Presumption of Bail Reversed for Repeat Violent Offenders

Amendments to the *Bail Act* will further strengthen laws that deal with serious violent offenders and give the Northern Territory among the toughest criminal laws in the country.

The Attorney-General Chris Burns said the Territory Government is committed to tackling violent crime in the community.

“Last week the Parliament debated and passed the *Sentencing (Violent Offences) Amendment Bill* to ensure offenders will serve an actual term of imprisonment for serious assaults,” Dr Burns said.

“Today we debated and passed the *Serious Violent Offenders (Presumption Against Bail) Amendment Bill* to reverse the presumption of bail for those who are charged with a serious violent offence within five years of being found guilty of a first serious violent offence*.

“So the onus is on the accused to show why they should get bail. If the accused does get bail but breaches any of their conditions, the court must revoke bail and remand them in custody.

“Beefing up our sentencing and bail laws puts violent offenders on notice that not only will they go to jail the first time for a violent assault but the presumption of bail will be reversed.

Dr Burns said the Territory Government makes no apologies for being tough on crime.

“Every Territorian has the right to feel safe in their homes or going about their daily business – and no one wants to see someone found guilty of a violent assault either going unpunished or receiving a light sentence,” he said.

“The Territory Government is taking a fresh approach that we believe will deliver real results.”

*The definition of serious violent offences under the *Bail Act* covers offences punishable by a term of imprisonment of five years or more such as aggravated assault causing harm, robbery and manslaughter.

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