



STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

MEDIA RELEASE



Victims' Charter Act a "Toothless Tiger"

5 October 2021

State leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, Stuart Grimley MP has called on the Government to strengthen the Victims' Charter Act which he currently describes as a 'toothless tiger'.

Currently, Victorian Government departments and agencies (including the Office of Public Prosecutions) face no consequences or penalties for failing to comply with the Charter.

The Attorney-General's Department of Justice and Community Safety is also bound by the Charter (under Section 21) to report annually on how the Department is promoting the Charter's principles and how the Act is operating but has **failed** to do so by containing no coverage of the functionality or effectiveness of the Victims' Charter Act.

Mr Grimley has asked the Attorney-General in Question Time today how the Government plan to strengthen the Act.

The Charter, which was introduced more than 15 years ago, has continued to fail victims of crime by being a 'toothless tiger'.

As directed under the Charter, the Victims of Crime Commissioner is currently undertaking a review of the Act.

In her answer in Question Time, Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes said she will commit to reviewing the Victims' Charter Act to make sure it supports victims of crime.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"Victims in Victoria are already receiving the short end of the stick. We have seen countless criminals released on bail, given light sentences and slaps on the wrist by soft magistrates and judges. The reality that government agencies are not complying with the Victims' Charter Act is frankly not good enough.

My office has looked through a number of the Department of Justice Annual Reports and have found no specific section pertaining to the functioning of the Victims' Charter Act. This seems to be in contravention of section 21 of the Act and yet there are no ramifications for the Department.

Why are there no penalties or consequences for these Departments which are failing in their duty to the Victorian public? Victims are too often left out in the cold or not considered. By not giving them the correct support, they're at risk of becoming even more traumatised by the justice system."

Mr Grimley Media Contact: Callum Whitehead / 0437 096 982 / callum.whitehead@parliament.vic.gov.au