31 July 2009

New Whistleblower Law Begins

Attorney-General, Delia Lawrie, said new legislation to protect whistleblowers and ensure a more open and transparent Northern Territory Government begin today.

From 31 July, Territorians will be able to report improper conduct in Northern Territory public bodies to a new Commissioner for Public Interest Disclosures, without fear of reprisal.

“The Public Interest Disclosure Act protects Territorians who speak out for the good of the community,” Ms Lawrie said.

“It is about ensuring the Northern Territory public sector continues to operate fairly and professionally.”

The new legislation also creates an independent Commissioner to investigate disclosures and to ensure that public bodies are transparent and accountable.

Ms Lawrie said respected lawyer and long-term Territorian Robert Bradshaw has been appointed as the Acting Commissioner for Public Interest Disclosures.

“Mr Bradshaw brings to this position a keen intellect, and a strong commitment to justice and integrity,” she said.

“He has more than 30 years experience working with commercial and government laws in the Territory and previously served as the Director of Legal Policy, the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs and as the Registrar-General.”

The Commissioner for Public Interest Disclosures will investigate allegations of serious improper conduct by Northern Territory Government Departments, members of Parliament, public schools, public hospitals, public nursing
homes, universities, as well as local government councils and most statutory bodies.

The new laws make it an offence to sue, sack, or discriminate against someone because they are a whistleblower.

Anyone who wishes to report improper conduct can contact the Commissioner on the free call number 1800 250 918. Disclosers can even choose to remain anonymous.

For more information about the Act, visit: www.blowthewhistle.nt.gov.au