New Offence means Drink Spiking is Not a Joke

The Territory Government is moving to strengthen food and drink spiking laws in the NT.

The Attorney General Chris Burns said the Criminal Code Amendment (Drink or Food Spiking) Bill will make it an offence to add a drug or alcohol to someone’s food or drink as a prank.

“Adding a drug or alcohol to someone’s food or drink can still result in harm, even if you don’t mean for that harm to happen,” Dr Burns said.

“Some people might think it’s funny to play tricks on their mates or even on strangers by spiking their food or drinks. It is not funny.

“This sort of behaviour can have serious consequences. The victim may already be intoxicated or taken prescribed medication or prohibited drugs that cause a powerful and harmful mix.

“Victims may also suffer allergic reactions, risk injuring themselves or could pass out making them vulnerable to further harm.”

The proposed legislation attracts a maximum sentence of two years imprisonment.

Dr Burns said the Standing Committee of Attorneys General last year agreed all jurisdictions should implement comprehensive food and drink spiking laws.

“The Territory already has strong laws in place that make it an offence to administer a drug with the intent to commit a crime – for example sexual assault, assault, robbery or stealing. 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.

“Despite these existing measures, we recognised there were no laws covering those who engaged in food or drink spiking as a prank.

“The very real harm that can fall on a victim is not lessened by the fact the food or drink spiking was a joke.

“The Criminal Code Amendment (Drink or Food Spiking) Bill will ensure there are consequences for such dangerous behaviour.”

Media contact: Andrea Adlam 0401 119467