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Lawyers, LNP call for Qld rape law reform

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One of Australia's most senior criminal defence lawyers and Queensland's opposition leader have backed calls for a review of the way the state's sexual assault laws characterise consent.

Queensland criminal lawyer Bill Potts says regular law reform is necessary to reflect changes in society and has welcomed a push from the Women's Legal Service for a clearer definition of consent.

"If there is a better way of expressing a law - then let's have that debate," said Mr Potts, the former president of the Queensland Law Society said.

His comments come as the state's Women's Legal Service repeats its concerns that most assaults are going unreported because current laws are outdated.

Solicitor Julie Sarkozi says it is easier to defend the offence of rape in Queensland than other states because defendants can still argue they mistakenly believed they had consent.

The service wants the state Labor government to follow the lead of NSW, where consent laws have been referred to the Law Reform Commission.

Opposition Leader Deb Frecklington has urged the Queensland government to take similar action, but Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath has said it will await the NSW findings before considering any action.

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Ms D'Ath will ask the Women's Legal Service to provide specific examples of their concerns.

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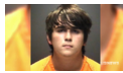
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