

# Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform (ACT) Inc.



*committed to preventing tragedy that arises from illicit drug use*

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NEWSLETTER

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As its contribution to  
**DRUG ACTION WEEK®**

Families and Friends for Drug Law  
Reform is organising a

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**Making it happen:**

**Impact of Drug Policy on the  
implementation of the  
Canberra Social Plan  
Wednesday 23 June**

**5pm – 7pm**

at the Reception Room  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
Civic Square, London Circuit  
Canberra City

Following a short address by each panel  
member there will be time for discussion  
from the audience.

**Please see enclosed flyer for more  
information.**

**Refreshments will follow**

(Members are asked to please let Marion  
know if you can bring a slice/cake/something  
savoury for refreshments – 6254 2961)

**MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE  
THE PUBLIC FORUM REPLACES  
OUR NORMAL MONTHLY  
MEETING.**

It was decided at our May meeting that because the  
FORUM would take place on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June the  
monthly meeting which would normally take place on  
Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June would NOT TAKE PLACE.

## Meeting dates:

Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform meet on  
the **fourth Thursday** of each month except December  
and January, unless otherwise advised. The venue is  
usually St Ninian's Uniting Church, Cnr Mouat and  
Brigalow Sts, Lynham. Meetings commence at

7.30pm and usually finish around 9pm with  
refreshments.

Expected dates for meetings for 2004 are:

22<sup>nd</sup> July, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 28<sup>th</sup> October,  
25<sup>th</sup> November.

Any enquiries please phone 6254 2961.

## OTHER EVENTS FOR DRUG ACTION WEEK®

The Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia  
(ADCA) hosts Drug Action Week® each year. It is a  
national week of activities to raise awareness about  
alcohol and other drug issues and to promote the  
achievements of those who work to reduce drug related  
harm. The week also aims to promote public debate  
about good practice strategies for reducing drug-related  
harm.

Drug Action Week® 2004 will include activities that  
educate and involve communities, educators,  
individuals, the media and politicians.

Following is a list of events (please also note our  
Public Forum in previous column) which will occur in  
the ACT during Drug Action Week®. Events not listed  
here and events occurring in other states can be found  
on ADCA's website – [www.drugactionweek.org.au](http://www.drugactionweek.org.au)

**Daytripper Bus Tour** to Alcohol and Drug Services in  
the ACT on **Monday 21 June and Friday 25 June:**  
Pick up at Parliament House, House of Representatives  
entrance at 7.30am and ACT Legislative Assembly,  
London Circuit, Canberra City at 7.45am. Services  
visited will include Karralika Therapeutic community,  
Canberra Recovery Services (Salvation Army),  
CAHMA (peer-based service), WIREDD (women's  
service), Directions ACT, Winnunga Nimmityjah  
Aboriginal Health Service, Ted Noffs Foundation and  
Arcadia House Withdrawal Service.

For bookings or other enquiries contact Shane  
Cumberland: email: [shane.cumberland@act.gov.au](mailto:shane.cumberland@act.gov.au)  
or phone 5205 5112, 0417 434565

**Gala Event – Saturday 26 June**, 10am – 4pm,  
Garema Place, "Chess Pit", Civic. Entertainment,  
information and other materials to raise community  
awareness of AOD issues and other health issues.  
**Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform** will  
have a stall at this event.

## July Meeting

Meeting: 7:30pm  
Speaker: **Affie Adagio** at 8pm  
Venue: St Ninian's Uniting Church, cnr  
Mouat and Brigalow Streets, Lyneham

### Topic: **Diversity in approaches to dependencies**

Addictive behaviours are the unavoidable part of being human. However, society needs to take responsibility for this situation and provide appropriate choices for recovery which involve the whole family. Society needs to be sensible about these choices and pressure government, professionals and the community into working together to make solutions work. The individual also needs to be empowered to choose what he or she believes will work.

Affie Adagio is AOD Interventions/Communication/Welfare TAFE Teacher, Family Therapist and President/Editor Humanist Society of NSW. She has just completed a 10 year PhD research program entitled Compulsions and Recovery Action Research at UWS Hawkesbury. This research covered conversations with people here in Australia and overseas in places such as Berne, Stockholm, Amsterdam and eleven cities in USA.

## Editorial

On 5 October 2002 Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform made a submission to the Joint Committee into the National Crime Authority concerning its inquiry on the Australian Crime Commission Establishment Bill 2002.

The Bill proposed to abolish the National Crime Authority (NCA) and replace it with a new body called the Australian Crime Commission (ACC).

The NCA was established in 1984 as a standing Royal Commission with the statutory independence and tight governance that was essential to get at the truth and fight ever more sophisticated and well-resourced crime. Its structure was deliberate because a series of Royal Commissions had revealed that the influence of organised crime had penetrated police forces and politics.

The Board of the ACC was to be a gathering together of the heads of ASIO, ASIC and Customs with other law enforcement agencies. FFDLR saw this as putting a group of jostling agencies together - a group that have never co-ordinated their efforts as well as they should - and thus unlikely to produce a national approach to the problem.

