



MEDIA RELEASE

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

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HOUSE-BREAKING CHILD SEX OFFENDERS TO FACE LIFE

Sexual predators that break into homes and have intercourse with children under 10 could die in jail under the toughest legislation of its kind in the country, announced NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos.

“Children have a right to feel safe in their own homes. Breaking into a property to commit a sex offence against a child is an abhorrent crime,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

Sexual intercourse with a child under 10 carries a jail sentence of up to 25 years. Under the new legislation, being introduced to Parliament today, the maximum sentence will increase to life if the crime is committed during a break and enter.

The legislation builds on tough new sex crime laws passed through NSW Parliament in December and follows a shocking incident in Grafton when a man assaulted a young girl as she slept in her grandmother’s house.

“It is important we amend the law when crimes of this magnitude happen to ensure that the penalty is in proportion to what occurred.”

The new legislation also includes a provision to criminalize attempts to commit domestic violence offences including attempts to stalk, intimidate and breach AVOs.

Mr Hatzistergos said this will ensure police will be able to prosecute individuals while they are in the act of preparing to commit one of these offences.

“Preparations and attempts to commit stalking are just as serious as the act itself and will still be considered a crime.”

The legislation will also expand the Sentencing Council from 13 to 15 members, adding a wider range of backgrounds and bringing more experience to the important task of monitoring the length of sentences for criminal offences.

“The Sentencing Council acts as an expert body which advises and informs government about appropriate penalties for crimes,” he said.

Mr Hatzistergos said one of the new positions will require a candidate with expertise in criminal law or sentencing. The second position requires a candidate with academic or research expertise in the law or criminology.