

Minimum mandatory sentences
for serious sexual offences against children

Building a Tasmania we
can all be proud of



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The Plan to rebuild our essential
services

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This policy will send a strong message to offenders that there will be zero tolerance for such heinous crimes committed against children

Protecting Tasmanian children

As part of the Liberal plan to deliver a brighter future for all Tasmanians, a majority Hodgman Liberal government will legislate for minimum mandatory sentences for those who commit serious sexual offences against children.

Labor came to office 14 years ago promising to become a “world leader in reducing the incidence of child abuse”^{**}.

Unfortunately, today in Tasmania, a shocking one in four girls and one in six boys will experience child sexual abuse before the age of 18^{**}. There is also a low prosecution rate of child sex offenders, and Tasmania is the least safe state for children[^].

Recent high-profile cases of sexual offences committed against children have prompted calls from the community for urgent action to protect our children. We have listened.

While the Labor-Green Government has failed to act on child sex crimes, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will protect children by legislating for minimum mandatory sentences for those convicted of serious sexual offences against children, including offences contained in the *Criminal Code Act 1924* such as sexual intercourse with a young person (s124), or involving persons under 18 in production of child exploitation material (s130).

The minimum mandatory sentence will be in line with community expectations and national standards. It will be developed in conjunction with the Sentencing Advisory Council and the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute. As a guide, other states have adopted statutory or mandatory minimum sentencing to take a strong stance in dealing with serious crime, with minimum mandatory sentences ranging from 4 years to 15 years^{^^}.

* Jim Bacon, 19/8/1998.

** Lara Giddings, media release, 29/4/11.

[^] Bravehearts National Study, Examiner/Mercury, 4/9/12.

^{^^} The Victorian Government has introduced legislation for 4 year statutory minimum sentences for certain violent crimes and the Western Australian Government has committed to 15 year minimum detention periods for the crime of breaking into a house and sexually assaulting a person. Queensland has also introduced a ‘two-strikes’ or second sexual offence mandatory sentence of life imprisonment with a 20 year non-parole period.

A majority Hodgman Liberal government will also make it compulsory for all sex offenders to receive appropriate treatment when they are in jail.

In addition, following the widely reported tragic case of the Tasmanian child who was prostituted, the Liberals will support changes to the Criminal Code to ensure there is no defence of mistaken age for sexual offences against children aged 12 or under.

As previously announced, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will also spend up to \$200,000 per annum providing a child safety awareness program in Tasmanian primary schools, state-wide, to educate and empower children to speak up about child sexual abuse.

Only a majority Hodgman Liberal Government has a plan to protect our children.

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