

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist International



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Dear Colleague

Submission on Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Background

1. On 18 September 2019, the Hon Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services introduced the ***Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*** into the Queensland Parliament. The Bill was referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for examination.

2. Soroptimist International Brisbane provides a submission in relation to the Bill.

Recommendations

3. The Bill includes a number of amendments. Of most concern to women and our members are the amendments that:

3.1 Clarify powers of law enforcement to access information on or through electronic devices so there is no ambiguity as to the scope of information that can be lawfully accessed; and

3.2 Create efficiencies for the Queensland Police Service in general and increase community safety.

4. We recommend and support the Bill as it would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts and agencies and clarify, strengthen and update the relevant legislation within the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation.

5. Soroptimist International Brisbane strongly supports the objectives to clarify powers of law enforcement to access information on or through electronic devices so there is no ambiguity as to the scope of information



that can be lawfully accessed; and create efficiencies for the Queensland Police Service in general and increase community safety.

About Soroptimist International and this submission

6. Soroptimist International works to ensure that the voices of women and girls around the world are included in international decision-making and the policy setting, as well as within Australia. Soroptimist International is active in all of the major United Nation Centres around the world maintaining a network of permanent representatives. The organisation holds a General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and maintains official relations with several agencies and technical bodies.
7. As an organisation Soroptimist International promotes the improvement of the lives of women and girls with consistent human rights and empowerment and enabling opportunities.
8. The Brisbane Club of Soroptimist International is providing this submission as an advocacy body for women. Our membership base consists of business and professional women who work to support other women impacted by the consequences of Domestic and Family Violence.
9. We also support the Queensland Government Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2015-2025 which articulates a Key Outcome with a primary long-term outcome that *'all Queenslanders feel safe in their own homes and children can grow and develop in safe and secure environments,'* and we regularly provide submissions on domestic and family violence matters as we are committed to the eradication of domestic and family violence.

Impact of domestic and family violence issues on women

10. Research from the 2016 ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS) shows that females from the age of 15 years were almost three times more likely to experience violence by a current and/or previous partner they lived with, than males: 17 per cent (1.6 million) compared to 6.1 per cent (547,600).¹
11. The 2012 Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) publications *Reduce Violence against Women & their Children* data showed 73% had experienced more than one incident of violence and 61% had children in their care when the violence occurred, including 48% who stated the children had witnessed and heard the violence.²

¹ Website accessed 25 September 2019
www.abs.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/mf/4906.0

² www.anrows.org.au



12. On average across Australia, one woman is killed by her partner every week. One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 years, and almost one in five have experienced sexual violence.³
13. Totals of Statewide Flagged Domestic and Family Violence offences, charges, lodged in Queensland are: 2016/17, 8,811; 2017/18, 6,879; 2018/19, 6,171; and 2019 – 31/8/19; 1,023.⁴
14. It is for the above reasons that we support the amendments in the proposed Bill to relieve any ambiguity as to the scope of information accessible on or through a device in the legislation, and to ensure the Queensland Police Service keeps pace with criminal elements concealing a range of crimes.

Conclusion

15. Soroptimist International Brisbane supports the Bill and is happy to be involved in any additional consultation that may take place on this submission and the Bill.

Sincerely

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President
Soroptimist International Brisbane

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³ 'Not Now Not Ever' Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, (2015-6)

⁴ Courts.qld.gov.au Queensland Courts Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) statistics