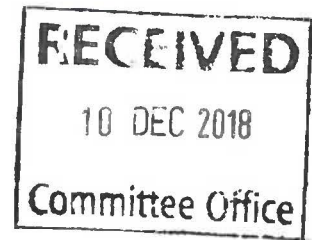




Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland

Date: 3 December 2018

Committee Secretary  
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street Brisbane Qld 4000

**Re: Human Rights Bill 2018 – Submission by the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland**

Dear Committee Secretary,

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) as the Peak Body of multicultural affairs in Queensland very much appreciates and values the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed legislation.

This is a significant step forward for the Government and the people of Queensland. Diversity is very much part of the DNA of Queensland and a valuable asset to the growth and development of all Queenslanders.

ECCQ strongly supports the proposed Bill, particularly the provisions of **Part 2, Division 2 – Civil and political rights** and **Division 3 – Economic, social and cultural rights** and **Part 4, Division 3 – Reporting requirements**.

Specific comments to the proposed legislation include:

**Section 20 (Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief):** ECCQ endorses the inclusion of this section that strongly affirms the freedoms intrinsic to a harmonious multicultural society.

**Section 27 (Cultural Rights-generally):** ECCQ commends the inclusion of this section. Enshrining the values and beliefs that bring communities together regardless of cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background into legislation is recognition of the valuable contribution of multicultural diversity to everyday life in Queensland.

**Section 67(2) (Form of human rights complaint):** ECCQ is particularly pleased to see in S 67 (2) that the Commissioner must give reasonable help to the complainant to put the complaint in writing – this is a potentially very valuable to people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and is strongly supported.

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## Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland

**Section 84 (Use of interpreters and other persons):** ECCQ strongly endorses this section as a valuable means of ensuring complainants from multicultural backgrounds are provided with the relevant assistance to fully articulate their complaint by way of an interpreter or other person with the appropriate cultural or social knowledge and experience.

**Division 3 Reporting requirements:** ECCQ strongly supports the provisions of this Division. It is hoped that such reporting will assist with addressing and reducing human rights complaints over time. Specifically, ECCQ offers the following comments:

**Section 90 (2) (c) (Commissioner may publish information):** ECCQ is pleased the protection of identity within this section has been included and this may encourage genuine complainants who might otherwise be reluctant to complain if their identity is published.

**Section 91 (Annual Report):** The content and detail of this section appears comprehensive and is very much supported by ECCQ. The possibility of a data base of de-identified cases searchable in a variety of ways such as date, issue, etc. and placed on a website for public access is seen as a valuable addition with the recommendation that this material be kept up to date.

**Section 97 (Reporting requirements for certain public entities):** Inclusion of this section may provide ECCQ and other organisations with opportunities to work with public entities on complaint reduction strategies.

**Section 99 (Giving of information protected) and Section 100 (Anonymity):** These sections are strongly supported as they are particularly pertinent to many newly arrived settlers who are often reluctant to report complaints due to their experiences and fear of reprisal by authorities or offenders.

ECCQ looks forward to the introduction of this legislation which will enshrine human rights for all Queenslanders and serve as a beacon of the values and freedoms that all people, including those from diverse backgrounds, can enjoy and share in this state.

Yours sincerely,

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