



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations

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REPORT BACKS NSW APPROACH TO SERIOUS SEX OFFENDERS

The Rees Government will amend the law to ensure the first hand experiences of sexual assault victims are heard in court when judges are considering keeping offenders behind bars after their sentences have expired.

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said it was important Supreme Court judges listen to the statements of victims when they are weighing evidence to make Continuing Detention Orders (CDOs).

“Written statements provided by victims of sexual attack, who undergo enormous trauma, should be heard by judges when they are trying to decide whether to keep serious sex offenders off the streets,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

CDOs were introduced in 2006 to keep serious sex offenders, who have failed to undergo rehabilitation programs in prisons, after they have completed their sentences.

The amendment is one of 24 recommendations made by a Sentencing Council report, which supports the continued use of the *Crimes (Serious Sex Offenders) Act 2006*.

“The Rees Government welcomes the Sentencing Council’s report, which is an endorsement of our tough policy toward serious sex offenders.”

“The Government will continue to place a high priority on protecting the community from sexual predators, particularly those who are at a high risk of re-offending.”

Mr Hatzistergos said 24 orders have been imposed in respect of 18 serious sex offenders.

CDOs are used in cases where the offender has refused to participate in prison programs to address their behaviour. Sex offenders placed on Extended Supervision Orders (ESOs) are closely monitored in the community and may be required to wear an electronic tracking device.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Government would also amend the law to:

- Allow the court to make an additional ESO to come immediately after a CDO has expired.
- Allow the court to substitute CDOs and ESOs, if warranted.

The Sentencing Council recommended the laws enabling CDOs and ESOs be monitored on a long-term basis to determine whether they reduce rates of recidivism.

Other recommendations made by the Sentencing Council’s report involving amendments to the *Crimes (Serious Sex Offenders) Act 2006* are also being considered as part of a statutory review of the law that is currently underway.