

Social scrutiny policy committee

To whom it may concern,

We welcome the Government's proposed amendments to the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Act* that will be debated in the November sittings.

We consider that the legislation adequately meets the requirements to amend NT laws as required by the Commonwealth Government and bring the NT in line with other states and territories.

The changes are important not only for Territorians, but also people who were born in the Territory but not longer reside here. Living outside the Territory they cannot vote or influence the MLAs who are making these changes, but they are still impacted by the law in its current form.

The legislation will:

- ensure that same sex and gender diverse couples can marry and remain married, regardless of either party to the marriage changing their sex- a personal choice that will be undertaken with a person obtaining assistance and support from their respective health care professional and the changes to *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender identity and intersex Status) Act 2013 (Cth)*.
- promote individual choice, particularly the removal of the requirement for individuals to undertake sex reassignment surgery prior to having their birth certificate amended to reflect their gender/sex. This is important to ensure the safety for and protecting the dignity of those who transition, who may need to rely on their birth certificates as a form of identification with government departments and employers.
- enable children in conjunction with their guardians to amend their birth certificates to reflect their true gender or sex are important and noteworthy. We consider that the requirements for children aged 14 and over to provide their consent in addition with the requirement that they undertake appropriate clinical treatment are adequate safeguards to ensure that the best interests of children are promoted and protected.
- promote the consistency of language that is appropriate and inclusive for all Territorians. The amendment of the language used to delineate gender in a marriage (ex. husband and wife) has been removed and replaced with spouse.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely,

Rainbow Territory