

Despite legislative reforms increasing maximum penalties for domestic and family violence (DFV) offences, these crimes are not being treated more seriously in court, as most offenders avoid imprisonment and receive non-custodial sentences, with only 7.2% of domestic violence offenders convicted of common assault received a prison sentence. 24% of men who committed partner homicides had previously been respondents under domestic violence orders, highlighting the urgent need to better support women in filing and enforcing these orders. Additionally, systemic shortcomings-such as inadequate tailored support for Indigenous peoples, lack of safe housing prioritization for women and young people escaping DFV, insufficient child safety responses, and limited psychological support for families navigating the legal system-undermine victim protection. Rural areas remain particularly vulnerable, with 10 out of the 24 women killed this year coming from these communities. Furthermore, the continued legality of hitting children reflects broader societal tolerance of violence that must be challenged. Overall, courts alone cannot address DFV seriousness without comprehensive reforms that empower victims, improve support services, and address underlying social issues. With 2 in 3 Australians reporting experiencing child abuse, this is a crisis. How can we expect our teens to thrive when 62.2% of them have experienced some form of abuse? To effectively reduce teen crime rates, we must prioritize supporting and nurturing our young people. Domestic and family violence (DFV) offenders in Queensland predominantly receive non-custodial sentences, with 30% fined and 25% sentenced to imprisonment or community penalties combined, reflecting a broader national trend where community-based penalties such as fines, bonds, and supervision are the most common outcomes. Despite increased maximum penalties, only a small fraction of DFV offenders serve prison time-for example, just 7.2% of those convicted of common assault, the most frequent DFV-related charge, receive imprisonment, and only 16.9% of breaches of apprehended violence orders result in jail sentences. More serious offences like assault occasioning actual bodily harm have higher imprisonment rates (17.6%), and grievous bodily harm offences see imprisonment rates as high as 60.4%. However, many cases are dismissed due to lack of evidence, further limiting accountability. Given that 62.2% of Australians report experiencing child abuse and about 1 in 32 children have contact with the child protection system, there is a pressing need to create minimum penalties that ensure offenders serve jail time where appropriate, alongside robust rehabilitation programs to reduce high recidivism rates-nearly 45% of offenders reoffend after sentencing for contravening domestic violence orders. Strengthening sentencing laws and support services is critical to improving outcomes for victims and breaking cycles of abuse. Creating minimum penalties would ensure that offenders receive the time they lawfully deserve. As a young person who has experienced the family court system in regards to child abuse, there is not enough punishment for those who are offenders of child abuse, nor is there any preventative or rehabilitation programs for these people. In my case there was no punishment for my offenders, and I had to fight in court for years to be able to live in a safe environment. I am lucky as I had other family to pay for these court proceedings and to stay with, most do not have this luxury. Research shows that about one-third of child abuse victims go on to perpetuate abuse or neglect as parents, while another third do not, and the remaining third remain vulnerable, we need more support for those who have experienced abuse to prevent future perpetrators. There are a significant lack of resources and support for these people. We need to focus on prevention, strict implementation of the respectful relationships education program would aid this, although it is in the curriculum, most schools do not educate children on this.

Many thanks - [REDACTED]

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