

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Attorney-General

Minister for the Coordination of Justice and Community Safety – COVID-19

Minister for Workplace Safety



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URGENT CHANGES TO ENSURE VICTIM-SURVIVORS CAN SPEAK UP

The Victorian Government will move urgently to respond to victim-survivors who have raised concerns about their ability to share their stories.

Attorney-General Jill Hennessy announced today that reforms will be fast-tracked to streamline processes for victim-survivors who wish to speak out.

This change will mean the majority of victims will no longer require a court order to tell their stories if they have given informed consent to being identified.

The Government is developing urgent amendments to be introduced to Parliament this year. The changes will be progressed in close consultation with victim-survivors and those who work with them.

The Victorian Law Reform Commission (VLRC) recently recommended a raft of changes to the *Judicial Proceedings Reports Act*, including changes to clarify and simplify the circumstances in which identifying information about a victim can be lawfully disclosed.

To ensure that the rights and needs of victim-survivors remain at the heart of these reforms, Department of Justice and Community Safety will convene a series of roundtables with victims in September to discuss the proposed reforms and seek victim input.

The government asked the VLRC to review contempt of court laws in response to recommendations made by former Court of Appeal Judge Frank Vincent AO QC in his independent review of the Open Courts Act 2013.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

"I have immense respect for victim-survivors who have the courage to speak out about their experiences and advocate for positive change. We hear you and we will take action."

"These laws provide an important protection to maintain the privacy of sexual offence victims and help ensure they are not exposed to additional distress – they were never intended to inhibit willing victim-survivors being able to speak out and share their stories."

"The voices of victim-survivors are a powerful and important part of the justice system. Their expertise will be invaluable as we make these urgent changes."