

23 March 2021

Dear Premier Palaszczuk and Minister Fentiman

We, the undersigned, provide services and support to victims and survivors of sexual violence.

In the past weeks we have seen you and other prominent women in Queensland act with courage, detailing your own experiences of violence and discrimination and join in the #March4Justice demonstrations last Monday 15 March 2021.

We implore you to channel your courage and energy to ensure that women in Queensland who have experienced sexual violence have the same protections as women in Tasmania and Victoria.

We are asking you to ensure that our rape laws require people to enthusiastically consent to sex and include that 'reasonable steps' are taken by parties to ensure consent.

In law, this is described as an affirmative consent model with a 'reasonable steps' aspect.

In practice, this means people demonstrate they want to have sex before it happens and ensure they take steps to ensure agreement.

The *Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020*, expected to pass this week, is not fit for purpose and will do little to improve the safety and wellbeing of women. Affirmative consent laws along with 'reasonable steps' will deliver a better experience of justice for women. They will be more likely to be believed and more likely to have their charges brought to trial and successfully prosecuted.

The affirmative model of consent and reasonable steps exists in other parts of Australia, you can change things for women in Queensland now. There is no need to refer an affirmative consent model to a taskforce or another inquiry and be forced to wait for an undefined time for them to report back.

We must honour the courage of women who have publicly shared stories of rape and sexual violence by working together to overturn systemic barriers that entrench gender inequality. Introducing an affirmative consent model relating to sexual assault and rape crimes (along with reasonable steps) is integral to this.

The moment calls for decisive and meaningful action. Please take this opportunity to continue your strong leadership in this space.

Respectfully,



Women's Legal Service Queensland



Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS)



Queensland Sexual Assault Network



**Aboriginal Family
Legal Service**

SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Aboriginal Family Legal Service Southern Qld

**CHILDREN
BY CHOICE**
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Children by Choice

WHQ
**Women's
Health**
QUEENSLAND

Women's Health Queensland



Ending Violence Against Women Queensland



Queensland Alliance for Mental Health



Respect Inc



Queensland Youth Housing Coalition

Gold Coast Domestic Violence Prevention Centre

Basic Rights Queensland

Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy (RASARA)

Edon Place Domestic & Family Violence Centre