Northern Territory police will have more powers to search for drugs in cars and declare specific roads as ‘drug transit routes’ under new laws designed to stop the spread of dangerous drugs.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the new laws, which would be introduced and passed in Parliament sittings later this year, were particularly aimed at stopping the distribution and use of methamphetamines – commonly known as ice.

“Methamphetamine use is a growing threat to our community with users often becoming violent and aggressive, and many resorting to property crime to support their addiction,” he said.

"These new laws are aimed at getting these drugs off the streets before more people become addicted.

“The Northern Territory Government is determined to do everything we can to stop ice from taking hold in our community and these new laws will help police keep Territorians safe.”

Attorney-General John Elferink said police currently had enhanced search and seizure powers to intercept alcohol and kava destined for indigenous communities, but the new laws would expand those powers so they could target suspected drug traffickers.

“It is estimated 80 per cent of the Territory’s ice supply comes from other jurisdictions,” he said.

“Under these new laws, police will be able to hone in on criminals bringing drugs into the Territory by declaring specific roadways as ‘drug transit routes’.

“Once a road is declared a drug transit route, police will then have enhanced powers to stop drivers they suspect may be trafficking dangerous drugs and search their cars without needing a warrant.

“Make no mistake – these new laws will make it clear to drug traffickers they are not welcome in the Territory and we will do everything we can to shut them down.”

The laws relating to ‘declared drug transit routes’ will be modelled on existing South Australian legislation, with declarations to last for up to 14 days.
The new laws follow the establishment of a Federal and Territory Government Joint Law Enforcement Ice Strike Force earlier this year and a Parliamentary inquiry on methamphetamines, which is due to report in September.

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