

MEDIA RELEASE



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Victoria takes next step to better support children of imprisoned parents

Around 7,000 Victorian children have a parent in jail at any time, with evidence showing they can experience significant emotional, financial, health, education and discriminatory repercussions.

These children today have been provided with some new hope, thanks to a landmark report into the impact that having a parent in prison has on their children, and the possible solutions.

The Victorian Parliamentary Legal and Social Issues Committee [report](#) features a number of significant recommendations to improve the support for this group.

SHINE for Kids, the national charity supporting children and young people whose parents are in prison, made a number of recommendations to the Committee to ensure the rights and wellbeing of children were at the core of the inquiry.

Victoria is now the second state in Australia to release a report specifically examining this issue, following NSW releasing its [report](#) on the matter in June this year.

SHINE for Kids CEO, Julie Hourigan Ruse, said it was pleasing to see Victoria hand down a comprehensive report which really listened to both the lived experience, and the experts in the sector.

“I would like to congratulate the Victorian Parliamentary Legal and Social Issues Committee for compiling such a thorough and well-informed report,” Ms Hourigan Ruse said.

“The findings and recommendations clearly highlight that there has been a lack of proper processes and oversight when it comes to the support of children whose parents are in prison.

“The recommendations also clearly state that the Government needs to show leadership and play a bigger role in coordinating support efforts.”

Ms Hourigan Ruse said there is a significant body of research that shows when a parent remains connected with their child, there is less recidivism, and the child’s wellbeing is greatly improved.

“We have an opportunity to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage through sensible reform – let’s take those opportunities,” she said.



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“We look forward to continue working productively with the Committee and Parliament, and the Victorian Government as it prepares its response to this report.”

SHINE for Kids’ submission to the Inquiry draws on 40 years of practice, research and advocacy experience on the specific needs of children of prisoners both in NSW and nationally.

Children are confronted with a number of challenges when a parent or caregiver is in conflict with the law, including:

- They have to emotionally cope with the break-up of their family, and may need to be placed in alternative care.
- Losing their primary caregiver may result in financial hardship and make it difficult to access health services and education.
- They experience discrimination and stigma as a result of their parent’s status as a suspect, defendant or convicted prisoner.

For more information on SHINE for Kids, visit: shineforkids.org.au

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