Tough New Bushfire Penalties for the Territory

People who intentionally light bushfires will now face up to 15 years in jail following the passing of legislation through the Northern Territory Parliament today.

The Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Delia Lawrie, said people who are found to have intentionally or recklessly caused a fire and who create a risk of spreading the fire now face up to 15 years in jail.

“Deliberately lit bushfires can have devastating effects on property, lead to the loss of stock and cause lasting damage to the environment,” Ms Lawrie said.

“These tough new penalties will act as a deterrent for anyone who is considering deliberately lighting a fire.

“The new offence will complement other existing offences relating to bushfires including under the Fire and Emergency Act which has penalties of up to two years imprisonment or $10,000 fine and under the Bushfires Act which has penalties of up to five years imprisonment or $25,000 fine.”

Ms Lawrie said the new laws recognised there are circumstances in which people would be exempted from liability to reflect the unique land management practises in the Territory.

“This will ensure that a person who causes fires in the course of activities such as fire fighting or hazard reduction burning will be exempt from liability,” she said.

“So practises currently permitted or are that are legal will continue. We want to ensure our unique system of land management and fire practise in the Territory continues.”

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