

From: Angela Lynch <secretariat@qsan.org.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 20 June 2023 2:18 PM
To: QSAC Submissions
Subject: Key issues

Dear Secretariat,

We refer to your letter to the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) on 30th May seeking preliminary feedback on some key issues of concern regarding sexual violence sentencing. We have consulted with our membership, and they have provided the following feedback:-

- There can be low sentences for child sexual abuse.
- There is inconsistency in sentencing.
- The issue of recidivism – the offender can be released and offend against children again within a couple of weeks – a very short time frame.
- The giving of non-custodial sentences because of the offender’s standing in the community and then they go on to offend again.
- The downgrades of offences because of guilty pleas.
- Limited feedback able to be provided on sentencing for sexual violence due to the very low number of clients we support whose offender is ever convicted and sentenced.
- Limited custodial sentences for perpetrators of child sexual abuse – many victim-survivors have reported this makes them feel that the offending against children is less harmful than offending against adult survivors and does not treat it seriously.
- Experiences of survivors when offenders released shortly after conviction, many survivors have reported this feeling like this is a betrayal of the courts and that no real sentence was given to the offender.
- Experiences of survivors when offenders have no other criminal history and can provide character references that mitigate the sentencing – this reinforces community attitudes about who perpetrates sexual violence and is particularly concerning as many sexual violence offenders engage in deliberate grooming and coercive control tactics of the victim-survivors community to discredit victim-survivors.
- Whether Queensland should consider an uplifting of sentences, similar to what occurred in Victoria, especially in relation to child sexual abuse because of traditionally low sentencing in these types of cases and a greater understanding of the lifelong harm and impact of this type of offending.

If you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

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(Usually - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)
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I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. I would also like to acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal people, as the traditional custodians of the land on which I live and work. I pay sincere respect to our Elders both past and present.