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DANGEROUS OFFENDERS LOCKED UP FOR GOOD

A new law announced today by Premier Mike Rann and Attorney-General Michael Atkinson will keep the State's most dangerous offenders locked up in prison until they die.

The *Criminal Law (Sentencing) (Dangerous Offenders) Amendment Bill 2007* will give the Attorney-General new powers to seek the removal of the non-parole periods for our most dangerous criminals.

"I make no apology for taking this tough stance on locking up the State's most notorious criminals for good," Premier Rann says.

"There can surely be not a single person in South Australia who would relish the prospect of waking up each morning with a serial killer or an unrehabilitated sex killer as their neighbour.

"Such monsters will not leave prison while I am Premier of this State, and if this legislation is passed, for long after," he says.

Under this new legislation, the Attorney-General can make an application to the Court of Criminal Appeal, the highest criminal court in the State, to have the non-parole period removed for a prisoner considered to be a dangerous offender.

"I can promise the people of South Australia that the second this legislation comes into force, the first case that the Attorney-General will be asked to consider will be that of von Einem.

"And where there is little prospect of rehabilitation, or, where the community needs to be further protected from similar offenders, the Attorney-General will ask the court to make sure that they are not released either," Mr Rann says.

The *Dangerous Offenders Bill* also sets tough new minimum non-parole periods for major indictable offences where the victim has been killed or permanently incapacitated.

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson says that this will ensure a range of offenders spend longer in prison.

"In our society murder is considered the most serious offence, and, for that there is a mandatory life sentence. We intend that unless there are exceptional circumstances convicted murderers will serve a minimum of twenty years in jail," Mr Atkinson says.

"For other major indictable offences, where the victim has died or been left permanently incapacitated, we will require that the offender serve at least four-fifths of their head sentence.

“That means a head sentence of 15 years will see such an offender serving at least 12 years in jail. It could be as little as seven or eight years in jail under current parole laws.

“We are sending a clear message to the courts that a top consideration has got to be protection of the public when they are sentencing dangerous offenders.

“We went to the last election pledging to protect the public from dangerous offenders and to provide justice for victims. This new legislation delivers on those pledges,” Mr Atkinson says.

Mr Atkinson says the *Dangerous Offenders Bill* continues the Rann Labor Government’s tradition of placing the rights of victims and the community at the forefront of our law and order policies.

“If an offender is dangerous there’s only one place for them. In jail. This new legislation will make sure that is where they stay.”