



Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Training and Skills

In reply please quote: 3094130

04 JAN 2016

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petitions 2525-15 and 2404-15, presented to the Legislative Assembly on 3 December 2015, regarding the request to pass legislation to render unlawful the decorating of camper vans with slogans that vilify women. The petitions also request that proprietors who hire out vans with slogans that vilify women or incite violence against women be liable to prosecution.

The Queensland Government is serious about tackling violence against women and is currently implementing a wide range of reforms to reduce violence against women, both in domestic and family contexts as well as more broadly.

In February 2015, the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland (the Taskforce) delivered its report to the Premier. The report of the Taskforce, *'Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic Violence in Queensland'*, contains 140 recommendations on how individuals, organisations, the community and the Government can better work together to address and reduce domestic and family violence in our community. In August 2015, the Queensland Government released its response to the Taskforce report accepting all of the Taskforce's recommendations. The Government's response and implementation plan for 2015-16 can be found at: www.qld.gov.au/enddomesticandfamilyviolence.

The first recommendation of the Taskforce (recommendation 1) was that the Queensland Government develop a Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy, which is currently under development and informed by extensive community consultation, is one of the key vehicles to drive change across all sectors of the Queensland community. The Strategy will set the direction for collaborative action to end domestic and family violence in Queensland, outlining a shared vision and a set of principles to guide action across government and the community, including a staged 10-year plan on how we will get there. It will also set out how we will support victims and children and engage with those responsible for the violence or abuse. We will place the safety of victims and children at the heart of all efforts to address and prevent domestic and family violence. Information on the Strategy can be found at: www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/end-domestic-and-family-violence/dfvp-strategy.

(2)

The Queensland Government is taking this commitment further by developing the Violence Against Women Prevention Plan (the Prevention Plan), which will complement the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy, by considering other forms of violence against women, such as sexual assault. Violence against women takes many forms and is often not limited to one occasion or type, but rather repeated experiences over time. In simple terms, violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of harm or coercion in public or private life. Violence against women is one of the most serious causes and consequences of gender inequality and has far-reaching impacts on women's social and economic participation, health, housing and security and, significantly increases their risk of disadvantage and poverty. The Queensland Government has undertaken community-wide consultation to inform the development of the Plan which will be released early 2016. In developing this plan, Queensland is meeting its commitments as a party to the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. Information on the Prevention Plan can be found at: www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/end-domestic-and-family-violence/vaw-prevention-plan.

Finally, the Queensland Women's Strategy (the Women's Strategy) will outline the Queensland Government vision for women and girls emphasising on gender equality and related issues concerning safety, economic security, health and wellbeing, leadership and participation. Submissions on the Queensland Women's Strategy closed on 11 December 2015. Information on the Women's Strategy can be found at: www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices/women/queensland-womens-strategy.

Regarding the petitioners request to make certain camper vehicle decorations unlawful, the laws of Queensland must seek to strike an appropriate balance between a range of public and private rights and interests including the fundamental right to freedom of speech. The right to free speech is not absolute, and the guiding principle underpinning Queensland's laws is that the right should only be limited to the extent necessary to protect other rights, such as public and personal safety and security.

The regulation of outdoor advertising, which includes the form of advertising that appears on camper vans, was examined by the former Health and Community Services Committee (HCSC) in its Report No. 36—*Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising* (the HCSC report), which was tabled in Parliament in January 2014. A copy of the HCSC report can be accessed at: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/former-committees/HCSC/inquiries/past-inquiries/outdooradv.

The HCSC report identified concerns about advertisers who ignore the directions to remove outdoor advertisements deemed inappropriate by the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB). The ASB administers a national system of advertising self-regulation. This system relies heavily on the cooperation of advertisers or owners of outdoor advertising space to comply with relevant codes and to remove advertisements if the ASB decides there is a breach. Based on figures submitted to the HCSC by the ASB, advertisers' compliance with decisions of the ASB is at over 99.6%, suggesting that the current arrangements are effective in most cases.

(3)

I am aware of the HCSC report and the concerns that members of the community have about camper vans who refuse to comply with ASB decisions. I am committed to consultation with stakeholders, and any proposals that might be considered to respond to the issue of offensive outdoor advertisements would therefore be the subject of future consultation.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Yvette D'ATH'.

YVETTE D'ATH MP

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
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