

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Draper to lobby for change to Bail Act to keep violent offenders behind bars

June 3 2004

Police need greater powers to ensure violent offenders are kept behind bars as they progress through the court system according to Member for Tamworth Peter Draper.

Responding to recent cases in which suspects accused of violent crime have been released back into the community only to re-offend, Mr Draper said he would lobby for an amendment to the Bail Act to give police a wider basis to appeal bail decisions by magistrates.

Under Section 25A of the Bail Act 1978, a police prosecutor can appeal a magistrate's decision to grant bail to a suspect who has committed a serious offence. By lodging a stay of the decision, the suspect is retained in custody and the bail application is reconsidered in the Supreme Court. Under the Act a serious offence is constituted by murder or any other offence punishable by imprisonment for life; or sexual intercourse with a child.

Mr Draper believes the definition needs to be expanded to include crimes of violence such as assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

"Recent cases in Tamworth have convinced me the Act simply does not go far enough in protecting the community from perpetrators of violent crime," Mr Draper said.

Mr Draper said he was shocked to learn of a man accused of a violent assault on a man in Tamworth being set free on bail providing he did not enter Tamworth.

"It's alleged the suspect failed to meet his bail conditions and returned to Tamworth only to be re-arrested after bashing on someone's door," he said.

"The community has an expectation they will be protected and that people accused of violent crime will be dealt with according to the severity of the offence."

"I have had victims come into my office beside themselves with fear because the person responsible for inflicting their injuries has been released back into the community."

www.peterdraper.com.au

Media Contacts: Peter Draper 0417 290 376 Electorate Office ph. 6766 1422
Donna Hurley 0419 409 538 Parliament House ph. 9230 2341

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

“Front line police who reflect community expectations are arresting these people on a daily basis and I believe they have a truer indication of what to expect from recidivist offenders.”

“If police have a compelling case and believe there is a strong likelihood the suspect will re-offend or poses a danger to society, then they should be able to appeal a magistrate’s decision to grant bail.”

Mr Draper said he would approach the Attorney General Bob Debus asking for a review of Section 25A.

End Release

www.peterdraper.com.au

Media Contacts: Peter Draper 0417 290 376 Electorate Office ph. 6766 1422
Donna Hurley 0419 409 538 Parliament House ph. 9230 2341