Joint Submission to the Queensland Law Reform Commission: Review of particular criminal defences

In support of the abolition of the defence of domestic discipline

Corporal punishment is ineffective, harmful, and violates children's rights. It has no place in our homes or legislation.

Associate Professor Divna Haslam andithe Consortium

ISPCAN

every child thriving aracy | Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health

ACU INSTITUTE OF CHILD PROTECTION STUDIES

PeakCare

Parenting and Family Support Centre

PAFRA Parenting & Family Research Alliance

Parenting Research Centre

Act for kids

CPP ChildProtectionPeak

Triple P Positive Parenting Program

NAPCAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

alannah & madeline foundation

raisingchildren.net.au the australian parenting website

OZ KIDS IN PRINT

Daniel Morcombe Keeping kids safe!

SNAICC National Voice for our Children

keyassets SERVING CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

FamiliesAustralia

Bravehearts bravehearts.org.au

e-kidha GROUP

grandparents VICTORIA

Kinship Carers VICTORIA

PREVENTION UNITED Joining forces to prevent mental health conditions

Allies for Children

benevolent SOCIETY

Commissioner for Children & Young People

End Corporal Punishment

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Health Justice Australia

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Submission Consortium

This submission is a joint submission by a consortium of 32 agencies and research centres including International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Parenting and Family Research Alliance, ARACY, Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership, Life Without Barriers, Kambu Health, Institute of Child Protection Studies, Parenting and Family Support Centre, Act for Kids, PeakCare, Commission for Children and Young People (SA), Triple P International, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, Raising Children Network, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), Ozkids, Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Key Assets, Families Australia, e-Kidna, Grandparents Victoria Inc, Kinship Carers Victoria, Prevention United, Allies for Children, The Benevolent Society, End Corporal punishment, SEED Lifespan Deakin University, Health Justice Australia, and the Parenting Research Centre.

Additionally, it is endorsed by over 100 multidisciplinary, clinical, and scientific experts from the fields of pediatrics, psychology, social work, psychiatry, public health, law, criminology, nursing, medical and social sciences who are endorsing in an individual capacity. These include nationally recognised Australians with Order of Australia medals, former politicians, and international experts.

This submission was coordinated by Associate Professor Divna Haslam (University of Queensland, Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research) who conducted the only national study of the prevalence of experiences, use and attitudes of corporal punishment in Australia as a part of her work Australian Child Maltreatment Study. She serves on the Queensland Child Death Review Board, and on the World Health Organization Technical Advisory Group for Violence Against Children Estimations. She is co-lead on the Third Australian Survey of Child and Adolescent Mental Health and a Director of the Parenting and Family Research Alliance.

All signatories approved key content and recommendations of the joint submission however final edits were made following approvals. Details of all organisations and individual signatories are listed at the end of this submission.

Executive summary

This joint submission is by a consortium of agencies, research centres, and individual multi-disciplinary scientists and clinicians who share a common desire to see children given every opportunity to thrive in childhood and beyond. It serves as a response to the Queensland Law Reform Commission's (QLRC) call for consultation regarding the current review into particular criminal defences, however the scope of this submission is limited to the defence of domestic discipline. It is this defence that essentially makes corporal punishment legal in Queensland as a form of discipline for children and adolescents in Queensland.

We call for a full repeal section 280 of the criminal code to abolish legally sanctioned violence towards children in the form of corporal punishment.

Further, we support the implementation of a public health campaign, aimed at educating parents and providing evidence-based parenting information to the public, and the introduction of diversion mechanisms. Diversion approaches would ensure that parents who engage in corporal punishment receive intervention support rather than criminal prosecution where feasible. **We assert that no child or adolescent should be subjected to corporal punishment, and that *children and adolescents should be entitled to the same legal protection from violence as adults.***

Corporal punishment is ineffective, harmful, and violates children's rights. It has no place in Queensland homes or legislation.

