

Stricter bail laws to protect the community

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27/04/2020 | Vickie Chapman MP

The presumption of bail will be reversed for offenders who assault emergency services workers and frontline hospital staff under tough new measures proposed by the Marshall Liberal Government.

Attorney-General, Vickie Chapman said the State Government would this week introduce amendments to State Parliament toughening up bail provisions as part of measures to better protect the community.

“The presumption of bail is an important part of our legal system – however, there is an obvious heightened risk to the health and safety of our community at this time,” Attorney-General Chapman said.

“Stricter bail laws are part of the Marshall Government’s strong plan to protect South Australians during the coronavirus pandemic.

“In order to keep our community safe, we’re broadening the range of offences where bail will not be automatically granted.

“This will now include any offence against a person acting in the course of their duties as an emergency worker, medical practitioner, nurse, midwife or health practitioner attending out of hours callout.

“These amendments also widen the criteria to include police support workers, court security officers, passenger transport workers, protective security officers and animal welfare inspectors.

“Offenders who cause harm to or assault these workers will need to show special circumstances why their bail should not automatically be refused.”

Attorney-General Chapman said the new provisions would help to protect those workers on the frontline.

“Our frontline staff continue to be the real heroes in this pandemic,” she said.

“They are putting the health of the community above their own needs, and we need to ensure they are adequately protected.”

The provisions also include reversing the presumption of bail for serious criminal trespass in residential and non-residential premises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With so many people working from home and numerous premises closed, commercial properties are currently far more exposed to trespassers,” Ms Chapman said.

“It’s a sad reality, but it’s highly likely we will see an increase in the number of trespassing offences over the course of this pandemic.

“By reversing the presumption of bail for these offences, we are working to increase the community’s safety during this challenging time.”

The new provisions will operate while the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 is in operation.