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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOT YOUR TYPICAL PUBLIC SERVANT – A FAIR PAY RISE FOR A DEADLY WORK ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) reaffirms its support for its members with respect to the life-threatening work they perform protecting Australia and Australian communities.

A deadly example of the types of risks officers face occurred over the weekend in Canberra, with AFP and ACT Policing officers being shot at by a man armed with a compound bow.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that policing was a dangerous profession both physically and mentally and that AFP appointees were underpaid for the risks they took when compared to other police services across Australia.

“Being a police officer or Protective Service Officer is a dangerous job. They are willing to put their mental and physical well-being on the line to protect others. They confront danger head-on as first responders.

“Surely, this alone is worth more than 11.2 per cent over three years.

“Less than 72 hours ago, we had two officers shot at by a man wielding a compound bow. Those members could have been killed, along with the alleged offender. The officers showed great restraint when they were justified in strongly considering all their options — including the possibility of employing lethal force.

“While the officers may be okay physically, this **will** take a mental toll on them. We don’t know what harm has been caused by this incident, and it may take a while for that harm to surface,” Mr Caruana said.

In 2022-2023, the AFP played its part in seizing or helping international partners seize nearly 100 tonnes of illicit substances. This equates to over \$22 billion in harm avoided across the globe.

AFP Protective Service Officers protect politicians and dignitaries on a daily basis. They also help secure and protect 32 sites that are critical to the Federal Government.

The AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) charged a total of 186 offenders with 925 child exploitation-related offences in 2022-23. They also received over 40,000 reports of child sexual exploitation, with each report containing images and videos of children being sexually assaulted or exploited for the sexual gratification of child sex offenders.

Mr Caruana said that AFP appointees were highly respected and valued not only by the public but also by other organisations, including other law enforcement agencies.

“AFP appointees are valuable employees of the Commonwealth but are not traditional public servants. Can you give me the name of another department that undertakes work similar to the AFP or whose staff are regularly exposed to the same physical and physiological trauma that AFP appointees are?”

“An 11.2 per cent pay rise over three years isn’t sufficient acknowledgement of the challenges and risks our members undertake every single day. They are already the lowest base-paid police officers in the country and deserve more than just the nominal pay rise offered to the broader public service. The incident involving the compound bow over the weekend highlights this.”

“The current Enterprise Agreement and the Government’s bargaining framework simply do not allow the AFP Commissioner the flexibility required to enhance workplace conditions for our members. It effectively ties his hands — to the detriment of the organisation and the safety of our community,” Mr Caruana said.

For comments:

AFPA Media and Government Relations Manager – Mr Troy Roberts – media@afpa.org.au / 0409 812 690