Why the domestic defence (s280) must be abolished.

Our recommendations are based on eight evidence-based justifications further outlined in the submission below.

1. Corporal punishment is ineffective and harmful[1,2].
2. The defence of domestic discipline contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [3].

3. Corporal punishment increases the risk of child maltreatment and is inconsistent with child protection principles [4].
4. Corporal punishment contributes to the cycle of violence and crime including intimate partner violence [5,6] and criminal justice system involvement [7].
5. Abolition will send a clear message to parent and the community that violence is never acceptable.
6. The defence is currently inappropriately used as a bar to prosecution in serious cases of assault, indicating it is not fit for purpose [8].
7. Corporal punishment is contrary to recommendations by key bodies including Royal Australasian College of Physicians [9], the American Academy of Pediatrics [10] and the Centres for Disease Control [11], Australian Human Rights Commission [12] and the Queensland Family and Child Commission [13].
8. Current legislation is archaic and out of step with current societal beliefs [14].

Why the domestic discipline defence (s280) must be abolished.

	Ineffective and harmful		Contributes to cycle of violence and crime, intimate partner violence, and contact with criminal justice
	Increases risk of child maltreatment		Abolition sends a clear message violence is never acceptable
	Not fit for purpose		Contrary to recommendations by key health, medical bodies
	Contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child		Out of step with current societal beliefs

At the conclusion of the submission, we outline additional recommendations and consideration that may enhance the effectiveness of legislative reform.

Introduction

This submission is in response to the Queensland Law Reform Commission's (QLRC) review into particular criminal defences. It draws on the QLRC Background Papers, the research report and the most recent consultation paper "Equality and integrity: Reforming criminal defences in Queensland released Feb 20, 2025, hereafter referred to as the consultation paper. [8, 15-17].

The scope of the review of particular criminal defences is broad, encompassing a range of defences (e.g., provocation, self-defence and preservation) as they apply to various criminal offences (e.g., murder, manslaughter). We applaud the Commission for the timeliness of this review which occurs within a broader national focus on the reduction of domestic and family violence, including The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 [18]. **Attitudes toward violence begin in the home and can perpetuate across the lifespan and intergenerationally** [19]. Reducing violence towards children, in the form of domestic discipline, through legislative reform to change attitudes must form a key part of broader initiatives to reduce violence and crime.

"Reducing violence towards children, in the form of domestic discipline, through legislative reform must form a key part of broader initiatives to reduce violence and crime."

This submission is limited in scope to the defence of domestic discipline. It is this defence that essentially legalises corporal punishment or physical discipline in Queensland. "*The defence of domestic discipline permits parents, persons in their place (like step-parents or foster carers), and schoolteachers to use force, provided the force was reasonable and was used for the purpose of correction, discipline, management or control of a child in their care."* [20]. In practice, the defence is used as a bar of prosecution against a range of criminal charges including common assault and other more serious violence related charges such a grievous bodily harm.

The scientific literature rarely uses the term domestic discipline but, rather, refers to corporal physical punishment, spanking, smacking and other terms. This submission uses the term corporal punishment to include all of these behaviours. *Corporal punishment is defined as the use of force to cause pain but not injury for the purposes of correction* [21].

Corporal punishment is distinct from physical punishment which can cause lasting pain or injury although, in practice, corporal punishment often crosses the threshold into physical punishment and abuse. *The World Health Organisation defines corporal punishment as "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light* [22].

> "Globally 68 countries have introduced legislation to legally protect children from corporal punishment giving them the same legal protection as adults. Australia must be next"

Sweden was the first country to enact legislation to protect children from corporal punishment 45 years ago [23]. Since this time more than 67 countries have followed to legally protect children from corporal punishment giving them the same protections as adults [24]. These include Western and non-Western countries and both high and low resource setting countries. For example, New Zealand, Germany, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Japan, Kenya, Thailand and Wales. Many of these countries were repealing similar legislation and defences. Examining the impact of legislative changes in these countries can inform data driven decision making in Queensland*.

