1. The criminal justice system plays an important role in creating a safe community for Queenslanders. Equally as important is the need to ensure that people within the community also enjoy a sense of safety.
2. The task of sentencing is complex and is one of the most difficult functions performed by the courts.
3. It is vital that the Queensland community has confidence in the criminal sentencing process.
4. In Queensland, the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* sets out the purposes of sentencing and sentencing principles.
5. Australia has two established Sentencing Advisory Councils; one in Victoria and one in New South Wales. The overall objectives of these bodies is to promote consistency in sentencing, to stimulate balanced public debate on sentencing issues and to incorporate informed public opinion into the process thereby enhancing public confidence in the sentencing system. These bodies have advisory, research, education and consultative functions. They have broad based memberships comprising persons experienced in the areas of sentencing and the criminal justice system, and include community representation.
6. Cabinet approved the creation of a Sentencing Advisory Council for Queensland
7. Cabinet approved the development of measures to strengthen the adult sentencing regime with regard to certain serious offending, by:
   * amending section 9 of the Penalties and Sentences Act to insert a provision that an offender who commits a sexual offence/s against a child under 16 years must serve an actual period of imprisonment unless there are exceptional circumstances;
   * amending section 9 of the Penalties and Sentences Act to insert a provision that in considering the seriousness of an offence committed by a repeat offender, the court is to treat each previous relevant conviction as an aggravating factor when determining the appropriate sentence (however the penalty imposed must not be disproportionate to the gravity of the current offence) ; and
   * amending Part 9A of the Penalties and Sentences Act to insert a provision that violence to children, particularly when death results, is to be regarded as an aggravating factor when considering the discretion to declare an offence to be a serious violent offence.
8. *Attachments*
   * Nil