New Laws to Make Food Donations Easier

The Northern Territory Government will introduce new laws that will make it easier for Territorians to donate food and grocery products to charitable organisations.

Attorney-General, Delia Lawrie, today announced she will introduce the *Personal Injuries (Liabilities and Damages) Amendment Bill* to Parliament in the upcoming sittings that will protect businesses and individuals who donate food and grocery items from civil action.

“This legislation is an important step that will benefit Territorians,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Every year Territorians throw out around 30,000 tonnes of food and grocery items which could be redistributed to needy Territorians.

“The Government was made aware of reluctance by some organisations in the community to donate food to charities as they feared being held responsible if someone fell ill after consuming the food.

“Under the proposed laws, Territorians and companies will be able confidently donate food in the knowledge they are now protected from liability for personal injuries arising from the consumption of food.

“These laws will bring the Territory in line with other jurisdictions and will encourage Territorians to donate food and grocery items that would otherwise be wasted.”

Under the Act immunity to civil action will be provided if:

- the goods were donated in good faith for a charitable or benevolent purpose with the intention the consumer won’t have to pay for them;
- the goods were fit for human consumption or safe to use at the time they left the donor; and
- donors advise of any handling requirements or periods of consumption for donated goods.

“The Government understands that many individuals and organisations want to do the right thing and support charities to help less fortunate Territorians,” Ms Lawrie said.

“These laws will not only make it easier to donate food but we hope will encourage other charities to set up operations in the Territory.”
Foodbank NT Manager, Peter Fisher, welcomed the new laws and said they will encourage more organisations to donate food and grocery products.

“We currently provide food products to around 29 organisations in the Darwin and Palmerston area but these new laws will provide an incentive for more people to donate goods,” Mr Fisher said.

Woolworths Northern Territory Area Manager, Geoff Bell, welcomed the Government's announcement and said the new laws would allow Woolworths to expand its national Fresh Food Rescue Program into the Territory.

“Our stores already work with Food for Life in Darwin to turn packaged groceries, which we can no longer sell, into healthy, nutritious meals for those in need,” Mr Bell said.

“The change in legislation will now enable us to donate surplus fresh food, which would otherwise go to landfill.

“Woolworths has established Fresh Food Rescue partnerships around the country and this year made $2 million available to support the fantastic work of these food relief organisations.”

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