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Act for Kids Limited ABN 98 142 986 767

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

**Email:** [lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary

**Submission on the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (“**the Bill**”).

**Relevance of proposed legislative amendments to Act for Kids**

Act for Kids is an Australian charity providing therapy and support services to children and families who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, child abuse and neglect. Act for Kids provides services in over 26 centres for over 30 years with a team of over 400 staff from Adelaide, South Australia to the Cape York Peninsula, Queensland.

In partnership with the Queensland Government, Act for Kids delivers a number of services to children subject to child protection orders, including therapy and residential care. The SafeKIDS program offers vital residential care services to children in the remote Aboriginal communities of Doomadgee, Aurukun, Napranum, Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw. In consultation with community leaders, Act for Kids’ vision is to keep children connected to community, culture and kin, while the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women assess ongoing safety, reunification or long-term care options.

**Amendment of Child Protection Act 1999****Amendment of section 5BA (Principles for achieving permanency for a child)**

This amendment provides a hierarchy of principles for permanency options and ensures adoption is considered as an option within permanency deliberations. Whilst it is positive that permanency options are promoted for children on long-term orders, the legislative amendment does not proactively promote or provide protection for the much-needed enhancement in the practice of seeking the child’s views as part of permanency planning.

**Insertion of new section 51VAA**

This new section provides a minimum requirement to review a child’s case plan after two and a half years of granting a long-term guardianship to the chief executive. However, it does not enhance the child’s ability to request interim or further reviews or voice their views on permanency planning other than what is already provided for under section 51VA.

The term of two and a half years seems to be designed to align with the period of an order or statutory process rather than being a term designed to limit the impact on children's development and wellbeing of temporary or changing placement options. Developmentally, two years can be critical for infants and very young children, but may have a lesser impact for older children.

Act for Kids supports the amendment to require the Chief Executive to produce a brief of evidence to the Director of Child Protection Litigation for an application to the Children's Court where a better option has been identified during a permanency planning review.

In summary, the proposed amendment marginally enhances the promotion of adoption as a permanency option. Act for Kids believes that in order to protect human rights, a less restrictive manner of achieving the aim of increasing permanency planning for children could be achieved without amending the Child Protection Act 1999 (the "Act").

We believe the proposed amendment does not promote the rights of children to have a voice in decisions about their future. The most important change to the Act should be enhancing options for and protecting the rights of children and young people to be included in permanency decision-making wherever possible and practical.

Yours sincerely



Dr Katrina Lines  
**Executive Director Services**

