QUEENSLAND LAW REFORM COMMISSION

Consultation policy

This policy explains how the Queensland Law Reform Commission treats, and may use, information we receive during consultations for our law reform reviews. It should be read with our submissions policy and our right to information policy.

The Commission is an independent law reform institution. We undertake research and provide recommendations to reform the law on topics selected by the Queensland Attorney-General. Our recommendations are based on extensive research, public consultation, and the principles of impartiality, equity and social justice.

Our approach to consultation

Consultation is at the heart of our work.

Our values of transparency, rigour, impartiality, inclusivity and collaboration inform our approach to consultation and our commitment to encouraging and supporting people to engage in law reform. This includes people throughout Queensland, including from regional and remote areas, and from diverse and disadvantaged communities.

Who we consult

We consult with persons with interest, experience, and expertise in the topics we review. Understanding the views and experiences of consultation participants helps us to identify issues with the laws we are reviewing, explore options for reform, and ensure our recommendations are practical and reflect contemporary community attitudes.

We organise consultations by initiating connections with relevant individuals and groups and responding to requests and invitations from relevant stakeholders.

When we consult

We engage in consultations throughout the duration of our reviews.

We initially focus on understanding participants' views and experiences of the laws we are reviewing, to identify key issues our review should address.

Once we understand the key issues and have developed some options for reform, we release a consultation paper, inviting feedback on specific questions and reform options, as well as on other issues or suggestions participants wish to raise.

We also engage in targeted consultation to inform our understanding of aspects of the review or reform options or proposals we are exploring.

How we consult

We approach all consultations with a commitment to ensuring the safety of our staff and those we consult with. We aim to ensure our consultations are culturally responsive, respectful, inclusive, and trauma informed. A culturally responsive, trauma informed practice framework underpins our work and supports our team to engage in this way.

Our consultations can take the form of individual, small or larger group meetings. Where we convene group consultations, we aim to bring together people with similar interests or experiences. We hold consultations in person, by phone, or through an online platform such as Microsoft Teams.

We also invite feedback at events, including webinars, public information sessions, forums and roundtables. We promote these events through our newsletter, website and social media channels.

We prioritise hearing the views of people across Queensland. We undertake outreach to regional and remote areas to the extent our resources permit us to do so, and connect with people through an online platform when it is not possible or practical to meet in person.

Members of our review team or our Commission Chair or members facilitate consultations.

How we collect, use and manage consultation information

Consultation is an important way to share information and explore and develop options for reform.

We consider this best achieved through frank and open exchange of ideas. To foster this, we generally run consultations under the Chatham House rule: we do not attribute specific statements to participants or publish or share records or transcripts of our consultations with anyone outside the Commission, unless we obtain the participant's consent to do so.[1] To support open communication with stakeholders, we will only consider requests for access to our consultation notes in conjunction with an application under the Right to Information Act 2009 (Qld).

We collect, store, and use personal information in accordance with the Department of Justice Privacy Policy and our obligations under the Public Records Act 2023 (Qld) and Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld), including the Queensland Privacy Principles contained in that Act. For more information, please visit our website and the Department of Justice Privacy and Information Security page.

How we use consultation feedback

We prepare summaries of our notes from consultation meetings. We use these summaries, along with submissions, other feedback and our research and analysis, to inform our work and develop our findings and recommendations.

When we refer to consultation feedback in our publications, we do not attribute

specific statements or ideas to particular participants. We describe consultation participants' views in the context of all feedback we received about a relevant topic or issue. In this way, we can accurately present the range of views on an issue without identifying individuals.

As part of our commitment to transparency, we publish a record of our consultation meetings for each review, which records organisational stakeholders, stakeholder categories (for example, legal, individual, Government) and geographical locations (for example, North Queensland, Brisbane, South-West Queensland) for each meeting. We do not name individual participants, unless they consult with us in a professional capacity as a public office holder and consent to us naming them.

Consultations with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

We recognise Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge and expertise, maintained throughout generations, as the world's oldest continuing living culture. We seek to have this expertise inform our work.

We are committed to genuine, respectful, appropriate, and culturally safe and trauma informed engagement with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our work.

We follow the leadership of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples on appropriate engagement and participation with them. We respect cultural protocols and individual preferences in using the knowledge shared with us.

We are committed to maintaining data sovereignty in our collection, handling, storage and use of Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' information. When we finish a review, we share with participants how we used their information and what recommendations we made.

Other ways to engage with us

There are other ways people can share their views with us. While we may tailor our processes for different reviews, we always offer interested people the opportunity to:

- Informally share their views in writing, such as by sending us an email.
- Provide a written submission, which can be in any form, including artwork. Our submissions policy contains further information about this process.

Sometimes we use surveys or questionnaires to receive feedback.

We publish information about the different opportunities to engage for each review on our website and in our background papers and consultation papers.

[1] 'Chatham House Rule', Chatham House (Web Page, 23 October 2024) < https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>.