

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



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Vickie
Dear Attorney,

Today alone, two more child sex offenders pleaded guilty so that they can qualify for sentence discounts of up to 40%. The Labor Party has been ready for months to immediately pass legislation to slash discounts. The community expects no less.

Unbelievably, after voting against legislation to fix this in July, this week the government has failed to pass its own Bill that it introduced on 9 September. The earliest that these laws can now pass is the middle of October. As your government delays, paedophiles and murderers take advantage of your inaction.

Your government didn't list its sentence reduction Bill on its priority letter for the Legislative Council this week. The Government's whipping sheet for today showed its intention to adjourn the matter. There was not even an intention by your government to pass its Bill this week.

On Tuesday this week, the Leader of the Opposition spoke in support of your government's Bill and the need to pass it immediately:

"This means we have to pass this Bill before another serious offender is sentenced. For that reason, no other member of the opposition will be speaking on this Bill. We will not even ask questions in the committee stage. We will support the government's amendment to its own Bill".

"We are supporting the legislation, we are going to get it through ASAP, we are not going to ask questions, we are not going to have more speakers, we just want to get the outcome here of this legislation passed"

This morning in the Legislative Council, I reiterated this position:

"We were ready to pass that Bill on Tuesday, Wednesday and again today on that particular measure, the reduction in sentences on guilty pleas from 40 per cent to 25 per cent. It is up to the government as to when it wishes to move that along, but I reiterate that on this Bill we stand ready to support the government."

The Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Rob Lucas, today said:

"We were being criticised in the media by the Labor Party because we were not prepared to jam the Bill through, about how many paedophiles or other criminal offenders were going to be let loose because we were refusing to jam the Bill through without notice today."

This afternoon, the Liberal Party even voted not to deal with this Bill until the next sitting week. There is no greater duty than keeping our community safe and yet your government seems intent on delaying this matter again and again.

You engaged the Hon Brian Martin QC in September 2018 and received his report in June 2019. The report included consultations with stakeholders and detailed recommendations.

After thirteen months of inaction, the horrific case of Hamzeh Bahrami was a terrible reminder about the price of inaction. He abused a young girl in a public toilet while his daughter and niece waited outside. He couldn't even explain his offending to the Court and yet he got the maximum 40% discount.

Your government's excuses for delays and inaction seem to grow by the day, just like the list of vile offenders who have taken advantage of your inaction. The list now includes child sex offenders, wife killers and double murderers and this stands as an indictment on your tenure as Attorney-General.

After the Bahrami case, the Labor Party immediately introduced a Bill – based on the Martin report – to slash discounts from 40% to 25% for the most serious offences. Your government voted against it.

Two months later, your government introduced its own Bill. You have claimed that the delay was due to the need to get the Bill right but you somehow got it wrong. Your Bill excluded a range of violent and sexual offences from the biggest cuts to discounts and this required you to urgently amend your own legislation.

The community has every right to be outraged when an offer of bipartisan support to improve community safety is rejected. The Labor party has stood ready to fix this problem. We still stand ready.

Your sincerely,



Hon Kyam Maher MLC
Shadow Attorney-General

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