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LAW TO STOP HICKS PROFITING COMES INTO FORCE

The State Government's new law to prevent David Hicks from profiting from selling the story of his exploits and detention, and from his conviction by the U.S. Government of terrorist-related activities, has today come into force.

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson proposed the law earlier this year, shortly after David Hicks returned to South Australia to serve out the sentence handed down to him by an American military tribunal; the first Guantanamo Bay detainee to be convicted under the *U.S. Military Commissions Act 2006*.

At that tribunal, Hicks pleaded guilty to providing material support to an international terrorist organisation and court documents show he received training on guerilla warfare, weapons, kidnapping and assassination.

Those documents also reveal he was issued with an automatic rifle, ammunition and grenades, and joined al Qaeda and Taliban fighters near the Kandahar airport in Afghanistan.

"This week Australia has mourned the death of Private Luke Worsley, the fourth Australian soldier to die on active duty in Afghanistan. There can be few people in this country who would think it right that someone who joined the forces that now stand opposed to our troops should profit from his story," Mr Atkinson says.

The Attorney-General emphasised that this legislation was not meant to gag Hicks.

"I wholeheartedly support Hicks ability to tell his tale.

"I just do not support a mercenary profiting from selling his story to the highest bidder.

"This new law will not prevent his writing about his exploits or telling it to someone else – but it will prevent his making any money from that process," Mr Atkinson says.

Although both Commonwealth and South Australian law already allow for the confiscation of the profits of crime, peculiarities in the Hicks case, including that the offences occurred outside Australia, caused the State Government to be concerned about potential loopholes.

Mr Atkinson says Hicks has, by all accounts, been a model prisoner at Yatala, serving out his sentence quietly and without incident.

Hicks is due for release on 29 December.

"That release will undoubtedly descend into a media circus but now it will not be one where the main act walks away with a pile of cash for selling his story."