

**07 May 2025**

**National Family Violence Remembrance Day 2025: NTCOSS DFSV Network Responds to Scrutiny Committee Inquiry Outcome – Calls on Government to “Work with Us” to Prioritize Prevention Over Punishment**

On National Family Violence Remembrance Day 2025, the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Group – representing 33 specialist DFSV services across the NT – responds to the NT Legislative Scrutiny Committee’s report on the *Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*.

The Committee received 21 submissions—many from specialist DFSV services. The final report states that “All 21 submissions received outlined their opposition to the introduction of mandatory sentencing for contraventions of a Domestic Violence Order (DVO), with 16 submissions raising this issue as their only objection to the Bill”. However, the committee recommended the Bill be passed with only minor technical changes.

The submissions raised serious concerns about mandatory sentencing provisions and provided many examples of unintended and potentially dangerous consequences. The overwhelming view from the DFSV sector is that mandatory sentencing for DVO breaches will not lead to women and children being safer.

The specialist DFSV and community sector stands ready to work with the NT Government to implement actions that reduce reoffending, improve community safety, and prevent further victimisation. Across the Territory, there is a wealth of experience and knowledge on what works to prevent violence before it starts, intervene early, and respond effectively – particularly within remote and Aboriginal-led service contexts.

The NTCOSS DFSV Group represents the diverse and experienced voices of the social and community sector who work every day on the frontlines with victim-survivors, children, and users of violence alike. The group is calling on the government to heed submissions to the Scrutiny Committee and refrain from legislating the proposed mandatory sentencing provisions.

Justice responses alone are unable to keep women and children safe from domestic, family and sexual violence. As a Territory, we must invest in community led solutions that tackle the drivers of violence, rather than responding once women and children have already been harmed.

NTCOSS DFSV Group calls on the NT government to collaborate with the sector to ensure any changes to legislation include corresponding commitments to prevention, early intervention, and recovery and healing - and to ensure all people incarcerated for DFSV offences can access and complete high-quality, culturally safe behaviour change and accountability programs.

The sector welcomes the recent commitment by the NT government to provide additional funding for DFSV Corrections programs and stand ready to collaborate with the government and Corrections to ensure their success.

**Quotes Next Page**

**Quotes:**

“Mandatory sentencing without meaningful rehabilitation is not a solution. It’s a missed opportunity for prevention. If the government is serious about preventing harm and protecting victims, it must invest in what works—not just punish what’s already occurred.

The best outcomes for the community—the outcomes Territorians need and deserve—will come from a collaborative approach. The specialist DFSV and broader community services sector are ready and willing to work with government to ensure victims & offenders have access to quality programs that prevent violence and improve community safety.”

**- Sally Sievers, CEO Northern Territory Council of Social Service**