Tougher penalties for the manufacture and supply of drugs

25 May 2016

Amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act were passed in Parliament today.

Northern Territory Attorney-General John Elferink said that the Country Liberal Government is deeply concerned with the impact of drugs like ‘ice’ are having on our community.

“This Government supports these measures to disrupt the drug trade in the Territory and make engaging in illicit operations far less desirable.”

The proliferation of drugs in our community impacts the safety and wellbeing of all Territorians. The County Liberal Government has no tolerance for individuals who manufacture or supply illicit drugs to vulnerable members of our community.

The Justice Legislation Amendment (Drug Offences) Bill 2016 aims to:

• Reduce the accessibility of illegal drugs and related paraphernalia in our community and will contribute to a safer community.

• Create an offence for the manufacture or cultivation of a dangerous drug in the presence of a child in that the offence provides an aggravated penalty if a child is present. The offences reflect the serious nature of the offending involving children and are consistent with the higher maximum penalty which is provided for supplying dangerous drugs to a child.

• Inserts a new provision of an aggravated penalty for procuring a child under the age of 14 to commit an offence.

• Introduction of the requirement that offenders found guilty of serious drug offences including, commercial supply, manufacturing and cultivation in the presence of a child serve a minimum 70 per cent of their sentence in prison.

• Add a provision making the possession of a firearm, ammunition or weapons as an aggravating factor.

“The Bill will address a number of deficiencies in the Misuse of Drugs Act and will ensure the punishment for those who engage in commercial operations significantly outweigh any benefit,” Mr Elferink said.
“It is intended that the amendments will ensure that commercial drug operations will be shut down and offenders sent to prison.”

The Bill will not unfairly target individual drug users who need treatment and support. Rather it is targeted to impact those who manufacture and supply dangerous drugs for their financial gain.

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