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QUEENSLAND

ABN: 52 008 445 485

Ph: 3357-4188 / 04-222-696-03

Email: cameron.gledhill@nds.org.au

Web: www.nds.org.au

Moves to abolish Public Advocate face strong community opposition

Queensland Manager for National Disability Services, Valmae Rose, said that Queenslanders with impaired decision-making capacity need an independent Public Advocate now more than ever.

"There was never any doubt about it; the economic crisis was always going to hit people with impaired decision-making capacity the hardest," Ms Rose said.

"From the loss of employment opportunities for people with disability to the loss of capacity for disability services to fund-raise, this economic crisis was bound to hurt people with disability."

"Which is why — now more than ever — the Queensland Government should be taking steps to strengthen safeguards for the most vulnerable citizens we have — those with an impaired decision-making capacity."

Following the recommendations of the *Carter Report*, the Queensland Government has implemented legislative changes to the *Disability Services Act 2006* and introduced new specialist responses for people with intellectual or cognitive disability who exhibit severely challenging behaviour.

"While the disability sector strongly supports legislative amendments to safeguard people with disability, these newly introduced systemic changes are not perfect.

"They are not perfect because no human service system in the world is perfect — which is exactly why, now more than ever, we support an independent Office of the Public Advocate with the power to report directly to Cabinet," Ms Rose said.

The Government Response to the *Independent Review of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities* is available via the Premier's website:

http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/Government/Boards_and_committees/Review/Government_response/

For comment, please phone Valmae Rose on (07) 3357 4188.

Media contact: Cameron Gledhill

Phone: 3357-4188

Mobile: 04-222-696-03