

Sunday, 19 October 2008

DRUG-MAKING TOOLS RISK JAIL

The Attorney-General Michael Atkinson has warned those involved in making illicit drugs that from today they can be jailed if they're caught with any of 30 listed drug-making items.

“This sends a crystal clear message to drug manufacturers. We won't turn a blind eye to your activities in this State and no element of the drug-making trade will be tolerated,” Mr Atkinson said.

“Where there's smoke there's fire. By banning the means to make illegal substances, we're crippling the drug trade. From today, no-one can have the tools of the drug trade without proving they have a legitimate reason,” Mr Atkinson said.

The prescribed equipment includes:

Hydroponic cannabis equipment, such as:

- some high-intensity lamps, lamp mounts and reflectors used to heat and grow seedlings
- carbon filters used to block the powerful smell of cannabis and evade detection by police
- cannabis bud or head strippers.

Clandestine laboratory equipment, such as:

- some condensers, evaporators, heating tools, stirrers and distilling devices used for cooking illegal drugs
- some funnels, flasks and filters
- tablet and capsule presses
- heroin presses

Drug-making recipes and cannabis growing instructions are also prescribed items.

The laws will also cover prescribed equipment that has been modified or is broken. Offenders face jail time of up to two years or a \$10,000 fine.

“These items have been nominated by police as the equipment most closely linked to cannabis cultivation and amphetamine and heroin production. These items have very few legal uses,” he said.

“Police intelligence reveals some hydroponic equipment stores have been instrumental in supporting S.A's illegal drug making syndicates. Police want to break this link in the chain and we're doing all we can to help them,” Mr Atkinson said.

The changes to the *Controlled Substances Act* also back the Rann Government's tough stance against criminal motorcycle gangs. Making and selling illicit drugs is one of the most lucrative endeavours of outlaw bikies in South Australia.

At the last election the Rann Government promised to impose a jail term of one year and a fine of \$4000 for possessing drug-making items. These laws go well beyond that promise.

Today's changes will be fortified with the passage of the Rann Government's *Controlled Substances (Controlled Drugs, Precursors and Cannabis) Amendment Bill 2008*.

That legislation will lead to an aggravated charge for people caught with both prescribed equipment and chemical ingredients for illicit drugs.

More information about the prescribed items can be found at www.justice.sa.gov.au or by calling the Attorney-General's Department on 8207 1723.