



ROBYN LAMBLEY MLA | **Member for ARALUEN**

MEDIA RELEASE

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR ALCOHOL REHABILITATION**

MANDATORY ALCOHOL TREATMENT BILL INTRODUCED TODAY

15 May, 2013

Alcohol Rehabilitation Minister, Robyn Lambley, today tabled the Country Liberals Government's proposed Mandatory Alcohol Treatment Bill in the Northern Territory Parliament.

The Bill provides the framework for the Territory Government's landmark alcohol measures, which mandate treatment for chronic problem drinkers.

A public consultation phase is underway and the Bill will be debated in Parliament on 27 June.

Under the Government's model, chronic problem drinkers placed in Protective Custody three times in two months will be assessed by a clinician to determine whether they are capable of making decisions about their own welfare and could benefit from treatment.

The Bill provides for the assessment, treatment and aftercare of problem drinkers with the aim of improving their health and social function, restoring decision making capacity and providing access to ongoing treatment.

After clinical assessment, problem drinkers will appear before an Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Tribunal which can issue two types of orders:

- A mandatory residential treatment order of up to 12 weeks
- A mandatory community treatment order of up to 12 weeks

Breaches of either order as well as supplying anybody on an order with alcohol will be offences under the Act and carry the risk of a prison sentence.

The Bill comes with safeguards including independent decision making by a tribunal, the right of appeal, options for representation before the Tribunal and order variations based on changed circumstances.

In addition there will be Community Visitor Program oversight to ensure adequate standards and protections for clients.

During phase one of the program alcohol mandatory treatment facilities will be located in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Gove.

"This is a substantial piece of legislation and I welcome interest from stakeholder groups and the broader community in its introduction," Mrs Lambley said.



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“The Country Liberals Government believes that people suffering from chronic alcohol abuse should be medically treated in the health system rather than thrown into the justice system or left out in the streets.

“The Bill provides a legal basis to compel assessment and treatment for chronic drinkers that are either unlikely or unable to voluntarily access treatment options.

“Criteria for admission into alcohol mandatory treatment include diminished capacity to make decisions about the safety and welfare of themselves and others and the capacity to benefit from treatment.

“Treatment options within the alcohol treatment centres include therapeutic interventions, work skills and readiness and health improvement and chronic disease management.

“I have met with a number of rehabilitation, health and justice sector representatives over recent months and will continue this dialogue in coming weeks.”

The legislation can be viewed and feedback provided on the Health Department website www.health.nt.gov.au

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