



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NEW LAWS PROTECT STUDENTS FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS**

The NSW Government today introduced legislation to expand special care laws to ensure a teacher who has a sexual relationship with any student at their high school can face jail time.

“School students are entitled to a safe learning environment, free from sexual exploitation and manipulation by those in a position of authority and trust,” Mr Speakman said.

“While the age of consent in NSW is 16, it’s an offence for teachers to have sex with a child aged 16 or 17 when that child is under their ‘special care’. The crime carries maximum jail terms of between four and eight years.”

The Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 will expand the definition of teacher under the special care offence so that it covers:

- teachers at the school beyond the student’s direct classroom teacher;
- teachers who do not provide instruction to students such as the principal or deputy principal; and
- people employed at the school who have care of or authority over students, which may include school counsellors, welfare officers or year advisors.

The amendments close a loophole that led to the recent acquittal of a PE teacher who had a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old student. In that case, the student attended the teacher’s school but was not in the teacher’s class at the time of the relationship.

“It must be said the overwhelming majority of teachers do an exceptional job of educating our young people in a safe and professional environment,” Mr Speakman said.

“However, the changes to the *Crimes Act 1900* will protect 16 and 17-year-old students against a miniscule number of teachers and other school staff who misuse their authority. These amendments will reassure parents that our schools are safe spaces where their children are protected from this kind of predatory behaviour.”

The NSW Government is also considering further strengthening child sexual abuse laws, including further protections for 16 and 17-year-olds, following recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.