



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



Low Conviction Rate for Charge Supports Grab and Drag Proposal

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Derryn Hinch's Justice Party MPs Stuart Grimley and Tania Maxwell are urging the public to make a submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission as it considers the grab and drag proposal. The urgent call comes after it was revealed less than 5% of offenders charged with 'assault with the intent to commit a sexual offence' were convicted.

Of the 217 charges for this offence since October 2015, only 10 convictions were recorded for a similar time period. This offence therefore has a conviction rate of **less than 5%**.

Mr Grimley and Ms Maxwell said this statistic was "appalling" and is a blight on the ability of (statistically, overwhelmingly) women to come forward and pursue their attacker in court or to at least report this behaviour.

The DHJP MPs have used these revelations to further advocate for a 'grab and drag' proposal that they put forward in November 2020 after a nurse was dragged into a Melbourne laneway by offender Jackson Williams. Williams was found not guilty of assault with the intent to commit a sexual offence but found guilty of the lesser charge of unlawful assault.

Mr Grimley had presented an e-petition to then Attorney-General Jill Hennessey with over 90,000 signatures condemning the act by Williams. Principal petitioner Emm Jones – a shift worker in Melbourne's CBD - joined DHJP MPs at Parliament to make a statement that these offences need to be taken seriously.

Currently, the VLRC are considering the 'grab and drag' charge proposal and **submissions close 2 April 2021**. The MPs are urging anyone with an experience of 'grabbing and dragging' or who has witnessed such an act take place to urgently make a submission to the Inquiry outlining their thoughts about the proposal.

Currently, only 23.3% of those who commit unlawful assault are sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Nearly the same proportion (22.2%) are receiving a fine. Similarly, 22.8% are receiving a Community Corrections Order ([Sentencing Advisory Council](#), 2016-19).

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"Victoria needs a grab and drag offence to fill the gap between charges of common assault and sexual assault. These crimes are often a precursor to more serious offending and we need to ensure the offenders know this behaviour is denounced and will not be tolerated.

There are now over 100,000 signatures on an e-petition pushing for an appeal against Williams after being found not guilty for assault with the intent to commit a sexual offence."

Quotes Attributable to Tania Maxwell MP:

"This crime was disgraceful; no woman should feel unsafe while walking to or from work or anywhere for that matter. Victorians have spoken of their outrage at gendered crime and grab and drag offences must be taken seriously and offenders punished accordingly.

These offences can stay with victims forever. Low conviction rates are a huge contributor to victims not reporting or pursuing their offender and this needs to be changed."

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