MINIMUM SENTENCES FOR VIOLENT OFFENDERS
February 14th, 2013

Violent offenders will now serve guaranteed gaol time after changes to the Sentencing Act were passed in the Northern Territory Parliament tonight.

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice John Elferink said the changes will remove the option for magistrates to fully suspend a gaol sentence when the offender has committed a violent assault.

“Serious violent offenders now face mandatory minimum sentences of three months for the first offence or twelve months for repeat offenders. In addition, offenders who assault workers and cause physical harm will now, under this Act and the new legislation passed yesterday, face three months mandatory imprisonment.

“The community expects that if you commit a crime, you will face consequences and if that is a serious crime, the consequences will be serious.

“This legislation demonstrates to the victims of serious crime that perpetrators of these violent assaults will go to prison. It also sends a clear message to serious and repeat violent offenders that if they commit a violent offence they will serve genuine gaol time.

“Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis and the magistrate can use the exemption clause included in the legislation.

“These new mandatory minimum sentences correct the failed attempt by the former Labor government to be tough on crime.

“This Act, together with the One Punch and Assault on Workers legislation, demonstrates the Mills Government’s serious commitment to keeping Territory families safer,” Mr Elferink said.

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