

Media Release

1 August 2024

AFPA WELCOMES CANBERRA LIBERALS POLICING PLATFORM

The Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) welcomes the commitment to policing and criminal justice reform made by the Canberra Liberals in the lead-up to the 2024 ACT election.

AFPA President Alex Caruana said that the proposal of an extra two hundred police officers, a new police station in the Molonglo Valley and legislative reform around bail would be welcomed by all ACT Policing and AFP members as well as the Canberra community.

“The Canberra Liberals have put together an excellent law and order package that the Canberra community should welcome. Two hundred additional police officers is a great start and would allow ACT Policing to plug a lot of holes in the workforce that have arisen due to low numbers of officers.

“Another essential element that needs looking at is the retention of experienced police officers in ACT Policing. It is fantastic having new officers join the ranks, but we need experienced police officers to mentor and train these new officers when they hit the ground,” Mr Caruana said.

The AFPA also welcomes the commitment towards improving police stations across the ACT.

Mr Caruana said that the ACT Government had neglected police stations in terms of their overall maintenance and ‘future-proofing’ for too long.

“I acknowledge and thank the current government for recent improvements made to police stations across the ACT. However, for those improvements to occur, two police stations had to be closed due to work, health, and safety issues. This was manifestly unfair and dangerous for the affected ACT Policing members, as well as the broader community living and working in the Gungahlin and City regions.

“Apart from Belconnen Police Station, there are no police stations in the ACT that I would call ‘future proofed.’ The ACT continues to expand, both in terms of population and its suburban footprint, and ACT Policing staffing, resources and accommodation needs to match this expansion,” Mr Caruana said.

Since 2022, the AFPA has been calling for legislative reform regarding bail, including an independent review of bail and sentencing.

Mr Caruana said that removing the presumption of bail for people who assault frontline workers remained a necessary and important step for the safety of all frontline workers across the ACT.

“The removal of the presumption for bail does not mean that bail could not still be granted. This means that when bail is being considered during proceedings relating to assaults against frontline workers, both the prosecution and the defence need to provide sufficient and compelling reasons for either the granting or denial of bail.

“Occupational violence must never be tolerated in any industry, and police officers and other frontline workers often endure aggressive behaviour that can result in physical or psychological harm. The AFPA supports any legislative reform that would offer greater protection for all frontline workers.” Mr Caruana said.

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