



Media Release (28/11/2019)

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

SASS notes that the Justice Legislation (Mandatory Sentencing) Bill 2019 has recently passed the lower house.

We appreciate that this legislation has prompted much debate. SASS initially supported the Bill when it was first brought to Parliament in 2017. We did so because we believed, and continue to believe, that sentences are not appropriately reflecting the significant impacts children experience as a result of sexual assault.

When the issue was again raised in 2018, recognising that the political will for mandatory minimum sentencing was not present, we engaged with both parties to suggest alternative options that could be implemented to deliver more effective justice for victims of child sexual abuse.

Over two years after the issue was first raised in Government, we still do not have reform in this area. We know from our own experience with child victims that a significant part of the recovery process for a child is feeling that the trauma they have experienced, and the wrong that has been done to them, is recognised and appropriately punished. As stated by SASS CEO Jill Maxwell,

As a victim-centred service we are fully supportive of any legal reform that will better deliver justice to sexual assault victims. We want real solutions that can be implemented now, and for this to happen requires political will. It was clear that this wasn't the case last year with mandatory minimum sentencing, and so given this, we suggested to both parties alternate solutions that could be implemented to deliver more effective justice for victims of child sexual abuse. Given that effective justice is and has always been our focus, we are supportive of the issue of more appropriate penalties for child sex offenders being back on the table.

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