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MEDIA RELEASE:

AFPA opposed to proposed Commonwealth Integrity Commission framework

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) opposes the Federal Government's proposal regarding the establishment of the Commonwealth Integrity Commission (CIC) under draft legislation circulated by Federal Attorney-General Christian Porter.

The AFPA believes that the draft legislation does not address the reasons why Australians are calling for a CIC. The AFPA is supportive of a CIC model that is equitable, and where all people that fall under the scope of the CIC are faced with the same set of rules and outcomes.

The AFPA does not support the model of a CIC having two divisions – one to deal with law enforcement officers and employees, and the other for politicians and public servants (with a different definition of 'corrupt conduct' applied to each).

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that the Federal Government is looking at the wrong people under the proposed CIC framework, as well as inconsistently assessing alleged instances of corruption. The draft legislation holds police officers more accountable and more likely to be investigated than politicians and senior public servants.

"The Australian public has been asking for a CIC for years, and it has been slow-balled by the Federal Government who started the process in 2018. Australians are losing trust in politicians and their methods and a fully functioning CIC, where everyone faces the same outcomes and rules, is what is required.

"This draft legislation talks about actions against police officers that are already in place under the ACLEI model, so there isn't anything new in that aspect, except for police officers potentially facing public hearings. If police officers have to face public hearings, then so must politicians and public servants.

"I can't recall the last time a police officer was involved in awarding contracts worth millions of dollars without open tender or purchasing land for ten times its actual value, and yet under the proposed CIC model they are held to a higher standard and face more scrutiny than a politician," Mr Caruana said.



Under the current Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity (ACLEI) and the AFP Professional Standards model, AFP officers and employees are the most scrutinised police officers in Australia.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that under current guidelines and policy, AFP employees cannot accept discounts offered in good faith by community and business organisations, without having the matter referred to ACLEI as a corruption allegation.

“Currently, if an AFP member accepts a discount during a ‘red and blue’ sale, which many large businesses offer, they become subject to an ACLEI process.

“I’m sure that the Australian public doesn’t want a CIC that looks at incidents like this. Is it palatable to potentially hold a public hearing if an AFP employee is given a five percent discount off a new television, or a discounted cup of coffee from a local coffee shop?” Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA has evaluated the *Australian Federal Integrity Commission Bill 2020* presented by the Federal Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines MP and would support her bill and framework.

END STATEMENT

For comments:

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