

Media Release

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Destiny Rescue supports the call for stronger justice for victims

Destiny Rescue, a leading Australian-based NGO dedicated to rescuing children from exploitation and abuse, supports the proposed recent introduction of the *Federal Crimes Amendment (Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Child Sexual Abuse) Bill 2025 (the Bill)*. The Bill will ensure that those who abuse, exploit or prey upon children face real justice.

Destiny Rescue has long advocated for the government to strengthen sentencing laws, including in cases of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC), which has reached crisis levels globally. It is estimated that in the past year alone, more than 300 million children have been affected by online sexual abuse and exploitation.¹

Under the Bill, serious Commonwealth online child sexual abuse offences will carry mandatory minimum sentences of five years' imprisonment, increasing to six years for repeat offenders. The legislation further addresses a key gap in the justice system by removing provisions that have enabled offenders to avoid full custodial sentences and serve only a fraction of their sentence time.

The introduction of this Bill follows the recent release of a [7 News Spotlight special](#) which exposes the confronting truth that Australians are not only actively contributing to this global abuse but are often receiving disproportionately light sentences under our current judicial system. The programme highlights the case of a serious offender who was found guilty but received only a six-month suspended sentence. As a result, the convicted offender is currently free and continues to pose a risk to children both in the community and online.

Every instance of online offending represents a child enduring lasting and devastating consequences from these crimes.

Destiny Rescue further calls on the Australian judicial system to be strengthened to enable pathways for victim and community impact statements to be heard in online child sexual abuse cases, ensuring that the far-reaching social harm of these crimes is fully recognised in sentencing. Matthew Valentine, Global Counter-OSEC Director, Destiny Rescue stated:

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<https://www.childlight.org/newsroom/over-300-million-children-a-year-are-victims-of-online-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

“Implementing stronger penalties for online offenders marks an essential step in both deterring abuse and acknowledging the profound and enduring trauma experienced by victims, trauma equal to that inflicted through physical contact offences.”

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) saw a staggering 41 per cent increase in reports of online child sexual exploitation in 2024–25.² These statistics expose a grim and accelerating trend, that the online space is increasingly being weaponised to harm children.

Destiny Rescue continues to advocate for collaboration between government, law enforcement, and civil society to ensure that the protection of children remains a national priority.

For interviews or more information, Geoff Harrison, Chief Operation Officer, Destiny Rescue Australia via 0408 205 525.

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Contact us for interviews.

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