



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

26 March 2026

Hate Crimes and Vilification Review Team

jacslppcriminal@act.gov.au

Dear Hate Crimes and Vilification Review Team

This letter has been prepared by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) in response to the invitation from Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS). This response reflects both written and verbal feedback from consumers in relation to the Hate Crime and Vilification Review: Discussion Paper (the Discussion Paper). Consumers raised significant concerns regarding the accessibility, clarity, and inclusiveness of the Discussion Paper and the consultation process, which limited their ability to engage meaningfully.

Consumers reported that the Discussion Paper is difficult to read and understand. The complexity of the language and structure creates barriers to participation, particularly for individuals who require clear and accessible information. In addition, the consultation questions were described as broad and general, making them difficult to respond to in a practical and informed way. This places a burden on participants to interpret the intent of the questions and develop detailed responses, which may discourage engagement. Consumers noted that this is particularly concerning given that people with lived experience of mental health conditions are directly affected by issues relating to hate crime and vilification.

Consumers also identified a lack of clear definitions and examples for key terms, including unlawful vilification, serious vilification, hate crime, etc. Without clear explanations, participants may struggle to fully understand the issues and provide informed responses. Consumers emphasised that members of the general public,

particularly those without legal or policy backgrounds, require accessible explanations and examples to support meaningful participation.

Consumers expressed concern that the consultation process, as currently presented, does not adequately support meaningful engagement. A single round of consultation with broad questions was considered insufficient for addressing complex and sensitive issues. Consumers suggested that additional stages of consultation, including follow up engagement with more targeted and action-oriented questions, would improve the quality and depth of feedback. Ongoing opportunities for clarification, education, and interpretation were also seen as important to supporting meaningful participation.

Concerns were also raised regarding the inclusiveness of the Discussion Paper. Although the consultation is directed at the general public, the way the information is presented may not adequately support participation from diverse communities. This is particularly significant given that hate crime and vilification disproportionately affect marginalised groups, including people with lived experience of mental health conditions. Consumers noted that the lack of clear definitions, limited explanatory information, and absence of supporting materials make it difficult for some individuals to fully understand the issues and engage with the consultation. Without these supports, people from marginalised backgrounds may be less able to participate in an evidence-based way, which may result in their perspectives being underrepresented.

Finally, consumers emphasised that the consultation process should not be rushed without ensuring that the community is adequately informed and supported to participate. Meaningful engagement requires that people have the opportunity to understand the issues, reflect on their implications, and contribute in a considered way.

The Network appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. However, due to the accessibility and clarity issues outlined above, consumers found it difficult to respond directly to the consultation questions. The feedback provided in this submission therefore reflects broader concerns and priorities identified by consumers. The Network looks forward to participating in a more meaningful and accessible consultation process in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 6230 5796 or executive@actmhc.org.au.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Procedure. We look forward to receiving further consultation requests in future.

Yours sincerely



Dalane Drexler
Chief Executive Officer