

**From:** counsellor1@waggawomen.org.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 21 September 2017 2:59 PM  
**To:** Policy MailIn  
**Cc:** Gail Meyer  
**Subject:** feedback on Strengthening Child Sexual Abuse Laws

I am writing in response to the Strengthening Child Abuse Laws discussion paper.

Having worked with many survivors of child sexual assault the continual feedback given is the difficulty in understanding the legislation, the length of time that is taken to have a matter mentioned and the lack of support around understanding the impacts of the traumatic events that have occurred. In addition the difference in the legislation between the different states and territories cause confusion and often assist the alleged abuser to be able to escape through the gaps. I believe these are the points that need to be considered when looking at reform.

Upon reading the discussion paper there seemed to be much deliberation around what the right path for reform should be and how to best navigate this change. Having the same legal requirements and laws across the country would be of great benefit to all, so that a provision of consistency and transparency could be achieved. I believe that clarification should be sought for each legal definition to provide a clear understanding of what the laws are. Seeing the legal sections in terminology that is understood by everyday people would assist in the following:

- the right charges being put forward for the right crimes,
- more available communication between the legal system and victims,
- being able to provide accurate preparation for court and the journey that may lay ahead.

It is understood that reform takes much deliberation and consultation. Leading this reform from a place that listens to the experience of those who have accessed the legal system and consolidating the approach to be consistent across the nation would be of great benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to feed into the discussion paper.

With regards,

Leah Andersom

**Wagga Women's Health Centre**



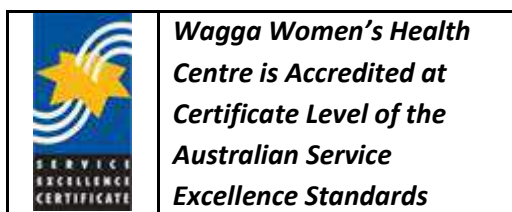
22 Peter Street, (PO Box 351)

Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Ph: 02 6921 3333



**Vision: A region where gender equality is normal**





The Wagga Women's Health Centre acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Wiradjuri People whose culture and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all Aboriginal people.

