



Gabrielle Upton

Attorney General

Pru Goward

Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research,
Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women,
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

MEDIA RELEASE

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REVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SENTENCING

The NSW Sentencing Council will be undertaking a comprehensive review of the sentencing of domestic violence offenders in NSW, Attorney General Gabrielle Upton and Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Pru Goward today announced.

Ms Upton said the NSW Sentencing Council's analysis would give the NSW Government a strong evidentiary base to better understand how the justice system treats domestic violence offences.

"This is about getting the answers to some key questions on domestic violence. We want and need to know more about the sentences imposed on domestic violence offenders in NSW, and how this compares to other jurisdictions. It is an important first step towards considering whether any changes to the justice system are required," Ms Upton said.

The NSW Sentencing Council will undertake an analysis of sentencing in domestic violence offences to:

1. Consider the principles the Courts apply when sentencing domestic violence offences (as defined by the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 - "Domestic Violence Offences") and advise on how those principles are applied by the Courts
2. Compare sentences imposed and sentences actually served for Domestic Violence Offences with those imposed for the same personal violence offences (not classified as Domestic Violence Offences) for key offence types where the Council considers undertaking a comparison may demonstrate sentencing patterns between the two categories of offences
3. Compare the available sentences, sentencing outcomes and sentences served for the NSW offence of contravening an ADVO (s14 Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007) with the comparable offences in other Australian jurisdictions and
4. Compare the reoffending rates for people convicted of Domestic Violence Offences with the reoffending rates for the same personal violence offences (not classified as Domestic Violence Offences) for key offence types where a comparison is possible and the Council considers comparison may demonstrate differences between the two categories of offences.

The NSW Sentencing Council advises the Attorney General on sentencing, prepares research paper and reports on particular issues, and educates the community on sentencing matters. Chaired by the Hon James Wood QC AO, the NSW Sentencing Council is comprised of members with a range of skills and backgrounds.

Ms Goward said domestic violence is a hideous crime and this is a positive step forward.

"This analysis will help identify any gaps in the criminal justice system to ensure perpetrators are held to account and better support victims and public expectations," Ms Goward said.

The NSW Sentencing Council will report to the NSW Government by the end of the year.