FFDLR concluded at the time that independence inherent in the NCA would be lost because the ACC would be controlled by a board of all Police Commissioners and three or four other agency heads

and government would only get to hear what it wanted to hear. Organised crime bosses would be celebrating.

Last Monday investigative journalist Chris Masters on 4 Corners exposed corruption in the ACC. The story unfolds with an ACC officer ripping off \$10,000 from a drug dealer and sharing with a NSW police office colleague.

But the problem was more than just two officers. The program showed the cooperation between corrupt police across state boundaries and cooperation between police and informants and criminals. It caught many by surprise, from that program:

**John Mckoy, Chief, Vic Police Drug Squad 1995-99:** *I can understand detectives becoming corrupt through dealing with major drug traffickers because of the amount of money involved. But to run with organised criminals in carrying out those corrupt activities is certainly surprising to me, and certainly unprecedented, I think, in the history of Victorian Police.*

**Chris Masters:** *The blackness of the Victorian corruption and the brutality on the Melbourne streets is sounding a familiar alarm. In the last 20 years, a series of State-based corruption scandals has rolled across the nation.*

It caught the federal government by surprise:

**Senator Chris Ellison, Federal Justice Minister:** *I don't accept that it has been shown that there is corruption in the Australian Crime Commission. What has been demonstrated is that there have been secondees to the Australian Crime Commission and they have been the subject of corruption allegations.*

(The full transcript of the 4 Corners program is available from the ABC website: [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au).)

There has been a series of exposures of police corruption in most state police forces over the years. That Royal Commissions were needed to expose the extent of that corruption should have been a warning sign to the federal government.

The Victorian gangland killings, the leaking of confidential documents that lead to the killing of police witnesses, events that have unfolded in Victoria over the last few months, should have been a warning signal even if all the previous signals had been missed.

Adam Graycar from the Australian Institute of Criminology had this to say:

*"Some officials cannot control their greed while others find themselves in difficult situations and cut corners or take inducements. Fortunately, these are a small minority of our public officials. In a Transparency International survey, Australia ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 99 countries on a "corruption perception index".*

The dynamics, however, are universal—a simple formula proposes that discretion plus monopoly minus accountability equals corruption.

On the issue of police corruption Tim Newburn from the British Home Office, Policing and Reducing Crime Unit Research, in a 1999 report concluded:

- *it is pervasive – corrupt practices are found in some form in a great many police agencies in all societies;*
- *it is a continuing problem – there is evidence of corrupt practices from all stages of police history;*
- *it is not simply a problem of the lower ranks – corruption has been found at all levels of the police organisation;*
- *there are certain forms of policing, or areas of the police organisation, which are more ‘at risk’ of corruption;*

In his report he goes on to say that the usual defence of a “few rotten apples” has been discredited and no longer holds water.

At the heart of much of the corruption, as has been shown by the many royal commissions and recently the gangland killings in Victoria, is the illegal drug trade.

The amount of money available through this trade is huge. The drugs are overpriced, sales are free of taxation, and the industry is free of regulation of any sort. On my estimates, street sales of heroin in 2001 could have been almost \$0.75 billion, \$0.9 billion for cannabis, and \$1.1 billion for amphetamines. That is, almost \$3 billion for just three drugs which are but a few of the drugs illegally traded.

With such vast amounts of money it is easy to see that some will always be attracted to the business of supplying drugs. Together with that business there will always be inducements for corruption and inducements to continue the trade.

Our past experience should tell us it is almost certain that the supply of illicit drugs and associated corruption of law enforcement will continue while such huge profits continue to be made and while the trade continues to be hidden from public view.

There is a challenge here for governments in tackling this problem. It will take courage for any government to seriously tackle it. It will however require a different approach to that tried and found wanting in the past. The public has little or no idea of the quantity of drugs on the streets and governments have been unwilling to make any attempt to identify those quantities.

A good first start for governments might be to bring the drug trade out into the light so that it can be seen in all its totality. That is **regulate the trade by a democratically elected governments, not criminals and corrupt officials.**

There is a challenge for us too. That challenge is to find ways in which to help governments to find the necessary courage. Posing that challenge to candidates in the up-coming election might be a good start for us.

## Stepping Stones

### ... a family drug support course

“STEPPING Stones” is a practical course to help families turn crisis into coping. Most families continue to have influence over the substance user, and this may be strengthened when the family understands the process and accepts support itself.

**When:** Two Fridays and Monday 5.30 – 9pm and two Saturdays 9.30 – 5pm on August 6 – 7, 16, 20 - 21.

**Where:** Function Room, Lewisham Building, Calvary Hospital, Bruce, ACT.

Information and registration: 6205 4515

“Stepping Stones” is run by ACT Community Care’s Alcohol and Drug Program and Family Drug Support (FDS).

