



ABN 50621908411

Acting Research Officer
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street Brisbane QLD 4000

Via Email lacs@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on the ***Victims of crime Assistance and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016***. Unfortunately I have just returned to work and will not be able to make a full submission. However, I would like to make the following comments on behalf of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence.

Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence (GCCASV) was founded in 1990 as an intervention and prevention service working with female victims of sexual violence no matter when the abuse occurred. For the past 27 years, GCCASV has provided support through police and legal processes, preparation for and support at court for complainants.

- GCCASV supports the Bill in principle – counselling privilege has been a long time coming to fruition and GCCASV has lobbied for over 20 years in relation to this issue. Victims should be able to waive the privilege if they want to face the accused in court and that no inference about lack of trauma should be drawn from this action.
- Believe that extending absolute privilege to cover sentencing is also necessary, but also to ensure that victims are able to waive the privilege if they so wish.
- Support making Rape/Sexual Assault victims automatically special witnesses in the same way that DV victims are now considered.
- There are some concerns in relation to Domestic Violence Victims and I believe Women's Legal Service will address these fully in their submission.
- For consistency, it is important that Domestic and Family Violence be defined as in the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012*
- Increased funding to sexual assault and community legal services would be needed to cope with an anticipated increase in demand for victims seeking information about their rights in relation to this legislation.

I would be happy to discuss these comments should you seek further information.

Kind regards


Di Macleod
Director

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