

SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2013

JUSTICE PRECINCT OFFICES
160 MARSDEN STREET
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150**MEDIA STATEMENT****Five-minute parole consideration claims rejected**

The State Parole Authority says parole considerations for offenders take many months and often years – not five minutes as was claimed in the media today.

SPA Chairman and former NSW Chief Magistrate Ian Pike AM said the claims aired in a Sydney newspaper today were a limited snapshot of a single moment during a long and complex procedural process which involved the careful considerations of many expert individuals.

Mr Pike said he highly valued the contribution of Community Members who are appointed specifically to represent community opinions and concerns.

The Authority has 20 members. Twelve are Community Members, including a victims' rights advocate. It also has four Judicial Members – current or former judges or magistrates – and four Official Members who are NSW Police Officers and Corrective Services NSW Community Corrections Officers.

When offenders become due for parole consideration, according to their court-imposed non-parole periods at sentencing, Authority members first receive carefully prepared, comprehensive reports from Corrective Services NSW' Community Corrections Division. In the case of serious offenders, reports are also received from the Serious Offenders Review Council. These reports canvass:

- the offender's criminal history,
- the judge's sentencing remarks,
- psychological and psychiatric reports and victim's submissions
- information on whether the offender has undergone treatment programs
- the offender's behaviour in custody, and
- details about suitable post-release plans.

Authority members are required to read and consider these reports and then attend private meetings where they form an initial intention to grant or refuse parole based on the information they have read and then discussed.

Should an intention to grant parole be made at the initial meeting, a public review hearing is then scheduled to thoroughly test the original intention to grant parole.

This hearing gives the State, the Corrective Services NSW Commissioner and victims the opportunity to make submissions.

Initial intentions to grant parole can be and are regularly overturned following public hearings.

Media enquiries: 0419 258 290