

NTCOSS

Northern Territory Council of Social Service



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Department of Territory Families
Domestic Violence Directorate
Via email: tf.domesticviolencedirectorate@nt.gov.au

16 August, 2019

To whom it may concern,

RE: development of the Sexual Violence Prevention Framework

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Territory Families – Office of Gender Equity and Diversity’s current consultation process regarding the development of the Sexual Violence Prevention Framework (the Framework) for the Northern Territory (NT).

NTCOSS is a peak body for the social and community service sector in the NT, and an advocate for social justice on behalf of the people and communities who may be affected by poverty and disadvantage. The community sector in the NT is made up of community managed, non-government, not for profit organisations that work in social and community service delivery, sector development and advocacy. The community sector plays a vital role in creating social wellbeing for all Territorians and in building safe and healthy communities by providing services that enable people to access and participate in health services, education, employment, economic development, and family and community life.

NTCOSS’ vision is for a ‘fair, inclusive and sustainable NT where all individuals and communities can participate in and benefit from all aspects of social, cultural and economic life’. NTCOSS’ mission is to ‘promote an awareness and understanding of social issues through the NT community and to strive towards the development of an equitable and just society’.

As a member based organisation, NTCOSS recognises the specific expertise of members that have a high level of contact with individuals and their families who have had direct experiences relating to sexual violence. NTCOSS acknowledges that a number of such organisations with specific expertise in this area have provided submissions relating to the consultation document and supports such submissions.

Of crucial importance to NTCOSS in the development of the SVPF is the need to ensure responses are informed by, and holistically respond to, the needs of survivors. Positioning survivors, their voices and experiences at the forefront of any legislative and program reform is crucial to ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable are met and respected.

NTCOSS is aware of the current #letherspeak campaign - focused on legislative reform in Tasmania and the NT to allow survivors of sexual violence to optionally disclose their identity to the media to assist in telling their stories. Adopting such legislative changes are an opportunity for the NTG to support survivor's control over their own narratives and healing process, as opposed to the current context where perpetrator behaviour is often diminished by the media and the community.

In conjunction with the above, we note that the Framework will be a 10 year plan, to be rolled out similarly to the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFS) Reduction Framework. As this time frame will encompass multiple election cycles and budgets, the Government must fully commit to adequately resourcing all actions within the Framework, and bipartisan support must be sought in its implementation.

In recent correspondence with NTCOSS relating to reform of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*, the Attorney-General also noted that with the range of reforms currently being undertaken relating to DFSV the Government is prioritising certain areas. NTCOSS urges the Government to adopt and appropriately fund service responses pertaining to all related frameworks, to ensure effective and sustainable service delivery to communities.

Kind regards,



Wendy Morton
Executive Director
NTCOSS