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## **Mandatory Code Recommended for Book-up**

The Attorney-General Peter Toyne has instructed the Consumer and Business Affairs Commissioner to prepare a Mandatory Code of Practice to regulate book-up.

The decision follows a four-month consultation process in which opinions surrounding the practice were gathered from across the Territory and interstate.

Book-up involves individuals handing over their ATM card and PIN number as security in exchange for credit from a trader.

During the consultation, Consumer and Business Affairs received 38 written submissions and dozens of oral submissions, representing the views of more than 200 groups and organisations.

Dr Toyne said although the consultation process revealed varying views, the majority supported regulation.

"While some preferred no regulation or a complete ban, I have asked the Commissioner to draft a Mandatory Code of Practice," he said.

"Opinions did, however, differ over the terms that should be included in a code."

Under the Territory's Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act, the Commissioner must be satisfied that "associated persons in a field of trade or commerce" agree to abide by the code.

This means further consultation will now be undertaken with interested parties to identify the content of the code.

Once that is complete, the Commissioner will put together a final proposal for Cabinet's consideration.

"The additional consultation will cover issues such as to what extent key cards may be retained by a trader – prohibited all together or allowing the trader to just hold the card without the PIN number," Dr Toyne said.

"Other issues may include whether the trader will be required to keep records, or whether some sort of outside dispute resolution needs to be put into place before a complaint goes to the Commissioner.

"The adoption of a Mandatory Code is good news for traders and consumers alike."

It's expected a proposed code of practice will be put before Cabinet by the end of the year.

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