The passage of the Government’s Alcohol Mandatory Treatment legislation through Parliament will provide a lifeline for the Territory’s worst problem drinkers and strike a significant blow against the impact of alcohol in the community.

Health Minister, Robyn Lambley, said carriage of the Bill means problem drinkers placed in Protective Custody three times in two months will be required to undertake 12 weeks of alcohol treatment in designated facilities across the Territory.

“Problem drinkers now have a pathway to treatment, families have an opportunity for respite and communities an alternative to anti-social behaviour,” Mrs Lambley said.

“This significant measure provides the Territory’s worst problem drinkers with a way out of chronic alcoholism and an opportunity to lead fulfilling, healthy lives.

“It comes after months of consultation with stakeholders across the Northern Territory and builds on the great work already being done by rehabilitation service providers in major cities, towns and communities.”

The Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Bill was strengthened by a number of amendments passed through the Parliament last night.

“Of the 43 amendments debated, 42 of those were framed around stakeholder and community consultation which took place across all corners of the Territory,” Mrs Lambley said.

“The vast majority were of a technical nature and suggested by the legal sector.

“The Government has reduced the length of time a client can be clinically assessed for Alcohol Mandatory Treatment from six to four days and reduced the time a client can appear before an Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Tribunal from seven to four days.

“A client will only have committed an offence after absconding from an Alcohol Mandatory Treatment facility three times during the 12 week treatment phase.

“The Country Liberals Government listened to the concerns raised by legal and community representatives and took seriously the recommendations made to enhance the legislation.”

Mrs Lambley said the Country Liberals Government has shown it is determined to help some of the most vulnerable Territorians and to stand-by its commitment to reduce the harmful impacts of alcohol across the Territory.

“This is the Legislation that the previous Labor Government promised time and time again but lacked the courage and capacity to implement,” she said.

“The last three Territory Labor leaders all committed to introducing mandatory rehabilitation with Delia Lawrie, when she was Alcohol Policy Minister, claiming Labor’s Enough is Enough legislation would roll out mandatory rehabilitation treatment for problem drinkers. It did not.

“Labor lacked the conviction to follow through with a promise that would have helped some of the most disadvantaged Territorians improve their lives.”

Media Contact: Camden Smith 0488 588 754