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Emergency Services Protection Bill expanded but criticised by Police Association of SA for falling short of needs

same protection as police under expanded legislation. But do they go far enough? **Mitch Mott**

Emergency room, rural medical personnel along with community correctional officers will get the

@MitchMottTiser May 16, 2019 - 12:00AM The Advertiser



officers and rural medical staff will be given the same protections as police officers under the State Government's proposed Emergency Services Assaults Bill. An amendment to the act, to be debated on Thursday,

more than doubles the maximum penalty for assaulting

emergency service workers from two years to five years in

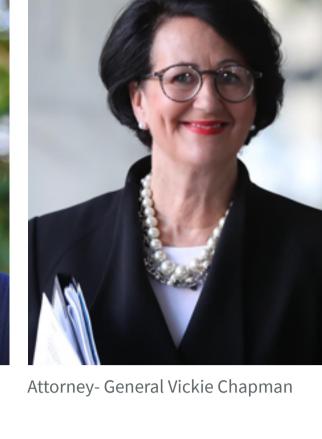
Emergency room nurses and doctors, youth correctional

prison but still falls short of expectations from the South Australian Police Association. The expanded bill is a major concession to appease the association but does not address calls for a separate

offence for assaulting emergency service personnel.







The Association also petitioned for the new law to prevent

suspended sentence if they reoffend between five years. Attorney-General Vickie Chapman said the proposed changes to the law had been expanded following

consultation with the Australian Medical Association and

the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.

anyone convicted of the offence from receiving a

"These penalties would apply to attacks against all emergency services workers — police, firefighters, ambulance officers and correctional services officers," Ms Chapman said.

"Under these amendments, the penalties of up to five or

seven years in prison will also apply where the victim is

working in a hospital emergency department, is engaged

in retrieval medicine or is a rural doctor working in an emergency scenario. "This will afford a greater level of protection to doctors and nurses working in our emergency

departments, and those working in rural and regional

areas."

FROM OUR PARTNERS ☑

Police Association president Mark Carroll said the latest amendments were "too minor to have any impact on the landscape of assaults on police".

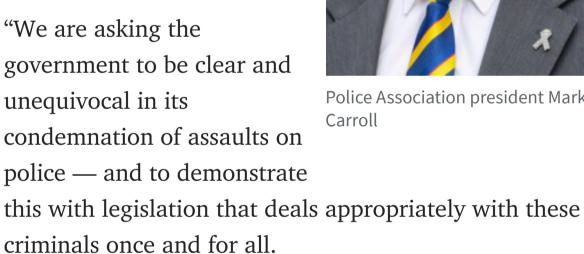
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"We've been very clear all throughout our campaign — we are seeking a dedicated offence, which deals with assaults on police and indeed other emergency services workers,"

Mr Carroll said. "We also want amendments to the Sentencing Act so that there is a specific deterrent

what the state government has proposed so far does not adequately address our concerns. "We are asking the government to be clear and unequivocal in its

in the legislation. Most of



around the edges.



A fight with the state government is not what we're looking for.

"So far, all we have seen are half-measures and tinkering

overwhelming support of the SA public." Opposition police spokesman Lee Odenwalder said Ms

Chapman was playing catch up on the issue and was

"Our requests are not outrageous by any stretch of the

imagination — and they are requests which have the

trying to strengthen the bill to make it more appealing. "Our police officers, ambos and other emergency services workers deserve protection through strong laws.

"It still does not address the central concerns of the Police Association, the Ambulance Employees Association and

General's bill is weak and inadequate.

"Whichever workers are ultimately included, the Attorney-

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others, who are calling for much tougher sentencing guidelines to properly protect our emergency workers."

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