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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

Guy Barnett, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

31 October 2023

Tough new child sex offender Bill introduced to Parliament

The Rockliff Liberal Government will introduce a minimum sentencing presumption for child sex offenders to Parliament today in line with our unwavering commitment to protect our most vulnerable.

The *Sentencing Amendment (Presumption of Mandatory Sentences) Bill 2023* outlines the Governments and the communities clear expectations regarding sentencing for serious sexual crimes against children.

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Guy Barnett, said the new Bill will replace the *Sentencing Amendment (Mandatory Sentencing) Bill 2022*.

“Sexual offences against children are abhorrent, and the people of Tasmania and victim-survivors demand that anyone who commits these offences should be appropriately sentenced,” Mr Barnett said.

“We’ve taken this policy to three separate elections and each and every time we’ve received a strong mandate from the community and victim-survivors.”

In drafting this Bill, our Government has heard stakeholder feedback regarding minimum terms for a range of child sex offences and the need to balance judicial discretion with the community expectations.

This Bill will ensure the rights of victim-survivors to know and understand the reasons for sentences imposed in relation to their offenders.

“We’ve heard from victim-survivors and we understand their despair at some of the sentences handed out to child sexual offenders.

“We’ve listened, and this Bill is about giving them a voice.”

“The Rockliff Government will always advocate for the strongest possible sentences for those who harm our children. What this presumption of minimum terms will do is ensure there is an absolute floor for sentencing these crimes which cannot be breached without very strong reasons why.”

The Bill provides for the presumption of following minimum sentencing terms:

1. Four years’ imprisonment for the crime of rape (section 185 of the Criminal Code) where a victim is under 18 years at the time of the offence;
2. Four years’ imprisonment for the crime of persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person (section 125A of the Criminal Code) where at least one of the unlawful sexual acts is an offence of rape;
3. Three years’ imprisonment for the crime of persistent sexual abuse of a child or young person (section 125A of the Criminal Code) where there are circumstances of aggravation and none of the unlawful sexual acts is an offence of rape; and
4. Two years’ imprisonment for the crime of penetrative sexual abuse of a child or young person (section 124 of the Criminal Code) where there are circumstances of aggravation; and
5. Two years’ imprisonment for the new crime of penetrative sexual abuse of a child or young person by a person in authority (section 124A of the Criminal Code).

Tasmania will be the first jurisdiction to introduce a minimum sentencing presumption of this kind.