



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



Embargoed until 12am Thursday 26 November, 2020

Grimley Calls for 'Grab and Drag' Laws in Victoria

Stuart Grimley MP is calling on the State Government to introduce 'grab and drag' laws to strengthen our legal system specifically in dealing with violence against women.

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party MPs were outraged that Jackson Williams, the man who ambushed a nurse and dragged her into a Melbourne laneway in an October 2018 attack, was recently found not guilty of assault with intent to commit a sexual offence. Instead, he was found guilty only of common assault

Mr Grimley **will stand on the steps of Parliament today (Thursday) at 9am** and be presented with a Change.org petition by creator Emmaline Jones, adorned with over 81,000 signatures.

Stuart praised Ms Jones, who had worked tirelessly to promote her e-petition which calls on the OPP to appeal Mr Williams' verdict of 'not guilty' for intent to sexually assault.

Ms Jones – a healthcare worker and former nurse – said her motivation came from wanting to feel safe walking home at night as a woman and to create a safe environment for her young daughters to grow up in.

Mr Grimley has been requested to pass on the signatures to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"A grab and drag law will fill a visible gap in legislation where the threshold to prove an intent to sexually assault is failing women and other victims.

I feel privileged to be fighting for over 60,000 signatories; some who have had enough of lax sentencing and feeling unsafe in their neighbourhood."

Quotes Attributable to Party Leader, Derryn Hinch:

"Why else would a young man drag a young woman into a deserted laneway, throw her to the ground and lie on top of her? Did he want to play Scrabble?

This is just another example of a victim being let down by an effed up system and this is why we need a new offence that deals with a gap in the law."

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Grab and Drag Proposal

Why is this offence needed?

If we cannot tighten the elements of the offence (sexual touching) within the charge of Sexual Assault or an Intent to Commit a Sexual Offence, and the best the judiciary can do is downgrade to a Common Assault (which is a Summary Offence and very low offence on the scale) then we need a new 'Grab and Drag' Offence.

We are urging the Attorney-General and Government to consider creating a specific 'Grab and Drag' offence that fills the void between the offences of 'Unlawful Assault' and 'Assault with intent to commit a sexual offence' within the Crimes Act.

What sort of penalty do you envisage this offence would have?

It will be suggested that this new offence would carry the same penalty as Assault with Intent (Level 4-15 years maximum) and involve simple 'Grab and Drag' elements without the intent to commit a sexual act.

As it will be in the Crimes Act, it is envisaged that it will be an Indictable Offence – a more serious offence, which may be judge and jury or heard in a higher court. It could also be triable summarily.

This new offence will encourage more women to come forward and report such crimes that are often a pre-cursor to more violent offending.

Is there an example of a similar proposal being created in the past?

The Government has previously introduced legislative change when increased penalties were mandated in regard to deaths resulting from 'one punch'. 'Coward's Punch' laws were standalone, reflecting the outrage the community felt as a result of similarly heinous crimes. This is how the community currently feels about the assault of women, particularly who are alone and vulnerable.

A Parliamentary Inquiry on the 'one punch' laws stated "On this spectrum of fatal offences, one punch with no intention to kill falls on the lower end of culpability. However, community outrage and a need for both specific and general deterrence has led to arguments that current sentencing practices do not reflect the seriousness of one-punch offences."

See more [here](#).