



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



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Emergency Services Worker Assaults Will Get 12-Month Mandatory Review

An amendment introduced by Stuart Grimley MP to the *Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Bill 2020* has passed, along with the Bill, late last night.

The amendment mandates the State Government to report back to the Parliament 12 months from the legislation passing to ensure accountability.

The amendment was passed by the Upper House, which will see the State Government undertake a review regarding the “operation and effectiveness” of the Bill which will be tabled before each house of Parliament as soon as is practicable after 12 months.

This is only the second time in this Parliament that the Government have supported a cross-bench amendment, and it was passed unopposed, signalling great support from all political parties.

The “Emergency Worker Assault Legislation” has been brought back to the Parliament due to the courts using a ‘loophole’ in many cases that has allowed some of those convicted of assaulting emergency services workers to avoid a mandatory 6 months’ jail time. All cases of this nature will now be heard in County and Supreme Courts.

Mr Grimley said that although the original legislation was “botched” in its inception due to the loophole, he was glad to see it before the Parliament again.

When the Bill was initially passed, Mr Grimley commented that the loophole should not exist at all, reflecting that on his time as a Victoria Police officer he often exercised discretion in respect to those who assaulted emergency service workers.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“I am very pleased that the Government has accepted our amendment late last night.

This Bill failed to do what it was supposed to do the first time, so this review will ensure there is some accountability on the Government to ensure the legislation works.

The community expect to see mandatory jail terms of 6 months for anyone who assaults an emergency services worker so this review will tell us if this has happened or not.

I don’t believe there should be any loophole because there is no reason to assault a frontline worker, and if due to their own discretion a frontline worker determines that the person who assaulted them is *not* of sound mind, they can choose not to prosecute them.

Our emergency workers do an amazing job in keeping us safe and they need to know that as a Parliament – and as a society – we have their backs.”

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