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MEDIA RELEASE

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LANDMARK CHILD ABUSE REFORMS PASS PARLIAMENT

A significant barrier preventing child sex offenders from being held to account will be removed under nation leading reforms passed by the NSW Parliament today.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said this was an important achievement for survivors of child sexual assault.

“Today marks a significant milestone in our fight against the scourge of child sexual abuse,” Mr Speakman said.

“The *Evidence Amendment (Tendency and Coincidence) Act 2020* will enable more evidence about an accused person’s sexual interest in children to be considered by the jury in child sexual assault proceedings.”

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found the exclusion of this kind of evidence led to cases of ‘unwarranted acquittals’ in child sexual offence proceedings. It recommended law reform to enable greater admissibility of this evidence in those proceedings.

“While these reforms cannot undo the crimes of the past, or take away a survivor’s pain, they will help to deliver justice for survivors across NSW,” Mr Speakman said.

Uniform Evidence Law jurisdictions agreed to implement a Model Bill at the Council of Attorneys-General meeting in November last year, following a two-year law reform process led by NSW.

NSW is the first jurisdiction in Australia to introduce the Model Bill and now leads the way for other Uniform Evidence Law states and territories to follow in its footsteps.

“We want to ensure that our criminal justice system is a fair one. These reforms will enable relevant evidence to be put before the court, while also maintaining appropriate safeguards to ensure the right to a fair trial.”

“The NSW Government has led the nation in its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I call on other states and territories to follow NSW’s lead and introduce these crucial reforms.”

The reforms will commence on 1 July 2020. Read more about NSW Justice responses to the Child Abuse Royal Commission, including the *Evidence Amendment (Tendency and Coincidence) Act 2020*, [here](#).