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Queensland
Family & Child
Commission

Committee Secretary
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

To whom it may concern

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is pleased to provide feedback to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties) Bill 2018*.

The QFCC is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people, and advocating the responsibility of the broader community to protect and care for children. The QFCC is also committed to supporting survivors of violence in the community, and acknowledges evidence demonstrating that women and their children are the primary victims of domestic and family violence.

The QFCC has previously advocated for national strategies to promote the safety of children and young people affected by domestic and family violence, including through legal decisions relating to family separation when domestic and family violence is present. In accordance with this, the QFCC commends any measures that minimise the intensity and duration of family conflict, especially court proceedings involving children and young people.

In instances when families experiencing violence are going through court proceedings, it is particularly important to consider the effects on the psychological and physical safety of children and young people, and that any decisions made are in the best interest of the children concerned.

The QFCC recognises that personal cross-examination by an alleged perpetrator of violence in a family court can re-traumatise a victim and affect their ability to give evidence. Fear of retribution and further violence can also hinder a victim of violence ability to personally cross-examine their alleged perpetrator. Protections must ensure victims are not disadvantaged in court proceedings, and that decisions can be made in the best interest of children.

The QFCC supports the *Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties) Bill 2018*. The QFCC believes the referred amendments will strengthen protections for victims of domestic and family violence and the court's ability to make decisions in the best interests of children.

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If you or your officers have any queries in relation to this matter they may contact
Director Office of the Commissioner, on

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission

13 JUL 2018