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# MEDIA RELEASE

## SOCIAL POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Wednesday 15 August 2018

### ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

Ms Ngaree Ah Kit MLA, Chair of the Social Policy Scrutiny Committee today tabled the Committee's Annual Report on its first year of operation.

"The Committee was established in August 2017 as part of the Assembly's initiative to Open Parliament to the People which has transformed the way laws are made in the Northern Territory by providing a more inclusive mechanism for Territorians to have their say on proposed laws." Ms Ah Kit said.

"The first year of the Committee has resulted in improvements to Bills before they became law by enabling stakeholders to suggest changes. Over two thirds of the Committee's recommendations that were created through the inquiry process have been accepted by the Government, and resulting amendments have been made to Bills."

During the reporting period the Assembly referred nine Bills to the Committee for inquiry and report. With the exception of the Domestic and Family Violence (Information Sharing) Bill, the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass all of the Bills referred to the Committee.

"That 69% of the Committee's proposed amendments and recommendations considered by the Government were accepted is a clear indication of the value of the Bill scrutiny process." Ms Ah Kit said. "Feedback from the various organisations and individuals who made submissions and appeared before the Committee has also been extremely positive, with a number of people commending the Government for providing members of the public the opportunity to participate in the legislative process."

While enabling opportunity for comment, the Committee has also sought to minimise the time taken to pass new laws. The Committee reported on 22% of Bills in the first sittings following their introduction into the Assembly so there was no unnecessary delay on those Bills which raised no public comment.

"It has been both a challenging and rewarding experience with the Committee considering a wide range of proposed legislation including the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Bill, Non-Consensual Sharing of Intimate Images, Adoption of Children Amendment Bill, and the Animal Protection Bill." Ms Ah Kit said.

"On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank all those who made submissions or appeared before the Committee. Their input has been invaluable." Ms Ah Kit said "I would also like to encourage other Territorians to participate in this important process and to make use of this opportunity to make their views known on legislation they have a particular interest in."

Information on how to get involved is on the Legislative Assembly's website at <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees>. People can also follow the Assembly on Twitter at: [@LegAssemblyNT](https://twitter.com/LegAssemblyNT) or Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/LegislativeassemblyNT/> and sign up for email alerts at: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/subscribe>.

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