

The Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP
Attorney-General

7 December 2022

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Women

Letter- National Round Table for Sexual Violence Judicial Reform

Dear Attorney-General and Minister,

We are writing to support the calls for a National Roundtable to consider options and reforms to how Australia can provide a world first trauma informed judicial process for victim/survivors of sexual violence and the consideration of other credible options (as an alternative to criminal justice) and new ideas that will enhance accountability and help provide fairer and safer outcomes for victim-survivors and broader community. As one of the six National Women's Alliances, the NWSA brings together 290 individual and organisational members, including those who provide services; legal, housing and social as well as the voices of lived experience.

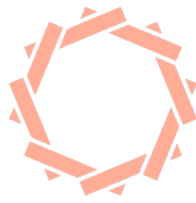
We welcome the Albanese Government's exceptional work to develop and finalise the National Plan to end Violence Against Women and Children in One Generation.

It is a bold and visionary plan to make Australia a safer and better place for everyone and we applaud the Government on its commitment to preventing and addressing Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence and other forms of discrimination.

We are however, deeply concerned, at the ability of sexual violence victim survivors to achieve justice through our current criminal law processes.

As you are aware, the statistics on sexual violence in Australia are very concerning-:

- research confirms only 13% of sexual violence victims report to police, and only approximately 2-6% of those complaints result in a conviction.
- According to findings by the Aged Care Royal Commission an estimated 50 sexual assaults per week in residential aged care in Australia.
- In the ANROWS longitudinal study on women's health showed that 51% of women in their twenties have experienced sexual violence and it was a common occurrence across a woman's lifetime, causing long and short-term impacts within a victim/survivor's life.



National Women's Safety Alliance

- The data supports that there is an increase in prevalence rates which is acknowledged in the National Plan. Sexual violence prevention services are reporting an increase for demand for their service with victim/survivors presenting at a younger age; with the offences becoming more violent

We are also aware of the important work by the Attorney General through the Meetings of Attorney General's and their work plan to strengthen criminal justice responses to sexual assault (2022 – 2027) but believe these reforms have become more urgent.

Once again, we reiterate our position that there is significant value in establishing a national roundtable to discuss ways in which we are better able to support safe and just outcomes for sexual violence victims in Australia.

Yours Faithfully,

Katherine Berney
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