Breach of Bail Laws Introduced

The Northern Territory Government today introduced new laws to give police and courts more power to crack down on repeat offenders.

Attorney-General, Delia Lawrie, introduced the *Bail Amendment Act* into Territory Parliament which will create a new offence of breach of bail.

“These proposed laws are sending a clear message that bail is a privilege, not a right and if a person abuses that privilege there will now be even more severe consequences,” Ms Lawrie said.

“These proposed laws follow discussions with Police in Alice Springs who said by making breach of bail an offence, it would give them greater powers to enforce bail conditions and get youth off the streets at night.

“Under the proposed laws, a person who breaches bail or fails to attend court when required could end up with a conviction, receive a fine or be imprisoned.

“The maximum penalty for breach of bail will be two years imprisonment or a $26,600 fine.

“However to ensure fairness, a court cannot impose a penalty greater than the maximum penalty for which bail was granted.

“Under the proposed laws defendants who are able to prove to a court that they had a reasonable excuse for a breach, won’t be held criminally responsible for a breach of bail.

Ms Lawrie said Northern Territory Government was taking action to address anti-social behaviour in Alice Springs and recently announced new steps as part of the *Alice Springs Youth Action Plan*.

“Introducing criminal sanctions for breaching bail is an important tool in combating offending and making our streets safer,” she said.

“The Government has also announced a new 24-bed Juvenile Detention Facility at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, the appointment of a new Senior Sergeant Patrol Co-ordinator and a review of the Youth Justice Act to strengthen the Juvenile Justice System.”

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