

representation of Aborigines in detention centres and prisons.

Crackdown on offences

Mr Manzie has introduced, to the Legislative Assembly, an amendment to the Summary Offences Act to increase penalties for offences including offensive conduct, loitering, indecent exposure and obscenity.

Penalties for these offences (under Section 47, 47A, 48(b), 50 and 53 of the Act) will be increased to a maximum of \$2000 and/or imprisonment for up to 12 months.

He said disturbances around Darwin nightclubs in recent months had partially prompted the new penalties.

Comments sought

The Whistleblowers Issues Paper has been tabled in the Legislative Assembly by Mr Manzie.

"The paper identifies the issues which need to be considered in deciding whether to protect whistleblowers and, if so, how such protection would be put in place," he said.

"Following receipt of comments, it may be appropriate to conduct public hearings or seminars.

"The final stage of the review process will then be the presentation of a report

by me to Cabinet on how the NT should deal with the issue of whistleblower protection.

"Whistleblowing is not prohibited by NT legislation and indeed there is a legitimate question as to whether whistleblowers legislation is necessary, given the powers of ... the Commissioner of Police, the Commissioner for Public Employment, the Ombudsman, the Auditor-General and Legislative Assembly and its committees to investigate claims of corrupt or negligent behaviour."

Comments on the Whistleblowers Issues Paper are requested by 31 May.

Truth-in-Sentencing

Correctional Services Minister Eric Poole said the Prisons (Correctional Services) Act would be amended to change sentencing options, removing automatic remissions for prisoners.

These amendments and the Sentencing Bill were expected to be introduced in the Assembly this month by Mr Poole and Attorney-General Daryl Manzie respectively.

"The amendments will put an end to the process by which offenders get one-third off their prison sentence," Mr Poole said.

"This legislation basically means that, in the future, if an offender is sentenced to 10 years' jail he or she will serve 10 years."

Mr Poole said the amendments would also give the Director of Correctional Services a discretionary power to grant up to 30 days' special remission to a prisoner for outstanding behaviour, diligence and application to work or training.

Bail Amendment Introduced

The Director of Policy for the Department of Law has made an announcement concerning the Bail Amendment Act (No 2).

The Director has advised that the above Act, passed in the most recent sittings of the Legislative Assembly, is scheduled to come into operation on April 5, 1994.

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