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STATEMENT

Wednesday, 18 November 2020

SEXUAL CONSENT LAW REFORM

Today I tabled the NSW Law Reform Commission [report](#) *Consent in relation to sexual offences* in Parliament.

The report, of more than 250 pages, considers questions central to sexual assault proceedings in NSW courts, including: the structure, language and meaning of consent; when a person does not consent; knowledge of consent or non-consent; and the meaning of terms such as sexual intercourse, sexual touching and sexual act.

I referred this matter to the Law Reform Commission following court outcomes that raised community concern about the law of consent. The Commission had regard to the experience of sexual assault survivors in the criminal justice system, and developments in other jurisdictions, in conducting the review.

Sexual offences in our community are significantly under-reported to police. The conviction rate for those offences that do make it to court in NSW is also low in comparison with other offences.

The present laws around consent, and the low conviction rates for sexual assault compared with other offences, may both contribute to the reluctance of victims to come forward.

The Government will carefully consider the report's 44 recommendations and intends to respond next year.

I extend my thanks to the Law Reform Commission, especially the lead Commissioner for this reference, the Hon Acting Justice Carolyn Simpson AO.

I also thank the organisations and individuals who contributed to the report by attending consultation sessions, submitting almost 200 written submissions, and providing over 1000 survey responses. Your efforts provided valuable input to the Law Reform Commission's important work.

The report follows the 'Make No Doubt' campaign, an initiative of the Government's Sexual Assault Strategy, to encourage open discussion about sexual consent.