## Stepping Stones

### ... Train-the-Trainer program

**Date:** Thurs & Fri 22 – 23 July 2004, 9am – 5pm

**Location:** Day 1 at Ted Noffs 350 Antill St Watson, ACT

**Day 2:** Training Room, Health Building, Civic, ACT

**Cost:** \$30 for FDS membership

**Enquiries:** 6205 4515 for info and application form.

The two day training is an orientation to the Stepping Stones manual and its approach to working effectively with families. Applicants need to have some group leading skills and some knowledge of AOD issues. Some previous experience working with families is preferred.

## Late Breaking News

### Fed Govt announces new national anti-corruption body

**The World Today - Wednesday, 16 June , 2004 12:10:00**

**Reporter: Alexandra Kirk**

ELEANOR HALL: The Federal Government has announced it will set up an independent national anti-corruption body to investigate law enforcement officers inside commonwealth agencies.

Those agencies include the Federal Police and the Australian Crime Commission, and the new body will be given telephone interception powers to assist it in detecting corruption.

The Government's announcement comes just two days after the ABC's *Four Corners* program revealed that the nation's chief crime body, the Australian Crime Commission, had been contaminated by corrupt detectives and questioned why no independent federal body was monitoring it.

In announcing the new independent body, the Government said it is yet to decide what form it should take, but said it would have the powers of a royal commission.

From Canberra, Alexandra Kirk reports.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: The Federal Government says there is no evidence of systemic corruption within the Australian Crime Commission, the Federal Police or other Commonwealth law enforcement agencies such as Customs.

Justice Minister, Chris Ellison, who was instrumental in driving the push for an independent national anti-corruption body, with royal commission powers, says such a body is warranted as a pre-emptive strike against corruption emerging at a national level.

He was flanked by Attorney-General, Philip Ruddock.

CHRIS ELLISON: The Commonwealth Government has decided that there should be an independent body, to scrutinise federal law enforcement and we say that whilst having no evidence of any systemic corruption at the federal law enforcement level, we believe that it is appropriate that such a body should be set up.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: There is some concern that this is a 'knee-jerk' reaction to the Four Corners program. Is that correct?

CHRIS ELLISON: Well, it's not a knee-jerk reaction to any media story at all. In fact what it is, is a review of the scrutiny of federal law enforcement at an appropriate time because what you have is a situation where we've had an inappropriate request from Victoria in relation to telephone intercept powers for an Ombudsman.

I think it highlights the very point the Attorney-General has made and that is that telephone intercept powers and the powers of a royal commission should be vested in an appropriate body and we've had a review of the federal situation. We believe that there should be an independent body to review federal law enforcement in relation to corrupt practices.

PHILIP RUDDOCK: If I could just add in relation to this. Look, police corruption has been a matter of note in state jurisdictions. There is no evidence of any systemic corruption at a federal level, none at all.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: The new body will be given extensive royal commission powers to tap phones, use search warrants, take evidence and compel witnesses to appear. The Government is preparing a detailed submission to take to Cabinet in the next few weeks.

Labor says it will support the establishment of an ongoing anti-corruption body, but Homeland Security Spokesman, Robert McClelland, believes the

Government's move is a response to the issues raised by the ABC's *Four Corners* program.

ROBERT MCCLELLAND: We have expressed concern that Senator Ellison has effectively pre-empted the findings of the inquiry. We don't think that is in the interest of the decent police officers who are entitled to be completely exonerated by an independent inquiry, and certainly we don't think it's in the interest of the community for the independence of that inquiry to have been pre-empted, as Senator Ellison has.

And again, his announcement, or the back flip to announce the need for such an ongoing anti-corruption body seems to be inconsistent with those statements that he's made.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: Liberal backbencher, Greg Hunt, wrote to the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago, urging federal intervention to help root out alleged corruption in his home state of Victoria. He says he, and a number of his colleagues, argued for the need to take steps to prevent any spread of corruption from Victoria.

GREG HUNT: What we've all discovered is that a gangland situation is now linked to the law enforcement process in Victoria. A small number of people of course, but that is a serious crisis, which breeds a crisis of confidence in the administration of justice.

I put forward three proposals, one of which involved a Victorian independent commission against corruption and that proposal still stands and I think the Victorian Government should act immediately.

Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, the Commonwealth now all have independent commissions, or the Commonwealth will have. And in addition I put forward a version at the Commonwealth level, but they've gone even further. They've taken a tougher stance and they've acted more immediately than we'd hoped.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: So do you and your fellow Victorian Federal MPs take credit for the Government's announcement today that they are going to set up an independent national anti-corruption body?

GREG HUNT: I think it's an important step forward. No, we don't take credit. If we have contributed in any way that's good. I think the Treasurer has played a very important role in this.

He is absolutely hot on the failure of action in Victoria and determined to make sure, along with the PM, that at the Commonwealth level none of this Victorian cancer will be allowed to spread anywhere outside of Victoria.

ELEANOR HALL: Federal Liberal backbencher from Victoria, Greg Hunt, ending that report from Alexandra Kirk.