

Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

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Submitted by: Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
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Committee Secretary
State Development and Regional Industries Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

By Email: SDRIC@parliament.qodlg.vo.au

QIFVLS Submission – Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Dear Committee Secretary,

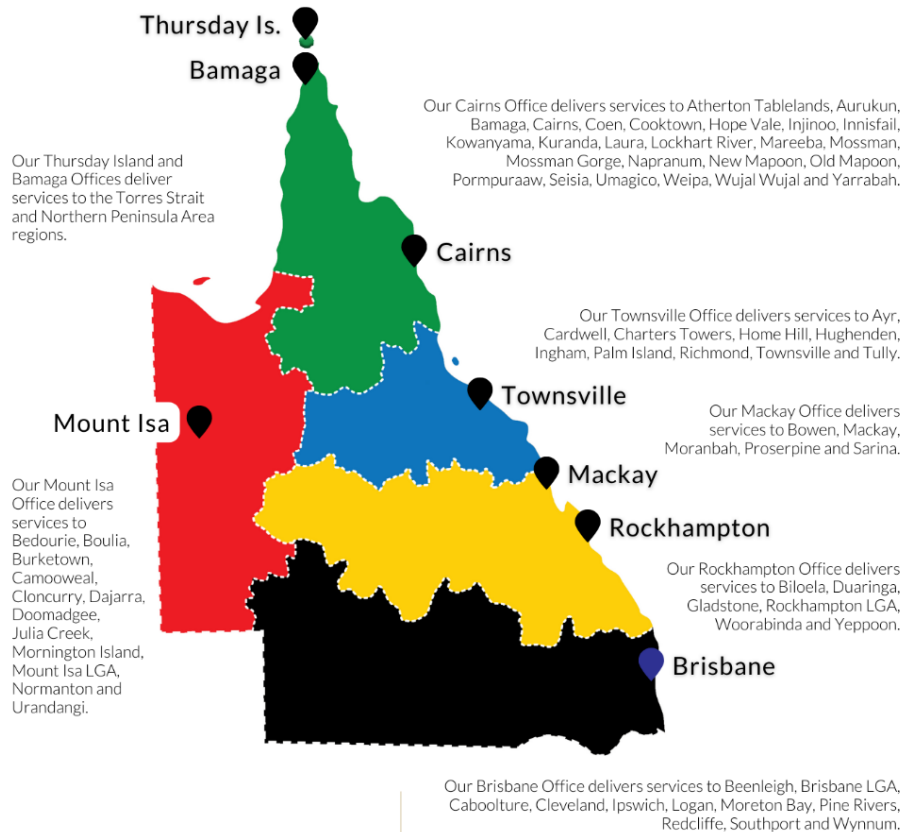
The Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service (QIFVLS) welcomes the opportunity to write in relation to the *Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023* (the Bill). We understand that the Bill aims to advance essential reforms designed to promote community safety, reduce youth offending and minimise the risks associated with knives and other dangerous items.

QIFVLS broadly supports the Bill in its aims to reduce the accessibility of dangerous items to young people, disrupt and deter violent offences, and curb the notoriety of weapon possession.

About QIFVLS

The Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services Aboriginal Corporation (QIFVLS) is a Family Violence Prevention Legal Service (FVPLS) and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) that fills a recognised gap in access to culturally appropriate legal and wraparound support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and sexual assault.

QIFVLS is primarily an outreach service. As can be seen from the map below, we operate out of eight offices across Queensland, delivering services to over 90 communities, from the urban south-eastern corner of the state, out west to communities surrounding Mount Isa, reaching the Northern Territory border, and north to the outer islands of the Torres Strait, neighbouring Papua New Guinea. Our services extend from domestic and family violence to family law; child protection; sexual assault and Victims Assist Queensland (VAQ) applications.



QIFVLS is a member of the Coalition of Peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations (Coalition of Peaks) and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition of community-controlled organisations (QATSIC). We are dedicated to achieving the priority reforms and socio-economic targets outlined in the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#).

Of the 19 socio-economic targets outlined in the National Agreement, our aim is to work with governments and the community to achieve Target 13 (ensuring families and households are safe and that domestic and family violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced by at least 50% by 2031 as we progress towards 0) among the other inter-related targets.

Target 13 is not an isolated objective, and we highlight that in seeking to achieve all 19 socio-economic targets, a combined and coordinated approach between the government, communities and the community-controlled sector is required. To this end, efforts to meet the targets are underpinned by a set of four priority reforms that all government parties to the National Agreement, including Queensland, must meet:

- Priority Reform 1 – Formal partnerships and shared decision-making.
- Priority Reform 2 – Building the community-controlled sector.
- Priority Reform 3 – Transformation of mainstream institutions.
- Priority Reform 4 – Sharing data and information to support decision-making.



Provisions regarding supply to minors

While broadly supportive of the aims of the Bill, we would be pleased if the Committee could consider legislative provisions that address the supply of controlled items to minors in a non-commercial setting.

We understand that the proposed amendments under the new division 4B of part 2 of the *Summary Offences Act* account for the sale of controlled items to minors. We do not see however any provisions relating to adults supplying controlled items to minors in a non-commercial setting. This could potentially occur in the context of gang-related activity where adults provide children and young people with dangerous weapons which could be classed as *controlled items* under the proposed amendments. We may have misread the existing provisions in the *Summary Offences Act* and the *Weapons Act* but if we have not, then we ask that the Bill clarify such situations where minors are supplied with controlled items in non-commercial settings and whether there will be legislation that can address such circumstances.

Relationships between law enforcement and communities

We are mindful of the historical and present climate of mistrust and fear among First Nations communities and police, and we have reservations about the interactions between police and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Should the Bill pass, we would advocate and support appropriate resourcing and funding for a multi-agency co-responder model ensuring a culturally appropriate police presence is supported by a non-law enforcement First Nations response. This takes into account situations where police may encounter rough sleepers and/or young people who may be armed, the primary purpose of having a knife is not to cause violence, but rather as a safety measure or for food preparation or other safety-related reasons.

Conclusion

We take this opportunity to thank the Committee for considering our feedback. We trust that the Committee appreciates our viewpoint as both an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisation and Family Violence Prevention Legal Service.

If the Committee would like to discuss our response further, please don't hesitate to contact me at

[REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service

[REDACTED]

Thelma Schwartz

Principal Legal Officer