



VICTIMS OF CRIME COORDINATOR VICTIM SUPPORT ACT
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Friday 3 April 2009

Ms Vicki Dunne, MLA
Chair, Standing Committee
On Justice and Community Safety
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA CITY
ACT 2601

Dear Ms Dunne,

Inquiry into Crimes (Murder) Amendment Bill 2008

I refer to your recent correspondence dated 23 February 2009, regarding the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, Inquiry into the Crimes (Murder) Amendment Bill 2008. Thank you for the invitation to make a submission.

I welcome and support the proposal to add s12(1) – '(c) intending to cause serious harm to any person', in the Murder Amendment Bill 2008.

I am aware that public and media discussion on the proposed amendment has focussed on the conviction rate for murder in the ACT and claims that it is unusually low. Reports comment that the absence of a provision such as that proposed and available in other jurisdictions generates the proportionately higher rate of convictions for the lesser offence of manslaughter in the ACT.

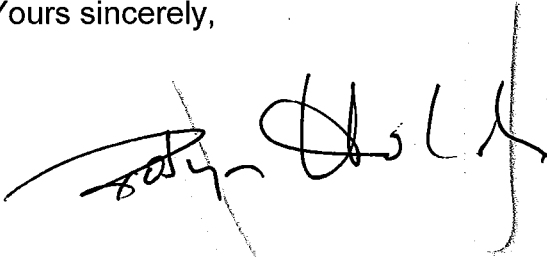
As the statutory advocate for victims of crime in the ACT under the *Victims of Crime Act 1994* I am primarily concerned with the rights and interests of victims as opposed to conviction rates. Family, significant others and friends of persons unlawfully killed in the ACT have expressed great distress that, on the surface of it, the law in the ACT does not adequately recognise the circumstances that gave rise to the death of their loved one. I support the proposed provision on that basis – that it allows for greater recognition of the range of circumstances that may give rise to homicide.

Where the law fails to label 'murder' within all situations in which an offender, through his or her actions, expresses contempt for the value of human life, it has denied the victim, their families and the community a fair and just criminal justice process.

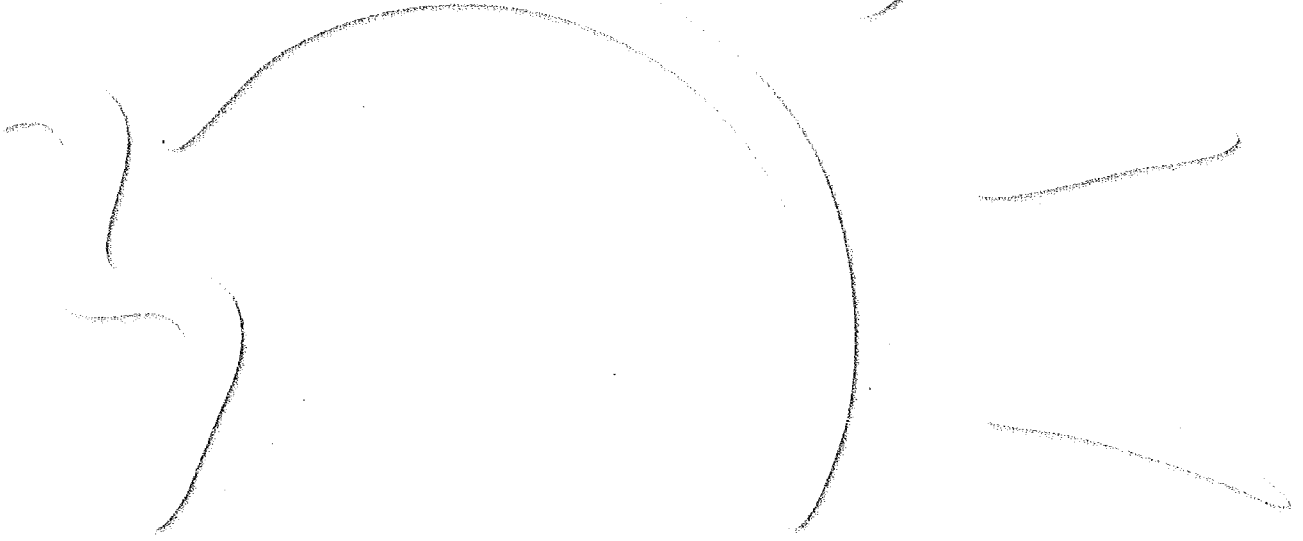
The inclusion of the amendment creates a viable option for the ACT to come into line with other Australian jurisdictions, and to signify the depth at which our community values human life.

I look forward to the findings of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Holder', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Robyn Holder
VICTIMS OF CRIME COORDINATOR

A large, sweeping handwritten flourish or signature in black ink, consisting of a large, open loop with several smaller strokes extending from it, possibly representing a stylized 'H' or a decorative flourish.