




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Trustee

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.02 am): Protecting Queenslanders, especially vulnerable Queenslanders, is a priority of our government. The Public Trustee plays a vital role in assisting vulnerable Queenslanders and provides financial management services to more than 10,000 Queenslanders each year.

Recently, the Public Advocate undertook a review of the critical work undertaken by the Public Trustee. Her report entitled *Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: a review of the Public Trustee fees, charges and practices* found that many of the Public Trustee's customers appear to receive a high level of service for very little or no cost. However, the report has also identified some opportunities for improvement in the way the Public Trustee engages with its customers.

The report makes 32 recommendations which are broad ranging and relate to the Public Trustee's fees and charges, community service obligations, investment practices and legal services. The majority of the recommendations are primarily the responsibility of the Public Trustee to implement. The Public Trustee has provided a comprehensive response to the Public Advocate's report, and that response can be found in the appendices to the report.

A review of the Public Trustee's fees and charges is already underway and many other reforms have already been implemented or are being implemented through the Public Trustee's customer-first agenda. The government has now finalised a response to the Public Advocate's report. I am pleased to report to the House that we accept in principle the majority of the recommendations in the report and will also now undertake further consultation with stakeholders.

However, as a first and significant step, I can announce today that the government will establish a Public Trustee board that will provide oversight and direction to the Public Trustee. The board will provide increased transparency and accountability and, importantly, enhance public confidence in this critical service. Mr Speaker, I apologise for the weight of this given your earlier advice to members, but I table the Public Advocate's report and the government's response and also take the opportunity to table the Public Advocate's annual report for 2019-20.

Tabled paper: The Public Advocate—Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: A review of Public Trustee fees, charges and practices, January 2021 [283](#).

Tabled paper: The Public Advocate—Preserving the financial futures of vulnerable Queenslanders: A review of Public Trustee fees, charges and practices, January 2021, government response [284](#).

Tabled paper: The Public Advocate—Annual Report 2019-20 [285](#).

In doing so, I would like to thank the Public Advocate for her reports and especially for her advocacy for the rights of adults with impaired decision-making capacity in Queensland.