

Media Release



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AFPA WELCOMES AMENDMENTS TO DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING LAWS

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) welcomes the announcement from the ACT Government confirming the passing of the *Road Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2023*.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said the new legislation would focus on high-risk drink and drug driving behaviors.

“Minister Steel has undertaken a fair amount of reform in tackling anti-social, drink and drug driving behaviors in recent times and his dedication towards reform is to be congratulated. The consultation process we’ve had from Minister Steel and his staff has been very good, and we thank him and his office for allowing us the opportunity to engage in these important community and road safety reforms.

“The new legislation will streamline processes, along with allowing ACT Policing officers to immediately prevent people who choose to drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs from continuing to operate a vehicle.

“Road safety is everyone’s responsibility, including the judicial system. The ACT Government has given the judiciary the tools and penalties it needs to help keep Canberra roads safe, and we hope they use the new penalties. The judiciary needs to be part of solution if the ACT is to fulfill its commitment towards Vision Zero,” Mr Caruana said.

The new laws will also give first time low-range drink drivers the option of receiving an immediate six-month loss of license and an \$800 fine.

Mr Caruana said this would benefit low-range drink drivers, as they would be able to commence their penalty period immediately, without having to wait months for their court appearance and sentence outcome.

“The court process can be time consuming and lengthy. People who admit guilt straight away will be able to pay the fine and start the license suspension immediately. Our members frequently tell us that first-time, low-range offenders are normally embarrassed and ashamed about being apprehended, and will usually accept the consequences for their actions without delay.

“We respect and welcome the fact that people will still have the option to have their day in court if they choose to do so, but we feel that many first time, low-range offenders will take up this option of diversion,” Mr Caruana said.

For comments: AFPA Media and Government Relations Manager – Mr Troy Roberts – 02 62651788 - media@afpa.org.au