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To the Committee Secretary
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Mr Peter Russo MP, Chair, Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Regarding: Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

The Queensland Domestic Violence Service Network (QDVSN) is a network of 19 Queensland regional domestic and family violence services as well as the Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, the Immigrant Women's Support Service and DVConnect. As the network of specialist domestic and family violence services across the state, QDVSN works collaboratively and strategically to:

- Advance understanding of, and to eliminate gender, structural, political, economic, legal and cultural inequalities and inequities, which result in gender based violence in all its forms;
- Provide peer support, information sharing and debriefing within our membership;
- Be a change agent by providing education, a reference point and a collective voice to Government, non-government and member services on State and National issues relating to domestic and family violence.

QDVSN, alongside the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) believes that the opportunity has been missed to broadly assess the operation and practical application of current legislation that would improve the safety of women, encourage them to report to police and engage with the criminal justice system.

QSAN's submission which we wholeheartedly support and endorse can be found here -<http://qsan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/QSAN-Submission-Criminal-Code-Consent-and-Mistake-of-Fact-and-Other-Legislation-Amendment-Bill-2020.pdf?x82360>.

Furthermore, as outlined in QSAN's submission, the recommendations do not address the failings of legislation and the criminal justice system that were actively raised in submissions from women's services and in consultation with victim/survivors and advocates.

QDVSN aligns with the Queensland Sexual Assault Service (QSAN), Women's Health Services Alliance (WHSa), Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) and Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy's (RASARA) recommendations for amending the QLRC's draft Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) Amendment Bill 2020. These are outlined in the submission referred to.

The Bill, in its current form, makes no significant changes towards seeking justice for survivors of sexual violence, holding perpetrators accountable for their actions or increase safety for the Queensland community. Furthermore, the recommendations on which the Bill is based, do not reflect the views of survivors or survivor advocates. QDVSN calls for a broad-based review of the experience of survivors following sexual assault. This review should examine the barriers to reporting, the process of reporting to police, attrition through the criminal justice system through to trial and the court outcomes. This review should prioritise and highlight the views and voices of survivors and survivor advocates. QDVSN requests that the Bill, in its current form, to be repealed and rewritten utilising the outcomes of a broad-based review.

Regards, On behalf of the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network (QDVSN)

Co-Secretariats
Stacey Ross & Sophie McCashin

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