

Monday, 5 June 2017

Office of the Hon Martin Pakula MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing
Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

The need for a Victorian spent convictions scheme

Dear Attorney-General,

It is of increasing concern that Victoria remains the only jurisdiction in Australia without laws governing the disclosure of a person's criminal record. The undersigned individuals and organisations urge you to introduce or support legislation for a spent convictions scheme.

A criminal record carries an ongoing stigma that far outlasts the punitive value of the original punishment. The need to disclose minor offences can limit a person's ability to fully participate in community life. It can have a negative impact on their ability to get a job, access secure housing or participate in volunteer positions. A spent convictions scheme that removes minor convictions from a person's record after an appropriate period of time promotes rehabilitation and protects the community through reduced re-offending.

Victorians deserve transparency and clarity around how their interactions with the criminal justice system are disclosed. The operation of the Victoria Police Information Release Policy is opaque and inconsistent. This means that legal practitioners are unable to give their clients meaningful advice to about the impact a minor offence could have on their life.

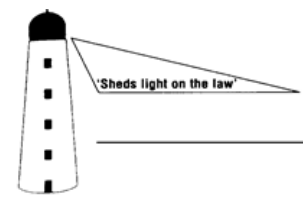
Over the past 30 years, every other jurisdiction in Australia has introduced legislation to deal with this important area of discrimination. The Victorian Government can no longer leave such reform on the bottom of the pile. While this issue continues to be ignored, Victorians continue to face discrimination on a daily basis and are disadvantaged in comparison to their interstate peers.

We note your 2014 Election commitment to examine the merits of a spent convictions scheme and welcome consultation and discussions on options for reform. We point you towards the work of legal advocacy bodies calling for reform, including [Liberty Victoria's Rights Advocacy Project report](#) (released last week), the [Law Institute of Victoria's 2015 submission](#), and the ongoing work of the [Woor-Dungin Criminal Record Discrimination Project](#).

We look forward to action in this area soon.

Sent on behalf of:

Liberty Victoria's
**RIGHTS
ADVOCACY
PROJECT**



**SOUTHPORT COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE
INC.**

WEstjustice

