

2 May 2023



MEDIA RELEASE

GOVERNMENT LEAVING COMMONWEALTH LAW ENFORCEMENT BEHIND

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) is concerned by revelations that the Federal Government has spurned the appointees of its elite law enforcement agency in the upcoming budget.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that while veterans and military personnel deserved the benefits they would receive from the new budget, the disparity between the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) workforces continued to grow.

"It's disappointing that the Federal Government doesn't invest in the AFP at the same level that it does with the ADF. Across the country, there are systemic issues with recruitment and retention in law enforcement.

"AFP members are Commonwealth employees who risk their physical and mental health daily. The AFP's role is to enforce Commonwealth criminal law, investigate and combat serious and transnational crimes impacting Australia's national security, and protect Commonwealth interests from criminal activity in Australia and overseas.

"Our members are at the forefront of investigating hideous crimes. They undertake community policing roles in the ACT and airports around Australia, with the potential to go to battle every single shift. In both a national and international environment, this workforce protects children from exploitation; protects politicians, dignitaries and critical infrastructure; and stops human trafficking, drug importations, and terrorism. They stop crimes that many Australians won't ever hear about.

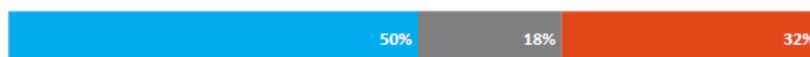
"If a terrorism incident were to occur in Australia, it would be police officers on the frontline defending the country and protecting the community. Policing is a dangerous profession, and it is becoming more so every day. I don't think the Federal Government really appreciates the work that AFP members undertake, and they certainly aren't demonstrating their appreciation by supporting them for their time served."

A recent survey of AFPA members showed that less than one-third of participants think the Government respects them.

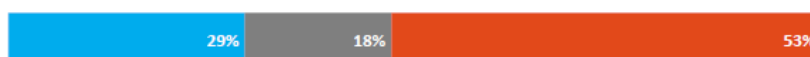
Half of members who responded believe that they are respected by the public, while less than one-third (29%) think they are respected by the Government

■ TOTAL: Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ TOTAL: Disagree

Members of the AFP are respected by the public



Members of the AFP are respected by the Government



Mr Caruana said the current AFPA Pay and Morale Survey results weren't surprising.

"AFP officers are among the lowest base paid police officers in the country; this is a direct result of the Federal Government's policies, alongside the wage freezes imposed by the previous Federal Government. These freezes put AFP members even further behind their state and territory colleagues.

"They see former ADF members receive assistance from the Federal Government via the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA). After many years of serving the Australian community, former and retired AFP members are left behind to fend for themselves without support or recognition.

"The AFPA has long been calling on the Federal Government to support AFP members (past, present and future) by introducing an AFP Blue Card, offering the same benefits as the DVA's White Card. This would be a great first step in acknowledging the work of AFP members and the physical and mental toll this work takes," Mr Caruana said.

For comments:

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