30 September 2026

Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee,

Victims of Crime Assistance (Victims' Advocate Service) Amendment Bill 2026

The Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN) is a group of organisations funded under the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program to provide individual advocacy assistance to Queenslanders living with disability. QIDAN members offer various independent disability advocacy services across Queensland, including support with navigating the justice system.

QIDAN welcomes the introduction of the *Victims of Crime Assistance (Victims' Advocate Service) Amendment Bill 2026* (**the Bill**) by the Hon Laura Gerber MP into Queensland Parliament. In our experience, people with disability can find victim support to be difficult to navigate and inaccessible.

QIDAN broadly supports the proposed Victims' Advocate Service that intends to deliver targeted support for victims of crime, operating as a central entry point to improve the experience of victims, by providing coordinated information, navigation assistance and referrals to existing services.[1] It is, however, unclear whether the consultation for the Victims' Advocate Service model involved victims with disability. This submission therefore

[1] Explanatory Notes, *Victims of Crime Assistance (Victims' Advocate Service) Amendment Bill 2026* (Qld), 1, https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/bills/2026/5307/Victims-of-Crime-Assistance-(Victims'-Advocate-Service)-Amendment-Bill-2026---Explanatory-Notes-9027.pdf.

aims to provide a disability specific focus on the information that has been provided in the Bill, informed by our extensive experience as disability advocates.

The Victims' Advocate Service must be accessible for people with disability

To ensure that people with disability can use the proposed Victims' Advocate Service, it must be accessible and flexible. This means that the coordinated information and navigation assistance that the service intends to provide must be adapted to meet the communication and accessibility requirements of the individual. Drawing from QIDAN's experience in other areas of the justice system, for example in courts and tribunals, communication barriers and the inaccessibility of requesting reasonable adjustments have consistently hindered access for people with disability. Some of these barriers include failing to have a central point of contact for assistance or a reliable record of previous contacts, difficulty understanding complex information and a general lack of awareness that adjustments may be required to accommodate different communication styles and preferences. In addition, processes for requesting reasonable adjustments can often be unclear or unavailable. To avoid replicating these same issues for victims with disability, the Victims' Advocate Service must:

- Establish client management systems and associated processes that protect the individual from retelling their story at each point of contact;
- Provide coordinated information in accessible formats (i.e. Easy English, video, audio visual) and offer translation services; and
- Have staff undertake disability awareness training; and
- Introduce clear and visible processes for requesting reasonable adjustments; and
- Implement reasonable adjustments where required.

In QIDAN's experience, people with disability often get stuck in a "referral loop" when seeking assistance from services. This is due to either incorrect referrals being made or services not having capacity to assist. As a result, QIDAN advocates often hear of the

exhaustion and overwhelm people experience when bouncing from one referral to another when looking for help. It is also common for people to give up and go without assistance, resulting in poorer outcomes for people with disability. In the context of victims of crime, this may include failure to recover expenses or the inability to get an urgently needed protection order put in place. For these reasons, it is essential that any referrals made to existing services through the proposed Victims' Advocate Service are correct and transparent. That is, the existing service must actually provide the assistance the person is seeking, and capacity of the service must be clearly communicated, even if unknown. Where appropriate, QIDAN also strongly recommends warm referral pathways where the Victims' Advocate Service directly contacts the existing service to lessen the burden on the victim with disability.

We thank you for providing the opportunity to provide our feedback on the Bill and we are happy to provide further information or clarification of any of the matters raised in this letter upon request.

Yours sincerely,



Caitlin De Cocq Van Delwijnen
Director, Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN)