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## MEDIA RELEASE

### DESPICABLE ASSAULT ON ACT POLICING MEMBER

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) is appalled by the Sunday evening assault of a police officer that resulted in his hospitalisation, the loss of five teeth, and other facial injuries.

The alleged offender was initially stopped by police, who believed he was in breach of bail conditions. The man ran away after being questioned and was apprehended after a short foot pursuit. During his arrest, the man seriously assaulted a police officer.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that assaults on police and other emergency services workers were becoming too frequent, often resulting in mental and physical injuries that have a long-term impact on the victim.

“Police officers are frequently victims of assault, and to be frank, I suspect it’s an under-reported offence. My members are telling me that assaults are becoming much more frequent and often more violent than in past years.

“Police are there to do a job. No one comes to work to be assaulted. We wouldn’t accept this in any other workplace, so why should it be acceptable for people to believe they can assault police officers?”

“In this case, we’ve spoken to the victim and will continue offering support on his recovery journey,” Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA is calling on the ACT Government to review the penalties for assaulting frontline community service providers. *Section 26A* of the *Crimes Act 1900 (ACT)*, “assault of frontline community service provider”, legislates a maximum penalty of just two (2) years imprisonment.

Mr Caruana said that the penalty wasn’t an effective deterrent for people assaulting police officers and other frontline service providers.

“Since the introduction of this offence, I will almost guarantee that not one person convicted of this offence has received close to the maximum penalty. We’ve actually seen people receive monetary fines for assaulting police. How can a simple fine, with **no** other penalty or caveat – especially any kind of apology to the victim or commitment to good behaviour – provide a deterrent to protect frontline service providers in the ACT?”

“With the ACT election on the horizon, we’ll be calling on all political parties to commit to a review of the penalties in *Section 26A* of the *Crimes Act* and an independent bail and sentencing review,” Mr Caruana said.

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