Dr Chris Burns
MINISTER FOR RACING, GAMING & LICENSING

09 July 2007

NT Rejects One Size Fit All Approach to Alcohol

The Northern Territory Government has reiterated its long-standing commitment to reducing alcohol-related harm throughout the Northern Territory.

Licensing Minister Dr Chris Burns said the Government’s strategy focuses on a region-by-region approach to limit the supply, demand and consumption of alcohol.

“We have already seen how successful this can be,” Dr Burns said.

“For example, a liquor supply and permit system has been in place on Groote Eylandt since 2005, and is associated with a 75 per cent reduction in public drunkenness and property crime.

“We have also had success with liquor restrictions in Alice Springs, including the declaration of Alice as a “dry town”, and the announcement to ban alcohol in the town camps.

“Nonetheless, we acknowledge there is much more to do.”

Dr Burns said the Northern Territory Government did not support Canberra’s plan to impose Territory-wide conditions on the purchase of three or more cartons of beer.

“This ‘one size fits all’ approach announced by Indigenous Affairs Minister Mal Brough will be ineffective and unworkable, particularly in Darwin,” Dr Burns said.

“Similarly, the Federal Government’s proposal for a complete ban on the transport of alcohol through restricted areas in the Northern Territory hasn’t been thought through.

“It will have unintended consequences for people living and working in remote areas.”

Dr Burns said the key to success was community engagement.

“We are working in partnership with communities to bring about the reduction in alcohol consumption and associated crime and violence,” Dr Burns said.

“We have consulted widely over the implementation of an electronic ID system to control the purchase of alcohol in Alice Springs, and will make a decision in light of the views of the people of Alice Springs.”
"We want effective measures on a region-by-region basis," Dr Burns said.

Media contact: James Hook 0401 119 592

Moving the Territory Ahead