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WA: Tougher requirements for security personnel

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This is a media release issued by Police and Emergency Services Minister John Kobelke

Security personnel will face a range of stricter licensing requirements, including drug testing, identification checks, fingerprinting and licence cancellation provisions, under amendments introduced in to State Parliament today.

Police and Emergency Services Minister John Kobelke said the Security and Related Activities (Control) Amendment Bill 2007 would strengthen the existing regulatory control in respect to the security, crowd control and inquiry investigation (private investigation) industries.

"The Government's Safer Night Spots election commitment focused on removing criminals from the bouncer and security industry," Mr Kobelke said.

"The amendments are aimed at ensuring the integrity and professional standards of security operators, providing reassurance for people encountering their services.

"We need to ensure those protecting the public at nightspots and clubs are free of the influence of criminal activities such as stand-over tactics, drug distribution, money laundering and other illegal activities."

The major reforms include:

- disqualification offences that would prevent a person from holding a licence;
- fingerprinting of all applicants and licensees;
- creation of an additional security licence for unarmed security bodyguards;
- more drug testing of crowd controllers, including security officers carrying a baton and firearm;
- a Code of Conduct for all licensees, irrespective of whether they are members of relevant industry associations or not;
- provisions for security officers who carry a firearm or baton to undergo a medical or appropriate examination as necessary;
- issuing of infringement notices for people who commit minor offences;
- appointment of compliance officers, freeing police to focus on more serious offences and preventing criminal infiltration of the security and related industries;
- the ability to refuse to issue, renew, or suspend a licence, where the person has been charged with an offence that has yet to be dealt with by a court;
- a requirement that a 100-point proof of identity check for new applicants; and
- the ability to issue a temporary licence for short-term purposes to persons with a current equivalent licence in another Australian jurisdiction.

The amendments also introduce additional probity requirements for licence applicants who have resided overseas in one country for more than 12 months in the preceding five years. This information, with other criminal intelligence, could prevent persons who may have potentially become involved in terrorist training or some other form of involvement with such organisations, from obtaining a licence under the Act.

"These amendments will help eliminate domestic and international criminal elements that may be in the security industry and proper background checks will help provide further safeguards to the public," Mr Kobelke said.

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