ATTORNEY-GENERAL

TOUGHER LEGISLATION FOR DRUG SUPPLY TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

11 February 2014

Drug suppliers caught trafficking a Schedule 2 dangerous drug into an indigenous community will face an expanded and tougher charge under new legislation that was passed in Parliament today.

Attorney-General John Elferink said the legislation will strengthen existing offences which currently cannot convict a person charged with the supply of a dangerous drug into an indigenous community unless it is supplied to an individual.

“Under the amended legislation, a person may be charged with supply if they carry drugs into the community with the intent to sell the substance or if they prepare or transport drugs for the purpose of supplying them into an indigenous community,” Mr Elferink said.

“People who commit an offence of this nature will be prosecuted regardless of whether they have actually provided the drugs to another person.

“These changes will see drug traffickers caught at airports or on highways entering communities charged to the full extent of the law.

“The Northern Territory Government has taken a tough approach to the supply of drugs into these communities by targeting and punishing offenders.

“Stronger laws and harsh penalties should be a deterrent to any drug trafficker who supplies drugs to the community,” Mr Elferink said.

Under the legislation, persons convicted of supplying a Schedule 2 dangerous drug to a community will serve real jail time of at least 28 days, with the actions now an aggravating circumstance to the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Mr Elferink said drug suppliers must face the consequences and realise that not only is it illegal; it can also have devastating social and economic impacts on the community.

“This legislation directly targets those who supply drugs to an indigenous community, where tragically it is all too common for families to be torn apart by the harmful side effects of substance abuse,” Mr Elferink said.

The Parliament also eliminated inconsistencies and duplication from the Misuse of Drugs Act relating to Schedule 2 substances.

Any person who supplies a Schedule 2 dangerous drug in an indigenous community in the Northern Territory will face a maximum penalty of nine years imprisonment.

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