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**Number:** 2019/05

**Date:** 6 September 2019

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**Relevant:** Jervis Bay Territory residents

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**Topic:** New ACT laws to improve reporting of child abuse

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As part of the ACT Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse, legislation was recently passed to make changes to reporting laws.

The new laws came into effect on 1 September 2019 and apply in the Jervis Bay Territory (JBT).

In summary, the changes to reporting laws are:

- Any adult (anyone 18 years old or over) who reasonably believes that a sexual offence has been committed against a child, must make a report to police – in the case of the JBT, the Australian Federal Police. Failure to make a report is an offence.
- Ministers of religion, religious leaders and members of the clergy of a church or religious denomination will be Mandated Reporters.

Currently, under Section 356 of the *ACT Children and Young People Act 2008*, each of the following people is a Mandated Reporter: a doctor; a dentist; an enrolled nurse; a midwife; a psychologist; a teacher at a school; a person authorised to inspect education programs, materials or other records used for home education of a child or young person under the *ACT Education Act 2004*; a police officer; a person employed to counsel children of young people at a school; a person caring for a child at a childcare centre; a person coordinating or monitoring home-based care for a family day care scheme proprietor; a public servant who, in the course of employment as a public servant works with, or provides services personally to, children and young people or families; the public advocate; an official visitor; and, a person who, in the course of the person's employment has contact with or provides services to children, young people and their families and is prescribed by regulation.

- Certain information disclosed in religious confession must be reported by religious bodies to the ACT Ombudsman under the Reportable conduct Scheme.

More information on the changes can be found at this link:

<https://www.act.gov.au/childabuseroyalcommission/formalresponse/new-laws-to-improve-reporting-of-child-abuse>

ACT Government factsheets are attached for your reference.



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