



20 December, 2019

The Secretary
Legislation Scrutiny Committee
Via email to LSC@nt.gov.au

Dear Committee members,

Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Act 1983

Victims of Crime NT Inc. (VoCNT) is a community organisation that provides a range of emotional and practical support services for people impacted by crime, and actively represents their rights, needs and interests. The Board of our Association have given the above Bill their consideration and submit this letter in response.

VoCNT is pleased to support the proposed legislative amendments which will bring the Northern Territory in line with other jurisdictions. Allowing adult sexual assault survivors to tell their stories in the public arena, in a manner of their choosing, gives them the freedom to speak openly about their experiences. The opportunity to identify themselves via statement, publication or representation may assist in the recovery and closure process for survivors, and may also contribute to building greater community awareness of the issues faced by sexual assault survivors. We strongly support that consent in writing must be given, and that capacity to consent is clearly established.

We note that in other jurisdictions, young people are able to give consent to disclose their identity within age thresholds. Our view is that the complexity of sexual assault matters and the associated legal process make it difficult to determine distinct age thresholds. We therefore support retaining the option of applying to the court for authorisation to disclose identity, in particular for sexual assault survivors under the age of 18.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response. We are confident that these changes will better serve the needs of sexual assault survivors in the NT who choose to speak about their experiences following the completion of legal proceedings.

Yours sincerely,

Melinda Fleming
Chief Executive Officer
Victims of Crime NT