

1 November 2022



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELEASE

AFPA SEEKS UPDATE ON ACT LAW AND SENTENCING COUNCIL

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) eagerly awaits concrete details of (including a provisional timeframe for) the ACT Government's new advisory council, grandly announced in early October 2022 by ACT Attorney-General Shane Rattenbury.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said the announcement of the advisory council appeared to have been premature, as the terms of reference and other details about the council were still unknown.

"It seems that the Attorney-General rushed this announcement to try and appease the community, in a laughable effort to deflect from his position on an independent sentencing and bail review for the ACT.

"If the Attorney-General was taking this matter seriously, he would have released terms of reference and guidelines for the establishment of the advisory council at the time of the initial announcement," Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA and ACT community are still waiting for further details on a previous study ordered by Attorney-General Rattenbury. In August 2022, Mr Rattenbury commissioned a study to be undertaken by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate around bail practices — concentrating heavily on the question of whether recent bail outcomes meant a rethink of existing attitudes around the granting or denial of bail was overdue.

Mr Caruana said that to date, no updates of any substance had been provided to the community about the study.

"The terms of reference for the study haven't been made public and we don't even know if the study has commenced. Again, anything to do with the judicial system seems to have a lack of transparency and accountability — all thanks to the Attorney-General," Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA recently participated in the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety inquiry into dangerous driving in the ACT.

Mr Caruana said that listening to the victims participating in the hearing was heartbreaking, and if the ACT Attorney-General required anymore evidence to commence an independent review into bail and sentencing, then he should watch the hearings.

"My heart goes out to the families who participated in the hearings. We can never return their loved ones, but we could at least make sure that the judicial system is getting things right when it comes to sentencing and bail. An independent review would answer this question," Mr Caruana said.

For comments:

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