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BILL TO STOP HICKS PROFITING FROM SUPPORTING TERRORISM

The Rann Government is introducing legislation to stop David Hicks from profiting from his support for terrorism.

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson will this week introduce the *Criminal Assets Confiscation (Serious Offences) Amendment Bill 2007* which will ensure that Hicks will not profit from his exploits.

“I am concerned that Hicks may try to profit from telling the tale of his exploits, his detention and his conviction,” Attorney-General Michael Atkinson said.

“Questions have also been raised about the adequacy of Federal legislation in preventing Hicks from profiting, with the Prime Minister saying the Commonwealth may have to legislate to close any loopholes.

“We are not going to take any chances that the gap will be left unfilled. That is why we are proposing the South Australian Parliament pass this bill to stop him selling his story.

“Hicks is serving his sentence at Yatala Labour Prison, and is expected to be released at the end of the year. We therefore have an obligation to act on this matter.”

South Australian law already allows for the confiscation of the profits of crime, but it currently applies only to serious offences committed in breach of Australian law.

Hicks has 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.

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

“Given Hicks’ offences occurred overseas, we’re amending our legislation to cover serious offences, such as the support of terrorism, committed outside Australia,” Mr Atkinson said.

“I support the right of individuals to tell their stories, but I do not support convicted persons profiting from selling their story.

“This bill will not prevent him writing about his exploits, or telling it to someone else – but it will prevent him making any money from that process.

“This is not a bill to gag Hicks, but to stop him profiting from his exploits.

“For instance, if a relative or a media outlet make money from telling Hicks’ story, this legislation will prevent any of those profits being passed onto Hicks in any form.”