"68 countries have introduced legislation to legally protect children from corporal punishment giving them the same protections as adults. Australia must be next"

* * The nature of naturalistic examination of law reform means causal conclusions regarding the reasons for these changes cannot be drawn.

What have we learned from countries who have abolished corporal punishment?

- Systematic reviews examining the impact of such legislation shows declines in the support and use of corporal punishment following legal reforms [25].
- Cross country data indicates there are reductions in use of severe corporal punishment which could be better classified as physical abuse including being "hit on the face or head" or being "beaten repeatedly" [26].
- The impact of legislative change is enhanced when paired with strong educative public health education campaigns [27].
- Bans do not lead to dramatic increases in prosecution [28].
- Countries where corporal punishment is cultural normative, like Kenya, see reductions in the use of corporal punishment but not belief changes*. This speaks to the importance of culturally informed education campaigns [29].
- Diversionary approaches to parenting support are taken up and result in improvements in child and parent outcomes [30]
- Cross country comparisons indicate lower levels of adolescent violence in countries where corporal punishment is banned [31].
- The tightening of laws to define reasonable corporal punishment are poorly understood by parents and ineffective [32].
- No country has reinstated legislation to allow corporal punishment.

We call for a full repeal section 280 of the criminal code to abolish legally sanctioned violence towards children in the form of corporal punishment.

Children are entitled to the same legal protection from violence as adults. To retain the defence in any form fails to provide children with equal protection as adults.

"We call for a full repeal section 280 of the criminal code to abolish legally sanctioned violence towards children in the form of corporal punishment."

Justification for recommendations

Corporal punishment is ineffective and harmful

Metanalyses, one of the strongest forms of scientific evidence, have found corporal punishment is ineffective as a discipline strategy and is not associated with improved behaviour over time. Research with over 75 studies representing 160,000 children has found no evidence that corporal punishment leads to improved behaviour over time [1]. **The science shows smacking, and other forms of corporal punishment, simply don't work.** Rather, data indicate that physical discipline and harsh punishment predicts a worsening of child behaviour overtime [1, 4]. Legislation should not enshrine strategies that are ineffective or, worse, counterproductive for their stated purpose.

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*"Research with over 75 studies representing 160,000 children has found **no evidence** that corporal punishment leads to improved behaviour over time."*

Decades of research have shown the corporal punishment is associated with a range of harms for children both in childhood and across life. These include increased aggression, antisocial behaviour, and poor emotional regulation as well as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse later in life [1], poor child development [33], poor parent-child relationships and increased conflict [34], and increased prevalence of suicide [35], as well as a having a negative impact on neural functioning in similar ways to serious maltreatment [36]. These effects are not limited to severe or abusive forms of punishment; even "mild" or "reasonable" corporal punishment can contribute to harmful developmental outcomes. No level of corporal punishment of children or adolescents has been demonstrated to be safe.
The World Health Organization recognises corporal punishment as a form of violence that can compromise a child's physical and mental health and impair cognitive development [37].

The level of cumulative evidence underscores that corporal punishment is not only ineffective as a long-term disciplinary strategy but also poses substantial risks to a child's overall

wellbeing has led researchers to argue that corporal punishment should be classified as an adverse childhood experience [5, 37]

Physical punishment is a violation of children's rights

Corporal punishment is internationally recognised as a violation of children's fundamental human rights, particularly their right to protection from violence and to dignity and respect. These rights apply to children and adolescents under the age of 18. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, to which Australia is a signatory, explicitly obliges states to protect children from "all forms of physical or mental violence" while in the care of parents or others (Article 19), and to ensure that discipline is consistent with the child's human dignity (Article 28(2)) (United Nations, 1989) [3]. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has made it clear that corporal punishment is incompatible with these obligations and has called on all states to *enact legal prohibitions against its use in all settings, including the home* [38]. Australia has been formally recognised by the United Nations as failing to protect child rights because of its stance on corporal punishment [39]. In total, 68 nations globally have prohibited corporal punishment in all settings, primarily due to their obligations under the Convention, including New Zealand and, most recently, Thailand [24].

