

Welcome to the third newsletter for the Queensland Law Reform Commission's Guardianship Review.

In this newsletter, we tell you about the Commission's recent consultation process on the issue of confidentiality and provide an update on the progress of the Guardianship Review.

Asking questions about confidentiality

Stage 1 of the Commission's review is to examine the role of confidentiality in the guardianship legislation. We are required to consider whether the law adequately protects people's privacy and promotes accountability in the guardianship system.

In August 2006, the Commission released a set of consultation publications seeking community views on the issue of confidentiality.

In addition to its full Discussion Paper *Confidentiality in the Guardianship System: Public Justice, Private Lives*, the Commission produced a shorter Companion Paper and two pamphlets inviting views on the key issues in the review. One of these pamphlets was written specifically for people who may need help with decision-making.

The Commission also consulted using an interactive CD-ROM presentation. The Commission understands that this is the first time a law reform commission has used this format to seek community input.

The Commission has been encouraged by the positive feedback it has received about these publications.

Going out and seeking views

In addition to asking people questions in these consultation publications, the Commission also went out into the community to find out what people thought about confidentiality.

To achieve this, the Commission held ten publicly advertised community forums in different parts of the State. In addition to Brisbane, the Commission travelled to the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Mt Isa.

The Commission also held fifteen focus groups with people interested in, or affected by, the guardianship legislation. Four of these meetings were with groups of people who may need help with decision-making.

A record community response

The Commission has been delighted by the high level of support that its review has received from the community.

The Commission has had the opportunity to hear from hundreds of people through its community forums and focus groups. These meetings were well attended and people were generous with their time and in sharing their views.

We have also received almost 250 formal submissions from 147

individuals and organisations to date.

This is the largest response the Commission has ever received to a single round of consultation.

We would like to thank those people who participated in our consultation process. We are grateful for your contribution to the review, and have learnt a great deal from your input.

Completing the confidentiality report

The Commission's consultation process is now officially closed and we are writing our report for Stage 1 on the role of confidentiality in the guardianship system.

The Commission anticipates its report will be completed at the end of June. We will tell you when it has been tabled in Parliament and is available to the public.

The future of the review

The Guardianship Review used to have three stages. Stage 1 examined confidentiality. Stage 2 involved reviewing the General Principles, which are the guidelines for all decisions made under the guardianship legislation. Stage 3 considered the remainder of the legislation. Stages 2 and 3 will now be done together to ensure that the General Principles are examined in the context of the legislation as a whole.

Accordingly, once the Commission completes its report on confidentiality, we will start the final stage of the review and

examine the remainder of the guardianship legislation.

The 'General Principles' remain an area of priority for the Commission in this final stage of the review. Other matters for consideration raised by members of the community include the role of informal decision-makers, processes for reviewing decisions made in the guardianship system, and the roles of the various government bodies in the field.

The Commission will again consult widely when it undertakes the final stage of its review. We will contact you closer to the time to let you know how you can have your say on these issues.

If you want more information

More information about the Guardianship Review is available from the Commission or its website www.qlrc.qld.gov.au/guardianship.

Post: PO Box 13312
George Street Post Shop
Brisbane Qld 4003

Facsimile: (07) 3247 9045

Telephone: (07) 3247 4544

Email: qlrcguardianship@justice.qld.gov.au