



**29 January 2020**

By email: [LSC@nt.gov.au](mailto:LSC@nt.gov.au)

To whom it may concern,

**Justice Legislation Amendment (Domestic and Family Violence) Bill 2019 and Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Amendment Bill 2019**

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the above proposed amendments.

NTCOSS is a peak body for the Social and Community Sector in the Northern Territory (NT) and an advocate for social justice on behalf of people and communities across the region who may be affected by poverty and disadvantage.

NTCOSS' vision is for a 'fair, inclusive and sustainable NT where all individuals and communities can participate in and benefit from all aspects of social, cultural and economic life'. NTCOSS' mission is to 'promote an awareness and understanding of social issues through the NT community and to strive towards the development of an equitable and just society'.

NTCOSS has a broad membership base, made up of non-government and community organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and community councils, as well as other organisations and individuals committed to social justice issues for people and communities who are socially and financially disadvantaged in the NT.

NTCOSS recognises the specific expertise of members that provide support services, advocacy and social support and other related specialist services for people who have experienced Domestic, Family and/or Sexual Violence (DFSV).

NTCOSS is largely satisfied with the content of the Justice Legislation Amendment (Domestic and Family Violence) Bill 2019, and commends the Government for taking proactive steps to improve responses to DFSV. While positive, NTCOSS and our members are seeking further details around the programs that perpetrators will be able to complete as exceptional circumstances to mandatory sentencing.

Regarding the Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Amendment Bill 2019, NTCOSS is encouraged to see that the Government has committed to allowing complainants of sexual offences to consent to being identified in a publication or statement. NTCOSS has previously provided input on the creation of the Government's development of a Sexual Violence Prevention Work, encouraging the NT Government to adopt legislative changes to allow survivors of sexual violence to optionally disclose their identity to the media to assist in telling their stories.

NTCOSS is pleased to see that the Government has progressed this agenda, and believes it is a valuable opportunity to support survivor's control over their own narratives and healing process, as opposed to the current context where perpetrator behaviour is often diminished by the media and the community.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact NTCOSS.

Kind regards,



Deborah Di Natale  
CEO  
NTCOSS