



NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

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DR PETER TOYNE MLA Attorney-General

REGULATION OF ASSOCIATIONS SET FOR AN OVERHAUL

Long overdue reforms to the regulation of incorporated associations and clubs are underway with the release of a discussion paper and draft Bill by Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne today.

Dr Toyne said the new draft legislation contains modern accounting, audit and reporting provisions as well as more effective investigation powers for the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs – powers that are necessary to help prevent the financial collapse of an association.

“In an environment of antiquated and deficient regulation, an alarming number of Territory associations and clubs have faced financial difficulty and even collapse over recent years.

“This draft legislation aims to alleviate that situation and, given the fact the Territory currently has an antiquated regulatory framework and the most associations per capita of any jurisdiction in Australia, there is a real need to address the regulatory system.

Some of the problems have included a lack of accountability to members, creditors and funding agencies, allegations of conflict of interest and trading whilst insolvent, in some cases resulting in the collapse of associations leaving unpaid creditors and unhappy club members.

The proposed changes seek to update the 1963 Associations Incorporation Act in the management of internal affairs, including accounting and audit requirements, investigation and intervention powers, and insolvency provisions. The provisions reflect corporations laws for high turn-over organisations.

Dr Toyne said these changes would enable the Consumer Affairs Commissioner to obtain information on the financial status of an association on a regular basis, and more swiftly intervene to assist associations facing financial or administrative difficulties.

“Importantly the draft Bill will be accompanied by increased education on the responsibilities of committee members as a means to assist clubs and associations to implement better management practices.”

Public forums are scheduled in major Territory centres and the closing date for submissions is 31 March 2003. The discussion paper is available online at <http://www.nt.gov.au/ntg/forcomment.shtml> and mail by phoning 8999 7454.

Forum details over page...

Associations Draft Bill Public Forum details:

Darwin	10 March & 19 March	5–6pm	Novotel Atrium
Katherine	18 March	5–6pm	Katherine Government Centre
Tennant Creek	12 March	5–6pm	Civic Centre
Alice Springs	13 March	5–6pm	Mercure Inn Diplomat
Palmerston	17 March	5–6pm	Palmerston Sports Club
Nhulunbuy	20 March	5–6pm	Nhulunbuy High School