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NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

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DR PETER TOYNE MLA

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

ALAWA STORE SIGNS BOOK-UP AGREEMENT

The first agreement on store practices for managing book-up has been reached between Consumer Affairs and a Darwin corner store.

Justice Minister Dr Peter Toyne today said the agreement signed between Alawa Foodmart and the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs is the first voluntary agreement to govern store book-up practices in the Territory.

“Book-up does occur in many retail outlets across the Territory but has been an area of concern because consumers can be unfairly disadvantaged by this practice.

“This new voluntary code of practice for managing book-up protects both the consumer and trader by instigating proper process and records of sale, ensuring open and accountable dealings.

“This voluntary agreement will be monitored over the next six months and if successful could become a standard code to be implemented across the Territory.”

Consumer Affairs and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) have worked with the new proprietor of Alawa Store, Ms Rachel Lim, to improve the store’s administration procedures.

Earlier this year officers from Consumer Affairs raided the premises and removed a large amount of documents from previous management relating to book-up. This included approximately 1000 debit cards.

Ms Lim has voluntarily entered into the code of practice that sets out specific requirements in relation to book-up. These include:

- Display of signage at the store detailing book-up practices;
- Implementation of a formal agreement between the customer and the store regarding book-up; and
- Itemising of receipts and transparent accounting practices for customers.

The code of practice has been formalised in a written agreement between the store and the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, and Consumer Affairs will undertake regular visits to the store to ensure the new proprietor is adhering to the code.