

# Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Water

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



**DELIVERING  
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Tuesday, 5 February 2019

## TOUGHER LAWS TO SOLVE CRIME AND PROTECT POLICE

The Andrews Labor Government is strengthening laws to further protect police, streamline DNA powers and target organised crime and dangerous drugs.

The *Justice Legislation (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2018*, to be introduced into Parliament today, will help police crack thousands of unsolved crimes by removing the need for Police to obtain a court order to take DNA samples from certain suspects and offenders, including adults suspected of committing an indictable offence.

Currently there are more than 55,000 crime scene DNA profiles held by police that do not match any person's profile. These crimes could be explained with new DNA evidence that will be collected under the new laws.

Police will also be able to take DNA samples without a court order from 15 to 17-year-olds suspected of serious offences, including serious injury in circumstances of gross violence, rape, home invasion and armed robbery.

The new powers will enhance Victoria Police's ability to identify criminals, particularly serious recidivist offenders, reduce the administrative burden on police and courts, and help solve serious and high-volume crime.

New offences and higher penalties will also apply to people who seek to harm police officers, protective services officers (PSOs), police custody officers (PCOs) and custodial officers. Under the changes:

- Discharging a firearm when reckless to the safety of a police officer or PSO (including firing into the air or at the ground) will be made an offence punishable by up to 15 years in jail
- Intimidation of a police officer, PSO, PCO, custodial officer, youth custodial officer or their families will be an offence punishable by up to 10 years in jail
- Armed offenders found guilty of common assault against a police officer or PSO on duty will face higher penalties of 10 years in jail, or 15 years if the offender was armed with a firearm or imitation firearm.

A new offence has also been created to target organised crime gangs. Trafficking in a commercial quantity of a drug of dependence, carried out for the benefit of, or at the direction of, a criminal organisation, will be punishable by up to life imprisonment.

The quantity of heroin for large commercial or commercial trafficking offences has also been reduced, bringing it in line with equivalent quantities for ice. This will mean that more heroin dealers will face the higher penalties applying to those offences. Offenders will also face harsher asset confiscation powers.

The Bill will also enable police to address and disrupt suspected serious criminal activity among second-hand dealers, including the auto-wrecking and scrap metal industry.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

*"We're giving police DNA powers they need to quickly and effectively identify and prosecute high harm offenders, reducing harm and cracking down on recidivist offenders."*

*"These new powers will help reduce high volume crimes like car theft, and reduce recidivism by identifying high harm offenders more quickly and in serious cases like murder."*

*"We're also introducing new intimidation offences to ensure that our police, PSOs and custodial officers as well as their families, cannot be targeted by criminals for the incredible work that they do every day."*

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