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# Shadow Attorney-General visits Rocky on Public Trustee tour

Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman responded that he should “stop playing politics with vulnerable Queenslanders”.



Timothy Cox [Follow](#)

@CoxTimothyJames 2 min read March 30, 2021 - 12:00AM

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Shadow Attorney-General Tim Nicholls at CocoBrew on Monday.

Shadow Attorney-General Tim Nicholls held a meeting at CocoBrew on Monday morning to discuss the [Public Trustee](#), which he called “a very secretive service”.

Two people arrived to discuss their interactions with the agency, but did not wish to be identified.

“One of the big areas where we have seen a lot of complaints come from is from the Central Queensland, Rockhampton area,” Mr Nicholls said.

“We’ve had people in today who have told stories about their mothers’ property being taken off them and they haven’t really been given a reason.

“People who have had orders made maybe 15 years ago when they were ill and still don’t have control of their own finances.

“People on a pension who are having \$200 a fortnight being taken out of their pension by the Public Trustee and they just don’t know what they’re getting for that money.”

He said he wanted a “wide-ranging review” of, and community input into, the Public Trustee.

“It’s about time that it was updated, that it was made more responsive, that it was brought into the 21st century,” Mr Nicholls said.

“The only thing that the government has said is that they’ll appoint a board to oversee it.

“They’ve handed it all back to the Public Trustee, and that’s just Caesar judging Caesar.

“The government set the legislation, the government set the boundaries under which the Public Trustee operates, the government needs to act.”

He said he intended to hold more meetings around the state about the body.





Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman. Picture: NCA NewsWire / Dan Peled

Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman said Mr Nicholls should “stop playing politics with vulnerable Queenslanders”.

“There has been an incredibly thorough [report into the Public Trustee](#) which I’ve tabled in the parliament from Mary Burgess, the Public Advocate,” she said.

“The government has accepted the recommendations and we’re getting on with the job in reforming the Public Trustee, and Queenslanders should have confidence that the Public Trustee is there to serve their best interests.

“The announcement of an oversight board will give Queenslanders additional confidence that there is the right accountability and oversight mechanisms in place.”

Ms Fentiman said there was already a review underway about the fees charged by the Public Trustee, and there would be further legislative changes.

The Public Trustee said it welcomed Ms Burgess’s report and had been implementing its Customers First Agenda to achieve better outcomes for its customers.

“We actively engage on a regular basis with our Customer Reference Group and Government Reference Group to ensure that we have integrity in our decisions and that our actions are directly benefiting our customers,” it said.

“With key advocacy and peak body groups on these reference groups, such as Aged and Disability Advocates Australia and the Public Advocate, we value their input into our review and implementation of the Public Advocate’s report.

“We have welcomed the announcement to appoint a Public Trustee Board which will provide additional oversight and accountability mechanisms to the operations of the Public Trustee and are continuing to undertake a number of projects across the organisation to address the recommendations of the report.

“The Public Trustee cannot comment on individual matters, however, if a customer or their support network has concerns about the Public Trustee, they are encouraged to bring these to the Public Trustee so that they can be investigated and actioned accordingly, either with their regional office or by calling 1800 014 536.”

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