The Law Reform (Gender, Sexuality and De Facto Relationships) Bill was last night passed in Parliament with support from the CLP.

Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne welcomed Opposition support, in particular the contribution from CLP Shadow Attorney-General Jodeen Carney.

Ms Carney said the legislation ensured the extension of human rights so that people over the age of 16 will be treated equally before the law.

The Bill contains some of the toughest penalties for child sex offences in the country, and new offences to protect 16 and 17 year olds from predatory sexual offenders.

It also gives equal rights to gay Territorians.

Dr Toyne said the passage of the legislation meant:

- new protection for young people from sexual predators,
- the age of consent will now be the same for all Territorians, and
- gay Territorians will now be treated equally under the law

"These reforms are sensible and ensure stronger protection for our children as well as give a fair go to all members of a community," Dr Toyne said.

"This is a balanced package of laws, and not about homosexuality which was legalised almost two decades ago, but about equality for gay and lesbian Territorians, and protection for all children.

CLP Member for Port Darwin, Sue Carter’s amendment, to include an employer in the offence of sexual intercourse or gross indecency with a person aged 16 or 17 year old and under a special relationship, as well as a carer, such as a teacher, coach, priest/minister or guardian, was supported by Government.

The Bill was passed 15 to 9 with Member for Araluen, Jodeen Carney and Member for Port Darwin, Sue Carter crossing the floor to vote with the Government.