



Minister for Communities, Women and Youth  
Minister for Child Safety  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Your reference: Petition 2706-17  
Our reference: COM 03649-2017

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13 JUL 2017

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

*Neil*

I refer to petition number 2706-17 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 13 June 2017 requesting the introduction of laws to provide greater certainty and safety for children in contact with the child protection system in Queensland. Please accept this letter as my response to this petition.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication shown by the principal petitioner, Mr Jay Whatley, in organising this petition to advocate on behalf of children and young people. I am also in the process of responding to an earlier email from Ms Summer Whatley regarding permanency in care, and which references this petition.

The Queensland Government is committed to implementing the recommendations made by the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry to improve Queensland's child protection and family support system through its *Supporting Families Changing Futures* reform program. A comprehensive review of the *Child Protection Act 1999* is a key commitment of the reform program.

The Queensland Government recognises that child safety generates robust debate across the community. The government considers genuine and wide-ranging consultation is necessary to develop contemporary child protection legislation that will meet community expectations, and help ensure Queensland's children and young people are safe, protected and able to reach their full potential. The review of the Act commenced in September 2015 with a six-month public consultation on the discussion paper *Supporting families and protecting children in Queensland: a new legislative framework* to start a conversation with the people of Queensland about the laws we need in place to keep children and young people safe and allow them to thrive.

A second stage of statewide consultation commenced in October 2016 focusing on options for legislative reform in response to feedback from the first stage of consultation, presented in *The next chapter in child protection legislation for Queensland: Options paper*. The Options Paper included a dedicated topic on improving permanency outcomes for children and young people and set out options for legislative change. All the requests made by the petition have been considered by the review and tested during consultation.

A wide range of people and organisations expressed their views on the proposed options for new legislation, including children and young people, parents, carers, peak bodies, service providers, legal professionals, educational institutions, government advisory groups and our government partners.

During the consultation, stakeholders gave their clear support to prioritising and enabling permanency and stability for children in the child protection system. This means enabling stable arrangements that allow for a child or young person's ongoing productive relationships with significant people in their lives, and healthy development. In particular, children and young people expressed views that permanency arrangements are critically important for their emotional wellbeing, as stability helps them to feel settled at school and that they are part of a family.

In response to strong stakeholder feedback, a growing evidence base and analysis of recent permanency reforms in a number of other Australian and international jurisdictions, the government is in the process of developing contemporary child protection legislation to help ensure Queensland's children and young people are provided with safe and stable care arrangements.

At the completion of that process, I will write to you updating this response to the petition. I would appreciate the reply also being shared with the principal petitioner.

Again, I commend Mr Whatley and the signatories to this petition on their commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people in contact with the statutory child protection system. Please be assured, I have noted the opinions expressed in this petition.

If you require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Cynthia Kennedy, Chief of Staff, on 3719 7500.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shannon Fentiman".

**Shannon Fentiman MP**  
**Minister for Communities, Women and Youth**  
**Minister for Child Safety**  
**Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence**