



Review of laws to protect vulnerable Canberrans

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

In April 2021, the ACT Government introduced three new offences against vulnerable people to the *Crimes Act 1900* in the Crimes (Offences Against Vulnerable People) Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. The new offences aim to provide additional protections for vulnerable adults with a disability and older Canberrans.

The ACT Attorney-General is required by law to review the operation and effectiveness of the offences against vulnerable people, and to table a report of the review in the Legislative Assembly.

The statutory review of the offences focussed on three questions:

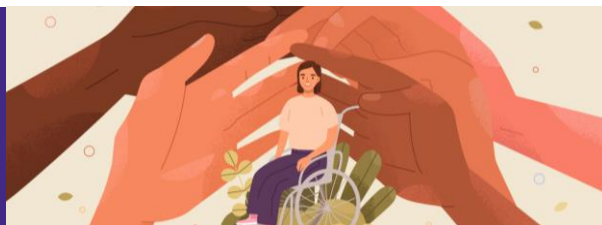
1. How has the definition of ‘vulnerable person’ supported or limited the effectiveness of the three new offences?
2. How have the types of caring relationships captured in the offences, including the definition of ‘responsible for providing care’, supported or limited the effectiveness of the offences?
3. If the offences applied to children with disability, would they offer more protection compared to existing protections for children? Why or why not?

The ACT Government consulted with the Canberra community and key stakeholders on the three offences against vulnerable people. The feedback collected during the consultation will be considered during the evaluation of the offences and will directly inform any recommendations that emerge from the review.

Feedback received so far has indicated broad recognition of the needs of vulnerable people, and a range of views about the nature of that vulnerability across different groups and how this could be better protected by legislation. This included applying the legislation to children with disability and people under 60 years old.

THE CONVERSATION

We conducted consultation via the ACT Government’s YourSay Conversations site including a short online survey from 12 April 2023 to 24 May 2023. The public was invited to provide feedback through written submissions, oral submissions on voicemail, or through the completion of an online survey.



WHO WE ENGAGED

We engaged the Canberra community as well as key stakeholders including the Director of Public Prosecutions, ACT Police, the ACT Human Rights Commission, ACT Legal Aid (Older Persons ACT Legal Service), and Care.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The ACT Government is evaluating the three new offences. The evaluation is being informed by the feedback received during the statutory review, including the feedback provided through the YourSay consultation.

The Attorney-General is due to table a report on the statutory review in the ACT Legislative Assembly in late 2023.

Key Timings

April 2021 - New laws to better protect vulnerable people commence in the ACT

April 2023 - Consultation on a statutory review of laws to better protect vulnerable people commences

May 2023 - Consultation on a review of laws to better protect vulnerable people closes

We are here - ACT Government examines the feedback collected during the consultation period

Late 2023 - A report on the statutory review of laws to better protect vulnerable people tabled in ACT Legislative Assembly by the Attorney-General

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

9

We sent emails to over
organisations and interested
individuals

5

The number of people who
completed an online survey

3

The number of submissions
received through YourSay

>230

people visited the YourSay
site during the consultation