

Submission to the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015

The Brisbane Rape and Incest Survivors Support Centre (BRISSC) welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic Violence and Family Violence Prevention Committee (the Parliamentary Committee) in response to the draft *Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015*.

This written submission has been developed within significant time constraints so cannot attempt to address all provisions outlined in the Bill. Because of this, BRISSC wishes to endorse the submission from the Queensland Sexual Assault Network, of which we are a member.

We would like to draw attention to their recommendations:

- 1. A commitment from the Queensland Government to ensure similar protections are available to all victims of sexual violence who are giving evidence in criminal proceedings. This can be achieved by enacting additional provisions to those outlined in the *Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015* to amend the *Evidence Act 1977* to ensure the availability of protections for special witnesses apply to all victims of sexual violence who are to give evidence about the commission of a sexual offence committed by any person.**
- 2. Amendments to the *Evidence Act 1977* to ensure that special witness provisions are routinely offered to all victims of sexual violence, irrespective of their age, who are giving evidence in criminal proceedings to enable their participation, with respect to their informed choice.**
- 3. A commitment from the Queensland Government to fund appropriate upgrades to all regional Queensland Courts to ensure availability of the video technology required by special witnesses when giving evidence in Court. This technology should not be limited to special witnesses residing in the Brisbane metropolitan area.**
- 4. Development of appropriate and safe mechanisms to facilitate greater participation and inclusion of the victim in Court proceedings; with recognition for alternative options and choice to be made available to victims of sexual offences.**

For further detail, please see the submission from the Queensland Sexual Assault Network, or contact BRISSC.

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