



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

## MEDIA RELEASE



### **Grimley Wants Online Grooming and Consent Education in All Victorian Schools**

29 April 2021

State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party Stuart Grimley has urged the Victorian Government to introduce online grooming, online consent and physical consent education into the Victorian school curriculum.

Mr Grimley called on the Government to "include online grooming, online consent and physical consent in the Victorian school curriculum by 11 February 2022."

Mr Grimley – an ex-SOCIT Detective at Victoria Police – has cited the huge growth in online grooming of children since COVID-19 as just one urgent reason to have these lessons as mandatory in the curriculum. Further, Mr Grimley pointed out in a speech to the Minister for Education that if our Federal Government can't explain what 'consent' means, then we need to devote resources in schools to making sure the concept is understood.

Recorded cases of online child exploitation reported to The Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation went from 1,000 in 2010 to over 17,000 in 2020, and the Australian Institute of Child Welfare found that "during COVID-19, public tipoffs about online child sexual exploitation material more than doubled".

In terms of Victorian arrests and charges made for these offences, in 2009/10, 42 charges were laid and 10 years later this figure jumped to 317 charges. It's a stark growth.

On Thursday in Parliament at the Regional Sitting in Bright, Mr Grimley asked the Minister for Education for "reform to be explored to our school curriculum to ensure online grooming and consent education is mandatory in each and every school in the state."

In 2020, 46% of Australian children aged between 6 and 13 was using a mobile phone and a Channel 7 report quoted that 69% of children aged 12 in Australia had sent or received a nude image, yet only 52% of parents talk to their children about online safety. This shows a huge gap in the guidance our children receive about online safety.

Mr Grimley noted that in 2020 the State Government (to their credit) stated "all students who do not have access to a laptop or tablet at home will be provided one". But with this access should come responsibility of online safety.

Whilst Mr Grimley acknowledged that parents should be partly responsible for this education, he said given a lack of consistent information in the home, the Government needs to mandate this education in schools.



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### Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

“Working in SOCIT for Victoria Police, I saw the outcomes of online grooming of children and it’s sickening.

Consent is important online too, through the sending and receiving of lewd images, through distribution of pornography and regarding emerging technologies such as video chatrooms and apps like Snapchat. Just as we need physical consent education in schools, we now need it taught in an ‘IT’ context too.

I am urging the Victorian Government to work with our Federal Government and our schools sector – including non-government schools - to develop an in-depth program that explores physical consent but also online consent and safety from online grooming.”

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