Further protection for victims of domestic violence

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The Northern Territory Government will seek to amend the Bail Act to ensure that more repeat domestic violence offenders are kept behind bars and not granted bail.

The Bill aims to protect victims of domestic violence and prevents individuals with a history of violent offending from being released back into the community if they breach a Domestic Violence Order, Attorney-General John Elferink said.

Under the proposed legislation, offenders who breach a Domestic Violence Order, and have been found guilty of a Domestic Violence Order contravention offence within two years, will be subject to the presumption against bail.

The proposed changes would amend current legislation by removing the neutral presumption, which neither presumes that a person should or shouldn’t be granted bail.

“The Country Liberals Government is focused on protecting victims and ensuring that offenders are not allowed to simply be released back into the homes of the very people they offended against,” Mr Elferink said.

“In September, the Northern Territory Government launched its $18 million 2014-17 Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy.

“The comprehensive victim-focused strategy aims to create an improved and coordinated approach to reduce and prevent domestic violence.

“While efforts are made to protect victims, perpetrators must also be held accountable and sent a clear message by the Police, Courts and society that domestic violence is not acceptable.

“Police are continuing to target repeat domestic violence offenders, applying a zero-tolerance, prosecution approach.”

Offences under the Criminal Code of terrorism, sabotage and arson have also been inserted to the Bail Act and will be subject to a presumption against bail.

Matters which automatically attract the mandatory minimum sentencing provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act will also have a presumption against bail.
The Bill has been subject to industry consultation and will be introduced to Parliament next week.

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