



**Gladys Berejiklian**

Premier of NSW

**Mark Speakman**

Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **HOLDING CHILD SEX ABUSERS TO ACCOUNT**

Offenders convicted of persistent child sex abuse will face a maximum penalty of life in jail under extensive reforms implementing the criminal justice recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced the NSW Government has accepted the overwhelming majority of the Royal Commission's criminal justice recommendations.

"These historic reforms are designed to deliver survivors the justice they deserve and impose tougher penalties on offenders for their appalling abuse of children."

"NSW continues to lead the nation in its response to the Royal Commission by introducing one of the state's largest ever criminal reform packages," Ms Berejiklian said.

Some of the key changes the NSW Government will make include:

- Legislating a maximum life sentence for a strengthened offence of persistent child sexual abuse;
- Introducing new offences for failure to report and failure to protect against child abuse;
- Requiring courts sentencing historic child sexual assault offences to apply current sentencing standards and the present understanding about the lifelong effects of sexual abuse on children;
- Requiring courts not to take into account an offender's good character when sentencing for historic offences where their reputation facilitated the offending; and
- Introducing a new offence of grooming an adult to access a child and strengthening the grooming offence to include providing a child with gifts or money.

Legislation implementing these changes will be introduced to the NSW Parliament in the coming months. Mr Speakman said these reforms represent a major improvement in the way the legal system responds to child sexual abuse.

"The Royal Commission has generated unprecedented community understanding of child sexual abuse and the harm it causes," Mr Speakman said.

“It is vital we strengthen our laws so they better reflect community expectations, protect children, and help survivors find justice.”

Extensive reforms to implement more than 50 recommendations of the Royal Commission will be introduced before the end of the year. The Government will formally respond to all the Royal Commissioner’s recommendations in June.

The NSW Government will establish a monitoring group to review the legislative changes to ensure they operate effectively after they are introduced.

NSW has already taken significant steps in response to the Royal Commission, including by:

- being one of the two first states to opt in to the National Redress Scheme;
- introducing new laws to make it easier for survivors to access civil justice; and
- introducing new reforms for out-of-home-care.

Support for survivors is available through Lifeline 13 11 14, 1800Respect on 1800 737 732, Blue Knot Foundation on 1300 657 380 or MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978

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