"Australia has been formally recognised by the United Nations as ***failing to protect child rights*** *because of its stance on corporal punishment."*

Risk of maltreatment and inconsistency with child protection principles

Corporal punishment is associated with an increased risk of child maltreatment which is a major crisis in Australia, with 6 in 10 Australians experiencing one or more forms of maltreatment [14,40] This can occur where corporal punishment escalates into physical abuse [2] but also serves as an independent risk factor for abuse and neglect [1]. Mothers who report the use of corporal punishment are almost three times more likely to also report physical abuse of their child [1]. US data show that parents who spank young children are 33% more likely to be involved in child protection one year later [41]. In Australia, where the prevalence of child maltreatment remains unacceptably high, we cannot allow the law to permit the use of known risk factors for child abuse and neglect. The Queensland Child Death

Review report also highlights the high overlap between family violence and the use of corporal punishment in Queensland child death cases, with many of these cases relating to adolescent suicide in the context of harsh corporal punishment and family violence [42].

The continued legality of corporal punishment via the domestic discipline defence is also inconsistent with the principles enshrined in the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*[43]. This legislation asserts that the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the child are paramount (s 5A), and that children have a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm (s 5B(1)(a)). **Legislation permitting corporal punishment contradicts these principles by exposing children to practices that are known to cause psychological and physical harm [3].** Its continued legislated acceptance in the home undermines Queensland's commitment to placing the child's welfare above all else.

Additionally, corporal punishment is inconsistent with the principle that children's dignity, rights, and needs must be respected (s 5C), and that the State has a duty to intervene when a parent is unable or unwilling to protect a child (s 5B(2)(f)). By legally validating the use of physical force by caregivers, the defence blurs the line between discipline and abuse, contradicting the protective intent of Queensland's child welfare system. This is particularly the case given there is evidence the defence is being used as a bar to prosecution in 40% of cases that are more likely to be physical abuse such as grievous bodily harm offences[1]. It also fails to support families in adopting non-violent, developmentally appropriate parenting approaches, as envisioned by the Act.

"Children's dignity, rights, and needs must be respected."

Furthermore, corporal punishment is not consistent with the Standards of Care expected to be provided for children in foster care, licensed care or a departmental care service, as outlined in the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld), Section 123.1. The Standards of Care specifically state that the child's dignity and rights will be respected at all times (s 123.1a) and the child will receive positive guidance when necessary to help change inappropriate behaviour (s 123.1g). Foster and licensed care providers are held to these standards in providing care to children. Staff are required to undergo annual mandatory training in positive behaviour support and the prohibition of the use of physical responses or restraints of any kind. A

Standards of Care breach occurs if a physical response or corporal punishment is used with a child. The potential consequences of this include loss of organisational and carer licenses, staff being disciplined and/or losing their jobs, the matter being referred to Police for investigation which may result in a criminal charge, and staff being disqualified from child related work. This is completely inconsistent with the consequences for corporal punishment that occurs within families. All children should have their safety prioritised and rights upheld in legislation, regardless of whether they are in the care of the state or their family.

Corporal punishment contributes to cycles of violence

Scientific evidence demonstrates that corporal punishment contributes to cycles of violence that persist into adulthood and are transmitted intergenerationally. Parental modelling of the acceptability of violence contributes to pro-violence attitudes and greater use of violence in subsequent adulthood. For example, people who experienced corporal punishment as children are more likely to have pro-violence attitudes about corporal punishment [44] use physical forms of discipline in raising their own children [14]. Similarly, data shows parents who were spanked or smacked as children are more likely to engage in abusive and neglectful behaviour patterns as adults [4].

