



PRESS RELEASE (No. 8 of 2019)

DPP ESTABLISHES SEXUAL CRIMES DIVISION AND ISSUES GUIDELINES ON PROSECUTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CASES

As part of a major restructure within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Mr Christopher Pryde, has created a new Sexual Crimes Division to replace the current Child Protection Division of the Office of the DPP and has established within it a Victim and Witness Assistance Unit to provide greater support and assistance to victims and vulnerable prosecution witnesses.

In recognition of the need to focus more resources into resolving the difficulties faced in prosecuting child sexual offences, the DPP has also issued Guidelines on Prosecuting Child Sexual Abuse Cases and Other Crimes Against Children (the “Guidelines”) which will come into effect from 1st September 2019.

The DPP said: “For a long time there has been a need to focus more on the needs of victims within the criminal justice system, particularly child sexual assault victims. The period between the offending and the date of trial in the High Court can be anything from 18 months to 3 years and during that time victims and their needs are often ignored. This has an especially pronounced effect on the victims of child sexual offending who suffer disproportionately particularly in terms of mental health outcomes.

The establishment of the Victim and Witness Assistance Unit within a revamped Sexual Offences Division is part of the ODPP’s longer term strategy to deal more effectively with the problems of prosecuting sexual offences in Fiji. The Guidelines are an update of previous guidelines issued in 2009 and are to assist prosecutors efficiently prosecute child sexual abuse cases and cases where children are victims of crimes in a manner that will ensure the best interests of the child are identified and met at every stage. We also intend working

closer with the Police in achieving better outcomes for child victims and the Police Commissioner has expressed his support for the Guidelines.”

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6 August 2019

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is an independent office established under section 117 of the 2013 Fijian Constitution. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is motivated by the principle that it is in the interests of justice that the guilty be brought to justice and the innocent are not wrongly convicted.
