

Queensland Police Union of Employees

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Ms Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra

Via email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

16 June 2021

Dear Ms Dunstone,

Re: Committee consideration of the Family Law Amendment (Federal Family Violence Orders) Bill 2021

Thank you for your invitation, via the Police Federation of Australia, to provide a submission for the consideration of the Committee in relation to the above Bill.

The Queensland Police Union ("QPU") represents over 12,000 sworn police officers, civilian watchhouse officers, police liaison officers and band members throughout the State of Queensland. Over 85% of eligible personnel are financial members of the QPU.

The QPU commends the Commonwealth Government for its introduction of the Bill and appreciates the opportunity to comment upon it. The QPU believes any steps to increase the protection afforded to the victims and witnesses of family and domestic violence are commendable.

The QPU does have some concerns with the use of State based domestic and family violence orders in some instances where it would appear the first occasion on which an application for such order is made, is upon proceedings being commenced for family matters in the Federal jurisdiction. There seems to be a perception that having a State based domestic and family violence order will benefit a party to federal litigation. The QPU is aware of a number of occasions where this practice has occurred, against its own members.

It is the QPU's position that family protection orders should be the preferred manner of dealing with family and domestic violence where concurrent proceedings are on foot in the Federal or Family Courts. The QPU holds this belief, because it would mean only one court would be dealing with the whole of a matter, thus reducing the need to concurrent proceedings in the State and Territory courts. Secondly, such an approach would ensure State and Territory based schemes for protecting victims of family and domestic violence cannot be abused by parties seeking an advantage in their federal litigation.

With the exception of the above concern, the QPU fully supports the proposed legislation.

Yours faithfully,

IAN LEAVERS APM
GENERAL PRESIDENT & CEO