"Parents who were spanked or smacked as children are more likely to engage in abusive and neglectful behaviour patterns as adults."

Of particular concern in the context of a broader state and national focus on reductions of crime and gender-based violence is evidence of the association between corporal punishment and antisocial behaviour, and with intimate partner violence. A systematic review published in The Lancet found multiple studies linking corporal punishment with conduct problems and antisocial behaviour indicating this form of discipline may increase the very problems it aims to reduce [4]. Systematic reviews specifically examining the association between corporal punishment and subsequent violent behaviours show corporal punishment is significantly associated with violence spectrum behaviours, with more severe punishment associated with greater violence [45]. Data shows experiences of paternal aggression quadruples the risk of adult violence [46].

Childhood experiences of corporal punishment are linked with intimate partner violence in adulthood"

Corporal punishment has also been linked with sexual coercion and the dating violence with corporal punishment predicting higher perpetration of dating violence even after controlling for physical abuse and related demographic factors [47]. This indicates these effects are not driven by the overlap between corporal punishment and other forms of maltreatment but rather that corporal punishment has an independent effect. Furthermore, corporal punishment is associated with increased risk of subsequent intimate partner violence both as a victim (revictimisation) and as a perpetrator [6, 19, 47, 48]. Associations with perpetration are most strongly evidenced in father administered corporal punishment[2] indicating the gender-based transmission of this form of violence [49].

Abolition sends a clear message violence is never acceptable

One reason for perpetuation of cycles of violence related to corporal is the implicit endorsement in legislation that permits corporal punishment that some forms of violence are acceptable or further that violence is a solution to particular problems. This pro-violence thinking can have broad impact. Evidence from legislative change in other countries including those in the Wales and Scotland clearly demonstrates that abolition paired with properly funded public health campaigns is related to decreased use of corporal punishment and are not associated with increased criminalisation of parents [32].

"An English report found tightening the use of defences to specific practices was ineffective and laws were poorly understood by parents."

In contrast to the success of abolition reform in Ireland and Wales, English reform which , which tightened the use of the defence (as proposed in Option 2 of the consultation paper) was ineffective as parents did not understand the law and practitioners (e.g. parent support works, child safety officers) felt unable to advise against the use of smacking when it remained legally permitted [32]. England is now revisiting the possibility of full repeal of

their defence. Abolition is needed to send a clear message to parents and the community that violence is not acceptable **Full abolition is the only way to generate broad behaviour and attitudinal change in the community.** The English experience suggests amending the current defence is unlikely to contribute to any changes in parent behaviour or reductions in this form of violence.

"Abolition is needed to send a clear message to parents and the community that violence is not acceptable."

The defence is not fit for purpose

The intent of the defence is to allow parents to use "reasonable" or mild forms of physical discipline such as a gentle smack not to permit serious forms of violence however vast subjective differences in what is deemed reasonable means the defence is not fit for purpose. There is evidence the defence is not limited to cases of "reasonable force" or mild discipline but rather is frequently inappropriately used to avoid prosecution for serious criminal behaviour and assaults. Data presented in the consultation paper (section 402) based on Queensland Police Service data indicate that of 571 cases when the defence has been used as a bar for prosecution, 40% of cases involved "*serious allegations of violence (other serious assaults, assaults occasioning bodily harm and grievous bodily harm"* [8]. It is wholly unacceptable that this defence is so frequently used in cases which exceed reasonable domestic discipline. Even supporters of corporal punishment are unlikely to endorse this form of assaults as a part of normal discipline. These data represent 228 children who have experienced serious offences (e.g., physical assault leading to injuries or non-fatal strangulation) where no legal consequence was enforced. These concerning data raise significant questions about whether restricting the defences as proposed in option 2 would have any beneficial impact at all.

