

# No murder convictions for 10 years in ACT

AAP

THE ACT Government has been told it must introduce a raft of reforms to address Canberra's lack of murder convictions over the past decade.

Canberra's questionable strike rate, which has not resulted in a single murder conviction for more than 10 years, has cast doubts over the strength of territory murder laws.

A month-long inquiry into the issue handed down a list of recommendations today, calling on the [ACT Government](#) to tighten up legislation to put it on a par with the rest of the country.

But the territory Government rejected an earlier bid to toughen its laws, claiming it was "complicating".

Among calls to increase manslaughter sentences, the committee asked for an expansion of Canberra's legal definition of murder to include instances where an injury causes death.

Earlier, the [ACT Police](#) brought up the 2008 case of Glen Porritt, who killed his mother after stabbing her multiple times in the head, neck and face, but was found not guilty of murder.

The judge ruled he had not intended to kill her.

The committee also called for the Government to conduct its own sentencing inquiry, as well as advising a direct lift in manslaughter sentences from a maximum 20 to 25 years and from 26 to 31 years in aggravated manslaughter cases.

It argues the [ACT Law Reform Advisory Council](#) should be handed greater powers and consideration, given to uniform murder laws across the country.

"The committee believes that there is some disquiet about elements of the law which is exacerbated at the time of high profile cases," reads the report, which was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

"One of the persistent themes that came out in both written and oral evidence was a concern that people who had perpetrated violent crimes that resulted in death were not being sentenced appropriately.

"There is strong support for harmonisation (of the laws)."

The committee rejected perceived community views that Canberra was soft on murderers, saying the statistics did not back up that view.

It also dismissed the ACT Government's attempted changes to draft murder laws, when it tried to include the causing of serious harm in the murder definition.

The committee declared the change was complicating the debate making it harder to prove intent before the act itself.