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## Grief-stricken daughter slams new Public Trustee Board as 'toothless tiger'

A grief-stricken Logan woman, whose mother was kept in hospital against her will until she died, said a new state board overseeing the Public Trustee was a 'toothless tiger'.



**Judith Kerr** Unfollow

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A board, to be set up to oversee the office of the Public Trustee, has been slammed as a “toothless tiger” which will not have powers to patrol bedside public guardianship hearings in hospitals and QCAT.

The state government amended legislation this week to allow the board after thousands of complaints about the office and the way it handled assets of people in guardianship.

Board members are yet to be named, but once established, it will only have an advisory role and no governance power to direct the Public Trustee or the Attorney-General or Minister Justice.

Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman said a report into the Public Trustee by the Public Advocate had raised serious issues about the entity’s fees, charges and practices and the impacts on the vulnerable.

“This bill is an important step towards addressing the issues identified by the Public Advocate,” she said.

“... The board will provide independent and effective oversight over the Public Trustee to improve performance, transparency and public accountability.”

She said recruitment for board positions would start as soon as possible but would take time to get the right people with the requisite skills.

[Logan woman Therese Zuanetti, who spoke out last year about the office after her elderly mother died in hospital under the Public Guardian](#), said the board would be a toothless tiger unable to solve many guardianship complaints.

[The Australian Association to Stop Guardianship and Administration Abuse](#) backed her claims.

“This is another self-appointed, self-review process which, effectively, is business as usual for the state Public Trustee,” the association said.

“Nothing will change. This is just a smoke screen. The real dangers of QCAT guardianship hearings and bedside hearings in hospitals are not being addressed by the state government, which has the capacity to send involuntary clients to the public guardian and public trustee.

“The whole system is wrong and an abusive guardianship system cannot be patrolled by scraping at the edges or looking at just the money collector, which is the public trustee.

“We have had 20 years of reviews and inquiries and no serious changes were implemented.

“Unless the system is overseen by the federal government, the state government will have the powers to exploit vulnerable Queenslanders under the guise of protecting them.”

More than 10,000 Queenslanders receive financial management services from the Public Trustee, with more than 9300 people under a formal administration appointment after a Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal ruling.

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