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AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE

CHILD SEX OFFENDER GIVEN ICO, DESPITE BEING FOUND UNSUITABLE

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) is questioning the rationale behind granting a convicted child sex offender an intensive corrections order (ICO), despite his previous flouting of reporting requirements causing him to be deemed unsuitable for an ICO.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said this was another example of the community having to accept risk due to the inaction of the ACT Attorney-General and the judiciary.

"It worries me, and it should worry the community, that a magistrate would completely ignore the system put in place to determine if someone is unsuitable for an ICO.

"If the offender breaches this latest ICO, who will be held responsible? What happens if the convicted child sex commits further breaches against the sex offender registry reporting requirements? Registered child sex offenders have stringent reporting requirements for a reason. The court has basically set another poor precedent.

"Given the evidence, why won't the Attorney-General allow an independent review of bail and sentencing in the ACT? Our guess is that he knows there are issues, has one eye on the future ACT election and knows sentencing isn't following community expectations, which in turn is causing poor social outcomes. He clearly doesn't know how to fix it or want accountability and transparency in the judicial system," Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA acknowledges that the Attorney-General has commissioned a study for the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to examine how bail is defined in legislation and investigate whether any recent court cases highlight a need for reform.

Mr Caruana said that a study conducted by the Attorney-General's own department was just a band-aid approach.

"A study by the department that reports to the Attorney-General isn't independent, and neither the Attorney-General nor his department has publicly released Terms of Reference. Who knows what the study will do and really focus on? Again, it's another example of a lack of transparency and accountability.

"If the Attorney-General doesn't want the job, or feels he isn't up to having difficult conversations with the judiciary, then he should speak to Chief Minister Andrew Barr. Similarly, how long can the Chief Minister sit back and watch this inaction from the ACT Attorney-General? Maybe he needs to consider how this reflects on him and the ACT Labor Party. Being an Attorney-General means difficult discussions and decisions, and the incumbent doesn't want to have or make them." Mr Caruana said.

For comments:

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