NSW STRENGTHENING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE LAWS

Attorney General Mark Speakman today encouraged the community to have its say on a discussion paper aimed at strengthening NSW laws targeting child sex offenders.

The discussion paper reviews legislative recommendations from the final Criminal Justice Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released last month.

“The feedback of survivors, victims’ groups, legal stakeholders and the broader community will help shape how NSW delivers justice for victims by holding child sex predators to account,” Mr Speakman said.

The discussion paper considers the Royal Commission’s recommendations, including:
- strengthening grooming offences;
- removing remaining limitation periods on some historic child sex offences; and
- developing a targeted failure to report offence.

In response to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders, the discussion paper also examines whether there needs to be new child sexual abuse offences to fill gaps in the law, and whether existing legislation could be more user-friendly for victims and the legal community.

NSW has already introduced the pre-recording of evidence and a program trialling intermediary support for child sexual assault victims – recommendations of both the Royal Commission and the Committee. NSW has also appointed two specialist District Court judges to hear child sexual assault cases.

“A range of other issues are examined in the discussion paper, including the challenges of prosecuting persistent child sexual abuse and measures to encourage reporting of sexual crimes against children ,” Mr Speakman said.

To make submissions on the discussion paper, visit the NSW Government’s ‘Have Your Say’ website: www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/have-your-say by 6 October 2017.