



Mark Speakman
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MEDIA RELEASE

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TOUGHER SENTENCES FOR CONCEALING CHILD ABUSE

The NSW Government will introduce the toughest sentences in Australia for concealing child abuse, including seven-year prison terms for the worst cases, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

“Child abuse can lead to a lifetime of trauma for victims and should be reported to police immediately. Increasing penalties for concealment will deter people from protecting perpetrators or turning a blind eye to their crimes,” Mr Speakman said.

Currently, failing to report child abuse without a reasonable excuse carries a sentence of up to two years’ imprisonment, or five years if the concealment was done for a benefit, such as financial gain.

The planned amendment to section 316A of the [Crimes Act 1900 \(NSW\)](#) will introduce staggered penalties for concealment.

“The highest penalty will apply to the concealment of child abuse offences that carry a maximum sentence of at least five years in prison. Most child abuse offences carry such a penalty. People who conceal these serious offences could face up to five years behind bars – or seven if they hid the crime for a benefit,” Mr Speakman said.

“These reforms will enable courts to impose longer sentences on people who protect paedophiles and other heinous child abusers. In light of recent caselaw, we have listened to the concerns of survivors and the broader community, including more than 13,000 people who signed a petition to Parliament advocating this change.”

NSW and Victoria are the only states in Australia with a concealment offence specifically related to child abuse (NSW) or child sexual abuse (Victoria). In Victoria, the maximum penalty is three years’ imprisonment.

The NSW Government will also introduce a staggered penalty regime for concealing serious indictable offences. This would mean people who hide an offence that carries a maximum sentence of more than 20 years’ imprisonment could be jailed for five years (instead of two years at moment), or seven (instead of five at the moment) if they solicited or received a benefit. The most serious indictable offences include murder and manslaughter.

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