ATTORNEY-GENERAL

FLEEING FROM POLICE TO ATTRACT UP TO FIVE YEARS JAIL

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People who force police into a pursuit could face a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment under tough new legislation to be introduced during this fortnight’s Parliamentary Sittings.

Attorney-General John Elferink will propose harsher penalties for offenders who speed or drive recklessly or dangerously when evading police.

“The proposed change seeks to ensure that a person is met with the full force of the law when they refuse to comply with police instruction to stop a vehicle,” Mr Elferink said.

“Fleeing from police at high speeds in a vehicle is a serious and dangerous offence and will be treated as such.

A person who engages in a police pursuit is not only endangering their own life, but also endangers others.

“I will not tolerate innocent members of the public being put in grave danger because a person believes they can evade the police and the law.

“The Country Liberals Government is committed to ensuring that a person’s punishment for breaking the law matches the seriousness of the offence and properly meets community expectation.”

Current legislation attracts a significantly lower penalty than the proposed new legislation, with an offender subject to a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment under the Motor Vehicles Act and 12 months under the Traffic Act for a fail to stop.

The legislation will also apply when police call off a pursuit due to the safety of the public, themselves, and passengers in the vehicle, and the offender is located and arrested at a later time.

Mr Elferink said the changes adopt a recommendation made by a Northern Territory Coroner last year following a tragic case in Alice Springs which resulted in two passengers killed and two seriously injured when the driver of a vehicle attempted to flee police.

“The driver of the vehicle was travelling at speeds in excess of 170km/h, causing police to sensibly call off the pursuit and limit any danger to themselves and innocent bystanders,” Mr Elferink said.

“The Country Liberals Government is committed to securing the safety of Territorians and penalising those who purposely snub the law.”

Police recorded 101 incidents of traffic pursuits in the Northern Territory last financial year.

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