



Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc

2 April 2014

Hon Tracy Davis MP
Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
GPO Box 806
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Minister,

Disability Justice Strategy

The Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc (**QAILS**) is concerned about the experiences of people with disability in Queensland's criminal justice system.

In our recent submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission's inquiry into access to justice in the criminal justice system for people with disability, we highlighted a number of barriers faced by vulnerable people who come into contact with police, courts and other legal institutions. A copy of our submission, co-authored by the National Association of Community Legal Centres, is **attached**.

In its final report, released in February this year, the Australian Human Rights Commission recommended that the Commonwealth and each state and territory in Australia develop a Disability Justice Strategy, to ensure:

- people with disabilities are safe and free from violence;
- people with disabilities have effective access to justice;
- non-discrimination;
- respect for inherent dignity and individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own decisions; and
- full and effective participation and inclusion in the community.

The Commission's report recommends that a Disability Justice Strategy should:


1. be prepared in partnership with people with disabilities;
2. be coordinated across the agencies that deliver outcomes in the criminal justice system;
3. ensure accountability through our system of parliamentary democracy and public administration;
4. involve actions that are embedded in operational plans; and
5. be monitored for effectiveness and adjusted in light of experience.

We encourage you to consider the development of a Disability Justice Strategy for Queensland.

QAILS, and its members, would be pleased to work with your government to develop this strategy, as a meaningful framework to ensure access to justice for people with disability in the criminal justice system.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you; your office can contact me on (07) 3392 0092 to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Farrell', with a large circular flourish at the end.

James Farrell
QAILS Director

cc: *Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice*
Graeme Innes AM, Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission