The Country Liberals have moved to toughen penalties for torching a motor vehicle in the Northern Territory.

Opposition Leader Terry Mills said if amendments to the Territory’s Criminal Code become law, anybody arrested for torching a motor vehicle would face a charge of arson.

As it currently stands, the charge is criminal damage.

"The penalty for arson is considerably tougher than criminal damage," Mr Mills said.

"The maximum penalty for criminal damage to a motor vehicle is 7 years in prison compared to a maximum of life imprisonment for arson.

"This change is long overdue and necessary.

"As the law currently stands, setting fire to a motor vehicle is not considered arson, while setting fire to a haystack is.

"In light of recent tragic events, it is important the law reflects the community’s disgust at vehicle torching.

"Our amendment would also see setting fire to trailers attached to a motor vehicle considered arson.

"Incidents of vehicle torching are on the increase in the Northern Territory.

"In 2002-03 there were 104 vehicle fires in the Territory, in 2008-09 there were 184.

"I hope the Government joins with the Country Liberals and supports this important reform."

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594