

**Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals)
Amendment Bill 2023**

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Re: Inquiry into Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Bill. Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) is supportive of the proposal to extend the double jeopardy exception to other prescribed offences in addition to murder.

WLSQ is generally supportive of amendments designed to improve access to criminal justice outcomes for victim-survivors of sexual violence, particularly women and children.

We also welcome the use of gender-neutral language in the Bill.

Double jeopardy exception

WLSQ supports the broadening of offences to which the exception applies, specifically to sexual offences. WLSQ's experience across a number of decades in working with women who have experienced sexual violence echoes the finding of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce; that women who report sexual assault "find their experiences, from police to jury trial and verdict, traumatising, confusing, disempowering and slow".

This experience has been further degraded by recent systemic failures, including those relating to the testing of DNA samples in forensic laboratories.

In this context, it is essential to safeguard access to justice for victims (who have no standing) in the potentially flawed prosecutions which relate to harm done to them.

WLSQ wholly supports the proposed retrospective operation. All victims of the prescribed offences should enjoy the same opportunity to pursue a conviction regardless of when the offence occurred.

We look forward to participating further in the progress of this Bill.

Yours sincerely,



Nadia Bromley
CEO
Women's Legal Service Queensland