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MEDIA RELEASE

AFPA WELCOMES DRUG SUPPORT SERVICE FOR ACT FAMILIES

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) welcomes the ACT Government's announcement establishing a new pilot service to support families who have relatives affected by drug use.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that creating services such as this would be critical as the ACT Government moves to decriminalise heroin, cocaine and other illicit substances.

"With the ACT Government going ever further down the decriminalisation path, more support and welfare services will be required.

"This is only one piece of the puzzle and a good first step, as it's often a drug-users immediate family who is impacted and left to pick up the pieces.

"I'd like to congratulate the ACT Government on this initiative, but more will need to be done as the territory moves towards drug decriminalisation," Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA hopes that the study tour being undertaken by the ACT Chief Police Officer and ACT Chief Health Officer of America and Canada will also explore any welfare services in San Francisco, Portland, Vancouver and Ottawa which were established to support decriminalisation.

Mr Caruana said there are a number of cities where these specific drugs have been decriminalised, with mixed results.

"I hope that the delegation engages with welfare and support agencies to find out what has and hasn't worked in terms of supporting the community post-decriminalisation.

"Welfare and support agencies already operating in this environment will have a wealth of knowledge that needs to be tapped into and used by the ACT Government in the journey towards decriminalisation.

"Poor welfare and support pathways, or support not provided quickly enough, will ultimately harm individuals and families seeking help. It will also make the job of police officers more difficult when they have to deal with people in possession of drugs.

"These pathways must be established before the implementation of drug decriminalisation." Mr Caruana said.

For comments:

AFPA Media and Government Relations Manager Troy Roberts - (02) 6285 1677 – troy.roberts@afpa.org.au