
Media Release

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PAROLE BILL SUPPORTED

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed says the Justice Legislation Amendment (Parole Reform and other Matters) Bill introduced urgently into Parliament this week, shows the respect the Victorian public has for its police.

“The Supreme Court has said the murder of a police officer deserves the harshest sentence that can be imposed, being life imprisonment. Such an act is considered an attack on the very foundations of society,” Ms Sheed said.

To date, 159 members of Victoria Police have been killed in the line of duty. 30 of those were murdered, including Shepparton’s Constable Damian Eyre, who was shot in the notorious Walsh Street Murders.

“A 2008 Sydney Morning Herald analysis of the event described it as “not an attack on police, but on the rule of law”, and as such, a group of businessmen donated \$50,000 for equipment as police set up a taskforce to investigate the murders,” Ms Sheed said.

Four men stood trial for the killing of Constable Eyre, and his senior at the time, Constable Steven Tyan. They were acquitted in 1991.

A revision of the double jeopardy laws a decade later opened a possibility for the group to be tried again, however it was ruled there was insufficient evidence to do so.

“Should anyone ever be gaoled for the murder of Constables Steven Tynan and Damian Eyre, this legislation would ensure their killers would never be paroled, and I think the community outcry following the death of these young men show there would be a general consensus for this,” Ms Sheed said.

The second part of this legislation provides that a prisoner will be ineligible for parole without first revealing the location of the victim’s body.

There are currently eight prisoners serving custodial sentences in Victoria for murder in cases where the victim’s body was never found, and approximately four parolees.

“Most of us can only imagine the pain and suffering experienced by persons connected to a victim and the inability of those to be able to move on,” Ms Sheed said.

“At the present time, there is no real incentive for a convicted prisoner to reveal the whereabouts of the victims’ remains. This legislation will to some extent provide an incentive as well as a punishment for failing to do so.”

Ms Sheed said while police had the right to feel safe in their duties, it was also vitally important they were not concealed in their office for hours on end, buried under paperwork.

“A lot must be said for law and order in our community,” she said.

“I fear the two-up rule has had a detrimental impact on my electorate.

Our police must be on the beat. They must be out, and they must be highly visible.”

Ends

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