



MEDIA RELEASE

**Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations**

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SPOTLIGHT ON STANDARD NON-PAROLE PERIODS

Two high level bodies are examining how to make sure sex offenders feel the full force of the law when they come before judges, Attorney General John Hatzistergos said today.

Mr Hatzistergos said both the Sentencing Council and a working party being chaired by a Supreme Court judge were examining various aspects of standard non-parole periods.

“Even though tough standard non-parole periods are set down in legislation, we are working to ensure that courts are consistent in the sentences they hand down,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

“The Government believes that serious offenders should feel the full force of the law.”

The Sentencing Council will work on the issue of ensuring that standard non-parole periods are properly applied to offences, following a recommendation which had been made in its landmark report on sex crime last year.

In addition, a high level Sexual Offences Working Party, chaired by Supreme Court judge Elizabeth Fullerton has been convened and will identify whether any additional sex offences should have a standard non parole period applied.

Mr Hatzistergos said the working party would build on new laws aimed at safeguarding adults and children from sexual predators, following the Sentencing Council report.

The new laws, which came into force this year doubled the maximum penalty for possessing child pornography to 10 years imprisonment and created a new aggravated offence of having sex with a child under 10, which will carry a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The working party is also examining the offences of persistent sexual abuse of a child, introducing a definition of act of indecency, increasing the maximum penalties for child prostitution offences and achieving greater uniformity between NSW sexual offences and Commonwealth offences for sexual crimes committed overseas.