

21 March 2025

Hon. Deb Frecklington MP

Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity

GPO Box 149

BRISBANE QLD 4001

Hand-delivered, and by email: attorney.general@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Attorney-General,

Every Queenslanders deserves equal protection under the law

We write to express our deep concern regarding the announced deferral of changes to Queensland's anti-discrimination laws introduced by the *Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Act 2024*.

The decision to delay implementation of these critical reforms is unnecessary, undermines workplace protections, and creates uncertainty for employers, employees, and vulnerable communities across Queensland.

Changes are the result of extensive consultation

These improvements to Queensland's anti-discrimination laws are the result of years of consultation, expert advice, and broad commitments to strengthening anti-discrimination laws. The reforms align with the recommendations of the 2020 *Respect@Work Inquiry* and the 2022 *Building Belonging Report*, both of which identified clear gaps in Queensland's legal framework that leave individuals exposed to workplace harassment and discrimination. These reforms were further examined through community engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and experts, supported by an exposure draft released in early 2024.

These reforms were neither rushed nor inadequately considered—on the contrary, they were shaped through rigorous engagement with legal experts, human rights advocates, employer groups, and community stakeholders, including many of our organisations.

Unfounded concerns about impact of new protected attributes

Concerns about the impact of certain provisions, including protections against discrimination based on an "irrelevant criminal record," are unfounded. The legislation does not prevent legitimate risk-based decision-making for licensing and security purposes. Instead, it ensures that individuals are assessed fairly and that past, irrelevant criminal records do not become an unjust barrier to employment or social participation. Similar protections exist in other Australian jurisdictions, without creating undue risks.

Deferral will create further uncertainty

The decision to defer these laws is particularly harmful because it creates unnecessary uncertainty for businesses and organizations already taking steps to comply with the reforms. Employers need clarity and confidence in legal standards, and a delay in implementation disrupts their efforts to establish safe and respectful workplaces. Additionally, this decision sends the wrong message to survivors of workplace harassment and discrimination—delaying their access to stronger protections when there is no justifiable reason to do so.

Please reconsider deferring these sensible reforms

We urge you to reconsider this deferral and proceed with the implementation of these changes as scheduled on 1 July 2025. The reforms represent a vital step forward in ensuring Queensland workplaces are free from discrimination and harassment. Delaying them would only serve to prolong existing inequities and create further legal uncertainty for businesses and workers alike.



The Most Rev'd **Jeremy Greaves**, Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane
The Very Rev'd Dr **Peter Catt**, Dean of Brisbane (St John's Anglican Cathedral)

cc: Hon. David Crisafulli MP, Premier of Queensland, and other Government members