Commercial passenger vehicle drivers and operators who have committed serious offences will have their licences and accreditation removed under tough legislation to go before Parliament next week.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Dr Chris Burns said amendments to the Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act and the Motor Vehicles Act would enhance the safety of the travelling public by removing from the commercial passenger vehicle industry people who are not considered “fit and proper” because they have been convicted of a disqualifying offence.

“The legislation addresses public concern about people convicted of serious offences holding licences or operating in the commercial passenger vehicle industry,” Dr Burns said.

“Under the new laws, an existing operator or driver who has been convicted of a disqualifying offence will have their accreditation or licence cancelled.

“Any person who has a conviction for a disqualifying offence and applies to enter the industry will be refused.”

Disqualifying offences include murder, sexual offences and serious assaults.

Offences committed in the Northern Territory, other states and territories and overseas all qualify.

The amendments apply to all commercial passenger vehicle licence holders, including drivers of taxis, buses, minibuses, tourist vehicles, private hire cars, limousines and courtesy vehicles.

“This sets a new standard whereby a disqualifying offence excludes a person from the industry,” Dr Burns said.

“In the interests of public safety, I will be seeking urgency for the passage of this legislation.”

The amendments considerably strengthen the existing discretionary “fit and proper” assessment system.

They contain appeal provisions for people who believe exceptional circumstances apply to their particular offence.

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