



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday 19 March, 2020

Short Term Pain, Long Term Gain: Magistrates Courts Should Halt Non-Essential Mention Hearings & Stop Transporting Prisoners

Stuart Grimley has asked the Attorney-General to temporarily halt non-essential mention hearings and transportation of prisoners to courts in a bid to limit the spread of the coronavirus and keep our courts open in the long term.

Mr Grimley said that “bail and remand application hearings, cases where people are in custody awaiting their court date and family violence matters should remain processed as a priority”.

On prisoners, he said “we should be cancelling all transport of prisoners to court for matters and asking them to instead appear via Audio Visual Link to reduce the likelihood of coronavirus spreading into our prisons.”

Despite Mr Grimley’s strong stance on victims’ rights, regarding the pushing back of non-essential mention hearings and other Magistrates Court matters he said this was “short term pain for long term gain”.

This came after a lawyer within Mr Grimley’s electorate contacted him with concerns about the “thousands of people” flowing through Melbourne’s Magistrates Court as recent as Wednesday despite gatherings of over 100 people outlawed in other indoor situations.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“I’m the first one to talk about ridiculous delays in the court system, but this idea is a long-term strategy to deal with COVID-19 and to make sure our courts can still function, just at a safer capacity.

Once our magistrates, defence lawyers, police prosecutors and court staff go down, our court system is completely put on hold which isn’t good for anyone, especially victims of crime.

If the virus gets into our prisons, it makes things very difficult for prison officers and Corrections staff as well as those being held on remand who may be due for release.

With all the precautions being undertaken by the rest of society, it seems ridiculous that prisoners are still being transported to courts.”

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