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TOUGHER LAWS FOR SERIAL VIOLENT OFFENDERS

New legislation to be introduced into the Territory Parliament tomorrow will further strengthen the hand of Police in targeting the Territory’s violent offenders, Police Minister Paul Henderson said.

The Bail Amendment (Repeat Offenders) Bill 2005 introduces a range of measures to toughen bail laws against serial violent offenders, to make it harder for them to get bail.

“It’s been shown that all too often the people who commit violent offences against others, including assaults and sexual assaults, go on to re-offend,” Mr Henderson said.

“With the extra resources delivered by the Government’s $75M Building our Police Force Plan, NT Police have been able to establish Personal and Domestic Violence Protection Units in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

“These officers are using proven intelligence-led policing tactics to target repeat violent offenders, and these new legislative measures will strengthen their hand.

“Police have advised that family members in particular are at risk of being assaulted when serial violent offenders are released on bail.

“Under the new legislation, repeat serial offenders caught committing another serious offence while on bail will no longer be able to walk into court assuming they will be let out on bail.

“Where serious violent offence is an issue, there will be a presumption against bail.

“With the presumption against bail they will in all likelihood be held in custody while awaiting their trial, removing the opportunity for them to commit further violent crimes.”

In determining whether a person is a serial violent offender, criminal histories will be considered as far back as 10 years for serious violent offences (including robbery, assault and home invasion), and two years for serious offences.

“Violent crime is totally unacceptable in our community, and the Repeat Offenders Bill will further strengthen Police work to get serial violent offenders off our streets,” said Mr Henderson.

The Bill will be introduced tomorrow.

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