



Media release

The Hon Dr Denis Napthine MP

Premier
Minister for Regional Cities
Minister for Racing

The Hon Robert Clark MP

Attorney-General
Minister for Finance
Minister for Industrial Relations

Tuesday 25 March 2014

New laws to further protect children from sexual abuse

- **Coalition Government introduces legislation to further protect children from sexual abuse**
- **Two additional criminal offences**
- **Coalition Government building a better Victoria for the youngest and most vulnerable in the community**

The Victorian Coalition Government will today introduce legislation into Parliament to create two additional criminal offences that will further protect children from sexual abuse.

The introduction of these offences is the next stage in the Coalition Government's response to the recommendations of the Family and Community Development Committee's Betrayal of Trust report on the handling of child sex abuse allegations.

A new offence carrying up to five years in jail will apply to a person who holds a position of responsibility in an organisation and fails to take action where they know there is someone associated with the organisation who poses a risk of sexually abusing children.

The law will apply to a wide range of organisations that may be involved with children including schools, churches, sporting clubs and youth clubs.

"In future, anyone in authority in an organisation who does nothing about known child abusers, or simply moves them somewhere else in the organisation where they can continue to abuse other children, will face up to five years in jail," Dr Napthine said.

The new laws will also make it an offence carrying a penalty of up to three years in jail for a person to fail to provide relevant information to police if they know or believe a child has been sexually abused.

This law will be in addition to current mandatory reporting to child protection authorities.

"This new law will make clear that people who know or believe that a child has been sexually abused cannot just keep quiet about it – they have a duty to tell the police what they know so that the police can bring the offender to justice and prevent further abuse," Attorney-General Robert Clark said.

It will not be an offence to not report information obtained through the victim seeking medical help or counselling advice, if the information is provided by a victim after they have reached the age of 16 and the victim requests that the information not be disclosed, if the person has reasonable fears for their or another person's safety and it is reasonable not to report in the circumstances, or if the information would be privileged from disclosure in court proceedings.

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