News Release Deputy Premier John Rau

Attorney General
Minister for Planning
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Laws pass to help break criminal code of silence

Attorney General John Rau has welcomed the passing of 'supergrass' laws that encourage those involved in serious and organised crime to break the criminal code of silence.

"We have recently heard about instances involving criminal gangs where there has been very little cooperation with authorities to assist them in their investigations," Mr Rau said.

"The Government does not accept that 'honour amongst thieves' is reasonable behaviour.

"These laws will encourage those who might be loathed to cooperate to act as what is know as a 'supergrass' and to provide important information to police to assist them in their fight against serious and organised crime."

"This type of cooperation can, and does, play a crucial role in combating crime."

Under the laws, offenders who cooperate with police and the co-operation relates directly to combating serious and organised crime will be eligible to receive a significant reduction on their sentence if the court finds that the cooperation is exceptional and contributes significantly to the public interest.

"This is anything but a 'get out of jail free card' as some of the uninformed have suggested," Mr Rau said.

"Offenders involved in serious and organised crime will still be subject to what the court regards as an appropriate punishment, balancing out the nature and gravity of their crime with their cooperation with authorities."

The passing of the *Criminal Law (Sentencing) (Supergrass) Amendment Bill 2012* follows the passing of the *Criminal Law (Sentencing) (Guilty Pleas) Amendment Bill 2012* earlier this week which offers sentence discounts to offenders who enter an early guilty pleas.

The Supergrass Bill, the 22nd passed by the Attorney General this year, comes just in time for the closing of Parliament for 2012.

The laws will come into effect on a date to be proclaimed.