Government Focuses on Alcohol Initiatives

The Northern Territory Government is continuing the fight against alcohol abuse and misuse with the passing of two pieces of legislation.

The *Liquor Legislation Amendment Act* provides for the establishment of an electronic photo ID system for the purchase of alcohol in Alice Springs and the Katherine region.

“The electronic ID system is aimed at reducing excessive and harmful consumption of alcohol,” the Alcohol Policy Minister Chris Burns said.

Under the new legislation licensees will be required to scan all customers’ photo ID before any takeaway alcohol sale.

The system will identify:

- those with a prohibition or alcohol intervention order in place
- those whose court-imposed bail conditions prohibit alcohol consumption
- those with court-imposed domestic violence orders against them prohibiting alcohol consumption

It will be an offence to sell liquor to anyone prohibited by the system. A breach will attract a maximum penalty of up to $2200.

The system can recognise 19 forms of local and national photo ID and more than 150 international forms of identification.

The Territory Parliament also passed the *Criminal Code Amendment (Drink or Food Spiking) Act* which makes it an offence to add a drug or alcohol to someone’s food or drink as a prank.

Dr Burns said the Territory already has strong laws in place that make it an offence to administer a drug with the intent to commit a crime. It is also an offence to cause any substance to be taken with intent to cause serious harm, to disfigure or disable.

“Committing these offences attracts a maximum sentence of life imprisonment,” he said.

“Despite these existing measures, we recognised there were no laws covering those who engaged in food or drink spiking as a prank – which can still have serious consequences.

“The *Criminal Code Amendment (Drink or Food Spiking) Act* will fill that gap. The new legislation attracts a maximum sentence of two years imprisonment.”

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