



Mark Speakman
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MEDIA RELEASE

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TOUGHER SENTENCES FOR HISTORICAL CHILD SEX CRIME

Any paedophile sentenced from today onwards for historical child sexual abuse offences will be dealt with according to tougher contemporary sentencing standards.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said such offenders will no longer be able to rely on the more lenient sentencing laws and principles in place at the time of their historical offending.

“Thanks in part to the Child Abuse Royal Commission, in 2018 we have a much better understanding of the lifelong impact and trauma of child sexual abuse and this is reflected in the tougher sentencing principles we have adopted,” Mr Speakman said.

“The community is rightly concerned about some sentences given for historical child sexual offences and this reform will help ensure paedophiles are appropriately held to account.”

Also from today, institutions are on notice to protect children from abuse, with the commencement of two new offences that put children’s safety first. The offences are:

- concealing information relating to child abuse from police (‘failure to report’); and
- failing to reduce or remove a risk of a child being abused (‘failure to protect’).

Each offence carries a maximum sentence of two years’ imprisonment, or, in the case of failure to report, five years if the concealment is for the individual’s or another person’s benefit.

“The Child Abuse Royal Commission uncovered too many examples of institutions letting down children in their care and the public at large by failing to report a child abuser from their ranks. From now on, penalties will apply if they don’t do the right thing,” Mr Speakman said.

“People involved in child-related work at sporting clubs, schools and other organisations also need to understand they can no longer turn a blind eye to a risk of abuse and now must act to protect children or risk a potential jail term.”

The laws taking effect today are in response to recommendations made in the 2017 Criminal Justice Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. For more information, visit:

<https://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Media%20Releases/2018/royal-commission-reforms-factsheet-details.pdf>