Corporal punishment is counter to recommendations by major bodies

Due to the extensive empirically documented evidence on the harm associated with the use of corporal punishment, **virtually all major health and peak bodies both in Australia and internationally have taken strong and active stances against corporal punishment**, including documenting these in formal position statements. These include, but are not limited to, Australian Medical Association [51], Royal Australasian College of Physicians [9]

American Academy of Pediatrics [10], Centres for Disease Control [11], Australian Psychological Society [51], Australian Human Rights Commission [12], International Association for Forensic Nurses [52] and the Queensland Family and Child Commission [13].

"Most major health and peak bodies both in Australia and internationally have taken strong and active stances against corporal punishment."

Retaining the defence or limiting its scope (as recommended in option 2 presented the consultation paper) is patently inconsistent with recommendations by major health bodies and associated Australian peak bodies who advocate against the use of any form of physical discipline. To retain the defence in any form serves to provide parents legal justification and endorsement for the use of behaviours that are contrary to health recommendations by key bodies and known to cause harm to children.

The defence is out of step with societal opinions

The history of the domestic discipline defences is predicated on the belief that violence is an acceptable means of maintaining authority. This legal provision has its origins in earlier legal systems that allowed for the disciplining of children in ways that mirrored the historical treatment of slaves, where the concept of a "master's right" to physically discipline subordinates, including children and slaves, was widely accepted. This foundational belief is now viewed as archaic and is out of step with current opinions and practices. It should be reformed.

Evidence of changing community attitudes comes from a nationally representative random sample of 8503 Australians conducted as a part of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study in 2021. This found most Australians (75%) do not believe corporal punishment is necessary to raise children [14]. Furthermore, strong age effects were observed such that young generations of Australians are increasingly less likely both to use corporal punishment and to believe it is needed. This national finding is indicative of changing attitudes towards what was once a common parenting practice but is increasingly viewed as unacceptable. These naturally occurring societal changes provide an opportunity for legislative reform to be

enacted to better protect Australian children from this form of violence and to interrupt cycles of violence reducing broader patterns of societal violence.

"75% of Australians do not believe corporal punishment is necessary to raise children."

International evidence indicates legislative change, particularly when paired with public health campaigns is associated with changes in community attitudes towards the acceptability of violence [4]. While corporal punishment remains legally sanctioned in any capacity it will be viewed as morally and legally acceptable by some segments of the population which will perpetuate its use and associated harms. Data from countries such as Ireland, Scotland and Wales, that have enacted full abolition indicates broad reductions in pro-violence attitudes around corporal punishment [57]. **Full abolition of the defence provides an opportunity to change broad attitudes towards violence and capitalise on naturally occurring change to better protect Queensland children.**

Primary Recommendations

A full repeal of section 280, the defence of domestic discipline, is required to reduce this form of violence towards children. Further it will likely support changes in community attitudes towards violence and lead to reductions in other forms of family and domestic violence.

We fully endorse Option One as outlined in the consultation paper. Our primary recommendations are outlined on the following page.

Recommendations

1	2	3
Abolish the defence of domestic discipline.	Adopt a community education and awareness campaign.	Implement diversion approaches.

1. A full repeal of section 280 of the Queensland criminal code which would abolish the defence permitting corporal punishment. This would make the use of this form of violence against children illegal, sending a clear message to parents and the community that this behaviour is unacceptable.

   To adopt option 2 which limits the use of the defence, does not provide clear guidance for parents about what behaviours are legally acceptable and has not been effective overseas. It is unreasonable to expect parents to understand the complexities of when corporal punishment is and is not acceptable. **A full repeal allows for clear consistent messaging that violence is never acceptable**.

2. The development and implementation of state-wide community education and awareness campaign. This campaign should outline the harm associated with physical punishment, legislative changes, and the provision of alternative evidence-based parenting discipline strategies, as well outline where parents can access further support. This is consistent with the recommendation made by the Queensland Family and Child Commission in their recent publication on corporal punishment [13].

