



WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES ALLIANCE QUEENSLAND

C/o WHSA Secretariat, PO Box 1855 Thuringowa BC QLD 4817

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30 September 2020

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

We are writing as members of the Women's Health Services Alliance (WHSA), a group of statewide and regional organisations funded to provide women's health and well-being services in Queensland.

These primary health services provide counselling, community support, health promotion, early intervention and prevention. They are utilised by marginalised communities, and target vulnerable women and children who may not access other services, including those affected by men's violence.

Alliance members are committed to working proactively with governments and other health and community organisations to enhance women's well-being and safety.

Our main objectives include but are not limited to:

1. Advocate as an expert body for Queensland women's health and well-being matters and be a voice to and for government on women's health and well-being best practice service delivery, strategy and policy.
2. Maintain a proactive role in the continuous development of the WHSA community-based service models through information sharing and collaborative projects, reinforcing the important role women's health services play within our communities.
3. Collaborate, network and provide peer support for all WHSA members to enhance the holistic services we provide.

The WHSA, alongside the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) believe 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 accessed 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.

The WHSA aligns with the Queensland Sexual Assault Service (QSAN), the Queensland Domestic Violence Support Network (QDVSN), Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) and Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy's

Members

NORTH QUEENSLAND
 COMBINED WOMEN'S
 SERVICES

MACKAY
 WOMEN'S CENTRE

GLADSTONE WOMEN'S
 HEALTH CENTRE

GYMPIE & DISTRICT
 WOMEN'S HEALTH
 CENTRE

WOMEN'S
 HEALTH CENTRE
 ROCKHAMPTON

WIDE BAY WOMEN'S
 HEALTH CENTRE

CENTRE FOR WOMEN
 & CO

CENTRE AGAINST
 DOMESTIC ABUSE

LAUREL PLACE
 (SUNSHINE COAST /
 NOOSA)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 ACTION CENTRE
 (IPSWICH)

MERCY COMMUNITY
 SERVICES
 (TOOWOOMBA)

LIFELINE
 (DARLING DOWNS &
 SOUTH WEST QLD)

EDON PLACE
 (BUNDBERG)

CHILDREN BY CHOICE

WOMEN'S HEALTH
 QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND
 WOMEN'S HEALTH
 NETWORK INC
 (Secretariat Organisation)

(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 above.

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 increasing safety for the Queensland community. Furthermore, the recommendations on which the Bill is based do not reflect the views of survivors or survivor advocates.

WHSa 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. WHSA requests that the Bill, in its current form, be repealed and rewritten utilising the outcomes of a broad-based review.

Regards



Maree Hawken
Secretariat

On behalf of the Women's Health Service Alliance