

Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform

committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use

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MEDIA RELEASE

Parliamentary Inquiry introduces sense into the “Ice” debate

Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform today welcomed the report by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission that covers “ice”. The report on the *Inquiry into the Manufacture, Importation and Use of Amphetamines and Other Synthetic Drugs (AOSD) in Australia* was released yesterday (28 February 2007). It makes 18 recommendations to improve Australia’s response to certain illicit drugs.

“Of particular significance are recommendations 5, 6 and 7. I hope that the current House of Representative inquiry chaired by Bronwyn Bishop into the *Impact of Illicit Drug Use on Families* adopts these recommendations,” said Brian McConnell, President of Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform. “Recommendation 5 is about using factual, informative and appropriately targeted public education campaigns. Recommendation 6 calls for harm reduction strategies and programs to receive more attention and resources. Recommendation 7 recognises the need to try different approaches and supports an illicit tablet monitoring and information service.

“It was clear to this Committee that factual, informative education campaigns are the way to go, not discredited counter productive scare campaigns. It was also clear to this Committee that the National Drug Strategy does not allocate sufficient resources and funds to harm reduction strategies.

“Another recent report indicates that a mere 2 percent of direct spending on illicit drug programs is spent on harm reduction. That 2 percent has been proven to be extremely effective – imagine how effective it could be for those people and their families caught up in illicit drugs, if funding in this area was increased significantly.”

The Committee has also made welcome recommendations about improving the performance measures for law enforcement. Australians want to know that governments give value for the taxes they take.

This Joint Committee of the Parliament is to be commended on such a valuable and useful report - a report with recommendations that should be accepted.

The report is available at

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/acc_ctte/aosd/report/index.htm.

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