



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders has today tabled its report of a one year inquiry into the sentencing regime applying to child sexual assault offenders in NSW.

The Joint Select Committee was appointed in August last year to investigate and report on whether current sentencing options were appropriate and effective. In addition, the Committee was asked to examine whether public confidence in the judicial system for these offences could be improved through a more consistent approach to sentencing and the use of alternative sentencing options.

The Chair of the Committee, Troy Grant, The Nationals Member for Dubbo, said the report marks the culmination of a detailed investigation into the complex and controversial area of the management and treatment of child sexual assault offenders in the State's criminal justice system.

"This report demonstrates the commitment of the NSW Parliament to address issues related to the way the judicial system handles these offences, which affect the most vulnerable group in our community, namely young children," Mr Grant said.

As part of its review, the Committee consulted extensively with legal and medical experts and practitioners and organisations advocating on behalf of child sexual assault victims and families. The Committee also spoke directly and took evidence from victims of sexual assault, as well as receiving confidential evidence from perpetrators of such offences.

"A central issue determining public confidence in the judicial system is whether the length and nature of sentences handed down meets community expectations, based on the seriousness of the offence.

"The report makes a series of recommendations to simplify and streamline sentencing legislation, to improve treatment options and to establish a specialist court to safeguard the interests of children caught up in the court process. I am conscious of the personal and tragic nature of the matters being dealt with and its impacts and I am confident the report contains recommendations which will produce better outcomes for victims, offenders and the whole community.

"As a society we must act today and take greater responsibility for the protection of our children and break the cycle of abuse for future generations."

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