



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



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Grimley Asks for Database for Withdrawn Sexual Assault Case Reasons

Stuart Grimley MP has asked the Attorney General to explain what is holding the Andrews Government back from creating a database to collate the reasons for not pursuing sexual assault convictions in Victoria.

Due to COVID-19 and Parliament not sitting, The State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party submitted his questions to the Attorney-General via Hansard.

A former Victoria Police SOCIT Detective in Footscray, Mr Grimley has dealt with victims of sexual assaults and been involved with the lengthy investigations required to bring offenders to justice.

A 2020 ABC Report brought to light the extent to which our system could be failing victims of sexual crimes, finding that under 30% of sexual assault reports led to any legal action Australia-wide.

Mr Grimley hopes the Victorian Government will mandate the reporting of the reason of withdrawal of sexual assault cases to a database, so they are able to respond to the issue of under-reporting and a lack of convictions in future, more accurately and purposefully.

It is known that some reasons for withdrawal can include victims being coerced (or pressured) by their perpetrator, a lack of evidence to achieve a conviction (and high threshold of 'beyond reasonable doubt') or that the victim doesn't feel believed by authorities, but without a database of these reasons, we can only speculate why a limited number of convictions are recorded.

If it were to be created, Mr Grimley noted it would be important to ensure victims couldn't be identified as part of the information held on the database.

Mr Grimley, in his address to the Attorney-General, also addressed the concerning statistic that for every 10 offences, an estimated 9 aren't reported to their local authorities. He said this pointed to a need for "immediate cultural change around the seriousness of sexual assault".

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"Working at SOCIT, it was incredibly frustrating seeing sexual assault cases reported and not being able to bring a perpetrator to justice as a result.

Knowing the reasons that cases aren't making it to court or being pursued by victims is really important to changing the strategy around pursuing sexual assault investigations.

It's frankly not good enough that less than a third of sexual assault reports actually result in legal action so I'm hoping by creating a database of reasons we can work towards justice for victims."

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