

Media Release

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**NSW Parliamentary Committee Calls on NSW Police To Release “Hidden”**

**Policing Blacklist Policy**

The NSW Parliament Law and Safety Committee has just released a report calling on NSW police to make publicly available details surrounding a “hidden” blacklist used by police to target children as young as nine. The report, titled the ‘[The Adequacy of Youth Diversionary Programs in New South Wales’](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2464#tab-reportsandgovernmentresponses)[[1]](#footnote-2), looks into the adequacy of youth diversional programs to deter juvenile offenders from long-term involvement with the criminal justice system.

Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) welcomes the Committee’s recommendation to make the Suspect Targeting Management Plan (STMP) policy publicly available, but is of the view that this does not go far enough to address the deep concerns about the impact of this program on young people. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are disproportionately represented, making up over 50% of those on the STMP.

Samantha Lee, Head of Police Accountability Practice at Redfern Legal states, “The STMP has been operating behind closed doors for too many years. Making this policy public would bring much-needed transparency to this hidden blacklist, but what we really want to see is for those under the age of 18 to be removed from this aggressive policing program, which entrenches young people into the criminal justice system.”

Dr Vicki Sentas, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, UNSW and the convenor of the RLC Police Powers Clinic, who co-authored the 2017 [Youth Justice Coalition Report on the STMP](http://www.yjc.org.au/report.html)[[2]](#footnote-3), said:

“The Committee’s finding that the STMP is an important community safety tool that should be retained is wrong and not supported by the evidence before the Inquiry. The Committee heard compelling evidence that young people should not be placed on the STMP because it undermines youth diversion efforts. The evidence from a range of stakeholders reflects and endorses our 2017 research findings that the STMP has detrimental social impacts on young people and is not good crime prevention.

“There is still absolutely no evidence on the public record from police that this extraordinary policy is either appropriate or effective. At the very least, BOCSAR should be provided with regular data in order to conduct an independent, public evaluation of the program.”

The report makes a number of findings and recommendations, including:

* The STMP is an important community safety tool that should be retained
* The NSW Police make the STMP policy and high-level operational arrangements publicly available
* The NSW Police introduce guidelines to limit confrontational practices and language, maintain respectful lines of communication and avoid the possibility of unnecessary escalation of interactions when dealing with people under 18 years are policed
* The Committee supports initiatives within the NSW Police Force so that children under the age of 12 years cannot be placed on an STMP without approval at the Assistant Commissioner level. Furthermore, it supports extending this initiative so that it applies to any child under the age of 14 years.

**RLC police powers solicitor Sam Lee is available for interview:** contact Finn O’Keefe, RLC Communications Manager: 02 9698 7277 | 0424 548 019 | [finn@rlc.org.au](mailto:finn@rlc.org.au)

**Dr Vicki Sentas is available for interview**: v.sentas@unsw.edu.au

1. Legislative Assembly, Committee on Law and Safety (2018). *The adequacy of youth diversionary programs in New South Wales*. Report no. 2/56 Committee on Law and Safety. NSW Government, Sydney. Availabe at: bit.ly/2Dinrl8 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Sentas, V., Pandolfini, C. (2017). *Policing Young People in NSW: A study of the Suspect Targeting Management Plan*. Youth Justice Coalition NSW, Sydney. Available at: http://www.yjc.org.au/report.html [↑](#footnote-ref-3)