

For immediate release
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Promised human rights act to deliver real benefits for Queenslanders

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk's commitment today to implement a human rights act in Queensland will deliver real and meaningful benefits to Queenslanders, say community lawyers.

'Queenslanders understand the importance of a 'fair go', and the introduction of human rights laws will mean that people in this state will be treated with more respect, dignity and equality,' said James Farrell, Director of Community Legal Centres Queensland, the peak organisation for Queensland's community legal centres. 'Queensland's democratic institutions need to be strengthened, and introducing a Human Rights Act is a sensible and measured response.'

'A Human Rights Act in Queensland will increase fairness and justice for vulnerable and disadvantaged Queenslanders – community legal centres' clients, said Mr Farrell. 'Queensland community legal centres assist more than a thousand people each week with their legal problems, and many of these clients would benefit from a meaningful and effective human rights act, as would the broader Queensland community.'

'Victoria and the ACT have had human rights laws for years, and we've seen stronger protection of human rights,' said Mr Farrell. 'This means that people with disabilities, people accessing government assistance, people appearing in front of the court will be better off from the introduction of these laws. When governments have to take into account human rights then it has been shown that the laws they make, the services they deliver and the way the courts operate are improved.'

'Any proposed Human Rights Act would need to be supported by community education, training and support for service providers and public authorities, and a shared commitment to realising the human rights of all Queenslanders,' said Mr Farrell. 'Today's commitment will strengthen the ways that Queenslanders' human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled, and improve the realisation of Queenslanders' human rights. A Human Rights Act is an important step forward, and a welcome commitment from the Premier.'

Ends

Community Legal Centres Queensland Inc (formerly QAILS) is the state-wide peak body representing community legal centres in Queensland. Queensland community legal centres have 40 years of service delivery experience providing free information, advice and referral, casework and representation to the community. www.communitylegalqld.org.au

As QAILS, Community Legal Centres Queensland made a detailed submission on the need for a Human Rights Act: see <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/LACSC/2015/14-HumanRights/submissions/476.pdf>

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