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MEDIA RELEASE

DELAYS IN ACT LAW AND SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) acknowledges yesterday's announcement from ACT Attorney-General Shane Rattenbury about the new ACT Law and Sentencing Advisory Council recruitment process.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that while the announcement was a step forward, it was a slow and small step that brought more questions than answers.

"The ACT Government announced the establishment of the Sentencing Advisory Council on 7 October 2022. Given the community's concerns around sentencing and bail, I would have thought this was a priority for the Attorney-General and ACT Government to progress.

"It has taken over nine months to get to a second round of recruitment after the ACT Government failed in an earlier attempt.

"The AFPA is also concerned by the lack of appropriate community representation. How can two people realistically represent the entire ACT community? At a minimum, there should be two First Nations people on the Council, with the opportunity for members of other cultures to be represented.

"Unless there is more representation for culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans, how can the ACT Government possibly assert that the views of the entire community have been represented?" Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA has reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Council and is generally supportive of them and the establishment of the Council.

Mr Caruana said the makeup of the selection committee for the Council was also unknown.

"I don't believe this Council will be genuinely independent or have a sufficient cross-section of community representation. It seems to consist solely of academics and legal professionals; while I'm sure they are knowledgeable and experts in their field, I do wonder which part of the community they will represent.

"The Attorney-General should involve the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety members in the recruitment process. I appreciate that the Committee is explicitly a function of the Legislative Assembly and not the government, but the Committee's members have valuable expertise in justice administration and would have had dealings with many potential suitable and representative candidates.

"I think the involvement of the members of the Standing Committee would add transparency to the recruitment process," Mr Caruana said.

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