

## LEGISLATION SUMMARY BRIEF

### Adoption of Children Legislation Amendment (Equality) Bill 2017

#### **Purpose of Bill**

- Amends the *Adoption of Children Act* and *Adoption of Children Regulations* to broaden the eligibility criteria for prospective parents applying to adopt by expanding relationship status to include de facto couples and making it more consistent with the Australian Government *Sex Discrimination Act* by removing gender and biological sex gender references.

#### **Key Features of Bill**

- Amendments to include people in de facto relationships as being eligible to adopt children. This includes de facto partners in the definition of spouse, couple and the meaning of 2 persons.
- Amendments to allow same sex couples to adopt children by virtue of being included in the definition of de facto relationship.
- Removal of most gender and biological sex specific language from material provisions affecting eligibility of people applying to adopt.

#### **List of Stakeholders consulted during development of Bill**

- Anti-Discrimination Commissioner
- Rainbow Territory
- A range of non-government organisations and a legal firm specialising in adoption and family law matters was consulted on proposed reform in an Information Paper in 2015.
- A comprehensive review of the *Adoption of Children Act* is scheduled to be undertaken in 2019 where a broad range of stakeholders will be consulted.

#### **Beneficiaries of the legislation**

- De facto and same sex couples wishing to apply to adopt children in the Northern Territory.
- Children relinquished for adoption.