

As there are adequate provisions in the NTCAT Act for the following to occur, these sections will also be repealed:

- that require the referral of a question of law to the president—section 28 of the NTCAT Act
- with powers to summon a person or evidence before itself—section 89 of the NTCAT Act
- to appoint persons to assist it to inform the tribunal on any matter—sections 73 and 74 of the NTCAT Act.

A functional mental health service system depends on an effective legislative and judicial framework to ensure society can fulfil its obligation to care for individuals affected by mental illness and, where necessary, to protect others from the effects of adverse behaviours attributable to mental illness in a reasonable and compassionate manner.

This bill aims to further enhance our mental health service system for the benefit of all Territorians.

I again thank all of the past members of the MHRT for their service on this important tribunal. I also thank Judge Bruxner and his staff who have provided invaluable commentary and assistance to the department during the drafting of this bill to ensure that it will be fit for purpose.

I am pleased to commend this bill to honourable members.

Motion agreed to; bill read a first time.

Mr McCARTHY (on behalf of Health): I move that the bill be referred to the Social Policy Scrutiny Committee for report by 26 November 2019.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (Serial 107)

Mr McCARTHY (Local Government, Housing and Community Development): Madam Speaker, I present a bill titled the Local Government Bill 2019 and table a copy of the explanatory statement and statement of compatibility with human rights, as defined in section 3 of the Commonwealth *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

I move that the bill be now read a first time.

The *Local Government Act 2008* was enacted as part of major local government reforms resulting in the current system of local government in the Northern Territory, in which there are municipal, regional and shire councils. As this has been a new and evolving system of local government for the Northern Territory, a review of the act has been conducted to ensure that the legislation is effective and contemporary.

This bill supports democracy, transparency and financial accountability within the local government sector. It also provides measures to strengthen local decision-making by improving working relationships amongst councils, local authorities and their communities.

This bill has been developed over a number of years with an extensive three-phase consultation process. In late 2014, a full review of the act was announced. For phase one of the consultation, submissions on how the act could be improved were sought by April 2015 from all stakeholders, including the general public. Submissions were received from most local government councils, the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory and members of the public.

The local government working party was formed to consider topics identified through the submissions and to make recommendations regarding the contents of a new act. The working party had representation from the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, regional and municipal councils and Northern Territory Government staff with responsibilities for local government.

The working party developed a series of recommendations for a new act. For phase two of the consultation, the working party's recommendations formed the bulk of the intended changes set out in a consultation paper that was publicly released in 2016.