

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Draper lobbies Parliament over changes to NSW Bail Act 1978**

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Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has stepped up his campaign to amend the NSW Bail Act to increase police powers of appealing a magistrate's decision to bail suspects accused of violent crime.

Mr Draper spoke raised the issue in Parliament calling on the NSW Attorney General to review Section 25A of the Act which gives police power to stay a bail decision for offences of murder, those punishable by life imprisonment and specific sex crimes against children.

"I believe the category of offences should be expanded to include those where there is no presumption in favour of bail such as serious personal violence offences including malicious wounding and assault occasioning grievous bodily harm," he said.

The NSW Bail Act is currently undergoing its first major rewrite since its enactment in 1978 with the NSW Attorney General describing it as a "confusing patchwork of amendments".

"In the majority of cases magistrates make the right decision but police and community members are telling me that certain cases in which suspects have been released are falling well short of their expectations.

"Police can have a bail decision reviewed but it comes too late as the suspect has already been released and the process is onerous and discourages police to pursue it."

Mr Draper said figures sourced from the NSW Police Bail Working Report on Best Practice Bail showed in the 12-month period between January 1 and December 31, 2002, police opposed bail in 105,773 matters only to have the courts release 65 per cent of those suspects.

"I welcome the fact the Bail Act is under review, but now is the time for the Attorney General to consider community expectations and amend Section 25A to give police greater powers to and keep suspects who pose a threat of violence to the community behind bars," he said.

***A copy of the Hansard of Mr Draper's speech in Parliament is attached.***

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