



# **Brad Hazzard MP**

## **Attorney General Minister for Justice**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Monday 1 September 2014

#### **NEW HEAD OF SERIOUS OFFENDERS REVIEW COUNCIL**

Attorney General Brad Hazzard today welcomed former NSW District Court Chief Judge the Honourable Reginald Blanch AM to his new role as chairperson of the Serious Offenders Review Council.

Mr Blanch replaces acting chairperson Edward Selwyn OAM. Mr Selwyn will resume his position as Alternate Chair which he has held since 2012.

Mr Hazzard said he was delighted Mr Blanch had accepted the appointment after retiring as Chief Judge of the District Court in July this year.

“Mr Blanch brings a wealth of experience having served as one of the country’s most successful heads of jurisdiction for more than 20 years,” Mr Hazzard said.

“During this period, Mr Blanch, who also sat regularly as a judge on the Court of Criminal Appeal, oversaw some of the state’s largest criminal and civil court cases.

“As Chair of the Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC), he will lead a team of 10 judicial, community and government members responsible for providing advice and recommendations on serious offenders.”

A serious offender is defined as an inmate who is serving a sentence of life imprisonment for murder or who has been sentenced to a term of at least 12 years before becoming eligible to be released on parole.

In 2013 the number of serious offenders increased from 742 to 774, representing 7.6 per cent of the total inmate population.

“The council serves a vital role in determining security classifications, development programs, management strategies and placement of offenders.” Mr Hazzard said.

“It also conducts review hearings for inmates who are appealing segregation or protective custody directions, as well as assessments of serious offenders who are approaching the expiry of their non-parole periods.

“The council provides regular updates and reports to the Attorney General, Commissioner of Corrective Services, the State Parole Authority and the Supreme Court to ensure serious offenders are being managed appropriately.

“I look forward to working with Mr Blanch whose experience, sound judgement and leadership is highly valued by the NSW Government and Serious Offenders Review Council,” Mr Hazzard said.

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