



AFPA BULLETIN:

AFPA Welcomes Road Transport Drug Testing Bill

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The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) welcomes the Road Transport (Alcohol and Drugs) (Random Drug Testing) Amendment Bill 2009 introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the ACT Liberal Party. The Bill had the support of the ACT Greens and was passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly today.

The AFPA has called on the ACT legislators to introduce random roadside drug testing as a road safety initiative for the Territory. Drug driving is a major contributor to road fatalities. In 2003, research found that a total of 31 per cent of drivers killed in Victoria tested positive to drugs other than alcohol.

The AFPA National President, Mr Jon Hunt-Sharman stated today:

“Random roadside drug testing legislation will provide AFP police officers greater scope to test and subsequently prevent drug-affected drivers from driving on Canberra’s roads. This will make ACT roads safer for all Canberrans”.

This legislation will provide AFP police officers access to greater tools in their fight to keep the community safe from drug offenders whilst balancing the rights of individuals.

Mr Hunt-Sharman commented:

“Research shows that a driver who has recently consumed cannabis or an amphetamine based substance is at the same risk as having a crash as a driver with an alcohol concentration above 0.05. The active component of cannabis called THC impairs mental function and reduces attention and concentration on the driving task. Speed, ice or crystal meth (methamphetamines) and ecstasy (MDMA) increase risk taking and aggression whilst driving.”

Throughout the process of drafting this Bill the AFPA has been pleased with the constructive nature of consultation by the ACT Liberal Party. A number of recent amendments to the Bill introduced by the ACT Liberal Party today, are a direct result of successful consultation with the AFPA. The AFPA also supports the amendments introduced by the ACT Greens.

Mr Hunt-Sharman said:

“The AFPA applauds the measures introduced in this Bill, those measures will aid our members in exercising their duties to the community as professional police officers. This Bill will save lives by getting drug affected drivers off the streets of Canberra. I am also confident that with the amendments, this legislation now addresses the genuine concerns raised by the ACT Chief Police Officer, as reported in the media.”

The AFPA looks forward to the Stanhope Government supporting the implementation of this legislation. ACT Policing needs to be appropriately resourced to adequately conduct random roadside drug testing.

If you have any comments on this bulletin or any other queries please contact your local representatives or the AFPA National Office on afpa.office@afpa.org.au.

Authorised by

Jon Hunt-Sharman, President, Australian Federal Police Association