3. The introduction of diversionary approaches, including the provision of evidence-based parenting support programs to foster the development of non-violent parenting skills in cases where the defence might otherwise have applied. The introduction of diversionary approaches will enable parents who engage in corporal punishment but

do not show other high-risk patterns of harm and violence to avoid criminal charges but instead receive parenting support and education in effective non-violent discipline approaches. This approach has the benefit of reducing the burden on the criminal justice system and ensuring families with the highest risk of violence have access to essential parenting support and interventions.

Secondary recommendations and considerations

To further support the impact of full repeal we recommend the following be considered.

- **Increased investment and broad dissemination of evidence-based parenting programs at a population level to support the use non-violent parenting strategies.** This should include a mix of low intensity population-based support and more intensive targeted services and supports that provide trauma-informed care for families experiencing family violence or other related adversities.
- **A public health campaign** regarding the legislative change and promoting non-violent parenting practices to be co-designed with parents and be adequately funded to ensure reach and impact. This will maximise knowledge and attitudinal change.
- **Tracking the effects of the public health campaign and legislative change** with statewide surveys, implemented by expert academics, before and after law change. These should examine knowledge of the law as well as behavioural and attitudinal change at a whole of population level and in priority risk groups. This would provide much needed evidence on the impact of repeal on levels of violence within the home.
- **Consultation with First Nations Australians and as other cultural communities** to examine concerns about law change and explore what steps will be needed to address these concerns. This might include fears around greater child protection involvement in families, increased removal of children and increased prosecution of parents.
- **A specific First Nations public health campaign** that is co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure messages are culturally appropriate and meaningful for First Nations populations.
- **Mandatory cultural training for police** to ensure the repeal does not discriminate against First Nations people or contribute to the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in child protection services.

- **Develop diversion practices in consultation with experts** with consideration being given to who can instigate diversion approaches and under what circumstances. These could be modelled on similar approaches in the domestic and family violence space.
- **Monitoring of data regarding diversion measures** for a period of 2 years to track the impact of diversionary approaches and uptake and intervention services.
- **Collect data for 10 years to track about the long-term impacts** on children, adolescents parenting, and the wider impacts at a population level. For example, changes in youth suicide, youth mental health, rates of child maltreatment and broader societal violence.
- **Investment for widespread sector training for police, health professionals, educators, child safety workers and other front facing professionals.** This should focus on awareness of legislative change and how to connect parents with further support and training.

Organisational signatories

1. International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN)
2. Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
3. Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)
4. Parenting and Family Research Alliance (PAFRA)
5. Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)
6. Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership
7. Life Without Barriers
8. Kambu Health
9. Institute of Child Protection Studies
10. Parenting and Family Support Centre
11. Act for Kids
12. PeakCare
13. Commission for Children and Young People (SA)
14. Triple P International
15. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation
16. Raising Children Network
17. National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)
18. Ozkids
19. Daniel Morcombe Foundation
20. Key Assets
21. Families Australia
22. Bravehearts Foundation
23. e-Kidna
24. Grandparents Victoria Inc
25. Kinship Carers Victoria
26. Prevention United
27. Allies for Children
28. The Benevolent Society
29. End Corporal punishment
30. SEED Lifespan, Deakin
31. Health Justice Australia
32. The Parenting Research Centre

Individual signatories

The signatories below are endorsing in an individual capacity and should not be considered indicative of organisational endorsement.

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5. Ms Anne McLeish OAM, Director Grandparents Victoria Inc and Kinship Carers Victoria
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7. Mr Alan Corbett, former Member of the NSW Parliament
8. Ms Linda Savage, Lawyer and former Member of the Western Australian Legislative Council
9. Ms Helen Connolly Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)

International signatories

10. Ms Jillian van Turnhout, Former Independent Senator, Ireland (2011-2016), Ireland
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