



Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women  
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Our reference: CSYW 02450-2020

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Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to e-Petition 3301-20 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 22 April 2020 regarding the harbouring of minors who have run away from home.

The *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act) provides for intervention for children in need of protection. A child is in need of protection if they have suffered, are suffering, or are at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm and do not have a parent able and willing to protect them from the harm. The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) must take action considered necessary when it is reasonably suspected that a child may be in need of protection.

Under the Act, it is an offence for a person to unlawfully remove a child from the care of the child's carer if the child is under the custody or guardianship of the chief executive. This is similar to the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (SA), which provides an offence for the unlawful taking of children and young people placed in care under that Act.

The child protection and family support system is midway through the 10-year reform program *Supporting Families, Changing Futures*. As recommended by the *Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry*, the Act was comprehensively reviewed from 2015-2017, with priority amendments made progressed in the *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017*.

A discussion paper, *Rethinking rights and regulation: towards a stronger framework for protecting children and supporting families* was released from July to September 2019 to facilitate consultation on the next stage of reforms to the Act. The discussion paper focussed on reinforcing children's rights in the legislation, strengthening children's voices in decisions that affect them and reshaping the regulation of care. A consultation summary report is available at [www.csyw.qld.gov.au/cpaconsultation](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/cpaconsultation). The Queensland Government is currently considering the outcomes.

It is acknowledged that parenting can be challenging, and the Queensland Government provides and funds a range of services and websites to help families to raise happy, healthy children and teenagers.

Parents in Queensland can access the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program at no cost <https://www.triplep-parenting.net.au/qld-uken/>. Triple P provides support for parents of teenagers aged 12 to 16 years, on issues ranging from common problems with raising teenagers to help with more serious teenager behaviour, offering tools and strategies to assist parents to build positive relationships with their children.

The Talking Families website provides useful tips and information for parents who want to get help, or for people who want to know how to support a family <https://talkingfamilies.qld.gov.au/>; and the oneplace website that lists more than 53,000 services for Queensland parents, young people and families who are having tough times, and can be searched by location and the type of support that is needed at <https://www.oneplace.org.au/>.

Family and Child Connect is also available to provide support for a range of family and parenting challenges <http://familychildconnect.org.au/>. This confidential service is free and there are no limits to its use. The service provides advice and support that is specific to identified needs. Families facing complicated issues may be referred to a Family Support service, which can offer families the option of working with a support worker.

A number of resources are available to families on the Raising Children Network website at <https://raisingchildren.net.au/> and Parentline, a confidential telephone counselling service for parents and carers of children <https://parentline.com.au/>.

As young people grow and develop during their adolescent years, a very small number will come into contact with the youth justice system. The Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) works closely with these young people and, using a range of intervention and case management strategies, supports them to identify and reduce the factors that contribute to the risk of re-offending, such as antisocial peer networks or living arrangements.

The importance of family and maintaining relationships with family is at the core of our youth justice system. It is a principle of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* that parents should be encouraged and supported to fulfil their responsibility for the care and supervision of their children. In accordance with this statutory responsibility, DYJ engages with a child's parents wherever possible.

I trust the information provided will be of assistance to the petitioners. If you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Susie Pedersen, Acting Director, Legal Policy and Legislation, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women on 3097 8635.

Yours sincerely



**Di Farmer MP**  
**Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and**  
**Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence**