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New laws to hit drug industry

Chief Minister Clare Martin today announced a range of new laws to crack down on the illegal drug industry in the Territory.

Ms Martin said the laws, to be introduced into Parliament in May, will target the money and assets of drug dealers, and force those with unexplained wealth to demonstrate that they legally obtained their wealth, or face confiscation proceedings.

These new laws will be used where evidence strongly suggests that a person has income from criminal activity - because there is no other explanation for their wealth.

"Our new laws will deter crime by attacking the profit motive and take the fight against drugs to a new level in the Territory," Ms Martin said.

"It will put an end to the unjust enrichment of criminals and compensate the rest of the community for the harm caused by serious crime, particularly drug trafficking."

Ms Martin said the anti-drug package would also include drug house legislation, which will allow police to forcefully target premises, such as houses and nightclubs where drug dealing is known to occur.

New provisions of the Criminal Code will provide additional protection for witnesses involved in giving evidence against such activities.

"Drug manufacturers and traffickers should not profit from their illegal activities," Ms Martin said.

"For too many years the reality of drug abuse in our community has been overlooked and the link between drug abuse and crime ignored.

"Labor's Three Point Plan on Drugs identified the drug problem in our community, and the steps this Government will take to attack the problem.

"We will repeal the ineffective criminal Crimes (Forfeiture of Proceeds) Act and replace them with new laws that will show the Territory Government is serious about cracking down on drug manufacturers and dealers."