

Ms Julia Knight
Secretary to the Committee
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Via email: LA.Committees@nt.gov.au>

Dear Committee,

RE: Inquiry into a Process to Review Bills for their Impact on First Nations Territorians

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission in regard to this important reform.

Background

The Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission (NT ADC) administers the *NT Anti-Discrimination Act 1992 (the Act)*. We are an office charged with promoting the recognition of equality of opportunity in the Northern Territory (NT). We also represent the human rights of consumers receiving services under the *Disability Services Act 1993* and *Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998*. Aboriginal Territorians feature highly in the use of both our services.

Inquiry

The NT ADC supports this important reform to ensure the voice of Aboriginal Territorians informs Territory law that impacts on them.

In our submission we will only respond to question one.

Q1. What do you consider to be the most appropriate body to review Bills introduced into the Legislative Assembly for their impact on First Nations Territorians?

It is vital that whichever body is established for this purpose, that it provides diverse representation across the Northern Territory and for different groups within this population to ensure a cross section of views are before the Parliament.

I support the establishment of a body for this purpose. I think consideration should be given to the NT ADC, if appropriately funded being the host for such a body.

The NT ADC has expertise in human rights including discrimination. The scope of our work and expertise has significant relevance to the objects of this process. If NT ADC were to play a secretariat role we could lend our expertise to assist a first nations committee, understand human rights contexts in which they are required to comment.

Under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992* the Commissioner already has power to examine proposed Acts and report to the Minister on inconsistencies with the Act. It would be a minor amendment to expand it to cover this context and ensure that what I report is the view of the Committee.

The NTADC is an independent body and I believe is highly regarded. Our role in this work would bring credit, independence and expertise to this work.

I am happy to be contacted to discuss this option further, or to provide further details if required.

Yours sincerely,



Jeswynn Yogaratnam
Anti-Discrimination Commissioner

29 September 2023