

**FOR RELEASE**

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## **NT ORGANISATIONS STAND TOGETHER AGAINST FEDERAL RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL**

**Major health, social, legal organisations and unions from across the NT call for the Federal Religious Discrimination Bill to be abandoned.**

Signatories to the statement include: Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), Childbirth Education Association, Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory (CLANT), Dameyon Bonson, Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS), Darwin Indigenous Men's Service Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (DIMS), Dawn House, Family Planning Welfare Association of the NT Inc., Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (NAAFLS), Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC), Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), NT Working Women's Centre, Sex Worker Outreach Program Northern Territory (SWOP), United Workers Union. Rainbow Territory has also signed this statement.

Rainbow Territory spokesperson Syahir Soffi says, "We are concerned about the impacts on Territorians health if this Bill was to become law."

"In the last 5 years there have been great advances in HIV treatment and prevention medication and we are concerned that a person could be refused this medication based on the religious belief of the health workers" says Rainbow Territory member Syahir Soffi.

Rainbow Territory spokesperson Syahir Soffi says "We think that whoever wrote this Bill didn't think about the NT and the already limited choices in health providers up here."

"Today a pharmacist would have to dispense a prescription for the contraceptive pill to a woman if she asked for it, tomorrow, under this Bill, they could refuse to give her the pill because of their religious beliefs" says Rainbow Territory member Syahir Soffi.

- ENDS -

Formed in September 2014, Rainbow Territory is an unfunded Northern Territory community group that advocates for the human rights of Northern Territorians who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer ('LGBTIQ'). Rainbow Territory aims to develop a safer, fairer and a more inclusive Northern Territory.

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