

**LEGISLATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**RESPONSE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND**  
**JUSTICE**  
**TO A QUESTION ON NOTICE FROM THE COMMITTEE**  
**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DOMESTIC AND FAMILY**  
**VIOLENCE) BILL 2019**

**a. What consultation on the Bill occurred with services in Katherine and the Barkly Region?**

AGD Response:

The amendment to the exceptional circumstances provision of the *Sentencing Act 1995* was proposed by stakeholders as important for the implementation of the Specialist Approach to Domestic Violence being developed at the Alice Springs Local Court.

Correspondence in favour of the proposal was received from the NT Legal Aid Commission and the Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network (CAFVSAN) representing the family violence sector in Central Australia.

Detailed feedback was sought from members of the Project Reference Group of the Specialist Approach to Domestic Violence at the Alice Springs Local Court, which includes representatives from the following organisations:

- a. NT Community Corrections
- b. NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- c. Southern Region, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and Witness Assistance Service (WAS)
- d. Central Australian Women's Legal Service (CAWLS)
- e. Women's Safety Services of Central Australia (WOSSCA, formerly the Alice Springs Women's Shelter)
- f. Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit (CAAFLU)
- g. NT Legal Aid Commission
- h. North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)
- i. Tangentyere Council (providing the Men's Behaviour Change Program)
- j. Aboriginal Interpreter Service.

It is intended that rehabilitation programs will only be declared in Alice Springs in the first instance in line with the Specialist Approach to Domestic Violence at the Alice Springs Local Court. If the approach is beneficial in Alice Springs, consideration will be given to declaring programs in other locations in the Northern Territory. Consultation will then occur with local agencies in relation to suitable rehabilitation programs and sourcing the assessment services required.

Communication about the Bill also occurred with the following organisations and groups, although not all responded:

- Northern Territory Local Court (Darwin and Alice Springs)
- Legal services and organisations, including:
  - a. Law Society NT(NTLS)
  - b. NT Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC), including the Domestic Violence Legal Service (DVLS)
  - c. Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS)
  - d. Top End Women's Legal Services (TEWLS)
  - e. Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service (KWILS)
  - f. North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)
  - g. North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (NAAFLS)
  - h. Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit (CAAFLU)
  - i. Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)
- The Cross Agency Working Group on Domestic Family and Sexual Violence (CAWG DFSV) convened by Territory Families, with the following membership:
  - a. Territory Families (Convenor)
  - b. Department of the Chief Minister
  - c. Department of Health
  - d. Department of Education
  - e. NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services
  - f. Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
  - g. Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development
  - h. Tangentyere Council (Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network CAFVSAN)
  - i. Domestic Violence Legal Service (Darwin Domestic and Family Violence Network DFVN)
  - j. Tennant Creek Women's Refuge (Tennant Creek Local Reference Group)
  - k. Katherine Women's Crisis Centre (Katherine Local Reference Group)
  - l. Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT)