PETROL SNIFFING IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY BANNED FROM TODAY

Australia’s most comprehensive petrol sniffing laws come into effect today.

Northern Territory Family and Community Services Minister, Delia Lawrie, said the Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act was now law in the Northern Territory.

“Police, the courts and the community now have the powers and support they need to tackle petrol sniffing,” said Ms Lawrie.

“The legislation gives police the power to seize petrol when it is being abused. Intoxicated sniffers can be taken to a place of safety and compulsory treatment programs can be ordered.

“The main focus of the new law is the health and safety of young people who are misusing volatile substances. Community control is central to the new law, which will give legal support to the programs that some communities are already undertaking.

“The legislation also includes some of the toughest penalties in Australia for illegal petrol trafficking. Communities will be helped to make decisions about the supply of petrol and other volatile substances.”

The legislation is being backed with an additional $10 million being put towards rehabilitation programs and services.

The extra $10 million is already flowing with treatment programs being funded in urban and remote areas.

“The new laws and the new programs and services will give communities the support they need to protect children and help their young people get back on track,” said Ms Lawrie.

The Minister said the Martin Government had ignored calls from the CLP Opposition to send young people caught sniffing to jail for 2 years.

“This legislation in not about making criminals out of already vulnerable young people. However people who commit crimes while intoxicated with a volatile substance will still be forced to face the legal consequences of their actions,” said Ms Lawrie.

“This is ground breaking legislation. The first of its kind in Australia. Other jurisdictions are watching us closely and looking to learn from the Northern Territory experience.
“The development of this legislation was undertaken with wide consultation with stakeholders and communities across the Territory. The consultation will continue and the Government will be seeking feedback on the operation of the new laws.

“As of today, the Territory is leading the way in Australia in saving lives, strengthening families and communities and reducing the unacceptable numbers of deaths, brain damage and anti-social behaviour caused by the scourge of petrol sniffing.”

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