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MEDIA RELEASE

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HISTORIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS DELIVERED

The final piece of the NSW Government's 'tough and smart' Criminal Justice Reform Package will come into force tomorrow, with new sentencing laws to improve community safety by driving down reoffending.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the stronger sentencing laws cap off transformative changes to the administration of criminal justice from the time an offender is charged until the end of their sentence, and beyond in exceptional cases.

"The early appropriate guilty plea scheme is already encouraging offenders to own up to their crimes earlier, helping victims get on with their lives and police to get back to fighting crime. Reforms to parole which make community safety paramount are ensuring more offenders access more effective rehabilitation," Mr Speakman said.

"The government is also protecting the community through the High Risk Offender Scheme which keeps the most dangerous sex and violent offenders behind bars or under close supervision if they pose an unacceptable risk after completing their sentence.

"From tomorrow, suspended sentences will be abolished as a sentencing option and will be replaced by stronger Intensive Correction Orders (ICOs) with supervision as a standard condition and a range of other available conditions including home detention, electronic monitoring, curfews, and community service work."

Minister for Police Troy Grant said the reforms are helping to get police back on the beat quicker instead of spending hours in court.

"Police officers put their lives on the line everyday to protect the community. These reforms should help ensure their hard work leads to offenders serving sentences appropriate to their crimes," Mr Grant said.

Minister for Corrections David Elliott said, "These reforms have delivered clear authority for Community Corrections to manage parole breaches. Community safety is the paramount consideration for the State Parole Authority when making parole decisions."

ICOs will not be available to offenders guilty of a range of serious offences including murder, manslaughter, sexual assault, any sexual offences against a child, an offence involving the discharge of a firearm and terrorism offences.

The reforms also introduce a new legal presumption that domestic violence offenders will receive a prison term or supervised community-based sentence.

Other new sentencing options include Community Correction Orders (CCO) for offences that don't warrant a prison sentence. The CCO may include community service work requirements, curfews and supervision to hold offenders accountable and tackle the causes of their offending behaviour.

The sentencing reforms are part of a broader \$330 million NSW Government Strategy to reduce reoffending which includes recruiting close to 200 new Community Correction staff to boost capacity to supervise offenders.

The strategy is supported by the NSW Government's \$3.8 billion prison infrastructure plan which is delivering thousands of extra inmate beds across the state. For more information visit the Justice website at <https://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/Reforms/reform.aspx>.

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