

Attorney general, Victoria

Sonia Kilkenny

I write as a supporter of Isla Bell and her family and acknowledge your respectful attendance at the rally.

We are seeking two urgent legislative reforms which will together will lessen media traumatising of victims and improve the prospect of successful prosecutions of perpetrators.

This can be achieved by

1. Implementing recommendations from South Australia's 2025 royal commission to create legally enforceable standards for responsible media reporting on domestic, family and sexual violence. This reform can be implemented nationally to achieve consistency across all jurisdictions.

Isla's mother Justine Bell, along with many others has repeatedly called for this reform. The victim blaming by some media outlets in reporting Isla's death was traumatising and entirely avoidable.

2. Reviewing the Evidence Act 2008 and any other relevant legislation, to amend provisions which set an unreasonably high standard of proof and limit effective prosecution.

Those of accused of crimes are entitled to a fair trial governed by rules defined in the Evidence Act and elsewhere. The pendulum has swung too far in favour of the accused and is limiting effective prosecution. It is time for the pendulum to swing back to support victims of violence in line with reasonable community expectations.

We call on you as the responsible Minister to urgently to lead these reforms.