been enacted in both Victoria and the ACT. However, other states and territories have lagged behind, and do not have state or territorial legislation. It is time that similar human rights legislation be enacted throughout the rest of Australia, and thus we are in support of such legislation being enacted in Queensland.

The proposed Human Rights Bill is comprehensive in its' coverage of human rights. We note with approval that its' various provisions include the following rights: recognition and equality before the law; right to life; protection from torture and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment; freedom from forced work; freedom of movement; freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; freedom of expression; peaceful assembly and freedom of association; taking part in public life; property rights; privacy and reputation; protection of families and children; cultural rights – generally; cultural rights – aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; right to liberty and security of person; humane treatment when deprived of liberty; fair hearing; and rights in criminal proceedings; children in the criminal process; right not to be tried or punished more than once; retrospective criminal laws; right to education; and right to health services.

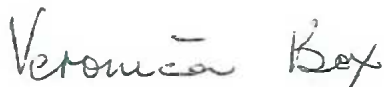
While this list is quite detailed and comprehensive we would also advocate for

the inclusion of reference in the bill to the rights of particularly vulnerable groups, such as people with disability; older people; and women. This is because the particularly vulnerability of people within these categories warrants a special emphasis within the human rights legislation, to ensure that they are able to access the full protection of the law that they might both require and warrant.

In sum, the Catholic Women's League of Queensland strongly supports the introduction of this legislation and looks forward to its enactment into Queensland state law.

We wish the committee well in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



Veronica Box

State President

Catholic Women's League of Queensland