

Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform

committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use

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MEDIA RELEASE

Opposition leader to speak at FFDLR's 12th Annual Remembrance Ceremony

Again, it is Spring and families and friends will gather together under the flowering Locust Trees in Weston Park to remember those lives lost to illicit drugs.

“These are lives that would have been saved if we had better understanding, more compassion and better policies,” said Brian McConnell, President of Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform. “Many died before they had a chance at life.”

The remembrance ceremony is a very sad time for those who have lost a family member or a dear friend but the Locus tree with its new growth, its magnificent blossoms and perfume provides a backdrop to remember the positive qualities of the loved ones who lost the struggle to drugs.

“Although funding for drug treatments has increased since our first ceremony in 1996 and the deaths from heroin overdose have decreased, the tragedy of destroyed lives continues.”

“And yet there is only a short term, narrow minded, focus. The shortage of heroin, which resulted thankfully in reductions in deaths, reflected the weather patterns in the opium growing area. But it ushered ‘ice’ into Australia. Now with opium poppy production improving, the return of heroin threatens more deaths – and ‘ice’ still remains.”

“Even though great effort is needed to keep the drug policy gains of the past, more people recognise the need for change. Even radio personality Alan Jones has called for a debate on all the issues.”

“This Remembrance Ceremony reminds us that an evidence-based, pragmatic approach to problematic drug use is required – an approach that will put aside the moral judgements, make the black market in drugs redundant and that will value fully the lives of those struggling with drug addiction.

Details of the Ceremony

Date and Time: Monday 22 October 2007
12:30pm – 1:30pm

Location: Weston Park, Yarralumla, ACT
at the dedicated memorial Weston Park Rd
opposite Prescott Lane Junction

Speakers: Tina van Raay, Family member
Bill Stefaniak, Leader of the Opposition,
ACT Legislative
Assembly
Rev'd James Barr, Senior Minister,
Canberra Baptist Church

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