

**Aboriginal Peak Organisations
Northern Territory (APO NT)**

MEDIA RELEASE

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APO NT welcomes ‘Smarter Justice for a Safer Territory’

Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT) recognises the significance of the justice amendments being introduced into NT Parliament today, and congratulates the work of the Attorney General, the Honourable Chansey Paech, and his team in prioritising these reforms.

“We at APO NT recognise that the Northern Territory needs a new way of working in matters of law and justice, for the benefit of all Territorians”, said Priscilla Atkins, CEO, North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency.

“We welcome the announcement to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years of age”, said Dr John Paterson, CEO of AMSANT. “APO NT commits to working with the government on better, therapeutic options for young offenders, to support our youth, and see the age of criminal responsibility ultimately raised to 14 years of age,” said Dr John Paterson.

APO NT also welcomes amendments to improve sentencing options for offenders so the focus can be on changing behaviours.

“The revolving door of repeated incarceration is not working and does not improve community safety. We want to see responsive action, centred on addressing the risk factors for crime, because this leads to better outcomes for everyone”, said Ms Atkins.

“Let’s have a mature conversation, and matched investment, into addressing these justice matters properly”, said Dr Paterson.

APO NT also welcomes strengthening of the Anti-Discrimination Act, in due recognition of the harm discrimination causes to so many Territorians.

“We want the NT to set the national standard for how we work to combat racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination,” said Ms Atkins. “These amendments are long overdue but the benefits to all are far reaching”.

For Media enquiries please contact:

Seranie Gamble
APO NT Manager
9 Rowling St Casuarina
Ph: 0473 423 806
(08) 7943 2736
Email: manager@apont.org.au