

# Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform

*committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use*

PO Box 36, HIGGINS ACT 2615

Telephone (02) 6254 2961

30 October, 2003

---

## Drug Deaths to be Remembered

M  
E  
D  
I  
A  
  
R  
E  
L  
E  
A  
S  
E

Stronger heroin and three deaths in the ACT in recent weeks have been reported, as Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform prepares for its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Remembrance Ceremony for those who lose their lives to illicit drugs. The ceremony will be held on Monday 27 October 2003.

“Despite Federal Government assurances that it had stopped heroin supply, and has solved heroin problems, drug deaths have continued,” said Brian McConnell, President of Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform. “It is with great sadness that with these latest deaths, we have more people to be remembered. The heroin drought has ended, but it has left a legacy of increased availability and use of other drugs like cocaine and amphetamines, known to cause anxiety, psychosis and aggression.”

Speakers at the remembrance ceremony at Weston Park will be Marion McConnell, a member of FFDLR, Bob McMullan MP, member for Fraser, and Bishop George Browning from the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. ‘A Chorus of Women’ will also sing at the ceremony.

“Governments must take responsibility for contributing to these deaths. Their harsh drug policies, refusal to implement life saving measures such as prescription heroin, and procrastination over supervised injecting rooms and time wasting arguments on moral positions, are contributing factors.

“Now that their claim for responsibility of the heroin drought has been shown to be false there is an even more urgent need to implement better strategies.

“Parents and communities are still made to feel the blame for this predicament,” Brian McConnell continued. “Users and their families are set up for failure by inadequate and scarce treatment options and unrealistic insistence on getting ‘clean’. There is a refusal to understand that addiction is a long term health condition.”

“This ceremony is a time for families and friends to grieve amongst a caring community and to recognise the worth of the drug users who have died. The ceremony also seeks to lift the veil of shame and silence in relation to illicit drugs that is so disempowering.”

**For more information contact Brian McConnell (02) 6254 2961, mobile 04 0907 4033**

**Place:** Weston Park, Yarralumla, ACT at the memorial rock located on the right of Weston Park Road opposite the Prescott Lane junction.

**Date:** 27 October 2003      **Time:** 12:30pm

---