Attorney-General, Rob Knight, welcomed the passage of the Work Health and Safety Bill in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

Mr Knight said the passing of the bill sees the Northern Territory join New South Wales, the ACT, Queensland and the Commonwealth as jurisdictions ready to implement the nationally harmonised work health and safety laws in January 2012.

“In July 2008, the Northern Territory Government, as part of the Council of Australia Governments formally committed to the harmonisation of work health and safety laws by signing an Intergovernmental Agreement,” Mr Knight said.

“The passing of this bill demonstrates this Government’s commitment to that agreement and to Work Health and Safety (WHS) in the Northern Territory.

“The new laws are a win not only for Territory workers, who will be protected by the same work health and safety standards as other Australian workers, but businesses as well,” he said.

“Currently there are nine different jurisdictions across Australia each with their own WHS laws. Adopting harmonised laws will reduce the cost for businesses that operate in more than one state or territory.

“WHS compliance is increasing becoming a factor when awarding contracts for work on major projects. The harmonised laws level the playing field for Territory businesses competing interstate companies as they will all have the same compliance requirements.

Mr Knight said that Northern Territory businesses can also expect the same compliance and enforcement outcomes as businesses across Australia.

“A national compliance and enforcement policy has been developed which introduces standard procedures for Workplace Safety Inspectors nationally,” he said.

“Regardless of whether your business is located in Darwin, Alice Springs or Sydney, if the workplace incident is the same, the compliance and enforcement outcomes will be the same.

“Every morning, thousands of Territorians leave home for work. These laws are about creating a safe and healthy work environment so Territorians can return home safe, everyday,” Mr Knight added.

Contact: Gino Luglietti 0401 119 794